

USI Health Promotion Strategy 2017-2020

About USI

"The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) is the sole representative body for students in Ireland and represents 354,000 students in over thirty member colleges across Ireland, North and South. Throughout its history, USI has worked relentlessly in the pursuit of student rights in all areas of the student experience."

Objectives of the Union of Students in Ireland

1. An education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realize their full potential.
2. An education and training system which truly serves the interest of the people of Ireland.
3. The right of students to a decent standard of living including the right to adequate financial support, proper housing and future prospects of employment in Ireland.
4. The defence and promotion of all democratic and human rights.
5. The provision of student services for the benefit of the membership on the principle that control of student service should lie with the membership.
6. To represent the interests of the students of Ireland at international level.

Background

The Union of Students have a proud history of campaigning and contributing to national policy surrounding the many aspects of health to benefit and support student health. The USI Constitution states “

With the growing awareness of one's health and the changing economic, political and geographical environments, the creation of a holistic health promotion strategy is a stepping stone in allowing USI, the VP Welfare and local Officers' to properly support, campaign and

train its members but also allow the Union to engage and contribute to national frameworks to benefit the individual, the student.

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment.

Good health is a major resource for social, economic and personal development and an important dimension of quality of life. Political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioural and biological factors can all favour health or be harmful to it. Health promotion action aims at making these conditions favourable through advocacy for health. (World Health Organisation)

In essence, to fully grasp health , one must approach in a holistic and whole way. One aspect of health benefits or defects another. The Ottawa Charter of 1986 is in spirit the approach the USI Health Promotion Strategy should undertake. The following 5 pillars act as a guideline in which the health promotion strategy should be approached.

1. Building healthy public policy
2. Creating supportive environments
3. Strengthening community action
4. Developing personal skills
5. Re-orienting health care services toward prevention of illness and promotion of health

Building Policy:

Creating, contributing and updating policy that is reflective of the student body of USI and its stakeholders

Creating Supportive Environments:

Adapting to ever changing environments to allow the Changing patterns of life, work and leisure have a significant better impact on health. Environments can be urban, rural or change of life of a students, all of which is pivotal in USIs approach to campaigns, policy and work to support students.

Strengthening community action:

Community development to allow Student Unions and students on the ground to be able to access and direct public health initiatives to support and develop self help for ones health matters. This requires full and continuous access to information, learning opportunities for health, as well as funding support.

Developing personal skills:

Health promotion supports personal and social development through providing information, education for health, and enhancing life skills. This is ultimately having better access to relevant training, information and campaigns to educate students on illnesses, health and services.

Re-orienting health care

The responsibility for health promotion in health services is shared among individuals, community groups, health professionals, health service institutions and governments. The responsibility of health expands into every sector, and it is up to health care services/providers to focus on the individual in respect of ones community and background. This in turn to allow services have a mandate to students to have proper facilities that cater for their individual needs. Re-development of education and outreach to focus more on the individual to promote self-help and prevention while in turn training professionals on up to date materials and research.

The essence of the following strategy is to encompass the full range of health actions that is currently mandated through the Union of Students' in Ireland's annual Congress.

The following sections of the Health Promotion strategy are as follows:

Sexual Health- p6

Smoking Cessation- p18

Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence- p25

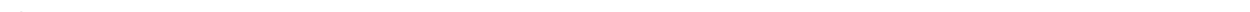
Mental Health p34

Gambling- p52

Alcohol – p61

Drugs- 72

*The Strategy is to be reviewed annually.



USI Sexual Health

This strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of sexual well-being and prevention of sexual health difficulties, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and local Students' Unions.

“The World Health Organization describes sexual health as “a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality. It requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence”. WHO.

USI aims to promote positive sexual health and wellbeing and fight for access to sexual health information, education and services for students.

The USI Vice President for Welfare, with support from the Vp Equality and Citizenship and Regional Officers, must follow the USI Sexual Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.



Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to sexual health organisations. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sexual health sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of sexual health and consent.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with students' unions and external organisations.
- To build a coalition for effective lobbying for sexual health supports and legislative change.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Retain and develop partnership with HSE in relation to sexual health campaigns in particular SHAG.
- Sustain membership to committees, such as Sexual Health Advisory Group and National Sexual Health Communications Working Group under the HSE etc.
- Sustain working relationship with the DRCC, Rape Crisis Network, Smart Consent and members of the SHCPP and Advisory organisations/groups

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources, and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote sexual health and consent supports and resources.



Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on sexual health and guidance as well as consent so that students can make informed decisions and take necessary precautions.

Objectives:

- To equip Students' Unions with the skills and information needed to form campaigns to promote sexual health and consent awareness.
- For Students' Union to be equipped with the information needed to ensure campaigns are gender and LGBTQ inclusive.
- To equip officers in their work in relation to sexual health promotion and consent.
- For Students' Union Officers to be equipped to support fellow students who have experienced sexual harassment or assault.

Action:

- Provide training for relevant officers during the summer term in sexual health and consent promotion.
- Liaise with the VP Equality and Citizenship to ensure all campaigns are gender and LGBTQ inclusive.
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services.
- Organise relevant training for officers in relation to consent, such as disclosure training etc.
- Support unions in establishing local links to support their work in promoting consent and sexual health.
- Students' Unions to be equipped with the skills and information necessary to

develop and review campus policy and to represent students on management committees.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
- Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to sexual health promotion and consent.
- Aim to develop and review new or existing campus sexual health and consent policies.

Prevention

High quality sexual health education promotes positive mental and physical wellbeing. Education and access to information is important throughout life, particularly for 'at risk' and vulnerable groups. (Leo Varadkar, Minister for Health, National Sexual Health Strategy 2015.).

Objectives:

- Reduce the rates of new Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV among students.
- Increase sexual health and relationships literacy.
- Develop a culture to support sexual health and wellbeing.
- Promote an environment of openness among students to reduce the negative impact of stigma relating to sexual health and wellbeing.

