



**HANDBOOK**

**2008 / 09**

# **Being a disabled students' officer**



disabled students' campaign

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Make sure you're signed up for the 2008/9 e-newsletters!

Do you have a position in your union/association that makes you responsible for disabled students' issues?

Are you interested in knowing more about NUS disabled students' Campaign and other disabled students' campaigns nationally and internationally?

Would you like to receive regular updates and information about the disabled students' Campaign?

If your answer to any of the above is yes, then you should fill out this contact form so we can add you to our current disabled students' Campaign e-newsletter database. We send out a newsletter once or twice a month that could help you in your work and interest in the Disabled Students' Campaign. It will only take a minute of your time and all information is kept confidential and will not be passed onto any third parties.

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to make the disabled students' campaign bigger and better.

## **Stay in touch**

Please complete this page/copy and paste it into an email and return to the address at the bottom of the page.

Name:

Position:

Students' union/association:

Telephone:

Email:

Region:

Further education or higher education?

Part-time or full-time?

Gender:

Please return to:

NUS Disabled Student's' Unit, 2nd Floor, Centro 3, Mandela Street,  
London NW1 0DU or email [disabled@nus.org.uk](mailto:disabled@nus.org.uk).

## **Glossary of Terms used:**

NUS - National Union of Students

A democratic organisation driven by its members, the students' unions.

CM - Constituent Member

A students' union / guild / association affiliated to the National Union of Students.

NEC - National Executive Committee

The NUS NEC is elected by the membership to be its representatives. The NEC co-ordinates NUS' campaigns, services and training and is responsible for managing the affairs of NUS except when conference is in session – when conference itself assumes responsibility.

HE - Higher Education

Higher education is defined as courses that lead to Level 4 qualifications or above. These include undergraduate degrees, postgraduate qualifications, foundation degrees, Diplomas in Higher Education, Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates.

FE - Further Education

Further education is now more widely termed as the learning skills sector, for 14-19 year olds and for adult learning. This includes education in schools, and encompasses the '14-16 Increased Flexibilities Programmes' that enables 14-16 year olds to access learning opportunities, mostly vocational and usually part-time, in FE colleges. There are now about 130,000 14-16 year olds across two-thirds of colleges in the FE sector. FE covers a multitude of courses – basic skills through to Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A-level or the Advanced Vocational Certificate (AVCE). There will also be new national diplomas (14-19 diplomas) to replace AVCE from September 2007.

FE colleges also deliver HE qualifications – HNDS, foundation degrees and degree courses – usually franchised from an HE institution.

LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans

DS - Disabled Students - Referred to the term 'disabled people' to refer to all of those people with impairments and long-term medical conditions, regardless of cause, who are disabled people by social restrictions.

Professor Michael Oliver – (Michael Oliver, 1990, quoted Barnes in 1991)

restrictions [that] occur as a consequence of inaccessible built environments, the inability of the general population to use sign language, the lack of ... (accessible) ... reading materials ... or hostile public attitudes to people with non-visible (impairments)'

#### Caucus

Caucuses are groups of individuals who identify with each other because of similar cultural or ethnic characteristics, or life circumstances, or who share a common sexual identity or experience. Caucuses are formed by groups whose members are traditionally underrepresented in larger groups due to cultural or institutional barriers. Caucus reps on committee are elected by and accountable to their caucuses.

#### Open-place rep

A representative on committee without specific portfolio or caucus responsibilities, who is elected by and accountable to conference as a whole.

#### Steering Committee

A committee elected to arrange and direct the order of business at democratic conferences.

#### CEHR (Commission for Equality and Human Rights)

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights is Non-Departmental Public Body. It subsumes the work of the three previous equality commissions, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The CEHR aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights.

## Being the National Disabled Students' Officer Introduction by Adam Hyland

Welcome to the new online disabled students' Officer Handbook for 2008/09. I'm Adam Hyland, the National Disabled Students' Officer for the year. Please feel free to contact me or the disabled students' unit anytime during the year:

Email me: [adam.hyland@nus.org.uk](mailto:adam.hyland@nus.org.uk)

Email our unit: [disabled@nus.org.uk](mailto:disabled@nus.org.uk)

Telephone: 0871 221 8221



I am pleased to hear that our Disabled Students' Campaign achieved a major success within the education sector, a substantial increase in the **disabled students' allowance (DSA)** in July 2007. This came about after several years of lobbying and pressurising the government.

Funding for non-medical personal help in the **DSA** was increased to £20,000 for full time undergraduates and this will apply from 2008 (for part time students, it will rise from £9,315 to £15,000; for postgraduates from £5,915 to £10,000). **DSA** is a system of support that aims to provide equipment and human support to disabled students in order to enable them to complete their courses in Higher Education (HE). Whilst this change will have a major impact on disabled students in HE, NUS still face an uphill battle on engaging disabled people in Further Education (FE).

To take sign language users as an example, this meant that many people were unable to have interpretation for many of their lectures and contact time at university. Deaf students quickly used up their 'allowance' of funding and were often left without access to the same information and contact time as their non-disabled counterparts. Similarly, many students with learning disabilities were left without note takers and the human support necessary in order to complete their studies.

This year we need to campaign for disabled students in FE because our major concern is that educational providers may have created **barriers to**

**disabled students' participation in FE** because of a lack of clarification regarding agency responsibility, including the complete absence of a specialised system of funding support for disabled students. Many disabled people are not encouraged to go into FE or simply do not see college as an appropriate option for them. This argument calls for more clarity of agency responsibility, in areas such as **personal care and transport issues**, through educational transition periods in order to remove barriers to participation in FE for disabled students. We have selected for this research project to be carried out this year looking at disabled people and further education. This will inform an evidenced based campaign, beginning 2009.

**The Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, Mr Rammell**

*"I think this is an important and welcome change and I would pay tribute to the National Union of Students, who have campaigned strongly on this issue".*

We have other campaign priorities such as reducing the stigma of Mental Health this year. It is important to reduce stigma is essential, as it can in itself worsen an existing mental health problem. If you fear stigma, you're less likely to seek help from family members or from organisations, as you believe this will make people question your ability and competence. If you're depressed, you may believe you are 'going mad,' and this can cause you to slip further into depression. This is known as a negative feedback cycle.

Make the most of the disabled students campaign your opportunity to make a big fuss about YOUR disabled students' Campaign on campus!

This year there will be opportunities for you and your students to lobby government, demonstrate, rally, petition, write to MPs, change attitudes on your campus, and more.

This handbook is designed to help you run YOUR disabled students' campaign - either as disabled students' officer, a convenor of disabled students' group, or somebody interested in running campaigns for disabled students' rights - whether you are in Higher or Further Education.

The disabled students' Committee and I are on hand to visit your Campus for an event or just a chat so get in contact with us - especially if you are fighting a referendum or trying to stop an attack on your position or campaign.

Don't forget the most important event in the Disabled Students' Campaign calendar which is Disabled Students' Conference (February 2009)! It's going to be awesome.

I sincerely hope that you have a fantastic year. My advice to you (and to myself!) would be to pick a few campaigns and run them well - don't try to do everything! And my second piece of advice to you is to get your students involved nationally with the disabled students' Campaign Priority Campaign - we are strong together, which is why we pick a Priority Campaign each year.

Adam Hyland  
National Disabled Students' Officer

## **SECTION 1 - THE DISABLED STUDENTS' CAMPAIGN IN YOUR STUDENTS' UNION –**

Disabled Students' Campaign – self-organising, autonomous Liberation Campaign for students who self define as disabled.

Full time Disabled Officer post was ratified at NUS Annual Conference in 1999 but it took until July 2000 to get the first full time Disabled Officer in post.

### **"Why do we need Disabled Students' Campaign in Students' Union?"**

Disabled Students face:

- Attitudinal and social barriers to full inclusion – for example – barriers to aspirations-raising & transitions and Information, Advice & guidance (IAG).
- Financial Barriers.
- Empowerment barriers as a result of which they are not listened to, consulted or involved.
- Policy Barriers, resulting from policy design and delivery, which do not take them into account.

*Research from various sources shows that disabled students in universities and colleges have increased numerically over recent years (Colin Barnes, Centre for Disability Studies, University of Leeds (2007))*

Over ten years ago, **the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)** became law. Colleges and universities are now making great strides to increase the intake of disabled students and to improve their experience and educational outcomes. NUS emphasises the importance for its Disabled Students' Campaign to lobby for disability rights to be at the forefront of the political agenda in the UK, in order to facilitate changes in policy and practice within disability legislative frameworks.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 seeks to prevent discrimination against disabled people in employment, provision of goods

& services and in education. This act has been amended several times and finally came fully into effect in September 2005. **DDA Part 4**, which has been merged with **Special Educational Needs (SENDA, 2001)**, looks at the requirement on schools to take responsibility for ensuring that the transition from childhood to adulthood – pertaining to education – is effective.

*Until the 1990s, most universities were inaccessible to disabled students and staff...we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> education, more support services for students with particular access needs. (Colin Barnes)*

In June 2005, the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) (replaced by Equality & Human Rights Commission in October 2007) launched the **Disability Debate**, a major national debate on the future of disabled people's equality in Britain, which focused on a change in society in a move to greater equality for disabled people. It has taken over 18 months for this to develop and form the **Disability Agenda**, through actively involving a wide variety of individuals and organisations. Furthermore, an institution's **Disability Equality Duty (DED)** (2006) relates to part 5 of DDA and places the responsibility of disabled people's inclusion, not on the individual, but firmly on the institution in question. Within education, the learning establishment concerned is responsible.

The **disability discourse** has become more prevalent since the various campaigns organisations have brought the subject into mainstream debate. Campaigns on the subject have been more widely publicised, helping to identify the barriers that exist and making these more widely known as representing a social model of disability. Through the increase in public awareness, government and society have been influenced to exert positive change. This change may be described as a move away from the traditional medical model of disability towards the **social model**. This coincides with a move towards a more cohesive policy on disability; the new **Office for Disability Issues**.

**Colin Barnes:**

*...shift from traditional...medical approaches to the more recent socio/political analyses associated with the social model of disability. Attention will then turn to how the latter is reflected in recent government policy initiatives and their impact on policies and practices within institutions of higher education*

**The Social Model and language**

'The language that people use reflects what they think and can influence how they deal with situations. If they behave as if the problem is with the individual, they will take a different approach than if they regard the problem as being with the attitudes, systems and practices that create disabling barriers'.

