**Comhairle Náísiúnta Interim Policies**

**Comhairle Násiúntí since Congress 2021**

May National Council

5(c) Conversion Therapy Ban

The motion: Conversion Therapy Ban was proposed by the Vice President for the Dublin Region. This motion was seconded by TCDSU and was passed by consensus.

**Motion: Conversion Therapy Ban**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta recognises:** That the practice of conversion therapy is the harmful practice of attempting to erase, suppress or change someone’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Conversion therapy includes medical, psychiatric, psychological, religious, cultural or any other interventions that seek to erase, repress or change the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of a person.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:** That conversion therapy is currently legal and is widely practiced in both jurisdictions on this island. In 1990, the WHO (World Health Organisation) removed homosexuality from the international classification of diseases. Yet, 31 years later attempts to ‘cure’ people who identify as LGBTQ+ continue across the island and globally.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes:** The immense suffering experienced by, and lives lost within, the LGBT+ community due to this harmful practice. Conversion therapy has lifelong impacts on those who survive and for some who do not survive. The need for victim and survivor support is vital to support and protect the LGBTQ+ community across the island and globally.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta acknowledges:** There is a commitment in the Programme for Government to legislate to ban conversion therapy, alongside officials at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth confirming that they have prepared a scoping paper on banning conversion therapy and are currently engaging with the Department of Health to forward proposals on banning conversation therapy. On April 20th, Stormont passed a motion by 59-24, calling on the Minister for Communities to commit to bringing forward legislation to ban conversion therapy in all its forms before the end of the current Assembly mandate. MLAs also voted to reject an amendment from the DUP to remove a section reading “it is fundamentally wrong to view our LGBTQ community as requiring a fix or cure”.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta believes:** That all forms of conversion therapy must be made illegal on an all-island basis and the Governments across the island must take action to ban this harmful practice. In order to support LGBTQ+ people across the island we need to introduce a full legislative ban, along with providing supports for victims and survivors and introduce public awareness, education and training.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta therefore mandates:** The President and the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the NUS USI President in lobbying for the introduction of a full legislative ban to take place within the current Assembly mandate.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further mandates:** The President and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby and raise awareness of this issue nationally and lobby the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth ban conversation therapy in Ireland within the lifetime of this Government.
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5(d) Casework Debriefing Session

The motion: Casework Debriefing Session was proposed by WITSU. This motion was seconded by IADTSU and was passed by consensus.

**Motion: Casework Debriefing Session**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:** The difficult casework which officers deal with on a regular basis; and often must rely on self-coping mechanisms between periods of little support.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes:** That although working groups or spaces at NC can be useful to debrief, an Exec member may not be adequately equipped to lead a facilitation session to help officers explore issues they have faced in their roles.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta therefore mandates:** Each Exec Team member with responsibility for a Working Group to organise debriefing sessions, on the request of that working group, in order to best help officers. Debriefing sessions should be led by an appropriately skilled facilitator, and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises
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5(e) Re-Introduction of In-Person Examinations

The motion: Re-Introduction of In-Person Examinations was proposed by MSU. This motion was seconded by TCDSU and was passed by consensus.

**Motion: Re-Introduction of In-Person Examinations**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:** The moving of many exams to an online format across Higher Education Institutes, and the replacement of many exams with continuous assessment or assignments for the duration of third level education being conducted in an online capacity.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes with:** The lack of experience in sitting in-person exams with short time constraints that students who have come into Higher Education this year may have, due to the lack of in-person exams conducted this year coupled with the cancellation of the Leaving Certificate Examinations.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta believes:** That many students are put under immense pressure during exam times, as large portions of exams within a short time period is a difficult undertaking for many students.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further believes:** That should all examinations immediately return to an in-person format once Higher Education returns to in-person teaching, students who have come into third level in the last year, and possibly those coming into Higher Education next year will be put into a high pressure situation which they have not had any experience in, which could lead to difficulty in performance in examinations.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further believes:** That the ability to undertake assessments and examinations remotely is a benefit to many students, such as student parents and carers, and it would be beneficial for these students that the ability to take assessments and examinations online remained available to students in the future.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta therefore mandates:** The Vice President Academic Affairs lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and work with MO’s to lobby individual MO’s institutions for the provision of online assessment and examination options in the future.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further mandates:** The VPAA lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and work with MO’s to lobby individual MO’s institutions to ensure that should examinations and assessments return to an in-person setting, that the re-implementation of these assessments and examinations would be in a gradual manner.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta also mandates:** The VPAA to lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to ensure that higher education Institutions provide additional supports to assist students with the transference from online assessments and exams to in-person examinations
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5(f) Expansion of Provision of Free HIV Supports

