

Student Council

VP Community and Welfare, Lubyna Gardezi, Report – November 2024

Health and Wellbeing Activity

The Welfare Committee

I have been working to establish the Student Welfare Committee at The Students' Union 2024/25 and have successfully recruited 13 students to be part of the group. We are looking to expand this to 15 to ensure that the campus sites are represented. The Welfare Committee took part in an induction on Tuesday 29th October to learn about The Students' Union and come together to start working on a welfare campaign. The committee will take part in campaigns training with the Student Sustainability Committee, the training will be run by charity SOS-UK (Students Organising Sustainability). I will be working with the committee throughout the year to get feedback on welfare work, run events for students and engage students in community building campaigns. They will all receive a certificate at the end of their time on the committee and be recognised at the annual Student Experience Awards for their efforts.



Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week

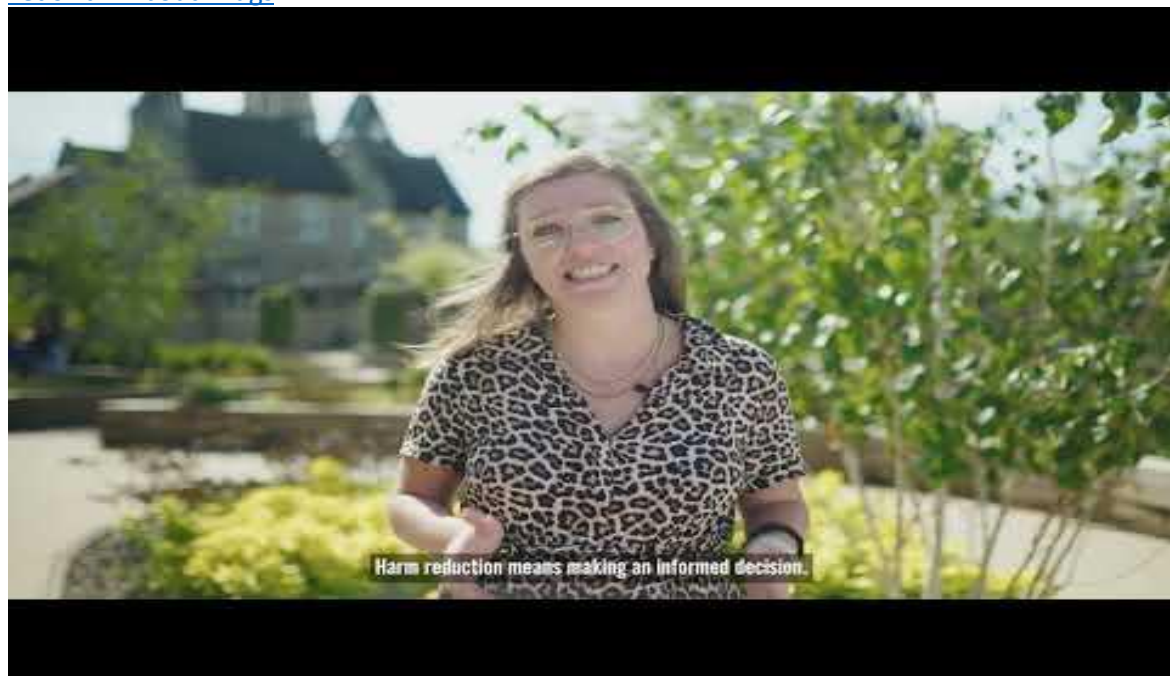
Drugs including Alcohol

This year's Drug and Alcohol Awareness Week runs from 18th November to 24th November. We will be running 3 alcohol interventions across Frenchay, Glenside and Bower Ashton campuses throughout the week. Drink Rethink is a preventative approach that enables and encourages students to reflect on their drinking, consider risks associated with alcohol consumption and the benefits of reducing consumption. Our trained student ambassadors gave free helpful and non-judgmental information to students about their drinking habits. We were also joined by Becky Risley, UWE's Specialist Drug and Alcohol Advisor, who ran a general harm reduction stall alongside the intervention. During these interventions and engagement stalls, we also advertised the SOS-UK Drug and Alcohol Survey which is running from 18th November 18th – 6th December. The information from this survey will inform our Drug and Alcohol impact work up until the next accreditation year in 2026.

