

Statement from The Students' Union President 2023 – 2025



As I come to the end of my term as President of Dudley College Students' Union, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been a truly transformative and unforgettable two years. Serving in this role has been one of the greatest honours of my life, and I am deeply proud of all that we have achieved during this time.

From launching campaigns to address the cost-of-living crisis, to strengthening our democratic structures and building more inclusive, student-led spaces, everything we've done has been rooted in listening to and acting on

the voices of Dudley students. Whether it was the creation of the Zen Garden, the re-development of the SU website, or our work to make voter registration more accessible, these achievements have only been possible thanks to the collective effort and support of those around me.

It has been two years of growth, challenge, and resilience. Throughout this time, I have had the privilege of working alongside committed student leaders, an exceptional SU team, and a student body full of passion and purpose. I am especially grateful for the collaboration, trust, and shared vision across both my Leadership Team and Staff Team, which have been vital in helping the Union grow in confidence, capacity, and impact.

As I step down, I do so with great pride in what we've accomplished and deep confidence in the Union's future. The foundations we've laid are strong, and I'm certain the SU will continue to thrive, evolve, and serve as a powerful force for student voice and change at Dudley College.

Representing Dudley students has been a profound and rewarding experience, one that has shaped me deeply and will stay with me for years to come.

In Solidarity,

Jack Stokes, President of Dudley College Students' Union

Representation- including campaigning, lobbying and liberation work.

Presidential Election 2025 – Don't DUCK Out of Democracy!

This year's **Presidential Election** went off with a bang - or a "quack," you could say! In our **biggest and most engaging election to date**, we saw **three fantastic candidates** step forward: **Elizabeth Gado Johnson, Joel Hyde, and Kaynat Ahmad**. With an incredible **1,200 total votes cast**, this year's turnout is a testament to just how passionate and invested Dudley students are in the future of their Students' Union.

To encourage participation, our campaign theme was the bold and brilliant **"Don't DUCK Out of Democracy"**. With ducks taking over social media and campus culture, we gave away **hundreds of rubber ducks** and even had a **giant inflatable duck waddling around campus**, making democracy not just accessible, but fun.

We're thrilled to announce that **Kaynat Ahmad** has been **duly elected President of Dudley College Students' Union 2025–2026**, securing **35.5% of the vote**. Kaynat brings a wealth of experience, having served for two years as **Campus Leader for Inspired**. She is currently completing an **IT Digital and Programming course** and will be making history as the **first-ever SU President from the Brierley Hill Learning Quarter**.

Kaynat will officially take office on **July 1st**, and we couldn't be more excited to see her lead. **Please join us in congratulating Kaynat on her election victory and wishing her every success in the year ahead!**



Presidential Handover: Jack to Kaynat

Throughout **June**, we have facilitated a **comprehensive month-long presidential handover** between outgoing President **Jack** and incoming President **Kaynat**. This structured transition period ensured a **smooth and effective transfer of knowledge, responsibilities, and ongoing project work**. Jack supported Kaynat with **in-depth briefings on key campaigns, stakeholder relationships**, and the **strategic direction** of the Union, while also providing guidance on **day-to-day operations and leadership expectations**. The extended handover allowed Kaynat to **shadow Jack, engage with staff and students**, and begin **shaping her priorities with confidence and continuity**. This proactive approach has laid **strong foundations for a successful new term**, maintaining **momentum** and ensuring **students remain at the heart of the Union's work**.

Kaynat's Presidential Statement



"I joined Dudley Students' Union in my first year of college. Before becoming involved, I wasn't very confident and often found it difficult to engage with others in public settings. However, joining the SU became a turning point in my personal development.

Inspired by the opportunities around me, I decided to run for the role of Campus Leader – and I was successfully elected. Before the Christmas break, I organised my very first event, which helped build my skills in planning and leadership. Throughout the year, I worked closely with the SU on a number of projects and even had the chance to attend my first national student

conference in Blackpool, which was a valuable learning experience.

