



Ideas for Senedd

22/10/18





Eating Disorder Awareness Week (B-eat)

Raising awareness about eating disorders on campus and encouraging support and recovery.

Details:

On average it takes 3 years for someone with an eating disorder to get the support they need, and the rates of eating disorders amongst men and women are growing each and every day, however the support the university provides is insufficient and there's a total lack of awareness regarding eating disorders on campus.

B-eat runs an eating disorder awareness week each year and (this year its landed on the 26th February - 4th March) and they tend to run different campaigns, such as a funky socks week where you just wear silly socks and fundraise, or other fundraising and awareness drives. This year they're also launching a video campaign called #WhyWait about recovering from eating disorders. AberSU have already met with B-eat, and with the backing of Council should proceed to fully support campaigns on campus, and provide signposting and information about eating disorders.

Submitted by: Georgina Whiteman





Independent Students' Officer

We need an officer to represent independent students who are currently not represented by any of the other union officers.

Details:

AberSU currently has many officers to represent certain groups of students. There is, however, a gap in the representation. The university currently does not have any student representation for independent students.

The term 'independent' student is an umbrella term to cover a number of students who in some way are not supported. This includes care-leavers, estranged students, refugees, young carers, and parents in education. This means that this group of students, who may have different priorities and needs to the general student population, are not represented and ergo not getting the best experience possible from university.

The lack of support may be very difficult for these students, so the least that we can do is have a designated person within the union to support them and speak for their needs.

AberSU should create a new volunteer officer role called Independent Students' Officer for these students, so that they can have a voice within the university. The role should be made available for students to stand in the next officer election.

Submitted by: Samantha Wilding





HIV - Testing, Testing, Testing

Lobby the Welsh Government to fund free HIV Home Testing Kits for residents in Wales, in an aim to increase the rates of HIV testing, as has already been done in England.

Details:

Currently, home HIV testing kits are not available on the NHS in Wales, Scotland, or Northern Ireland, however these kits are provided for free on the English NHS. Home testing kits come in two types, in the first you take a sample of your own blood or swab of saliva which is sent to a laboratory for testing, in the second type the sample can be tested at your own home. These tests are provided free in England to encourage testing for HIV as according to the NHS as many as one in five people with HIV may not be aware of it.

In November 2016 the Minister for Social Services and Public Health commissioned the Public Health Wales Trust to carry out a review into sexual health services in Wales, part of this review included the access to home testing kits. In Aberystwyth there is an immense strain on the NHS already due to the fluctuating student population, and across the county some may live long distances from their local GP. Making tests accessible to all would lessen this strain, as instead of going to the doctors you could quite easily get a test delivered to your home. Given that a one-in-five may not be aware they are HIV Positive, testing is essential and should be encouraged as well as accessible.

Some would argue that the best option, however, would be to go to the local GP to get a test, and receive information on the risks of HIV infection and how to reduce this. Yet, many LGBTQ+ people know the risks of HIV infection and get tested for these very reasons. Assuming that people are unaware of the risks and giving them, what may be perceived as a lecture, may feel patronising and off-putting to LGBTQ+ people and enforce the idea that people do not know what they are doing. An attitude like this could push people away from getting tested at a doctors, increase stigma on the LGBTQ+ community, and make people less comfortable going to the doctors to receive a HIV Test.

Therefore, this Idea calls for AberSU to lobby the Welsh Government to provide these tests for free on the NHS within Wales, especially given the recent review. This is an issue that affects not only students, but everyone in Wales and tests like this would make the experience for students far better than it might have been before. It will also help make testing quicker, easier, and more accessible, meaning that we may be able to increase rates of detection of HIV. Making tests accessible, and increasing the rates of detection, is the best way to lower the rate of HIV infection not just in Aberystwyth, or Wales, but globally.

Submitted by: Samuel Smales





Sex work is just that, work.

Sex work is an alternative job that some students may seek to pay bills, we must not discriminate for it, it is also a risky job, but with the right support we can protect the wellbeing of sex workers.

