



Manifestos For VP Welfare

The following are the manifestos for the candidates running to be one of your full-time officers for the year 21/22. These officers will represent yourselves to the university and lead on campaigns to make student life better.

This officer role will champion the following areas of work but not limited to:

- Be the lead student representative on welfare and equality issues and widening participation promoting equitable representation of our diverse student population.
- Act as lead officer on internationalization and international students
- Lead campaigns and activity related to students as students issues relating to their welfare
- Be the lead student officer responsible for responding to national welfare issues and bringing these to the Union executive committee

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order

Amy Merchant

“Here to listen to and amplify your voices.”

I'm **Amy Merchant** (she/her) and I'm running for **re-election as your VP Welfare 2021**.

As your current Vice President Welfare, I have delivered on my promises and launched my campaign, [Stop Housing Haste](#). This included [delaying the release of housing contracts from SU Living](#) until January 2021 to give you more thinking time during a pandemic and creating my own [student renter toolkit](#). I supported the rent strikers and also achieved a 2021-22 rent freeze. I introduced and delivered free [care packages](#) for isolating students, created the first-ever [LGBTQ+ libguide](#), and I'm organising inclusive contraception to be placed in the library.

The University benefits from the turn-over of Full Time Officers and the time it takes to comprehend University structures. **Re-electing me** would mean that **from day one** I'll be can step into the role and **continue to make necessary changes** for you, **especially now, when it really matters**.

Mental Health:

According to the National Union of Students, [52% of students say their mental health has deteriorated](#) or been affected negatively by Covid, but only 20% of students have sought support. As your VP welfare, I will:

- **Lobby the university:** Use my existing contacts to ensure the University moves forward with their proposal to extend the Counselling and Mental Health service hours, which will improve the accessibility of the service. This is something I have lobbied the university for this year.

- **Compulsory mental health training:** Make training compulsory for all student-facing staff. Current uptake of optional training is 45%, meaning that many staff don't know how to respond to your issues should you seek help.
- **Expand training:** Recently, I organised a sign-posting session for JCR Welfare Officers delivered by the SU Advice service, so that they know how to respond to students facing mental health issues. I'll extend a similar offer to all welfare officers (or executive members) within teams, clubs, and societies. This ensures that students have multiple places to access support.
- **Create a wider student support network:** Improve connections with local charities, such as Samaritans and Renaissance, to ensure students have access to information from local organisations. These long-lasting healthy relationships mean students have a wider support network.
- **Prevent students reaching crisis:** Support students before they reach crisis point through improved triaging information and guidance in a central hub on the SU website. Getting help shouldn't be difficult, and so I'll be removing the barriers to make sure you get support.

Housing:

The [National Student Accommodation Survey 2020](#) shows that 1/3 undergrads look for housing before Christmas. This means that while places are going fast, you'll have to pay another deposit on top of current living costs. 1/3 [of students also admit to not reading their contracts](#), leading to many issues. I'll continue to tackle the toxic student housing culture by:

- **Setting a good housing precedent:** Lobby the wider LU Homes accreditation scheme to delay the releasing of contracts for housing providers to give students more time before they sign across Lancaster.
- **Promote existing tools:** Lobby LU Homes to promote my existing student renter toolkit when you sign a housing contract so all student tenants are properly supported..
- **Continue my 'Stop Housing Haste' campaign:** Continue my successful campaign by focussing on three areas: upholding your rights, understanding tenancy responsibilities, and important things to look out for in contracts so you are not caught out.
- **Support national campaign:** I will support the NUS #StudentsDeserveBetter campaign that is lobbying the UK government to provide rent rebates and re-introduce maintenance grants. We must recognise the recent unfair treatment of students.

Union for all

- **Diversity:** Create an SU calendar to ensure the Union celebrates both faith and wellbeing days. We need to make students feel welcome in their SU.
- **Training:** This year the SU has expanded its EDI training for JCRs. I will work on providing this training sustainably, so that it covers all liberation groups at Lancaster for the future.
- **Lobby the University:** Lobby on their commitment to the [Race Equality Charter](#).
- **Inclusive sport:** Students have felt disconnected during COVID-19, which has greatly impacted those from liberation backgrounds. When events like Roses are re-introduced, I will ensure they are inclusive for all. My sports inclusivity campaign will expand on work with Rainbow laces this year and help reduce barriers students from liberation backgrounds can face when participating in sports.

