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Degrees of Independence: Providing inclusive learning in Higher Education
University of Huddersfield, Canalside West
Thursday 16th April 2009

Students' Union Clubs and Societies

Increasing Participation and Inclusion

Chris Jesson
Students' with Disabilities Councillor
University of Sheffield

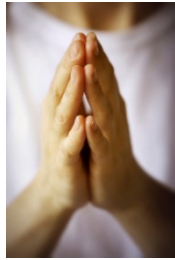


Students' Union Clubs and Societies

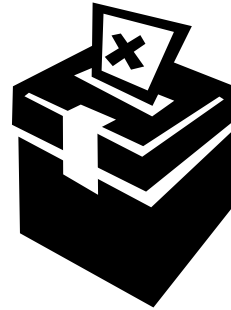
KEY THEMES

- What makes an inclusive club or society?
- How far do we go in asking for inclusion?
- Highlighting best practice:
Where have improvements been made?
- Your experiences - How involved are you in Students' Union Activities?

Some Types of Societies and Groups



Religion and Belief



Political



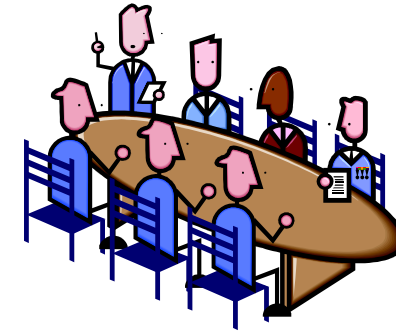
Sports Clubs



Outdoor



Departmental



Committees



International



Volunteering/Fundraising



Creative Arts

They all share commonalities...

Is inclusion one of them?

What makes an Inclusive Club or Society?

- A group that is accessible and welcoming to all students. Anti-discriminatory.
- A group that takes Inclusion seriously and not as a “one-off” at the beginning of the year.
- A group that is trained in the area and gains an understanding through additional reading.
- A group that takes Inclusion as something done by instinct not just by policy.

“Welcoming” “Takes Inclusion Seriously”
“Additional Reading” “Instinct”

These all have commonalities.

They are examples of going beyond the
'norm' for the benefit of others which
is what Inclusion relies on.

- There may be policy involved, but there's a difference between obeying rules and showing genuine caring ability.
- This is why those who do make the effort or are on the way towards improving their service should be commended.

Societies, Sports Clubs and Committees Should...

- Offer to produce literature in alternative formats if necessary.
- Be prepared to release materials for a meeting in advance.
- Book meetings in accessible rooms where possible/if asked to.
- Use their initiative - Think of ways to help people get involved.
- Remember there may be funding available for things that may prove costly to organise such as providing a BSL interpreter.
- At first instance ask your activities department (or similar) at your Students' Union for queries. Don't hold back!
- **Expand your horizons!**

If we think of society,
not everyone has this frame of mind!

...

It is a skill, you cannot be expected
to understand the fundamentals of
inclusion straight away!

...

But you have to make the effort.

➤ How far do we go in asking for inclusion?

➤ Frequently asked questions/comments:



➤ What about Language?

➤ I don't know about a specific condition.

➤ My Union is not changing in this area.

➤ Avoid patronising comments!

This is not welcoming.

➤ Additional Reading

➤ Ask around!

➤ Consult disability support, activities department, disabled students group, sabbatical officer team.

Take inclusion seriously.

➤ Highlighting best practice:
Case Study: Sheffield



➤ Access All Areas, Sheffield Union
13th February 2009

➤ Showcased what is on offer for disabled students, and what is on the agenda to improve. Featured society stalls, speeches and experiences from students themselves.

SheffieldVolunteering



➤ Sheffield Volunteering - Involved projects.
Community Garden and Clubbing Crew.

Highlighting best practice:

- Inclusion Officers and Training
- Inclusion Officer handbook
- Accessibility Statements (websites)
- Alternative Format displays (eg. Braille)
 - This is what should be done at all Student Unions.

➤ The key person is the disabled students' representative. Can they empower the Union to be more inclusive?

YES!

➤ **Your experiences** - How involved are you in Students' Union Activities? Are you satisfied with the service?

Please speak to us and write comments on note sheets given if you wish.

Any further Questions?

End of Presentation

Thank You

Chris Jesson

Students' with Disabilities Councillor

University of Sheffield