

# SHAKIRA MARTIN

**#1 FOR NUS BLOCK OF 15**



It's been a long time coming for me to actually be able to make a break, as for my entire life those around me have expected me to fail, including my family and friends.

Fail as a mother and as a person, since I was young people have expected me to be a waste, be on the streets in gangs maybe even being in prison, and I have always at the back of my head known that I was better than where I was coming from.

Being exposed to drug abuse from people close to me, witnessing and being a victim of domestic abuse and coming from the hood, in hindsight I consider myself lucky to have had those experiences, it's made me who I am.

Having my first daughter has really motivated me to make a change and not be a product of my environment as well as to make sure my daughters had the chance to grow and have opportunities that I never had.

Further Education has changed my life, the opportunity to study, and to achieve. It's not acceptable that that opportunity is being taken away from so many people around me.

Since getting involved in the student movement I have learnt so much about myself and have realised that my experiences has allowed me to see thing differently. I have realised that I am an activist too; I'm passionate about change and breaking the cycle.

But our movement isn't as diverse as it should be, as being a black woman with caring responsibilities studying within FE from the ghetto there aren't many people that representing me. I want to create a wider diverse student movement where people like me can grow and flourish.

*"Shakira is one of the single most talented, passionate and inspirational student officers I've ever worked with. She's exactly what our movement should be about, and she'll completely transform NUS if she's elected onto the Block"*

**– Toni Pearce, NUS National President**

If elected the three issues I would aim to focus on within my role would be as followed:-

- **Education within the criminal Justice System-** working closely with all professional linked in with the type of work in creating opportunities for offenders to learn and develop themselves in to enable to contribute positively back to society, and with employers to tackle stereotyping.
- **Bring the awareness of Domestic Abuse to the forefront of people's minds,** and work closely with children and young people to understand the importance of healthy relationships - delivering workshops in nurseries, schools, colleges and universities.
- **Tackling youth unemployment, through better contracts, and job creation.** Changing the mindset of employers to ensure that they support and push their young employees to reach their potential and better their career progression and/or choice.

If I am elected, I will ensure that people like me, who are so often shut out of education, and out of our movement are represented by NUS. Thank you for taking the time to read my Manifesto and I look forward to meeting you all at National Conference in April.