

Board of Management Students, Staff and Equalities Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 26 October 2022
Paper No.	SSEC1-H
Agenda Item	6.3
Subject of Paper	Student Cost of Living Crisis AY2022/23 – Update October 2022
FOISA Status	Disclosable
Primary Contact	Gillian Plunkett
Date of production	13 October 2022
Action	For Noting

1. Recommendations

The BoM Students, Staff and Equalities Committee is asked to note this paper.

2. Purpose

To update the SSEC on actions taken to support students through the cost of living crisis IN ay 2022/23.

3.Consultation

This paper was presented to SMT on 19 October 2022 and prepared in collaboration with CitySA.

4.Key Insights

3.1 The cost of living crisis and how this will impact on students is a key topic of concern just now and has been highlighted by the [NUS](#) as likely to have significant consequences for student well-being and ultimately student retention and success.

3.2 [Queens University Belfast](#) have designated the cost of living crisis a 'critical incident' for both staff and students.

3.3 The following outlines action taken so far by the College support services and CitySA:-

3.3.1 Student Support and Well Being Actions

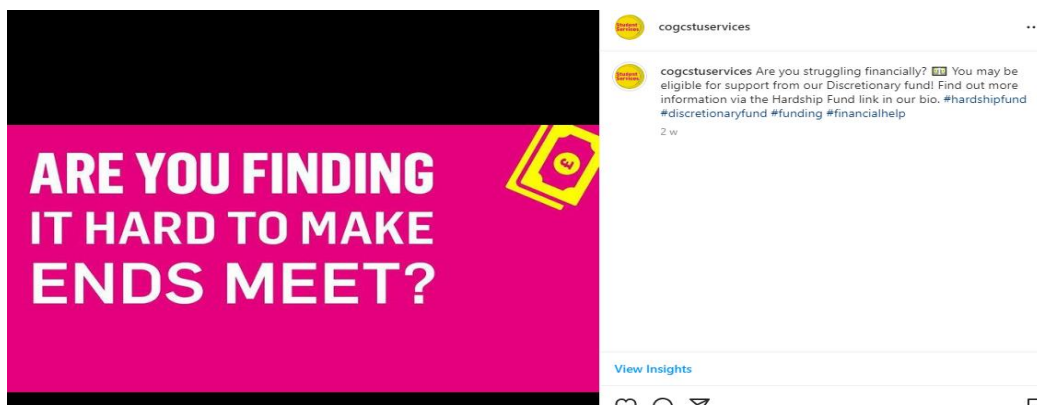
- [CityLife student page](#) for cost of living crisis with student discounts, money saving ideas and tips, information on travel savings and who to speak to on campus if faced with money issues.
- Discretionary (Hardship) Funds - 1,260 applications made to end September.
 - Emergency payments available- in some cases, can be cash from Finance of up to £50. (We offer small amounts of cash and vouchers because some students have exceeded their overdraft and any monies to bank accounts may not be available to withdraw).
 - Can also arrange same day payments for emergencies where payment is higher than £50.
 - Tesco vouchers available for vulnerable students/those at max overdraft so bank payments aren't swallowed up. Working with Procurement to bulk buy so have range of £10 and £25 vouchers.
 - Bus tokens available for emergency travel situations.
 - Streamlined Hardship assessment procedures by building in assumptions on some items.
 - Assume Wi-Fi costs for all applications regardless of it being included in their form.
 - Increased caps on following expenditures:
 - Food and household costs.
 - Gas/electricity.
 - Added new option to include food for children for those paying maintenance (not primary carers).
 - Increased the cap for manageable debt to £150 p/m.

- Part time work - Job Shop available for support with looking for part-time work. Careers Advisors weekly drop-in for students to help with CV prep and job search.
- Under-22s free bus travel available with Young Scot card.
- Keeping up-to-date with NUS and Save the Student comms around the cost of living.
 - NUS have successfully campaigned to include students in Scottish Government rent hike freezes and eviction freezes. This includes students in public, private and student accommodation. This will be in SA Comms in October along with advice and available contacts for students.
- New partnership with MyBnk to offer [The Money House](#) training for vulnerable students.

Social Media and current online campaigns:

- [Video](#) created by Student Support and Wellbeing team- used on social media.
- New [video](#) content created for the Skills for Life (lecturers' resource) around financial support.
- Social media campaigns. Some examples below:

Instagram:





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More here 📄 <https://bit.ly/3o27TqY>

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[View Insights](#)

Twitter:

Student Services **COGC Student Services** @CoGCStuServices · 4 Oct ...

It's #ChallengePovertyWeek! 🏠 If you need financial help or funding, we can help. Learn about the available funding here: bit.ly/3SCtXoV

CHALLENGE POVERTY WEEK 3 - 9 October 2022 @CPW_Scotland

We can #TurnTheTide

Student Services **COGC Student Services** @CoGCStuServices · Sep 16 ...

If you are struggling with additional costs such as gas and electricity, you may be eligible for support from our Discretionary fund! 🏠 Learn more: bit.ly/3o27TqY

APPLY NOW FOR HARDSHIP FUNDS

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Additional campaigns are planned focusing on accommodation, fuel, food and exercise during the winter months. Support with mental health and well being continues to be a priority and our Christmas countdown will start early December supporting students through the festive period.

3.3.2 Students' Association Actions

Breakfast Club being set up for starting after October Break:

- All Faculties and the Student Experience Directorate have pledged £3,000 to support a breakfast club = £15,000. A further £15,000 is required.
- Will run initially 3 days a week from 8.30am to 9.15am.
- Will be hosted in Level 2 Refectory (City Campus) and Level 1 Canteen (Riverside Campus)
- Not means tested, students only need to ask for the "Breakfast Deal" during these times and at these locations.
- Will be promoted with tagline "Fuel your Morning" – avoiding stigma of needing free meals or the school association of "Breakfast Clubs".
- Will include a hot drink and Toast with butter/jam or porridge.
- Dietary alternatives can be offered (e.g. gluten free bread).
- Baxter Storey tills will be set up to invoice monthly so monitoring to Christmas and adjustments made to product if required.
- Total pricing for drink plus one of either toast or porridge will be recharged to Breakfast Club budget at £1.90 through Baxter Storey, this is the most that will be charged per head.

Cost based on above @ £1.90 per student x 3 days = £5.70 per week. With a budget £30,000 we can offer 15,789 free breakfasts over 30 weeks or 526 (breakfasts/students) per week.

CitySA are also running a series of Student Campaigns on Cost of Living:

- An Advice page signposting to [Food bank resources](#). (Sept)
- Are in process of setting up a "[Warm Banks](#)" digital map for students with comms emphasising that the college is also a place to go to keep warm. (Oct).
- Awareness Raising Campaign for students and staff on addressing unhelpful money saving tips (e.g. don't buy coffee) with more practical suggestions. (Oct)
- Call to Action Campaign for students, highlight community organisations they can engage with to lobby government such as Living Rent (Nov).

4. Impact and Implications

NUS and the [media](#) have raised the alarm around student drop out rates this winter. Failing to act is not an option on both humanitarian grounds and in terms of college reputation and success.