

Dear Signatories of the Union Boycott,

Thank you for getting in touch and making us aware of your concerns.

This is an incredibly important issue that we have been working on for a while now and it is great to see the wider student body so engaged on the topic. We are confident that by working together we can continue to improve the safety and experiences of our students. We are also grateful for the time you have spent in communicating with us and providing suggestions on how we can go about continuing to make the Union a safer place for everyone, and we are sorry to hear that much of the work the Officer Trustee team has been working on this term hasn't been clearly communicated to you.

Sam and Nathalie have been working on this since August, not long after they commenced their current term of office. Laying the groundwork for these measures had been in the works for a while; they were then vastly accelerated in the last week of October in response to the recent rise in spiking cases. Everyone in the Union felt the urgency to act quickly to protect as many students as possible. Despite numerous challenges and an incredibly tight timeline, we all came together in a time of need, just in time to support students during the Halloween event in Metric on October 30.

We agree that the most effective safety measures should be proactive, rather than reactive in nature. They need to be of substance and create concrete ways in which students can seek support from us, whilst also creating a hostile environment for potential perpetrators. We also need to ensure that we are better at communicating the steps we are taking to the student body, and would like to take the opportunity to share some of this detail with you here.

The Messaging

Nathalie has worked very closely with ICUsToo (Imperial's campaign group against sexual violence) and Malinda Davies (Gender Equality Officer) to ensure that the communications and social media posts got the messaging right and made it clear that victim blaming is unacceptable. Every single piece of communication, from social media posts to posters, was looked over by each of them before it was published. The following was written in [Nathalie's blog post](#) on October 26 at 11:32 am:

*If someone you know is exhibiting [symptoms of spiking] during a night out, it is important to act quickly and without judgment. If they have been spiked, it is important to remember **that this is not their fault**. The only person who is responsible for this is the person who tried to intoxicate them without their consent.*

We also posted the following on the Union [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) on October 27, as well as in [Issue 1782 of Felix](#):

Nights out should be safe for everyone

Drink spiking awareness & support



What is drink spiking?

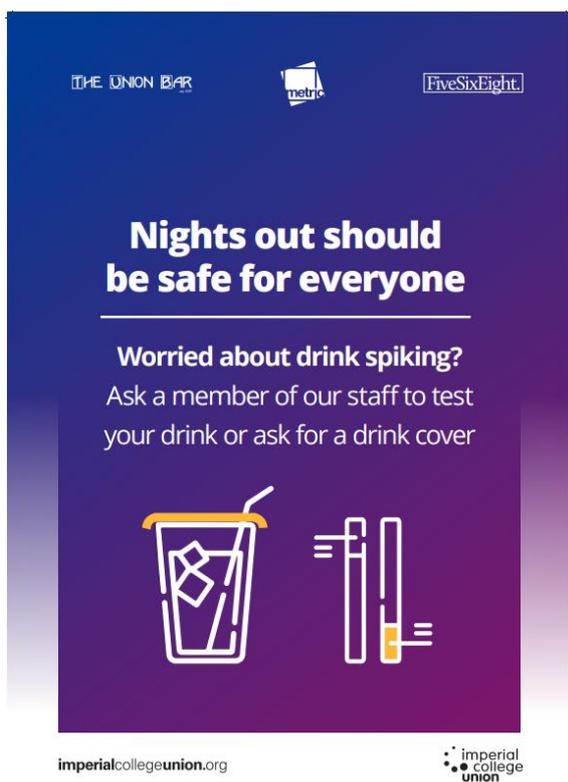


Spiking is never the victim's fault. Drinks are spiked to make people more vulnerable - this could be to facilitate sexual assault, to commit theft, or in an attempt at a bad joke. Everyone should have the right to feel safe and spiking is never ok.

Drink spiking is a serious crime. Anyone found guilty of this can be sentenced to ten years in prison.

Posted on Instagram, Twitter, and in issue 1782 of Felix.

We also put up the following posters in our venues on October 27, to make students aware that we now have lids and test strips available in the bars (left); after receiving your letter on November 10, we made the following change to this poster after further consultation with Malinda and ICUsToo (right):



Posted in Union Venues October 27



Amended on November 12. Currently in the process of being reprinted.

The Actions

The following lists the set of actions that have been, or will be, taken by the Union, along with their respective dates of implementation:

August 10, 2021

Sam and Nathalie met to discuss their initial ideas on how to make the venues safer for all students. The topics of **testing strips** and **student welfare wardens** came up.

