

Statement from The Students' Union President 2023-2025

“As we reflect on the progress and achievements of the past term, I am filled with pride for the incredible resilience and enthusiasm displayed by our student community. At Dudley Students' Union, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive and supportive environment where every student feels valued and empowered to thrive.

This term has been marked by exciting initiatives, including the successful launch of our “Get Involved” campaign, which aims to encourage active participation in our clubs and societies. We have seen an impressive increase in

engagement across our events, fostering connections among students from diverse backgrounds. Our recent induction talks, where I had the opportunity to speak directly to nearly 3,000 students, reinforced our mission to inspire and motivate individuals to take an active role in shaping their college experience.

Moreover, our commitment to mental well-being is evident in the successful opening of the Zen Den, providing a peaceful space for students to unwind and recharge. We believe that well-being is at the core of academic success, and we are dedicated to supporting our students in every aspect of their lives.

Looking ahead, I am focusing on building **student power**, rooted in collectivism and collective action, which is a transformative force that has consistently shaped educational environments and policies for the better over the years. When students unite, they amplify their voices and create momentum that individual efforts alone could not achieve. This power of unity has proven essential in advancing key issues like mental health, the cost-of-living, and discrimination. When students come together, they not only advocate for their own generation but also pave the way for future students, ensuring a lasting



impact that reinforces the values of liberation, empowerment, and progress across communities.

As the year unfolds, Dudley SU will keep pushing forward to make 2024-25 one for the books. The goals are big, and so is the belief that every student here matters and every voice counts. Together, we're making Dudley stronger, more inclusive, and more inspiring every single day. Here's to the year ahead and all we will accomplish—together. 🌟 #StrongerTogether #StudentPower

In Solidarity,

Jack Stokes, President of Dudley College Students' Union"

This report will highlight key areas of work under the DSU core themes and values which are:

Representation- The Students' Union aims to represent and advocate for the interests, concerns, and welfare of its members. This involves engaging with college administration, local and national authorities, and other stakeholders to ensure that students' voices are heard, and their needs are met.

Skills development- Encouraging student engagement and participation in the wider community through volunteering, fundraising, and other activities.

Creating community- Promoting diversity, inclusivity, equity and belonging among the student population and providing a range of sports, societies, and other extracurricular activities that help students to build social connections and develop new skills.

Representation- including campaigning, lobbying and liberation work.

As is tradition, the SU President dedicated the first week of term to engaging with students during Induction talks alongside the Principal and Vice Principal. Jack passionately conveyed the message of "Get Involved," which aligns with our broader branding strategy discussed later in this report. Over the course of the week, he spoke to approximately 3,000 students in back-to-back sessions, sharing his personal experiences of being shy, bullied and gay with openness and honesty. This authentic approach resonated deeply with students, and we

have since received numerous conversations from attendees expressing how Jack's speech inspired them to act and engage with the Students' Union. His efforts have undoubtedly set a positive tone for the year, motivating students to become active participants in our community!

One student messaged us this because of the talks "Hi Jack, I heard your speech about the Students Union earlier in the theatre, and it really caught my attention. I experienced bullying in secondary school for being black and bisexual, which led me to leave in Year 9 because I couldn't handle it anymore. In Years 10 and 11, I often felt excluded from friendship groups. I want to be part of the Students' Union because I understand what it's like to feel unworthy and isolated. I'm ready to step out of my comfort zone and be involved in a community that truly understands me and others like me."

Exciting Leadership Elections: Candidates Ready to Inspire Change!

Dudley Students' Union is thrilled to announce a record-breaking leadership election season! With 18 passionate candidates stepping up to represent and lead our student community, we have more participation than we've seen in years—an inspiring testament to the energy and engagement of Dudley students. To support this exciting process, we've hosted multiple Leadership Info Sessions, Election Rules Sessions, and Candidate Support Sessions, ensuring every candidate is well-prepared and empowered to share their vision. This year's election kicks off on November 6th and runs until November 13th, marking a week filled with anticipation and vibrant campaigning. Together, we're shaping the future of our Union, and with so many voices in the running, we know we're heading toward an incredible year ahead. This election season isn't just about choosing leaders; it's about uniting as a community to inspire progress.

