

Impact Report

Union of Students' Impact
Report for the year 2024/25





Union of Students' Mission Statement

*Empowering students at the
University of Derby to shape
their own journey by providing
opportunities, support, and a strong
community where they can thrive*

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Union organisational priorities

Introduction from the CEO



The Union of Students is pleased to present its Impact Report for the 2024/25 academic year, following a year of both challenge and positive transformation.

Throughout the past year, we have continued to navigate financial pressures, most notably the rising costs associated with increases to the National Minimum Wage and National Insurance contributions. In response, we have proactively adapted our operations to maintain financial stability whilst safeguarding the services that matter most to students.

This has also been a year of strategic renewal. We have strengthened our Senior Leadership Team and laid the foundations for a refreshed and ambitious Strategic Plan. Under new leadership, we have taken a more engaged and data-led approach to better understand students’ needs, priorities and expectations. A key milestone has been our Student Voice Review, which engaged over 1,500 students. Alongside this, we piloted our Core Community project to explore innovative ways of supporting and connecting students, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups. Our annual student survey, completed by over 1,000 students, alongside initiatives to go out and talk to students about their

“This has also been a year of strategic renewal. We have strengthened our Senior Leadership Team and laid the foundations for a refreshed and ambitious Strategic Plan.”

experience across all campuses, has helped place student voice at the core of our future direction. These insights are shaping a renewed commitment to ensuring every student

finds a place where they feel they belong and that the Union remains a sustainable, inclusive, and student-led organisation.

As we prepare to launch our new Strategic Plan, we are also reviewing how we deliver our core functions, especially across our Voice and Activities teams, exploring more sustainable, innovative, and impactful ways of working. At the centre of this new direction is a renewed focus on building community, ensuring every

student feels a sense of belonging, has access to meaningful opportunities, can see their voice actively shaping their university experience, and prepare them for life beyond it.

This report outlines the impact we have made in 2024/25, our performance against key KPIs, and sets out our priorities and KPIs for 2025/26. With continued support, we are confident we can deliver a student experience that places community, voice, and belonging at its heart.

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Strategic Priority 1

Awareness and Understanding of the Union of Students

Awareness and understanding of the Union of Students is important to ensure that every student sees the relevance of our work to enhancing their student experience. By improving our visibility across sites and promoting all that we offer, from support services and representation to opportunities for involvement and development, we aimed to strengthen our visibility and value across the student community. This priority helps ensure that more students know who we are, what we do, and how we can positively impact their time at university.

Strategic Goals

- *Identify existing touch points and create new touch points for students to ensure their relevance*
- *Establish a clear communication strategy for all Union activity, aligned to the student journey*
- *Ensure broader student representation in feedback and democratic processes*





Project 1 Welcome Activity

Each year, the Union plans a series of events and activities to welcome the new cohort of students, for both September and January starters. This is designed to provide an introduction to the University, the Union and the Derby community, highlighting what we offer throughout the year to enhance their university experience.

Aims

This year, we aimed to make as many students aware of the Union as possible, increasing the number of students who access our services. Every university student is automatically a member of the Union, so we strive to introduce them to the Union at the earliest opportunity so they can get involved as soon as possible.

KPIs

- *Incrementally increase student engagement across the Union's membership services by 5% annually, including activities, voice, advice, and communication channels.*
- *The percentage of students saying the Union of Students allows them to feel part of a community increases by 5% year on year.*
- *Satisfaction with the Union's accessibility and inclusivity at events and activities will increase annually, with a target of at least 80% by July 2025*





Intake Day

At this year's Intake Day, we created a 'Union Zone' that showcased everything the Union has to offer, with each department running their own stall. This was an opportunity for students to learn

more about the ways they can get involved and enrich their university experience. We also had showcases from our Cheerleading and Brazilian Jui-Jitsu clubs to give students an insight into what some of our clubs get up to.

Freshers' Fairs

In both September and February, we host Freshers' Fairs to welcome new students to the University of Derby and give them a taste of the student lifestyle they can expect during their time here. This includes an introduction to the Union, showcasing how we can help them whilst at university, with services such as the C-Scheme, our impartial advice service and our student voice mechanisms that are designed to put students in a position wherein they can enact change.

The September Freshers' Fair is the larger of the two as it spans over two days. Day one saw 1,729 students visit across the day, and day two saw 806. This is a 37% increase in footfall from our 2023 September Freshers' Fair. Throughout the day, the February Freshers' Fair attracted around 400 students.

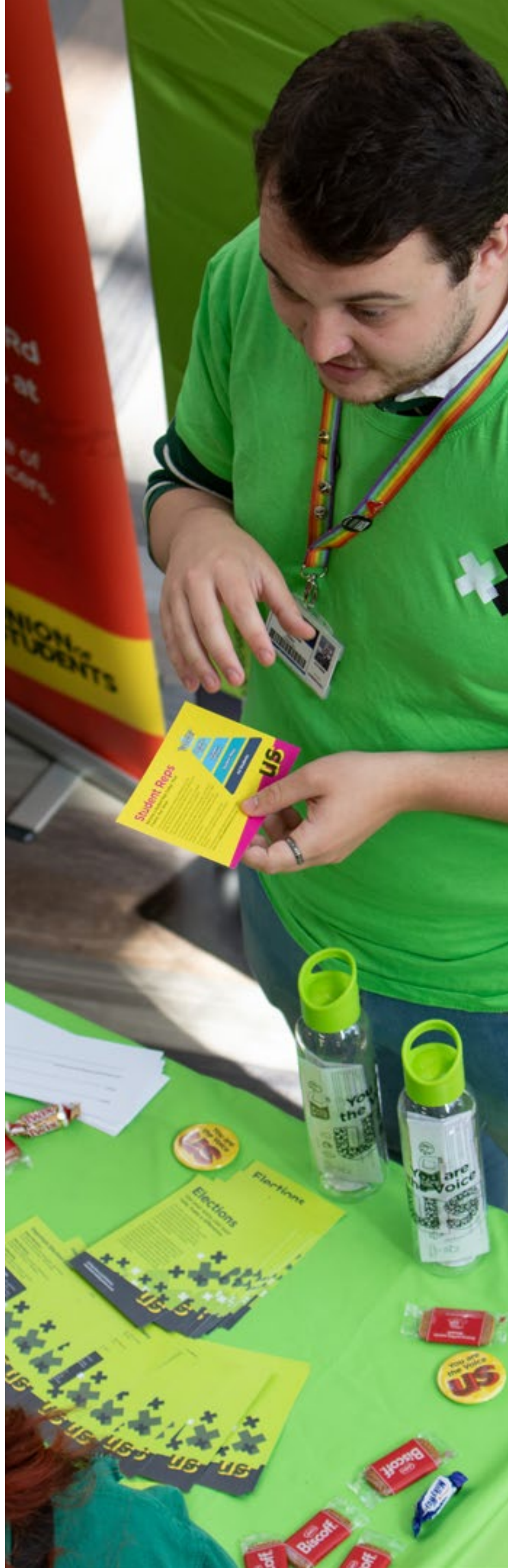


At our Freshers' Fairs, we encourage students to follow us on social media so they can keep up to date with everything they can get involved in. In September, we gave out tote bags and Mentos to students who followed us and gained a total of 740 new Instagram followers and 204 new TikTok followers from both fair days. In February, we worked with our external partners and fair stall holders to create a Freshers' Fair hamper to giveaway through Instagram. We gained 66 new followers on Instagram and 42 on TikTok. By signposting students to our social channels, we are encouraging them to join our online community, a place where student feedback is sought out and valued.

Induction Talks

Through hosting induction talks in lectures at the start of the two terms, we were able to get in front of students at the start of their university journey to introduce ourselves. We delivered 61 induction talks in September and January across all sites.





Project 2 Student Voice Review and Mechanisms

This year, we made the decision to review our Student Voice mechanisms to ensure that they reflect the needs and wants of our students. Through obtaining student feedback, we are planning to implement new and updated mechanisms that will improve the ease of giving feedback whilst ensuring they are accessible and relevant to all students.

Aims

The main aim of this project is to give students the opportunity to shape their university experience, ensuring that the new updated schemes are both fit for purpose and student-led. By reviewing our processes, students will feel more encouraged to engage with our feedback outlets, such as our annual Union Survey, knowing that they influenced the way we hear and respond to student voice.

KPIs

- *The percentage of the student body filling in the Union Survey increases by 5% annually.*
- *10% increase students participating in elections and voting*

This project began with a research phase where we reached out to students through the distribution of a survey and hosted pop-up 'Have Your Say Cafe' events, from which we were able to gain feedback from 877 students. The second phase of this project involved reviewing the feedback, picking out any patterns and common themes.

Recommendations from student feedback are currently under review ahead of changes being made for the new academic year.



Project 3

Advice Pop-ups

The Advice team host a variety of pop-ups throughout the year across campuses and accommodation sites to highlight the support on offer for students and raise awareness amongst students around our external partners. Our Advisors are on hand to support students across a wide range of topics and issues, so we strive to make all students aware that they can come to us for guidance.

Aims

Our Advisors aim to get in front of as many students as possible to ensure that students understand what support they can access through the Union. These pop-ups aim to cover the entirety of the Advice service, showcasing the breadth of support the team can provide.

KPIs

- *Incrementally increase student engagement across the Union's membership services by 5% annually, including activities, voice, advice, and communication channels.*
- *The number of students accessing our advice and support service increases annually with 90% of students rating the service as good or excellent.*



Advice Freshers' event

During Freshers' Fortnight, the Advice team hosted a mocktail and quiz evening. This event was designed to provide students with a non-drinking activity they could get involved with during freshers, aiming to negate the stereotype that freshers is just for going out clubbing.

SVLO Roadshow

The Advice team undertook an SVLO Roadshow to promote the support available from our independent Sexual Violence Liaison service. The aim of this was to raise awareness of SVLO trends to ensure affected students know where they can go for support, including external partners SV2 and SARC, as well as our own internal SVLOs.

