

# University of York

## Student Life Committee

### Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee, 2 November 2023

1. The Committee approved:
  - a. Revised terms of reference for the Committee, including the discontinuation of Student Experience Operations Group; the inclusion of Sports Strategy Group as a group reporting to the Committee; and revised quoracy such that at least one student representative had to be present.
  - b. The following set of annual priorities for the Committee during 2023-24: cost of living; accommodation; mental health; conduct and respect (including regulatory changes in this area); international and postgraduate student engagement; and supporting the YUSU / GSA merger, where applicable.
  - c. A set of focus areas for the implementation of the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy during 2023-24, as part of its consideration of a report in this area which also detailed work during 2022-23. Good progress is being made and the University is working towards developing an application for accreditation under the University Mental Health Charter.
  - d. A revised College Constitution, subject to minor amendments including ensuring that at least one student representative was present for quoracy of College Councils. The revised constitution reflected the Colleges Governance Review and included terms to address any issues of student or staff misconduct of members of College Councils or college student and staff organisations.
  - e. Revised terms of reference and membership for College Life Forum (previously College Life Operations Group).
2. The Committee considered the following reports:
  - a. An annual report on employability, detailing work in the Careers and Placements Team during 2022-23. The Committee commended work in this area, particularly the support for students from under-represented groups, and further noted support for international students.
  - b. An annual report from Community Volunteering Committee on volunteering during 2022-23. The Committee was encouraged to see volunteering returning to pre-pandemic levels, with for example over 500 students having been engaged in York Students into Schools; c. 760 students in Community Placements; and c. 1,200 students in YUSU-led volunteering.
  - c. An annual report from the Conduct and Respect team on work during 2022-23. The Committee highly commended the work of the team, which it considered to be sector-leading. There had been 100% positive feedback about the Sexual Violence Liaison Officers from students supported by the team. The Committee further noted that the team and University would need to respond to upcoming regulatory changes in this area. The Committee requested an aggregate breakdown of outcomes relating to a small number of cases where students had reported staff misconduct.

- d. An update on progress against the Gender-Based Violence Action Plan.
  - e. An update on cost of living support. The Committee noted that there was some evidence that students were not applying for support, and also that success rates in applications to the Student Support Fund were below 50% in 2022-23. This suggested a need for further work to improve students' ability to access cost of living support. The Committee established a working group to take this work forward.
  - f. An updated implementation plan for the Sports Strategy. The Committee noted that actions to increase participation in sport had been successful but that the resulting increased demand had led to problems in students' ability to access facilities. DTEF will be looking into this issue.
  - g. A report on the OIA Statement on Complaints for 2022, noting that many unsuccessful appeals and complaints related to the Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment policy or procedure: it was hoped that forthcoming work to simplify the procedure would reduce complaints.
3. The Committee noted the following updates or reports:
- a. An oral report from the Co-Chair (Academic Registrar) and Co-Chair (YUSU President) covering the University's nomination for the *Times Higher* University of the Year; uptake of the off-campus rent grant; the University's Gold award in TEF 2023; the introduction of the Check-in system; the de-ratification of Nightline over safety concerns; and introduction of the 'Rate your Landlord' scheme.
  - b. An update on recent activity from YUSU, noting in particular encouraging levels of sign-up for activities and events and a need for further communication around plans for the Student Centre.
  - c. An update on activity from the GSA, noting in particular work on postgraduate arrivals and welcome; difficulties in organising welcome activities caused by protracted postgraduate arrivals due to accommodation timescales; and planned work to encourage students to access the Report and Support tool and safety apps: Internal Communications will further support this area.
  - d. Revisions to the Refund and Compensation Policy and Safeguarding and Prevent Policy Statement [for degree apprenticeships], approved under chairs' action.
  - e. A report on the results of the Graduate Outcomes survey for 2020/21 graduates, as previously considered at University Teaching Committee and Senate.
  - f. Results from the Student Barometer Survey 2022-23. The Committee noted that there had not been sufficient professional services capacity to conduct further analysis of this survey (beyond that provided by the external company that runs it) and thus it was not thought to be value for money; this would be fed back to External Relations. The PVC (Teaching, Learning and Students) reported planned work to examine the University's approach to surveys.

Dr Wayne Campbell and Pierrick Roger, Co-Chairs of Student Life Committee, November 2023