*(Clark & Marsh 2002) (Clark and S Marsh, Patriarchy in the UK: The Language of Disability, Leeds University disability archive, 2002 – [www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/arciveuk/titles.html](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/arciveuk/titles.html)*

All people who have impairments and long term medical conditions (including mental illness) should be referred to by the term 'disabled people' as this implies they are disabled by social restrictions. Replacing medical or suppressive language used to describe disabled people with the social model of language will influence how people behave, some examples are:

- |                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. People with disabilities  | Disabled People    |
| 2. Deaf & Dumb People        | Deaf People        |
| 3. Wheelchair bounder        | Wheelchair user    |
| 4. People who suffer from MS | People who have MS |

Professor Michael Oliver (1990) quoted in Barnes 1991 talks about:

*'restrictions [that] occur as a consequence of inaccessible built environments, the inability of the general population to use sign language, the lack of ... (accessible)...reading materials...or hostile public attitudes to people with non-visible (impairments)'*

Under the umbrella term disabled people there are people with many types of impairment and long term conditions as well as hidden disabilities. The medical model of language uses terms such

as 'severely impaired'

and

'less severe impairments'

*(National Centre for Social Research – Disabled for life? Attitudes towards, and experiences of disability in Britain – DWP research report no. 173, 2002)*

One of the reasons some disabled people find it difficult to disclose their hidden disability is because they believe it is people's attitudes, systems and practices that create disabling barriers. This point is important when considering the NUS campaign about the social model language of disabled people and removing attitudes that create disabling barriers.

### **Social Model of disability**

The social model of disability proposes a variety of factors that may mean a person can self-define as disabled e.g. discriminatory assumptions about a person linked to his/her impairment; lack of necessary support and equipments; being labelled as having special educational needs; stereotypical language, etc.

The **Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2005)** report on the life chances of disabled people stated that:

*'Disability should not be distinguished from impairments and ill-health' and is defined as poverty, disadvantage, social exclusion and environmental and educational/employment barriers...Disabled young people's needs are often not met by current further education provision'*

Thus, referring to disabled students as students with a disability is misleading, as it places the reason for the disability **with** the person and not the society that created the barrier by discriminatory practice.

## **being in nus - nus and the Disabled Students' campaign**

NUS Disabled Students' Campaign is one of the four autonomous liberation campaigns within NUS; the others being the Black Students' Campaign, the LGBT Campaign and the Women's Campaign.

What these campaigns have in common is that they all seek to represent and empower individuals who experience disadvantage, in terms of status and opportunity, because they belong to, or are perceived as belonging to, a particular social group.

As an autonomous campaign, NUS Disabled Students' Campaign has its own conference that only people living and defining as disabled students can attend. This year we welcomed our Trans sisters to conference for the first time. This conference elects the National Disabled Students' Officer and decides the policy of the campaign for the year ahead.

The National Disabled Students' Officer and the Disabled Students' Committee (also elected at Disabled Students' Conference) then prioritises this policy. This year policy was passed included:

### **Education Zone**

- Disabled Students' Allowance – Research in FE (carried)
- Fitness to Practice (carried)

### **Welfare and Student Rights Zone**

- Disabled Students and Social Events (passed)
- Accessible Transport (passed)
- Snowdon Award Scheme (passed)
- Personal Care Provision (passed)

### **Strong and Active Zone**

- Disabled Students Officer Handbook (passed)

- Procedural Motion 405c – challenge to the order paper to discuss emergency motions before remaining ordinary motions (carried)
- Disabled Students' Allowance – Quality Assurance Group (passes)
- Promoting Active and Effective Disabled Students' Officers (passes)

### **Emergency Motions**

- Pro-choice and Proud – Uniting Disabled Students, representing disabled women and uniting with the Women's Campaign (passed)
- Facebook (carried)
- NUS Governance Review (passed)

### **Society and Citizenship Zone**

- Citizenship and Disabled People (falls)
- UN International Day of Disabled Person (passes)
- History of the Disabled Movement (passes)

This year's Disabled Students' Conference elected Adam Hyland as National Disabled Students' Officer. Adam sits on the National Executive Committee (NEC), and works to ensure that there is disabled students' perspective throughout all the work of NUS.

He will co-ordinate Disabled Students' Conference policy and the work of the Committee. He also acts as chair of the Disabled Students' Committee when they meet.

'Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.'

**Colin Barnes, *Disabled People and Discrimination:***

## **NUS Disabled Students' Committee**

NUS Disabled Students' Committee's members are elected at NUS Disabled Students Conference and meet regularly throughout the year. The National Disabled Students' Officer and the Disabled Students' Committee prioritise NUS Disabled Students' Campaign policy, support and promote NUS Disabled Students' Campaign, and provide advice and support for disabled students and for disabled students' groups.

Operationally, there are four NUS 'super regions' within England:

- NUS North (North East, North West and York and Humber)
- NUS Midlands and East (West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England)
- NUS South (South West and South East)
- NUS London

Most committee members are allocated a specific region - this is decided upon in the first committee meeting. This is so these committee members can concentrate their work on supporting disabled students in FE and HE unions in a region local to them.

The three 'special regions' (NUS Scotland, UCMC/NUS Wales and NUS-USI in Northern Ireland) are represented by their own Disabled Students Officers, elected at the Disabled Students' Conferences in the special regions.

Disabled Students' Committee members are held accountable through the Disabled Students' Campaign Report and via the individual caucuses, which take reports from the relevant representatives. NEC members of the National Executive living and defining themselves as disabled students also sit on the disabled students' committee as observers, meaning that they can input ideas into discussions but cannot vote.

If you wish to contact any of the Disabled Students' Committee members, please do so via NUS Disabled Students' Unit and we will pass on the message.

**Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2005, -  
Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People –**

'Disabled people's experience of government support services needs to change. Too often disabled people feel that they are fighting a system which is fragmented, complex and bureaucratic and which does not put the needs of disabled people at the heart of service provision'.

The social model clearly now at the heart of policy development.

NUS Disabled Students' Committee for 2008/9 is:

**Who we are**

Our full time officer and elected committee direct the work of our campaign. At our annual conference, we make decisions on issues affecting disabled students and set our work priorities for the year ahead.

**Officers**

Adam Hyland [adam.hyland@nus.org.uk](mailto:adam.hyland@nus.org.uk)

**Key staff**

Kathleen Grehan – [Kathleen.grehan@nus.org.uk](mailto:Kathleen.grehan@nus.org.uk)

### Disabled Students' Committee

The Disabled Students conference elects a number of committee members to carry out the work of the campaign, to represent disabled students and to take on specific tasks. Committee members may also have regional responsibilities.

<b>Disabled Students' Committee 2008 - 2009</b>			
<b>Position</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Union</b>
Disabled Students' Officer	Adam	Hyland	Bournemouth University
Womens' Rep	Aliya	Gulamani	Royal Holloway University
Womens' Rep	Lucy	Hamlin-Wright	Nottingham University
International Students' Rep	Ziby	Philips	Middlesex University
Black Students' Rep	Rupy	Kaur	Manchester University
LGBT Rep	Lea	Howard	Leeds Metropolitan University
FE Rep	Simon	Holburn	Dudley College
Open Place	Leo	Capella	University of Essex
Open Place	Sophia	Hill	Parklane College
Steering Committee	Kathy	Wylde	Wirral Met College/Steering
Steering Committee	James	Hughes	Manchester
National Council Rep	Leo	Capella	University of Essex
Co-opted Student	Becky	Balow	Bournemouth Univeresity
Co-opted Student	Darren	Bailey	
Co-opted Student	Olli	Wood	

## **Being in NUS – The Disabled Students' Unit**

NUS Disabled Students' Unit is part of the Liberation Department at NUS and supports the work of Adam Hyland, National Disabled Students' Officer. The unit works to combat disablism in all its forms and to ensure that disabled students' voices are heard and valued. The policy passed by delegates at the annual NUS Disabled Students' Conference (and prioritised by elected representatives on Disabled Students' Committee) determines the framework of the Disabled Students' Unit's work.

The Disabled Students' Unit is staffed by **Kathleen Grehan**, Liberation Research and Development Officer (disabled students).

A major part of the Disabled Students' Unit's work involves advising disabled students on their day-to-day work, defending them if they are under attack, and helping them with the development of disabled students' groups and local disabled students' campaigns. The unit produces materials for disabled students' officers to assist their campaigning and information work, such as posters, postcards, and campaign packs, and organises events and network days for students and student officers. The unit also ensures that NUS Disabled Students' Campaign has an effective national voice: running national campaigns, working with key disabled students' organisations and lobbying Parliament on disabled students' issues.

If you would like to order some disabled students' campaign materials, please email to the disabled students' unit (details on page nine).

## **Being in nus -campaigns for 2008/9**

### **Priority Campaigns**

This year NUS Disabled Students' Committee have chosen the two campaigns: mental health stigma and personal assistant (PA) provision as the priority campaigns for 2008/09.

### **Mental Health Stigma**

There's a huge lack of knowledge about and misinformation surrounding mental health issues. Many people do not believe they are a legitimate illness, or believe that people with these problems are 'just crazy'. The media perpetuates the stigma by exaggerating the role of mental health in the reporting of violent crimes.

This year we're working with other agencies to promote awareness of mental health issues. We're planning to release a DVD, which we hope will help to change people's views. It will also promote the help that's available, so people realise there is someone they can talk to. In addition, we'll be developing guidelines for students' unions on how to deal with mental health issues and looking at ways of tackling how the media reports suicides and crimes linked to mental health.

### **Aims of Campaign**

- To campaign to reduce stigma, which is essential as it can in itself worsen an existing mental health problem.
- To increase awareness and knowledge about the misinformation surrounding mental health issues.
- To change people's views by promoting the help that is available – how? To develop guidelines for students' unions how to deal with mental health issues.