The Advice team have engaged with approximately 60 students at their pop-up stalls across four sites.

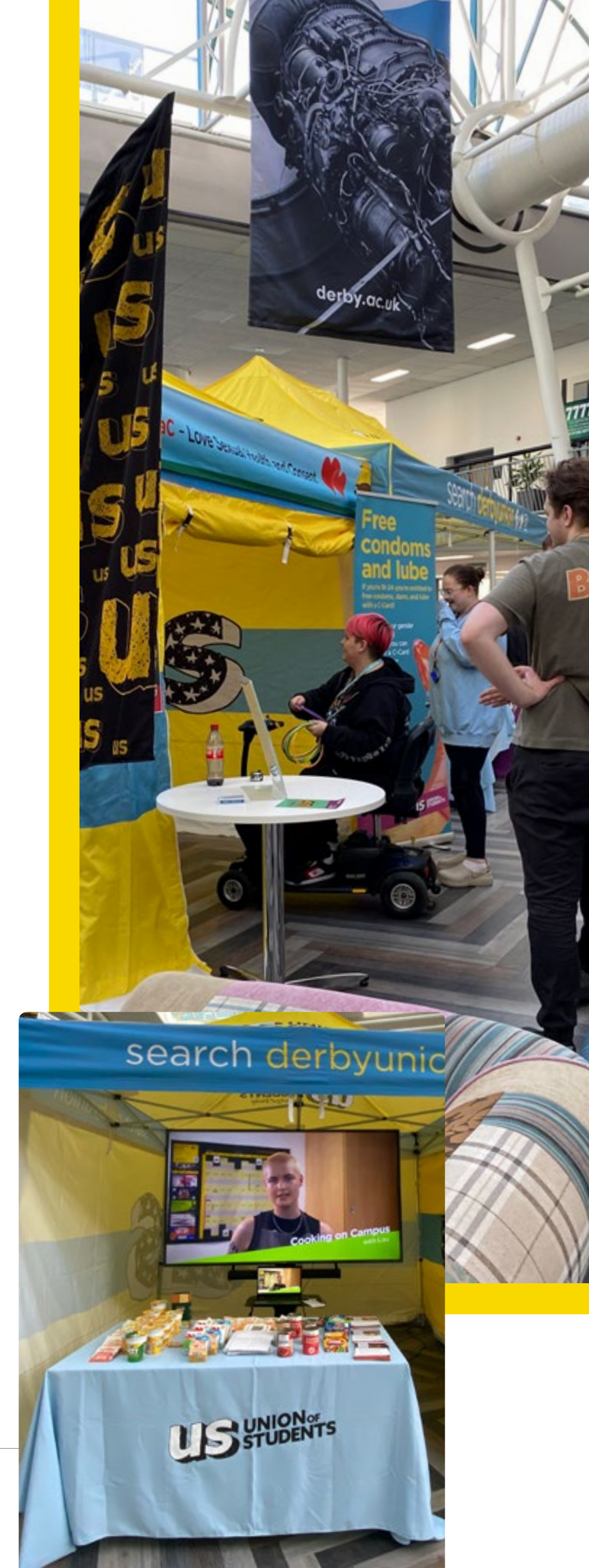


House Party

Every year, the Advice team host a 'house party' with the aim to increase students' knowledge around their housing rights, sharing tips and resources to help protect them. With help from the Marketing team, the event this year was elevated to cover the entire breadth of the Advice service. We set up the Atrium to replicate a house set-up, allocating each Advice branch a relevant room:

- *The Advice service and Student Living team as the office*
- *The SVLO service, C-Scheme and sexual health services as the bedroom*
- *The wellbeing services as the living room (with crafts, films and a 'beer' pong activity)*
- *The Community Pantry as the kitchen*

We set up gazebos in the Atrium for each room, which peaked students' curiosity and drew students in to see what was happening. This, combined with marketing through digital channels attracted 101 students to the event; the Advice team were on-hand to answer any questions and highlight the services available to students, so everyone who attended left with a better understanding of how the Union can support them during their time at university.



Strategic Priority 2

Supporting Students' Needs

The Union is committed to making sure every student feels supported and safe throughout their university experience. As students face growing financial, academic, social, and emotional pressures, we've adapted our services to meet them where they are both physically and emotionally. This has meant going beyond our physical spaces, forming meaningful partnerships, and creating services that are accessible, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse experiences within our student community.

Strategic Goals

- *Be where the students are - the Union is more than a building or campus; we need to engage with students where they are*
- *Provide activities and services accessible to all students to ensure the full breadth of the Union is understood*



Project 1

Partnerships

The Union is partnered with a variety of organisations that help us support students across a wide range of areas. These partnerships offer a variety of services and resources for our students.

Aims

The aim of our partnerships is to expand what we can offer students and provide them with as much support and guidance as we can, with partners who are knowledgeable and trustworthy.

KPIs

➤ *At least 80% of students, when surveyed, will report feeling safe when attending Union activities by July 2025.*

Advice partners

1625 Outreach

Outreach 1625 provide non-judgmental, fact-based information and support surrounding drug and alcohol use. Their aim is to empower young people and young adults with the knowledge and skills to make informed choices and stay safe.

They offer monthly pop-up stalls at the Kedleston Road campus for students to speak with them and offer 1-1 targeted intervention meetings, which students can access by self-referral or are referred by Advisors.

Legal Triage

The Legal Triage Clinic is run by a Senior Academic in the Law programme. They offer fortnightly appointments exclusively for University of Derby students who have a legal issue they require advice about. The Clinic can offer guidance and signpost to alternative services.

SV2

SV2 is a Derbyshire based charity service who provide support to anyone who has experienced any form of sexual violence or abuse. They also offer a counselling services for both adults and children. The Union SVLO Service has joint referral pathways to SV2, allowing us to refer students between us when needed.

SARC

The Derbyshire SARC provides free, confidential healthcare, and compassionate support for adults who have experienced any form of sexual assault. They offer forensic medical examinations, holistic examinations and can store forensic samples. The Union SVLO Service has joint referral pathways to SV2, allowing us to refer students between us when needed.



Partnering with the city to support student nightlife

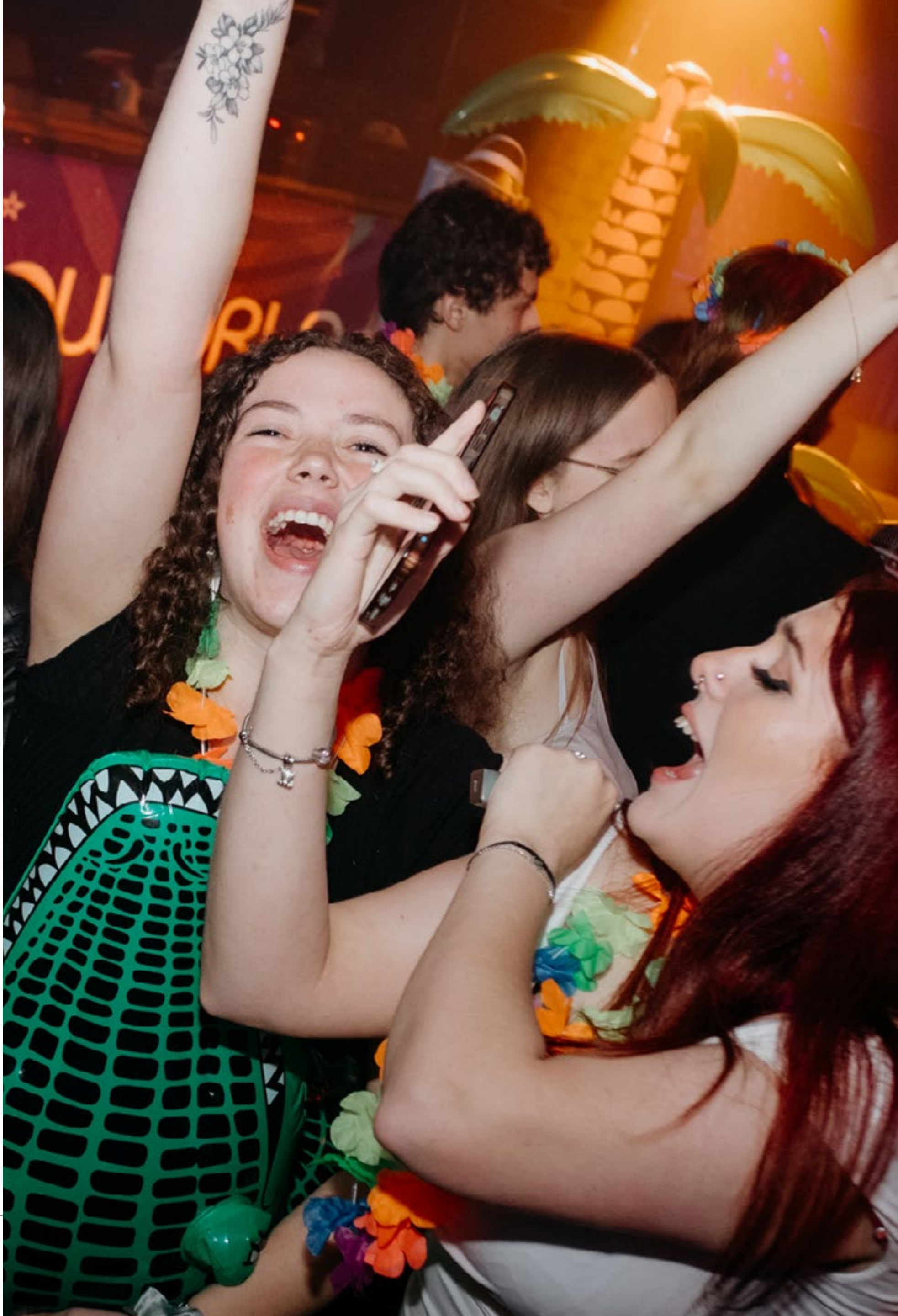
Stonegate

We have a partnership with Stonegate to facilitate a student-only club night. Through this partnership, we are able to offer students a safe clubbing experience. We also work with Stonegate to create two weeks’ worth of nightlife events during Freshers’ Fortnight to provide students with a range of events, from quizzes to themed club nights with celebrity special guests. With Stonegate facilitating these events, we are able to create a memorable freshers experience with a trusted and reliable partner.

