

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION

Harm Reduction: Drugs and Alcohol	
Meeting and date:	Union Assembly, 06/02/2024
Purpose of paper:	To recognise the negative impact of no tolerance policies on drug and alcohol misuse and to commit the Union to campaigning for harm reduction policies on a campus, local, and national level; combined with running a Students' Union preventative wellbeing campaign.
Intended outcome:	For Approval
Paper submitted by:	Josh Newsham, Vice-President Welfare
Restricted business:	No
Key contact(s):	Josh Newsham, su.vp.welfare@lancaster.ac.uk
Persons/committees consulted to date including student engagement (where appropriate):	Lancaster University Students' Union Advice Service Lancaster University Students' Liberation Forums Lancaster University Wellbeing and Mental Health Service Welfare sabbatical officers from across the UK National Union of Students, SOS UK Drugs and Alcohol Impact UK
EDI considerations	Minorities from different groups are disproportionately affected by drug and alcohol use and face cultural and discriminatory barriers to accessing support and care. Targeted intervention and out-reach programs for specific protected characteristics would add additional positive impact to these campaigns.
Date paper produced:	22/01/2024

The Students' Union recognizes the importance of addressing issues related to drugs and alcohol within the student community. This policy paper aims to outline the Union's stance on harm reduction strategies for drugs and alcohol to create a safer and more responsible environment for all students.

This Assembly notes:

1. That there has been an ongoing increase in the use of, and the dangers of drugs and alcohol among students, across the country.
2. There is significant risk to students' physical and mental health as a result of [drug and alcohol misuse](#).
3. [2021-22 report on Students, Alcohol and Drugs launched - News | SOS-UK \(nus.org.uk\)](#)
4. Use of certain drugs is prohibited under statutory law in the United Kingdom but there is freedom for political campaigns and wellbeing advocacy.
5. The Students' Union owns a licensed venue (The Sugarhouse) and this policy should not infringe on the legal responsibilities of the venue but enhance the wellbeing activity and support.
6. This year has seen the revival of the Union's "Late Night Do It Right!" campaign.

This Assembly believes:

1. In the importance of comprehensive education that is accurate and accessible on the risks and consequences of drug and alcohol use.

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2. Stigma created by no tolerance policies leads to disengagement and further detriment from students, especially those suffering addiction or dependency.
3. That the Students' Union should be a supportive environment and an organisation of advocacy for those who are suffering addiction and dependency.
4. In creating a non-judgemental environment that encourages students to seek support and advice without fear of punishment.
5. Students should have access to professional addiction support on campus.

This Assembly resolves:

1. To commit to running preventative wellbeing campaigns focussed on the risks of drug and alcohol misuse combined with guidance on safe use, mental health support, and signposting guidance.
2. To campaign, lobby, and advocate for extensive no-detriment harm reduction policies and wellbeing campaigns to be implemented on campus, in the local area, and on a national level.
3. To write a collaborative open letter to the government with other Students' Unions calling for
 - a. the decriminalisation of drug use, and
 - b. for a binding responsibility for UK Universities to take a harm reduction approach.
4. To deliver training on the risks of drug and alcohol use and empower students with the resources and knowledge to react appropriately and safely to incidents.
5. To publish this paper in the form of a statement, to be transparent with students about the beliefs and resolutions and future of harm reduction at Lancaster.