

Website Manifesto

Cultural Competency

Cultural Competency, Inclusivity and Awareness

All Guild Staff should be trained in Cultural Competency, LGBTQ+ and Disability Inclusivity and Trauma/Disclosure Awareness

Guild Staff work for you, and to do that properly that need to understand and be aware of the different experiences and challenges which students may face. This will not only improve the ability of Guild Staff to create a Guild which truly works to support and engage with all students, but it will also show students that the Guild are willing to put the work in, not just performative, in its drive for inclusion and support for all students.

- Every Guild Staff member must undergo
 - o Cultural Competency Training (covering forms of racism - overt and microaggressions, racial trauma, Importance of validating experiences of racism, awareness of groups and oppressed intersections within those groups, signposting for POC, resources for further education)
 - o Faith-based Discrimination and Sensitivity Training (covering all religions, not just those which are highly represented within the student body, smaller faiths must be included)
 - o Disability Awareness Training (including visible and invisible disabilities)
- I will also support and work with the Decolonise The Curriculum movement led by students
 - o By analysing the surveys conducted by this group and bolstering with more evidence I will present this to the university to show that Exeter students have a real desire for a decolonial and diverse curriculum and this is important - Exeter students should be well rounded and to create well rounded students the material they learn from must be diverse - with non-diverse teaching we are liable to collective blindness and thus are doing students, and the workplaces they will go into, a disservice
- The Guild must be actively inclusive in its events and celebrations
 - o This must not be performative, the Guild should put on and spearhead its own events but also work closely with and support student groups in running their own
- Demanding an input into the design of the new Multi-Faith Chaplaincy building and ensuring diverse student voices are heard in the decision making process
 - o Currently this building is going to be good for larger faith based groups but not smaller ones. All faiths (whether currently present or not) at the university should be considered carefully.

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Complaints Reform

The Complaints Procedure must focus on supporting and empowering students, not protecting the University's or Guild's reputation

Currently, the complaints process is filled with bureaucracy, whether you're complaining about academic matters or sexual harassment, students are forced to go through the same procedure, this is not fair and it does not help the student. The complaints process makes it extremely difficult for victims to come forward, and when they do they are not offered adequate support in the process. This has to change if we are to understand, support and advocate for all students. Whatever circumstances and challenges students are facing - we must create a process that is sensitive and compassionate - thus creating an environment where students feel safe and are able to thrive. We need a complete structural reshaping of the complaints process as well as comprehensive disclosure training as well as a complete structural reshaping of the complaints process.

- **I will launch a complete investigation into the process for all forms of complaints**
 - o The priority will be the sexual harassment complaints procedure
- **This will involve a complete student body consultation** (with student voices, groups, and leaders, worked with in a collaborative and mutually beneficial way) which allows anyone who has used the complaints procedure, or been unable to use it due to its current form, to tell us about their experience of the process
 - o Again, the **priority will be understanding and supporting student victims of harassment and assault. I aim to ensure these conversations are survivor-led and sensitive, yet solutions-based with regards to the complaint procedure**
 - o Throughout the consultation process **support will be offered to anyone who chooses to come forward** - understanding that this may well be an extremely challenging and troubling thing to speak about - there will also be increased signposting and clarity on support available to everyone (regardless of their involvement in the consultation process)
- Another extremely important aspect of this reform will be to ensure that **members of staff at the Guild have rigorous sexual assault disclosure training** - the process of disclosure is always likely to be difficult, but we can make it an easier process by giving survivors members of staff who are well trained
- For the academic complaints process I will work closely with VP Education as well as VP Liberation and Equality - to ensure the process is both **academically rigorous and aware of the differing circumstances students face**
- Lead by the findings of student consultation and institutional leaders in this field, I will propose a renewed process that will ensure students are at the centre.
 - o This will include
 - § **different avenues for importantly different forms of complaint**

