**3. Student Council mandates VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to continue preventative work on college using NDAs**

**Council Notes:**

1. On January 18 2022, Michele Donelan, Minister for Further and Higher Education in England, announced that universities must stop using NDAs for complaints about sexual harassment, bullying and other forms of misconduct. In her words, “I am determined to see this shabby practice stamped out on our campuses.”
2. From this, in collaboration with Can’t Buy My Silence, a voluntary pledge was constructed for universities to sign: “Backed by the Minister for Higher and Further Education, former Equalities Select Committee Chair Maria Miller MP and campaign group #CantBuyMySilence, we [our vice-chancellor and higher education provider] commit to not using Non-Disclosure Agreements to silence people who come forward to raise complaints of sexual harassment, abuse or misconduct, or other forms of harassment and bullying.”
3. 72 universities have currently signed up to the pledge.
4. As a result of Oxford’s collegiate system, this requires each individual college to sign the pledge, rather than being covered by the university as a whole. The university has not signed the pledge
5. The statement made by the University of Oxford was: 'Oxford University cares very deeply about the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. We condemn all forms of sexual harassment and violence, and supporting victims is a high priority for both the University and Colleges.

'We urge anyone affected by sexual harassment, assault, or violence to contact their college or the central University where they will be offered help and support, including advice on their options if they wish to make a complaint.

'The University of Oxford does not and will not use Non-Disclosure Agreements to prevent the investigation of complaints of sexual misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour, or to prevent responsible whistleblowing.'

1. Several colleges have passed an anti-NDA motion through their common rooms (JCR/MCR) but no change has been seen
2. Lady Margaret Hall, Keble and Linacre College have all signed the pledge
3. The work done by SU Campaign It Happens Here has been instrumental in achieving this result

**Council Believes**

1. NDAs should never be used in cases of misconduct, sexual harassment or bullying, especially by the university/colleges
2. NDAs fundamentally silence victims and are harmful, at times serving to retraumatise them.
3. NDAs prevent victims from accessing avenues of support, including that which family and friends provide, as well as more professional services.
4. Every college should commit to not using NDAs in cases of bullying, harassment and misconduct, either through the signing of the pledge or otherwise stated in their harassment policy.

**Council Resolves**

1. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to continue the work of ensuring every college puts in place measures to prevent the use of NDAs
2. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to organise meetings with college heads specifically on this issue
3. To mandate the outgoing VP Women and VP Equal Opportunities and Welfare, as well as future VP Liberation and Equality and VP Welfare to report on the progress of this work each term at 7th week Council.

**Proposer**: Ellie Greaves (VP Women)

**Seconder**: Grace Olusola Oxford SU (VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities)