

**Hertfordshire Students' Union**

**Name of policy:**

**Prevention and regulation of illegal or grossly offensive content while participating in White [plain] T-shirt Socials.**

**Proposer: Amy Holloway-Smith**

**Secunder: Muhammed Sajid**

**The issue:**

*For the purpose of this motion, a White [plain] T-shirt Social is defined as; an event in which students (e.g. society members, taster members etc.) engage in decorating one another's plain t-shirts by writing/drawing on them.*

*These social events tend to invoke behaviours which are not deemed acceptable by Hertfordshire Students' Union. This can include, but is not limited to, illegal or grossly offensive words written or drawn on attendees' t-shirts – particularly, content related to protected characteristics. Significantly, both Exeter and Lancaster have experienced high-profile issues with the running of these events previously, and other Students' Unions have taken their own precautions as a result, in order to prevent similar situations arising at their own events.*

*Recently, it has come to my attention that similar issues have arisen here at Hertfordshire, and continue to do so. Some of the content evidenced – pertaining to things such as homophobia, child abuse, racism, antisemitism, and bestiality – has the potential to be extremely triggering and sensitive to particular groups of students, and needs to be addressed.*

**Why this is important to University of Hertfordshire Students:**

*Behaviour of this kind goes against the values of Hertfordshire Students' Union, and we do not condone or support it in any way – we promote a fully inclusive environment for **ALL** students.*

*Furthermore, the University of Hertfordshire has an incredibly diverse student body – with students arriving here from a whole host of backgrounds, circumstances and experiences. University should therefore be accessible and inclusive for all, and as a student community, we should be fully supportive of one another and ensure that all students attending the University of Hertfordshire feel welcomed, and part of that community.*

**Action:**

*Hertfordshire Students' Union should, to the best of their ability, seek to prevent and regulate illegal or grossly offensive content [or hate crime] at White [plain] T-shirt Socials by:*

*Providing additional training and support to society committee members wishing to host a White [plain] T-shirt Social – focused around increasing awareness of potential issues.*

*In addition, the following mandatory steps are to be taken if a society [or student group] wishes to run an event as defined above. The event will also need to be signed off by the Student Activities team and Vice-President Activities in order for it to go ahead.*

- *Society handbook updated – [this year digital as 2019-20 already gone to print]*
- *Specific risk assessment*
- *Guidance & declaration form\**

*\*Examples of what this could include:*

- *2 committee members to remain sober for the duration of the event (for the purpose of being vigilant to potential issues with t-shirt content)*
- *Spare blank t-shirts (for the purpose of replacing defaced t-shirts)*
- *Sanctions (what will happen if issues arise at the event)*
- *Forum to deny entry of people with content as referred to above written on them*

**Officer responsible:**  
**VP Education**