

# NUS VP accused of betraying former union

Streeting's recent comments, after instigating a boycott of the National Student Survey during his presidency, angers officers at his former union.

FOLLOWING CAMBRIDGE University Students' Union's (CUSU) continuation of a policy not to participate in the National Student Survey (NSS), former President Wes Streeting has been accused of 'betraying' his former union.

Streeting, now Vice President (education) at the National Union of Students (NUS) who initiated the CUSU boycott of the survey while President in 2004-5, went before the Common's Education Select Committee on Monday February 19 and accused the CUSU policy of 'perpetuating the old school tie and secret handshake' and 'doing themselves no favours.'

During his presidency

Streeting described the government-backed NSS as 'not only harmful to student feedback mechanisms, but not useful either'.

In his current position he is responsible for 'advice and planning' on the survey.

Streeting's change of stance on the survey has angered current CUSU officers.

Union Democracy Officer Jacob Bard-Rosenberg described it as 'complete betrayal, given that he led the Exec which initiated the boycott'.

These comments have been dismissed as cheap by Streeting who explained his new stance, "The reasons why I've changed are that I now have responsibil-

ities to represent over a hundred other student unions. Although I know that my personal position on the matter is the same as the official NUS mandate, the NSS was a never a main plank in my manifesto".

NUS President Gemma Tumelty has criticised Cambridge students' boycotting of the NSS.

"It only exacerbates the reputation Cambridge has of being an elitist institution, somehow separate from others and affected by utterly different circumstances, which is not the case," she said.

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Wes Streeting

## Tesco offers new 'clubcard' degrees 'Every little Helps'

TESCO ARE offering students the chance to pay for their degrees using Clubcard points.

The supermarket giant has entered into partnership with the Open University to offer students discounts on their tuition fees in exchange for loyalty card vouchers.

Students will receive £40 off the cost of their course in exchange for every £10 worth of vouchers. However, the deal isn't quite as good as it sounds, to receive the £40 discount a customer would have to have spent £1000 in store.

The Open University's vice-chancellor Professor Brenda Gourley said the partnership was true to its principles of open access.

"The partnership allows the university to extend our reach to new students, we aim to make access to the university's programmes as flexible as possible."

"This extends to giving our students a number of options to meet course fees - and this new deal is now one of those options," she said.

Suggestions that paying for degrees in this manner will devalue them have been dismissed by the university.

Professor Gourley added, "A lot of students are concerned about



incurring debts - it is a way of studying without incurring higher debts."

"Tesco is the biggest supermarket and if students are already spending their money in Tesco then it is a good way to help pay for courses."

Head of partnerships at Tesco Freetime told the BBC, "We're delighted to be working with the Open University to offer customers the opportunity to put Tesco vouchers towards higher education."

"The programme provides a great

opening for customers to achieve some valuable qualifications by studying at home at their own pace without having to give up the day job."

The Open University teaches 35% of all part-time undergraduate students each year and is the UK's largest university.

There are no qualification requirements to study at the OU, and 33% of undergraduates begin courses with fewer than two A-levels.

## Couple jailed for student loan scam

A COUPLE were jailed earlier this month for their part in a student loans scam using stolen birth certificates.

The pair, Adeleke Adebayo, 32 and his girlfriend Adeola Aina 26, were arrested during a year long investigation by police following the theft of 850 birth certificates from Erewash Register Office in Derbyshire.

180 of the certificates had been used to create fake identities to obtain student loans, police said. A number of people are already in prison for their part in the fraud.

Adebayo was sentenced to four years in prison at Southwark Crown Court after pleading guilty to obtaining £65,595 by deception in relation to student loans in false names.

Aina was sentenced to 18 months in prison after pleading guilty to obtaining money by deception and money laundering.

The Metropolitan Police Public Sector Fraud Squad said that certificates had also been used to obtain drivers licences and passports.

Samuel James, 28, also known as Elias Williams; Babatunda Smith, 26, also known as Samuel Udoh; Tiomi Phiri Manase, whose age is not known; Pauline Osofodunrin, 24, and 22-year-old Victoria James are all serving terms of between six and 18 months in connection with the scam.

A woman and five men who were questioned but have since failed to answer bail are wanted by police.

## MP calls for review of student prescription charges

LABOUR MP Peter Soulsby last month called on the government to consider introducing free NHS prescriptions for full time students.

The Leicester South MP tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM 921) that coincided with an ongoing review of NHS charges.

Research by the National Union of Students (NUS) shows that one in seven students do not seek medical assistance because they are worried about prescription costs, and students who have to spend money on prescriptions regularly do so instead of spending on other essentials including food and study materials.

Mr Soulsby said, "Current exemptions for prescription charges do not take into account income levels, whereas students have to apply

through a very bureaucratic procedure for assistance with health costs. This system includes an assessment of financial income which considers a student loan. We know that students are under increasing financial pressures with many working long hours whilst they study to make ends meet."

"It is simply unfair and potentially dangerous that students are being discouraged from seeking medical help because they are worried about having to pay prescription charges."

Veronica King, NUS Vice President (Welfare) said, "NUS is extremely grateful to Peter Soulsby MP for taking the issue of students healthcare so seriously and putting down this timely EDM"

**"PRINCE HARRY'S TOUR OF DUTY IN IRAQ WILL TAKE HIM TO A HELL ZONE BRANDED 'MAD MAX LAND'"**

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