



**Welfare & Community Zone
Minutes**

Date: Thursday 02 November 2023
Time: 18:00 – 20:00
Venue: Harrie Massey Lecture Theatre
Chair: Ahmad Ismail

Members:	P	AP	AB
Abraham Selby, Hall Community Officer for Stapleton House			X
Ahmad Ismail, Equity & Inclusion Officer	X		
Amr Maher, Hall Community Officer for James Lighthill House	X		
Anji Suri, Trans Officer	X		
Christopher Johnson, Mature & Part-time Students' Officer	X		
Coco Lai, Hall Community Officer for One Pool Street	X		
Donna Amewu, Hall Community Officer for Endsleigh Gardens and John Adams Hall	X		
Elisa de Aragao Bibay, Women's Officer	X		
Grace Yang, Sustainability Officer		X	
Issy Smith, Postgraduate Officer		X	
James Zhou, Hall Community Officer for Frances Gardner House and Langton Close	X		
Jamila Kabir and Hanna Morris, UCL East Student Officer		X	
Langat Naomi, Social Class & Mobility Officer	X		
Louise Steele Saukila, Officer for Students with Caring Responsibilities			X
Lucas A H Dastros-Pitei, Accommodation & Housing Officer	X		
Manaal Tariq, International Students' Officer	X		
Max James, Hall Community Officer for St Pancras Way		X	
Micah Gerstner, LGBTQ+ Officer	X		
Maria Toigonbaeva, Hall Community Officer for John Dodgson House	X		
Mustafa Ahmed, Hall Community Officer for New Hall - Caledonian Road			X
Philip Greger and Suzanna Chen, Disabled Students' Officer		X	
Juan Grano De Oro Fernandez, Postgraduate Hall Community Officer for 109 Camden Road (Ann Stephenson, Ifor Evans, Max Rayne and Neil Sharp House)	X		
Rawleka Wilson and Rachel Lim, People of Colour Students' Officer			X
Roger Holwerda, Hall Community Officer for Arthur Tattersall and John Tovell House			X
Saloni Mookerjee, Hall Community Officer for Ian Baker House and Ramsay Hall		X	
William Warwick, Hall Community Officer for Campbell House East and West			X

Quorum: 14

In Attendance:
Rhiannon Ellis, Representation and Democracy Coordinator, minutes
Tommy Garwood, Sports Development Coordinator – Equity and Inclusion
Jake Simms, Policy and Research Coordinator
Danielle Swanson, Head of Advice & Wellbeing
Aria Xingni Shi, Activities & Engagement Officer

Student Observers – Dimitra Klinaki

Actions Log 2023/24	Responsibility	Update due:
Take feedback regarding welfare officer training to relevant teams.	DS & TG	4 December 2023
Speak to ABT about including drunk behaviour scenarios within programme.	JS	4 December 2023
Speak to accommodation team about first aid provision, support for students that witnessed a distressing incident and staff accessing students rooms without notifying in advance.	Chair & DS	4 December 2023
Speak to Counselling and Psychological Services about opening hours, crisis service, referral form and potential attendance at a future Welfare & Community Zone.	Chair & DS	4 December 2023
Meet to discuss rent-freeze	Chair, LDP, JS	4 December 2023

1. Preliminary Matters - Welcome and Introductions

Ahmad Ismail (Chair) warmly welcomed everyone to the first Welfare and Community Zone.

Chair introduced themselves, their role and their priorities for the year which includes:

Equity Leads of everything Equity & Inclusion in the Students' Union and supports the Liberation Students' Officers

- 1) Streamlining Equity and Inclusion work at UCL
- 2) Launching an inclusive and low commitment beginner art programme
- 3) LGBTQ inclusion
- 4) Accommodation – events and activities

All members and staff members were then invited to introduce themselves

2. Preliminary Matters – Brief overview of Welfare & Community Zone

Chair gave an overview of Welfare Zone, and explained that it deals with any welfare issues such as halls of residence, and advised that policies can be submitted and voted on.

Rhiannon Ellis (RE) also advised that policy proposals and policy briefings will be sent to each of the Zone members ahead of meetings.

