



WELFARE & DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Minutes - (01.05.2026)



Time: 17:30

Date: 1st May 2026

Chair: Bianca Holland

Present

Bianca Holland (BH) - Education and Community Officer

Rayya Bocus (RB) - Care Leavers Rep

Karina Whelan (KW) - LGBTQIA+ Rep

Noah Earey (NE) - Mental Health Rep

Victor Banan (VB) - Black Asian and ME+ Rep

Luke Hillier (LH) - Mature Students' Rep

Aqsa Sattar (AS) - Parents and Carers Rep

Apologies

Iffat Jahan (IJ) - Welfare and Diversity Officer

Welcome and Opening of Meeting

The Chair (BH) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

BH acknowledged previous concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Council and committed to improving delivery of outcomes and ensuring member contributions are actioned.

BH outlined a new proposal to develop a Student Support Resource Hub on the SU website, incorporating dedicated sections for:

- Sexual health
- LGBTQIA+ support
- Disability support
- Mental health
- Carers and parents
- Care leavers

Members were invited to submit resources (titles and links) for inclusion.

Reports and Discussion

Mental Health and Counselling Provision

- NE (Mental Health Rep) raised concerns regarding:
 - Current counselling provision limited to six sessions.
 - Lack of provision for complex trauma cases.
 - Students being redirected to GPs and subsequently left without support.
 - Disabled students being prevented from using assistive technologies (e.g. captions) within counselling sessions.
- RB confirmed similar experiences, noting restrictions on discussing past trauma within sessions.
- BH queried the scope of the issue and confirmed it relates to counselling services rather than academic staff.

Actions:

- BH to:
 - Contact Head of Disability and Mental Health Services
 - Investigate:
 - Assistive technology restrictions
 - Counselling session limits
 - Referral pathways for complex cases
 - Staff conduct and decision-making
- NE and RB to provide names of relevant counsellors to support formal investigation

Resource Hub Development

- KW (LGBTQIA+ Rep) proposed:
 - Inclusion of support for mature students (age 25+)
 - Partnerships with external organisations (e.g. Identity Space, Safe Space)
- AS (Student Parent/Carer Rep) requested:
 - A dedicated parent/carer advice hub
 - Clear guidance on entitlements and support
 - Information on childcare provision
- KW added:
 - Inclusion of carers' organisations and financial support pathways
- RB highlighted:
 - Lack of visibility of care leaver support
 - Need to clarify terminology (care experienced vs care leavers)
- BH to:
 - Develop hub structure and coordinate content
 - Include:
 - Carers and parent guidance
 - Mature student support
 - Care leaver information
 - Financial support routes
 - External support organisations
- All members to submit resources for inclusion

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and University Guidance

- KW raised concerns regarding:
 - Lack of clarity in university response to EHRC guidelines and recent legal developments
 - Inconsistent practices across courses, particularly around trips and accommodation
 - Absence of clear institutional guidance
- NE raised:
 - Evidence of potential discrimination in placements and course activities
 - Concerns regarding incorrect advice from HR

Cheltenham Pride Engagement

- KW confirmed:
 - Participation in Cheltenham Pride (16th May)
 - Plan to create a legacy banner representing supporting societies
- Engagement challenges noted with clubs and societies.
- BH to:
 - Support promotion through SU communication channels

Campus Accessibility and Facilities

- LH raised concerns regarding:
 - Faulty automatic doors at City Campus (ongoing issue)
 - Impact on disabled students
 - Disruption caused by maintenance works during teaching
- BH confirmed:
 - Issue has persisted for several months
 - Previous repair attempts unsuccessful

Societies Engagement and Inclusion

- LH raised:
 - Disparity in participation between sports clubs and societies
 - Low engagement in educational societies
- Proposed increased engagement during postgraduate induction

Student Parents and Carers

- AS outlined key challenges:
 - Lack of family-friendly spaces
 - Inconsistent recording of lectures
 - Lack of accessible support information
 - No clear childcare provision
- BH noted:
 - Insurance limitations restrict children in certain SU spaces
 - Structural limitations on campus space

Lecture Recording and Academic Accessibility

- KW, RB and others raised:
 - Inconsistent lecture recording across courses
 - Lack of accessibility for:
 - Disabled students
 - Carers
 - Students experiencing mental health difficulties

University Staff Conduct

- RB raised concerns about:
 - Inappropriate staff conduct
 - Lack of understanding of care experience
 - Dismissive behaviour towards students
- NE raised:
 - Normalisation of burnout in certain courses
 - Excessive workload justified as “industry standard”

Parental Leave Policy

- NE raised:
 - Current policy of two weeks’ leave following childbirth is insufficient
 - Reports of staff pressuring students to meet deadlines
- BH noted:
 - Policy influenced by attendance requirements but requires review

Mental Health Awareness and Campaigns

Discussion included:

- NE proposed:
 - Increased awareness of medication risks (e.g. SSRIs and heat exposure)
 - Use of SU social media for awareness posts

Any Other Business

Additional items raised included:

- Recognition of care leaver campaigns and awareness months
- Increased visibility of SU welfare support and representatives
- Need for improved follow-up and accountability on Council actions

Action Log

Action	Owner
Develop SU resource hub and coordinate content	BH
Submit resources for inclusion in hub	All members
Investigate counselling provision and assistive tech restrictions	BH
Clarify university guidance on EHRC/legal issues	BH
Promote Cheltenham Pride engagement	KW / BH
Escalate City Campus accessibility issues	BH
Investigate lecture recording policy	BH
Raise staff conduct regarding care leavers	BH
Review parental leave policy	BH
Develop mental health awareness content	BH