

Socialist Soc to canvas Visit Day with mock University flyer on mental health funds

Society members will distribute flyers on campus to prospective offer-holding students to “raise awareness”

By [Chris Owen](#), Editor (2015/16)

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Image: Jack Richardson

University of York Socialist Society is planning a “publicity stunt” at this Saturday’s post-offer visit event to raise awareness for the need to improve the University’s mental health provision, Open Door, and to condemn changes in higher education funding.

According to Chair Jack Chadwick, society members will be handing out flyers in fake ambassador shirts to prospective students at Saturday’s post-offer visit event, in order to “raise awareness of the lack of sufficient student support and the University’s reluctance to condemn the recent changes to higher education”. These are things Chadwick believes have “exacerbated stress and competition among students and are negatively impacting our levels of mental health”.

The flyer, which is written like a parody of an open-day information document and which will be given out to offer-holding potential new students, opens with the line: “Our innovative new programme, the BA (Hons) Leave of Absence offers an unparalleled level of efficiency for the £27k of debt we hope to collect from you over the course of your three years.” The flyer carries the University’s name and its official logo, as well as those of Socialist Society.

It continues “And with just six mental health practitioners servicing 18,000 students, the programme is proving more popular than ever. While students across England and Wales struggle to cope with a tripling in the rate of depression, anxiety and psychosis since the introduction of tuition fees five years ago, at York we aren’t far behind, having seen a 46 per cent rise since 2011.”

The stunt comes after Socialist Society conducted an investigation earlier this term into the increased pressure placed on Open Door. The society’s data found that increases in funding had not kept pace with rising demand.

University management has condemned the planned stunt. David Duncan, Registrar & Secretary, commented: “It is in everyone’s interests that York is able to attract able students from all backgrounds, and that we make them feel as welcome as possible. Leafleting prospective students with messages of

this sort would be completely contrary to this.

“If any student society would like to raise an issue with the senior officers of the University, our door is open – we would be happy to meet with representatives of this society and discuss these matters in a constructive and positive spirit.”

The flyer continues with the assertion that “The BA (Hons) Leave of Absence is a favourite of the many students struggling with the pressures you’ll find at York: a maintenance loan barely covering rent, the declining student-staff ratio leaving you to fend for yourself academically, and the intense stress of securing a stable career path.”

It concludes that, with “chronic oversubscription for the NHS” students are reliant on universities for mental health support. “Raising awareness is not enough,” the flyer says. “We need to start raising budgets.”



One comment

Emily

21 Mar '16 at 8:29 pm

How immature...

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