3. Announcements – Rep Election Results

Chair gave an overview of the results; more information can be found [here](#). Turnout for the Rep Elections was 8% with 3,805 students voted and 9,824 ballots were cast across 49 positions with 66

students being elected to leadership roles.

4. Officer Updates and Questions – Equity & Inclusion Officer

Chair provided an update on their priorities for the year in the opening introduction. No questions were asked by any members.

5. Officer Updates and Questions – Postgraduate Officer

The Postgraduate Officer was not present.

6. Matters for Information – Staff Updates

RE asked Zone advised Zone members that the Policy Zone Summit was held on Saturday 28 October and asked members to complete the feedback form by the end of the week. RE also explained that if anyone was unable to attend then they will have been sent the training slides and if they have any questions to please get in touch at su.democracy@ucl.ac.uk

Danielle Swanson (DS) – explained that in the advice service is an impartial and confidential space which can support students with academic misconduct, financial, and complaints queries. DS provided an updated the financial support provision, in particular [hardship funds](#) was expanded and last year £215,000 was given out to students last year. They are seeing a large increase in applications and so far they have received 400 applications for the [activities participation fund](#) compared to last year where they gave out 134 grants. If any students need support they can directly contact the advice service [here](#).

DS also explained that if students need additional financial support relating to bursaries, scholarships, student finance then they can speak to the [Student Funding Team](#) at the University.

Jake Simms (JS) explained that their team can support Zone members with achieving policies by helping to put you in touch with relevant University departments, conducting research to back up policy proposal and providing resources and reports. If Zone members would like to explore this further please get in touch with su.democracy@ucl.ac.uk

7. Matters for Information – Team UCL – Welfare provision

Tommy Garwood (TG) advised sound members that they are about to launch a men's mental health campaign called '[All Jokes Aside](#)'. The landing page provides mental health resources and contact details for charities, the advice service and the University. They are also starting a Talk and listen group and a men's activity group for anyone that identifies as a male at UCL.

TG also explained that they are going to be doing free fitness sessions for disabled students during Disability History Month, as well as doing a large accessibility review of the sports provision at UCL.

TG would like to engage with the part-time officers to find out how to improve the sports provisions at UCL and asked for their email to be shared here – t.garwood@ucl.ac.uk

8. Matters for Information – Outcomes from and inputs to UCL committees

Chair explained that they sit on multiple University committees such as Education Committee and LGBTQ Equality Implementation Group.

Chair advised that in Education Committee they are working on scheduling a January assessment period as this will prevent students from having to wait until Term 3 for all of their exams. They are also looking at the types of assessment and trying to move away from 100% exam or 100% coursework.

Chair explained that UCL has launched LGBTQ+ action plan which can be viewed [here](#).

9. Matters for Discussion – Agree on priorities for the Academic year

Chair asked Zone members what they wanted the priorities for Welfare Zone to be this year:

- 1) Improved welfare training for Sports and Societies Welfare Officers
Micah Gerstner (MG) raised that welfare officers don't know how to deal with mental health related situations, and they would benefit from the current training provision being reviewed. It was also suggested that Welfare Officers should be provided with specific resources to give to students if they needed support.

TG responded and said that they could take this feedback to the activities team.

Student Observer also explained that there is confusion around how to deal with situations such as sexual harassment or disagreements between members in societies/sports teams and they didn't know how to report this to the societies team.

DS responded and said that the [Active Bystander programme](#) that is run by the SU could also help with some of these issues surrounding not knowing where to report issues.

Action agreed: TG and DS to take feedback to relevant teams and review the training provisions and mental health resources. Update to be provided at a future meeting.

- 2) Mature Student Support

Christopher Johnson (CJ) advised that UCL has a high proportion of mature students, however they felt that the majority of information and events are catered towards younger students. They also explained that they currently have a mature students society, however they would like to change this into a network as there is such a huge community of these students. They also shared that there are lots of welfare needs within this community and therefore more should be done to recognise them.

DS responded and explained that the Postgraduate Officer has also been raising that the exams season toolkit for is mainly framed at undergraduate students, rather than postgraduate students even though the assessment periods are likely to differ. The move from a society to a network is also being raised within the SU and there will be an update in a future meeting.

