**Pro-Choice Action Group Minutes - 15:00 – 15/01/2025**

**Attendees:**

Hope Aquilina, WCO – Chair

Mimia Islam, Women’s Officer

Jane Baston, Interim Student Voice and Representation Manager – Staff

Paige Archer, SVC (Democratic Engagement) – Minutes

Molly Purcell, Interim Senior Voice Coordinator

Hannah Cleallsmith - Student

**Apologies:**

N/A

**Meeting:**

HA welcomed everyone to the meeting and explain how the action group will be run.

Introductions were made.

JB explained further how this process works and howe the action group came to be.

JB noted when we are thinking about this policy, we must remember to think about how the topic of this policy has a direct impact on students.

HA agreed and suggested we think about how the members of the guild and students at UoB should have the right to choice, the freedom to choose and the support available to them. Referring to the first sentence.

HC suggested that this also applies to the next section of the policy, students should have autonomy.

JB agreed and said we must be careful not to duplicate this wording.

HA moved the group onto the next section of the policy and picked up on the word ‘denounce’ and how this might be taken as an extreme word seeing as the definition is ‘evil’.

HC suggested we opt for different wording, MI agreed.

JB mentioned the recent change in the law that protest outside abortion clinics is illegal and raised the question of if it should be mentioned?

HA suggested adding a short sentence after the this; ‘This includes on our campuses and within our local community’

HC suggested the wording; ‘This includes on campus and in relation to providers of reproductive care that UoB students may access in the local community’.

Mimia left the meeting at 15:20. Minutes will be circulated.

HA referred to the final section and noted we should be thinking about how the guild can provide students with relevant resources and support that they can access in their own time.

HC raised the issue that this may be misleading and come across as the guild being the place to go for this type of support and we should reword this to make it clear.

HA agreed and suggested: ‘The Guild should sign post students towards...’.

HA took the group back to reflect on the whole edit of the policy.

JB shared some reflections on other policy changes we’ve made in the past, such as using wording like ‘the guild should support students who...’.

HC made the point that we need to ensure this policy doesn't just focus on support for those who choose to be pro-choice or those who choose to be involved in campaigning around this topic, this should apply to all students.

A student may approach the guild of signposting support and not have identified themselves as being pro-choice and just need support there and then.

HA agreed that we must make this policy readable from this perspective.

MP made the following wording suggestion: 'The members of the Guild of Students believe, as far as permitted by law, that the Guild supports reproductive healthcare and is inherently pro-choice'.

HC made the following wording suggestion: ‘The members of the Guild of Students believe that students who could benefit from accessing information about reproductive healthcare, including the right to choose an abortion, should be supported’.

HA mentioned we should mention who they can be supported by, as at the moment we have not mentioned whether the Guild is the provider of this support or not.

MP and JB suggested we reorder the policy to include both the political and supportive aspects, to make it easier to read and clearer for students.

All agreed.

HA asked if everyone was happy with the changes so far. All agreed.

JB explained next steps and the options of an All-Student Vote or a Student Forum and how the process works from here on out. Mentioning the possibility of seeking legal advice.

HA asked the groups opinions.

HC leaned towards an ASV but was unsure if the vote would be entirely reflective of the whole student body and was concerned regarding turnout.

HA explained her understanding of this concern and that this is always a risk with the ASV but expressed that this is personally her preferred option as it is in the hands of the students.

JB agreed. Asked if anyone knows if there is a debate on campus regarding pro-choice at present? If so, a Student Forum may be preferrable?

HA said she hasn’t seen much reaction recently. HC agreed.

HA asked the group to confirm were happy with going to ASV? All agreed.

JB will now move forwards with planning for ASV in February and speak with Jo Thomas CEO.

**CLOSED at 15:52**