Action:

- Continue to work with national bodies on the issue of sexual assault and harassment.
- Co-ordinate a national sexual health and guidance campaigns to promote awareness and stigma reduction and include relevant messaging on consent.
- Include relevant information on different forms of contraception on SHAG.USI.ie and in campaigns and equip officers to include information in local campaigns.
- Promote the message of consent at USI's Annual Congress and all USI run events.
- Actively lobby and campaign for mandatory consent classes or workshops to be delivered to every single class within the third level education system in

their first semester of college.

- Promote STI screening services and awareness of getting tested.
- Promote the use of condoms as contraception among students and other contraceptives i.e dental dams
- Be appointed onto the HSE outbreak committee
- Create a point of contact for USI in relation to sexual health within the HSE
- Promote the #AskConsent campaign during national sexual health campaigns.
- Include information on emergency contraceptive on SHAG.USI.ie and in national campaigns.
- Include information on EC as part of officer training in sexual health where necessary.

Suggested Action for MOs:

- Source accurate information that is relevant to the student body in relation to sexual health and consent.
- Facilitate, with support from USI, training modules identified for sexual health promotion and consent for student leaders.
- Where possible aim to promote campaigns and initiatives that reduces stigma and encourages an open attitude towards the treatment of sexual health and consent issues
- Include information on different forms of contraception in local campaigns, with support from USI.
- To engage with medical centres to introduce sexual health clinics and sexual health support.
- Liaise with services and local clinics to promote STI checks to students.



Screening, Treatment and Support Services

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help when needed.

Objective:

- Improve access to good quality sexual health services for students.
- Promote sexual health supports to students in need.

Actions:

- Assess, develop and implement guidance on STI and HIV testing for students.
- Promote services such as home testing to ensure more students get tested.
- Include stigma reduction material, in relation to sexual health in national campaigns.
- Lobby for funding to expand campaigns in sexual health promotion and consent.
- Lobby for investment into support services in relation to sexual health and consent, especially campus based services.
- Engage with other groups who are campaigning for maximum pricing for emergency contraception, including the Real Productive Health campaign, with the aim of setting a national maximum price for emergency contraception.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

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- Establish a referral pathway for students in need of sexual health supports.
 - Students' Union Officers should aim to partake, where possible, in lobbying opportunities with support from regional officers locally and the VP Welfare on a national basis.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Sexual Health Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

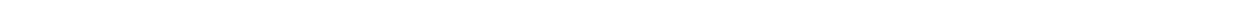
- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to promote sexual health awareness among students.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in sexual health promotion.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- Survey student demographics annually during SHAG week to collect data to support campaign and information direction.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups.

Suggested Action For MOs:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.



Previous Mandates:

- The Vice President Welfare to endeavour to hold Sexual Health Awareness week in the first semester.
- The VP Welfare to engage with other groups who are campaigning for maximum pricing for emergency contraception, including the Real Productive Health campaign, with the aim of setting a national maximum price for emergency contraception.
- The Vice President for Welfare to coordinate a campaign focused on sexual health in first semester, focusing on engaging first year students to promote positive attitudes towards sex in addition to SHAG Week each February.
- To develop an all-inclusive web site which will contain relevant information about sexual health that can be used in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.
- The USI Welfare Officer to co-ordinate with relevant groups to provide more comprehensive information on the different forms of EC. USI Officer Board to campaign for the introduction of 'over-the-counter' emergency contraception for people over the age of 17, as this is the age of consent.
- To continue to work with relevant organisations to ensure that the mandate from 09/WEL 1 is fulfilled.
- The USI Welfare Officer to work to make EC affordable and accessible to all who need it.
- To run an information campaign about the Morning After Pill and to make it an integral part in future S.H.A.G campaigns.
- The Welfare Officer to work with the LGBT RO to ensure that the sexual health module at UOS also covers lesbian sexual health issues; so that the welfare officers can be equipped with the knowledge to deal with these issues.
- The USI Welfare Officer to co-ordinate with relevant groups to provide more comprehensive information on the different forms of EC.
- To only provide information from three choice agencies.



Reporting and Progress

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the sexual health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Sexual Health Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for Sexual Health in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

USI Smoking Cessation

This strategy segment aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of well-being and prevention and reduction of tobacco related harm, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and affiliated Students' Unions.

Smoking levels in Ireland, although decreasing, remain at around 23% for young adults and 7,000 people die from smoking related disease every year.

Education at second and third-level is crucial in terms of informing students about the health consequences of smoking tobacco.

The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Smoking Cessation Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to organisations working to reduce tobacco related harm. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build alliances and partnerships to promote smoking cessations to 3rd level students.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Support unions in establishing local links to support their work in the area of smoking cessation.
- To aim to link with the Irish Cancer Society.
- In reference to Physical Health segment, a healthy campus initiative with Healthy Ireland.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.

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- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote supports, resources and preventions.
 - Liaise with health promotion of health service staff on campus to provide support and resources to students interested in ceasing smoking.

Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on tobacco and associated risks to promote smoking cessation.

Objectives:

- To equip officers in their work on their work in promoting smoking cessation.

Action:

- Provide a training module for relevant officers during the summer term on smoking cessation.
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services to identify referral paths for students.
- Support officers in influencing campus based policy in relation to smoking cessation.

Training shall only be undertaken by an agency, organisation or individual accredited to deliver such and not by an individual or body funded by the tobacco industry.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.

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- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
 - Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to smoking cessations such as “Smoke Free Campus” initiatives.

Screening, Treatment and Support Services

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help.

Objectives:

- Improve access to good quality support services for students.
- To liaise with external organisations such as ISHA ,SSI , Irish Cancer Society and PCHEI to identify and promote appropriate initiatives to support students who aim to cease smoking.

Action:

- Liaise with the HSE to identify support services in campus catchment areas.
- Promote the use of online supports to assist students in smoking cessation.
- Support unions in initiating the development or review of a college-wide smoking policy where one is not already in place.