3) Accommodation

Chair shared that they would like to improve the student experience in halls and they felt that their activities and events were not good previously. They also said that they would like to collaborate closely with the Accommodation & Housing Officer and the Hall Community Officers this year to make these improvements.

TG advised that Project Active was going to be doing some activities for students in halls which will be accessible for any student to attend.

Zone member raised that in some of the halls there are under 18s living there and they therefore cannot take part in some of the events and activities due to their age. They felt that there should be more priority put on building the community and making it a more welcoming experience in these particular halls.

Another Zone member explained that there was an incident in halls where someone was intoxicated and died and students did not know how to deal with the situation. They felt that there should be some first aid training provided to students so that they know what to do.

Another Zone member said that they felt there should be some examples included within the Active Bystander Programme around how to deal with intoxicated people or how they could help in those situations.

JS said explained that their team runs the Active Bystander programme and potentially this is something that could be explored within that. DS also said that the SRAs in the halls of residence should be first aid trained, however either they or the Chair will speak to someone in accommodation to find out what support is being offered to these students.

Zone member raised that there are issues with communication between staff and students in halls, as a member of staff entered the halls without notifying the students in advance. Another zone member raised that this is concerning for students who have accessibility needs and there they need to be told in advance if someone is going to be entering their rooms.

Chair said that they would raise this with the accommodation team.

Action agreed: JS to speak to the Active Bystander Team.

Action agreed: DS and Chair to speak to the Accommodation Team regarding first aid provisions and wellbeing support for students that witnessed the incident as well as staff entering students rooms without notifying them.

4) International Students – Regional Representative Volunteer position

Manaal Tariq (MT) explained that as the International Students' Officer they have created a volunteer position to gather a wider range of feedback from international students. Students will meet with MT once a term to raise any feedback about the international student experience and together policies proposals can be developed.

Click [here](#) to sign up.

5) Mental Health Support at UCL

MG explained that the Counselling and Psychological services at UCL is only available between 09:00 - 17:00 Monday – Thursday and then 09:00 – 15:00 on Friday. They felt that this was not accessible for students as students may need to access the service outside of working hours.

DS advised that the service does have some out of hours sessions, but they are not classed as a crisis service and a student would be advised to call 999 or a dedicated crisis line. They also explained that there is a [24/7 support line](#) that students have access to in addition to partnerships with night line. DS agreed that there should be further discussions with the University wellbeing team about their support and whether there should be a crisis service within the University.

A Zone member also raised that when completing the referral form there is a time limit, and it can only be accessed between 09:00 – 17:00, even though the form does advise that it may take 24 hours for a response. They expressed that the form should be open 24/7 with clear guidance that states it may take x amount of time to respond.

DS responded and said that they are having a meeting with the Counselling and Psychological Service soon along with the Chair and they will raise these concerns and provide an update. DS also suggested that someone from the service could come and attend a future Welfare Zone meeting to speak directly to students.

Action agreed: DS and Chair to provide an update at the next Welfare Zone about the opening hours of the service and referral forms, and explore whether someone from the Counselling and Psychological Services could attend a future Welfare Zone meeting.

6) Rent-freeze

Lucas Dastros-Pitei (LDP) raised that rent prices have gone up again this year and this is something they would like to tackle.

JS responded and said that there is a current Union policy calling for a London-wide rent-freeze (you can read the policy [here](#)). Rent setting negotiations take place in December this year within UCL and the route to go down to pushing for this rent-freeze would be through this meeting. JS said that they have lots of data on the prices of rent and the increases which they can share with LDP.

Agreed action – LDP, Chair and JS to meet to discuss this further.

10. Matters for Discussion – Transition/Welcome period

Activities & Engagement Officer said that at the Welcome Fair, 14,000 students registered for a ticket, and yesterday clubs and socs have 18,000 students sign up and memberships have increased by 57%

No further comments from any Zone members.

11. Matters for Approval – Elect one person to Union Executive

There were three candidates for the Welfare & Community Zone representative on Union Executive.

Manaal Tariq
James Zhou
Donna Amewu

With 38% of the votes, Donna was successfully elected.

12. Any Other Business

Activities & Engagement Officer said that they are working on getting a napping zone established on campus.

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record	
Chair:	Ahmad Ismail
Signature:	Ahmad Ismail
Date:	10 November 2023