




# AMOSSHE

The Student Services Organisation

## Winter bulletin 2022

### Strategic progress

In 2019 **AMOSSHE** presented our association's five year strategy to members, which aims to achieve three key priorities. In this bulletin **AMOSSHE**'s Executive Director John Bloomfield provides an update on our progress with delivering the strategy.



The strategy, which was developed by the **AMOSSHE** Executive Committee in consultation with our members, aims to achieve these three priorities:

- ▶ **Enable our members** by providing cutting edge tools, skills, knowledge, opportunities and networks to successfully deliver innovative and impactful Student Services programmes.
- ▶ **Collaborate and influence** by working with university leaders, policy makers, funders, government (local and national), students, advocates, and other key stakeholders – in the UK and globally – to ensure that the impact of Student Services is clearly recognised during conversations about the enhancement of the student experience.
- ▶ **Establish a movement** of Student Services leaders – in the UK and internationally – focused on facilitating and promoting student success – a collaborative consortium of partners speaking a common language and dedicated to the achievement of the highest quality outcomes for our students.

Unfortunately, because of the pandemic a lot of this work was put on hold or slowed down due to the need to prioritise supporting members through such a difficult period with additional networking opportunities, reverting to online provision, and ensuring research and professional development events were geared towards the immediate needs of members.

However, **AMOSSHE** has been driving forward the prioritised areas of the strategy over the last few months and the next page provides a brief update on the areas we are moving forward at this point in time.

Continues on page 2

# Update on our five year strategy

**AMOSSHE** Executive Director John Bloomfield provides an update on progress with our association's five year strategy. Read the strategy in full here: [www.amosshes.org.uk/governance](http://www.amosshes.org.uk/governance)

## Strategic workstreams

**AMOSSHE** has split the strategy into three workstreams, which are designed to practically deliver the objectives of the strategy over the course of the next two years:

- ▶ **Resources** – providing tools, research and professional development to enable our members.
- ▶ **External development** – working with partners and stakeholders to collaborate and influence.
- ▶ **Member engagement** – enabling members to network, share expertise and establish a movement.

These workstreams are made up of **AMOSSHE** members and Executive Members, supported by the National Office team to ensure that we deliver for the membership.



John Bloomfield

## Practical progress

These groups will be producing a number of outcomes in priority areas over the coming months, including surveys and focus groups designed to provide greater context about the diversity of our membership and the information and resources we produce, and to understand what else we can do for members that can add value to their work.

We will also be developing a new series of meetings to enable members to network with each other on relevant topics, and a series of webinars celebrating the work of members. We are also looking at how we strategically align with other organisations to get maximum impact for members through our links and partnerships, to ensure we are making the most of all our interactions within the sector.

## Get involved

As opportunities arise from this work, I encourage members to get involved, complete the surveys and participate in the discussions to further shape our organisation and enable you to make the most of your membership. **AMOSSHE** is a community of members, and we want to ensure we can support that community in the best way we can.

If you would like to find out more about the strategy or want to discuss any elements in more detail, please get in contact with John at [j.bloomfield@amosshes.org.uk](mailto:j.bloomfield@amosshes.org.uk).

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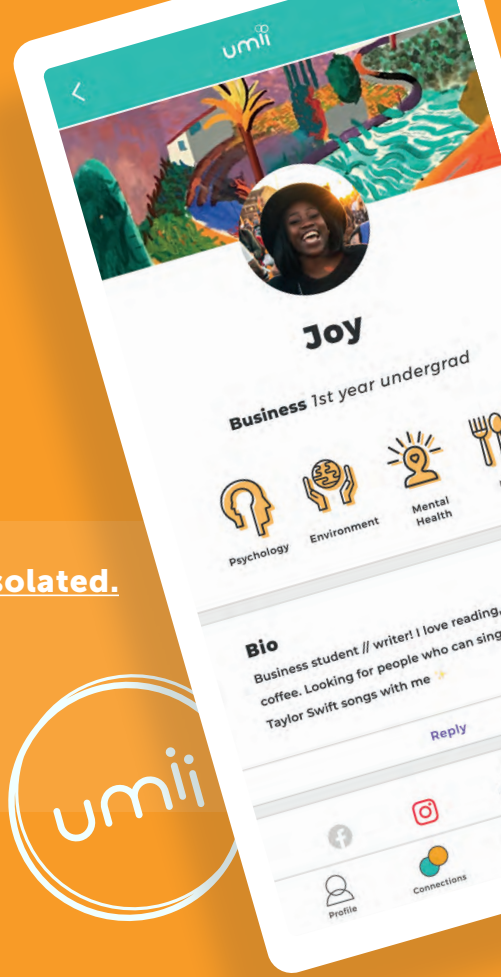
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– Anthony Ayers, Deputy Director of Student Services, University of Bath



## The student journey continues, and so does ours...

### The JS Group has been supporting higher education since 1751!

Starting with the John Smith & Son bookshop in Glasgow, we supported students and universities with bookshops on over 30 campuses. From 2006 we delivered our Aspire platform, enabling the distribution of HE bursaries, and in recent years have moved to delivering a wide range of study related resources online, supported by our on-campus Engagement Partners. Last year we established a Data Insights Team, providing enhanced reporting to our HE partners to support student retention, continuation and outcomes.