In my second year, I once again ran for the Campus Leader role. This time, I was even more focused on raising student voices and addressing the issues they were facing. It was a rewarding year, although not without its challenges. Unfortunately, not all staff were supportive of the initiatives we were trying to push forward, which made some projects more difficult. However, I remained determined to make a difference.

I had strong support from my SU President at the time, who continuously encouraged and motivated me. Their belief in me helped build my confidence further, and I decided to take a bold step and run for SU President myself. The election week was incredibly stressful, nerve-wracking, and demanding – but in the end, I was honoured to be elected as the President of Dudley Students' Union.

As the Incoming President-Elect, I organised the SU's first Anti-Racism Festival – one of the most meaningful and impactful events I've been part of. I've truly enjoyed my time working with the SU. It's been a journey of growth, learning, and empowering others, and I'm proud of what we've achieved together."

Shaping the National Student Movement



As ever, **Dudley Students' Union continues to play a leading role in national conversations**, ensuring that the voices of our students influence decisions beyond our own campus. This year, we took part in the **newly formed NUS England Conference**, held in **Lincoln**, which has replaced the traditional National Conference. This reimagined format features a **slimmed-down, more inclusive democratic model**, designed to **prioritise collective action, collaboration, and meaningful communication**, moving away from divisive debate and towards unified progress.

President **Jack**, Vice President **Usman Shahid**, and then-Inspired Campus Leader **Kaynat Ahmad** proudly represented our Union at the conference. We submitted two impactful policies: **"Tackling the Far-Right"** and **"Investing in Further Education Students' Unions"**. Both were **successfully adopted as national priorities by the National Union of Students**, marking a significant win for our students and the wider FE sector.



This event also provided a powerful platform to **connect with fellow student leaders, share campaign strategies, and build a stronger, more united student movement**, ensuring that Dudley SU continues to help shape the future of student representation across the country.

National Advocacy on Tackling the Far-Right



On

Tuesday 3rd June, President Jack and incoming President Kaynat travelled to London to attend a national roundtable in Parliament, focused on **addressing the alarming rise of the far-right**, an issue that continues to grow both **locally and nationally**. This engagement followed a major achievement: the **successful passing of our “Tackling the Far-Right” policy at NUS England**, which has now been adopted as a **campaign priority by the National Union of Students**.

At the roundtable, Jack and Kaynat contributed to vital discussions about **the role of Students' Unions in challenging extremism** and promoting inclusive values. A key point raised was the urgent need for the **Government to legally mandate and fund Students' Unions in all colleges across England**, mirroring the model already in place in **Scotland**. As **political, student-led organisations**, SUs are **uniquely positioned to lead the fight against radicalisation**, empower communities, and foster democratic resilience. Their presence on every college campus is essential in ensuring **young people are equipped, represented, and protected** in the face of rising hate.

Leading the Change: Representing at the SOS-UK Sustainability Summit



This year, we proudly attended the **SOS-UK Sustainability Summit**, a national gathering of student leaders and sustainability advocates committed to

driving climate action within education. The summit provided an incredible opportunity to **connect with like-minded changemakers, share best practices, and explore innovative solutions to environmental challenges** facing colleges. We engaged in powerful workshops and panel discussions on topics such as climate justice, green skills, and institutional responsibility, leaving us inspired and energised to bring fresh sustainability ideas back to our own campus.

Skill Development – Including training opportunities, professional development, and volunteering.

Our fabulous SU Intern Sam



Sam Robinson volunteers with us every Tuesday, supporting student activities, office admin, and helping to organise events for the *We Socialise Too!* disabled students group. We truly value Sam as a member of our team, his enthusiasm and dedication make a real difference. His mom shared how much our support has meant to him, *'just wanted to say thank you for looking out for Sam how you do, yourself, Darryll, and the team have been so kind to him. It is lovely to see him grow in*

confidence, and for me, I know he is always safe with you'. We're so proud to be part of his journey.