Empowering Change: Highlights from NUS UK National Lobby Day



At the NUS UK National Lobby Day, Students' Union leaders from across the country came together to lobby their MP's on the issues affecting students, Jack went to meet with MP Sonia Kumar in Parliament to the conversation focused on the urgent need to strengthen renters' rights, particularly the abolition of guarantors, which often create barriers for students seeking safe and



affordable housing. By including students in broader housing protections, we can ensure that all young people have access to secure living conditions without the stress of unmanageable financial requirements. Additionally, they addressed the necessity for affordable and reliable transport, which is vital for students commuting to classes and jobs, allowing them to fully engage in their education and community. The advocacy for votes at 16 was another key topic, emphasising the importance of empowering young voices in the democratic process, which fosters civic

engagement and responsibility from an early age. Furthermore, discussions surrounding education reforms, particularly the proposed BTEC cuts, highlighted the significance of diverse educational pathways for students. These qualifications provide essential skills and opportunities for many young people, and their removal could limit future

career prospects. Overall, it was an incredible day of political change and collective action, demonstrating the power of student voices to influence policy

and drive meaningful reform that prioritises the rights and needs of the next generation.

Empowering FE Students: Highlights from the AOC Student Summit

We attended the FE Student Summit at Stafford College, hosted by the AOC, alongside student leaders from across the country. Throughout the day, we focused on what Students need from the next Government, contributing to the AOC's youth initiatives and the newly established FE Youth Collective Board. This collaborative effort aims to hold AOC decision-makers accountable while fostering strong relationships within the education sector. Our participation in this summit underscores our commitment to advocating for the needs of FE students and driving positive change within the community!

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

NUS UK Lead and Change: Empowering Student Leaders for Impact



In the Summer the SU President Jack attended the NUS UK Lead and Change program hosted at the University of Birmingham Guild of Students which is a training initiative designed to empower student leaders across the UK with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to create positive change in their institutions and communities. This program provides the essential knowledge for leadership, campaign strategies, governance, and advocacy, equipping Jack to effectively represent Dudley students and address pressing issues facing them today. Through interactive workshops, expert-led sessions, and networking opportunities, Lead and Change fosters an environment where student leaders can share ideas, learn from one another, and build strong foundations for impactful, inclusive

leadership. By participating, Jack became more adept at navigating challenges, engaging stakeholders, and influencing policy within the education landscape. It's important to note that Dudley SU was the first Further Education SU to participate and send a delegate to this 3-day event proving how developed we are.

Meet the SU Crew: The Heart of Dudley Student Union

We are continuing our SU Crew initiative to support students and develop their skills through volunteering with the Union on projects, events and activities. The idea being that it's for students who want to get involved but don't necessarily want to take



on any leadership responsibility. This year we have launched our new SU Crew uniform; they will be striking a pose across all campuses in fiery orange having made their debut at Freshers and the recent Open Day.

Empowering Leaders in Small and Specialist Institutions at Dudley SU



On the 30th October, Dudley SU hosted the NUS UK small and specialist Lead and Change event tailored to FE and specialist Unions welcoming over 50 people to Dudley. This training brought SU Leaders together from Wales, Gower Swansea College to Leeds City College and Sheffield College. Through workshops and discussions led by experienced NUS facilitators, participants explored strategies to amplify their voices and drive meaningful change. We were joined by Amira Campbell the NUSK UK President and Qasim Hussain the NUS UK Vice President of Further

Education. Hosting this event at Dudley SU not only strengthened connections among like-minded student leaders but also showcased Dudley SU's commitment to fostering a collaborative, supportive network across Unions and ensures Dudley SU remains in the national picture and is a central part of the national student agenda.

Dudley SU Students Conquer Kinver: A Transformative Duke of Edinburgh Expedition



During July in the Summer Holidays students took their Duke of Edinburgh expedition around Kinver. They engaged in essential camp craft and navigation skills at Kinver Scout Camp. Many had never camped before or cooked independently, making the experience especially enriching. They learned to set up tents, prepare meals, and maintain a safe campsite while honing their map and navigation skills to plan effective routes. This hands-on experience fostered teamwork and problem-solving, culminating in a strong sense of achievement for all 12 participants upon

completing the expedition. Expedition assessor Kevin Whiting remarked, "The growth and confidence displayed by these young adventurers is truly inspiring; they've not only completed a challenging journey but have also built lasting skills and made memories to last a lifetime.

Advancing Leadership Skills with the CMI Level 5 Management Course

Jack has recently started a Level 5 CMI Leadership and Management course at the College to develop his skills and knowledge so he can lead the SU more effectively. This course covers essential topics such as strategic planning, performance management, effective communication, and team leadership. Students learn practical tools and frameworks for making informed decisions, motivating teams, and driving organisational success.

Dudley SU Secures Funding for Football Academy to Empower Youth and Prevent Violence

Dudley Students' Union successfully secured £2,000 to support the violence mitigation initiative promoted by the community voluntary service (CVS) during the summer holidays. We developed a project for the SU Football Club attendees named Football Development Academy which aimed to enhance physical fitness, teamwork, and skill development, while providing positive outlets for energy, fostering community spirit, and reducing idle time that could lead to negative behaviours.

