

# VITA PEARL FOR DISABILITIES OFFICER

## MANIFESTO

### KEY BELIEFS

Mentally ill, neurodivergent and disabled students - you deserve:

- **Informed Support** - from tutors, DoS, supervisors, HUS who are informed on the rights and options for disabled students
- **To be believed** - to be able to state what their access needs are, what their state is, without a continuing burden of proof that delays the college's support of students
- **Community** - to have the chance for peer support, solidarity and joy
- **Privacy** - to have the choice not to disclose medical details to have access needs met
- **Autonomy** - to be trusted with decisions about what they need
- **A voice** - opportunities to speak, and a Disabilities Officer who makes sure you are heard!

### ABOUT ME

Navigating first year as a disabled student has been a sharp learning curve of finding out how to work and see friends whilst dealing with fatigue and other fun things, a multitude of medical appointments and the energy sink that is ableism! I've gotten small chances to twist difficult experiences into something positive through advocacy this year - I'm ready to scale it up!

### EXPERIENCE

- Sending emails advocating for my own and other students' access needs to be met by their DoS and supervisors
- Pursuing the DRC for urgent SSD instatement
- Encouraging others in their self-advocacy processes
- Advising peers on DSA applications
- Successfully engaging in the Complaints Process around unsafe care provision in the NHS
- Challenging ableism as experienced from supervisors and lecturers
- Attending Disabled Students Campaign events
- Speaking for the mental health charity Mind about how being a woman has affected my experiences of mental and physical health care, in order to advocate for intersectional considerations in mental health campaigning

### POLICIES

- **Disabled Students Voice** - I would work to establish opportunities for students to share concerns and ideas, as well as seek advice, through trialling a Disabled Students Forum and Disabled Students Drop-In, and continuing either or both, depending on how students respond!
- **Community building** - solidarity in community is both a route out of the isolation we experience and a tool to recognise where our experiences are being affected more by inaccessibility and ableism than any conditions we might have. Board game nights, discussion events and brunch can all take place in Homerton, and so be easy to attend!
- **Workshops** - On accessing DSA and other topics as needed by students
- **Information** - Adding to tutor knowledge on supporting disabled students
- **Connections** - Establishing strong contact with Disability Liaison Officer, learning from Disabilities Officers across the university
- **Mental Health support in college** - working with welfare team to build strong support systems in college, as well as ensuring students with complex mental health needs are aware of options for support within college
- **Access** - Raise profile of Homerton as a place Disabled Students can and should want to apply to!