## How you can get involved

- You can help challenge the discrimination and stigma of mental health by calling for student mental health to be a priority in your educational institution. We're developing a series of posters you can put up around your campus to raise awareness of mental health issues (see below)
- You could arrange for speakers from different communities and cultures to talk about their own experiences of mental health. This will promote diverse involvement around mental health issues.
- You could hold an awareness day with your lecturers and academic staff to tackle the misinformation surrounding mental health.
- We'll keep you updated on all campaigning initiatives where we want students to get involved, whether by writing to your MP or lobbying Parliament.

## Resources

Mental health poster [downloadload from

<http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/Mental%20health%20poster.pdf>]

Links

- [Mental Health Foundation](#)
- [SANE](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [MIND](#)
- [Rethink](#)
- [Depression Alliance](#)
- [Eating Disorders Association](#) (EDA)
- [Mental Health Alliance](#)

## **A Disabled Students' Officer in every union**

### **Aims of Campaign:**

- The election of a Disabled Students Officer in every union.

### **Materials**

- Disabled Students' Officer Handbook

### **How to go about the campaign**

- This handbook will follow the social model of disability and will include a section listing relevant organisations an Officer can work with.

### **Access and discrimination –**

- In the Handbook there will be a large section dealing with making the Liberation Department accessible and how to make other events accessible.

## **Personal Assistants (PA)**

### **Aims of Campaign**

- to further research on disabled students who use their personal care provision to support their access to education and other aspects of their lives.
- To investigate funding issues relating to personal care.
- To influence NUS to support those disabled students who rely on personal care provision by developing its policy and strengthening its campaign.

### **What organisations we can work with**

- to liaise with disability organisations who campaign for disabled people's costs of living

### **How to go about the Campaign**

- Collect case studies of disabled students who rely on personal care provision
- Collect research resources for a literature review

### **Other Campaigns -**

As well as it's priority campaigns, NUS' Disabled Students Campaign also runs a number of smaller campaigns. These include:

#### **Fitness to practice review**

We've previously raised concerns over the fitness to practice review, a set of guidelines established by universities and professional bodies. We considered that they laid down unreasonable criteria for prospective students of social work or nursing.

To date we've managed to secure a set of fit to practice guidelines for social work that focus on the safety aspect of the course, rather than on a specific disability. However it's proved harder to change the guidelines for medicine. At the moment institutions are free to ask their own questions, whether they're fair or not. We're calling for strict guidelines to be set down on the equality and standards of the questions that institutions can ask applicants to study medicine.

## Scotland

Being in the special regions - NUS Scotland disabled students' campaign

NUS Scotland has four liberation campaigns. These are the Black Students', the Disabled Students', LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans) and the Women's Campaigns. Each of these campaigns has an officer elected annually by students.

**Comment [eo1]:** Page: |  
More info from liberation leaflets here?

### NUS Scotland policy

NUS Scotland is a pioneering, innovative and powerful campaigning organisation and the definitive voice of disabled students. Our mission is to promote, defend and extend the rights of disabled students in Scotland and develop and champion strong students' unions.

We aim to ensure that disabled students are empowered to shape both a quality learning experience and the world around them.

NUS Scotland is committed to a state-funded education system that is free at the point of entry, that provides support for students who need it, and that promotes widening access and equal opportunities for all.

### 2008/09 Scotland Disabled Students' Campaign

The Disabled Students' Campaign in Scotland will be focusing on a number of important issues in 2008/09. With the Scottish Parliament, comes some devolved legislation and policy giving us the chance to lobby locally on the issues key to our campaign.

We passed some really great policy at our conference this year, which will shape our campaign for the coming year.

Students with caring responsibilities are too often discriminated against in education. Many disabled students are denied access to education in the first place or are restricted to courses they can fit their commitments round.

And of course...we will be taking part in the national NUS Disabled Students' Campaign work as well!

If you would like more information about NUS Scotland Disabled Students' Campaign please contact [hyperlink] (NUS Scotland Disabled Students' Officer):

Email: [lucy.strachan@nus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:lucy.strachan@nus-scotland.org.uk)

If you would like to become involved in one of these campaigns, contact NUS Scotland or your students' association to find out what we are up to.

National Union of Students Scotland

29 Forth Street

Edinburgh

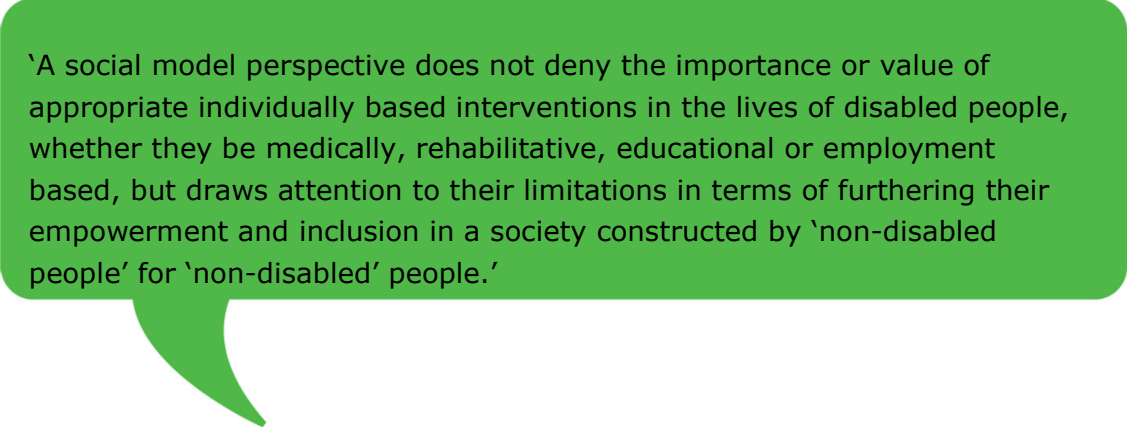
EH1 3LE

Tel: 0131 556 6598

Fax: 0131 557 5679

E: [mail@nus-scotland.org.uk](mailto:mail@nus-scotland.org.uk)

W: [nus.org.uk](http://nus.org.uk)



'A social model perspective does not deny the importance or value of appropriate individually based interventions in the lives of disabled people, whether they be medically, rehabilitative, educational or employment based, but draws attention to their limitations in terms of furthering their empowerment and inclusion in a society constructed by 'non-disabled people' for 'non-disabled' people.'

## **UCMC/NUS Wales**

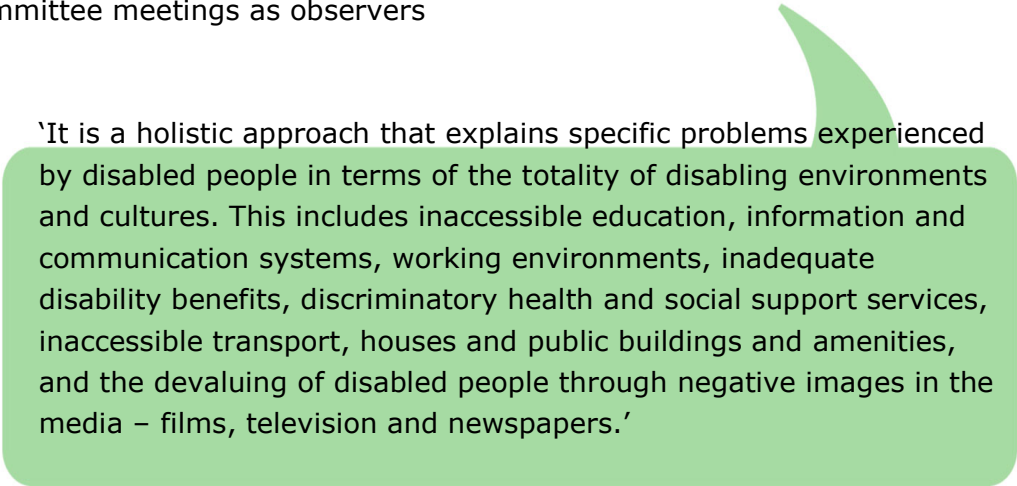
Being in the special regions - UCMC/NUS Wales disabled students' campaign

UCMC/NUS WALES Disabled Students' Campaign 2008/9

If you would like more information about UCMC/NUS Wales Disabled Students' Officer please contact (UCMC/NUS Wales Disabled Students' Officer):

Telephone: 07917728345

NEC members living and defining as disabled students can also attend committee meetings as observers



'It is a holistic approach that explains specific problems experienced by disabled people in terms of the totality of disabling environments and cultures. This includes inaccessible education, information and communication systems, working environments, inadequate disability benefits, discriminatory health and social support services, inaccessible transport, houses and public buildings and amenities, and the devaluing of disabled people through negative images in the media – films, television and newspapers.'

## **Being involved in NUS disabled students' campaign democracy**

About 700 UK students' unions in higher and further education pay an affiliation fee to join NUS. Every one of our students' unions (aka constituent members or CMs) can send one disabled voting delegate to Disabled Students' Conference, plus a number of non-voting observers. All delegates and observers must be disabled students. Delegates are elected by the disabled students at their institutions and, apart from travelling costs, attendance at Disabled Students Conference is free - the cost of meals and accommodation are covered by NUS.

### **Electing the Disabled Students' Officer and Committee**

Any disabled student who wants to run for the position of National Disabled Students' Officer must submit a nomination form and a manifesto to NUS by the close of nominations deadline (usually in the end of November 2009 but you need to check this date with the NUS Disabled Students' Steering Committee (Kathy.wylde@nus.org.uk). The manifestos are then sent out to all our CMs and put up on the NUS website ([www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)), so that you can find out vital information about the candidates, such as their related experience and their plans if elected.

The election vote takes place at Conference. On the first night, there is an informal hustings session, where the candidates give speeches and you have the opportunity to ask them questions.

The election takes place the next day, when the candidates give one last speech and then you get to cast your vote. The count takes place soon after, and the result is announced during the remainder of Conference.

For the Committee elections, things work slightly differently. For starters, nominations for all the places don't open until Conference itself, so only Conference participants get to run in the elections.

All voting delegates are eligible to stand, and vote, in the elections for the Open Place reps and Steering Committee, but some places are elected in caucuses, where only delegates who self-define into other liberation groups, such as black students, or are members of other groups, such as the further education sector, can run in the election and vote. This is to make sure that your reps on Women's Committee actively reflect and represent the diversity of the student movement - it's the same principle as having Disabled Students' Officer on your SU executive committee, or the National Executive Committee of NUS.

