



UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON  
STUDENTS' UNION

**Dear fellow student officer**

As you know in the run up to the September meeting of the NEC we submitted a motion about the NSS and Boycott/Sabotage. In the motion we reflected on feedback from students' unions that the tactic could cause real harm to students and students' unions- and so called on the NEC to properly assess the risks on small unions and SU grant funding as well as publishing an equality impact assessment on the proposed action before going ahead.

Shamefully, the clerks to the NEC – working closely with the current leadership of NUS – abused their power and deleted the clause calling for a postponement pending assessing risk to unions. The clerks have claimed that to postpone implementation of a policy is to ignore the “sovereignty” of National Conference- yet any SU in the UK would elect an executive to work out how best to implement policies.

This side-lining of legitimate SU concerns is the latest in a long line of actions from the NEC which demonstrates it hasn't learned from the disaffiliation debates of the summer and those coming in the autumn. We need an NUS that listens to unions and their concerns, not one that side-lines debate on them.

When the NEC stops listening to students' unions there is a constitutional provision to call a “National Ballot” on an issue. This involves a students' union signing up to a call for a ballot on a motion and then it gets voted on across the UK.

We would call on you as an SU to sign up to our call for a National Ballot on the issue by getting your officer team together and agreeing to add your union's name to the below motion. If you have any questions then you can give Helen, UWLSU VP Education a call on 07809250927 or Matt Grange on 07810494948 who has been supporting us with the NEC Motion.

In unity

**Dave Titley**  
UWLSU President

**Helen Pritchard**  
UWLSU Vice President Education

**Lillian Oliveria**  
UWLSU Vice President  
Activities and Participation

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## **UWLSU rational for putting this motion together**

Following the adoption of policy at National Conference to Boycott/sabotage the NSS motion, the University of West London Students' Union have been debating the proposed action and impact that this may have on our students.

After much debate and speaking to a number of officers across the country it has become clear that many officers like us were concerned that the action could have an unintentional impact on our Unions both in terms of reputation and funding as well as damage the relationship with key University Management.

Furthermore, and most worrying, as a proud widening participation institution and SU we are deeply concerned that this action will disproportionately affect students from the poorest and diverse background such as BME as well as hit the Universities which do most to ensure the widest access to HE.

To be clear we are against the marketisation of education and we do not support the idea of NSS being used to prop up the TEF Framework, but we are clear that when our National Union suggest taking an action, it has a duty as a membership organisation to be honest with its members and tell us about the risks that it foresees and be open about the effect that this can have on our members and on students' unions.

We do not believe that the current leadership of NUS has answered any of these questions. We are simply asking for the action to be postponed until NUS leadership has published a Risk assessment and an equality impact assessment on the impact of both the action itself, and of any fallout from the action identified in the Risk Assessment.

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## **National Ballot Motion: It's time to risk assess and Equality impact assess the NSS Boycott/sabotage before we take action**

### **NEC Believes**

1. That policy was passed by National Conference on Boycott/Sabotage of NSS in spring 2017.
2. It did this in order to disrupt the implementation of the TEF and Higher Education Undergraduate Home fees in England.
3. On timetables published by HEFCE, that would only impact on Year Three of the TEF- and the Government would press ahead using other data anyway.
4. If we want to make meaningful change to the Government's proposals, we should be focussed on lobbying MPs and the HE Bill now, not planning a strategy that might have an impact when it's too late.
5. The NSS provides incredibly valuable data to drive change within student demographics, protected characteristics and departments in Universities.
6. Underfunded Sus – especially small and specialist ones – have successfully argued that improvements to their grant will make an impact on their NSS score.
7. HEFCE have announced a refocussing of the NSS next year on students' academic experience. This will mean that students' unions' education and representative function gets recognition, focus and funding.
8. Many SUs have fed back that a boycott would directly harm their funding and representative capacity.
9. NUS should reaffirm its opposition to the use of NSS to justify raising fees.
10. The wave of disaffiliation attempts from SUs demonstrate that NUS needs to listen to SUs and their concerns now more than ever.

### **NEC further believes**

11. Students' unions have told us that there are a number of risks connected with this action.
12. The negative impact on our key stakeholder influence could affect our campaigning and lobbying work on issues such as access, widening participation, retention and tuition fees.
13. Many students' unions have also expressed a concern that this action could have an impact on specific groups of students, students' union and institutions. Especially students from diverse WP backgrounds.

### **NEC Resolves**

1. Carry out and publish a detailed risk assessment on the risks posed to students' unions' funding and representative capacity of implementing a Boycott/Sabotage policy of NSS.
2. In doing so to take particular account of the differential risks faced by smaller and specialist SUs and their funding.

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3. To take into account in this risk assessment the risks faced by NUS in terms of the relationships it holds, on behalf of students and students' unions across the UK, with the key national stakeholders on issues such as access, widening participation, retention and tuition fees.
4. To carry out and publish a detailed equality impact assessment on the impact of both the action itself, and of any fallout from the action identified in the Risk Assessment, especially the impact of such action on specific groups of students and different types of institutions,
5. To draw up a lobbying and campaigning strategy that can have a real impact on the Government's HE proposals now, not when it's too late.
6. To listen to SUs and postpone implementation of any NSS boycott or sabotage in light of the above.

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