Participant Feedback

Participants highlighted the program's positive impact on their mental health and behaviour. Key quotes include:

- "The football academy helped me stay focused and out of trouble."
- "Playing football made me feel happier and less stressed; I made new friends."
- "The coaches were supportive and kept us on the right path."
- "This program kept me busy and away from negative influences."

The Football Development Academy effectively engaged students, meeting its goals of skill development and violence reduction. Funding was crucial for this impactful program, and ongoing investment in similar initiatives is vital for sustaining positive community outcomes.

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

Freshers' Week: An Unforgettable Kick-off to the Year!



Freshers' Week has once again set the vibrant tone for the year ahead, and it certainly did not disappoint! We had the pleasure of connecting with countless amazing students throughout the week, engaging in a whirlwind of activities that catered to every interest—from thrilling basketball matches to snuggling with adorable animals, there was truly

something for everyone! We were also honoured to welcome some special guests, including Qasim Hussain, the NUS UK Vice President of Further Education, and Sonia Kumar, the Member of Parliament for Dudley. Both praised the incredible success of Freshers' Week, highlighting the energy and enthusiasm that filled our campus. This kick-off event has truly created a sense of community and excitement that will carry us through the year!



Dudley SU Zen Garden: A Space for Relaxation and Reflection



Before

We are thrilled to announce the grand opening of the Dudley Students' Union Zen Den, a tranquil oasis designed to provide students with a much-needed escape from the hustle and bustle of college life. Nestled at the back of the Library on the Broadway campus, the Zen Den offers an ideal space for relaxation, unwinding, and

decompressing. Recently, we welcomed our funders from United by 22, a legacy organisation inspired by the 2022 Commonwealth Games, to film interviews showcasing the success of this incredible project, which was completed with just over £8,000 in funding. But the excitement doesn't stop there!



After



We are exploring additional funding opportunities to enhance the garden further with more plants and stunning sculptures. This initiative reflects Dudley SU's unwavering commitment to promoting well-being on campus and supporting our students' mental health. Come visit the Zen

Den and experience the serenity for yourself!

Discovering Community and Connection: Clubs at Dudley Student Union

Dudley Student Union is home to an array of clubs and societies that cater to a wide range of interests and passions, fostering a vibrant campus community. From Social clubs to sports teams and liberation groups, there's something for everyone at Dudley SU. These clubs provide students with opportunities to

connect with like-minded peers, develop new skills, and engage in extracurricular activities that enhance their college experience. Whether it's joining a sports team to promote physical fitness and teamwork, participating in a liberation society to celebrate diversity, or getting involved in student leadership, Dudley SU encourages students to explore their interests and contribute to a supportive and dynamic environment. With dedicated support from the SU, students are empowered to create and run their own clubs, further enriching the student experience and promoting a sense of belonging on campus.

Club	Number of Members
Afro Club	46
Football Club Team 1, 2 and Pan-disability	70
Eco Warriors	15
Christian Union	15
Dungeons and Dragons	20
LGBTQ+ Network	27
We Socialise Too	8