Elections for the Open Place and Caucus Reps on Committee, and the members of the Steering Committee, normally take place on the third and final day of Conference.

## **Motions**

But there is more to Disabled Students' Conference than elections!

Every year, we spend a long debate discussing, debating and eventually voting on the policy that will direct the work of the Disabled Students' Officer and Committee in the year ahead, and this is where students' unions and disabled students' officers are given a fantastic opportunity to have a real say in the work of the Disabled Students' Campaign.

Every CM can submit policy to Disabled Students' Conference. This is done in two main stages - **motions and amendments**.

**The motions deadline is usually in November**, and each CM can submit motions on topics that the disabled students in their union want to be discussed at Conference.

**Note** - you can submit motions and amendments even if your union is not sending anyone to Disabled Students' Conference, though we'd recommend that you do both!

## **Reform of Motions and debate process**

After a vote at Disabled Students' Conference 2009, we will now be dealing with motions in Zones. This means that you will be able to submit motions under certain Zone headings, and the Motions Discussion at Disabled Students' Conference will be divided into these Zones.

### **The four policy zones are:**

- Education
- Welfare and Students' Rights
- Society and Citizenship
- Strong and Active Unions

Each union is entitled to send up to six motions of up to 500 words each.

Each motion must fit into one of the 4 Zones.

Each union is also entitled to send up to six amendments of up to 300 words each.

Examples of policy issues fitting into each zone:

#### **Education:**

- under-representation of disabled students in PhDs and Professorships at HE
- disability segregation in subject areas (Engineering, Teaching, Nursing etc)
- Disability Studies course closures

#### **Welfare:**

- childcare issues
- sexual health

- violence against disabled students

**Society and Citizenship:**

- disabled students' rights worldwide
- abortion rights
- conflict and poverty
- disabled students at work

**Strong and Active Unions:**

- defending disabled students' officers in Unions
- Liberation in every Union campaigns

If you have any queries about motions, zones, amendments or the process in general please contact NUS Steering at [Steering.Committee@nus.org.uk](mailto:Steering.Committee@nus.org.uk)

Motions are generally formatted like this:

- Conference Believes - statements of fact: eg, disabled students have the right to vote but not all disabled students use their vote
- Conference Further Believes - a belief building on the initial statement of fact: eg, disabled students using their votes is beneficial to society
- Conference Resolves - action point/statement of intent: eg, we should campaign to encourage more disabled students to use their vote

For motions to be accepted by NUS, they must either have been passed at a quorate Disabled Students' Group meeting, or be signed by 20 disabled students members of your students' union.

## **Priority Ballot**

Once we've received all your motions, our Steering Committee will check that they are valid, and will group them into areas of common interest (eg: pro-choice, women in the workplace, etc).

We will then send them out to all CMs, and then it's over to you, as you have to say what order you want to debate them in. This is extremely important, as if we have text on thirty different subjects, not all of it could be discussed if we run out of time. As we are an organisation based on the principle of democracy, we believe it is important to allow our members to decide the order of debate. You need to send the priority ballot form back to NUS and then we let you know what the outcome of the ballot is.

## **Amendments**

The second stage of getting policy to Conference is through amendments, which is when you read through the motions document and, well, "amend" it!

You can submit an amendment because you agree with the motion - or because you completely disagree! You can also decide to submit an amendment because you want to expand the debate eg, if the original motion talks about disabled students' rights at work, you might decide to submit an amendment that focuses specifically on the inequality issues.

The same rules for submitting motions also apply to amendments.

## **Drafting Commissions** (aka 'Compositing')

Once we've received all the motions and all amendments, we then need to put it all together for conference itself, in a cohesive document that everyone can understand - and that doesn't repeat itself! If twenty unions

have submitted text about the inequality issues, there's no point discussing the subject twenty times - it's far more effective to cut 'n' paste the text into one motion or amendment that talks about the inequality issue!

**And that is what we do at compositing.**

Every union that submits motions and/or amendments can attend the event (or ask someone else to go on your behalf), and we come to a consensual agreement about how to lay out and divide the motions and amendments. We don't cut 'n' paste in the new-fangled way with the click of a mouse button, but with scissors and glue! It's great fun and means that the Final Motions Document accurately reflects the wishes and intent of the unions who submitted text.

We also use compositing to decide the order of amendments (should the amendment about the inequality issues come before or after the amendment encouraging disabled students to join trade unions?) and who is speaking on what motion or amendment.

This then gets typed up and sent out to you, and is the Final Motions Document that you will use at Disabled Students' Conference.

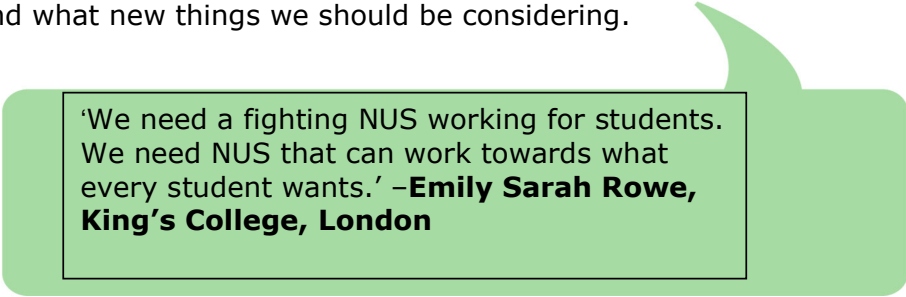
There's much, much more to Conference than elections and policy debates, and we will send you more information closer to the time, but these are the two main ways in which you and your union can have a real say in the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign.

Without your input, we cannot hope to accurately represent your views, or campaign on the issues that matter to you. It's your campaign, so use it!

For more information on NUS Disabled Students' Conference 2009, go to: <http://www.officeronline.co.uk/events/nationalevents>. Please note that [www.officeronline.co.uk](http://www.officeronline.co.uk) will be replaced in early 2009 by an [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk) extranet.

## **NUS Reform**

NUS Annual Conference, in March 2007, voted to undertake a far-reaching governance review. This means that throughout the year the Governance Review team will be consulting far and wide to find out what works, what doesn't work, and what new things we should be considering.



'We need a fighting NUS working for students. We need NUS that can work towards what every student wants.' –**Emily Sarah Rowe, King's College, London**

This NUS document is a brief summary of the proposals made, but hopefully it gives you an idea about how NUS works and what reforms are being proposed. Much more detailed information is available on our website at [www.nus.org.uk/governance](http://www.nus.org.uk/governance).

Don't worry! Liberation Autonomy is one of the central principles to the review. However, we can still feed into the process and even have a look at our own structures too.

If you are interested in getting involved in this massive project email the National Disabled Students' Officer [adam.hyland@nus.org.uk](mailto:adam.hyland@nus.org.uk).

NUS runs its new website – [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk) which contain useful information for disabled students' campaign activists.

You can find information about the disabled students' campaign at [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk) including information on our campaigns, on important dates in the disabled students' calendar, forthcoming events, and links to interesting external web sites. You can find campaign support for disabled students' officers including campaign materials, briefings, newsletters, fact sheets, order forms for materials, and campaign tips.

Disabled students' campaign e-newsletters NUS Disabled Students' Unit sends out e-newsletters every month to campaign activists signed up to the Disabled Students' Campaign E-network. These newsletters include information about our campaigns, NUS events, disability news items, and news from external disability's organisations.

If you would like to receive these e-newsletters, please fill in the form at [hyperlink] the start of this handbook and post it back to NUS disabled students' Unit, or email the information to [disabled@nus.org.uk](mailto:disabled@nus.org.uk).

You can view past campaign e-newsletters at [www.nus.org.uk/disabled](http://www.nus.org.uk/disabled).

### **Liberation Officer in Every Union Guide**

This guide contains all the arguments you need to win and defend liberation officers in your union.

The pack is endorsed by NUS as a whole and a part of a wider campaign to make sure that Liberation remains a central part of the student movement.

The pack is available at [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)

## **Section 2 - Being in touch with your disabled students**

As your union's representative of the Disabled Students' Campaign, it is vital that you stay in touch with disabled students at your institution. Remember that this is a two-way process - you need to let disabled students know about the work you're doing, and you need to hear from them to inform your work and effectively represent them. Here are some points to understand the social model of disability.

It is essential to ensure students' unions are accessible and do not themselves create barriers for disabled students. In order to achieve this it is important to:

- identify disabled students and use their access requirement forms to guarantee these are incorporated into all aspects of the union's work e.g. if there are students who are BSL users make sure Sign Language/English interpreters are present at all meetings;
- ensure all written literature and information is provided in accessible formats;

and

- have a check list available to make sure the university/college is complying with DDA. For example, the establishment must have a disability policy – the union should ascertain who the disabled staff and students involved in its development were and check to see if the policy meets all the criteria within the policy. In this way, it can be guaranteed that there is no breach of the DDA.

Information relating to campaign accessibility can be found at:

[www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk).

To consider communicating with disabled students at your college, here are a few helpful points:

Get your contact details out there! Get yourself an email address, phone number and postal address that you can give out to students. If you haven't got your own phone or do not want to give out a personal number, give the general students' union phone number, but make sure whoever answers this number knows how to get messages to you. If possible, have a generic disabled students' campaign email address, eg disabledstudentsofficer@..., so this can stay the same year after year, no matter who is in post, and it will always be clear how to contact the disabled students' campaign.

Get an auto-signature. Set up an auto-signature on your email account, so that every time you send or reply to an email it will include at the end: your name, officer position, phone number, postal address, email address and any web site details. Remember also to use your auto-signature to promote your disabled students' group and campaigns.

Create e-newsletters. Send out e-newsletters to students with news from the disabled students' campaign, or have a disabled students' section in a general e-newsletter from your students' union. Your college may be able to give you a list of student email addresses, or someone else in your union might already have access to this information. Remember that you are the link to the national disabled students' campaign - refer to NUS Disabled Students' Campaign e-newsletters for information on what is going on nationally and reproduce this in your own newsletters.

Get a notice board. A notice board specifically for the disabled students' campaign in a prominent place is a great way to get information out there. But remember to keep updating the display; you need to use it as a tool to show how campaigns are progressing and what events are coming up. it is important to keep your contact details as a permanent part of the display.

