

University and SU to take a stand in supporting Pro-Reproductive Rights Universally

Passed by: Senedd

Passed on: 06/12/2021

Policy lapses: 06/12/2024

Status: Completed

Officer Responsible: Wellbeing Officer

Summary

I would like to put forward the idea that instead of the University/ SU taking a stand with just Polish student and protests, that they instead take a stand in supporting Women's Pro-Reproductive Rights universally.

Details

Current Policy 'Take a Stand in Solidarity with Polish Protests' encourages the SU to actively stand alongside the protest against the ban of abortion in Poland. However, all round the world countries have taken away women's re-productive rights, not just in Poland. Universally, laws around abortion are diverse and vary by country. There are currently 26 countries where all types of abortion are illegal, regardless of if the pregnancy is a result of a rape or incest. In a further 37 countries abortion is illegal unless it saves the mother's life.

Human rights bodies such as the United Nations (UN) have repeatedly condemned restrictive abortion laws as being incompatible with human rights norms and while most women live in countries where they can exercise their right to abortion, 41% of women world-wide still live under restrictive laws where they cannot practice their human right to have an abortion.

The inability to access safe and legal abortion care impacts 700 million women of reproductive age. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 23,000 women die of unsafe abortion each year and tens of thousands more experience significant health complications. Legal restrictions on abortion do not result in fewer abortions, instead they compel women to risk their lives and health by seeking out unsafe abortion care.

I would like to put forward the idea that instead of the University/ SU taking a stand with just Polish student and protests, that they instead take a stand in supporting Women's Pro-Reproductive Rights universally.

Hannah the Wellbeing Officer would like the SU/ University to show their support for all international students where abortion may be illegal or banned to certain extents in their home country. I want to ensure that all these students have the access to the correct advice and support regarding abortions that they may not have access to at home, including the process of an abortion, the aftercare, and supporting wellbeing

advice. Should a student in the University have to go through an abortion themselves, I want to see the University have compassion and leniency when it comes to absences, special circumstances and assignment extensions. Having to make the decision to terminate a pregnancy, and the process of terminating a pregnancy is an extremely stressful life event, that only a woman who has been through the experience can understand. Not only do women suffer from physical responses, but they will also experience a wide range of psychological and emotional responses too. It is also known that any pregnancy loss will lead to an interruption in a women’s hormone cycle. The American Pregnancy Association states that the most common negative feelings subsequent to an abortion include guilt, anger, shame, remorse or regret, loss of self-esteem or self-confidence, feelings of loneliness and isolation, sleeping problems/insomnia, bad dreams, relationship issues and thoughts of suicide. In addition to this many women will often experience grief, stress or a sense of loss and may feel less able to cope. Abortions will NOT be looked down upon OR discriminated against and appropriate process will be put in place should a student be the victim of this due to their decision to have an abortion. A woman should have the right to choose what she does with her own body and her own baby, not a higher-up male authority.

Submitted by: Hannah Lunnon

Updates

Action Taken	Name and Role	Date
This is our current SU stance.	Helen (Wellbeing Officer 2023-24)	November 2023
During our annual SHAG week, we informed students about the location of the nearest sexual health clinic, ensuring they have access to abortion services and other essential healthcare options.	Helen (Wellbeing Officer 2023-24)	November 2023