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- § a webpage where the **process and steps involved in each type of complaint is clearly laid out,**
- § and importantly, **specific support available for students going through the complaints process.**

Student Wellbeing

This year, more than ever before, we have seen our wellbeing services put to the test. Individually and collectively we have faced challenges that we could have never prepared for, or expected. There are many things that can be done to improve student wellbeing, and here in my manifesto I have highlighted those that I think will have the biggest impact on the student population here at Exeter. Fundamentally I believe that looking to the root cause of wellbeing issues, and tackling it here, is what we must do. Putting additional money towards the services we provide will of course reap benefits, but the biggest impact will come by looking at the systems and structures surrounding wellbeing, and the preventative measures that we can take. So here we will look at Harm Reduction; a pragmatic approach to the risky behaviour that students may partake in, and an approach that ultimately will save lives. Improved collaboration, both between teaching staff and wellbeing services, as well as between student groups, the Guild, and the wellbeing centre. Without collaboration there is a drain of expertise, insight and action. Finally I want to make our campus an environment where everyone can thrive, to do this we must have monitored spaces for quietness and relaxation that are separate from study spaces - I will work to introduce these.

Student Wellbeing - work collaboratively to provide wraparound support

- **Create a monitored and accessible Relaxation Space on campus separate from study spaces, designated to calmness, meditation, prayer and reading.**
- **Work to create better communication between University Wellbeing Services, Student Lead Support Groups and the Guild. Focus on collaboration, sharing of information, resources and expertise.**
- **Lobby University Wellbeing to provide group counselling sessions, an additional form of psychological support, which has proved successful in other [universities](#).**

Harm Reduction

Students are going to act in risky ways, lets focus on reducing the risk

We all know that 'just say no' doesn't work, whether its referring to drug use, binge alcohol drinking or other behaviours associated with risk. Instead of pretending students are not engaging in this behaviour, or ignoring it, we must ensure that students have the ability to be as safe as possible, to do this, our approach to drug use, sexual health and alcohol consumption must be one of harm reduction.

- The University must follow the evidence and renew their Student Alcohol and Drug policy to explicitly be focused on Harm Reduction (following in the steps of a number of universities including Bristol and Leeds) - currently if a student wants to seek medical help due to an adverse reaction to a drug use they may not do so due to fear or disciplinary procedures - **this costs student lives**
 - o There needs to be clear and unbiased educational content available to students surrounding taking drugs - including how to do so safely
 - o Drug Safety Testing Kits should be available to students

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- o Clarity surrounding the policy of the university for ALL students (including those on professional qualification pathways) and the policy of Estate Patrol in supporting students with the affect of drug use
- Better honest and inclusive educational material surrounding Sexual Health in places on campus (such as halls of residence and campus bathrooms) and the free provision of materials needed for good sexual health (all must be LGBTQ+ inclusive)
- A continuation of the work that Sunday has done to improve the situation and support available for Student Sex Workers

Training for Teaching Staff

Providing Training and Resources to Teaching Staff surrounding Student Support and Wellbeing Services

Teaching Staff already have a lot on their plate and I do not wish to add to this, I want to ensure that they have the training and resources necessary to react to a student who may need to access support. For many students their only contact with the university is through lectures, module convenors and personal tutors, often these students might display needs for support to these staff members, but staff might not know where or how to direct them to support. Freshers in particular may not have a support group which understands the support structures available through being a student at the university.