Use the 'local details' section in NUS posters. NUS Disabled Students' Campaign posters have a section for you to write your local contact details in. To order posters, see the order form at the back of this handbook.

Get a web page. If possible, get a specific disabled students' campaign web page with news of your contact details, campaigns, events and links to local services/support organisations.

Get a stall. Choose a few days over the year to have a stall with information on the disabled students' campaign, perhaps staffed by you and members of your disabled students' group. Choose a prominent spot and a day when there is going to be a lot of 'student traffic' passing by. Remember that music, freebies, sweets, leaflets etc. make it more attractive to passers-by. Not everyone is going to have time to stop to talk, or even pick up a leaflet, so make sure that there is someone handing out information that students can grab and read later. You could organise the stall to coincide with internationally recognised dates in the disability calendar, eg International Disabled People's Day on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Being a campaigner for disabled students**

A campaign is a series of actions that aim to do one or more of the following:

- Change society's negative attitudes towards disabled people
- Remove barrier to empowerment of disabled students
- Encourage full participation in Disability Equality Duty under the DDA and campaign for removing policy barriers for disabled students.
- Campaign for improving awareness of the effect, of changing service provisions – This has an impact on disabled students' lives, especially where it is not clear who is responsible for providing a particular service.

As a national disabled students' officer, there is plenty of campaigning work you can do, whether it is linking up to a national campaign or campaigning on a local issue. Here are some top tips for you to consider in preparing and running your campaigns.

### **TOP TEN CAMPAIGNING TIPS!**

#### **1) Decide what you want to achieve LIGHT BULB**

Set a realistic overall aim. Think about:

- \* Is your campaign going to be local or part of a national campaign?
- \* Do you want to raise awareness on a particular issue?
- \* Do you want to change attitudes?
- \* Do you want to influence decision makers?
- \* How will you know when you have achieved your aims?
- \* Who do you want to involve in your campaign?

## 2) Do your research! LIGHT BULB

How can you successfully persuade others that an issue is important if you are not clear on the facts yourself?!

- \* Ask NUS for help - make the most of the work that NUS Disabled Students' Unit does
- \* Have a look at the information and links on our web sites: [www.nusonline.co.uk/disabled](http://www.nusonline.co.uk/disabled) and [www.officeronline.co.uk](http://www.officeronline.co.uk)
- \* Look at the useful contacts section at the back of this handbook and use the expertise of external organisations.
- \* Do some primary research of your own - find out what the issues are first hand from talking to your disabled students. Find out about their experiences as disabled students. Design a questionnaire and/or hold (minuted) discussion forums.
- \* Be quantitative in your research if possible - what % of disabled students x,y, z? These help your arguments when influencing decision makers, or raising awareness among students, and help you to measure your campaign's success in making change.

## 3) Decide upon your key messages LIGHT BULB

Your key messages should exist to easily engage potential supporters and targets, making it clear what you want to achieve.

- \* What does the audience for your campaign care about? Decide which angle is most likely to appeal, and start to think of ways of communicating this.
- \* Draw upon key facts from your research.
- \* Look to national campaigns for examples of key messages. For example, the key message from NUS Disabled Students' Campaign's priorities – what?

## 4) Make your objectives SMART? LIGHT BULB

From your research and key messages, develop a strategy that will help achieve your overall aim. This will involve smaller steps (objectives) that should be SMART:

Specific - make them as clear as possible

Measurable - set indicators so you know how successful you've been

Achievable - are they realistic?

Resourced - take account of your resources (money, materials, people to help out, etc)

Timely - set deadlines and stick to them! Also, think about externally-imposed timescales you need to take note of - eg, college term times, parliamentary timetables

#### 5) Put together a campaigns team LIGHT BULB

Set up a campaigns team to manage the campaign and assign roles to each member.

#### 6) Communicate - get your message out! LIGHT BULB

\* What are the most effective media in your institution - postcards, posters, leaflets, flyers, messages on the web, beer mats, badges, email messages, t-shirts, stalls, stickers, letters, events, press releases, articles, displays, stunts?

\* Think about how to make your campaign materials striking enough to grab attention, and provocative enough to strike up debate without causing offence.

\* Use NUS Disabled Students' Campaign posters and 'personalise' them in the blank 'local details' section.

\* Do you have a union web site? Could you link up to the NUS ([www.nusonline.co.uk/disabled](http://www.nusonline.co.uk/disabled)) site?

\* Who are the key people you want to hear your message? Adjust your key messages for different target audiences.

\* Which decision maker do you need to write to/set up a meeting with?

#### 7) Take action in the media! LIGHT BULB

\* Do you have a student newspaper? Can you offer a ready-made article and graphics on your campaign issue, in case they need something at the last minute?

\* Get your campaign into the local press! Would your free or regional paper be interested in stirring up some discussion about your campaign in your area? You could ask Adam Hyland (NUS National Disabled Students' Officer for a quote. You could also see if you can get a

supportive quote from the college, from your local MP, MSP or Assembly Member.

#### 8) Reach out! LIGHT BULB

- \* If you have a disabled students' group in your union, are you involving them? Or does disabled students' group need to be set up to campaign on disabled students' issues? [See the next section on disabled students' groups]
- \* Can you join forces with other unions in your area that are interested in campaigning on the same issues? Have a look in the NUS Directory for the contact details of other local unions.
- \* Would a local external disabled students' group or organisation be interested in joining forces with you (for example, a local rape crisis centre or refuge)?
- \* Think about other people in your community who could get involved: lecturers, alumni, local schools, local teachers, local community groups, local police, local dignitaries, for example.

#### 9) Use NUS Disabled Students' Campaign! LIGHT BULB

Remember that we are here to assist you and support you in your work as disabled students' officer. Contact us, or consult our web site, if you want to know more about:

- \* our national campaigns
  - \* the materials we produce
  - \* where to go to find information on women's issues
  - \* women's organisations we have contacts with
  - \* other students' unions campaigning on the same issues as you
- ..... or just want to run an idea past us or share a success story!

#### 10) Evaluate LIGHT BULB

There are three main ways of evaluating: process (did you carry out the tasks you set yourself well?); member satisfaction (did disabled students on campus like the campaign, perceive the disabled students' campaign well?); impact (did you make actual change?).

- \* Look back at your original aims - have you achieved them, is there more work to do in a follow-up campaign?
- \* Discuss with your campaign team how you think the campaign has gone. What could you do differently next time, and what would you do again?
- \* Could you do an opinion poll in your union newspaper/letter/email alerts/web page to see if people have seen your campaign and what they thought of it?

Evaluating your campaign as it develops will allow you to alter and modify aspects of the campaign in light of certain successes and/or setbacks.

Examples of campaigning for disabled students in students' unions.

**Leeds University Students' Union** who is the winners of the NUS 2008 Award for Equality and Diversity Policies has helped disabled students.

Having undertaken a major piece of research using quantitative and qualitative methods they discovered lower satisfaction rates among disabled students. Focus groups were set up to look into these issues, one area of concern was a student in a wheelchair who told them that rubbish piled up by the union lifts made her feel 'like garbage'. In addition the complex nature of the union building means that students in wheelchairs have to use a series of lifts to navigate the building. If one lift breaks down it can cause major access issues. In response to this Leeds ceased to store rubbish by any of their lifts. Their facilities department also instigated daily checks on all lifts and now hold spare parts for the building's major lift to ensure that any downtime is kept to a minimum.

Leeds University Union also measures their staff demographic against that of the Leeds population for their monthly paid staff and against the student population for their weekly paid staff. Their application forms are formatted so that individuals conducting shortlisting have no access to the candidates personal information in order to ensure that all decisions are based on ability. In addition to this their HR department now has targets to address imbalances in equality and diversity (these are especially high around the profile of their managers). Initiatives have included building a relationship with Remploy. As a result Leeds has been successful in increasing the number of staff with disabilities. They also contacted an external training provider to deliver training around equality and diversity and this forms part of the Students' Union's training program.

**The Open University Student Association in Scotland**

welcomed concessions: Scottish disabled students have helped overturn a planned ban on an indispensable exam aid, which would have affected thousands of their fellow learners, but said that the institution could do more to fall in line with the leading universities in Scotland, which allow disabled students to use the Dragon software in an exam, if the macros have been removed

(Source: The Herald, Scotland)

"I'm happy with the interim resolution and it has gone a long way to reassuring a lot of disabled students but there is still a little way to go before we can get to a definitive solution.

Harry Wright, a third year history student based in Stirling – disabled link for the Open University Student Association

"We really need to find a way for the Open University to concur with the majority of other universities we have spoken to and accept that disabling the macros is all that is required."

## **being the convenor of disabled students' group**

This section looks at what disabled students' groups are, and how to set one up. As disabled students' officer, you may have responsibility in your official capacity to run disabled students' group. This may be laid down clearly in a job description. If not, you may have to decide what your role is.

If no one else in your college/university is willing to get a group off the ground then the first steps are yours. You will have to decide how to start it off and, once it has started, what involvement you have. This role might evolve naturally, but it is helpful if you have a good idea of how you would like the group to be run. You may remain as the main organiser, or this might fall to a 'committee' within the group. Whatever happens, it is essential that you remain involved in the women's group. You are the link between the disabled students' group and the students' union and NUS.

What is disabled students' group?

Disabled Students' group is the chance for disabled students to get together for whatever reason they might decide.

If possible, it is good to organise a mix of events in your disabled students' group, as this will get more people interested. Some may be interested in campaigning, others in learning more about disabled students' issues, while others may join the group in order to meet new friends.

At the start of the term many disabled students' groups organise an informal meeting for those interested. It gives disabled students the chance to see what the group is about. At the first meeting you could get women to fill in a questionnaire about what they want from their disabled students' group. A model questionnaire, which you can photocopy and use, is at the end of this section of the handbook. This could help you plan events for the future.

If you would like help planning the first meeting then contact the Disabled Students' Unit at NUS, who can help you find speakers, or decide on an event, and put you in contact with your regional representative from the Disabled Students' Committee.

