

Full-Time Welfare and Wellbeing Officer 2021/2022

My name is Caitlin Wood, I am a third year International Media and Communications student at the University of Nottingham and I would like to nominate myself for the role of the Welfare and Wellbeing officer for the Students' Union.

It is clear to say that the welfare and wellbeing of University students is an absolute priority, especially after the difficult year we have faced. I feel that I would be the ideal candidate for this role as I too have had to undergo the transition to remote learning and understand the toll the pandemic may have on students' mental health. I have many ideas and plans in bringing students back to normality in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and recognise that this return may be overwhelming to some.

If I am elected as the Welfare and Wellbeing Officer, one of my first plans is to create helpful toolkits for students with advice on balancing their studies, alongside social and leisure activities such as societies, nights out and other extra-curricular events. It is understandable that when things are back to 'normal', students may find it difficult in balancing their work and social lives. Therefore, I think it is important to create and distribute online toolkits with advice on time management, approaches to a healthy lifestyle and safety surrounding the return of nightlife. I intend to work alongside the University drug and alcohol safety policies as well as groups such as Nightline in creating these accessible toolkits so that students feel supported from all areas of their University experience.

The University of Nottingham is extremely supportive regarding welfare issues, which is one of the reasons I am proudly nominating myself for this role. However, there is always room for improvement which is why another one of my plans for the year is to work closely with students to find ways in which we can enhance the quality of support for the students so they can feel comfortable in seeking help and advice when in need. From this, I plan to create online question and answer sessions on social media platforms such as Instagram stories, as well as distributing anonymous questionnaires so students can feel comfortable in giving honest answers regarding their experiences in seeking advice and support within the University. I feel confident in undertaking these tasks as I have previous experience in researching and analysing feedback for the University from a placement I undertook with the University External Relations marketing department. From this, I also learned about protecting the University brand, the tone we should write in and how to coherently communicate with social media followers. After receiving feedback from students, I will then work with Student Services, Student Welfare Representatives and Societies to create a plan in which we can enhance the quality of welfare and wellbeing support for the student body.

One thing that I have heard from many students, is disapproval at the waiting time for counselling appointments with the University. With there being thousands of students at the University of Nottingham, it is understandable that there would be a waiting list for counselling appointments. However, support does need to be accessible while on the waiting list. If I am elected as the Welfare and Wellbeing Officer, I plan to create accessible platforms for students to seek advice in the waiting period and promote student groups such as Student Minds as well as design infographics and tips on coping strategies including mindfulness and positive thinking.

Furthermore, in my spare time I work on podcasts surrounding mental health and creativity and am a camera operator for small projects. In the rise of popularity with podcasts, I think it would be a great idea to work with University Radio Nottingham in developing a series regarding the welfare and wellbeing of students and discussing a range of subjects including healthy lifestyle choices, mental health, how to access and talk to University services as well as influences and issues such as breaking down the barriers of students feeling pressured to drink alcohol in social settings. It would also be great if we could get mental health professionals or advocates to feature on the series so that students can easily access a network of support instantaneously, simply through listening to the series.

As we do begin the descent to normality, I have many ideas for campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week and am extremely excited to work alongside the Students' Union representatives in establishing an accessible, welcoming network in representing the views of the students and stakeholders of the University of Nottingham.

I'd like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to run for this role and I promise that I will work my absolute hardest to be the ideal advocate for the welfare and wellbeing of students at the University. I feel that my experience in not only working for the University External Relations, but from working in events such as charity festivals raising money for Teenage Cancer Trust, creating podcasts surrounding the topics of mental health and wellbeing aimed towards people who may be suffering and finally, researching and developing graphic design to a range of demographics means that I can bring creative and new ideas to the role.

I plan to break down the barriers in accessing welfare and wellbeing support and advice and make resources easily accessible for all. I truly believe that I can make a positive difference in effectively improving the student experience and strive to 'be the change I want to see'.

Marketing Manifesto

- My name is Caitlin Wood, I am running as the Welfare and Wellbeing Officer for the 2021/2022 academic year.
- I have many plans for the year ahead. Some of which include creating a welfare and wellbeing podcast in which we meet with mental health professionals, advocates, charities and students in breaking down the barriers and stigma regarding mental health and how to access support within the University.
- I understand the long wait for University counselling sessions, so I intend to create an accessible support network for students on the waiting list with tips and advice on coping mechanisms and positive thinking strategies.
- I plan to create toolkits for students returning to University life with advice regarding time management, approaches to a healthy lifestyle and safety

surrounding the return of nightlife as the descent to 'normality' after the COVID-19 pandemic may be a little overwhelming when balancing studying and social activities.

- I truly believe that I can make a positive difference in effectively improving the student experience and strive to 'be the change I want to see' through working closely with students and Union representatives in order to make welfare and wellbeing support accessible for all.