

POLICY PROPOSAL

SENSE BASED APPROACH TO STUDENT DRUG USE

PROBLEM/IDEA

Drug use is increasing across Scotland's students and students across the UK - according to the 'take the hit' NUS report. Universities across Scotland's current policies for student drug use are punitive, a punishment-first method where monetary fines are issued if a student is caught in possession of drugs.

These fines place unnecessary harm on students when support and help are needed. Especially when it has been shown that punitive measures are the main reason students do not seek help with drug use, which has resulted in fatalities previously.

WHAT SHOULD HWUNION DO?

There needs to be a multiple-pronged approach involving harm reduction policies, de-stigmatising drug use, and an increased focus on creating a safe environment on campus for students to feel safe to approach the relevant individuals to seek help.

The Students' Union should approach issues relating to drug-use with a 'Help Not Harm' strategy - offering non-judgemental support (rather than punishment) to those affected.

1. The Union should offer adequate and honest drug safety information via advice services and websites; this information should include.
 - Honesty about Drugs and that students no matter what will use them.
 - How to minimise harm
 - where to get help if needed in case of overdose or emergency.
 - Information and signposting to organisations that help users get off drugs.
2. The Union should work with 3rd sector organisations to provide anonymous and professional support. E.g. Crew 2000
3. Lobby their own universities to either create or update their current drug policies.
4. Fund and Provide drug purity testing kits for students that is free at the point of use for students anonymously.

WHY SHOULD HWUNION DO IT?

Studies on drug misuse amongst students are showing that across the United Kingdom illicit drug use amongst students is on the rise. This is particularly worrying in Scotland - where our drug deaths are highest.

Early intervention is key to stopping these problems. We want help and support for people who use drugs, not harm that is a direct result of their stigmatisation and persecution.

We've seen that the Just Say No approach doesn't work – drugs will still find a way into young people's lives.

HOW SHOULD HWUNION DO IT?

- Create a page on the Students' Union website with a statement of intent, and co-produce harm reduction resources on alcohol/drugs with the Help Not Harm Campaign and Crew, or alternatively provide signposts to their external sites where this information can be accessed.
- The Students' Union shall distribute physical resources containing the aforementioned information on harm reduction and safe drug-use to students who come seeking support, providing a way for students to receive these resources anonymously also.
- That the Students' Union will have simple drug testing kits accessible to students in the same way that contraceptives are already made available for those who seek them.
- That the Students' Union should lobby the university to provide funding for this initiative and help to distribute these harm reduction resources wherever this may be possible.
- The Students' Union will provide anti-spiking testing strips at each of their bars for students to take and use at their own will. Ensuring that an adequate stock is consistently maintained