Suggested Action for Students’ Unions:

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- Initiate the development or review of a college-wide smoking policy.
 - Promote the use of online supports to assist smoking cessation.
 - Promote campus supports to ensure students seek help when needed.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Smoking Cessation Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to promote smoking cessation.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in smoking cessation.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups and consultation with VP Campaigns.
- Implement the strategy with regular monitoring and review of its effectiveness by USI National Council, Welfare Working Group, Campaign Working Group and Regional Working Groups.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

Previous Mandates:

- The Vice President for Welfare to work with all relevant bodies in the promotion of smoking cessation to students across both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Vice President should present plans of this campaign by November 2014.

Reporting and Progress:

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Smoking Cessation Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for smoking cessation in 3rd level students between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

USI Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence

This strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of physical well-being to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and local Students' Unions.

USI aims to promote physical activity, healthy eating and a positive body image and fight for access to health information, education and services for students.

All third level institutions should be encouraged to adopt the concept that they should be a 'health promoting college'. Colleges could actively address issues concerning healthy eating, drinking behaviour and the need to live an active lifestyle. If in this way we can ensure young people of college going age live in a positive health culture, we will go a long way towards ensuring that the next generation is a healthy one.

The USI Vice President for Welfare, with support from the Vp Equality and Citizenship and Regional Officers, must follow the USI Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence Strategy and assist local officers in following through

with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to health promotion. USI recognises the need to work with others in the health sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of physical health, healthy eating and body confidence.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with students' unions and external organisations.
- To promote initiatives and investment to encourage more sustainable and active forms of transport by students as a means of increasing overall physical activity levels and reducing carbon emissions in partnership with Smarter Travel Campus.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Sustain links with Bodywhys and Student Sport Ireland.
- Sustain partnership with SpunOut in delivering a national healthy eating campaign and roadshow.
- Support initiatives to increase student physical activity levels.
- Support the implementation of programmes to promote the benefits of

physical activity and sport to students.

- Support Smarter Travel Campus in promoting sustainable and active forms of transport by students.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources, and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote sexual health and consent supports and resources.

Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on physical health, healthy eating and body confidence.

Objectives:

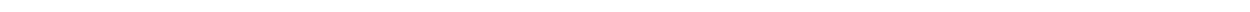
- To Support Students' Unions in developing campaigns and initiatives to promote physical exercise.
- Support Students' Unions in organising campaigns and events to encourage healthy eating among the student body.
- Support Students' Unions in influencing positive health promotion policies on campus.

Action:

- Liaise with Student Sport Ireland to facilitate a training event with Students' Union officers to equip them in promoting physical activity on campus.
- Provide support and training to officers in organising campaigns on healthy eating and home-cooking.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
- Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to health promotion policies.



Support Services and Health Promotion Initiatives

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help when needed.

Objective:

- To inform students of available supports in relation to physical health, healthy eating and body confidence.
- To promote physical activity to non-participants to engage in physical activity.
- To encourage students to partake in home-cooking and healthy eating.
- To promote support services to students experiencing body confidence issues.
- To ensure students with a disability can be better catered for in terms of access and provision of opportunities.
- narrow the gender gap in the provision of sport through clubs.

Actions:

- Develop a new social networking initiative to provide friendship and support for non-participants to engage in physical activity.
- Promote a diversity, range and type of sports clubs provided in the light of the findings that some sports have particular potential to promote increased participation among students with disabilities.
- Co-ordinate a national campaign and roadshow to encourage students to eat healthy and learn to cook healthy affordable meals.
- Promote sports clubs that particularly appeal to female students to narrow the gender gap in sport.

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- Promote opportunities for students to try new sporting activities as part of their progress through third level education and where possible expand the scope for students to avail of “taster” sessions.
 - Promote appropriate fitness apps to encourage students to use technology to increase participation in physical exercise.

Suggested Action for Students’ Unions:

- Provide information to students on a campus level on physical health, healthy eating and body confidence.
- Promote campus based physical activity initiatives such as “Couch to 5k”, etc.
- Establish referral pathway for students experiencing body confidence issues.
- Support initiatives on campus to encourage students to eat healthy and learn to cook healthy affordable meals.
- Local Student Unions should work with their respective Sports and Recreation departments who not only have the skills and expertise in the area but also experience and access to resources and facilities

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to promote physical health and healthy eating awareness among students as well as promoting body confidence.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in sexual health promotion.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups.

Suggested Action For MOs:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

Previous Mandates:

- The VP Campaigns and VP Welfare to work on the Healthy Living Campaign to address the aforementioned issues in relation to health which have increased within the Third Level student demographic. (context of mandate- cancers, viral infections, ongoing long term illnesses and conditions related to bad eating habits)
- The Vice President, Welfare to roll out Healthy Eating Campaigns every year, which include a drive to raise awareness of the various forms of eating disorders.
- The Vice President Welfare to work with various bodies like Student Sport Ireland to create a new Physical Health strategy.
- The Welfare Vice President to both follow the USI Physical Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.
- To design a strategy document on physical health, making reference to the following:-
Stress Management, access to healthcare, Awareness of prevalent illnesses, Cost and value for money of student gyms, Availability of non-competitive

sport, Diet and nutrition, Sports Clubs, Training at UOS for welfare officers, Relevance of physical health to mental health, Body image and eating disorders.

- The Vice President, Welfare to roll out Healthy Eating Campaigns every year, which include a drive to raise awareness of the various forms of eating disorders.

Reporting and Progress

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the physical health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for Physical Health, Healthy Eating and Body Confidence of students in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

USI Mental Health

This strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of mental well-being and prevention of mental health difficulties, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and local Students' Unions.

The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Mental Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

‘It is internationally recognised that mental illness is a public health problem in need of urgent attention. Mental health disorders account for a significant burden of disease in all societies. Effective interventions are available but are not accessible to the majority of the people who need them.’ — World Health Organisation World Health Report 2001 Mental Health New Understandings New Hope.

Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to mental health organisations. USI recognises the need to work with others in the mental health sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of mental health.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with students' unions and external organisations.
- To build upon a coalition for effective lobbying for mental health supports and legislative change.
- To build a network of partners and stakeholders across 3rd level institutions in Ireland.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Sustain coalitions, such as the Mental Health Working Group for 3rd Level.
- Sustain membership to organisations such as Mental Health Reform
- Develop an accreditation scheme in consultation with external organisations for 3rd level institutions and develop an Annual Forum for Mental Health.

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- Establish and maintain links with HSE resource officers to provide support and resources to Students' Union Officers.
 - Establish and maintain links with Mental Health Ireland development officers to provide support and resources to Students' Union Officers.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote mental health supports and resources.

Training and Support - Students' Unions

We believe, through knowledge gained by working with young people as student leaders, and through our lived experience as students, that Students' Union Officers are uniquely positioned to work for the better mental health of our student populations.

We believe our colleges and universities are communities and families, and to ensure the relationships within these institutions are strong and healthy, all members must be safeguarded, cherished and protected. We recognise that the lack of resources in Students' Unions contributes to stress and pressure upon officers, and their ability to support others in difficulty. It is important Students' Union are trained and supported throughout their terms.

Objectives:

- To support officers throughout their term in dealing with casework in relation to mental health.

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- To equip officers with the skills and tools necessary to promote understanding of and a positive approach to mental health and help seeking on campus.
 - To support officers to develop new initiatives to improve the mental health of their student population
 - For Students' Unions to be encouraged to seek consultation with mental health professionals, where possible.
 - For Students' Unions to be equipped with the skills and information necessary to partake in lobbying efforts.
 - For Students' Unions to be equipped with the skills and information necessary to develop and review campus policy and to seek representation on student services management committees.
 - For Students' Union officers to be aware of Self Care best practice and promote the importance of Self Care to officers in their line of work

Action:

- Provide training for relevant officers during the summer term in mental health promotion.
- Provide training for relevant officers during the summer term in dealing with casework and referral.
- Provide mental health first aid to Officers through St. John of God's
- Provide an online mental health resources and contacts for Students' Unions through the USI Mental Health Hub on USI.ie
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services to establish referral pathways and to support their work in promoting positive mental health, coping skills and therapies.
- Promote the St Pats Helpline to SU Officers
- Lobbying training Policy training Campaign Training - Briefing Session on issues

The VP Welfare shall support MOs in organising lobbying for local representatives with the support of regional officers.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
- Utilise personal support either from the VP Welfare or from Walk In My Shoes Helpline to debrief and discuss casework.
- To follow best practice for Self Care during officer terms.
- To seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to mental health.

Aim to develop and review new or existing campus mental health policies.

Stigma Reduction and Awareness Campaigns

It is vitally important for USI to aim to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues in the student population and encourage an open attitude towards the discussion and treatment of mental ill-health. The experience of mental ill health and its associated stigma can mean real personal suffering and distress for some students. Stigma is a barrier that deters students from accessing mental health supports. "The number of those in receipt of mental health services is considered to be far lower than the level of need" (Rothi and Leavey. 2006).

Objectives:

- To support and develop new initiatives that will reduce stigma of mental ill health among 3rd level students.
- To equip officers in developing new campaigns and initiatives on campus to reduce stigma associated with mental ill-health.
- To encourage and support campus events to promote positive mental health
- To encourage new student media to promote positive mental health in campus publications
- To promote material from those who have lived life experience as a means to reduce stigma and encourage open discussion of mental health.
- To promote stigma reduction in national campaigns
- To increase support for USI's efforts to reduce stigma

Actions:

- Develop a USI Mental Health Campus Ambassador scheme. Run a recruitment drive at the beginning of each academic year and communicate campaigns and training opportunities to ambassadors throughout the year.
- Develop a secondary Mental Health Hub for students/student ambassadors and provide a resource to log positive mental health events.

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- Include guides on media production in Mental Health Hub
 - Develop a promotion plan and outreach programme through the ambassador scheme.
 - Promote student blogs on Mental Health Hub/Please Talk
 - Collaborate with student ambassadors to include stigma reduction material in national campaigns
 - Maintain relationships with organisations that promote stigma reduction such as Please Talk etc.
 - Encourage on campus initiatives such as Mental Health Officers in 3rd level institutions.

Suggested Actions For Students' Unions:

- Where possible aim to promote campaigns and initiatives that reduces stigma and encourages an open attitude towards the treatment of mental ill-health.

Suicide Prevention and Postvention - Therapy and Help Seeking Promotion.

In the past few years, there has been an evident shift in the way that third level institutions view their role with respect to the health and specifically mental health of students. Initiatives such as UCC Health Matters have been established to improve upon campus community health and well being.

Our college communities need to be safe, suicide aware spaces for all students. with targeted approaches to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve mental health among students.

Creating ongoing awareness of services and supports on campus is a challenging task. Students may not seek help for mental health issues due to lack of awareness about available services or misconceptions about those services. According to Reach Out Ireland “ a high proportion of students with poor mental health may not be aware of the need for support.”. (ReachOut Ireland 2015)

Objectives:

- Increase campus capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour.
- Enhance communications and awareness of support services among students.
- Build awareness of positive mental health or mental fitness and its important relationship with academic and workplace success.
- Promote personal growth and development among students to prevent mental ill-health.
- Provide suicide intervention training appropriate for students.