- I propose that the guild provides briefings and optional training for teaching staff who want to become more aware of what support is available to students
 - o This is so that they can correctly and effectively signpost students who they feel may need additional support
 - § I will pilot the formation of a clear information pack along with a session delivered by student support groups and services at the university at the beginning of the academic year
 - § I would consult staff members about the effectiveness of these sessions and information to develop this process throughout the year

Inclusive and Accessible Relaxation Spaces on Campus

Quiet Spaces

Feeling stressed, anxious, just needing a break from studying and somewhere quiet and calm to sit and regroup? At the moment there is nowhere on campus to do this - there are quiet study spaces, but we all need a break from studying. This is particularly important for students with additional or differing requirements, such as mental health conditions and visible or invisible disabilities

- Create accessible spaces around campus (piloting this in/near the Forum) separate from study spaces, designated to calmness, meditation, prayer and reading
- This will around campus 'set aside as an area of stillness and quiet,

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- o These spaces will be highlighted for students who may have hypersensitivity to stimuli, anxiety, visible and invisible disabilities, or any student who needs a moment of calmness on a busy campus
 - § They would be staffed (or at least monitored) by individuals who have training in mental health first aid, trauma disclosure, and signposting
 - § (<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/campus/landmarks/quiet-place/>)
- A key part of creating these spaces will be finding out what students need, I would look to speak to stakeholders, VP equality and liberation and the leaders of students support groups who would be able to offer insight and collaborate with me in ensuring these spaces offered a place where all students can decompress and feel safe in an often overwhelming environment

Collaboration between services and utilisation of expertise

Collaboration between The Guild, Student Led Wellbeing Groups and The University Wellbeing centre to create wraparound support

There are many services available to students at the University but they are currently not working together. We should put more money into wellbeing, but money won't make a difference if they are systematically flawed, I want to ensure all services work together and learn from each other to give students the wellbeing and mental health support they need to thrive.

- My core aim will be to work to create better communication between University Wellbeing Services, Student Lead Support Groups and the Guild. Focus on collaboration, sharing of information, resources and expertise.
- I will propose a meeting of all key stakeholders to take place over summer to address what key problems exist within the student population and how these groups can work together in preventative and responsive ways. This should open channels of communication that should continue regularly throughout the year.
 - It will be particularly important to seek out the voices of current first years in this conversation who will be coming into second year when their degree counts with so far an extremely turbulent year of university

Work with Wellbeing to launch **group-counselling** following the lead of other universities and evidence that groups settings are more effective form of psychological support for some

- o For many individuals this is a much more effective form of help as groups can provide opportunities to explore feelings and relate to the group, as well as forming relationships with those in similar situations, and learning to articulate your emotions by listening to others
- o Many universities (such as Oxford and Bristol) already offer this and I would seek their insight into the most effective way to set up these sessions
- Additionally these groups sessions would alleviate some of the pressure on wellbeing services, although it is important to note that these would not be an alternative to individual counselling when that is the most appropriate form of help

Beyond Covid

This year our university experience has been wildly different to what any of us expected. Academically and socially we have been challenged in so many ways, and for many this will have long lasting impacts on our university experience. I want to mitigate the impact of covid through proactive measures - additional educational support, working alongside VP education for the academic mitigation and conditions students need to thrive, and support to give current first years a jump start in making friendships at university.

Ensure the Guild caters for current first years transition into Second Year

(Ensure Freshers' Week caters to current first years via additional Guild events specific to this year group, support with transition to community living, and working with societies to support inclusive in person events.)

All students have been impacted by Covid but Freshers have gone through this whilst also facing the normal struggles associated with starting University. Freshers, I want to ensure the guild does everything it can to improve your second year experience and mitigate the negative impact of covid on you. I have a number of ideas but ultimately want to consult you to ensure that these fit with your needs and desires.

- Ensure Freshers' Week caters to current first years via additional Guild events specific to this year group, support with transition to community living, and working with societies to support inclusive in person events.
 - Ensure that there are sessions for 'transition to community' to help Freshers learn their way around Exeter and their way to campus
 - o Include in this support regarding living in a shared house - how to manage bills, conflict resolution and how to stay safe in the community
 - Working closely with Subject Reps to create bonding opportunities for Freshers and their coursemates
 - o Weekly group sessions where 10-15 second years will meet in a group lead by 1-2 3rd/4th years to discuss anything from general uni life, to modules they're doing to study skills tips. This will create an environment where course friendships and bonds can be made more quickly, whilst also making bonds and support network with older years who may be able to offer good advice and help guide conversations within the group.