Committee members for our sports clubs, societies and student-led services also receive committee cards that offer free entry into Popworld on our Wednesday student night.

Tea and Toast

We have partnered with Saint Werburgh’s Church to incorporate their Tea and Toast provision into our student night. Every Wednesday, they will be located outside of Popworld offering free tea and toast to students between 11.00pm and 2.00am. The aim of this is to provide a safe space for students to gather their bearings after leaving the club, with the volunteers being a friendly face that can wait with students as they make their arrangements for getting home safely.



Project 2

Student Safety

Student safety is a key priority of the Union, which is why we go the extra mile to ensure that our students feel safe both on and off campus.

Aims

We want students to feel safe during their time at university, whether they're commuting for lectures or attending our affiliate student night. Our aim is to offer as much security and support as we can to students, ensuring that they are always safe and know where they can access help.

KPIs

➤ *At least 80% of students, when surveyed, will report feeling safe when attending Union activities by July 2025.*

Club Nights

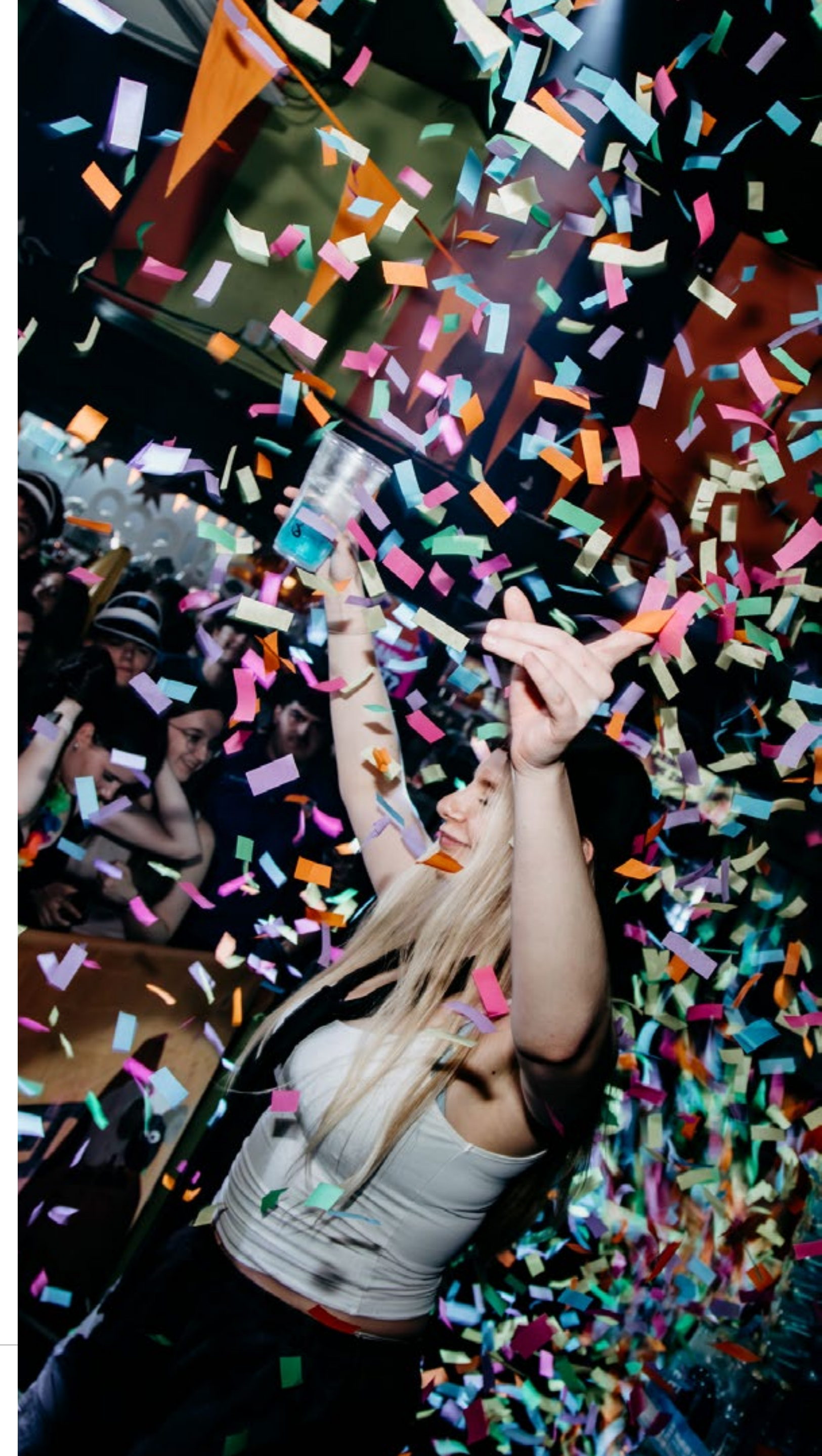
Our partnership with Stonegate allows us to host a student-only night at Popworld, one of their city centre venues. The door staff check for student IDs to ensure that the night is purely for students and not open to the public. This helps create a more comfortable clubbing environment for students to enjoy.

As well as being exclusive to students, we also work with Stonegate to offer additional safety precautions for our student nights. We offer free spikeys (anti-spiking drink stoppers that can be used on bottled drinks) and drink toppers in all Stonegate venues to ensure that students can keep their drinks covered to help prevent spiking. These are available at all times on the bar in Popworld and can be requested at any other Stonegate venue from a member of staff. The 'Ask for Angela' scheme is also implemented in Stonegate venues, with all staff trained to react and respond to the situation accordingly and posters in the toilets so students are aware that the scheme is in use.

SA&SV Awareness Week

Sexual Assault and Sexual Violence Week is recognised annually by the Union through raising awareness of the support available to students, including our Sexual Violence Liaison Officer (SVLO) service, which is accessible to all students.

Advisor and SVLO Zoe Lancaster organised a free women's self-defence session with our Brazilian Jui-Jitsu club to provide students with the skills and confidence to defend themselves should they need to, as well as a crafts evening that acted as a safe space for open discussion.



Alcohol Awareness Week

This year we hosted an event during alcohol awareness week to highlight the importance of knowing your limits and encourage students to avoid relying on alcohol, especially during stressful times such as around university deadlines and exams. We set up an engaging activity, having students navigate a remote-controlled robot through an obstacle course whilst wearing beer goggles, which attracted the attention of students as they walked through the Atrium. Several external organisations were invited to the event to help showcase the services and resources available to students should they need to access any alcohol related support.

Training

Our Advisors have hosted a variety of workshop training sessions for students throughout the year covering a variety of topics, including:

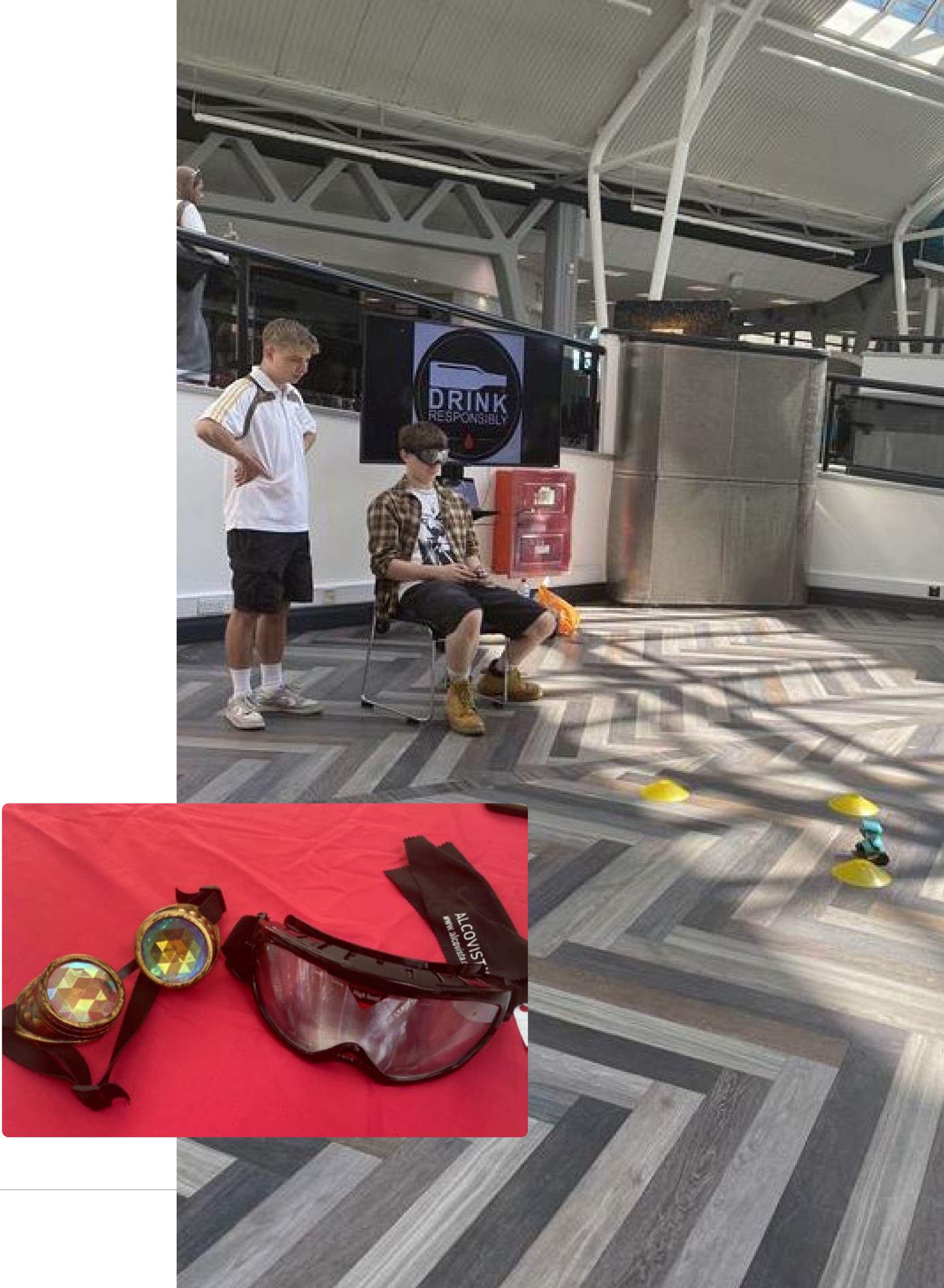
- *Budgeting*
- *Consent*
- *Mental health*
- *Eating Disorders*
- *Bullying vs Banter*
- *Active Bystanders*
- *EDI*

Sexual harassmt training

The SVLO service delivers an annual session to radiography students ahead of placement to offer guidance on what to do should they experience any form of sexual violence/harassment whilst on placement. The session aims to empower students to speak up if they need to.