Actions:

- Research and collaborate to review existing training and where necessary develop new training to equip students in suicide intervention skills.
- Support Students' Unions in developing an on campus Help Seeking Promotion Plan

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- Develop an online promotion plan for USI to facilitate help seeking promotion on social media platforms.
 - Encourage officers to provide support information to students in financial difficulty.
 - Include promotions of various therapies and coping skills in national mental health campaigns.
 - Promote the provision of staff roles to facilitate a supportive environment and promote and lobby for improved mental health training and resources for academic and other staff to equip them with the tools and skills necessary to assume a more supportive role for students.
 - Promote physical activity and exercise programmes as a protective factor in national campaigns.
 - Promote help-seeking and mental fitness as part of academic and career success.
 - Create awareness of post-trauma resources, providing support where necessary for students' union to develop a protocol for responding to a traumatic event on campus such as a student death by suicide.

Suggested Actions For Students' Unions:

- Ensure that sources of help and support are well publicised on campus.
- To attend, where possible, training provided or promoted by USI to equip officers with the skills and tools needed to support fellow students.
- To promote campus based therapies and programmes that encourage coping skills among students.
- To develop new initiatives on campus in relation to Suicide Prevention and Postvention Therapy and Help Seeking Promotion
- Develop a campus Help-Seeking Promotion Plan at the beginning of academic term.
- Develop a referral path to Mental Health Supports for students in financial difficulty.



Funding and Services

Ireland has one of the highest levels of participation in third-level education within the EU (Careersportal, 2013 - Eurostat Figures). The importance of promoting positive mental health among the large third-level student population cannot be underestimated, with recent research showing a high percentage of students experiencing mental health difficulties including depression, anxiety, loneliness, substance misuse and suicidal behaviour (Vision for Change, 2006).

The number of mature students, international students, students with disabilities and students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds has also grown steadily. Yet the provision of counselling services to meet the growing numbers and diverse needs of students has not kept pace.

One in four people will experience mental health problems in the course of their lives. A small percentage of persons affected will require access to mental health services to address their mental health needs.

Currently waiting lists can be up to six weeks which raises serious concern if a student is in distress. . Given the increasing numbers of students reporting mental health issues this causes serious concerns if a student is in distress. Currently, as a result of hiring restrictions most institutions may not be able to afford to hire extra counselling staff to meet the demand. Access to 24/7 crisis intervention services remain extremely poor. Some patients who present to A&E with a mental health crisis face lengthy waits of 8 hours or more before receiving support.

Objectives:

- To protect and improve funding for mental health services within our college communities.
- To build support through the production of reports and research to lobby.

Actions:

- Lobby for the creation of a promotion plan for positive mental health or mental fitness, building coalitions to support its development and progress included within the development and implementation of a Health Promoting College Network with Healthy Ireland.
- Lobby for budget allocations for counselling services to be ring fenced.
- Lobby for the introduction of community based 24/7 crisis intervention services.
- Retain membership of MHR and actively partake in the coalition of organisations campaigning to transform mental health and well-being supports in Ireland.
- Lobby for budgets to services to be protected during cuts through the provision of reports and research.
- Work with the CSSI,PCHEI and ISHA to research access to and integration of support services on campus and in catchment area.
- Following through commitments on the Youth Mental Health Taskforce

Suggested Actions For Students' Unions:

- Students' Union Officers should aim to partake, where possible, in lobbying opportunities with support from regional officers locally and the VP Welfare on a national basis.
- Establish a referral pathway for students in need of mental health supports.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Mental Health Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to promote mental health awareness.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in mental health promotion.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups and consultation with VP Campaigns.
- Implement the strategy with regular monitoring and review of its effectiveness by USI National Council, Welfare Working Group, Campaign Working Group and Regional Working Groups.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is

effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

Relationship With Other Strategies:

Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020

Higher Education Authority – Commitments List Role Action Work with the HSE to develop national guidance for higher education institutions in relation to suicide risk and critical-incident response, thereby helping to address any gaps which may exist in the prevention of suicide in higher education.

Lead 3.3.3 Support the coordination and streamlining of research completed by third-level institutions.

Lead 7.4.2 Encourage the coordination of suicide-prevention initiatives and research across the higher education sector.

Support, in relation to suicide prevention, the Substance Misuse Strategy, to address the high rate of alcohol and drug misuse.

3.3 Enhance the supports for young people with mental health problems or vulnerable to suicide.

The USI Mental Health Strategy also relates to action points prescribed in the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, the USI Physical Health Strategy and the USI Sexual Health Strategy.



Previous Mandates:

- The VP Welfare to create a set of guidelines for officers as a support and referral guide on how best to deal with Student bereavement in supporting bereaved students and themselves.
- The VP Welfare to coordinate a training event on bereavement for all officers annually before the academic year commences
- The VP for Welfare to co-ordinate a campaign with literature that provides support, advice and support services to students who are suffering from bereavement.
- The USI VP for Welfare to provide training to Welfare Officers to support students in this position as well as providing links to organisations who work in the area of bereavement.
- The Vice-President for Welfare to include information on the use of medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.
- The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the relevant bodies including the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People to lift the embargo on the hiring of counselling staff in Higher Education Institutes and for increased funding to be given specifically for the provision of adequate Counselling services to all Third Level Students either through the direct employment of more Counsellors or in purchasing external counselling session hours.
- The VP for Welfare to find out the best practice of MOs regarding their individual bereavement policies and come up with a uniformed policy for MOs to use in the case of a bereavement. This mandate should be fulfilled by September 2014.
- The VP for welfare to ensure that Safetalk training are offered to all Welfare Officers and

any other officer who wish to avail of such training by September before students return to college.

- The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health & Older People to challenge the Minister for Education on the effects that the rising student contribution charge and 3% cut to the maintenance grant has on the mental health of students in Ireland.
- The Vice President for Welfare, in consultation with other members of Officer Board, to organise intensive casework training for Students' Union officers each year. This training must include; referral, role plays, data protection and managing casework records. This training must be completed before September each year.
- The Vice President for Welfare to organise Suicide Intervention Skills Training each year for Students' Union Officers. This must be completed by September each year.
- The USI President and VP for Welfare to call on the Government in the strongest possible terms to ensure that commitments to fund mental health services are met in future Budgets, and for the speedy roll-out of service developments for which these monies were earmarked.
- To provide supports to individual Students' Unions by way of centralised sourcing materials and information, targeting the stigma surrounding mental health issues.
- To further engage with relevant groups and NGOs to publicise the various means of dealing with mental illness to the wider student population. To run a campaign on the issues raised above.
- The Welfare Officer to organise, design and run a National Suicide Prevention Campaign that would be rolled out right across the Country on a Specific Day.
- To both follow the USI Mental Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.

