

TO: Assembly

FROM: NUS Delegates

RE: NUS National Conference

DATE: 12 June 2018

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### **NUS Delegate report**

On the 27 – 29 March 2018, 5 Durham students attended NUS National Conference in Glasgow to vote on policy and in elections on behalf of Durham University students. The delegates elected by students were:

- Helen Paton
- Tom Harwood
- Clara Gallay
- George Walker

They were joined by SU President, Megan Croll who attends as President as an ex-officio delegate by virtue of being President.

### Elections Results

President:

- Shakira Martin

VP Higher Education

- Amatey Doku

VP Welfare:

- Eva Crossan Jory

VP Society & Citizenship:

- Zamzam Ibriham

VP Union Development:

- Ali Milani

### Voting Records on motions

### **100 - Priority Zone**



Motion Number	Motion Name	For	Against	Abstained
PC101	Student poverty	George Clara Megan Helen		
PC101a	Student finance	George Clara Megan Helen		
PC101b	Pay student loans before the course date	George Clara Megan Helen		
PC101c	Student Loans for everyone	George Clara Megan		Helen

## 200 - Education Zone

Motion Number	Motion Name	For	Against	Abstained
FE101	This Story is getting old... time for investment in FE/College our voices to be heard!	George Clara Megan		Helen
HE101	Tackling the Black Attainment Gap	George Megan Helen		
HE101a	Replacement amendment	Helen		George Clara
HE102	Students and Brexit	George Megan	Helen	
HE102a	Not Letting the Door Hit Us On The Way Out	George Megan	Helen	
HE102b	Resisting the Brexit Brain Drain	George Megan	Helen	
HE102c	Ensure that the UK Government will commit to the continuity of the Erasmus Programme following Brexit	George Helen		
HE102d	Freedom of movement	George Helen		
HE103	High course costs are destroying student mental health	George Clara Megan Helen		

HE103a	Smash the Class Ceiling - scrap audition fees at Universities	George Clara Megan Helen		
HE103b	Graduation – the final hidden cost	Megan George Helen		Clara
FE102	The Scourge of Day 42	George Clara Megan		Helen
He104	Quality of Teaching	George Clara Megan Helen		
FE103	There is progression data for most learners! why not us?	George Clara Megan		Helen
HE105	Postgraduate Tuition Fees and Funding	George Megan Helen		
HE105a	Post Graduate Loans System	George Megan Helen		

### 300 - Union Development Zone

Motion Number	Motion Name	For	Against	Abstained
UD101	Our Unions have, and always will be, Political	Clara Megan Helen		
UD101a	Defend SUs – Stop Victimisation	Clara Megan		Helen
UD102	A new strategy for engaging disability specialist students' union	Clara Helen		
UD102a	One size doesn't fit all	Clara Megan Helen		
UD103	Media Response Unit	Clara Megan Helen		
UD104	'Welfare and Inclusivity' positions on SU Sports Team Committees	Clara Megan Helen		
UD105	National Postgraduate	Megan		

	Representation	Helen		
UD106	Protecting Students in Nightclubs and Bars	Megan Helen		
UD107	Hello, is it Nightline you're looking for?	Megan Helen		
UD108	Unions should pay the real living wage, as defined by the Living Wage Foundation	Megan Helen		
UD109	Asset learner forum	Megan Helen		
UD110	Updating the Education Act	Megan Helen		
UD111	Defending Freedom of Speech	George Helen	Megan	
UD111a	Affirm Conference's Commitment to Freedom of Speech	Helen	Megan George	

**400 - Welfare Zone**

Motion Number	Motion Name	For	Against	Abstained
W101	Mental Health – From The Roots Up	George Clara Helen		
W101a	Mental Health – From The Roots Up	George Clara Megan Helen		
W101b	Meaningful Mental Health campaigns not Puppy Rooms	Helen	George Megan	
W101c	Supporting officers dealing with student suicide	Megan Helen (for speech given) George Clara		
W101d	Actual Action on Students Mental Health	George Clara Megan Helen		

**500 - Society and Citizenship Zone**

Motion Number	Motion Name	For	Against	Abstained
SC101	Ending single use plastics	George		

		Clara Megan Helen		
SC101a	ADD amendment	George Clara Helen		
SC101b	DELETE & REPLACE amendment	Clara	George Megan	Helen
SC102	International not isolationism	George Clara Megan Helen		
SC102a	ADD amendment	George Clara Megan Helen		
SC102b	Child refugees and the DUB	George Clara Megan		Helen
SC102c	Refugee scholarships in every University	George Clara Megan Helen		

### **George Walker - Report**

I was very pleased to be able to attend NUS Conference in March as one of Durham SU's five delegates. National NUS Conference is an event that allows delegates from SUs around the country to come together to decide on NUS' policy priorities for the year ahead and elect the President and the five Vice-Presidents of NUS.

On the whole the quality of policy sent to Conference was very high and I was pleased to see NUS debate and pass policy on many key issues that affect students in Durham, including on issues which I raised in my own manifesto for NUS delegate. Motions were debated and passed on a range of issues such as Student poverty, Brexit, the black attainment gap, FE funding and mental health, with important contributions from Durham delegates, in particular on the very important mental health motion which was passed by conference. It was good to see NUS addressing issues that are of great relevance to students across the country, especially as this has been something that NUS has been criticised for in the past.

The delays and disruption on the second day of conference were disappointing. It was an ongoing issue throughout the Conference that there was simply not enough time to debate all of the policy that had been submitted to conference and it is understandable that people felt strongly about this, especially given the effort that goes into writing motions and the personal connection many may have had to the issues being discussed. Regarding the two motions at the centre of the controversy,

I would have voted for both the motion on abortion laws in Northern Ireland and the motion on student sex workers had the motions reached conference floor and I am pleased that both motions have since been passed by NUS' National Executive Committee (NEC).