Details:

During the Student Sex Work Project, around 5% of the respondents were found to be sex workers. In the recent NUS Student Sex Worker's Survey, 71% of Student Sex Workers identified as Women, 17% as Non-Binary, over 70% as LGBTQ+, and over 55% identified as having a disability. Many of these people come from already disadvantaged backgrounds and participate in sex work for varying reasons, whilst it is not our place to discuss why someone may go into sex work, a majority are motivated purely by a lack of money and a need to survive. These people use sex work to fund living expenses, bills, food, rent, clothes, or resources for their education. Sex work is a flexible revenue that allows a student to work around university hours in their job. This situation can only increase with inflation and the rising costs of being a student. There are many risks to being a sex worker, 65% of respondents had faced harassment and 47% had experienced sexual assault. It is important to remember that just because a sex worker engages in sexual acts it does not mean that they do not have boundaries that can be crossed, nor that consent is always a given. Given that 48% of respondents said they would be uncomfortable going to the police, this means that harassment and assault goes unreported and uninvestigated for these people, who fear that the law will go against them rather than perpetrators. In terms of accommodation, there can be far reaching consequences for sex workers working from their own homes (around 47% of respondents), where landlord "morality clauses" mean that if found out a sex worker could face a forced eviction, without getting their rent back, and making them face more financial difficulty, and possibly homelessness. In some universities Sex Workers may face expulsion or suspension for their work, which can be extremely harmful for their wellbeing, and again force them further into the conditions that drove them to sex work in the first place. Additionally, due to their work, many may find it difficult to talk to others, or to talk to staff at universities for fear of repercussions that might affect their finances, education, wellbeing, or lead to legal action against them, leading to a high level of loneliness amongst sex workers. These problems are widespread with only 15% of respondents in the survey saying that their institution or students union provided sufficient support. This is what we must change. Therefore, this motion calls for AberSU to back decriminalisation of Sex Work, whilst sex work itself is not illegal, many of the acts around sex work are. Decriminalisation would; increase safety, enhance health, protect sex workers, end criminal records, stop rapists, and free up police time. In addition to this the union should campaign to the end of morality clauses, or at least identify landlords without morality clauses, to make sure the university does not discriminate based on sex worker status, and make sure that the conditions that drive people further into sex work are not allowed to be created. In addition the university should make sure that people are aware that a status such as sex work does not affect the help given through university run services, and the students union should aim to set up confidential support groups to make sure that those in sex work can access the support groups they need with the confidence that they will not be discriminated due to this.

Submitted by: Samuel Smales





Come on Aberystwyth - get with the pro-choice program

Let's campaign to end the disparity of access to terminations in Wales!

Details:

Terminations in rural Wales are insanely hard to get, having to wait until 8 weeks pregnant to be allowed a proper consultation, forced to be faced with an ultrasound, potential lack of treatment due to non-viable pregnancies and then if you want to go to a clinic in Welshpool, which is the nearest - being forced to pay for a simple treatment that should be provided on the NHS. This is the same if you want to go into England.

I propose we push the health board and the NHS in Wales to make terminations more accessible and fight for women's rights to choose in Wales.

Submitted by: Molly Jean-Longden





Boycott Prevent

The Union should seek to end their compliance with Prevent, in order to be a Union that is truly inclusive.

Details:

This Union Notes

1. The government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies and 'specified authorities' – including universities – to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism' and to implement the 'Prevent' agenda.
2. The Prevent agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting Black people and Muslims.
3. Under Prevent, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers.
4. The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
5. The Act further criminalises Muslims and Black people, and comes amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government.

This Union Believes

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
2. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" problematise and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties.
3. That the Act could serve to isolate many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection.
4. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.
5. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance
6. The implementation of the Prevent Strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists.
7. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and University and Colleges Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their conferences opposing the Act and Prevent.
8. As a Charity, we as a Union are not legally bound to engage with Prevent and should seek to boycott it

This Union Resolves

1. To mandate the Officers of this Union to not engage with the Prevent strategy or implement the proposals of the Act, and to boycott it as far as legally possible.
2. To work with campus trade unions including UCU on combating the Prevent strategy and its implementation on campus.
3. . To educate students on the dangers of the CTSA and the Prevent Strategy.
4. To lobby the university to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with Prevent and other similar initiatives.

This involves:

- Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the university and Students' Union.
- This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.
- Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students.

Submitted by: Ammaara Nalban