### We continue to significantly develop our offer to universities and their students with a number of new services available now and in the near future.

Following a successful pilot we have recently launched **Aspire Cash** which enables institutions to deliver cash bursaries, scholarships and other awards to students via a secure platform delivered in partnership with Natwest. This allows students to choose which bank account to transfer funds to, take their award in instalments, removes the need for an HEI to collect bank details and supports university cashflow.

During lockdowns we wanted to further help our university partners and their students and so we created a free **Events programme**, working with publishers and authors to deliver live online events on topics supporting study skills and wellbeing. These were hugely popular and we have now embedded them into our standard offer, expanding the range of topics covered.

We have also transformed our previous online platform to a new **student engagement portal**. Apart from providing our online shop for study related resources and digital access, the portal also provides a generic range of key student information provided by partners and our student ambassadors. What we have now is just the beginning of what will be a very significantly expanded provision for the next academic year.

At the JS Group we are passionate about supporting student success and better outcomes. As a sector we are all aware that students from less advantaged backgrounds do not have the same access to graduate level jobs as other students and so **we are currently working on the creation and delivery of a programme to help less advantaged students on our schemes to develop employability skills**, including confidence and social and cultural capital, and to have opportunities to attend workshops and placements, to help them achieve better graduate outcomes. More information on this coming soon...

If you'd like to know more about what we do and our current plans, do feel free to get in contact for an informal chat.

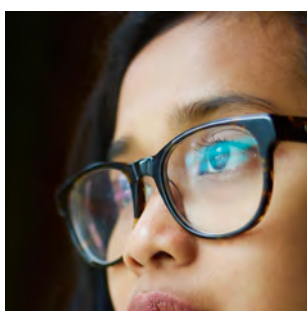


Julie Walkling,  
Director of Academic Partnerships  
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or visit our website  
[www.jsgroup.co.uk](http://www.jsgroup.co.uk)

# Sector representation this winter

**AMOSSHE** members and Executive Members represent our association on a variety of higher education sector stakeholder groups, and lend their Student Services expertise through collaboration with national and international organisations. Here's a roundup of just some of our outreach during the winter.



## Mental health

**AMOSSHE** Vice Chair (Professional Development) Nic Streatfield (Deputy Director of Student Services, University of East London) has focused his attention on mental health, representing **AMOSSHE** on the Advance HE Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education Expert Group (MWBHE). This group exists to support and promote the mental health of higher education students and staff.

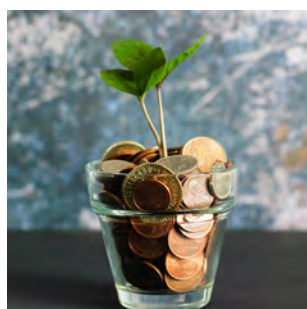
Nic also contributes to the Universities UK Mental Health in Higher Education Advisory Group, which considers initiatives to support healthy university environments and cultures for students and staff, and the Student Space Independent Governance Group, which advises Student Minds on the development of the Student Space resource.

Meanwhile **AMOSSHE** Chair Jill Stevenson (Dean of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Director of Student Services, University of Stirling) led a panel at Informa London Tech Week about addressing high levels of poor mental health in students, and contributed to a Student Minds roundtable about understanding international students' experiences at university.

## Student homes

**AMOSSHE** Executive Members Chris Warrington (Head of Student Support, University of Leeds) and Emma Bales (Director of Student Services, University of Cumbria) regularly attend meetings of the National Code for Large Student Developments Committee of Management. The code, operated by ANUK (Accreditation Network UK), aims to ensure the transparent and professional management of purpose-built student accommodation.

They also represent **AMOSSHE** on the Universities UK / GuildHE Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing Governance Board and Sector Advisory Group, and Emma attended the 12th Joint Codes Conference. This Unipol event explored the need for both the private and public parts of the student accommodation sector to work together much more closely, thereby benefiting the students who they house.



## Student finance

**AMOSSHE** members Phil Davis (Head of Student Support, Bishop Grosseteste University) and Lynne Condell (Student Money) regularly represent our members on the Student Loans Company (SLC) Finance Stakeholders Operations Group. This group contributes specialist insight, knowledge and expertise to support SLC to deliver successful student finance services. Phil has also contributed to the SLC Higher Education Bursaries and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) Steering Group, which provides oversight of the HEBSS scheme and acts as a forum for stakeholder liaison and management.