I have been working closely with Becky to create 3 Drug and Alcohol Harm Reduction YouTube videos to get our Harm Reduction message out to students in the most accessible way possible.

We created one general Harm Reduction video, one video on Mixing and another on Drug Testing. Please see the videos on our YouTube channel here;

[Let's Talk About Drugs](#)



[Let's Talk About Drug Checking](#)



[Let's Talk About Mixing Drugs](#)



Black History Month

In October, we celebrated Black History Month. I worked with our Student Union President, Sam, to reward our Black staff and students at UWE in the [Hall of Fame](#). We marked the occasion in D Block where frames were put up with the recipients' pictures and biographies of their astounding achievements. After the unveiling ceremony, we headed to The Students' Union where we hosted a panel discussion with Roger Griffiths and Jo Forbes. We found out what 'Reclaiming Narratives' the theme for this year's Black History Month means to them and had some delicious food.



I also attended the Bristol Distinguished Address Series as a panelist alongside Sam. The event, part of the Bristol Distinguished Address Series, was a night of reflecting and

celebration. Hosted by Dr. Roger Griffith MBE, the evening featured conversation about activism and academia, poetry, and networking.



Support for Bangladesh students

The President Team hosted a support session for Bangladesh students affected by the violent protests. We worked with the Bangladesh Society, Global Student Support Team,

Wellbeing Team and Pastoral Care Team to organise an informal meet up in the Upper Engagement Space at The Students' Union, Frenchay Campus. It was an important safe space for UWE students to come together:

<https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/news/article/thesuatuwe/SUPPORT-AVAILABLE-FOR-UWE-STUDENTS-AFFECTED-BY-VIOLENCE-AT-BANGLADESHI-STUDENT-PROTESTS/>

Reasonable Adjustments to Deadline

The University has proposed changes to the reasonable adjustment to deadline policy for students. I am part of the working group to analyse these changes. Myself, Sam (SU President) and Khadiza (VP Education) are challenging the proposals and ensuring the student voice runs throughout. The Task and Finish Group meets on Monday 18th November and the President Team will present the findings from our student survey.

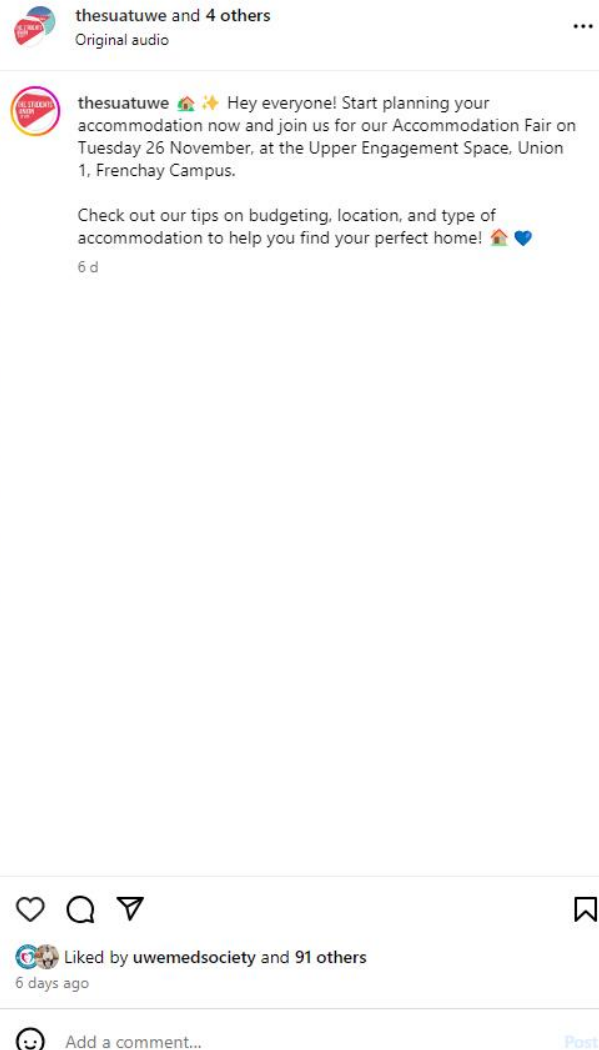
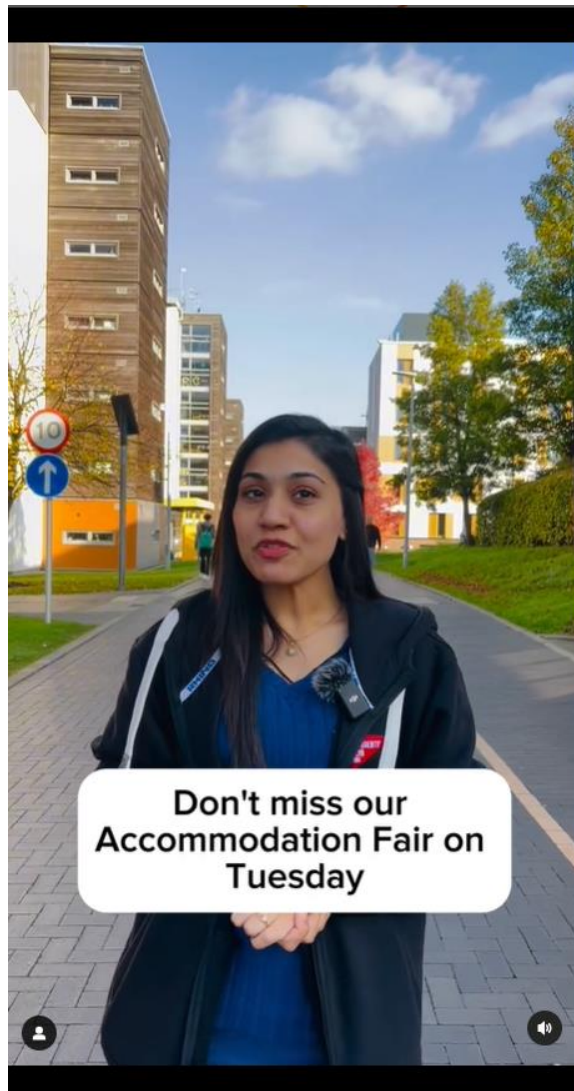
Accommodation

