

Firstly, I'd like to stress from the beginning that a large part of the Welfare Officer role is casework. I usually see two or three students each day concerning various problems, many minor but some serious. I accompany students to formal disciplinary hearings, as well as more informal meetings concerning their academic and personal problems. In these immensely stressful situations I provide support and take notes of everything that is said. I occasionally intervene.

Know Your Rights Week

The first of my four campaign weeks (the others are Disabled Students, Sexual Health and Anti-Fascism), Know Your Rights Week ran between 12th-16th October. Events included two days of housing advice with the Union's House Doctor in the foyer, various liberation campaign stalls focusing on legal rights, an equality and diversity presentation, a week-long welfare foyer stall, a meeting on trade unions and the Miners' Strike, and the Reclaim events organised by Hazel.

I have invited all interested parties to an organising meeting for my next campaign week- Disabled Students.

Campaigns Fair and Community Fete

At the Campaigns Fair (31st September) and the Community Fete (8th October) I organised a sexual health stall, distributing info on everything from Chlamydia to the Pill. I also ran a sexual health quiz with sweets and chocolate as prizes. Over the two days the quiz was taken by around 250 students.

Freshers Week

I had a welfare stall at all three days of this year's Freshers Fair. I also organised condom fairies for each day of the Fair (and spent a few hours of Wednesday as a condom fairy... an experience I'm not desperate to repeat!)

For the Freshers Ball, I organised condom fairies, distributed anti-drinks spiking devices - "Spikeys" - and in tune with the zombie theme, gave lots of freshers scary zombie makeup.

Completed Training

3 days of general Students' Union training
Peer Support Centre training (including Nightline training)
Brooke Sex, Drugs and Alcohol training
NUS Action Through Advocacy
Local Area Partnership (LAP) and Manchester Student Homes training
NHS Chlamydia Testing training

General

I have...

Attended LAP and Independent Advisory Group (IAG) meetings with the police.

Written a Welfare Column for the Union Page in the paper.

Had Sainsbury's agree to include the contact address for the Welfare Officer alongside an offer of financial advice in promotional material targeting students.

Built links with NUS Disabled Students' campaign and helped establish a support group for visually impaired students (VISA, Visually Impaired Student Association).

Attended numerous meetings: University Counselling Service, George House Trust, NHS, local pharmacies providing emergency contraception, Ladybarn Community Centre, National Blood Service (donating will be happening through the Union!), NUS town takeovers etc.

Established close and friendly links with relevant Nightline committee members.

Updated UMSU website information and started the Twitter account "UMSU_Welfare" to inform students of my day-to-day welfare activities. Re-established the Welfare Collective mailing list, which has been dead for years.

Given several press interviews, on topics ranging from student debt to student sport.