

**Emergency Accommodation Proposal**

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| **Contact details** | |
| Your name (Proposer of the policy) | William Styles |
| Your email | [william.styles@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:william.styles@students.plymouth.ac.uk) |
| The name of a person who supports the policy (Seconder of the policy) | Saffron Deemer Daniella Marley Isabel Saxby |
| Seconder’s email | [philippa.deemer@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:philippa.deemer@students.plymouth.ac.uk) [daniella.marley@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:daniella.marley@students.plymouth.ac.uk) [isable.saxby@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:isable.saxby@students.plymouth.ac.uk) |

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| **Student Impact** | |
| Have you consulted students about your proposal? Please explain how many students you have engaged with and how. | Motion began in response to feedback from a single student with dangerous house mates who found that emergency accommodation was no longer available. Following the war in the Ukraine speaking to our Ukrainian and Russian students it is clear they will become stranded and homeless this summer. |
| How does your proposal impact the students at the University of Plymouth, what difference will it make to students? | -Prevent student homelessness and associated vulnerability.  -Provide housing security so students can focus on food and other issues affecting them during the conflict.  -Provide lasting safety for students whose housing situation has become untenable because of violence, threats, abuse and other circumstances. |

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| **Policy Proposal** |
| **The Union Notes** (Facts) This section should include facts, not reflection or opinions. Please provide references where possible. |
| 1. The University has previously, though no longer provides emergency accommodation to students. 2. The war in the Ukraine prevents Ukrainian students from returning home, receiving financial support from home, and has placed immeasurable stresses upon them. 3. The war in the Ukraine prevents Russian students from returning home, accessing their funds, receiving financial support from home, and has placed immeasurable stresses upon them. 4. Outside of the conflict, there is a need for emergency accommodation to insure student safety alongside the ability and freedom to escape harmful living arrangements in immediate and unplanned ways. |
| **The Union Believes** (Opinions/Beliefs) This section requires reflection on the facts stated in ‘The Union Notes’ |
| 1. In supporting and safeguarding all students. 2. That housing is a fundamental human need. |
| **The Union Resolves** (Actions) Here you will describe the action you want to be taken, be specific. |
| 1. To lobby the University to once again provide emergency accommodation alongside legal assistance in escaping former contracts. 2. To lobby the University to provide a support fund for students stranded as a result of the war in the Ukraine.      1. “The Union recognises Russian and Ukraine students in the UK as in need of help and lobby for all support as is required and necessary on their behalf, if requested.” 2. To Union shall lobby with the goal to ensure any agreed emergency housing provision is sufficient, apt and non-discriminatory. |
| **Appendices/supporting information** Please include any supporting information relevant to your motion, this could include; consideration of how you would achieve any points in ‘The Union Resolves’, links to news articles or online publications |
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**Excerpt from meeting minutes of 31st March 22**