There are no hard and fast rules about what disabled students' group should do, as the activities can vary depending on what the disabled students in the group want. In the past disabled students' groups have organised events such as:

- \* Discussions on a topical subject, such as
  
- \* Guest speakers invited to talk on an issue. Why not invite someone from NUS Disabled Students' Committee to speak at your disabled students' group? In the useful contacts section of this handbook there is a list of organisations - some of which may be able to send speakers along to your group.
  
- \* Campaigning workshops on topics affecting disabled students locally and nationally, including raising awareness of the inequality issues.
  - Training Sessions on topics such as
  
  - 'Indulgence days'. These include organising events
  
  - Mark internationally recognised days, such as:  
International Disabled People (6 December),

## **SETTING UP DISABLED STUDENTS' GROUP - TOP TEN TIPS!**

1) Decide the overall aims of the disabled students' group LIGHT BULB Write these down so that you are clear yourself and can show others if required. These are helpful for you to refer back to. Be clear of your own level of participation within the group. Check your disabled students' officer job description - if you don't have one already then you could write it and submit it to your students' union executive committee or Annual General Meeting. This will lay out what your responsibility to the group is.

2) Decide upon a title for the group LIGHT BULB Perhaps an intriguing title, such as 'The 51% Group' (the percentage of UK society that is disabled), could grab attention? But remember to clearly explain what the group is in your advertisements, and that it is disabled students-only, or the title will just confuse rather than intrigue!

3) Find out the rules and regulations for clubs and societies in your union LIGHT BULB

For example, there are usually rules governing what groups can and cannot spend their money on. It is good to be aware of these in advance, rather than getting tripped up by them at a later stage.

4) Find a suitable venue

If you have a union building, there may be a room there you can use. If not, you may be able to book a classroom in the college or university for your meeting. It is worth considering if it is accessible to all disabled students – for example, is it accessible to disabled students in wheelchairs? Are there toilet facilities suitable for wheelchair users nearby?

5) Decide upon a suitable time

Finding a time that suits everyone is next to impossible, but you can try and maximise the number of people who can attend. Is there a time of the week when most disabled students are not in classes, e.g. Wednesday afternoons? Remember that it may not suit women with dependants to hold a meeting in the evening.

You could get group members to suggest what time suits them best, or vary times of events to give more people the chance to come along to meetings.

Why not do a survey at your first meeting, and on your web site (if you have one), to find out which times suit the most women? You could use the model questionnaire at the end of this section.

6) Make your disabled students' group a safe space that all disabled students feel included

Think about what steps you can take to ensure that your disabled students' group is accessible to all disabled students, and that everyone feels it is a comfortable environment in which to socialise and exchange ideas. Perhaps at the first meeting the group could agree on some ground rules to stick to, and refer back to at future meetings?

Is there a particular group of disabled students that do not get involved in the disabled students' group, such as black students, mature students, international students, or lesbian and bisexual women? It may be worth talking to your LGBT society, black students' group, women's officer and so on, to find out ways that you can make the group more open and accessible, and encourage more disabled students to attend. Perhaps you could work together on campaigns?

7) Promote your disabled students' group!

Get the message out to your students through:

- \* Word of mouth. Use the success stories. Use people who have been, or are, involved and get them to tell people about it.
- \* Posters. Order some NUS Disabled Students' Campaign posters and fill in your local details in the box provided at the bottom; or produce your own posters. Try poster in unusual places - in toilets, on floors, in stairwells, etc. But beware - your institution may prohibit posters except on notice boards. Be creative - teaser campaigns, posters with unusual messages or very little writing.
- \* Use different media, e.g. plastic bags, flyers, pens, t-shirts (depending on your budget).
- \* Set up a stall. This is a good, pro-active way of getting your

message across - students can question those on the stall and can receive information specific to their situation. Remember that music, freebies, sweeties, leaflets etc make it more attractive to passers-by.

- \* Newsletters. If your students' union has a newspaper, newsletter or magazine you could write an article about the group, or use this to advertise meetings.

- \* Prospectus / student handbook. Try to put a page in the college or university prospectus, so that disabled students will know about the disabled students group before they start their course. Your students' union may produce its own student handbook and you may be able to have an article printed in it.

- \* E-mail. Will the IT department or registry let you send a mass email to all students? You could also add details of the disabled students' group to your own personal email auto-signature.

- \* Website. If your students' union has a website you could put details of the disabled students' group on it - websites are easy to update and so are a good way of keeping members informed. If you don't have a website, the college or university may put the information on theirs. It is a good idea to include the address of the website on posters and leaflets.

- \* Notice boards. Is there a central notice board that you could turn into disabled students' group notice board?

- \* Induction process. Do you give a welcome speech to new students? This is a prime opportunity to plug the disabled students' group. Even if you don't have a chance to speak at the talks, you could ask the president to mention you. Put up posters near where the induction happens.

## 8) Incentives!

If you are holding an event, meeting, or workshop, offer free food and drink: these are close to most students' hearts! Think carefully when organising an event with food and drink, though, as there may be some disabled students who are put off the event if it is based around alcohol, for example, for religious reasons. If possible offer non-alcoholic alternatives and don't always offer alcohol. Try to find out if any of your group's members have special dietary requirements and cater for these so everyone can join in.

9) Use NUS Disabled Students' Unit!

- \* Contact us to ask for advice or just to run an idea past us.
- \* Tap into one of our national campaigns and use our resources to campaign locally.
- \* Use the contact information we provide at the back of this handbook and on our website to make links with like-minded external organisations.

10) Evaluate!

Examine your own aims and objectives: What could you do to improve your meetings? What's good about them, and what did not meet your expectations? By relating this back to your original aims and objectives you can change things for the better.

Look at feedback: If you have got those at meetings to fill out questionnaires, have a look at what they have suggested and what they want from future meetings. This will help you to ensure that the union meets the expectations and needs of its members.

## **If your position, disabled students' group or campaign comes under attack due to discrimination or inaccessibility or attitudinal problems**

We [disabled people] receive so many messages from the non-disabled world that we are not wanted, that we are considered less than human.  
(Morris, 1995)

Some people continue to question the need for disabled students' officers and disabled students' groups/ associations, and the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign and Officer. Whatever the reason, it is useful to be familiar with their arguments. It may be that you have been through them hundreds of times before. On the other hand, the need for these things can sometimes seem so obvious that you don't know where to start refuting negative claims.

Here is a list of common questions and queries about students' union disabled students' representation, and some standard responses. These are followed by pages on 'key facts about disabled students in society today' and 'inspiring quotations' that you could use to back up your arguments.

## Key Facts about disabled students

How many disabled Students in Higher Education?

Only six per cent of students in Higher Education identify as disabled (HESA, 2007). This figure is based on those who self-identify and declare themselves disabled, thus the actual figure may possibly be greater. This is due to a lack of awareness of rights, options available and insufficient information in general.

Improved Participation Rates after anti-discrimination legislation?

Research  
show

s that there is improved participation of disabled students in further and higher education: from 158,000 disabled learners in further education back in 1996, to over 500,000 last year. (Skill, 2007) Anti-discrimination legislation is the primary factor for increasing numbers of disabled students in FE but it only came into force in September 2001 with extra duties that aim to involve disabled people in the decision making process becoming a requirement in December 2006.

Why is there a low representation of disabled students in HE?

Research shows that in 1996 the Tomlinson Committee estimated the number of potential students to be 13,000, a number equivalent to the one for students who were actually enrolled. Potential students were turned away for various reasons, including lack of accommodation and lack of expertise. Thus the problems identified by Tomlinson have not yet been solved and despite there being examples of good practice, the general picture is one of inconsistent provision (Ionann, 2006)

Another reason for low participation in HE

With regard to disclosure of disability it is important to note that whereas some disabled students feel they have a strong identity and are empowered by this, there are also those for whom the idea of being thought of as disabled is anathema and hence the means for ensuring accessibility becomes more precarious (Lewis et al, 2006). (Lewis, A. Parsons, S & Robertson, C. (2006) *My school, My Family, My life: Telling It Like It is, DRC*) As a result the statistics for disabled students' participation are not necessarily indicative of the full facts.

Inequality for disabled students

When looking at attaining higher level qualifications there is a marked inequality of outcome. This is reflected in the much higher rates of disabled people dropping out of education at age 16. Disabled people are half as likely as non-disabled people to have a degree and twice as likely to have no qualification at all. (ONS Labour Force Survey, 2007) The data suggests that about one third of disabled people with no qualifications have mobility impairments, a third have long-term health conditions, approximately 15% have mental health conditions and around 6% are learning disabled.

Disabled students continue to experience inequality in the education system. They experience lower academic outcomes than their non-disabled peers and are more likely to be discouraged from taking external qualifications and progressing onto higher levels of study. (DRC, NOP, (November 2002) *The experiences and aspirations of young disabled people*)

For example,

- 21% said they were discouraged from taking particular options in school
- 20% were discouraged from taking GCSEs because of their impairment.
- 30% of the young disabled people surveyed, who had not gone on to further or higher education, said they were prevented from doing so for a reason related to their disability.

Why are most NUS disabled students' campaign conference and events for disabled students only?

In the DRC survey (date) it was found that disabled students were also discouraged because of concerns about support, transport or accommodation. Their learning experience could be affected by barriers that have nothing to do the quality of courses themselves. These included access to buildings and equipment and unhelpful or hostile staff attitudes. (*DRC, NOP, (November 2002) The experiences and aspirations of young disabled people*) SKILL reported that the reduced range of options in FE colleges could have a negative affect on encouraging those previously turned-off education to return. Other reasons for under-representation of disabled students in FE are:

- a lack of adequate provision (financial, personal and procedural);
- the negative attitudes of academic staff; and,
- the comparative isolation of disabled students.

In line with the Disability Equality Duty (DED) the disabled students' campaign is about disabled students organising themselves and making decisions about their own lives. It is important to realise that our agenda may differ greatly from other external stakeholders' agenda for disabled students, and also for us to reinforce the fact that disabled professionals are still under-represented, which means there is still too high a

percentage of non-disabled professionals working for them. This is clearly at odds with Disabled Students' Campaign policy.

However, it is worth continuing the struggle for disabled people to properly appropriate non-disabled experts' skills, which helps improving disabled professionals' skills; one day they will be able to decrease the numbers of non-professionals working for disabled people (replacing 'for' with 'of' disabled people in the future). This answers the further question:

'Why shouldn't non-disabled person take up the position of disabled officer?'

