

## **064 In-house Support for Eating Disorders and Disordered Eating**

**Proposer:** Georgia Hubbard (Invisible Disabilities Officer)

**Seconded:** Eleanor Matthews (Ballet Society President)

### **Summary**

This motion aims to highlight the importance of providing in-house support for students with eating disorders or disordered eating, which is not currently offered by the university. It aims to ensure the Students Union support the lobbying of Student Services to increase and improve the support offered to these students.

### **Union Notes**

1. UEA Student Services states: "Wellbeing Advisers offer support in conjunction with other specialist services for those with diagnosed or suspected Eating Disorders" [1].
2. The university does not provide any specialist services for students with eating disorders or disordered eating.
3. 32% of students with eating disorders are diagnosed after moving away to university [2].
4. Eating Disorders have the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder [3].
5. The incident rate for Bulimia Nervosa is highest for 20 to 24 year olds [4].
6. Eating Disorders are likely to class as disabilities under the 2010 Equality Act, meaning the university is legally obligated to provided reasonable adjustments to those students, as this constitutes a protected disability.

### **Union Believes**

1. Support for students with eating disorders and disordered eating is virtually non-existent within the university.
2. There are a wealth of external services the university recommends and signposts students to, but these are not always accessible and practical for students in crisis.
3. Having an external services signposting system often put the onus on students to organise their own support, which is not always useful or beneficial to those reaching out for help.

4. Students often experience difficulties accessing NHS services due to, for example, wait times and limited provisions available.
5. GP services rely on universities being able to provide support, expecting a service to be available which is not. This expectation from the NHS that the university supports and safeguards its student's is not in line the reality of what UEA provides for eating disorders or disordered eating.
6. We believe the university is not doing enough to support its students with eating disorders or disordered eating, and needs to improve the services it offers in-house.

### **Union Resolves**

1. For the Welfare Officer to work with the Disability PTOs and key student stakeholders to lobby the university to provide in-house specialist support for students with eating disorders or disordered eating.
2. For the Students Union to support the introduction of specialist eating disorder provision by Student Services, such as a specialist counsellor, dietician or medial professional.

### **References**

1. <https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/student-services/wellbeing/resources-and-self-help>
2. <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/support-our-work/fundraise-for-beat/fundraising-at-university/>
3. <https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-020-2433-8>
4. [http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/student\\_eating\\_disorder\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.studentminds.org.uk/uploads/3/7/8/4/3784584/student_eating_disorder_fact_sheet.pdf)