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- The Vice President for Welfare to create a new USI Mental Health Strategy with specific reference to reducing stigma, to be completed by January 2014.
 - The Vice President for Welfare to implement the USI Mental Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.
 - The Vice President for Welfare to conduct a study on the effects of budget cuts on counselling services and in turn the danger which could leave young people at further risk. The results from the study carried out can be used to lobby Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health & Older People prior to Budget 2014.

Reporting and Progress

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the mental health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Mental Health Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year. An accreditation scheme will be developed to award individual campuses for excellence in mental health promotion and support.

The strategic objectives for Mental Health in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

USI Gambling Harm Reduction

This strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of well-being and prevention of gambling dependency difficulties, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and local Students' Unions.

In 2010, the Irish Institute for Public Health (IPH) estimated that there were between 28,000 and 40,000 problem gamblers in Ireland (based on data from Northern Ireland). The UK's NHS estimates that for every problem gambler, 8 to 10 additional people are negatively affected. This would mean that there could be up to 440,000 people in Ireland who are suffering, either directly or indirectly, from gambling-related harm.

The IPH also have found that adolescent gambling in Ireland is 2-3 times greater than that of adults. The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs Report 2015 found that 13% of Irish males, aged 15-16 had gambled online in the previous 7 days.

With studies highlighting that 1 in 5 problem gamblers attempt suicide, while 4 in 5 experience suicidal thoughts. The suicide rate among problem gamblers is 3-4 times that of the general population.

There is no current sufficient legislation to combat Problem Gambling in Ireland
The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Gambling Harm Reduction Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.



Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to organisations working to reduce gambling related harm. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of gambling harm reduction.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with students' unions and external organisations.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Support unions in establishing local links to support their work in the area of gambling harm reduction.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote gambling dependency supports, resources and preventions.

Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on gambling and associated harm so that students can make informed decisions and take necessary precautions.

Objectives:

- For Students' Unions to be equipped with the skills and information to form campaigns to promote support services and gambling awareness.
- To equip officers to support students at risk of developing gambling dependency.

Action:

- Provide a training module for relevant officers during the summer term on the issue of gambling awareness and harm reduction.
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services.
- Provide Students' Unions with resources and training opportunities where possible both locally and nationally.
- Students' Unions to be equipped with the skills and information necessary to develop and review campus policy and to represent students on management committees.

Training shall not be undertaken by an agency with a vested interest in, or one that is funded by, the gambling industry.

Suggested action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.

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- Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to health promotion.
 - Aim to develop and review new or existing campus health policies.

Prevention

USI notes the addictive nature of gambling and how easily accessible gambling can be with development of apps such as Paddy Power and the close proximity of betting outlets to third level campuses.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness amongst the student population on harm prevention and gambling cessation and to encourage Students' Unions to run local campaigns on the issue.
- To reduce the incidence of problem gambling by aiming to discourage students from developing problems with their gambling and reduce the prevalence of problem gambling by making available assistance to students who may have a problem with their gambling.

Action:

- Continue to work with national bodies to source accurate information that is relevant to the student body.
- Co-ordinate a national campaign to promote awareness of gambling harm and promote help seeking.
- Support unions in promoting and developing resources to inform their students of the harms associated with gambling.
- Support unions in rolling out training modules for gambling harm reduction for student

leaders.

Suggested Actions for Students' Unions:

- Where possible aim to promote campaigns and initiatives that reduces stigma and encourages an open attitude towards the treatment of gambling dependency.
- Source accurate information that is relevant to the student body in relation to gambling.
- Promote resources to inform students of the harms associated with gambling and support relevant national campaigns and initiatives that aim to do the same.
- Facilitate, with support from USI, training modules for gambling harm reduction for student leaders.

Screening, Treatment and Support Services

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help when needed.

Objective:

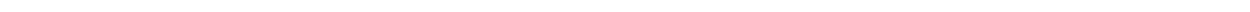
- To improve access to good quality support services for students.
- Promote help seeking to students in need.

Action:

- Liaise with the HSE and other relevant bodies to map support services available to campuses across Ireland.
- Support unions in creating a referral path for students affected by gambling and at risk of developing an addiction.
- Provide training, where available, for relevant officers in the area of gambling harm reduction.
- Lobby for the funding of support services for gambling dependency.
- Lobby for the regulation of student targeted gambling promotions on campus.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Establish a referral pathway for students affected by gambling and at risk of developing addiction.
- Students' Union Officers should aim to partake, where possible, in lobbying opportunities with support from regional officers locally and the VP Welfare on a national basis.



Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Gambling Harm Reduction Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to reduce gambling dependency among students.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in gambling harm reduction.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

Previous Mandates:

- The VP Welfare to liaise with the relevant organisations to develop a protocol for students' union officers to deploy in casework relating to gambling issues.
- The Vice President for Welfare to work with the relevant organisations to develop a campaign to inform students of the effects of gambling and recognising an addiction.

Reporting and Progress

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Gambling Harm Reduction Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for Gambling Harm Reduction in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

USI Alcohol Harm Reduction

This strategy segment aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of well-being and prevention and reduction of alcohol related harm, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and affiliated Students' Unions.

USI will promote 'low risk drinking' behaviour and increase awareness of the potential harmful or negative effects of excessive alcohol consumption.

The alcohol aware ethos of USI events shall fall under the responsibility of the relevant organising officer.