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| Emergency Accommodation Proposal |
| Will Styles, PT Men’s Welfare Officer gave an overview of the proposal  Saffron Deemer - PT Women’s Officer, proposed an amendment to change Union Resolves Point 3 to read ‘treat all students that request it, as refugees’ as not all Russian and Ukrainian students will identify as being refugees. Everyone should be treated with compassion and supported but being a refugee is a specific thing.  Will accepted the amendment so no vote was necessary.  Charlie Atkinson - VP Education, noted that the hardship fund is available and does encompass things like this. Charlie also pointed to the phrasing of refugees, those students are not here as refugees, they are here on visas. That’s not to say that they cannot be supported but, as Saffron noted, the word refugee means something very specific. Charlie proposed removing the refugee from Union Resolves Point 3 entirely.  Charlie explained that the President - Emi Dowse, has been in contact with students who are impacted by the war in Ukraine. They say they are okay for now, but of course they can ask for more support in the future.  The Chair asked seconders to the motion if they agree to the amendment.  Saffron suggested the wording of ‘the Union shall treat Russian and Ukrainian students in need as displaced’ instead of refugees as there needed to be some acknowledgment of the severity of the situation they are in.  Charlie disagreed that there needed to be any terminology like refugee or displaced used to describe the students in question. They are students in the UK studying on visas, they are not currently displaced. Of course, the focus needs to be on support them and making sure they are alright.  Saffron asked if the visas are year-round or only for term time. Charlie noted it would depend on the individual and that any conversations about that needed to happen on a case by case basis rather than blanket terms being used.  Daniella Marley – PT Welfare Officer did some research ahead of this and spoke to every Ukrainian student. General feedback was that they wanted quite generalised help which was for all students, not just Ukrainian students and from the vibe Daniella had, they did not need any specific terms as long as it was a generalised offer of support. For example, they wanted emergency accommodation to be available, if they needed it at a later date.  Saffron was happy to remove the words refugee and displaced as Daniella has spoken to the students in question about it.  All proposers and seconders accepted the amendment  Joyita Aston-Simon – School of Psychology Rep, acknowledged the situation in Ukraine and the need for support for students but queried if there was going to be another proposal to support those other international students that are also struggling.  Daniella explained that she has been working with quite a few international students on accommodation concerns, however, much of it is not emergency based and is more in relation to guarantors and longer-term issues which the SU is already looking at. Emergency accommodation would be applicable to all students, including international students. It would be for any situation which is an emergency. Will Styles agreed with what Daniella said.  Charlie added that if there is need for lobbying the university for emergency accommodation, it doesn’t have to be a policy, if there is need then it can be progressed as Union Council or by Officers aside from policy.  Joyita noted that she understood that this situation is an emergency but looking longer-term, something does need to be done to improve accommodation for international students. There will be other situations in the future that will be emergencies also.  Owain Gullam - PT Societies Officer, suggested if it would not be better, on the basis that anyone should have access to emergency accommodation, to remove reference to Russian and Ukrainian students particularly as everyone should have equal access in an emergency situation.  Saffron added that Russian and Ukrainian students are experiencing a lot of media which could be really distressing, yes there are other people in need, but this is a war and there is going to be students that are deeply affected. Having some declaration to be held responsible against is really important.  Joyita countered that no-one is arguing that its not important, but on the topic of equality and diversity, there are other students who are facing issues, it is important to all students.  Saffron explained that they were not suggesting exclusion but thought there was value to having specific reference to students impacted by the war in Ukraine as an accountability measure and so that those students feel supported, even if they do not need to use that support.  Daniella noted that the policy applied to all students and Owain is right that the SU does support all students, but Daniella also agreed with Saffron that it needs to acknowledge Ukrainian and Russian students specifically. The conversation that Daniella has had with Ukrainian students is that they don’t feel that the SU is doing enough, that the support they have had hasn’t been what they wanted and that is a sperate conversation to have.  Charlie asked what feedback Daniella had received from Ukrainian students regarding the support from the SU.  Daniella explained that the main thing is fundraising, they have been organising weekly fundraisers and the SU has refused to promote them. Daniella was not sure if that was because the event was not in the SU but they were also not offered to host it in the SU. Daniella wants to speak about this with Sabbs today.  They were also not impressed with the vigil, they said it wasn’t harmful having it but it was disappointing that there were not more fundraisers led by themselves. They appreciate the things the SU has done but would have liked more support with things they have been doing.  Mads Morton, - VP Activities, expressed her confusion as when Emi has spoken to the Ukrainian students, they said they are quite happy with the support they have received. Mads questioned whether they are just saying that. Mads noted she was not aware of the fundraising issue but there are systems in place regarding advertising outside of the SU and there is legislation nationally governing charities fundraising for other charities and that it has to be done officially through RAG. They are all things that can be discussed. Daniella noted she hoped to do that at the end of the meeting.  Michael-Riley Wallace, School of Engineering, Computing and Maths Rep, asked in the chat  “What is the ongoing future of this proposal in regard to those graduating in September who won’t be able to fly home, but also won’t be classed as students anymore and therefore not be liable to emergency accommodation from the university? we will provide help, or default them back to their embassy? (should the war be ongoing at that time)”  Will noted that unfortunately as they would no longer be students the SU would lack the ability to do anything for them. Charlie added that whilst they are still students the SU can lobby for what does happen moving forward. Whilst Charlie did not know what that might look like, that is part of what is up for discussion.  Michael queried if there is a responsibility for the university to protect its alumni's in emergency situations? Charlie was not aware of any university policy but acknowledged that it is something that can be looked into  **Action: Sabbs to look into the situation with regards to the university responsibility**  Tracy Priestman – note taker for the meeting, asked for clarification of the final wording of resolves point 3 prior to the vote  Will clarified Union Resolves Point 3 reads;  “The Union recognises Russian and Ukraine students in the UK as in need of help and lobby for all support as is required and necessary on their behalf, if requested.”  All other wording of the policy proposal remained the same  The Chair called for a vote on the policy proposal and noted that as the meeting is not quorate then email votes will be collected from absent members following the meeting  For: 11  Against: 0  Abstentions: 1  Email results to follow  Final Voting numbers, including email votes  For: 17  Against: 1  Abstentions: 1 |