

Policy name: Changemaker Citizen's Assemblies

Date Presented: 07/02/24

Lapse Date: May 2025

STUDENT COUNCIL FACTS:

- Successful Citizens Assemblies (CA) have been held in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Examples of successful CA work have included Involve UK¹ and ongoing work from the People Powered University group².

STUDENT COUNCIL BELIEVES:

- UUSU should support students to develop a vision for society where all should have equality of opportunity, regardless of gender, race, religion, rurality or age and have equity of access to basic human needs and a sustainable future.
- Students are disproportionately affected by wider societal issues around the cost of food, rising rent and housing issues and issues of low pay.
- Vulnerable children, and older people in NI communities are suffering due to deepening inequalities. Too many are cold, hungry, and live in unaffordable homes, with inaccessible physical and mental health care, loneliness and decades of neglect of adult social care.
- The suffering comes on top of a profile of high mental health and wellbeing challenges, and transgenerational trauma following decades of the troubles, with high prescription drug for mental health dependency as a result of the conflict, alongside some of the worst hospital waiting lists in Europe.
- This comes on top of transitional justice/political failures to deliver grass roots healing, peace and reconciliation resulting in high levels of segregation in education and housing, division and peace walls, allowing potential for conflict to reignite. Civil society has a vital role and responsibility in transformation.
- Communities in NI are also struggling to defend environments from pollution and climate change, and to halt development of new fossil fuel infrastructure contrary to IPCC³.
- UU students should be knowledgeable, confident, educated, and free to act to be make change. Students should have a role in supporting communities, where students will live and work.
- UU Students should be facilitated to build cooperation for the common good by helping communities create change to ensure implementation of UN Sustainable Development Goals of no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, affordable clean energy, reduced inequalities, climate action, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions.

¹Our Projects | Involve

²<https://facultyforafuture.org/>

³<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/10/fossil-fuels-incompatible-1-5c-goal-energy-climate-change-study/>

- Students should have the opportunity to participate in brave conversations about realities facing communities. Through such an experience of participation students can find their civic voice, develop empathy, listening, and authenticity, to enable them to choose courage over comfort and transform their reality.
- Ulster University should create and facilitate understanding of issues facing communities and provide Changemaker's Citizens Assemblies so students can influence, prepare for and determine their future.

STUDENT COUNCIL RESOLVES:

- The Union will facilitate a UU Changemakers Citizens Assembly for participatory action including forming a vision for the future, analysis of social and environmental challenges in communities, dialogue, reflection, connections, actions and the co creation of knowledge and action with communities.
- The Union runs regular Changemaker Citizen's Assembly events (supporting student led decision making, discussion, alongside) hosting guest speakers, showing films, hosting conversation, arts, network meetings with the university, community groups, unions, and NGO's.

Name of Proposer: *Dianne Little*

Name of Seconder: *Angela Rillon*

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES/RESOURCES

<https://citizensassembly.ie/about/>

<https://citizensassembly.co.uk/>

<https://facultyforafuture.org/>

<https://www.involve.org.uk/>

NUS / USI Student's Cost of Survival Report

https://www.nus-usi.org/cost_of_survival_report#:~:text=Our%20Cost%20of%20Survival%20Report,education%20system%20for%20our%20future

High prescription drugs for mental health

https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/39935/1/Drug_overdoses_and_drug_related_deaths_in_NI.pdf

Civil Society's role in transformation

https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/119210606/the_belfastgood_friday_agreement_and_transformative_change_promise_power_and_solidarity_1.pdf

IPCC – No more fossil fuels

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/fossil-fuels-are-dead-end-warns-un-chief>

Profile of Needs of NI Community

Fitzgerald, E. et al. The Transgenerational Impact of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. School of Psychology. Queen's University Belfast.

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/psy/files/Filetoupload,784073,en.pdf>

CVSNI (2011) Commission for Victims and Survivors prepared by Bamford Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing at University of Ulster in Partnership with the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation and Compass. *Troubled Consequences: A report on the mental health impact of the civil conflict in Northern Ireland.*

<https://www.cvsni.org/media/1435/troubled-consequences-october-2011.pdf>

Ferry, F. et al., (2011) *The Economic Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Northern Ireland.*

Bamford Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing. University of Ulster and NI Centre for Trauma and Transformation.

https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/issues/health/docs/ferry_05122011.pdf

O'Hara, M. (2004) *Self-imposed apartheid.* The Guardian [Online] 14 April.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/apr/14/northernireland.societyhousing>

Walsh, C, 2023. Human Rights and the Management of Threat to Life. Queens University Belfast.

https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/527115081/Human_rights_fin.pdf

Health and Social Care

Gregory, (2022). NHS privatisation drive linked to rise in avoidable deaths, study suggests.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jun/29/nhs-privatisation-drive-linked-to-rise-in-avoidable-deaths-study-suggests>

BMA (2022). Outsourced: The role of the independent sector in the NHS.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/media/5378/bma-nhs-outsourcing-report-march-2022.pdf>

Lynch, P. (2022). Health Care Services in Northern Ireland 'on its knees'. Medscape UK.

<https://www.medscape.co.uk/viewarticle/health-care-services-northern-ireland-its-knees-2022a1001c4d>

Roderick, P and Pollock A (2022). Dismantling the National Health Service in England. International Journal of Health Services, IV. *The Commodification of England's National Health Service* Vol 52, Issue 4, October 2022.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/00207314221114540>

Hughes, B, (2023) NI Private health spending almost quadruples in five years. Belfast Live. 22 February 2023.

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/ni-private-health-spending-almost-26301388>

Connolly and Smyth, (2023) NI Health: More people than ever paying for private healthcare. BBC News.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-64971161>

Gray, A M. (2021) What now for Social Care? Ulster University.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C56xifQMtR8>

McLaughlin, D, 2022, Homecare: Northern Ireland's waiting list increases by 60%. BBC.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-62978097>

Duncan, P, et al, (2023) Which nation has the longest NHS waiting lists? The Guardian Newspaper.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/14/which-uk-nation-has-got-the-longest-nhs-waiting-list>

Factcheck NI (2023) Are NI's Hospital waiting lists over twice as long as they are in Ireland? 19 October 2023.

<https://factcheckni.org/articles/are-nis-hospital-waiting-lists-over-twice-as-long-as-they-are-in-ireland/#:~:text=Over%20281%2C000%20people%2C%20per%20million,30%2C000%20per%20million%20in%20Ireland.>

Mental Health Foundation. (2022) Hundreds of thousands of adults in Northern Ireland affected by loneliness.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/about-us/news/hundreds-thousands-adults-northern-ireland-affected-loneliness>