September 28-29, 2021

Active bystander training was given to 128 casual bar staff and student volunteers. This training was provided externally by the [Active Bystander Training Company](#).

October 1, 2021

Nathalie implemented the [Stay Safe 2021 campaign](#) in conjunction with Welcome Week, which involved handing out rain ponchos, a map of halls of residence, warm beverages and biscuits to students heading home after ticketed night events in collaboration with the Christian Union. The **Ask for Angela** scheme was also implemented in all Union Venues at this time; training for this scheme had been provided to staff during the active bystander training that took place one week prior.

October 22, 2021

A meeting was held with Malinda (Gender Equality Officer), Nathalie (DPW), India (DPCS) and staff from the activities and representation teams to make plans to implement mandatory, comprehensive **consent training for CSPs**. Given the ongoing issues that we

are facing with under-staffing, the original deadline has had to be extended and placed on the action tracker.

October 25, 2021

An emergency meeting with Nathalie, Sam, and the Union Venues team was held this evening. An action plan was agreed upon to begin implementing measures as soon as possible, with the aim of having them ready for the Halloween event on Saturday, October 30. It was noted that it would be too short of a timeframe to have everything fully in place for ACC on October 27, but that we would do our best to have as much of it ready as soon as we can.

October 26, 2021

A new set of **guidelines** were written and given to staff on how to attend to suspected spiking cases.

October 27, 2021

The [blog post](#), [Instagram](#) post, and [Twitter](#) post were published online. **Lids** were made available upon request in Metric, 568 and the Union Bar. **Rooms were pre-booked** in the Union for ticketed night events to provide a safe space for students who were ill or in distress. Security were briefed to perform **bag checks** to look for needles, alcohol, illegal/prescription drugs and other unsafe substances.

October 30, 2021

The **spiking test strips** arrived and were implemented in the Union Venues. External first aid support was booked for the Halloween event in Metric.

November 1, 2021

An enquiry was drafted for **Good Night Out** training and accreditation. This would be done to complement the Active Bystander Training that was given to casual bar staff in September. One of our senior managers was on leave this week, so we agreed upon the content of the enquiry but decided to wait until the following week for his return to send it off. Additionally, a **letter** was drafted to other students' unions to invite them to join ICU in our efforts.

November 3, 2021

Nathalie toured H-Bar, Metric, 568, and Union Bar and took an inventory of which parts of the building still needed to have **posters** put up. She then hand-delivered said posters to the Union's Deputy Venues Manager and contacted the College's Director of Estates to get permission to post them in the toilets underneath H-Bar.

November 8, 2021

The Union's campaign against spiking (including all published communications and implemented measures) were shared with College stakeholders in the Student Experience Committee. College supported the initiative and agreed to take on the messaging from their side of the communication.

November 10-11, 2021

Nathalie regrouped with ICUsToo and Malinda to look over the published communications and took their suggestions for improvement on board. She sent the recommended **changes**

to the posters that advertise lids and test strips to the Marketing Team for editing and re-printing. We had a conversation about the **placement of the Ask for Angela posters**; it was agreed by ICUsToo that it would be difficult to implement the Ask for Angela scheme if a student were to try the “Angela” code-word while the person they were trying to get away from is staring the poster right in the face; hence, it was agreed that Ask for Angela posters should be prioritised in the toilets, whilst the lid/test strip posters should be prioritised outside the toilets, in the rest of the venues.

November 12, 2021

The **spiking guidance** for bar staff and duty managers was reviewed and updated.

November 15, 2021

The Venues Team have booked **external first aid** for the upcoming ACCs on November 24 and December 15.

November 16, 2021

Nathalie and Sam will meet with the Venues Team to discuss the option of hiring **student welfare wardens** in the venues, as well as the remit of their role; this would help to limit the interactions of vulnerable students with externally hired security. A live **action tracker** will also be written to keep all of these previous measures, as well as future ones, up to date on their progress.

November 17, 2021

Communications on this campaign will be in the *Inside Imperial* e-newsletter to continue to spread the message on our anti-spiking initiatives.

December 1, 2021 – Ongoing

Nathalie will liaise with the marketing team on reintroducing the topic of spiking awareness and safety as students prepare to go home for the holidays. We will refer to the action tracker to continue to reintroduce the topic throughout the year

Opportunities for feedback

We are keen to hear your views on everything we have just described to you in this letter, as well as any other questions or suggestions you may have. As such, we are inviting you to attend a **Union Town Hall** meeting at the following date and time:

Date and Time: Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 12:30-13:30

Location: [Microsoft Teams](#)

All the best,

Your Officer Trustees