Advisor domestic violence training

Every Union Advisor undertook domestic violence training to ensure that they are equipped with the right knowledge and resources to support those who have experienced domestic violence to a high standard and with confidence.



us

Strategic Priority 3

Accessibility and Inclusion

The Union believes every student should feel welcomed, included, and able to get involved, regardless of background, identity, or circumstance. That's why Accessibility and Inclusion is one of our key strategic priorities. This year, we have introduced projects and initiatives designed to make it easier for all students to engage with the Union, find their people, and feel like they belong. Whether it is through inclusive events, faith-based celebrations, quiet zones at Freshers', or projects led by our brilliant Student Officers, we are championing a student experience where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued.

Strategic Goals

- *Increase participation and engagement of students from underrepresented groups to ensure students feel part of a community, increasing their sense of belonging*
- *Work with students to ensure that we offer opportunities that are fully accessible*
- *Create a vibrant and inclusive student community by identifying and leveraging resources that empower students to connect, collaborate, and create meaningful experiences*



Project 1

Core Communities

The Core Communities project was created to help students find communities and create friendships with like-minded students. It is split into categories (Faith & Belief, Liberation & Equality, General Interest, Nationalities & Cultures, Academic and Service) based off demographics that students may be part of.

Aims

This project aims to help students build their own networks and ensure that students from underrepresented groups feel part of a community. We want to provide opportunities for the whole student body to get involved, no matter how they identify.

KPIs

- *Incrementally increase student engagement across the Union's membership services by 5% annually, including activities, voice, advice, and communication channels.*
- *Increase memberships of clubs, societies, SLS and volunteering activities by underrepresented students by 5%. (Dependent on demographic data)*
- *The percentage of students saying the Union of Students allows them to feel part of a community increases by 5% year on year.*



Events

Throughout March, we held six events to kickstart six Core Community groups, which were selected based on feedback from past events and significant widely observed holidays/events

- *A lunch for Post Graduate Research students, where PGR students joined us, discussing how we can help improve their student experience over lunch.*
- *A women's paint and sip evening as part of our Women's History Month celebrations.*
- *A Holi celebration for our Indian Community*
- *A litter picking walk for our Sustainability Community during Go Green Week*
- *A sensory board making session for our Disabled and Neurodivergent Community*
- *An Iftar to celebrate Ramadan for our Muslim Community*

These events were designed to bring together the pre-existing communities and signpost them towards our newly formed Core Community groups, which act as an official group that students can be part of to make new connections and friends based off their identity, culture, beliefs and interests. Across these events, we engaged with 77 students.

We signposted students to join an interest list for when the Core Communities officially launch, and from the events we had 43 students sign up to express their interest. This is the first step towards creating spaces for students to connect, increasing participation and engagement of students from underrepresented groups to ensure students feel part of a community with an increased sense of belonging.



Project 2

Student Officer Spotlight

This year, our Student Officers have gone above and beyond for their fellow students, helping to support and represent them at the highest levels. A standout Officer this year had been James Eames, our Disabilities Officer. He has spent the year championing for the necessary changes to make the university experience accessible for all, and we are very proud of the work he has done within the university.

To help make the University's accessibility provisions more widely known amongst students, James created and distributed leaflets and posters that provided accurate, up-to-date information on the accessibility of our buildings, including entrances, routes, and facilities.

For Disability History Month, James worked with the Marketing team to share some information about the history of British Sign Language (BSL) in an article, as well as an interactive story takeover on our Instagram page. This quizzed students on some facts around BSL and also had them guessing what some common signs meant. Across these polls we had an average of 61 students engage.

James met with us to offer student feedback on how to make future events like Freshers' Fair more accessible, which we were able to take onboard and implement to ensure the event was accessible and wouldn't infringe on the accessibility needs of students who were on campus and not attending the fair. This feedback will be valuable for the planning of future events.

Recently, James was invited to speak in Parliament about the experiences of students with disabilities. He outlined the struggles that disabled students often face at university and encouraged other universities to empower disabled students, using their experiences to help improve all aspects of the university journey so that disabled students are not disadvantaged.



Project 3

Inclusive Events/Making Events Inclusive

Events are a big part of our offering, so we strive to make them as inclusive as possible so every student has the opportunity to attend. We also aim to host a wide variety of events that cover a range of cultures, beliefs and interests. Throughout the academic year, we host various events that we welcome all students to join us for to connect with the Union and our community, bringing students together to enrich their university experience. As a Union, we strive to be intentionally inclusive, ensuring that any accessibility needs are not an afterthought and are engrained in our event planning.

Aims

Where possible, we remove barriers, such as cost and accessibility, from our events to ensure that as many students as possible can attend, whilst maintaining a high level of value to students. Students are at the heart of everything we do, so we aim to ensure that our events reflect the wants and needs of current students.

Our student community is diverse and rich with cultures from all around the world, which we want to celebrate! We aim to host a range of events that cater to the interests and traditions of our students, helping them celebrate and connect with each other.

KPIs

- *Incrementally increase student engagement across the Union’s membership services by 5% annually, including activities, voice, advice, and communication channels.*
- *The percentage of students saying the Union of Students allows them to feel part of a community increases by 5% year on year.*
- *Satisfaction with the Union’s accessibility and inclusivity at events and activities will increase annually, with a target of at least 80% by July 2025*



Freshers' Welcome Buddies

To offer additional support to students who need it, we employed six students as Freshers' Welcome Buddies; their role was to offer support navigating the Freshers' Fair and act as a friendly face to students who may appreciate it. Across the two fair days, they engaged with over 70 students, acting as an approachable Union presence that students could seek support from.

Quiet Hour and Quiet Zone

We understand that Freshers' Fair can be very busy and sometimes overwhelming, which is why for our September fair we implemented a quiet opening hour where overall volume was reduced so that students could navigate the fair without feeling overwhelmed. We also set up a dedicated quiet zone so that students could take a break from the fair. This was run by a group of society committee members and featured zen music, games, beanbags and a calm environment where students could have a breather whilst still enjoying the freshers' atmosphere.

Ear Plugs

Our EDI Champions reflected on the needs of students who may experience sensory overload, so now students can pick up a free pair of ear plugs at every Union event. We appreciate that some of our events have high volume levels, so we wanted to make an adjustment that would make them more accessible, allowing students to get involved.



Diwali

Vice President (Education) Pournami organised and hosted a Diwali celebration this year to share and celebrate Indian culture. The celebration brought Indian traditions to the University of Derby, including rangoli making, diya painting and traditional Indian snacks and sweets.



Liberation Months

Each academic year, we celebrate five Liberation Months that provide an opportunity for us to recognise and celebrate demographics that are often overlooked. We hold a minimum of one event per liberation month and seek input from students within these demographics to understand more about what they would like to see.

Black History Month in October

Union President Holly hosted a Black History Month Fair to celebrate black culture, inviting local and student-owned businesses to showcase their products. Vice President (Education) Pournami organised and led a group of students on a trip to participate in an African drumming session at the National Justice Museum in Nottingham.



Disability History Month, mid-November to mid-December

Working with our Disabilities Officer, Vice President (Welfare) Jack organised a Disability History Month pop-up in the Atrium, offering students the chance to use a dyslexia simulator and learn more about the impact of hidden disabilities. We engaged with 60 students, which provided a valuable insight into how we can offer better support to those with additional needs.

LGBT History Month in February

Vice President (Education) Pournami organised a clothes swap to provide students with clothes that match their chosen identity. Recognising the current cost of living crisis that so many students face, we wanted to give away items for free to anyone who needed them; we had a suggested donation of £2 per item, but students were encouraged to only donate if they were able to do so. This initiative was well-received by students and many left with several new items and a better understanding of the Union and what we offer. The Executive Officer team also collaborated to host a quiz to raise money for Derbyshire LGBT+.





Staff commemorated LGBT+ History Month by attending the ceremony to raise the Progress Pride flag at the beginning of the month.

Women's History Month in March

Union President Holly organised a Hands of Change event to celebrate Women's History Month. All female identifying students and staff were invited to leave a painted handprint on a large display wall, and we welcomed 54 women to leave their mark to signify the importance of celebrating the strength and power of the women in our community. A sweet treat was provided to all who took part, and we were able to have some meaningful conversations, encouraging more students to get involved and find their space within our community.

Faith and Belief Month in May

Vice President (Education) Pournami hosted a rooftop picnic to celebrate Faith and Belief Month, encouraging students to join us for light refreshments and free goodie bags. This event aimed to create a space for open discussions around religion, allowing students to share their personal beliefs and connect with others. Students were also encouraged to submit their favourite spiritual songs to a playlist to help spread some musical joy and share songs that are meaningful to their faith.



