

Vote Pete Mercer #1 for VP Welfare



Hi, my name is Pete Mercer. I'm currently on the NUS Block of 15, having previously been the Welfare Officer at Newcastle University Students' Union for two years. As a passionate, dedicated campaigner, I want to see a fighting NUS that wins for your students' rights; a campaigning NUS that builds active citizens; and a responsive NUS that listens to students' unions and your members.

The landscape of the student movement has completely changed and now it is time for the welfare zone to take a new direction. We need a welfare zone with teeth, one that fights vigorously and one that takes no prisoners when faced with attacks to our wellbeing, identity and aspirations. Serious times call for united campaigning action!

NUS simply can't just be a 'watch-dog', a haphazard organisation chasing round the country putting out fires, minimising the damage of a government on a rampage. We need to be a campaigning organisation deploying the right tactics at the right time, from protest to pickets, and lobbies to unique research. Under my leadership the welfare campaign will be on the front line with you, it will be fast, responsive and empowering - supporting you to win for your students.

Defending Student Services

As education cuts hit institutions up and down the country, our Principals and Vice Chancellors face the biggest financial pressures that the sector has ever seen. We must fight back against cuts and protect our front line services, preserving student support that benefits so many. Now is the time to be investing to ensure that students have access to counselling, mental health services and pastoral care - not denied the very health services that are so necessary for our members.

I Will:

- Campaign against the cuts to student services - preserving front line service at all costs, demanding full equality impact assessments
- Fight for minimum levels of pastoral care as part of the broader demands in both the HE & FE white papers
- Create a national review of SU advice centres looking at the most effective ways of delivering advice in the future, such as collaboration, joint advice and national specialist support on immigration & student parents
- Provide a research-led case for the protection of support services, based on student satisfaction, wellbeing surveys, attainment and retention - for officers to use in their battles against local cuts
- Fight against the brutal attack on the enrichment budget in FE
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"Pete Mercer's enthusiasm and drive is unparalleled. He is the candidate who can inspire activists and deliver on policy. A dedicated campaigner through and through. I'm voting him #1"

**Ben Whittaker,
NUS VP Welfare**



"Pete Mercer has been a refreshing change and an inspiring activist over the last few years - he will bring a new kind of campaigning to the movement. NUS needs more leaders like Pete Mercer!"

**Emilie Tapping,
VP Academic Affairs, KCLSU**

For more information on my campaign plans check out my extended manifesto at:

www.mercer4welfare.co.uk

or email me at:

merc4welfare@gmail.com

Supporting localism and campaigning

This year we have seen a massive change on our campuses; students are mobilising in new ways, through new means and need national support to enable them to win at a local level. With the Government giving more powers to local people I want to ensure you have the right tools to be in the campaign driving seat.

I Will:

- With the VPUD, develop an activist programme that unions can use to support and train your local campaign teams to help win for your members
- Launch a new campaign hub on the welfare page allowing you to see other unions who are campaigning on the same issue and share best practice / resources
- Create a bank of welfare resources that we can share giving you downloadable campaign resources at your fingertips
- Be a listening, responsive VP Welfare, video blogging every week, web chatting every month on key issues, as well as being out in your unions

Campaigning, Fighting, Winning for Students

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No Compromise on Student Support

It is right that NUS has focused on the debate about how further and higher education is funded, and we must not give up the fight for a fairer alternative funding model. However, while that debate continues, we must not forget about the student support package that is currently failing millions of students. Our members are desperately struggling to make ends meet under a deeply flawed system of financial support. We have witnessed the total removal of EMA, 50,000 delays to student loans, changes to the adult learning grant, apprentices still being paid below minimum wage, brutal cuts to the ALF and discretionary college funds, and absolutely no clarity with regards to a national bursary scheme. We need to act now!



I Will:

- Continue to campaign for the re-introduction of EMA and ALG and support a pioneering campaign on saving FE travel subsidy
- Parallel to the White Paper developments, lobby for a rigorous and comprehensive national bursary scheme that is standardised and fair, regardless of geographical location or institution
- Battle to preserve and expand statutory funds allocated for Disabled Students Allowance and Student Parent Grants and extend this to those who are carers
- Press BIS for a radical reform of maintenance loans and lobby for a system that allows students to borrow a level of loan that reflects their needs
- Fight for a living wage and the equalisation of the minimum wage for all learners, including apprentices

"Pete Mercer's support has been invaluable, helping us to set a clear direction for the union's future. He understands what FE unions like ours need and I'll be voting him #1."

**Sam Foreman, SU President
Newcastle College**

My Experience

NUS NEC: Block of 15
Newcastle Union

Welfare Officer 08-10

NUS Anti-Racism, Anti-Fascist
committee

**NUS Equality & Diversity
Committee**

SLC Student Consultative Grp
**Newcastle Campus 'Hope
Not Hate' campaign
organiser 2009**



Winning on student housing

A person's home is their palace and that is no different for students. Our homes, whether it be in halls of the rented sector, are the places where we live, eat, work, study and socialise, the places that create many of the memories that make our university or college experience. But unfortunately, it's not that simple. With rent prices soaring, standards falling, and those who want to move us out of our communities and into student ghettos, the right for our members to have safe affordable housing is under attack. We have to act now!

I Will:

- Support students' unions by running a rent freeze campaign – helping you deliver affordable accommodation for all, fighting for accommodation bursaries to be introduced where fees are raised
- Oppose any HMO quotas, developing a local campaigns strategy with you when regressive HMO legislation is proposed by local Councils
- Release a best practice model for SU-led accreditation schemes to push up standards in the private rented sector and ward against 'rogue' landlords
- Share best practice on community engagement, ensuring every SU has a community strategy as identified in 'living together working together'
- Continue to support the 'Student Crime' project, focusing on students as victims of crime

Fighting for liberation

As a proud liberation activist I believe that diversity must be at the heart of our movement, and it is vital that equality and diversity is integrated across all of our work. Our unions should be beacons of best practice and most fundamentally, places where people feel safe, secure, supported and free from intimidation and fear.

I Will:

- Continue to support the principle of no platform and work to support unions with hate crime guidance
- Roll out hate crime and hidden marks recommendations ensuring every union is a hate crime reporting centres & has a zero tolerance policy to sexual harassment
- Create a diversity champion programme which supports unions embedding diversity on your campuses

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