

Statement from The Students' Union President 2023 – 2025

“As **President of Dudley Students' Union**, I am proud of the transformative work we've led this year—driven by a commitment to **sustainability, inclusivity, and student empowerment**.

We declared a **Climate and Ecological Emergency**, aligning our policies with ethical procurement, reducing single-use plastics, and raising awareness about fast fashion's devastating impact. These actions are not symbolic; they are a **call to responsibility**.



We have reformed our governance, strengthened student representation at regional and national levels, and ensured **Dudley SU remains a force for transparency and advocacy**. In a political climate where student voices are often sidelined, we stand firm in our mission to challenge the status quo.

Championing the rights of **marginalised students**, we launched a **Gender Expression Fund** to support Trans+ students, pushing back against regressive policies. **We will not be silent in the face of injustice**.

Embracing the digital age, we launched a **state-of-the-art website** to enhance student engagement and advocacy. **The future belongs to those who adapt, innovate, and lead—and that is exactly what we are doing**.

Dudley Students' Union is not just responding to today's challenges; **we are shaping the future**. We will continue to fight for a **fairer, more sustainable, and more inclusive** world—because the work we do now will **echo for generations to come**.”

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.

NUS West Midlands Campaign Day & A Fair Deal for Our Future



We proudly attended the National Union of Students' Regional Campaign Day, where the focus was on empowering grassroots communities to tackle some of the most pressing national issues of our time. This event marked the powerful launch of the "Fair Deal for Our Future" campaign, which champions three fundamental pillars: fair future, fair education, and fair pay.

Dudley Students' Union is fully committed to leading the charge in these areas. We will not stand by while apprentices are denied a real living wage, nor will we accept a system where

age determines the fairness of pay. We will demand a minimum wage for all, regardless of age, and an education system that serves students holistically, addressing their academic, personal, and financial well-being.

This campaign is more than a call for change—it's a demand for justice. As we stand at the forefront of this movement, we will fight relentlessly to ensure that every student, every worker, and every member of our community has the opportunities and support they deserve. The time for action is now, and we will be the force driving that change.

Sustainability embedded in Dudley SU

Dudley Students' Union has officially declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, reaffirming our commitment to sustainability and empowering us to take meaningful action. As part of this pledge, we are actively reviewing and implementing an ethical procurement policy to ensure that our purchasing decisions align with our values. We are also taking steps to divest from Amazon, prioritising ethical and sustainable suppliers, and introducing a single-use plastic reduction policy to minimise our environmental impact.

Leading our sustainability efforts, our Assistant President of Sustainability is organising a Fast Fashion Awareness Event on April 1st, highlighting the environmental and social consequences of the fashion industry and promoting sustainable alternatives. In addition, we have been at the forefront of promoting the Planet Earth Games, an initiative designed to engage and educate students on sustainability in a fun and interactive way. Through these actions, we are taking tangible steps to create a greener, more responsible future for our students and our planet. The link to our full statement is here:

[Climate-Declaration.pdf](#)

