



Student Experience Zone:

4pm Thursday 22nd October 2020

“Disabilities and Vulnerable students”

Virtual on Zoom

Present:

6 individuals were in attendance

Chair

Emma Palmer, President of Wellbeing and Diversity (PWD)

Students' Union Officers/staff

Zaki Kaf Al-Ghazal – Advice and Representation Coordinator (ZK)

Jenny Marchant – President of Education (JM)

Apologies

None recorded

Introduction

PWD welcomed attendees to the zone and explained why she was hosting it and how important it is to get student feedback on disabilities, support services and wellbeing particularly with the impact Covid-19 has had on those who are most vulnerable.

Section 1 - Questions around the topic

1. Have you accessed the wellbeing services? If so how did you find it? If not, has anything stopped you?

“Yes – last academic year I came to the previous president of wellbeing for advice I haven’t personally but I know you can attend the desk in Holgate and they can refer you”.

“No – not knowing who to contact and apparently referrals take ages”.

“Not really”.

PWD notes Wellbeing and Welfare advice and appointments are available on the website. Holgate will only signpost you to online services as there is nothing physical. All staff are working remotely.

2. How have you found accessibility to online learning (lectures and tutorials)

“Difficult, manageable but hard mainly.”

3. How has accessing learning been?

“Difficult for the past 4 weeks I wasn’t able to access my online reading materials and only just been sorted.”

“Self-directed learning has always been an issue for me so trying to discipline myself has been a challenge, Not all tutors have been supportive.”

“Not showed us how to use Teams so lots of issues there.”

“Finding lectures has been ok but quality is not always there and internet is always an issue.”

“I also worry about the amount of screen time I have. Prior to this I would always manage my screen time and keep it as low as possible.”

“I feel like we didn't get much help with the transition and the setting up of all seminars etc was left to the last minute which is a little bit stressful.”

4. How have you felt about the start of the semester?

One student mentioned that he had already got out of his accommodation for the year.

5. Have you accessed campus? If so how was it? If not why not?

“For lab sessions I access campus. I only went to the library once and didn’t enjoy the experience.”

“One-way system from skjell/foss is confusing and the library is confusing.”

“I have been in D Grey for seminars which were confusing to find in the one-way system.”

“Campus is awesome and the one way systems are clear.”

6. What do you think about the start of the semester?

“Going into 3rd year has hit like a ton of bricks but that’s a similar experience for all third years. I miss playing sports.”

“Very stressful!”

“Support is not great! Disability team haven’t really supported me and neither has head of studies but the accessibility team in the library have been of some help. Lots of passing around.”

“Accessing learning has been more difficult since going online a lot of the readings won’t load.”

7. If you have needed to contact disability services, how have you found it?

“They have not been helpful and it doesn’t help that you can’t speak to someone in person.”

“My disability advisor has changed about 4 times in the past 2 years, They have been good with some things bit others I have been messed around.”

“I haven’t needed to but I know very little about them as I don’t think they are very well advertised.”

“They take too long to reply. The communication loop doesn’t seem to be closed.”

8. How have you found accessibility to student services?

“It’s been ok, mainly communicated through email.”

“Accommodation in terms of moving out have been understanding. Student Services can’t be faulted and have been contactable.”

“SAUs have generally been good in responding”

9. Do you find hygiene provision in accommodation and across campus adequate for you e.g. cleanliness in lifts etc....

“It’s been good from what I’ve seen.”

“No hand sanitiser at my accommodation and I don’t think the building gets cleaned, I know there was some broken glass that was cleaned up for around a week at my accommodation.”

“From the limited times I’ve been on campus, PPE provision looks ok on campus.”

“Fire alarms and social distancing need to be taken in consideration.”

10. How are you finding socialising with friends and new people? Can more be done to help you?

“Finding it hard as we can’t really meet new people.”

“I haven’t really met any new people apart from through sport (in a socially distanced way). Everyone is really quiet in lectures on Teams.”

“A lot of FaceTiming has been going on which has helped too.”

“Not been able to see people inside houses whilst in Tier 2 has its impact and what is making matters even more difficult is the uncertainty.”

PWD and PE advertised online events that will be going on.

11. Do you feel like you have adequate social support from friends, flat mates, course mates and academic staff?

Some students replied with “Somewhat” on the sliding scale.

More students replied with “Yes definitely” on the sliding scale.

12. In what ways could social support be increased for you?

“Potentially more time speaking to my course mates.”

“Academic tutors arranging short meetings with students focusing on where they are in terms of workloads and just a general check in on wellbeing.”

13. If you are part of a sport/society how have you found it so far? If you're not part of one, is anything preventing you from joining?

“I want to join running but not a lot seems to be happening.”

“Sport being postponed has been difficult but understandable.”

“Being a captain of a sport has been testing because decisions have to constantly be made. It has been challenging getting in touch with Freshers too.”

“Hard preparing for the unknown but it's been good fun when we've managed to get back.”



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14. Mentally, how have you been during the last few weeks?

“Getting back to sport has really helped me a lot, Work has been really stressful so having that has really helped me.”

“I have had to isolate and it’s been tough.”

15. Are you able to take time away from the screen and has “screen fatigue” affected you mentally?

“It’s really tough looking at a screen all day but I don’t know what to do about it.”

“My breaks involve time on the screen too, it’s hard.”

“Some lecturers give us tea/coffee breaks which help a lot. Others push us through the full 2 hours which isn’t good. Breaks should compulsory.”

“It’s been hard to manage everything in terms of DSA and getting all the support without speaking to anyone.”

Section 2 - Any Other Business

None