Strengthening Visibility and Brand Presence

This year, **we made it a priority to elevate the visibility and branding of Dudley Students' Union**, ensuring that **we are present where our members are**, and that our services remain **accessible, recognisable, and engaging**. In line with this commitment, on **11th–12th June**, we attended the **SU Marketing Conference at Manchester Metropolitan Students' Union**. This national event brought together **experienced marketing and communications professionals** from Students' Unions across the country. It was a valuable opportunity to **gain insights into innovative strategies, explore creative campaign ideas, and share best practices** to enhance our Union's outreach. We returned with **fresh approaches to digital engagement, student-led storytelling, and visual identity**, all of which will support our ongoing mission to **build a stronger, more visible presence across campus and connect with students in more meaningful ways**.

Campaigning for a Fair Deal for Our Future

As part of our commitment to championing students' rights and well-being, Dudley Students' Union took part in the **national "Fair Deal for Our Future" campaign**, led by the National Union of Students (NUS). This campaign calls on the Government to **properly fund further education**, address the **cost-of-living crisis**, and ensure **students are treated with fairness and dignity**, both now and in the future.

As part of the **Fair Deal for Our Future campaign**, Dudley Students' Union proudly took part in the **national day of action known as "Money Monday"** a coordinated effort where **Students' Unions across the country hit their campuses to gather as many signatures as possible** in support of better funding and fairer treatment for students.

Unions competed nationally to mobilise their campuses, and we're **thrilled to announce that Dudley SU topped the national leaderboard**, collecting **over 300 signatures in just one day**. This success was driven by a **dynamic, two-pronged campaign**: a **strong physical presence on campus** paired with an engaging **social media push**. Our team ran an eye-catching stall, handed out **free chocolate coins**, and added an element of fun with **golden ticket prize giveaways**, creating real buzz and encouraging students to get involved.

This achievement highlights **the power of creative campaigning and student mobilisation** and firmly positions Dudley SU as a **leading voice in the national student movement** fighting for a fairer, more supportive future for all students.

Through this work, Dudley SU continues to be a **strong voice in the fight for educational justice**, ensuring that **students are heard, valued, and protected** at every level.

Continuation of our new leadership training program



During the recent half-term break, the leadership team attended a focused training session designed to empower and enhance their effectiveness. The training covered key areas essential for their roles, including project management, campaigning strategies, student engagement, and the importance of maintaining

regular office hours. The session provided a platform for leadership members to build their skills, share ideas, and develop practical approaches to better support their peers and responsibilities. Overall, the training aimed to strengthen the team's confidence and capability in leading initiatives and engaging actively within the student community.

Workshop Madness - Education Reform + National Youth Strategy



This year, we trialled a new form of student input, moving away from traditional methods such as surveys and focus groups. Instead of simply asking for feedback, **we shifted towards seeking students' advice through active workshops**, sessions designed to **empower students to shape and guide the direction of specific topics**.

One key example was a **workshop on the Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR)** a government consultation on the future of education. **We hosted this session in collaboration with the Shadow Curriculum and Assessment Review Panel**, which was established to **amplify young people's voices in the review process**. This was a vital conversation, and we were pleased to be joined by students from **regional colleges including Sandwell and Solihull**. **Over 60 students participated** in the discussion. As a next step, **we have been invited to attend the national launch of the Shadow CAR Report in Parliament on 8th July**.



Another significant workshop focused on the **National Youth Strategy**, recently announced by the **Labour Government** and the **Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, Lisa Nandy**. We designed, delivered, and facilitated this **workshop**, providing a platform for young people to **influence the development of the strategy**. **Sonia Kumar, MP for Dudley**, attended the **session** to hear directly from students, and as a result, **she has raised the agenda in Parliament**.



