

Alex Taylor (he/him)

Welfare/Wellbeing Officer

About Me

I am Alex Taylor (he/him), currently in 3rd year studying Humanistic Counselling. I am standing for the role of Welfare and Wellbeing Officer.

I have vast experience of Welfare systems from both seeking support for myself and providing support to others in various official capacities and informally to friends. As well as my work and education in counselling, I have spent three years as a Course rep, which gives me experience with representing people and bringing peoples issues, as well as experience of navigating formal meetings and councils. I was also elected as a Welfare Officer for a Large society. From this, I have gained experience running welfare events, promoting wellbeing, and dealing with day-to-day welfare issues. I also have experience with being part of the Welfare and wellbeing council and have ideas for its potential.

One of my core beliefs is that Welfare is not *one* thing; rather, a thousand tiny individual things that all impact how we function in our lives. It is a combination of Mental, Emotional, Physiological, and External factors that all contribute to the way we interact with the world, and as such, to work within Welfare is to work and address all these factors with the importance they each deserve.

My aim is to champion and advocate ways to help improve all the small things that build-up so as we can all have the best Student Experience possible.

Main Manifesto

Build on existing policies - I want to build on the policies put in place by previous Welfare Officers, as I believe that there is a lot of strength in them. Whilst we are all in the process of recovering from the effects of Covid on all aspects of our lives, I believe that **now is not the time for an overhaul**, but significant change can still happen. I prefer to think of it as keeping things in motion and adjusting as we go along. If something needs to be stopped, it will be. But for the most part, it is easier to adjust than to try and overhaul without losing the ability to support students.

- **Ensure that the SU do not regress** – there are good, important policies in place that ensure people’s needs are met and their rights protected. These need to be kept and preserved, which will be a key part of my work.
- **Expand the capacity and availability of support to students** – There has been high demand for services due to covid and its knock-on effects. One of the key priorities is ensuring that support is available to all who seek it.
- **Represent the student voice on matters Welfare & Wellbeing**, be that in SU, the University, or externally. As an elected officer, I will be working to represent the students, not to serve my own interests.

Accessibility

- **Review the Referrals system** – I have heard complaints about the current referral system for some welfare systems. It should not be hard or complicated to make or get a referral if you

need one. This is something that I would want to lead a review into so a solution might be found and implemented to help students access support.

- **Push for more specialised training for welfare providers** – Whilst the welfare providers are well trained, there is always room for further development and greater understanding. One of the priorities for me would be to ensure the expansion of specialisation within the training, including LGBT+ issues, Sexual violence, working with trauma etc. as these are topics where training can sometimes be short and generalised. I would be keen to work with the part-time officers to help create specialised groups that work within their remits providing support for marginalised groups where it may be lacking elsewhere.
- **Ensure that the system works for everyone's individual needs** – Everyone's needs will vary, so we need a system that reflects this by ensuring that there is diversity in approaches and services available to people. This would enable students to access whichever service best fits their needs at the time.

Wider Goals

- **Work to make Tutors better equipped to deal with students Welfare concerns.** – One concern I have heard several times talking to friends and as a society Welfare Officer is the lack of support that some tutors offer. I want to make a change and ensure that all tutors have the necessary training and provision to be able to support their students when they come to them in need, whether that be giving training and better signposting. This is something I would require student input on.
- **Clarity of communication** – openness and honesty in all I do. One of the larger issues I have heard about the SU is a lack of knowledge and communication about exactly what it is that Officers and staff do to help the student body. Whilst there has been improvement on this front, I believe that there is still room for improvement, so one of my commitments would be to open and transparent communication where appropriate and ensuring that people are made aware of what I am doing and why.
- **Building on Welfare & Wellbeing council** – As a society Welfare Officer, I was on the newly-formed Welfare & Wellbeing Council. Whilst it is still in its infancy, I see a lot of potential for the council, as a space to help amplify student voices, and help shape the wider Welfare system more towards what students need and want it to be. I would want to continue the work of the previous Welfare Officer and make it the powerful forum it has the potential to become. Part of this would mean helping to solidify and clarify the role of Welfare Officer in sports and societies, as I am aware that there has been confusion and some ambiguity surrounding the role in some societies.

200 word Summary

I am Alex Taylor (he/him), a 3rd year Humanistic Counselling student. I have vast experience of Welfare systems both seeking and providing support.

Welfare is not one 'thing'; rather, a thousand tiny individual things that all impact how we function in our lives.

My aim is to champion and advocate ways to help improve all the small things that build-up so as we can all have the best Student Experience possible.

Main Manifesto

- Build on existing policies, e.g., Welfare and Wellbeing Council; Drug safety and Harm Reduction.
- Ensure that we do not regress.
- Now is not the time for an overhaul, but significant change can still happen where it's needed.
- Expand the capacity and availability of support to students.
- Represent the student voice on matters Welfare & Wellbeing, be that in SU, the University, or externally.

Accessibility

- Improve the Referrals system
- Push for more specialised training for welfare providers, e.g., LGBT+ issues, Sexual violence etc.
- Ensure that the system works for everyone's individual needs.

Wider Goals

- Work to make Tutors better equipped to deal with students Welfare concerns.
- Clarity of communication – openness and honesty in all I do.