West Midlands Officer Conference

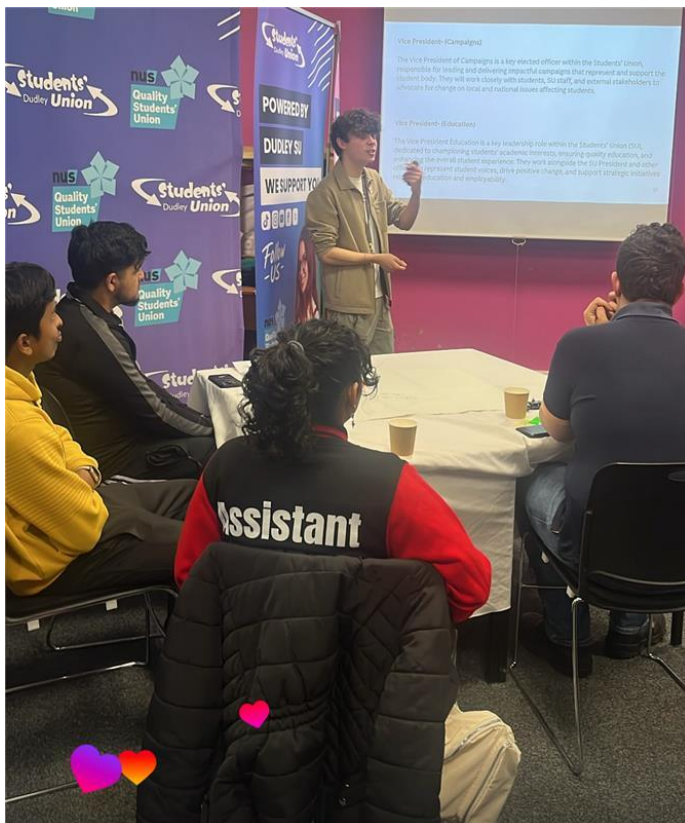
The President and Vice President proudly represented Dudley Students' Union at the West Midlands Officer Conference, joining forces with Union Leaders from across the region to tackle key student issues. Throughout the conference, they actively participated in discussions and strategy sessions, focusing on pressing regional concerns such as transport accessibility, student safety, and broader advocacy efforts.

This collaborative environment provided an invaluable opportunity to share best practices, strengthen cross-union partnerships, and develop meaningful campaign actions that will drive real change for students. Additionally, they forged strong working relationships with key



Students' Unions, including the University of Birmingham Guild, University College Birmingham Guild, and Staffordshire University Students' Union, laying the foundation for future collaboration and regional solidarity.

Student Parliament & Reform



Dudley Students' Union recently held a Student Parliament session that resulted in the approval of a comprehensive leadership and constitutional reform package. This significant development reflects the Union's commitment to enhancing its governance structures and ensuring that student representation remains robust and effective.

Role of the Student Parliament

The Student Parliament serves as the governing body of the Students' Union, making key

decisions about its operations and priorities. Discussions and decisions at Student Parliament typically focus on:

- How the Students' Union operates, including its processes and policies.

- New initiatives, campaigns, or projects the Students' Union should undertake.
- Allocation of resources, ensuring they are used effectively to benefit the student body.

Additionally, Student Parliament addresses questions submitted by student members and provides updates from elected representatives on their ongoing work.

Implications of the Reform Package



The approval of the leadership and constitutional reform package signifies a pivotal moment for the SU. The Reform Package includes:

- **Enhanced Governance Structures:** Implementing clear policies and procedures to ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making.
- **Strengthen Student Representation:** Ensuring that elected leaders effectively advocate for the student body's interests and the roles available reflect student needs.
- **Promote Inclusivity:** Creating an environment where all students feel represented and valued.
- **Improve Operational Efficiency:** Streamlining processes to better serve the student community.

The Student Parliament's decision to approve the leadership and constitutional reform package underscores the union's dedication to continuous improvement and responsiveness to student needs. By refining its governance framework, the SU aims to foster a more inclusive, transparent, and effective organisation that truly embodies its mission of being run by students, for students.

Support for Trans+ Members & the Creation of a Gender Expression Fund

The **Gender Expression Fund** at Dudley Students' Union is designed to support students in expressing their gender identity with confidence and dignity. This initiative provides financial assistance to help students access essential items such as clothing, makeup, binders, packers, and other gender-affirming resources. By removing financial barriers, the fund ensures that all students can feel comfortable and authentic in their identity, fostering an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

Alongside the fund, Dudley SU also offers educational resources and advocacy to promote awareness and understanding of gender diversity, reinforcing its commitment to equality and student well-being.

Dudley SU supports its Trans and Non-Binary members and has released a public statement condemning the Governments action to ban access to life saving puberty blockers. The Statement can be read here: [Statement-on-Puberty-Blocker-Ban.pdf](#)

Knife Bin Campaign

The **Knife Bin Campaign** is a vital initiative aimed at tackling knife crime by providing a safe and anonymous way for individuals to dispose of weapons. In collaboration with local authorities, the MP for Dudley and community partners, the campaign raises awareness about the dangers of carrying knives while promoting safer communities.

The idea being a bin will be placed in a designated spot within the community which will allow students and the wider public to surrender knives without fear of prosecution, reducing the risk of violent incidents.



Dudley SU is committed to fostering a culture of safety and responsibility, ensuring that people are informed about the consequences of knife crime and the importance of making positive choices.

As part of this vital campaign, we've proudly partnered with St John Ambulance to deliver the **Young Responder: Save a Life** training program. This initiative equips our students with essential, real-world first aid skills—empowering them to respond effectively to emergencies, including treating stab wounds, managing intoxication, and recognising mental health crises.

So far, we have successfully trained two cohorts—50 students in total—arming them with the confidence and expertise to make a real difference in their communities. This is more than just training; it's about creating a safer, more prepared generation ready to step up when it matters most.

Meet the Leadership Team

The Dudley Students' Union has a brand-new leadership team, ready to tackle key student issues and make meaningful changes on campus. Following a hard-fought election campaign, the newly elected representatives have secured a strong mandate from the student body, placing them in a prime position to advocate for student needs.



The leadership team has laid out ambitious manifesto aims, focusing on areas such as improved mental health resources, better access to student clubs and

societies, enhanced enrichment opportunities, and continued efforts to address the cost-of-living crisis. Their commitment to these issues reflects the concerns voiced by students throughout the campaign period.

"We are here to ensure students' voices are heard and acted upon," said Vice President Usman Shahid. ***"Our goal is to make tangible improvements in student life, and we are eager to get started on fulfilling our promises."***

The Students' Union plays a crucial role in representing the student community and advocating for policy changes that enhance the college experience. By working closely with students, college management, and external organisations, the new team aims to drive forward initiatives that will have a lasting impact.

Position	Office Holder
President	Jack Stokes
Vice President	Usman Shahid
Assistant President of Union Development	Miriam Guadalupe
Assistant President of Education	Atifa Saftari
Assistant President of Communities	Elizabeth Gado Johnson
Assistant President of Liberation	Anthonia Abakporo
Assistant President of Sustainability	Madina Morton
Assistant President of Media & Outreach	Goodness Kanu
Dudley Sixth Campus Leader	Aishat Olabode
Evolve Campus Leader	Dominic Loveridge
Inspired Campus Leader	Kaynat Ahmad
LGBTQ+ Liberation Leader	Remi Miles

Students are encouraged to engage with their new representatives, share their concerns, and take part in upcoming initiatives.

With a passionate and determined leadership team now in place, Dudley Students' Union is set to be a powerful force for positive change, ensuring that student voices remain at the heart of decision-making.

Holding Power to Account

Local Member of Parliament Sonia Kumar (Dudley constituency) attended an in-person event with students, where she engaged in an insightful and interactive discussion.

The event provided students with the unique opportunity to ask MP Kumar questions on a wide range of topics, including education, homelessness, and community initiatives. The session was both engaging and thought-provoking, allowing students to gain firsthand insights into the workings of government and public service.

MP Kumar expressed her enthusiasm for connecting with young people and encouraging their involvement in political discourse.

Students in attendance appreciated the chance to voice their concerns and gain clarity on key issues. Many described the session as informative and motivating. One



student commented, ***"It was great to speak directly with our MP and hear her thoughts on important topics. This kind of engagement really makes a difference."***

The event at Dudley Lecture Theatre was part of MP Kumar's ongoing efforts to connect with her constituents and promote civic engagement among young people.

With events like these, The Students' Union continues to foster a culture of active political participation and awareness among members (students), ensuring their voices are heard in shaping policies that impact their future.

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

Training Colleges in Youth Social Action

The training of colleges in Youth Social Action (YSA) has been an integral initiative aimed at empowering students to become active changemakers in their communities. Led by Aldrich and supported by Sophia and Jack, YSA training has been delivered to a number of colleges from across the region equipping their students with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively deliver YSA programs, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities that positively impact society and the environment.