Student Governor Conference

Jack and Deborah, supported by Sophia, are set to attend the national Student Governor Changemaker Destinations Conference at Burberry HQ in London. This will be an inspiring celebration of leadership, impact, and student voice. Jack is nominated for a national award, fingers crossed for him! Dudley College and Dudley SU once again on the national stage showcasing the calibre of student leadership we're proud to support. We continue our commitment to empowering students as changemakers within and beyond the college.

Creating Community- supporting students to meet likeminded people, try new things and tackle loneliness and isolation.

Standing up to Racism

The Students' Union organised an **Anti-Racism Festival** aimed at raising awareness among students about the importance of standing against racism and promoting inclusivity within the college community. This event was developed in close collaboration with the **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)** department and involved extensive planning to ensure it was both educational and engaging.



The festival featured a range of interactive activities, including:

- Dance performances
- African drumming
- Face painting
- Origami
- Henna art
- Steel band music
- Language Café



In addition to these cultural and creative activities, several **information stands** were set up to provide resources, advice, and educational materials related to anti-racism and equality. The event was also supported by **local organisations**, who contributed to the day by sharing their expertise and offering community connections.



Approximately **300 students** participated in the festival, making it a well-attended and successful event. Feedback from both students and staff was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the event's impact on promoting awareness, encouraging dialogue, and fostering a stronger sense of community.

The Anti-Racism Festival reinforced the message that **racism has no place in our society** and that through **education, engagement, and cultural exchange**, we can build a more inclusive and respectful environment for all.

Since the last football update:

Dudley Students' Union FC has gone from strength to strength, facing off against high-profile teams such as Aston Villa and Wolves FC, an incredible experience for our players.

The Birmingham FA has partnered with Aldrich to launch the ESOL League, building on the success of the Ramadan Football League, which Dudley Students' Union hosts annually. **Recreational football continues to thrive**, with over 30 students regularly attending weekly sessions to unwind, de-stress, and enjoy the beautiful game.

Students have expressed strong interest in continuing club activities over the summer and even **proposed a summer camp for local school children**. While this may not be possible this year, it's a great idea we're keen to explore for the future. This enthusiasm reflects how students are not only committed to having fun but are also passionate about creating opportunities for themselves and others.

A special congratulations to **Cacious Mpofu, Captain of Dudley SUFC**, who was **scouted by Romulus FC!** Although he declined the offer to focus on completing his T Levels, his dedication on and off the pitch is commendable.

Looking ahead, next season will be a big one for Dudley FC. **We plan to enter four leagues: the Women's League, PAN Disability League, ESOL League, and the Friday Men's League.**

Exciting times lie ahead, watch this space!

E-Sports Tournament

The **ESPORTS Tournament** was a huge success, proudly supported by **John Collins** from Dudley College staff. Over **50 students registered**, with **30 actively participating** in a high-energy, fiercely competitive tournament.

The competition brought together students from across the college, including **ESOL, Sports, the CAT Centre, and Inspired Students**, highlighting the inclusive and cross-departmental appeal of the event.

In a thrilling final, **Saif Almansour** (an ESOL student) emerged victorious against **Declan Crofts** (a Sports student with an EHCP), showcasing both skill and sportsmanship.

Due to the overwhelming interest and engagement, this initiative will now evolve into a dedicated **ESPORTS Club**, set to launch next year under the guidance of **John Collins**. This club will provide a structured and ongoing opportunity for students to **connect through gaming, develop teamwork, and build digital literacy in a fun, supportive environment**.

London Trip

As part of the Students' Union's annual programme of enriching experiences, students were given the opportunity to explore the iconic historic city of London. This trip offers more than just entertainment, it serves as a education to civic engagement and cultural discovery.

In London, students immersed themselves in the nation's capital, visiting renowned landmarks such as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and the National Art Gallery. These experiences deepened their understanding of British heritage, governance, and national identity.

For many participants, it was their first time visiting these locations, making the experience both memorable and meaningful. The trips fostered stronger bonds among students and encouraged a sense of belonging and shared identity.