Recently, I was invited to join the One City Living Rent Commission, a body established by Bristol City Council and the City Office to explore strategies for making Bristol a more affordable city and to strengthen tenants' rights in the Private Rented Sector, and together we attended our first introductory meeting. In our upcoming sessions, we'll dive deeper into the commission's goals and identify actionable steps to address rising rent costs and enhance tenant protections, aiming to create a lasting positive impact for students and all residents in Bristol.

To further support student accommodation needs, UWE Bristol has recently introduced Purdown View, a new residence on the Frenchay campus with 900 rooms, including a range of options from en-suite rooms and shared bathrooms to studio apartments. Purdown View has already made a noticeable difference in easing the accommodation challenges students face, with a significant decrease in housing-related complaints compared to last year.

Additionally, Purdown View includes a unique kitchen booking facility, where residents can reserve a kitchen for events or celebrations and invite friends and classmates to join. This feature, along with communal study areas, social spaces, and sustainable design elements, helps create a vibrant and supportive environment for students, enhancing their overall living experience on campus.

Moreover, I am actively participating in the promotion of our [accommodation fair](#) which is on Tuesday 26th of November.



National Lobby Day

On 23rd October, The Students' Union at UWE President Team attended the NUS National Lobby Day in Westminster, we had the opportunity to meet with nearly 100 Sabbatical Officers from across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. This was a fantastic opportunity to network with MPs and their staff communities to discuss the rental Rights Bill. We also managed to have some insightful discussion with Carla Denyer, MP from Green Party as well as Bristol-based Clare Hazelgrove (Labour MP for Filton and Bradley Stoke), topics of discussion included the rising cost of living, reducing the employability threshold, and the importance of unbanning spouse visas. These conversations were vital in advocating for policy changes that impact students and the wider community.

THE STUDENTS'
UNION
AT UWE



International Student Advisory Committee

Our President Sam and I are working together on creating an International Student Committee to elevate the voices of international students at UWE Bristol. Our vision is to build a strong platform where international students can openly share their experiences, perspectives, and ideas to improve student life in areas that affect them directly. This committee will not only empower international students to influence university life, and it will also serve as a key channel for their input on institutional policies and decisions, ensuring that their needs and insights are recognized at all levels.

