

Putting Students in Control of their Health - GP Policy

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Union Notes

1. As it stands, students (and indeed the wider public) are not able to register permanently with one GP surgery¹
2. Students are able to temporarily register with a GP surgery for a maximum of 3 months at a time²
3. Students at Leeds Trinity University are anecdotally more likely to return home for short periods, such as over weekends or for odd weeks at a time than the average student population
4. 10% of students report a diagnosed mental illness.³
5. 32% reported that in the previous four weeks they had 'always' or 'often' felt 'down or depressed' and 30% reported 'always' or 'often' feeling 'isolated or lonely'⁴
6. Early diagnosis can hugely increase the survival rate of a whole variety of serious illnesses
7. There is a currently active petition on the official Parliamentary Petitions website concerning this issue⁵

Union Believes

1. The current temporary registration system is highly inflexible, students are very unlikely to temporarily register, either at home or at university. It is also inadequate for students who move back and forth with any regularity
2. The current system makes going to the GP an inconvenience which invariably leads to students putting it off, they may stay registered at home, and 'wait till they get home' or vice versa and this in turn reduces the chance of early diagnosis of illnesses
3. Many conditions require multiple trips to the GP over an extended period of time, which can be made fiendishly complicated if a student is moving back and forth and is only registered in one location
4. We face a pandemic of mental health problems among young people
5. Whilst awareness and self-care campaigns are important, medical treatment is often a necessity⁶
6. Mental Health problems can require both immediate action and ongoing treatment, both of which can be made more complex by only being registered in one location. This is especially pertinent if a student puts off their appointment until they are back home or back at university and are then rebuffed by the first GP they see, which is a common occurrence⁷
7. Anything which causes a delay in students seeking medical treatment reduces the chance of Early Diagnosis

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-medical-care-as-a-student/>

² <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-medical-care-as-a-student/>

³ The Invisible Problem? Improving Students' Mental Health' – HEPI (2016)

⁴ Student Resilience Insight Report –Unite/YouGov (2016)

⁵ <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/229573>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jun/30/nothing-like-broken-leg-mental-health-conversation>

⁷ https://i-d.vice.com/en_uk/article/8xbegv/this-tweet-about-mental-health-services-went-viral-emily-reynolds

8. Leeds Trinity Students' Union has historically been fairly insular, and beginning campaigns that deal with issues students' face outside of our immediate control is a positive step forward
9. Beginning to work on issues that affect students but are not under our immediate control may encourage more students to come forward with ideas on student say

Union Resolves

1. That we, as a union, believe that students should be able to register at two GP surgeries
2. For the President and any officers who wish to be involved to co-author a blog post outlining this position which will form part of a social media campaign, aimed at both raising awareness of the issue and encouraging students to sign the government petition
3. To explore whether the National Union of Students (NUS) currently has policy on this issue: if it does then express our interest in joining whatever campaign work is going on around the issue, and if does not, then for the President to draft a policy for LTSU to take to National Conference