Project 4

International Students' Support

We want all international students to have an enjoyable experience at university, which is why we strive to make their transition as smooth as possible and offer support where we can.

Aims

We want all students to feel supported throughout their university journey, but there are times when international students may need additional support as they settle into their new home and lifestyle. With this in mind, we aim to provide all international students with the guidance and resources to make the most of their time at the University of Derby and ensure that we are on hand to support them at all stages of their journey.

KPIs

- *Incrementally increase student engagement across the Union's membership services by 5% annually, including activities, voice, advice, and communication channels.*
- *A 25% increase in student-led activities compared to the previous year will exceed 300 events.*
- *The percentage of students saying the Union of Students allows them to feel part of a community increases by 5% year on year.*



Global Gathering

We want to support and celebrate our diverse student community, which is why we host an annual Global Gathering event. We welcome students to join us in celebrating the variety of cultures that make up our student body, creating an open space for celebrating cultures from around the world and providing an opportunity for students to come together and create lasting memories and connections.

This year, we worked with a local organisation (M Productions Time 2 Show) to curate a selection of Derbyshire based performers and businesses to attend the event, providing a showcase of the diverse cultures within Derby. We welcomed 12 externals, ranging from food suppliers to carnival dancers.

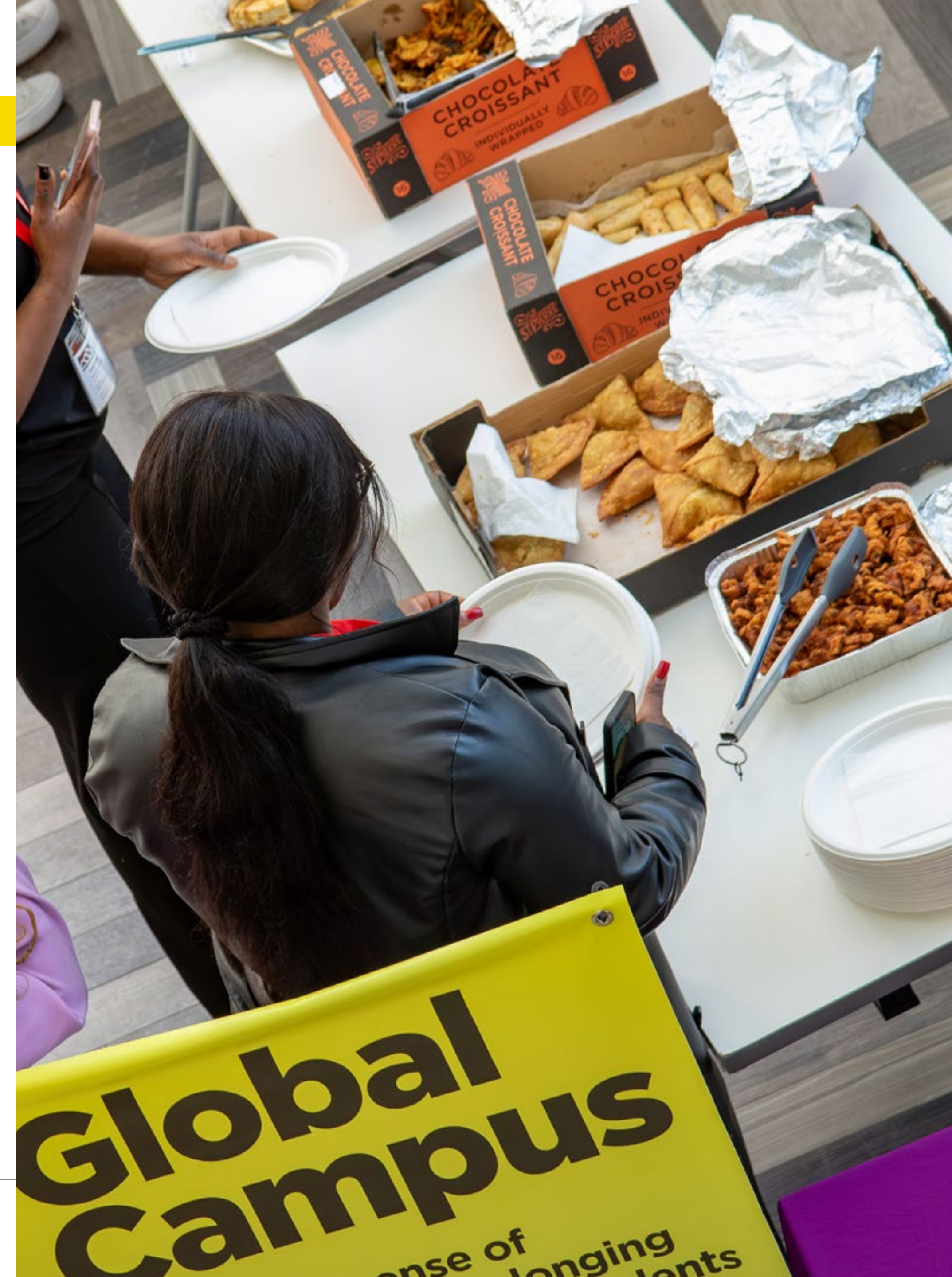
Each food provider made around 150 meals each and everything was consumed over the lunch period, providing around 400 meals to students. The event also gave a platform to elected students, notably with the International Officer giving a speech.

Working in the UK guide

Vice President (Education) Pournami put together a handy guide for international students to help improve their understanding of their right to work in the UK. This has been created with the aim of decreasing the number of students facing workplace exploitation, empowering them to know their rights and find employment that works for them around their studies.

International Student Package

Aparna Golla, one of our Union Advisors, is working to create a package for incoming international students to help ease their transition coming to the UK. This package will provide information on a range of subjects, from finances to accommodation, all of which will help create a smoother journey for students joining the University from overseas. The information included in the package has been collated from Advice appointments, collating frequent concerns and queries that are raised in appointments.



Strategic Priority 4

Easing Students' Financial Pressures

With the rising cost of living and increased pressure on students to take on paid work, many are finding it harder to prioritise their studies and fully engage in university life. That's why we made easing students' financial pressures one of our strategic priorities. Whether it's through student-friendly paid roles, skill-building volunteer positions, or campaigns and workshops, we committed to empowering students with the knowledge, tools, and opportunities they need to thrive financially throughout university and beyond.

Strategic Goals

- *Support students to find student friendly earning opportunities*



Project 1

Union Initiatives

Our Advice team deliver a wide range of workshops, campaigns and initiatives to help ease students’ financial pressures and support them throughout their university experience.

Aims

These initiatives aim to equip students with the knowledge and resources to look after their finances, ensuring that they are still able to make the most out of their university experience. We aim to reach as many students as possible, ensuring that they know who they can come to if they need guidance.

KPIs

➤ *The percentage of students saying that being involved with the Union enhanced their employability increases by 5% year on year.*

Budgeting workshops

The Advice team run budgeting workshops throughout the year to help students navigate their finances and make informed purchasing decisions. These sessions are free for any student to attend and provide knowledge and resources that will be useful throughout their university experience and beyond.

The workshops aim to help students avoid financially risky behaviours and ease the financial pressures that many students face by helping them implement budget plans and set realistic financial boundaries so they can better understand how to make their money go further.

The Advice team also put together some budgeting workshops tailored for apprentices. These workshops are tailored specifically for employed students, looking more at savings, pensions and covering any queries about managing their income.

Community Pantry

The cost-of-living crisis has been particularly impactful on students, creating financial strains that cause stress and impact their university experience, which is why we decided to open a Community Pantry that is open for all students to use. The pantry runs off donations, which we have been fortunate enough to receive from Union and University staff, local businesses and the Derby community.



SAFE Spend

Our SAFE Spend campaign (Safeguard Against Fraud and Excessive Spending) aims to provide students with the tools to recognise and avoid scams, budget their finances to make money go further and recognise financially risky behaviours, such as gambling. With a focus on financial well-being, this campaign exists to help students make informed decisions, build budgeting skills, and safeguard their finances.

As part of this campaign, we ran a ‘takeaway or fakeaway’ interactive social media story takeover to highlight that homecooked meals can look and taste as good as a takeaway, for a fraction of the price. Across these polls, we received an average of 97 students interacting.

We hosted a SAFE Spend event in the Atrium to engage with students and get them thinking about the impact of financially risky behaviour and how to avoid it.

The Advisors were joined by various external companies who provided information keeping finances safe and where to go for support and guidance. We also had the police fraud team come in to host a fraud mystery activity where students could test their knowledge on cyber-attacks.



Project 2

Employability

There are many roles at the Union that students can volunteer for, all of which help train and assist them to develop their skillsets and enhance their CVs. The positions range from Course Representatives to Committee Members and provide students with the opportunity to gain valuable experience that will help them become more employable.

Aims

The aim of these roles is to provide opportunities for students to step into leadership positions and manage their own projects and responsibilities, whether this is a PAL Leader organising a talk to their cohort or a Sports Club Treasurer setting budgets for the team.

Alongside the standard training for these roles, students are also offered additional training opportunities, such as Look After Your Mate Training and active bystander workshops, to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge for any situation.

KPIs

- *The percentage of students saying that being involved with the Union enhanced their employability increases by 5% year on year.*



This year, our Activities team delivered committee training to 310 new committee members (169 across our sports clubs and 141 across our societies and student-led services). The training covers different aspects of leading a student group and equips students for their roles; we have role specific training for the core roles (President, Secretary and Treasurer) and additional training for the other roles (e.g. Social Secretary, Charity Officer and Welfare Officer amongst others). There is also then training for a number of different skills including budgeting, using social media, communicating effectively and how to be a good leader.

Our Voice team delivered Student Rep training to 234 students this year. This training covers effectively collecting feedback and explains the Union’s representation structure. This year, we have employed and trained 27 Peer Assisted Learning Leaders to aid first-year students.