## Drugs and alcohol harm reduction

In January 2022 **AMOSSHE** Chair Jill Stevenson gave evidence at a Scottish Parliament Education, Children and Young People Committee meeting on the topic of drink and needle spiking, and **AMOSSHE** member Robert Partridge (Executive Director of Student and Academic Services, University of Glasgow) has represented **AMOSSHE** at several meetings of the Police Scotland Precept (Spiking) Partners. These meetings bring together stakeholders from the public services, night time economy, colleges and universities, to address concerns about spiking – particularly by injection – which were heightened at the end of October 2021. **AMOSSHE** Head of Engagement Benjamin Parsons attended a similar meeting convened by police forces across the UK.

Also, **AMOSSHE** Executive Member Chris Warrington represents our members on the SOS-UK (Students Organising for Sustainability) Drug and Alcohol Impact Advisory Board.

## Changing the culture

In November 2021 **AMOSSHE** Executive Member Sarah Cavendish (Head of Student Support Services, University of Leicester) spoke at a Government Events conference about supporting women and minorities in higher education, tackling harassment and creating safe environments. Then in January 2022 **AMOSSHE** Executive Member Sammy Li (Adviser on Student Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, University of Birmingham) gave a keynote address for IGPP (Institute of Government and Public Policy) about tackling complaints of sexual misconduct and gender-based violence, harassment and hate crime in higher education. And **AMOSSHE** Chair Jill Stevenson spoke at Wonkhe's Secret Life of Students conference in February about induction initiatives such as bystander intervention, consent training, unconscious bias, and anti-racism, and discussed their efficacy and implications.



## International collaboration

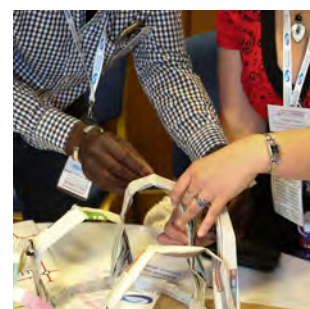
As part of our strategic commitment to collaborate and share learning with international Student Services and Affairs professionals, **AMOSSHE** has forged close relationships with peer associations around the world. In November 2021 **AMOSSHE** Chair Jill Stevenson and Vice Chair Simon Lee (Deputy Director – Student & Library Services, Student Wellbeing & Welfare, Teesside University) attended a meeting of the IASAS (International Association of Student Affairs and Services) Global Association, to look at common issues and challenges, and start conversations about how IASAS as the global association for Student Services can help members collaborate and make the most of the opportunities to work together.

And also in November, **AMOSSHE** Vice Chair (Professional Development) Nic Streatfield attended the ANZSSA (Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association) conference 2021, where he took part in a panel discussion called 'Supporting Higher Education in the New World: A Global Perspective'. The panel included representatives from ANZSSA, CACUSS (Canadian Association of College & University Student Services) and IASAS.

## And there's more

**AMOSSHE** members are always active in the sector, contributing their insights, experience, and advice. For example, **AMOSSHE** Vice Chair (Operations) Helen McNeely (Head of Student and Academic Affairs, Queen's University Belfast) regularly attends meetings of the UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) Health and Safety Committee. This sector stakeholder group acts as a central point for discussion and resolution of health, safety and wellbeing matters within higher education, and also develops a sector-wide health, safety and wellbeing plan.

And in November 2021 **AMOSSHE** Executive Member Sammy Li attended a roundtable discussion on professional representative and funding bodies as part of an Advance HE research and development project, discussing divides between professional services and academic staff, lack of diversity in higher education leadership, and more.



# a focus on flexible mental health and counselling provision.

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# INTERSOL GLOBAL



## Higher Education investigation and training services

This month we have been retained by a fifth University as their external impartial investigation consultants. Our retained service delivers free investigation advice and planning together with reduced rates for investigation and training. Universities do not incur any expense until an investigation plan is agreed and terms of engagement signed.

Why retain an in-house investigator when you can access free services that deliver consistency, an Office for Students compliant team of over 30 specialists, and operational support for a fraction of the cost? Support your in-house people and let the team here at Intersol Global shoulder the strain of serious and traumatic investigation.

## UUK

UUK are about to publish guidance on HE's handling complaints of staff/student sexual misconduct, we thought it timely to refresh the imperative that such reports **must** be investigated by skilled specialist investigators who are well versed and skilled in trauma-informed practice.