Thanks for reading my manifesto. For more information, please contact me at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Re-Elect-Amy-for-VP-Welfare-109314401205637>
 #ReElectAmy

Charlotte Senior

FTO Elections

CHARLOTTE SENIOR FOR VP OF WELFARE 2021-2022: WELFARE COMES FIRST!

Hi! My name is Charlotte and I am running to be your Welfare Officer. I am a friendly, bubbly person who is eager to make a difference to people's lives. My aim is to strengthen the welfare provided by LUSU by adding additional useful resources, as well as campaigning for increased welfare awareness and increased resources provided by our University.

1. MY PLANS

A. More welfare check ins – especially for students that are off campus

- i. Continue to improve counselling and mental health services provided by the university
- ii. Bi-weekly emails containing information on where to get help if you need it
- iii. An opt in service for monthly phone calls from someone in your college

B. Resources- I want to dedicate a section on the LUSU website to welfare and make sure that it is a well-known resource. Knowledge is power!

- ii. Mental health awareness (how to recognize that someone is struggling, what to do if someone you know/you need help, numbers to specific helplines)
- ii. An outline of discrimination and prejudice (racism, homophobia, transphobia, sexism) and what to do when observing/experiencing this.
- iii. Ideas and tips to integrate everyone in your flat – this is so important in times of COVID!
- iv. A continuation of previous officers campaign for sufficient resources for student housing by creating a page with information.

C. Pandemic support

Support groups for people who have lost loved ones to Covid-19/during the pandemic

D. Have the voices of the Equality and Diversity Inclusion Reps heard in every department

- ii. Making sure departments are listening to and working with their reps
- iii. Giving support to EDI reps to ensure faculties promote diversity and decolonization of curriculums

- E. Society training
- ii. Supporting the leaders of societies to notice and have a positive impact on any members that may be struggling via training days
- iii. Giving training to society exec members in recognizing discrimination and what to do if it arises

- F. Push for environmental awareness
- ii. Support Green Lancaster and continue to encourage the ideas outlined in the 'Environmental Sustainability Objects and Targets 2019-2020'
- ii. Try to implement more environmentally friendly alternatives on campus (printer paper, toilet paper, less bottled water)
- iii. Encourage the creation of nature groups/opportunities, i.e. 'Get Outside' initiative to help incorporate nature and study breaks- perhaps by planting trees/making wildflower meadows or beds.
- iv. Create duck feeding stations on campus

- G. Supporting the Part Time officers
- i. Helping the PTOs get their ideas and voices listened to (e.g have bi-weekly meetings to discuss what needs to be done by LUSU and by the University, introduce compulsory lectures at the beginning of academic year on discrimination, make sure there is more representation for BAME students).

2. ABOUT ME

During my 3 years at Lancaster University, I have been an Academic Rep for my department (Psychology). This has given me the opportunity to represent the views of my peers who do not have such a platform by establishing consistent and reliable lines of communication and acting as a bridge between the student body, the Psychology department, and the wider university community.

As well as this, I had the incredible honour of being elected the Club Captain for Cartmel Netball this year, which has given me confidence in my decision making and will prepare me for working within the elected officer team. As a Psychology student, I am very aware of the importance of welfare – especially during (and after) the madness that is COVID. I would love to represent you as the next VP of Welfare- I have listed a brief description of everything I want to achieve above, and of course I will always be very open to any ideas; after all, I would be representing you – the student body!

3. CONCLUDING MESSAGE:

My main aim as your Welfare Officer would be to raise awareness of the significance of mental health, as well as supporting the people taking the important action of ending discrimination within our university. I am passionate about ending discrimination, supporting those in need and trying to save the planet. To measure progress, I would send out a survey termly about what more could be done, as well as whether awareness surrounding mental health and discrimination was strong enough. Overall, my central purpose would be to support and listen to you, the students of Lancaster!

Thank you for reading my manifesto, and I hope we can work together to improve the welfare of all those at Lancaster University!