Kira Critchlow

President of the Business Society

How has the training you've received as a committee member improved your employability?

/// The training received as a committee member really gives students the building blocks for the future -with training covering a range of topics such as communication, organisation and leadership; all of which are to be expected of graduates today.
/// I feel that holding a committee role will be incredibly beneficial when it comes to applying for those graduate roles.

Has being a committee member impacted your university experience, and how?

/// Being a committee member has given me the opportunity to meet so many incredible people that I never would've been able to if I'd not been involved in Union activities. I really feel like
/// I'm part of a community which I'd never have found had I not joined societies.

What have you gained from being a committee member?

/// I've gained so much confidence from being on a committee, I'm so much more confident communicating with others, and have so much more confidence and belief in myself. There's so much to being a part of a committee and pushing myself out of my comfort zone has continually given me new, amazing opportunities.

What have you learnt from working with the Union?

/// I feel like partaking in Union activities has helped me to develop a passion for the student experience and student engagement and I would definitely consider something similar as a career option in the future.

Do you feel being on a committee has helped you to develop skills that might help you in your future career?

/// Being on a committee has definitely helped with my interpersonal skills, I've been on committees with a wide range of people with such a breadth of personalities and personal experience and this has really
/// helped me develop how I communicate with others which will be a huge part of a future career.



Peter Winfield

Student Rep

Do you think being a Rep has made you more employable, and why?

I think being a Rep has helped increase employability levels because it helps an individual to build on skills such as leadership which are an important part of any job whether being the manager of a workplace or being put in charge of a group project.

What have you gained from being a Rep?

I have gained valuable insight into developing and enhancing further skills within my role as a Rep which I can use in placement and it has helped me to build on confidence and learn more about leadership, and I have developed this through being a Rep.

What have you learnt from working with the Union?

From working with the Union, this adds to what I have gained from being Rep, but also how important teamwork in this aspect is, and how it helps to influence university life and the changes that help to support students within all respective cohorts and future students who come to study at university.

Do you feel being a Rep has helped you to develop skills that might help you in your future career?

I feel I have learnt so much as mentioned in the above, and these skills can be useful in the future.



Jodie Gregory

PAL Leader for Occupational Health and Physiotherapy

Do you think being a PAL Leader has made you more employable, and why?

Being a PAL Leader has made me more employable because not only does it add to my CV and demonstrate my contribution to the University and Union of Students, but it has also provided me with the opportunity to develop my skills (e.g., confidence, organisation, time management, communication) and demonstrates I genuinely care about supporting future students learning, health and wellbeing.

What have you gained from being a PAL Leader?

I have gained and strengthened so many skills from being a PAL Leader over these two consecutive academic years, including; communication, organisation, confidence, public speaking, IT using Teams, leadership and time management. These skills will aid me in my future career.

What have you learnt from working with the Union?

I have worked in the Union of Students since my first academic year, undertaking many roles over my three years, including; PAL Leader, Student Representative, Mental Health Awareness Officer, Mental Health Ambassador, Co-producer of Recall's Therapy Hour through a student-led service Phantom Media, and the Treasurer of DOTS. I have learned that the Union of Students provides a variety of opportunities for students to immerse themselves within, developing and strengthening skills, enhancing employability, and supporting health and wellbeing throughout students' university journeys. The Union staff are very helpful, supportive, enthusiastic, friendly and encouraging. What an amazing team they are - it has been an absolute pleasure to be part of this! I will continue to champion the Union of Students and the impact it has on Students - I truly believe it, have seen it and have been part of it.

Do you feel being a PAL Leader has helped you to develop skills that might help you in your future career?

Being a PAL Leader has definitely helped me to develop skills which will help me in my future career. It has enabled me to strengthen my knowledge and skills, and it has enabled me to build new skills and develop both personally and professionally. Skills include; public speaking, confidence, communication, leadership, time management, and organisational skills.



Project 3

Student Staff

Student staff are an asset to the Union workforce, and we place a lot of value in creating positions to help students gain new skills alongside their studies. Our outlets staffed entirely (excluding management roles) by students, to whom we can offer flexible hours around their studies.

Aims

- *To offer students flexible work around their studies that provides them with the opportunity to earn money alongside their studies*
- *To provide an opportunity for students to gain new skills*

KPIs

- *The percentage of students saying that being involved with the Union enhanced their employability increases by 5% year on year.*

This year we hired:

- *Four students join the Union staff team on a part time basis, working in both membership and operations*
- *27 Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leaders who dedicate four hours a week to assisting first year students on their course*
- *52 student staff members across our five outlets (33 in Blends and 19 in the shops).*

We strongly believe in supporting students with their careers, and these roles are an example of how as a Union, we're able to provide students with opportunities to better themselves and develop as individuals, showcasing to future employers their dedication in working alongside their studies.



Zoe Calder

Student staff member at Keddies

What skills do you feel you have gained in your employment with the Union, and how will these help you in the future?

/// I have learned how to navigate the tills, how to do the banking and maintained people skills - these will help me in other retail roles I could have in the future.

How has being employed by the Union helped improve your employability?

/// It has helped me improve my employability because I have learned new skills which can go on my CV

Would you recommend taking on a student staff role at the Union, and why?

/// Yes I would because it's worked really well alongside my university course due to its flexibility. Everyone is lovely to work with too!

What have you enjoyed most about working with the Union?

/// I have enjoyed meeting other students



Rosie Buss

Student staff member at Keddies

What skills do you feel you have gained in your employment with the Union, and how will these help you in the future?

I have gained skills in communication and collaboration by building relationships with customers and my coworkers. These will help me in the future, as I am more likely to be confident participating in networking and social events.

How has being employed by the Union helped improve your employability?

It has helped my employability by showing that I am organised and I can prioritise work, due to balancing my university work and my part-time job.

Would you recommend taking on a student staff role at the Union, and why?

Yes, I would. The shifts are very flexible and the managing staff are helpful, friendly, and welcoming.

What have you enjoyed most about working with the Union?

I've most enjoyed making new friends and getting to know the uni/Union a bit better.



“Working with the Union has taught me a lot about collaboration and organisation. I’ve seen how different teams come together to support students, and I’ve learned how important student voice and representation are in shaping a better university experience.”

— **Alex Carvajal, PAL Leader**

Strategic Priority 5

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability and social responsibility matter to our students, with 40% of respondents to our annual Union Survey telling us they have high expectations of the Union in this area. Through projects like Go Green Week, the Bean Fund, and student-led initiatives, we are giving students the tools, platforms, and opportunities to turn their passion into action.

Strategic Goals

- *Embed sustainability in all aspects of the Union's activities and operations*



Project 1

Sustainability Champions

Our group of Sustainability Champions are dedicated to creating a greener environment, both around the University and in the local community. From building a greenhouse out of bottles at a local school to increasing the biodiversity around our campuses.

Aims

Our Sustainability Champions group aim to introduce students to sustainable initiatives that they can both support and get involved with. We want to encourage students to have sustainable lifestyles and incorporate sustainability into their everyday lives as much as possible, no matter how small the change is.

Our annual Union Survey showed that students wanted to get involved with more sustainable events, with 40% of students asked stated that they had high expectations of the Union regarding environmental sustainability and social responsibility. With this in mind, we are aiming to introduce more visible sustainability initiatives that students can get involved in to increase the awareness amongst students of what we are doing and how students can take part.

In October, we were awarded gold in the University's Sustainability Champion framework.



Go Green Week

Every year, our Sustainability Champions group celebrates Go Green Week by co-hosting the University's Sustainability Fair, showcasing the Union's sustainable initiatives and conversing with students about how they can get involved. This year, we collaborated with Leila Ainge, Senior Project Manager for Strategic Insights and Planning at the University, to help students bring more greenery into their homes. We offered the opportunity to decorate a plant pot made from a plastic cup, turning a single-use plastic into something new and saving it from the landfill. Students were then provided with soil (which was kindly donated by the University's Estates team) and signposted to collect a seed from our partner stall. We received a lot of engagement on our stall, and it was a great opportunity to speak to students about our Bean Fund scheme and how they can get involved with sustainable initiatives around campuses.

We collaborated with the Executive Officers and some of our student groups to host more activities throughout the week, including:

- *A clothing repair workshop*
- *A litter pick walk*
- *A second-hand swap shop for books, clothing and nursing scrubs*
- *A candle making workshop*



Bean Fund

The Bean Fund is an initiative from our Union coffee shop, Blends. Our goal is to neutralise the impact that our takeaway cups have on the environment. With each drink served in a takeaway cup, there is an additional charge of 20p. This pays for the materials of the cup itself, but we have a few pennies left over from each purchase that we want to put to good use!

This extra money is put into a central pot of money - 'The Bean Fund'. Students and staff can submit their own ideas for sustainability projects that they would like to see funded either on-campus, or in the local community. The Sustainability Champions review these proposals and after hearing a pitch, they decide on how much funding they would like to allocate to the project. This year, the Bean Fund has funded:

- *Two new bee colonies*
- *420 trees for a wildlife hedgerow at the Markeaton Street campus*
- *Student activities for Go Green Week – a clothing repair cafe and a candle making workshop*
- *100 incentive vouchers for Botso to encourage recycling*
- *Plastic free decorations for the Union's Christmas tree*

During Go Green Week, we held a vote for students and staff to decide on what our next Bean Fund project would be. The winning project this year was a community garden where we could work alongside students to grow various fruits, vegetables and plants that students could take for free. This project will begin work over the summer period.