Disabled Students' liberation and equality is about disabled students organising themselves as disabled people and making their own decisions about their own lives. It would be impossible for a non-disabled person to fully represent disabled students, as a non-disabled person, however well informed or sympathetic. Disabled students can speak with the full authority of their own experience about issues of concern to other disabled students. That is not to say that non-disabled students cannot be involved in campaigning on issues of concern to disabled students, but they must allow disabled students to define their own priorities.

What is the role of the National Disabled Students' Officer?

The National Disabled Students' Officer's role includes involvement in discussions and debates with all political parties and government departments. Also involved is disseminating information to all students' unions on updated educational policies that effect disabled students.

What does the Disabled Students' Campaign hope to achieve?

Campaign for improving awareness in students' unions and ask them to support the national campaign, whilst improving their relationships with respective institutions and disability officers (who are not necessary

disabled officers). Encourage more disabled students to control their own campaign and become more involved in decision making.

'Surely a disability officer could represent disabled students'

Many disability officers do a wonderful job managing a large portfolio, and the creation of a disability officer was a useful first step to creating awareness around equalities issues in a union before the Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. However, this is not ideal, as it is unrealistic for any one individual to fully understand and represent the needs and interests of a range of minority groups - women, ethnic minority students, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students, disabled students etc. Effective representation needs to include members of disadvantaged groups themselves; otherwise it is open to accusations of tokenism.

This evidence concurs with an article in Disability Now,(March 2008) that claimed disabled staff face widespread discrimination in Further/Higher Education as well as the public borrowing sector. It concluded that the discrimination against disabled staff and the fact that few institutions employ disabled staff in senior positions, has led to a waste of talent and potential and a lack of disabled role models in lifelong learning.

"What do if someone submits a motion to abolish the disabled students' officer position in your union ..."

Unfortunately the position of disabled students' officer does sometimes come under attack at students' unions, and sometimes proposals are submitted to scrap this important position. If this happens at your union, here are some points to consider in campaigning against such proposals:

**Contact NUS Disabled Students' Unit** - We will be able to give you support and advice, and one of the NUS Disabled Students' Committee can come to your union to help you campaign against this proposal in person.

**Clearly establish the case for disabled students' officer position.**

Use the arguments given previously in this section, the facts and statistics given in the 'being a disabled person in society today' section later in this handbook, and the information on <http://www.officeronline.co.uk/disabled> [www.officeronline.co.uk/disabled](http://www.officeronline.co.uk/disabled) to inform the case you are putting together. Important points to stress are:

- Disabled Students need specific representation as a minority group in terms of status and equality of opportunity in education and in society as a whole.
- Students' unions should be progressive forces for change, and by having disabled students' officer position students' unions are making a bold statement about discrimination and the need for equality.
- Having disabled students' officer position sends a clear message to disabled students that the union values them and will represent them and campaign on their behalf, regardless of the gender make-up of the rest of the executive.
- The disabled students' officer is the only position on the executive committee that is elected by disabled students specifically to represent disabled students. Other members of the exec, who may be female, do not have this mandate.
- In some years the disabled students' officer could be the only disabled member of the exec; this is an important step in guaranteeing that there will always be a disabled person on the executive committee.

- Disabled students are consistently underrepresented at every political level, including student politics, so abolishing the disabled students' officer position would be pre-empting a state of equality that does not yet exist.
- The disabled students' officer is a vital link between the students in the college and the national NUS Disabled Students' Campaign. The disabled students' officer plays an important role in representing the interests of the college's disabled students to NUS, and in communicating NUS' work back to the students.

### **Celebrate your successes!**

Remember to emphasise your successes and achievements in establishing the case for a disabled students' officer position:

- Which campaigns have you run and which campaign targets have you met?
- Do you know how many 'hits' your web page has had?
- What events have you run and how many people attended? What was their feedback?
- How many disabled students attend your disabled students' group and what activities do they do?
- How have you been involved in representing your college in NUS Disabled Students' Campaign democracy?

### **Organise a disabled students' campaign meeting before the vote.**

Organise a gathering, open to all students, to educate people about the disabled students' campaign and its importance in the student movement. Arrange for some inspiring persuasive speakers to address the audience there, for example, a representative of NUS Disabled Students' Committee, or a staff member.

### **Get the message out there!**

You need to bombard students from all angles on why the disabled students' campaign is important in their students' union. Use your notice boards, web page, student newspaper, student magazine, stickers, leaflets and flyers to give out to students, and staff a 'keep the disabled students' officer' stall.

**Encourage people to vote to keep the disabled students' officer position.**

It is not enough to just convince people of the need for a disabled students' officer position, you need to make sure they are there to cast their vote at the general meeting, student council meeting or referendum (cross campus ballot). You need to convince students that their vote counts, and that the small effort involved in turning up to vote to keep the disabled students' officer position will make a big difference.

**Target students going in to vote**

Stand by the doors to the meeting or voting room to hand out flyers urging students to vote to keep the disabled students' officer position, giving the key arguments and relevant statistics and facts.

**Call for a referendum to reverse the decision**

If, at a general meeting or union council meeting, it is decided to scrap the disabled students' officer position, remember that you can ask for a referendum (cross campus ballot) to reverse the decision.

Liberation Officer in Every Union Guide in separate box

NUS will shortly be releasing the 'Liberation Officer in Every Union' Guide. This guide contains all the arguments you need to win and defend liberation officers in your Union.

The pack is endorsed by NUS as a whole and is part of a wider campaign to make sure that Liberation remains a central part of the student movement.

When it is ready, the pack will appear at [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk).

Until then [contactadam.hyland@nus.org.uk](mailto:contactadam.hyland@nus.org.uk) for more information.

## Section 3 – Disabled People in Society

### Being a disabled person in society today – Key facts and Statistics

#### Disabled People's participation in education

- Only six per cent of students in Higher Education identify as disabled (*HESA, 2007*). This figure is based on those who declare themselves disabled, thus the actual figure may possibly be greater.

#### Important for HE given the Public Service Agreement target: (DfES 2006:111

'By 2010 to participation in higher education towards 50 per cent of those aged 18- 30 and to make significant progress year on year toward fair access and bear down on rates of non-completion'

- The DRC/NOP research (2002) acknowledges the major progress that has been made in providing disabled students with more educational opportunities and has also found an improvement in educational outcomes. For example, there is a faster annual increase in achievement of GCSE, grades A-C and equivalent over the last six years by disabled people than non-disabled people. Similarly, it should be acknowledged that education has played a crucial role in transforming and widening the life chances of disabled people. (*DRC, NOP (November 2002) The experiences and aspirations of young disabled people*)
- Evidence in the DRC survey of disabled young people aged 16-24 demonstrates low participation of disabled students in both further and higher education. This survey found that of those who had not gone on to further or higher education, nearly one third had been discouraged because of concerns about support, transport or accommodation. Evidence shows that learning experiences can also

be affected by barriers which have nothing to do with the quality of the courses themselves. These include access to buildings and equipment, and unhelpful or hostile staff attitudes. (*DRC 2003 - A survey of the views and experiences of young disabled people in Great Britain*)

### **Social Model of disability**

Moving towards **the social model of disability**, the **Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report (2005)** on the life chances of disabled people

Disability should not be distinguished from impairments and ill-health' and is defined as poverty, disadvantage, social exclusion and environmental and educational/employment barriers...Disabled young people's needs are often not met by further education provision

- The proportion of young disabled people who were classified as 'not in education, employment or training', NEET, increased from 11% to 15% between 2000 and 2004. (*DfES 2005 'Youth Cohort Study'*).

'by 2025 disabled people have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and be included and be respected as equal members of society'

**Tony Blair – (PMSU 2005:6)**

- As well as being twice as likely to be NEET when they leave compulsory education, disabled young people experience lower rates of employment and expect to earn less as disabled adults. (86% of disabled young people felt it was harder for disabled people to find work, and 30% expected, by age 30, to be earning less than other

people their age. (*DRC 2003 - A survey of the views and experiences of young disabled people in Great Britain.*)

- Consequently, at age 16, young disabled people in England and Wales are twice as likely to be classified NEET as their non-disabled peers. The interim report of the Equalities Review (2006) states that the relatively low participation of young disabled people has a profoundly negative effect on their life chances and a person being NEET for six months or more between the ages of 16 and 18 is the single most powerful predictor of unemployment at age 21.
- When looking at attaining higher level qualifications there is a marked inequality of outcomes. This is reflected in the much higher rates of disabled people dropping out of education at age 16. Disabled people are half as likely as non-disabled people to have a degree and twice as likely to have no qualification. (ONS Labour Force Survey, 2007) The data suggests that about one third of disabled people with no qualifications have mobility impairments, a third have long-term health conditions, approximately 15% have mental health conditions and around 6% have a learning disability. (ONS Labour Force Survey, 2007)

### **Disabled People & Employment**

- The employment rate of the working age disabled population rose from 38.1% to 47.2% between 1998 and 2007. The overall employment rate (which was 74.9% in 2007) is 26.5%, which has fallen from 35% in the same period. (Labour Force Survey)
- Approximately 5 in 10 disabled employers were satisfied with the amount of influence they had over their job compared to nearly 6 in 10 non-disabled employers. (Workplace Employee Relations Survey 2004)
- Almost 4 in 10 disabled people had not received any 'on the job' training, compared to 1 in 3 non-disabled people. (Workplace

Employee Relation Survey 2004)

- Disabled people in work on average earn almost £1 less an hour than non-disabled people and nearly half of disabled employees are dissatisfied with their pay. (Workplace Employee Relations Survey, 2004)

### **Disabled People & Transport**

- The percentage of disabled people experiencing any difficulties in using transport related to their health problem or disability decreased from 27.2% in 2005 to 25.4% in 2006. (ONS Omnibus Survey)
- The percentage of buses with low floor wheelchair access increased from 28.2% in 2001/02 to 50% in 2005/6 and further still, to 57.5% in 2006/7. (Department for Transport's Annual Sample Survey of Bus Operators)

### **The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (PMSU) Report *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People***

'Disability should be distinguished from 'impairment and ill health' and defined as:

- disadvantage experienced by an individual.....
  - ...resulting from barriers to independent living or educational, employment or other opportunities....
- ...that impact on people with impairments and or ill health'

