

Drug & Alcohol

Impact

SOS-UK DRUG AND ALCOHOL IMPACT PROGRAMME

QUB's Journey to Drug & Alcohol Harm Reduction



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BELFAST**

**STUDENT WELLBEING
AND ACCESSIBLE
LEARNING**



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Overview



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- Completed 2-year SOS-UK Drug & Alcohol Impact Programme
- Achieved full accreditation (valid to Jan 2028)
- Score: 285 (threshold: 213)
- First institution in Ireland to achieve this
- Framework delivered across 8 strategic themes and 51 criteria

How the DAI Programme Started



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- It all started with a student-led proposal from the Welfare Student Officer and our founding partners.
- We secured official backing from the University Management Board to make this a top priority for the whole campus.
- We built a steering group that brought together academics, community teams, and partners from every corner of the university.
- Our big launch and public commitment statement grabbed attention in both local and national news.
- We really found our groove by sharing the workload and letting different departments lead on the areas they know best.

What We've Delivered

- Received full accreditation in February 2026
- Harm reduction booklet for students
- Changes to the drug policy and conduct process
- Consistent marketing for students
- Annual DAI Freshers Stall
- Drink check initiative
- Training for staff
- Presented at the PHA Northern Ireland Drug & Alcohol Event
- Detailed harm reduction information on the Wellbeing website
- Over 600 students participating in the your safety matters campaign
- Non-alcoholic events & Non alcoholic options promoted in the bar
- Student Drug and Alcohol Survey 2024 & 2025 – 1200+ respondents



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Freshers' Event



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- Annual Freshers Stall
- Non-alcoholic drinks
- 'Pour your own measure'
- Drinks unit education
- 'Guess the drug'
- Short & long-term effects of drugs



St Patrick's Day



STUDENT WELLBEING
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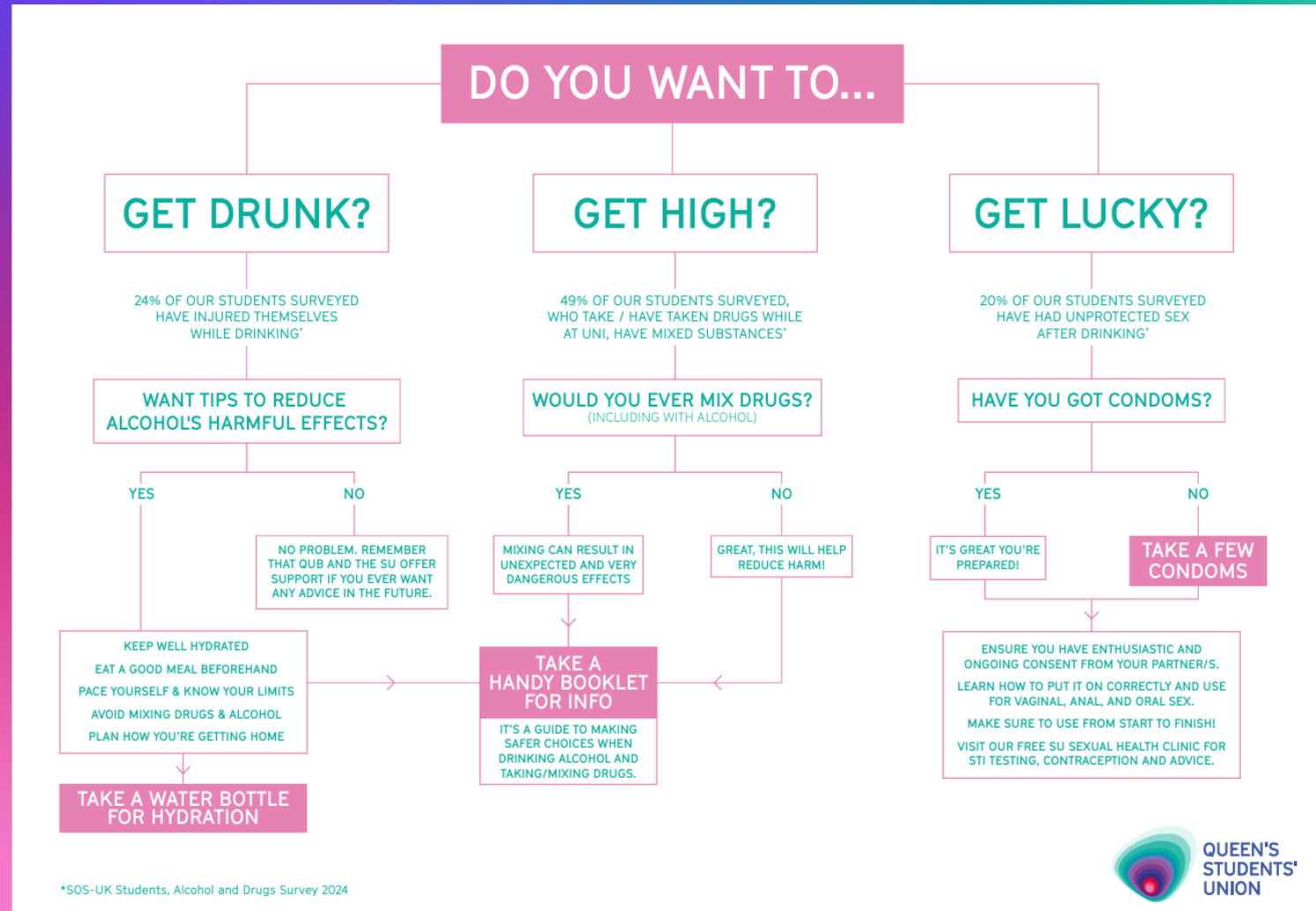