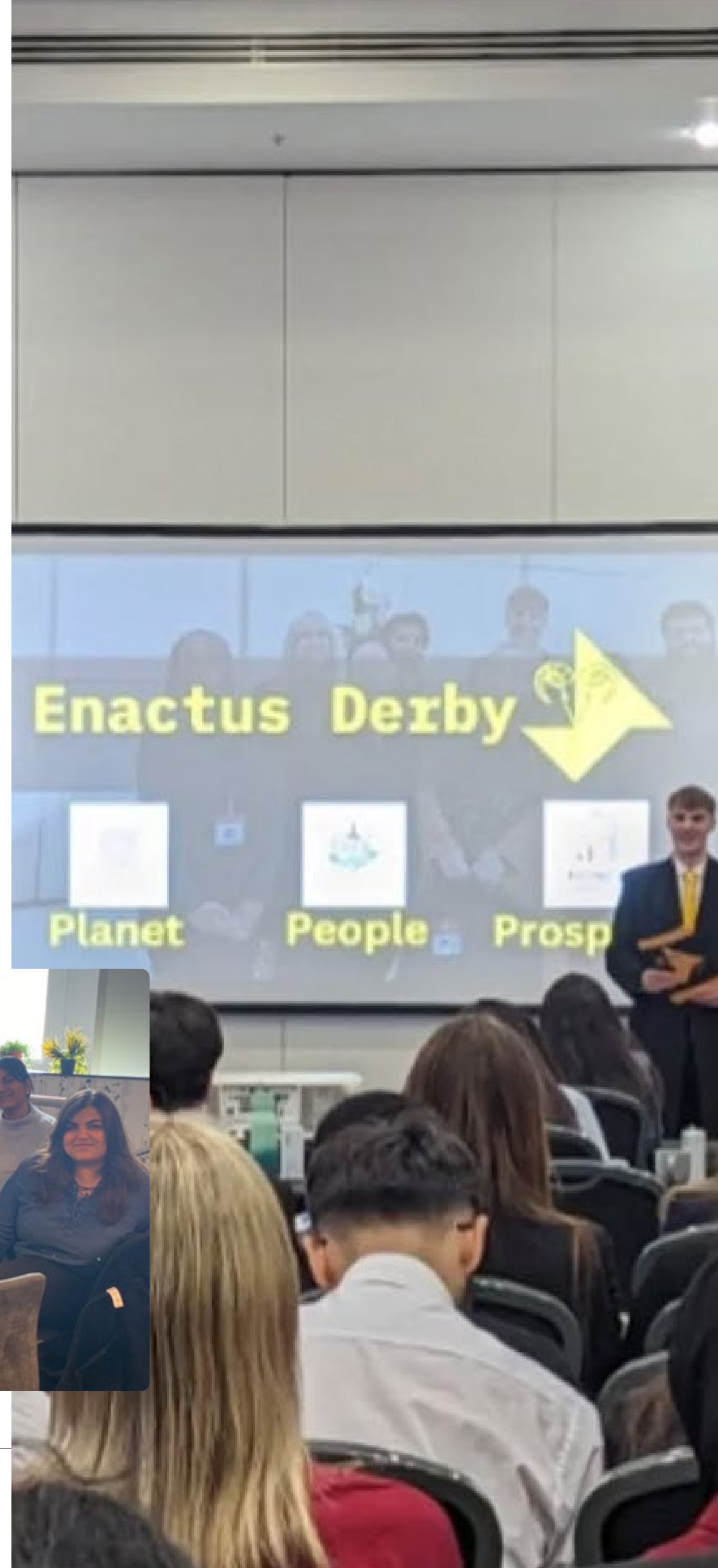
A sustainable Christmas

Each year around the festive period, our Sustainability Champions take over the Union's Christmas plans, adapting them to incorporate more sustainable practices. This included:

- *Sustainable Secret Santa, where all gifts had to be either handmade, a sustainable product or sustainably sourced*
- *A sustainable Christmas tree that featured no plastic decorations, and members of staff were invited to decorate wooden ornaments. We also ran a toy donation drive alongside this, collecting donations for a local children's hospital.*
- *The big Christmas switch off, where each department was given a checklist of things to switch off to save energy over the Christmas break. We also encourage staff to turn off all appliances before any break.*

Project 2 Students

Our vibrant student community has expressed a keen interest in sustainability, so we're striving to continue nurturing this passion and providing opportunities to get involved.



Enactus

Enactus are one of our student-led services who support students through a range of opportunities in entrepreneurship, building skills and connecting with different students and being a part of a bigger community, Enactus UK.

Enactus Derby worked hard this year to be able to pitch at the Enactus UK Nationals, with one of the three projects they pitched being Botso - is a student-owned business that received funding from the Bean Fund last year to help encourage students to recycle glass jars. During Go Gren Week, Botso hosted a candle making workshop to encourage students to recycle.

“Sustainability is at the heart of what we do because we believe change starts with conscious choices, and as student leaders, it's our responsibility to model that. For us, sustainability means creating impact that lasts—not just environmentally, but socially and economically too.

At the Enactus UK Nationals, our pitch focused on three key projects:

- *Botso - A recycling initiative promoting reuse through glass jar candle*
- *Role Resolve - A therapeutic tabletop RPG intervention for neurodiverse adolescents*
- *The money project - A financial education programme for young people*

From the experience, we gained invaluable public speaking confidence, strengthened our teamwork, and felt incredibly inspired by seeing the scale of social impact being driven by other students across the UK and Ireland.

The Union's support was instrumental—from helping us with funding and resources to promoting our initiatives and guiding us through event logistics. Knowing we had a support system behind us made all the difference and empowered us to aim higher.”

Vikki Nolan, Enactus Derby Vice President of Engagement

Sip One Stitch One society

During Go Green Week, the Sip One Stitch One society held a clothing repair cafe. Students and staff could bring in items of clothing that needed repairs, where members of the society would repair them free of charge. This initiative not only gave new life to items that might've ended up in the landfill, but it was also an opportunity to showcase their own green initiatives and help contribute to improving our sustainability.



...and there's more

Everything you've read so far has been the big picture projects; things we want to shout from the rooftops. But it's not an extensive list of all we've been up to this year!

2,337 PAL LEADER HOURS | 2025 INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR PEER LEARNING AND SUPPORT | ACTIVE BYSTANDER TRAINING | ADVICE SAFE SPEND EVENT | AFFILIATION WITH EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR PEER LEARNING | ALCOHOL AWARENESS EVENT | ALL-STUDENT MEETING | APPLICANT DAYS | ARTISAN ALLEY | AUTISM AWARENESS SESSION | BEAN FUND ALLOCATIONS | BIG SWITCH OFF | BLACK LIVES MATTERS LECTURES | BREW JANUARY | BUCS CAPTAIN TRAINING | BUCS FIXTURES | BUDGETING WORKSHOP | BUILDING A GREENHOUSE OUT OF BOTTLES | BULLYING VS BANTER | CANDLE MAKING WORKSHOP | CAREERS FAIRS | CATERING SERVICES FOR EVENTS | CHARITY BAKE SALE | CHRISTMAN HALLS SOCIAL | CLEARING | CLOTHES REPAIR CAFE | CLUB/SOC COMMITTEE TRAINING | COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING XMAS FUDDLE | COMMUNITY AWARDS | CONSENT WORKSHOP | CONTRIBUTED TO QAA PROJECT | DIWALI CELEBRATION | DOG LIFE DRAWING | DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE | EARPLUGS | EATING DISORDER WORKSHOP | EDIT TRAINING | EDUCATION AWARDS | EXECUTIVE OFFICER ELECTIONS | FATHER & SONS BAR CRAWL | FRESHERS | FRESHERS FAIRS | GLOBAL GATHERING | GO GREEN WEEK | GREEN WEEK | HALLS FEST | HANDS OF CHANGE | HOUSING PARTY | IKEA TRIP | INAUGURAL LECTURES NETWORKING | INTERNATIONAL AGENTS BREAKFASTS AND LUNCHES | INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SPORT SESSIONS | JOB APPLICATION REFERENCES | JUNE HUGHES LEAVING MEET UP | KEYNOTE SPEAKER CONFERENCE | LOOK AFTER YOUR MATE TRAINING | MAILING LISTS | MAIN ELECTIONS | MENTAL HEALTH IN SPORT TRAINING | MINI ACTIVITIES FAIR | MOCKTAIL AND QUIZ NIGHT | MONSTER MASH | MONTHLY BREAKFAST MORNINGS | NATIONAL APPRENTICE WEEK | NORTHERN VOICE CONFERENCE | OLD BOYS AND GIRLS WEEKEND | ONLINE COLLEGE FORUMS | OPEN/APPLICANT DAYS | PAL INDUCTIONS | PAL LEADER SUPERVISIONS WITH ACADEMIC LIAISONS AND PAL STAFF | PAL LEADER TRAINING | PAL PAPER AT REP CON | PAL PARTY | PART-TIME CAREER & EMPLOYMENT FAIR | PEER LEARNING AND SUPPORT NETWORK MEETINGS | PGR LUNCHES | POST GRAD OPEN DAYS | POSTER DAYS | RAMMED SPECIALS | RECRUITING PAL LEADERS | REP SOCIALS | REP CON | SCITT INDUCTION DAY | SCRUTINY PANELS | SELF DEFENCE CLASS | SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON PLACEMENT TALK | SNAP ELECTIONS | SOCIETIES SOCIALS | SOCIETY ASSEMBLIES | SPORTS ASSEMBLIES | SPORTS AWARDS | SPORTS CLUB COACHES FORUM | SPORTS COUNCIL SOCIAL | SPORTS TEAM PHOTO DAY | STAFF NEWSLETTERS | STUDENT TRAINING | STUDENT VOICE REVIEW | SUSTAINABILITY FAIR | SUSTAINABLE SECRET SANTA | SVLO TALK TO NURSING STUDENTS | SVLOS OUR TOUR | UPC DOCTORAL COLLEGE OPENING CEREMONY | VARSITY | WEEKLY MARKET TRADERS | WELCOME WEEKEND | WINTER MARKET | WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



Officer Impact – Part 2

Executive Officer priorities

Introduction from President

At the start of this year, as an Officer team we set out with a clear purpose: to put student voice at the heart of everything we do. We committed to being visible, approachable, and proactive in creating spaces where all students feel heard and valued. Through initiatives like Union on Tour, closer collaboration with Student Officers representing key communities, and strengthened support for our Student Representatives, we've worked to build stronger, more meaningful connections between students and the Union. Our goal has been to ensure that every decision, campaign, and project is guided by real student feedback, creating positive change that reflects the needs and aspirations of our diverse student body.