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- Having events in Freshers week 2021 that are solely for Second Years to ensure you have the opportunity to make friends in your cohort in an environment that is design for your year group alone
 - o Working with societies to ensure that there are events specifically catered towards second year students
 - o Working with subject leads and colleges to put on 'welcome' events for second years where they can meet course mates and lecturers
 - o Having a 'Second Year Freshers Fair' where societies can advertise what they do specifically for second year students so the events and publicity can be geared more towards what a second year wants from society involvement
 - o Having orientation events (i.e. walk around campus and walk around town) throughout freshers week and possibly the week before

Using Space on Campus

Many of us want to get back onto campus, I want to make sure that when it is safe that is possible and we utilise space effectively.

- If seminar rooms / lecture halls are not being used for teaching for prolonged periods then these should become study spaces
- Ensuring that whilst maximising study space is a priority, we do not remove spaces which are used for socialising, eating and decompressing
- Working with the university to increase the capacity of outlets such as the Ram and the Lemon Grove through the use of marquees already set up

Retaining the benefits of Covid

Covid undoubtedly has caused upheaval in everyone's lives, but there have been some positives, and we must make sure these are not lost.

- There must still be adequate provision of online learning for those who are unable to come to campus - we cannot lose the benefit that online teaching has had for so many
- Improved examination circumstances for many must also be considered when considering how exams will change in the coming year, here it will be important to work alongside VP Education and student's to ensure there is a fair and equitable resolution reached

St Lukes, PostGrads and International Students

St Lukes, PG and International Students are often not catered for in the Guilds decision making process. Although steps forward have been made this year there is still a long way to go. An important aspect for each of these areas is the active inclusion and the seeking out of student voices, listening to students and

giving them the opportunity to feedback is the first step in creating a Guild that can truly work to enhance their university experience.

St Lukes

- Create a working group of St Luke's students to consult on improving Guild relations on St Luke's campus.
 - For improved academic, social and wellbeing support
- Work to increase the Guild's presence on St Luke's by utilising the G47 space and introducing an Advice Unit.
 - Societies should also be able to book this space and actively encouraged to host events in there
- Holding more Guild events in Fresher's Week and throughout the term.
 - Also collaborating with other Sabbatical officers to host drop in sessions and coffee mornings on St Lukes campus - this could also be tied in with sessions run by College Officers and Subject reps - to help integrate the Guild into the support systems already created by St Luke's students

Events, Wellbeing Support and Representation must include PG Students

This year PostGrads have been left without a Sabbatical officer, this means that their voices have not been heard as loudly as they should have been. I want to ensure that PG student voices are heard and included in Guild discussions, and that their needs are considered in the decision making process.

- I will work with College Officers and VP Education to ensure adequate academic provisions are made for these students - including support in the funding process
- Ensuring that wellbeing provisions that are made are made with the consideration of PG students who may have a different set of circumstances and needs to UG students
- Working with VP Education and VP Liberation and Equality to ensure that sufficient and fair medical leave policies
- Improving communication channels separately for PG students
 - through increased awareness of opportunities for meetings and discussions with sabbatical officers, and improved clarity on any ongoing projects which specific relate to their needs
 - importantly this communication must acknowledge the differences between PGR and PGT students - both have wholly differing experiences at university and this must be recognised

International and INTO Students

- I will ensure International Student Voices are included in conversations surrounding financial mitigation from Covid.
- International Students must be considered and consulted in any decisions surrounding Graduation Ceremonies

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- There must be improved communication and support channels for international students facing visa and accommodation challenges due to COVID
 - o This ties into the improvement of the Guild website to be clearer and more accessible for students trying to find what support is available to them
- INTO Students must be explicitly included in Freshers Communication and I will work with VP Activities to encourage societies to run events exclusively for the INTO student community and appoint INTO Student Reps

Students Physical Safety

Student safety and wellbeing is at the core of any manifesto this year - if students don't feel safe they cannot be well, and if students are not well they cannot reach their full potential. There are complexities surrounding the feeling of safety and truly being safe, we need an approach that both engages with students and the services that they use. I believe that addressing the relationship between students and Estate Patrol by recentering their activity on wellbeing is the single biggest improvement that could be made to safety. Beyond this, we must look at issues like lighting on and around campus, and relationships with the local community and forces.