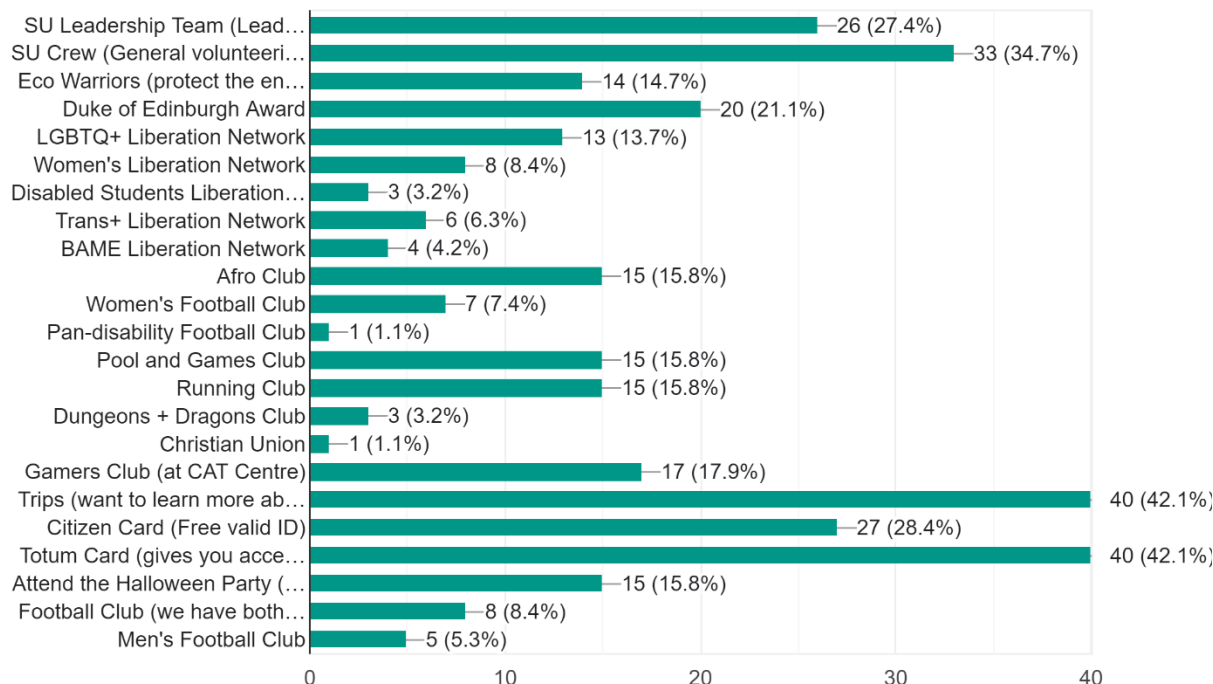


In addition to our vibrant array of established clubs, we're thrilled to introduce free-flow clubs like the Pool Club and Gamers Club, which invite students to unwind and connect in a relaxed setting. But that's not all—we're gearing up to launch even more clubs in the coming weeks, including various Liberation Networks, a Running Club, and the possibility of a Chess Club!

The enthusiasm is clear, as we've already received an impressive 95 responses on the SU Interest form—more than double the 40 responses we had last year! In total 336 individual interests for specific activities have been registered, not to mention the countless students who have reached out directly or visited our office to express their interest in getting involved. Check out the chart below for a detailed breakdown of this incredible engagement! The excitement is building, and we can't wait to see how our community continues to grow!

What are you interested in being apart of? (You can select more than one)

95 responses



Exciting Development for Dudley Students' Union Football Club

We are pleased to announce a significant new chapter for the Dudley Students' Union Football Club: we have joined a league! This initiative marks a pivotal step for our long-established recreational club, providing opportunities for those looking to develop their skills in a more competitive environment.

To enhance our presence on the pitch, we are proud to unveil our first-ever team kit, which has been designed and delivered with care. This kit was funded by a successful bid to the 'Sported' Barclays fund, highlighting our commitment to providing quality resources for our players.



This initiative is particularly important as the football club serves a majority of BAME students and those who may have faced challenges in joining official college teams, whether due to skill level or confidence. Additionally, many

participants have cited mental health difficulties, and we believe that embracing this diversity will strengthen our team and foster a supportive community. We are excited about the potential for personal growth and teamwork that this league will bring.

Youth Social Action Co-ordinator Aldrich Gonsalves Returns to Inspire ESOL Students Through Community Engagement

Youth Social Action Co-ordinator Aldrich Gonsalves has returned to his roots, re-engaging with the curriculum he first joined the college to study in 2016: English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). As part of the ESOL curriculum for the 16-18 year cohort, Aldrich will be delivering a structured program focused on Youth Social Action.

Youth Social Action involves empowering young people to engage in community service and social initiatives that address local issues, fostering a sense of responsibility and citizenship. This classroom experience is particularly relevant as Aldrich has just completed his Initial Teacher Training Certificate in Education and Training, equipping him with the skills to effectively guide and support students.

So far, students have been actively discussing ideas for projects they would like to pursue. They have also researched local organisations, gathering background information and identifying potential contacts to offer support for their initiatives. This program not only enhances their language skills but also encourages them to make a positive impact in their communities.

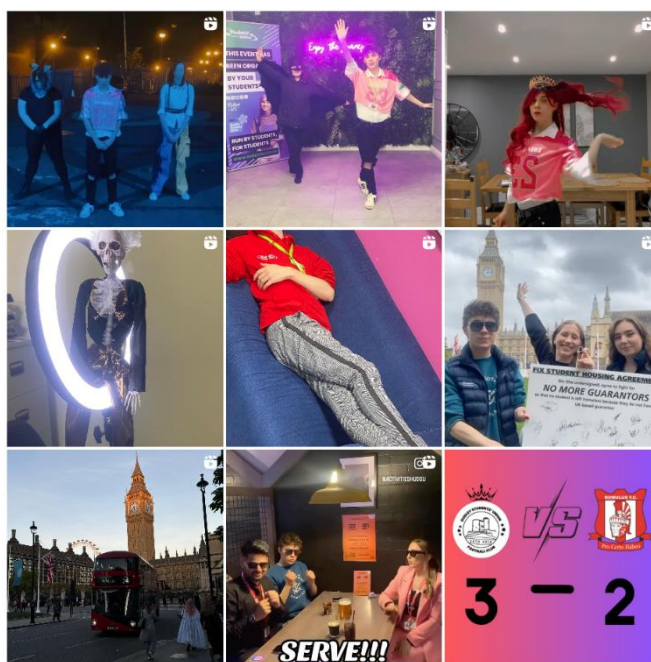
Building a Digital Community: Introducing the Student Noticeboard for Enhanced Engagement