Working closely with Sue Bennet this year, we facilitated an open conversation with the Executive Officer team to understand our collective goals and the impact we wanted to achieve. The themes we chose reflect a blend of continuity from last year and fresh goals aligned with our new manifestos. They are also aligned with the Learning, Teaching, and Assessment Framework's five factors for academic success. As both the Union and University strive for student-centred success, our continued partnership is key.

Throughout the year, Officers use a range of methods to ensure student voice remains at the centre of everything we do. Some new initiatives we used this year - 'you said we did', 'GOATing (Get Out and Talk)', and 'Have your say café' - enabled Officers to have an online and physical presence for students to engage with. 'You said we did' allowed us to share updates with students ensuring strong and clear communication, showcasing how student voice and feedback is actioned upon throughout the year. The 'Have your say café & GOATing' initiatives were used as part of the voice review, enabling Officers to get out to all campuses and into classes to gather feedback directly from students. We work closely with our Student Officers, who represent key student communities and gather insights through focus groups, tailored events, and forums, and with our Student Representatives, who provide structured academic feedback through meetings and surveys. Together, these channels ensure that diverse student perspectives continually guide and shape the work of the Officer team.

Bringing people together

Creating connections

The first theme emerged from student feedback and our own experiences. We recognise that university can be daunting, so we aim to foster connections, whether through one-on-one introductions or through societies and sports. By creating an environment where students can meet like-minded people, we hope to build lifelong relationships that enrich the student journey.



Project 1 Let’s Be Friends

The Executive Officers worked to launch the Let’s Be Friends campaign this year to engage hard-to-reach student demographics, such as student carers, commuter students, apprentices and online students. Through this campaign, they hosted one-off events each term to help these groups build connections. Additionally, they created a Teams channel to provide a safe space for communication and to keep these groups informed about available opportunities.

Aims

The main aims of this project were to expand our reach to students who don’t usually engage with the Union, whilst creating opportunities for these groups to connect with each other over their shared traits.

The initiative prioritised accessibility and inclusion, based on feedback from students last year. The campaign has seen them host tailored events like paint a pumpkin for student carers, a games night for mature students, and winter crafts session for student parents, all aimed at helping students connect and discover new opportunities.

After careful consideration, the Let’s Be Friends project was merged with our Core Communities project to ensure that it received the attention of the wider Union team, working towards developing and growing lasting communities for students.

Project 2

Union on Tour

To connect with students across all campuses and accommodations, the Officers introduced the Union on Tour initiative. Over several weeks, they organised “mini freshers” events at Buxton & Leek Colleges, Markeaton Street, One Friar Gate, and all student halls.

Aims

The aim of this project was to introduce new students to the Union and highlight how we can enhance their student experience.

These events provided opportunities to educate students about the Union’s services and create early connections with them; during the numerous campuses visit we engaged with over 290 students.

These pop-up events across campuses created space for direct conversations between students and Executive Officers. With interactive activities, giveaways, and opportunities to share feedback, Union on Tour has strengthened our engagement and ensured student voice is central to our work.



Belonging for all

Create a sense of belonging

Our second theme reflects our desire to offer inclusive, accessible spaces that students can call their own. We know that feeling connected can be challenging when you are new to university, and as a Union, we are uniquely positioned to support this through our clubs, events, and campaigns.



Project 1 Big Union Jam

The Big Union Jam is an end of year celebration that aims to bring all students together to celebrate the end of the academic year, offering a relaxed environment for them to unwind with friends and reflect on the academic year. This event highlights our vibrant community, helping students come together and make meaningful connections. Led by Union President Holly, the Executive Officer team collaborated to create an event for all students.

Aims

When this idea was first conceptualised by current Union President Holly Lloyd during her 2023/24 term as Vice President (Education), we wanted to create an event that would be open and accessible to the entire community. This year, we invited students to bring their families to the event to celebrate with them.

The event was held in an open, accessible space and featured a quiet zone for students who wanted to join us without needing to be in a crowd with loud music. The event was marketed as a family-friendly day where students could celebrate with their loved ones, so we were pleased to see several families join us for the day. This year, we saw around 200 students throughout the course of the day, joining us to celebrate with a 5-a-side football tournament, inflatables games, live music from Phantom Radio, a BBQ and free ice creams.

Project 2

BUCS Takeover for the sporting community

Sports is a huge part of student life here at Derby, with this year seeing 1054 students sign up to be part of one of our 30+ clubs (an increase of 7.1% from the past academic year). Vice President (Activities) Gabby does a weekly takeover on our social media stories, providing coverage of the BUCS fixtures for those who cannot attend in person; this was in response to student feedback that asked for greater recognition of university sport.

Aims

The aim of this year’s BUCS Takeover project was to increase sports coverage, providing greater visibility and recognition of our sports teams. We wanted to create a sense of belonging for our sports students, creating a space for the community to come together to support our teams and follow their journeys.

Weekly interviews with players and spectators now provide a behind-the-scenes look at game days, and regular updates on fixtures and results help keep students engaged. We’ve also boosted promotional efforts across social media and other platforms, putting university sport in the spotlight more than ever before.

KPIs

➤ *The percentage of students saying the Union of Students allows them to feel part of a community increases by 5% year on year.*

Jessica Allen, Sports Councillor

Does being part of Union Sport give you a sense of belonging?

Being part of Union sport gives you a sense of belonging as it helps you to feel part of a team. It helps you to build friendships, develop trust and helps you to feel connected to something bigger for the university.

Do you think there’s a strong sporting community at the University of Derby?

I believe there is a strong sporting community at the University of Derby, there is a vibrant and inclusive sporting community that helps to cater to all students. The Union of Students help to organise social gatherings and networking opportunities that brings together members from different sports clubs.

What impact do you think BUCS takeover has on the sporting community?

BUCS Takeover has had a positive impact on the sporting community by amplifying the voices of the students and providing a platform to celebrate their achievements. It has helped to shine a spotlight on the dedication and hard work of all the student-athletes.





Make your voice matter

Empowering students to be heard

Our third theme is a key priority we are carrying forward because student voice is at the core of any student union. It aligns with our own strategic aims and the University's, reinforcing that student voice is vital to every decision we make.

Project 1 Thursday Thoughts

Thursday Thoughts is a weekly social media segment that the Executive Officers created as a platform for students to share their thoughts and feedback on a variety of topics, from the cost-of-living crisis to the Derby community and its offerings.

Aims

The aim of Thursday Thoughts is to create an engaging method of feedback collection and present students with an opportunity to make their voices heard.

On average, we receive 70 students engaging each week, which has provided us with valuable student feedback that can be used to enact change on behalf of our students. The responses are fed back to the relevant groups within the Union and University, ensuring that the student voice is heard at all levels.

Project 2 City Partnerships

The Executive Officers work with key contacts in Derby to create partnerships that assist in empowering student voice within the local community.

Aims

The aim of these partnerships is to build relationships and work with stakeholders in the city to bring forward the student voice, setting the path for the next Executive Officer team to continue working with key contacts.

Vice President (Welfare) Jack is part of the Purple Flag working group where he has been able to meet with the Derby City Neighbourhood Services Manager to discuss how more student voice can be gathered and implemented into the city.

Voices heard, changes made

Hearing and acting on student voice

Our fourth and final theme is about showing students that their voices lead to real change. We aim to encourage more students to speak up and see the impact of their input, both within the Union and across the University.

Project 1

Apprentice Voice

This year the Officers have worked closely with our apprentices to ensure that their voice is heard, and they can access the Union's services without barriers. As their university experience looks different to most of the student body, we wanted to work closely with apprentices to gain a better understanding of how we can support them.

Aims

This project aims to create a strong bond with our apprentice learners and create a platform for hearing their feedback.

Vice President (Activities) Gabby and Union President Holly led two impactful seminars, Apprentice Experience and Sports Experience & Engagement with the Sports Council, giving students a platform to share their stories

directly at the Student Voice Committee. These seminars will continue as part of our approach to showcasing authentic student experiences that influence change.

Another initiative introduced this year was the Power Play – Engineer Your Game campaign, which focused on engaging apprentices, particularly those at the Nuclear Skills Academy (NSA). Working closely with university leaders and NSA programme leads, they raised awareness of the Union's services and opportunities. They delivered multiple induction talks for apprentices in Business, Engineering, and Cybersecurity programs and partnered with the Sport and Physical Activity team to establish an apprentice team in the Friday Football League. There will be a continued collaboration with the NSA, with plans to deliver budgeting workshops for apprentices alongside our Advice service.



Project 2

You Said, We Did

Throughout the year, the Executive Officers have worked hard to respond to student feedback and highlight the changes that have been made. Using the student voice mechanisms, the Officers have been able to enact the changes that students want to see.

Aims

This project aims to evidence that student voice is acted upon, instilling confidence in our ability take their feedback onboard and champion for the changes they want to see. This initiative helps us identify pressing issues and deliver improvements. The format of this project allows us to clearly show the ideas and concerns raised by students and how we have implemented and rectified them.

Some examples include

- *When Britannia Mill students requested more study space, we collaborated with the University to secure additional quiet areas.*
- *Apprentices highlighted a lack of social opportunities, prompting the launch of a dedicated 6.00pm 6-a-side football slot and expanded out-of-hours activities.*
- *Mature students called for more inclusive events, which inspired more family-friendly options through the Let's Be Friends campaign.*
- *A post on the Ideas Forum asked for more provisions in our Heat & Eat facility, so we added an additional microwave and clearer signage for the boiling water tap.*
- *A call for improved visibility and accessibility of academic representation led to the addition of a Rep Portal tile on UDo.*



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