Estate Patrol

We need Estate Patrol to refocus on Student Wellbeing and Safety, not policing

Estate Patrol's main task is to ensure the upkeep of the safety and welfare of students and staff, but currently, students are distrusting of them and even

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unsure of what their role is apart from shutting down parties and responding to noise complaints. These are important aspects of their job, but it means that if students need support for their welfare or safety they are unlikely to use Estate Patrol.

I want to change the narrative so that students and estate patrol can work together for student safety.

We need to work to improve students trust and use of estate patrol - but to do this we must improve estate patrol itself

- Estate Patrol must employ more staff from a welfare background - currently, the majority of staff are from MOD, the police force or prison wardens
- All staff must undergo wellbeing training so they can adequately respond to students needing support
 - For cost and speed, this training initially could be delivered by a collaboration between the wellbeing team at the University Wellbeing Centre and different student-lead wellbeing groups
- There must be clarity over what students can expect from estate patrol and what services they have access to - both on-campus and off-campus. Currently, every student has a different idea and story about what Estate Patrol can and will do.
 - Clarity on schemes such as (but not limited to) the Guardian Angel Scheme, transporting students if they don't feel safe or are unwell, the difference between their roles on/off-campus, they're response if they find students with drugs
- There needs to be open and consistent communication with different groups who also are involved with student safety and students in the community, such as the Student Community Wardens and the Residence Life Team
- Student Community Wardens should be utilised more - as students themselves they can be a friendly face that is a halfway point between estate patrol and students who need support with security, conflict resolution and relationship with the wider Exeter community

Safety On Campus

24/7 Designated Support on Campus and Lighting Routes To Campus

Every student should feel safe getting to campus and whilst they are on campus. There are some simple and easy things we can do to improve safety on campus and en-route to campus.

- Working with the council to improve lighting in areas such as Hoopern Lane, and working with the University to ensure there is adequate lighting around campus

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- The council are already willing to work on this, so with the right connections this should be something we are able to achieve
- Ensuring that there is a clear system whereby students can find a member of staff on campus 24/7
 - o Most of the time we are on campus there are staff around to help, but students need to know they can go to them, what they can go to them for and how to find them - whether you need urgent help, you need to report an incident or your phones dead and you're not sure how to get home safely
 - There needs to be better utilisation and publicity of the SafeZone app and clarity surrounding what it is

Improved Information and Support Online

Improving Safety and Support Online

Campus is wherever students are learning, right now, and moving forward that means online as well as in person. Improvements need to be made to the Guild website and our policy surrounding online harassment.

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Guild Website

- The Guild website is challenging to navigate and does not display information clearly - there are lots of support and advice services available to students, but they are no use if no one knows they exist or how to access them.
- To do this we must consult with a diverse range of students to ensure the end product is a website that can help all students, whether they are in a crisis, wanting to support a friend, or trying to find a new society to join
-

Online Policy

- There needs to be more support for students who have experienced online harassment, currently The Guild has no policy surrounding support for students who have experienced this, this needs to change.
 - Working to create a comprehensive policy on supporting students who are victim to social media harassment that is student-focused (not Guild/University reputation focused!)
-

Improved Access to Information - quick, clear and accessible information

- Improve the Guild's website so that students can find help (financial, academic, wellbeing, safety etc.) quickly and easily.
- Consult a diverse range of student voices throughout this process