The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to organisations working to reduce alcohol related harm. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sector to further our aims and ambitions. However, as declared at Congress 2015, Congress has no confidence in public bodies advocating on the issue of alcohol misuse and abuse which are funded by the drinks industry.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of Alcohol Harm Reduction.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with Students' Unions and external organisations.
- To sustain USI's role as a key partner in REACT.
- USI will not partner with the industry when creating campaigns or communicating messages around alcohol to young people.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.

Suggested Actions For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote alcohol dependency supports, resources and preventions.
- To support the implementation of the REACT action points at campus level.
- Reject partnership with the industry when creating campaigns or communicating messages

around alcohol to young people.

Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on alcohol and the dangers of high-risks so that students can make informed decision and take necessary precautions.

Objectives:

- To equip officers in their work on alcohol harm reduction.
- To equip officers to support students at risk of developing alcohol dependency.

Action:

- Provide training for relevant officers during the summer term on the issue of alcohol awareness and alcohol abuse.
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services.

Training shall not be undertaken by an agency with a vested interest in, or one that is funded by, the alcohol industry.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
- Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to health promotion.
- Aim to develop and review new or existing campus health policies.



Prevention

USI aims to promote a social, academic, and residential environment that supports health-promoting norms. Three people die in Ireland every day as a result of alcohol use. Half of all suicides in Ireland involve alcohol and alcohol costs the state €3.7 billion annually in health, policing and other services.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness amongst the student population on alcohol harm prevention and to encourage Students' Unions to run local campaigns on the issue.
- To encourage alternatives and choice amongst the student body.

Action:

- Continue to work with national bodies on the issue of sexual assault and drink-related aggression.
- Co-ordinate a national campaign to promote awareness of alcohol harm and promote help seeking
- Support unions in promoting and developing a programme for campus-based alcohol free events.
- Support and promote alcohol-reduction campaigns and initiatives such as #OffTheBoozeOnTheBall and #OnTheDry.
- Support unions in developing Re-hydration Stations at campus events.
- Facilitate an alcohol free social activities for USI's Annual Congress.

Suggested Action for MOs:

- Source accurate information that is relevant to the student body in relation to alcohol.
- Promote resources to inform students of the dangers associated with high-risk drinking and support relevant national campaigns and initiatives that aim to do the same.
- Facilitate, with support from USI, training modules identified for alcohol harm reduction for student leaders.

Supply, Access and Availability

Currently Ireland has one of the highest levels of alcohol consumption in the European Union. By ensuring that key factors influencing alcohol supply, such as price, availability and marketing, are regulated and controlled, alcohol-related harm can be reduced.

Objective:

- Protect members from the effects of low cost selling, over-availability and excessive and subliminal marketing practices.

Action:

- Lobby for a mandatory code of practice in alcohol marketing.
- Lobby for the banning of alcohol sponsorship of sporting events.
- Lobby to discourage student-targeted marketing, promotion and sponsorship by the alcohol industry.
- Provide Responsible Host Training to all relevant officers in conjunction with REACT and support unions in delivering training to their members on campus.
- Provide policy training and support to unions to encourage the development of on-campus alcohol policies and distribute the “National Framework to Develop A College Alcohol Policy” document.
- Continue to collaborate with REACT and support unions in realising the action points set out in the report.

Suggested action For MOs:

- Strive to remove high-risk alcohol promotion from their campuses.
- Ensure that on campus events and promotions are responsible and do not promote high risk drinking.
- Assist clubs and societies in sourcing sponsorship from sources other than the alcohol

industry.

- Facilitate Responsible Host training for student leaders on campus.
- Track and report any high-risk promotions on campus or in the catchment area.
- Liaise with college authorities to develop a college-wide alcohol policy where one is not already in place.

Screening, Treatment and Support Services

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help.

Objectives:

- Improve access to good quality support services for students.
- Promote help seeking to students in need.

Action:

- Liaise with the REACT team to map support services available to campuses across Ireland.
- Support unions in creating a referral path for students affected by addictions and at risk of developing an addiction.
- Promote the use of an online brief intervention tool such as Drinks Meter, etc.
- Provide training for relevant officers in SOAR through collaboration with the HSE.
- Liaise with unions and ISHA to promote brief intervention screening services on campus.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Engage with the REACT programme to realise the action points set out to respond to excessive alcohol consumption in third level.
- Establish a referral pathway for students affected by addictions and at risk of developing

addiction.

- Promote the use of an online brief intervention tool such as Drinks Meter, etc. on a campus level.
- Support the introduction of brief intervention screening services, online or through support services, on campus.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to reduce alcohol related harm.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in alcohol harm reduction.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups.
- To sustain partnership with the REACT programme.

Suggested Action For MOs:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.



Previous Mandates:

- To campaign against this body ‘Role Models’ and the continuation of such bodies based on this model.
- The Vice President for Welfare to work with various bodies including Alcohol Action Ireland and Alcohol Forum to update the USI Alcohol Policy.
- The Vice President for Welfare to include proposed actions on pricing, availability and marketing, training and support for local Students’ Unions and proposed actions on a national alcohol awareness campaign. This must be completed before November 2014.
- To engage with the Department of Health (RoI), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI), before July 2013 in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse.
- To develop and implement a USI National Drink Responsibly Campaign before July 2013, and to carry out same on an annual basis thereafter in order to create awareness around alcohol consumption rates, and encourage its responsible consumption.
- To both follow the USI Alcohol Policy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations and action points by disseminating the policy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.
- The Welfare Officer to hold 4 regional forums to gather student feedback, opinions and ideas on how best to approach this issue and to present a campaign idea to Welfare Working Group.

Reporting and Progress

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy’s progress will be documented in USI’s annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives

as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for Alcohol Harm Reduction in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

This segment of the Health promotion strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of well-being and prevention and reduction of drugs related harm, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and affiliated Students' Unions.

