

# AGM Report For Students with Disabilities Officer

Name:

*Molly Lawson*

Role:

*Students with Disabilities Officer*

## Progress on Manifesto Pledges:

*I started out the year with four manifesto pledges and I am happy that I have worked towards achieving each of them, though the pandemic and other struggles have prevented me from achieving some of them completely.*

- 1. The Sunflower Lanyard Scheme – This is a scheme used nationally to represent hidden disabilities, though has been used in the past year to show that a person is exempt from wearing a face covering. I have managed to implement the scheme at Lancaster, though for mask exemptions rather than all disabilities. This has been funded by the University, and I worked on the comms relating to the scheme and the practical implementation. There should be lanyards left over for mask exemptions next year, and if an officer after me wants to implement the scheme further, there is the groundwork to do so.*
- 2. Improving the accessibility of lectures – I wanted to create a project to convince the University to improve the accessibility of lectures, including using captioning, lecture recordings etc. This year, we already had these things due to the online delivery of lectures, so I wanted to make sure that this continued. I have created a campaign group to work on creating a report, based on the feedback from the student body. This turned into Improve Your Learning, a campaign and forty-page report presented to the University in the second term. Certain departments have been especially receptive to the recommendations (review of the ILSP system, review of accessibility reporting system, and changes to academic delivery) and I am currently in talks with the university to look at the recommendations further.*
- 3. Improving attendance of the forum – The Students with Disabilities Forum now has a full Executive Committee of 11 dedicated members and other members who regularly attend. We have held weekly meetings, special events, and certain exec members have ran online campaigns. We are also very active on social media, creating awareness posts and sharing events. I feel I have fully achieved this goal, despite the fact that meetings have to be online. Moreover, with the forum exec, we have changed the forum terms of reference to introduce an intersectionality officer and a graphic designer post, both of which have been filled.*
- 4. Intersectionality – I pledged to hold events with other forums. This has been partly achieved; most notably we held an introduction to all forums events at the beginning of the year, and the Students with Disabilities Forum collaborated last term with the Women+ forum to hold a roundtable event. As already mentioned, we have created an Intersectionality Officer. We have also worked on creating posts highlighting intersectional identities, including two posts for International Transgender Day of Visibility, Disabled LGBTQ+ activists to follow, and a post celebrating Disabled People of Colour Day.*

## Other Projects I Have Been Working On:

*The main other thing I have been working on is consulting with the university on various issues*

*relating to disabled students. I have gathered information on anonymous marking, changes to the ILSP system, captioning, inaccessible content, the academic tutorial system, and specific accessibility issues for example the new mail system. This information has then been shared with the University to help make a variety of projects accessible. I also regularly attend the meetings of the Inclusive Learning Network to make sure I am up to date with all disability-related projects.*

*I also passed the Accessibility Principles through the Executive Committee of the Union. These ensure that the Union is more accessible than before – for example, officers are now required to use image descriptions or alt text on social media, and all major SU events have to include a BSL interpreter. This was implemented at the Officer hustings this year. This project was started by my predecessors and I hope my successor also works to ensure that this is implemented. As a result of this, I also created a document that student groups can use to make sure that their events are accessible.*

*Moreover, I have worked on social media to raise the profile of the forum and the work I do. I have posted monthly updates highlighting what I have worked on and asking for feedback. I have also created many posts raising awareness of certain conditions and processes, including how to do image descriptions and alt text, how to get DSA, how to get free bus travel as a disabled student, where to access mental health support, myths about d/Deaf culture, how to make sure your lectures follow your ILSP, and what to do about the campus pharmacy being replaced.*

#### Priorities for the remainder of the year:

*I am currently looking at a project where student groups like societies, JCRs and sports groups can undergo accessibility training in order to receive some sort of badge or quality mark to show that they are accessible to new members. I am also going to ensure that the forum runs well for the rest of the year.*

#### Officer Budget Expenditure:

Expenditure	Cause
155	Two guest speakers
30	Teacher for BSL event
25	Sponsored post to advertise the forum