### **Disabled People & Culture/Leisure**

- 32.3% of disabled people participate in at least one active sport

compared to 59.6% of non-disabled people. Disabled people also participate less in a moderate intensity level of sport at 9.5% compared to 24.2% of non-disabled people. (The Taking Part Survey 05/06)

- Fewer disabled people than non-disabled people visit the cinema: about 3 in 10 disabled people visiting the cinema compared to almost 6 in 10 non-disabled people. (The Taking Part Survey, 05/06)

### **Disabled People & Crime**

- 53% of disabled people fear being a victim compared to 43% of non-disabled people. (Citizenship Survey 2005)
- 34% of disabled people fear being insulted or pestered in public compared to 28% of non-disabled people. (Citizenship Survey 2005)
- 44% of disabled people say their fear of crime has a high or moderate impact on their quality of life compared to 36% of non-disabled people. (Citizenship Survey 2005)

### **Disabled People's Participation in Civil Service**

- About 1 in 20 civil servants are disabled. This number has increased since 2001 when this same figure stood at around 1 in 33. (The Civil Service Statistics Report, Sept. 2006 – [www.civilservice.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk))
- Although this figure has risen, it is still below the national average of approximately 1 in 5 people in Great Britain being disabled. (Family Resources Survey)
- There is a trend of disabled people's being a decreasing proportion of employees within the Civil Service as the responsibility of the job increases. Declared percentages of disabled people:
  - 3.4% of Senior Civil Servants
  - 4.3% of Grade 6/7 posts and

- 6.3% of all other employees.

(The Civil Service Statistics Report, Sept. 2006 – [www.civilservice.gov.uk](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk))

- Nearly 4 in 10 disabled and non disabled people participate in Civic life. This figure has not significantly changed since in 2007. (Citizenship 2005)
- 1 in 100 disabled people compared to 1 in 50 non-disabled people participate in a civic role:
  - being local councilor;
  - school governor
  - volunteer special constable or magistrate
- In 2006/7 health and disability were the most popular causes of charitable donation. (Helping out: A national survey of volunteers and charitable giving – [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk))

'The EU also sees disability as a social construct. The EU social model of disability stresses the environmental barriers in society which prevent the full participation of people with disabilities in society. These barriers must be removed'

## **Being in touch with external organizations - useful contacts**

### **Boadicea – Disabled Women's Newsletter**

Boadicea, c/o GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

**T:** 020 7326 4554

**Minicom:** 020 7326 4554

**F:** 020 736 8844

### **Connexions Direct**

Telephone: 0808 001 3219 (open 8am - 2am, 7 days per week) Website: <http://www.connexions-direct.com/> Information and advice about learning and work. Disabled Students can use Connexions services until the age of 25. Details of your local service can be found by ringing Connexions Direct or visiting their website.

**Depression Alliance** – 'Depression Alliance is the leading UK charity for people affected by depression. The website contains information about the symptoms of depression, treatments for depression, as well as Depression Alliance campaigns and local groups'

35 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB

**W:** [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

**Disability Alliance** - Universal House 88-94 Wentworth Street London E1 7SA Telephone (Voice and Minicom): 020 7247 8776 Fax: 020 7247 8765 Email: office.da@dial.pipex.com [www.disabilityalliance.org](http://www.disabilityalliance.org) - Provides information on social security benefits and tax credits to disabled people, their families, friends and advisers.

**Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline**  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

**England** Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTRZ Arndale House Arndale Centre  
Manchester M4 3EQ  
0845 604 6610 - England main number  
0845 604 6620 - England textphone  
0845 604 6630 - England fax  
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Wed 9:00 am-8:00 pm (last call taken at 7:45pm)

Wales - **Freepost RRLR-UEYB-UYZL 3rd Floor 3 Callaghan Square Cardiff CF10 5BT**  
0845 604 8810 - Wales main number  
0845 604 8820 - Wales textphone  
0845 604 8830 - Wales fax  
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Wed 9:00 am-8:00 pm (last call taken at 7:45pm)

Scotland -**Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Scotland Freepost RRLG-GYLB-UJTA The Optima Building 58 Robertson Street Glasgow G2 8DU**  
0845 604 5510 - Scotland Main  
0845 604 5520 - Scotland Textphone  
0845 604 5530 - Scotland – Fax  
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Wed 9:00 am-8:00 pm (last call taken at 7:45pm)

**SANE** has three objectives:

- To raise awareness and respect for people with mental illness and their families, improve education and training and secure better services
- To initiate and fund research into the causes of serious mental illness through the SANE Prince of Wales International Research Centre
- To provide information and emotional support to those experiencing mental health problems, their families and carers through SANELINE

1s Floor, Cityside House, 40 Adler Street, London E1 1EE

**SANELINE:** 0845 767 8000 (open from 12 noon until 2am everyday of the year)

**T:** 020 7375 1002

**F:** 020 7375 2162

**E:** (admin queries only) [London@sane.org.uk](mailto:London@sane.org.uk)

**W:** [www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)

**Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities**

Chapter House, 18-20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JW Email:

**skill@skill.org.uk** Website: <http://www.skill.org.uk/>

**The National Association of Specialist Colleges**

39 Sanders Road, Quorn Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 8JN

Telephone: 01509 554357 Email: [chiefexecutive@natspec.org.uk](mailto:chiefexecutive@natspec.org.uk) Website:

<http://www.natspec.org.uk/> - Provides an online directory of specialist colleges around the country and the support they offer.

**UCAS (The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) - Rosehill,**

New Barn Lane, Cheltenham Gloucestershire, GL52 3LZ Telephone: 0870

11 222 11 (Open Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm) Email:

[enquiries@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@ucas.ac.uk) Website: - Processes applications for higher education.

**Mind (England & Wales)**

'Established in 1946. Mind now has a network of 210 Local Mind Associations (LMAs) throughout England and Wales. Our LMAs offer supported housing, crisis helplines, drop-in-centres, counseling, befriending, advocacy, employment and training schemes, and other services. Our Local Mind Support Team works to support local Mind associations'.

15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ

**t:** MindinfoLine 0845 766 0163

**t:** 020 8519 2122

**f:** 020 8522 1725

**e:** [contact@rnid.org.uk](mailto:contact@rnid.org.uk)

**w:** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Mind Cymru**

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Quebec House, Castlebridge, 5-19 Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff  
CF11 9AB

**t:** 029 2039 5123

**F:** 029 2040 2041

### **Mind Out For Mental Health**

'mind out for mental health is an awareness and action campaign, working to bring about positive shifts in attitudes and behaviour surrounding mental health.

In active partnership with organizations from a wide range of sectors, mind out for mental health is producing a range of communications materials and running a series of workshops and events'.

**Freepost** LON15335, London SE1 1BR

**W:** <http://mindout.clarity.uk.net>

**W.** [www.readthesigns.org](http://www.readthesigns.org)

### **Useful Websites**

Aimhigher Don't Stop

<http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk/dontstop/home/>

Website with information on higher education and how studying can improve your career opportunities.

#### Ask Mencap

<http://www.askmencap.info/>

A website by Mencap with information about learning, working, free time and relationships, for people with learning difficulties.

#### AchieveAbility

<http://www.achieveability.org.uk/>

Breaking barriers to higher education for students with specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.

#### BBC Ouch!

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ouch>

BBC Ouch! Disability magazine containing columnists, features, web blogs, podcast, news, opinions and chat community.

#### The Big Tree

<http://www.thebigtree.org/>

The home of Learning Disability online. Get information on employment, learning and transition. Visit the Community section and get to make your own web pages.

do-it The do-it website makes searching for volunteering opportunities easy. All users have to do is enter their postcode or town name to get a comprehensive listing of what is available in their area.

<http://www.do-it.org.uk/>

#### **Directgov**

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/> Information about the Disabled Student's Allowances (DSAs) can be found in the education and learning section of this government site.

#### Duke of Edinburgh's Award

<http://www.theaward.org/>

The award is a programme of activities for young people to do in their spare time. There are three awards to try for: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

Fast Tomato

<http://www.fasttomato.com/>

Interactive careers guidance and education for young people.

The Learning and Skills Council

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/>The LSC plans and funds further education and training in the UK. Find out more about courses and apprenticeships.

Moving on Up

<http://www.movingonup.info/>

For young disabled people in transition from ethnic minority communities.

National Union of Students

<http://www.nus.org.uk/>The NUS website contains information on student life and on current NUS campaigns, including the Disabled Students' Campaign.

**The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)**

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/> NDCS information for young deaf people on education, free time, work and careers. Go to the 'Youth' section.

Prince's Trust

<http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/>

UK charity that helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives working through practical support including training, mentoring and financial assistance.

Sort it!

<http://www.sortit.org.uk/>For 11-16 year olds who are visually impaired. Information on education, technology and rights.

**The Transition Information Network (TIN)**

<http://www.transitioninfolnetwork.org.uk/>Information on transition for young disabled people, their parents and people who work with them. Sign up for their newsletter or magazine.

#### TransActive

<http://www.trans-active.org.uk/>For teenagers with and without learning disabilities. It uses Multimedia to give support on making future plans.

#### UK Youth

<http://www.ukyouth.org/>A national youth work charity supporting young people to raise their aspirations, realise their potential and have their achievements recognised via non-formal, accredited education programmes and activities.

#### UK Youth Parliament

<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/>

Aims to give the young people of the UK between the age of 11 and 18 a voice, which will be heard and listened to by local and national government.

#### UNIAID

<http://www.uniaid.org.uk/>A charity helping students cope with the financial barriers into higher education. Learn about budgeting, bursaries and play the interactive Student Survivor game to see if you can keep your student alive.

#### Whizzkidz

<http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/>Supports children and young people who are wheelchair users. Go to the Kidz zone for more information on getting active, taking control, getting work, and much more.



If you require this document in an alternative format,  
please contact [disabled@nus.org.uk](mailto:disabled@nus.org.uk)

**National Union of Students**

2nd floor, Centro 3  
19 Mandela Street  
London NW1 0DU

t. 0871 221 8221

f. 0871 221 8222

w. [www.officeronline.co.uk/disabled](http://www.officeronline.co.uk/disabled)



disabled students' campaign