Aldrich plays a crucial role in this work as an Association of Colleges (AoC) YSA mentor, supporting both YSA apprentices and colleges looking to embed youth social action within their institutions. Through mentorship, workshops, and guidance, Aldrich helps colleges navigate the challenges of implementing YSA, ensuring they can harness the energy, creativity, and fresh perspectives of young people to drive positive change.

Youth social action refers to activities undertaken by young individuals to improve the lives of others or enhance environmental sustainability. By participating in these initiatives, students not only contribute to their communities but also develop essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving. Organisations benefit immensely from the enthusiasm and innovative thinking of young people, which can lead to new ways of working and fresh approaches to tackling social issues.

The training creates an environment where young people feel empowered to make a difference. By fostering collaboration between students, colleges, and

community organisations, this initiative is helping to cultivate a generation of socially responsible and active citizens who are committed to positive change.

Class Representatives: Driving Positive Change

Class representatives play a pivotal role in shaping the student experience, acting as a vital link between students and staff. Following Term 1 meetings across all curriculum areas, an impressive 300 items plus have been raised by class reps, reflecting the breadth of their engagement and commitment to improving college life. These items, ranging from suggestions on teaching and learning to enhancements in the campus environment, are now being addressed by managers across the college.

This level of collaboration highlights the importance of the student voice in co-creating a thriving educational community. By working closely with their peers to identify key areas for development, class reps ensure that every voice is heard and valued. Their efforts help create a dynamic feedback loop, fostering a partnership approach between students and staff.

Student Governors & the Association of Colleges

Each year, the Association of Colleges (AoC) hosts its Annual Conference, which brings together senior leaders from the further education sector across the country. This event serves as an invaluable platform for professionals to share best practices, engage in thought-provoking discussions, and take part in professional development activities. The conference also offers an opportunity for attendees to collaborate on solutions to the common challenges faced by colleges today, ensuring that institutions continue to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing educational landscape.



In addition to the Annual Conference, the AoC organises the Governors' Summit, a unique event that brings together Student Governors from colleges nationwide. This summit focuses on empowering student leaders by equipping them with the key skills necessary to contribute effectively to meetings, engage in meaningful discussions, and collaborate on solving the critical issues that affect students. It also fosters the creation of lasting connections between student governors, allowing them to share experiences and support one another in their roles.



At this year's Governors' Summit, Jack Stokes, your President and Student Governor, alongside Deborah Ibojo, the Student Governor, attended to gain knowledge into effective governance. Following the summit, Deborah was appointed as the Chair of Dudley Students' Union, a role in which she has excelled. Deborah has demonstrated exceptional leadership in chairing our Leadership Team Formal Meetings and, more recently, our Student Parliament. She has been instrumental in ensuring the smooth running of these meetings, facilitating open and inclusive discussions, and ensuring that every voice is heard. We are proud of the progress she continues to help us achieve.

Operational Planning for the Future

Last year, we launched our Strategic Plan, setting out a bold and ambitious vision for the future of Dudley Students' Union. This plan serves as a roadmap, guiding our priorities and ensuring that we continue to grow, evolve, and deliver meaningful change for our students. It provides a clear framework for how we can enhance student representation, improve services, and create a more inclusive and impactful Students' Union.

To ensure the effective implementation of our Strategic Plan, we are developing an Operational Development Plan each year. This document breaks down our long-term goals into actionable steps, outlining the specific initiatives, projects, and improvements we need to focus on. We are well on the way to completing the first Operational Development Plan, making significant progress in turning our strategic priorities into tangible outcomes. By taking this structured approach, we can track our progress, remain adaptable

to the changing needs of students, and ensure that every decision we make directly contributes to our long-term vision. Through this commitment, we are actively shaping a stronger, more responsive, and student-focused Dudley Students' Union.

New Approach to Supporting Student Leaders



Following a comprehensive review of the training and support framework for the Executive Team, we have implemented significant changes to enhance the development and performance of student leaders.

Executives are now required to dedicate a minimum of 2 hours weekly in the office to plan and work on campaigns. This structured commitment fosters better collaboration, accountability, and

campaign effectiveness.