We've already submitted a proposal for this committee and are currently refining it based on initial feedback. Our next steps include finalizing these adjustments and presenting an update to the Student Council at the upcoming meeting. Additionally, we've welcomed Muhammad, our part-time officer, to the committee. He brings valuable insights and is collaborating closely with us to bring this initiative to life.

To secure the committee's impact, we're working through the Partnership Board to formally lobby UWE for their endorsement and support. We believe this backing will establish the committee as an official voice within the university, amplifying international student representation in a way that promotes lasting, positive changes.

Southwest Regional Sabbatical Day:



The Students' Union at UWE hosted the Southwest Regional Sabbatical Day this year. It was a great opportunity to meet with other sabbatical officers, NUS and share ideas.

VP Community and Welfare Manifesto and Objectives Update:

After taking up their roles, the team spent several away days with Students' Union managers to review manifesto points. We developed a practical approach to form robust objectives. Here is an update on my manifesto objectives:

1. Prioritise Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Through Promoting Support Services through visual and physical mediums

Events;

- We celebrated **World Mental Health Day** on the 10th October. NHS Talking Therapies came onto campus, and we had the NHS Blood Drive at all 3 campus sites informing students about giving blood and the benefits of this.
- We continue to build on our year-long programme of alcohol-free events in collaboration with various stakeholders across the university. Some highlights this term have been;
 - To celebrate Halloween, we collaborated with the Centre for Music to put on a **Big Band Halloween Concert** in The Students' Union. CFM's Big band played some toe-tappers and attendees were encouraged to dress up in Halloween attire.
 - As part of Green Fortnight, we ran a **sustainable bat making workshop** with the Sustainability Team in the International College. Students had the chance to create their own decorations for Halloween, accompanied by some bat facts!
 - **Climate Convos and Crafts** session with alumni student Ellen ran at Bower Ashton to provide an accessible way for students to talk about the climate crisis through the medium of crafting
- In order to support students during the assessment period, I am working with Vp Education, Khadiza, to run a Destress Zone across all 3 campuses where students can access wellbeing support during this stressful time. The space will create an opportunity for students to relax and recharge, offering complimentary freebies and crafts to unwind.

Visual;

- I am working on an Instagram Live with the Wellbeing Team. This will be an opportunity for students to ask questions about how the service works and what is on offer with a goal for it to become more accessible to students
- Developed 3 Harm Reduction videos with UWE's Specialist Drug and Alcohol Practitioner, Becky Risley.

- Continue to work with our Advice Centre, I am planning on promotional video content to advertise the service to students and make the support as accessible as possible
- As part of Destress Campaign I am going to work with UWE's Wellbeing Team to create video content for students struggling to access support, new starters and students going through assessment period

2. Celebration and Sense of Belonging

- Black History Month
 - Mental Health Blog post on the importance of taking an intersectional approach to mental health
 - Hall of Fame to celebrate Black students and staff at the university. Nominees were recognised at the unveiling ceremony and invited family and friends to read their biographies and take pictures
 - Distinguished address panel event attended with SU president Sam with members of the Black community at UWE speaking about their narratives
- Celebrating cultural calendar of events
 - Attended SriLankan Society event as Vp Community and Welfare – Sajje music, food and dance. They were so loving that they invited me on the stage and gave me a gift to represent the culture.
- Working on the Student Experience Awards, plans to discuss award titles with Vp Education to ensure Health and Wellbeing and Diversity is embedded into the celebration
- Attended the Halloween event at the Global Lounge for Green Fortnight, sustainable bat making
- We welcomed all new students at the 3 campus Welcome fairs during September and October. It was amazing to be part of such huge events and to talk to and welcome new students onto campus.
- I have plans to organise UWE's Got Talent with Vp Societies and Communications this year. We will start planning for the event in March 2025

3. Employability

My main goal for this objective is the promotion of UWE's Careers Service to ensure more students access this resource and therefore can feedback on the service

- I held a [Q&A session](#) with the Careers Service last week. The Students' Union will be posting on Instagram video with the Careers Team in collaboration
- I am also working on a Careers Workshop. This aims to have inclusive practice and include employer and student voice. It will detail how employers can be more diverse and inclusive in their recruitment

- Job Fair in X Block – I am collecting feedback from students related to this event, to help inform UWE's work
- The President Team have set up regular meetings with UWE Careers and Enterprise to ensure smooth communication
- Fossil Fuel Careers – People and Planet