

Concern raised over welfare provision at York after college tutors' hours cut

By Elliott Banks and Ben Rowden

Tuesday 1 November 2016



Image: Matt Brown

Major concerns have been voiced over the changes to the college tutor system and the increasingly involved role that STYCs and Head STYCs have had to play in maintaining welfare during Freshers Week.

This change has occurred because college tutors are now subject to the working time directive, which effects the on-call nature of their remit. Previously college tutors were on-call during term time on top of their contracted 30 hours a week. Under the working time directive, workers need a minimum of 11 hours between the start of a shift, which can effect on call workers.

This means that, because of the working time directive, college tutors can no longer be on call to assist with the welfare issues of students during freshers week, given that they are no longer permitted to work after 6pm. This has meant that college tutors were not on-call as welfare assistants during freshers week, and given that the working time directive is a part of UK law it is likely that this situation will remain the same. The college tutors have received welfare training, provided by the University and YUSU.

HCSA (Halifax College) have exclusively told *Nouse* that this year Head STYCs came under increasing pressure to provide services, notably welfare, that went far beyond their official duties.

Commenting on the issue, HCSA released the following statement: "For a voluntary role, immense pressure was placed on STYCs and Head STYCs this year without presence of College Tutors. Many found themselves having to deal with Freshers personal problems alone, as they didn't have anyone else left to turn to."

They went on to raise concerns that students often became too reliant on STYCs to help with situations for

which they have not received training: "In return, Freshers are even now turning to their STYCs/head STYCs whenever they face an issue, and aren't going to their college tutors or the college wellbeing team.

No STYCs/Head STYCS should be expected to deal with such issues, especially as they have not received the training that College tutors receive. In the training sessions they received they were told to signpost Freshers to the college wellbeing team, which is nearly impossible when the only part of that team present throughout the whole week was the Head/Assistant Head of College."

Meanwhile, a source within Vanbrugh college JCRC explained to Nouse that the decision to change the working hours of college tutors was taken close to Freshers Week and no clear contingency plans were put in place to deal with the loss of a vital, trained and experienced body of volunteers. They went on to tell Nouse how college support following the departure of on-call college tutors. Source on Vanbrugh JCRC also said that without the college staff making up for the shortfall, then Vanbrugh would have struggled like other colleges during freshers' week.

YUSU President Millie Beach told *Nouse*: "STYCs are invaluable; year on year it's fantastic to see so many students eager to volunteer to make sure that incoming freshers receive a fun, York welcome. Just because there is this great student volunteer force it doesn't mean there isn't the need for professional support staff to be there, in colleges, for our students.

"The boundaries of the role of STYCs must be clear and maintained. It's concerning to hear that students have felt a lack in this professional support and have felt too much is expected of them in a voluntary role. They aren't there to provide in depth welfare support for other students. Moving forward YUSU have worked with colleges to put together a group to examine how welfare issues are managed during freshers' week and how we can best support students and ensure they do not experience this pressure in future."

University registrar David Duncan, when asked about the changes to the college tutor system, he told *Nouse*: "Despite the changes to the hours of college tutors, both they and the STYCs continue to have important parts to play. However, it is difficult to comment in detail until we have carried out a proper evaluation of freshers' week - we are currently seeking feedback from first year students through a survey."

Amendment: This article has been edited to clarify that only one source within Vanbrugh JCRC has commented to Nouse on this issue. An earlier copy of this article stated that Vanbrugh JCRC as a whole provided comment, Nouse would like to clarify this was not the case.



Most Read Discussed

1. [What is the difference between tax evasion and tax avoidance?](#)
2. [Penalty for submitting work up to an hour late halved](#)
3. [Study reveals spending habits of students](#)
4. [Academic censorship at Reading University](#)
5. [Massive power cut hits homes and train station](#)
6. [YUSU to hold referendum on policy of supporting second EU referendum](#)

Write for Nouse News

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in News

[Penalty for submitting work up to an hour late halved](#)

[Massive power cut hits homes and train station](#)

[YUSU to hold referendum on policy of supporting second EU referendum](#)

[A Viking Theatre for York](#)

[Annual Student Housing survey to close soon](#)

[Volunteering Week](#)

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