The time lost meant that motions on a number of other key issues were not discussed. I think this was a great shame as there were excellent policies on issues such as solidarity with Trade Unions, the Grenfell Tower fire and combatting far-right racism that I would have liked to have been able to support and see become NUS policy. As a result of the delays I was also unable to put my policy on Tenants' Unions to Conference, although again I hope that this will be made NUS policy by the NEC.

Having been to National Conference it is clear that NUS needs to address a number of issues regarding the accessibility of its democracy. It was sometimes unclear exactly what was happening or what delegates were being asked to vote on at a given time, making it harder to fully take part, especially for first-time delegates. The breaks given to delegates were also insufficient given the intense nature of the event and even the breaks originally scheduled were cut further following the disruption on the second day. This made the conference particularly difficult for students with disabilities such as myself. The NUS also must continue to answer serious questions about how we eradicate racism and anti-Semitism from student politics, which yet again was faced by some delegates in attendance.

Despite the shortcomings of NUS and the conference, it was incredibly positive to see productive debate on a number of important issues affecting the lives of students in Durham and across the UK. NUS has made progress and there are many great people within the organisation that recognise the need to go further in building a National Union that is able to fight effectively for students. Given this, as well as much of the good and relevant work done by NUS, the vital support provided by NUS to Students' Union groups and Officers and the ability that being a part of our National Union gives Durham students to project our voice on the national stage, I remain confident that Durham students are better off if our National Unions remains part of NUS.

For those who are interested, as well as my voting record on motions, these are the candidates I voted for in the elections for Full-Time NUS Officers:

President: Shakira Martin  
 Vice-President Higher Education: Amatey Doku  
 Vice-President Welfare: Izzy Lenga  
 Vice-President Society & Citizenship: Abdi Duale  
 Vice-President Union Development: Jess Levy

### **Helen Paton – Report**

As soon as we got to the wonders of the city of Glasgow, we knew it would be an eventful couple of days full of student politics; from elections to motions and even a protest. As one of the delegates my main plan was to try and represent Durham's reality in the national floor. My priorities were to make the NUS closer to what student's struggle on a daily basis, such as mental health and accommodation fees. I was elected on reform platform and I know how the NUS can be out of touch with most students across the country, but I believe it has potential to be taken more seriously. As a



delegate I made sure to live stream the conference on all platforms of social media such as Facebook, Instagram and content on Snapchat. This content had more than 2,000 views, which I believe is progress as a student myself I did not understand what happened in conference the year before. Social media is a great way of making people engage further within student politics as it does matter to all of us but most people feel they cannot engage because it is far from them.

The conference is divided into 6 zones, where motions are categorised: Priority Zone, Education Zone, Union Development, Welfare, Society and Citizenship and AGM. Many SU's proposed motion or amendments to conference, in our case, Durham took 3. These 3 were Actual Action on Mental Health, Housing and LGBT representation for delegate elections. As a delegate you are entitled to have a voting card and speak for or against motions. There are more than 500 delegates from all across the country gathered for the weekend. Conference receives hundreds of motions, so they have to filter most of them and because of time, not all of them will be able to be debated. During conference, the only of our motions to be debated was Actual Action on Mental Health, which was proposed by my SU Rep for Trevelyan College, Darcy Evan Eerten and I had the chance to speak for it at the conference floor, the motion passed unanimously. Within motions I voted for all those that impact us directly instead of diversifying into national politics such as Votes at 16 or Justice Grenfell, for the sole reason that the NUS should focus first on tackling student's needs and issues, which are the main reason why we united at conference. National politics do have an impact but there's need to be priorities in order to be taken seriously.

In terms of elections, there were 3 candidates for NUS presidency. Those being Shakira Martin, Monim Saqib and Sahaya James. I voted to re-elect Shakira Martin because she has made the NUS progress within national politics and I have seen results during her presidency. She was successfully re-elected and she was the candidate that represented the moderates of conference, all Durham delegates voted for her in the end. The other elections were the VP's and Block of 15.

As I told you, it was an eventful weekend as there was a lot of canvassing and campaigning for those running for elections, in my opinion that distracted slightly the debate but it is equally important as those officers are the ones who will be working on the motions debated. As you read this, you may have heard about the protest that took place during conference. As Durham delegates we did not partake in the occupation of the stage. Conference has set period of times to debate motions and there's a guillotine, when it falls, time is over and we move to the next zone of motions. When the guillotine fell for the Welfare motions, there was a vote to extend it and debate more motions, but democracy spoke and it lost. After that, students took over the stage for a period of 5 hours protesting about "Decriminalization of Northern Ireland and Students" and "Sex work". We all wanted to debate those motions and we all understood their motives to do so. It was not the time or place as SU's all across the country spend a lot of money to send their delegates and debate motions that matter to all students. We all respected the times and this protest took so much time as well as making headline for the wrong reasons, which put at risk the image of the NUS once again. Nobody says we don't support them, that's not the case, we as Durham delegates disagree that was the measure to take as the motion would be debated within NUS NEC rather than conference because of time. For this reason a lot of our motions could not be debated and we had to use the time to listen to candidates and election speeches as well as voting. I was specially a bit disappointed that One

student, One vote was not debated on the floor but do not worry, I will keep you posted on that as it was one of my main manifesto pledges.

I never expected a protest but it was a great moment to take part and represent Durham with fellow delegates, we all bonded and I worked my best to vote according to what you as students want for our education. As I said, a very eventful weekend. Helen out.

PS: I'll make a video of this report to share it and make it more accessible to the Durham community.