

**Policy name: Hidden Disabilities Awareness**

**Date Presented: 12/02/2020**

**Lapse date: May 2024**

### **Student Council notes:**

There are many hidden disabilities and the needs of individuals with such conditions is currently underrecognised. In 2016, Manchester Airport introduced the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme which has since been extended to many other public services and spaces throughout the UK, however currently no universities or Student Unions are involved with the scheme. The scheme aims to increase awareness and to enable reasonable adjustments to be made in line with current legislation.

Further information can be found here: <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/> **Student Council**

### **believes:**

Disabled students and staff members are more likely to encounter considerably more issues in their daily and academic lives than their non-disabled counterparts. It is important that UUSU fosters an environment of awareness and acceptance among its members. There have been incidences where students have been asked to prove their disability so that they can use equipment (such as elevators) designed to increase accessibility. Student Council believes that such an incident could have been avoided if the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme was adopted. This will allow students with hidden disabilities to discreetly indicate their need without having to explain themselves, which is demeaning and invites judgement. This serves to empower students and staff resulting in a positive impact on the culture of understanding at Ulster University and within UUSU. Evidence of this practice can be provided to NUS in terms of making campuses accessible for students which will enhance NUS resources and best practice guidance. This also supports Motion 403 of the NUS Disabled Students Conference 2017-20, "Access based on needs" (pp. 26-27).

### **Student Council resolves that:**

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Products should be made available at prominent UUSU locations and that the scheme should be widely advertised. Awareness training should be provided to UUSU Student Officers, Academic Reps and Student Councillors to promote the scheme and information should be provided to all members of Ulster University staff and those with contracts to work alongside UUSU and Ulster University. UUSU will lobby the university to post signs indicating that not all disabilities are visible within the disabled restroom facilities on campus.

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