The Students' Union remains dedicated to building a connected and informed student community through activities that celebrate both fun and civic awareness.

Blackpool Trip

The Students' Union organised a successful day trip to Blackpool, aimed at providing students with a fun and relaxing experience. Tickets to the amusement park were purchased in advance, allowing all attendees to enjoy the rides without extra cost.

Students also had time to visit the beach (without entering the water) and relax with their peers. Breaks were provided during the journey for students to buy their own snacks and drinks. Overall, the trip was well-organised and highly appreciated by students, who gave positive feedback and enjoyed the opportunity to take a break from academic life.

Pride 2025

The SU once again proudly led a vibrant queer delegation through the streets of Birmingham at this year's Birmingham Pride Parade on Saturday 24th May. A bold celebration of identity, joy, and solidarity. With rainbow flags flying and placards of solidarity and peace we marched proudly. **As attendee Madina Morton put it, 'I possibly had the most fun I've ever had ever today!'**



What a way to end the Year- SU Prom 2025

In a dazzling celebration of achievement, unity, and new beginnings, the Students' Union proudly hosted this year's College Prom, bringing together over 100 students from across all curriculums and levels of study. Held in a beautifully decorated venue at the Village Hotel Dudley, inspired by classic party elegance, the evening was a vibrant tribute to the end of an incredible college journey.

From the moment guests arrived, dressed to impress, the atmosphere was electric. Students from diverse academic paths came together to share laughter, dance, and heartfelt moments, many meeting peers from other departments for the first time. The event featured music, refreshments, and plenty of photo-worthy moments, creating a space where everyone could celebrate their hard work and the friendships formed along the way.



This prom wasn't just a party, it was a powerful expression of community spirit, inclusivity, and pride in our shared accomplishments. It marked the end of one chapter and the exciting beginning of the next.

The Students' Union remains committed to creating memorable experiences that bring students together, celebrate diversity, and honour the milestones that shape our college life.

Final Notes from us

New Storage Containers

To solve our long-standing **storage issues**, we've secured **two external storage containers** that will be placed just outside the SU. This game-changing move will **free up a significant amount of space in our SU BASE**, making it a more open, functional, and welcoming environment for students. Bulky items and infrequently used equipment will now be stored externally, we can finally reclaim our space and make room for **more student-focused activity and collaboration**.

Farewell to a Fearless Leader: Jack Stokes Ends His Term as SU President

As Jack Stokes' remarkable tenure as President of Dudley College Students' Union comes to an end, we pause to honour a period defined by **bold leadership, fearless advocacy, and transformative impact**. Jack arrived with boundless energy and a visionary spirit, driven by an unwavering commitment to **amplify student voices, challenge the status quo, and forge a Students' Union that is truly powerful, transparent, and at the heart of national campaigns**.

Under his leadership, monumental changes were achieved: from spearheading the **Constitutional and Leadership Reform** that reshaped

Union governance, to pioneering mental health initiatives like the **Zen Garden** that brought wellbeing to the heart of student life. Jack championed democratic innovation through **opt-in voter registration and revitalised elections**, ensuring every student's voice could be heard loud and clear. He led the creation of a dynamic new website that became the go to place for





everything SU, while revolutionising branding and marketing, dramatically increasing student engagement and raising the Union's profile across campus.

Jack leaves behind a legacy that is nothing short of **transformational, not merely transitional**. His unwavering passion for student empowerment, coupled with fearless campaigning, has set an entirely new standard for SU leadership. The impact of his dedication will resonate deeply, inspiring future generations of student leaders to believe in the power of change.

Thank you, Jack Stokes, for your relentless commitment and for proving that student leadership is not just a role, it is a catalyst for revolution.

A student Teams messaged Jack saying this “I wanted to congratulate you upon your tenacity and dedication to the position, you did well in the past few years, and I doubt anyone else could’ve had the reach you have had. Unofficially on the behalf of myself and others, congratulations.”

