

University of Leeds and Leeds University Union Commitment Statement

Drug and Alcohol Impact | Harm Reduction

June 2024

Commitment Statement: A joint commitment to harm reduction, from the University of Leeds and Leeds University Union.

The University of Leeds and Leeds University Union are working in partnership to ensure that all students and postgraduate researchers are safe and supported during their time at University. As part of this, we are undertaking vital work that aims to reduce the potential harms associated with **drug use and alcohol misuse**.

The University and LUU do not condone drug use or alcohol misuse. We want our students to be safe, and to make responsible choices that will reduce their risk of harm. This is reflected in our adoption of a **harm reduction** approach, which focuses on **education, empowerment, and support**, with the safety and wellbeing of students at its core.

Our joint commitment has five key strands:

1. **Education for students** about the risks associated with drug use and alcohol misuse - this includes risks to health including mental health, safety and wellbeing, as well as to academic success and future opportunity.

We will deliver this through University-wide campaign activity, through the provision of year-round targeted communications and events, and through working with both internal partners and external providers to share knowledge and promote educative opportunities to our student community.

2. **Education for staff** so that we understand the support that is available to students: empowering us to provide relevant and effective help and guidance, to efficiently and confidently follow referral pathways, and to undertake key training where appropriate within our respective roles.

We will achieve this through working collaboratively with colleagues across the University of Leeds and LUU, and through utilising the expertise of external providers as appropriate: delivering key information and offering training opportunities, providing guidance and support, and clarifying the avenues of enquiry and referral.

- 3. Provision of support** for students who are affected by substance misuse - whether their own use, or that of their friends and peers; including those who have been witness to or victim of a serious incident related to drug or alcohol misuse.

We will achieve this through strengthening our existing relationships with external support providers, such as Forward Leeds, and through the clarity and reinforcement of referral processes and pathways. As well as this, we will actively promote the support that is available from LUU Advice, from the University's Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service, and from the Harassment and Misconduct Team (for students who have been a victim of alcohol or drug-related misconduct.)

- 4. Policy development** that sets out and embeds out our harm reduction approach, and focusses on effective provision of a proportionate and supportive response to drug and alcohol misuse, while paying due regard to the law.

This policy is developed and maintained through our University's Drugs and Alcohol Impact Steering Group, comprising key members of LUU and representatives from a broad range of University teams and services. Vitaly, the Steering Group also includes the student voice through our Student President of the Students for Sensible Drug Policy.

- 5. Continuous review** of our policy and provision relating to alcohol and drug safety, to ensure that our offer is up to date, relevant, and responsive to the needs of our University community.

This will be achieved through continued work with specialist external partners and providers, through proactive Steering Group activity, and through regular and consistent collaboration with staff and student stakeholders.

For more information, you can visit <https://www.luu.org.uk/legal/drugs-alcohol/>

This joint commitment statement is signed by Chris Warrington (Director: Student Support and Experience, UoL) Doug Muzawazi (Director: Student Communities, LUU) Emily Tabern (LUU Affairs and Communications Officer)