The motion: Expansion of Provision of Free HIV Supports was proposed by TCDSU. This motion was seconded by DCUSU and was passed by consensus.

**Motion: Expansion of Provision of Free HIV Supports**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:** The HIV epidemic is an intersectional issue affecting people of all walks of life, including the students we represent, and its continued presence in Irish Society for over 30 years alongside the many preventative measures we have available to us.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes:** The inequalities of the HIV epidemic have been exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic, and the closure of the Gay Mens Health service, deeming it not a priority of our government.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta recognises:** The work done by many organisations such as HIV Ireland and MPOWER Ireland to make available free PrEP and free Rapid HIV testing kits.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta mandates:** The Vice President for Campaigns, the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, and the Vice President for Welfare to work with HIV Ireland and MPOWER Ireland and work with and lobby the HSE to expand the provision of free rapid HIV testing kits and PrEP within Colleges for every student who needs it.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta Further Mandates**: The relevant Executive Team members lobby for extensive informational and educational resources to be more expansive, readily available and easily accessible.
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June – I don’t have the minutes. Will need to follow up with Cathy.

July – none discussed

August

5(d) Careers Fair for outgoing Sabbatical Officers

The motion: Careers Fair for outgoing Sabbatical Officers was proposed by TUSSU and seconded by the USI Executive team. The motion was adopted by consensus.

**The motion: Careers Fair for outgoing Sabbatical Officers**

**Comhairle Notes**: Every year near the end of term, some outgoing sabbaticals have difficulty about their next step when leaving the movement. USI and member organisations have alumni officers who might be able to assist in sourcing their next career opportunities.

**Comhairle Further Notes:** The skills elected officers develop throughout their terms makes them excellent adaptable employees in a wide range of organisations. Many officers have gone on and shaped excellent careers who might be able to offer employment opportunities and advice for these officers.

**Comhairle Notes with Concern:** That many officers can face unemployment for the few weeks or months after their term’s finishes finding suitable employment.

**Comhairle Therefore Mandates:** The USI Coiste Gnó to organise a careers fair for outgoing sabbaticals no later than end of May each year

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5(e) USI Support for Equality for Children Campaign

The motion: USI Support for Equality for Children Campaign was proposed by the VP Southern Region and was seconded by WITSU. The motion was adopted by consensus.

**The motion: USI Support for Equality for Children Campaign**

**Comhairle Notes:** LGBT+ people in Ireland are currently still being discriminated against when it comes to LGBT+ Families. LGBT+ Families are currently prevented from having a legal relationship with both of their parents.

**Comhairle Welcomes:** The enactment of the Children and Families Relationships Act (CRFA) in Ireland. This Act allows for some LGBT+ Parents to have a legal relationship with their families.

**However, Comhairle Further Notes:** The CRFA still discriminates anyone who falls into the below categories:

• Children born to male parents
• Children born via surrogacy
• Children conceived or born outside of Ireland
• Children conceived using at-home insemination
• Children conceived using known or anonymous donors

**Comhairle Therefore Mandates:** The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to join and support the Equality for Children Campaign and support LGBT+ parents in fighting this discrimination.

**Comhairle Further Mandates:** USI President, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI Executive Team to call on the Government to end this discrimination by publishing an Assisted Human Reproduction Bill to include all children born to LGBT+ families; and by updating policy, supports, benefits and services that benefit children of heterosexual parents to also include children of LGBT+ parents
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5(f) Comhphairtíocht le Misneach/Partnership with Misneach

The motion: Comhphairtíocht le Misneach/Partnership with Misneach was proposed by the Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge/ Vice President for the Irish Language and was seconded by WITSU. The motion was adopted by consensus.