Our Chief Operating Officer, Mick Confrey is presenting at UUK's March Conference "Tackling Violence, Harassment and Hate Incidents 2022" and is joined by 3 of our team who would be delighted to meet fellow delegates and explain our services further. [Click here to view the conference.](#)



# Professional development roundup

This winter **AMOSSHE** has offered a range of continuing professional development events for the higher education sector. **AMOSSHE** members can find all the event resources here: [www.amoshe.org.uk/events-resources](http://www.amoshe.org.uk/events-resources)



## Re-setting expectations for students, parents and our teams post-pandemic

Last November we considered how Student Services can reset the expectations of students, their parents and supporters, and our own staff teams, following the pandemic. The event focused on structured discussions, with insights from Jenny Brown and Helen McNeely (Queen's University Belfast), Rebecca O'Hare (University of Leeds), Gareth Hughes (University of Derby) and Claire Slater (University of Bristol).

## Suicide prevention

Also in November, we hosted a webinar to explore the latest strategies for preventing student suicide, along with case studies of good practice and practical examples to help you review and develop how you approach this difficult area in your own institution. Professor Jo Smith (University of Worcester) drew on material from the new book *Preventing and Responding to Student Suicide: A Guide for FE and HE Settings*, Sarah Cavendish (University of Leicester) provided a case study of a strategic approach, and Clare Dickens (University of Wolverhampton) discussed an Office for Students-funded project about suicide and self-harm mitigation.



## Working with third-party providers

In December we offered a showcase of third-party partners, products and services that can enhance and develop your institution's service provision. Following a presentation by Levi Pay (Plinth House Ltd.) about working successfully with third-party providers, fourteen third-party providers gave overviews and answered questions about their products and services.

## Student Services across the UK

In January our first webinar of 2022 provided an overview of higher education across the four nations of the United Kingdom, with a focus on how Student Services are influenced by differences and similarities between nations. Helen McNeely (Queen's University Belfast), Robert Partridge (University of Glasgow), Gian Fazey-Koven (Bangor University) and Chris Warrington (University of Leeds) gave their unique insights.



## Healthy lifestyles

In February the AMOSSHE Winter Conference 2022 explored how to support students to maintain healthy lifestyles and relationships, and develop a positive higher education culture in a post-pandemic context. Presenters from member organisations and sector colleagues joined student representatives to discuss a wide range of hot topics. These included the key issues impacting student lifestyles and relationships, creating more welcoming spaces for international students, tackling harassment and sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol harm reduction, tackling student exploitation, staying safe and secure online, financial wellbeing, and using physical activity to tackle mental health issues.



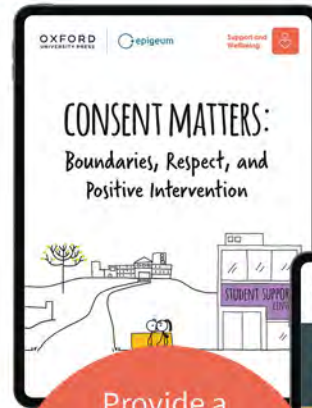
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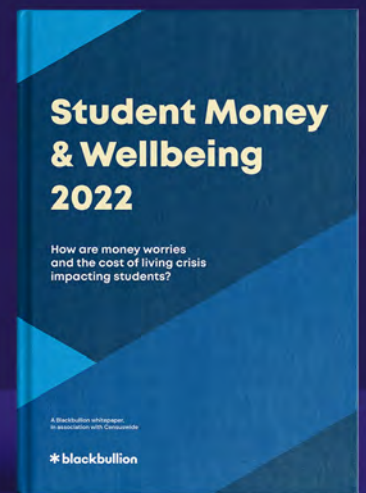
Find out more at [www.epigeum.com](http://www.epigeum.com)

\*blackbullion

## Student Money & Wellbeing 2022

Tuesday 1st March, 10:30am - online event

Following a survey of 1,000 UK university students, join the webinar for the first reveal of Blackbullion's Student Money & Wellbeing 2022 findings to find out:



How money worries and the cost of living crisis are impacting students, their mental health, physical health and university experience

Whether students can afford to study in 2022

Students' current financial attitudes and behaviours and how these vary by gender

How students' financial wellbeing has changed over the past 12 months

How students feel about their financial future

All staff across the sector with an interest in student support and outcomes are invited to attend.

Register your place:  
[bit.ly/blackbullion\\_webinar](https://bit.ly/blackbullion_webinar)

Keep up to date with AMOSSHE events at [www.amoshe.org.uk/events](http://www.amoshe.org.uk/events)



## Diversity, inclusivity and cultural competency in Student Services

7 April 2022, Birmingham

This in-person event explores how to make Student Services responsive to the cultural diversity of our students, and nurture informed, inclusive and diverse staff teams.



## Managing specialist services as a non-specialist: challenges, insights and lessons learned

11 May 2022, webinar

This webinar explores the challenges and opportunities of managing services that are outside your area of expertise.



## AMOSSHE National Conference 2022

13 to 15 July 2022, Newcastle upon Tyne and online

The AMOSSHE National Conference is the UK's foremost opportunity for Student Services leaders to share expertise and good practice, develop strategy and skills, and build professional networks.