Education at second and third-level is crucial in terms of informing students about drugs and the consequences taking drugs may have on their future.

According to the National Student Drugs Survey 82% of students have tried illegal drugs.

USI will endorse health promoting norms and increase awareness of the potential harmful or negative effects of drug consumption.

The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy segment and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

Collaborations and Partnerships

USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to organisations working to reduce drugs related harm. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sector to further our aims and ambitions.

Objectives:

- To build support for the work that USI does in the area of drugs harm reduction.
- To develop new initiatives through collaborations with students' unions and external organisations.
- To establish a point of contact within the HSE and Drugs Task Force to support unions to further campaigns and policies.
- To liaise with activist groups such as SSDP to expand campaigns and resources.

Actions:

- Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.
- Collaborate and consult with students' unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.
- Support unions in establishing local links to support their work in the area of drugs harm reduction.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.
- To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote supports, resources and preventions.

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- Establish a link with local SSDP branches to expand upon campaigns and resources.

Training and Supports - Students' Unions

USI encourages students' unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on drugs and associated risks so that students can make informed decisions in relation to drugs and take necessary precautions.

Objectives:

- To equip officers in their work on drugs harm reduction.
- To equip officers to support students at risk of becoming problem substance users.

Action:

- Provide a training module for relevant officers during the summer term on drugs awareness, drugs first aid and substance abuse.
- Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services to identify referral paths for students.

Training shall only be undertaken by an agency, organisation or individual accredited to deliver such.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
- Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
- Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
- Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to health promotion.

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- Aim to develop and review new or existing campus health policies.

Prevention

USI aims to promote a social, academic, and residential environment that supports health-promoting norms. A key part of prevention and harm reduction is in equipping and arming students with the information they need to protect themselves. USI aims to provide a relatively easy way to distribute advice by engaging students and sign-post to further information services, for example Drugs.ie etc.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness amongst the student population on drug harm prevention and to encourage Students' Unions to run local campaigns on the issue.
- To encourage alternatives and choice amongst the student body.
- To encourage students to actively seek information on the risks associated with drug use and sign-post students to information resources.

Action:

- Continue to work with national bodies to source accurate information that is relevant to the student body.
- Co-ordinate a national campaign to promote awareness of the risks associated with drug use and promote help seeking.
- Support unions in promoting and developing resources to inform their students of the risks associated with drug use.
- Support and promote drugs awareness campaigns and initiatives such as "What's In The Pill".
- Support unions in rolling out training modules for drug harm reduction for student leaders.

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Source accurate information that is relevant to the student body in relation to drugs.
- Promote resources to inform students of the risks associated with drug use and support relevant national campaigns and initiatives that aim to do the same.

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- Facilitate, with support from USI, training modules for drug harm reduction for student leaders.

Screening, Treatment and Support Services

The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help.

Objectives:

- Improve access to good quality support services for students.
- To liaise with external organisations such as ISHA and IAUCC to identify and promote appropriate screening initiatives to support students in difficulty.

Action:

- Liaise with the HSE and Drugs Task Forces to Map and identify support services in campus catchment areas.
- Support unions in identifying a referral path for students affected by addictions and at risk of developing an addiction.
- Promote the use of an online brief intervention tool such as Drugs Meter, etc.
- Provide training for relevant officers in SOAR through collaboration with the HSE.
- Liaise with unions and external organisations such as ISHA, IAUCC and CSSI to identify and promote screening initiatives to support students in difficulty.
- Support unions in initiating the development or review of a college-wide drugs policy where one is not already in place.
- Lobby for the next Government to invest in treatment and health facilities along with educational programmes to inform young people about drug use and associated risks

Suggested Action for Students' Unions:

- Where possible, partake in lobbying opportunities both nationally and locally for the increase of investment in treatment and health facilities, along with educational programmes.
- Initiate the development or review of a college-wide drugs policy.
- Promote the use of an online brief intervention tool such as Drugs Meter etc.
- Promote campus supports to ensure students seek help when needed.

Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

It is vital for USI to review progress under the Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.

Objectives:

- To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to reduce drugs related harm.
- To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
- To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI's work in drug harm reduction.

Actions:

- Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
- To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups and consultation with VP Campaigns.
- To further develop partnership with the National Student Drug Survey.
- Implement the strategy with regular monitoring and review of its effectiveness by USI National Council, Welfare Working Group, Campaign Working Group and Regional Working Groups.

Suggested Action For Students' Unions:

- Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

Previous Mandates:

- The VP Welfare to facilitate a feasibility study into the effects, and implications of Drug Testing Kits being introduced in Third Level colleges.
- The VP Welfare to run a drugs awareness and harm reduction national campaign by the end of the first semester
- To create a Substance abuse strategy document that would contain information in relation to drug awareness, campaigns, how to combat addictions and other items deemed essential to be included by welfare working group. Appropriate training should be provided for Welfare Officers over the summer period so they can handle cases in this area. This motion shall apply till December 2012.

Reporting and Progress:

To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy's progress will be documented in USI's annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for Drugs Harm Reduction in 3rd level between now and July 2020 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.

In preparation, a range of significant / strategic risks facing the strategy's implementation were identified.

- Budgetary and insufficient or inadequate budgets to meet campaign delivery costs.
- USI having to discontinue work and downsize campaigns/Officer resources
- Failure to achieve collaborations on the action points set in the strategy. For the strategy to be effective USI will need to foster support from external organisations and establish links with institutions and external stakeholders.
- Changing of Officer board and Institutional memory
- Changing of environments in the health care areana, socially and politically
- Workload of the organisation and the Officers
- Failure to ensure that the strategic and operational policies of the USI are properly developed and implemented, and that targets are met.

Risk Mitigation:

The Union of Students in Ireland will, over the life of this segments strategic plan, evaluate the above risks and will ensure that all actions and initiatives undertaken manage these

challenges pro-actively, with actions being identified and implemented without delay, so that our mandate can be pursued and effectively delivered for our members.