**The motion: Comhphairtíocht le Misneach/Partnership with Misneach**

Suíomh Idirlíon do tuilleadh eolais // Website for further information: https://www.misneachabu.ie/

**Aithníonn an Chomhairle seo:** Is grúpa é Misneach a bhfuil luachanna an cosúil linne, mar ghluaiseacht, acu; mar shampla, ag obair i dtreo na dícholínithe, ag cur deireadh le géarchéim na Gaeltachta agus tsochaí a bhfuil cothrom do chách.

**Comhairle Recognises:** Misneach is a group whose values are very similar to our own as a movement; for example, working towards decolonisation, ending the crisis in An Ghaeltacht and creating a fairer and more equal society.

**Creideann an Chomhairle seo:** Go bhfuil buntaistí le comhpháirtíocht a chrúthú le Misneach, chun dul i mbun feachtasaíocht, ag eagrú imeachtaí oideachais, pléphaineál agus traenáil d’ár oifigigh agus gníomhaithe.

**Comhairle Believes:** That there are advantages with creating a partnership with Misneach, to get involved in campaigns, organising education events, panel discussions and training for our officers and activists.

**Agus creideann an Chomairle seo:** Gur chóir dúinne mar eagraíocht le 374,000 ball ardán a thabhairt don ghrúpa gníomhaíochta seo ag ár imeachtaí agus spásanna Gaeilge.

**Comhairle also Believes:** As an organisation with 374,000 members, we should provide a platform for this activist group within our Irish language events and spaces.

**Mar sin, glacann an Chomhairle seo:** le comhpháirtíocht oifigiúil a chruthú idir Aontas na Mic Léinn in Éirinn agus Misneach.

**Therefore, this Comhairle approves:** the creation of an official partnership between the Union of Students in Ireland and Misneach Agus sainordaíonn an

**Chomhairle seo:** Go n-oibríonn an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le Misneach chun tacú agus dul i mbun feachtais, agus imeachtaí a eagrú le chéile.

**And Comhairle Mandates:** The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge work with Misneach to support and organise campaigns and hold events together.

October - none

November

5(a) Partnership with Safe Gigs Ireland

The Vice President for Welfare proposed the partnership with Safe Gigs Ireland. This proposal was seconded by NCADSU and was adopted by consensus.

 **Motion: Partnership with Safe Gigs Ireland**

**COUNCIL NOTES:**

The occurrence of sexual misconduct at concerts and festivals is often excluded from conversations surrounding the misconduct in nightlife industry.

**COUUNCIL FURTHER NOTES:**

Safe Gigs is a new initiative to make gigs and nightlife safer for everyone by creating a zero-tolerance environment for sexual violence.

**CONGRESS MANDATES:**

The VP for Welfare to work with the ‘Safe Gigs’ team to develop and support the campaign and represent the student perspective.

December

5(b)Anti War Motion

The motion: Anti War was proposed by TCDSU (on behalf of the Equality & Citizenship Working Group) and seconded by TUDSU and was adopted by a majority.

**Motion: Anti War**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:** That Ireland is considered to be a neutral country, yet the US military presence in Shannon, EU militarisation developments and the threat to world peace has accelerated in the last few years.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes with concern**: That Institutions are spending student money on facilitating the war industry through unethical investments.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta acknowledges**: The work being done by the Anti-War Movement, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) and other organisations. However, some organisations may have biases in their approach that may perpetuate the current military industrial complex, hindering neutrality.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta mandates:** The USI Coiste Gnó to take a stance that Ireland should remain a neutral country and support organisations working towards peace and neutrality. In addition to this, the VP Equality & Citizenship should reflect on biases that may exist within these organisations.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further mandates**: The VP for Equality and Citizenship, where applicable, to support MOs in lobbying their institutions to divest from the arms-industry.

February – 4th Feb – will likely have interim motions