

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK**  
**Senate**  
**STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE**

**Matters for note arising from the meeting of Student Life Committee held on 26 January 2023**

1. The Committee **approved** a revision to its membership, such that two additional student representatives be added to the Committee to represent Colleges on Campus West and Campus East. These would be elected at the February meeting of College Life Operations Group each year (reflecting timescales for election of College representatives): the relevant College would be represented on the Committee until the February of the following year. The proposal reflects the importance of the Colleges to the student experience at York, with Colleges not directly represented by YUSU or GSA on the Committee.
2. The Committee **approved** a new Safeguarding Policy and Procedure for the University, to replace the existing Safeguarding Framework and Policy and Procedure, and a number of local policies and procedures. This would bring consistency to this area and avoid duplication. Apprenticeships and the Campus Nursery would have separate policies due to specific OFSTED requirements; other local requirements would be addressed via appendices to the new policy and procedure. The Committee further **endorsed** the creation of a Safeguarding Officers' Network.
3. The Committee **endorsed** a proposal to extend work on the development of KPIs for the non-academic experience such that this work included impact and evaluation more broadly (beyond quantifiable KPIs) and with reference to the University Mental Health Charter.
4. The Committee **considered** annual reports in the following areas:
  - a. Campus Nursery. It **noted** that the Nursery had identified a need to raise awareness of the Nursery among student parents and highlight the flexibility of places. Further work would be done on this issue. GSA would also work with the Nursery to identify a student parent to sit on the Nursery Committee.
  - b. Sustainable Transport. It **noted** that staff and surveys on travel and transport had been conducted and insights from those surveys had been used to inform actions in the Sustainable Transport Plan 2022-25. It clarified that DTEF was working with the City of York Council on improvements to local cycling and walking routes, with further work planned in this area.
  - c. Student Wellbeing Officers (SWOs). It **noted** that the SWO role was working well, with over 1,900 referrals to SWOs in 2021/22; a range of department-specific wellbeing events and initiatives led by SWOs; and less tangible benefits such as a visible wellbeing presence in departments and support for staff. The role had been very positively received by departments / schools. A number of departments / schools had requested additional SWO resource and a business case would be developed for consideration. The Committee **noted** that accommodation for SWOs had been a challenge in some departments / schools, negatively affecting their work: this issue would be raised with the Heads of Faculty Operations.
  - d. Funding to support students, from OPPA. It **noted** a significant number of new donor-funded scholarships had been established during 2022-23 and that significant work had been undertaken in relation to preparing for the launch of York for Life (a package of alumni support).
5. The Committee **considered** a paper outlining results from Pulse Surveys held October 2022 to January 2023, including a more in-depth and specific survey relating to accommodation. It noted that:
  - a. The surveys were managed on a 'best endeavours' basis in the Strategic Insight Team and were subject to multiple requests. The Committee agreed that further work should be done to consider how the surveys could be best resourced going forward; to prioritise requests for insight through the surveys; and to consider other mechanisms for student insight.

- b. The surveys had revealed that the vast majority of students had a positive Arrivals experience. Experience of support from STYCs had been less positive for a minority of students, and further work would be done by the Colleges to improve consistency in this area. The surveys also revealed significant concerns about the cost of off-campus accommodation.
6. The Committee **considered** two reports relating to the cost of living:
    - a. A report from Student Financial Support on support initiatives in this area. The Committee identified a need to raise awareness among students of these initiatives. Data indicated that fewer students than expected had taken up the Household Energy Grant and that applications to the Student Support Fund had declined relative to 2020/21. The Committee discussed a number of possible reasons for this; and agreed to further investigate if there were barriers to applying for these initiatives.
    - b. A report on cost of living support in Colleges, identifying that each College now had a Cost of Living Ambassador and was providing free food twice a week, reaching an average of 50 students each time (thus 11,000 instances of free food over the term).
  7. The Committee **considered** an update on the Sports Strategy Implementation Plan. It **endorsed** plans for the launch of the Strategy. A full implementation plan detailing actions to deliver the objectives in the Strategy would be presented to the April meeting of the Committee.
  8. The Committee **considered** an update on initiatives to develop student-led inclusive academic communities. It commended progress in this area to date and discussed in particular the implementation of the Departmental Community Coordinator role.
  9. The Committee **considered** a report on the OIA statement on complaints for 2021. The report identified that there had been a significant increase in the number of cases referred to the OIA, and discussed a number of possible reasons for this. The vast majority of complaints were found 'not justified' by the OIA.
  10. The Committee **noted** the following updates or reports:
    - a. Oral reports from the Co-Chairs, who provided an update on University planning in relation to industrial action; YUSU's intentions to ballot over industrial action; and University plans (developed in collaboration with YUSU and GSA) to provide additional cost of living support in the form of an accommodation grant for off-campus students in the 2023/24 academic year, reflecting students' concerns around significant rent increases.
    - b. A report from the Student Experience Operations Group from its December 2022 meeting.
    - c. Reports on recent activity from OPPA, DTEF, Equality & Diversity, the Open Door team, the YGRS and the IPC.
    - d. Reports on recent activity in YUSU and the GSA. The Committee particularly highlighted work by YUSU in relation to cost of living (in particular the provision of heavily subsidised food on campus). It noted that YUSU had received concerns from some department representatives around unexpected course costs: YUSU would provide further information on this issue to the PVC for Teaching, Learning and Students.
    - e. Proposed Objectives and Key Results for Careers and Placements 2022-25. It noted that the objectives of the service were inclusive of all students (including PGR students). There were specific objectives relating to international students and employability in the curriculum. Additional data would be helpful in informing work in this area. The paper would be considered by the University Teaching Committee in March 2023.
    - f. A report on Report and Support Data for the Autumn Term 2022.
    - g. An action log in relation to staff-student sexual misconduct.
  11. The Committee **received** reports from the College Life Operations Group meeting held November 2022 and the YGRS PGR Experience Committee meeting held October 2022.

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