



## SENSIBLE DRUGS

<b>For the attention of:</b>	Executive Committee	<b>Taking place on:</b>	28/06/17
<b>Name:</b>	Kat Younger	<b>Action:</b>	To note

**Summary:** *This paper provides an update on the implementation of the policy*

<b>Union Resolves:</b>	<b>Completed, in progress or not started</b>
1. To argue that drug usage and substance dependence should be treated as (if the substances harm the individual) a health and social care problem.	Not started
2. To move to the adoption of sensible drug policies that prioritise the safety of the students, rather than the fearmongering around drug use. This includes prioritising policy that might lead to an increase of safe drug use over policy that drives drug use down but makes it unsafe.	Not started
3. To lobby the university to include a drug-testing service, where students and the wider community can get their drugs tested confidentially, freely, and without fear of persecution.	Not started
4. TO lobby the university to include information on safe drug use in their Freshers week. This should include, but is not limited to: the effects that different drugs have, the danger of mixing different drugs, the dangers of mixing drugs and alcohol, where to get help if someone suspect they (or a friend) might be addicted, and how to know if the drugs one buys are safe.	Not started
5. To advocate that the students union runs regular non-alcoholic social events, including in the evening in both SU bars	Not started
6. To work with Students for Sensible Drug Policy.	Not started
7. Advertise welfare support for those engaged in substance abuse at events and around campus.	Not started

### **Updates/notes:**

This policy has been withdrawn, with joint agreement by the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees. Resolves 4, 5, 6 & 7 are able to be implemented through Freshers and other events next year.

This policy presents a risk to the reputation and license operated by ARU Students' Union.

I took this issue to the last meeting of the executive committee and recommended the policy be withdrawn, to which there were no objections Therefore, I will be taking this recommendation to the next meeting of the Trustee Board's Finance and Risk committee and ask that the board agrees with the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

I have attached my update as an appendix.

However, it is possible to achieve specific resolves of this policy through campaigns and working with our Ents department, as below.

1. ARU Students' Union cannot supersede the law and must treat drug usage as a criminal offence where necessary. While we can signpost support services for those engaged in substance abuse, we will always take the stance that drugs are not safe and should not be consumed, while understanding that people need support in order to stop taking drugs.
2. We cannot prioritise policy or similar that encourages drug use, safe or otherwise.
3. Anglia Ruskin University has a zero tolerance to drug usage policy, as do we as part of our license for the Academy and Lounge. There is a drug testing unit on Mill Road that may be utilised by students if they so wish, that we can include in literature.
4. We can include information in our Fresher's material on the effects of drugs, dangers of mixing drugs with alcohol, where students can go to get support in dealing with substance abuse and where/how to determine the safety of drugs. We can also work with the medical centre to ensure they are providing the same information for students throughout the year.
5. We already run non-alcoholic-led social events; however, we could advertise them more widely. "Non-alcoholic event" needs to be defined – does this mean no alcohol is sold at all, or that drinking is not the main focus of the event? I.e, movie night vs pre-drinks for midweek mash up have different connotations for focus of alcohol but is present at both.
6. We can aim to work with this charity within the constraints of the law and our license.
7. We will be able to advertise places where students can seek support and advice if they are engaged in substance abuse.



## Sensible Drugs Policy

**Prepared by: Kathryn Younger, Welfare Officer 2016-17**

**Prepared for: Finance and Risk Committee, May 2017**

**Aim:** For the Finance and Risk Committee to withdraw the “Sensible Drugs” Policy.

**Background:** The “Sensible Drugs” Policy was presented to Student Council on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and passed by students through an online voting system on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017, thereby becoming official policy of ARU Students’ Union.

The policy was submitted with the intent of actively promoting and supporting the wellbeing of students engaged in drug use. Concerns around the legality, practicality and the safety of bar staff who would be operationally affected by this policy were raised at Student Council, though the policy was ultimately passed. Considering the concerns raised at council, Jamie Smith and I took the policy to Tom Manville, Commercial Services Manager, to consult his working knowledge of this area of legality and licensing law to assess the possibility of us being able to effectively implement this policy.

Through these discussions, we determined that the policy was problematic on a number of levels:

- The wording of the policy is not completely clear, despite its intent, especially in light of any legal consequences.
- Union Resolves 1, 2 & 3 of this policy would be in breach of our operating licenses for the Academy and the Lounge and potentially incur reputational risk
- Even if Union resolves 1, 2, & 3 are removed, adoption of the policy on the whole could be considered to encourage drug use, which would incur legal/reputational risk.

### Recommendations:

Policy adoption translates into the adoptions of stances through “Union Notes” and “Union Believes” as well as mandating implementation through “Union Resolves”, therefore the whole policy should be withdrawn by the Trustee Board in the interests of not exposing the union to undue legal and reputational risk.

The recommendation that this policy be taken to Finance and Risk Committee for withdrawal was brought to and agreed by the last meeting of the Executive Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

**Finance and Risk Committee is asked to CONSIDER this recommendation.**