We understand that building a community goes beyond in-person connections; it's equally vital to establish a robust digital presence where information is shared promptly and accessibly. That's why we successfully advocated for the implementation of the Student Noticeboard, a master team that includes every student at the college. This initiative ensures that all students have equal access to important information at the same time, promoting transparency and inclusivity. Over the past few weeks, we've actively utilised this platform, and we've already seen a remarkable increase in engagement within the Union. This exciting development not only enhances communication but also strengthens our sense of community among students.

Boosting Engagement: Dudley SU Expands Its Digital Presence on Social Media

Under the leadership of The President, we've turbocharged our digital presence through vibrant and consistent social media engagement. By ramping up our posting frequency, we've not only seen a significant boost in online interaction but also an impressive increase in our follower count. Our goal is to create trendy, relatable content that resonates with students and showcases the exciting initiatives happening at Dudley SU. Don't miss out on the action—check us out on Instagram @dudleysu_!

As a key part of our social media initiative, we launched an inspiring marketing campaign titled "Get Involved," aimed at encouraging students to actively participate in the Students' Union. We employed a multi-faceted approach to convey this straightforward yet impactful message, featuring it prominently in Jack's induction speeches and engaging directly with students during Freshers' events. Our strategy also included vibrant social media content and effective announcements on the Student Noticeboard, ensuring our message reached students through various channels. This campaign has successfully sparked interest and involvement among the student body, fostering a stronger sense of community within Dudley SU.



Exciting Transformation Ahead: Revamping Our SU Website!

In line with our bold new Strategic Plan, we are thrilled to announce the redevelopment of our SU Website into a dynamic engagement platform designed to enhance student interaction like never before! We're partnering with MSL, a specialised organisation known for creating websites tailored for Students' Unions, to bring this vision to life. Our current website, built on Wix, has proven challenging and time-consuming to manage, but this new system promises to streamline operations, reduce staff workload, and offer a more

accessible and visually appealing experience for all users. Plus, it will significantly improve our chances of success when applying for funding bids. We can't wait to see this transformative project unfold and elevate how our students engage with Dudley SU! Check out MSL here: [Home \(ukmsl.com\)](https://www.ukmsl.com)

Celebrating Connections at Our SU Party!

We hosted an unforgettable SU Party over half term, and while turnout wasn't as high as we had hoped, the positive moments we witnessed made it a truly rewarding experience. It was heartening to see students arriving solo forge new friendships and create lasting memories while other students enjoyed an experience they might not have had otherwise. The highlight of the event was watching groups of students from diverse backgrounds come together, connect, and enjoy themselves. Although not everything goes according to plan, our Students' Union consistently demonstrates its resilience and adaptability, transforming every opportunity into a chance for growth and connection. This party was a testament to our commitment to fostering community and ensuring everyone feels welcome and included!

Final Notes from us

As we close this chapter and look to the months ahead, the energy within Dudley Students' Union is unstoppable! Together, we've laid a powerful foundation through inspiring campaigns, groundbreaking events, and new spaces like the Zen Den that champion student well-being. The enthusiasm from Freshers' Week has carried through to every corner of the college, with more students than ever stepping up to "Get Involved" and make their mark on our community. Our new digital initiatives promise even more ways for everyone to connect, grow, and thrive. With each event, each conversation, and each shared experience, Dudley SU is growing stronger, more inclusive, and more vibrant. We're just getting started, and the best is yet to come—let's keep this momentum going and make this year one for the books!



Check out everything we are doing and follow us on socials:

- Instagram: [@dudleysu_](https://www.instagram.com/dudleysu_)

- Tiktok: [@dudleysu](https://www.tiktok.com/@dudleysu)
- Youtube: [@dudleycollegesu](https://www.youtube.com/@dudleycollegesu)
- Facebook: [@dudleysu](https://www.facebook.com/dudleysu)
- Website: <https://www.dudleysu.co.uk/>