St Patrick's Day



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*SOS-UK Students, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2024





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- Weekly Drug & Alcohol Drop-in
- Facilitated by external service DAISY
- Up to 12 counselling sessions offered
- 60+ students supported since October 2024



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STUDENT
WELLBEING



**DRUGS AND ALCOHOL DROP IN
THURSDAYS, 12PM-2PM
SU, LEVEL 1
LITTLE YELLOW ROOM.**



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ANNUAL
FUND



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Why This Matters / Student Behaviour Change

- Shift from punitive → compassionate, evidence-based harm reduction
- 70% of students do not feel pressure to drink (up from 64%)
- 33% reduction in off-campus complaints
- Zero arrests on St Patrick's Day 2024 & 2025
- Decrease in belief that “getting drunk is necessary”



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What We Are Working On

- Drug testing kits
- Expanded staff training
- “How to Say No” campaign
- Rapid drug bins
- Neurodiversity & drugs focus group
- Belfast Drug & Alcohol Steering Group
- DAI Community of Practice

Challenges



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- Resources & Timing
- Accountability & Direction
- Pioneering Leadership
- Financial Planning
- Audit Participation
- Institutional Alignment
- Legal Roadblocks
- Social Stigma
- Regional Limitations



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Institutional Change

- Wellbeing-led Harm Reduction Policy adopted
- Conduct process now educational, not punitive
- 92% reduction in repeat anti-social behaviour
- Coordinated, institution-wide messaging
- Stronger collaboration across Wellbeing, Students' Union, Accommodation, Community Engagement, and academics



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Recognition: Sector-Leading Success

- The first institution on the island of Ireland to receive this full accreditation.
- Finalists for "Outstanding EDI Initiative" at the Keystone Awards.
- Founding partner of the new Belfast Service Provider Network (SPN).
- Advising HSE Limerick and BDACT on adopting the QUB model.



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Looking Ahead

- Strengthening recovery support & polydrug use education
- Anti-spiking initiatives
- Deepening community engagement
- Widening Staff Education and Signposting
- Sustaining progress despite financial pressures
- What the future looks like for the DAI Programme?



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ANY QUESTIONS / COMMENTS?



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