All executives attended a leadership residential program to build critical skills. The topics covered included the Nolan Principles supporting the understanding ethical leadership values, the Art of Conversation and Debate to support in enhancing communication and negotiation skills and manifesto development, where leaders shared manifesto aims with one another and discussed next steps. The program provided leaders with the tools to approach their roles with confidence and clarity.



In addition, regular one-to-one sessions with staff have been introduced to evaluate performance, reflect on progress, and offer personalised guidance. These sessions ensure continuous development and alignment with the strategic plan.

We hope this refreshed approach supports student leaders in becoming more effective, ethical, and well-prepared. With structured commitments, immersive

training, and performance evaluation, leaders can deliver impactful campaigns and drive positive change.

These changes mark a new era in leadership support, equipping student leaders with essential skills and resources while fostering personal growth and accountability. This initiative lays a foundation for sustainable success for both current and future leadership teams.

Lessons from Auschwitz

The SU remains dedicated to supporting the *Lessons from Auschwitz Project*, led by the Holocaust Education Trust. This year,



photography students Lilliana and Kaysie have been selected as our ambassadors.

Through this initiative, they will deepen their understanding of the Holocaust and its ongoing significance in today's world. The project includes a one-day visit to Poland, complemented by orientation and follow-up seminars, ensuring a powerful and reflective experience. The students are now working on a Next Steps project which will help share their experience with fellow students.

By taking part, students not only gain valuable insights but also develop leadership skills, carrying forward the legacy of Holocaust survivors. As ambassadors, they play a vital role in preserving these stories and educating others beyond the classroom.

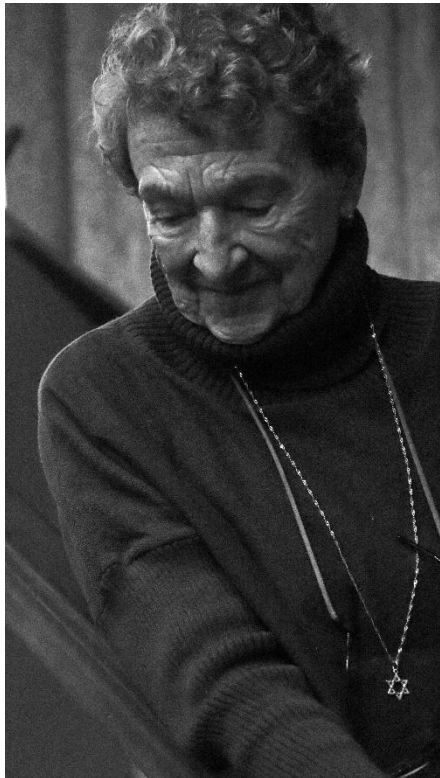
Creating Community- supporting students to meet likeminded people, try new things and tackle loneliness and isolation.

Holocaust Memorial Commemoration

As always, DSU was proud to support the Holocaust Memorial Commemoration, collaborating with Cllr Keiran Casey alongside community and faith leaders to organise one of the region's largest anti-racism events.



DSU President Jack Stokes contributed to the event by delivering a powerful poetry reading centered on this year's theme, For a Better Future.



This years Poem- For a Better Future:

The undeniable, reprehensible, heinous past.
Raw memories embedded in present mind.
Searching souls, with hope for a better future,
Fearing fate being left to cruel mankind.

Stop the hatred; a sprawling infectious disease,
Show kindness to neighbours; a promising start,
World at peace, not at war, for the good of tomorrow,

Think ahead, do one's best, hence we all play our part.

Written by SU office support and admin - Amanda Appleby

This year, we had the privilege of welcoming **Holocaust survivor Hedi Argent MBE**, whose incredible story of survival and resilience left a lasting impact on all those in attendance. Her visit to Dudley was a profound reminder of the atrocities of the past and the importance of remembering history to prevent

such horrors from being repeated. Students and attendees were deeply moved by her testimony, which highlighted not only the suffering endured during the Holocaust but also the resilience and strength of survivors.



As we reflect on her story, we recognise the vital importance of learning from the past and standing against hatred and discrimination in all forms. Hedi Argent's powerful message will remain with those who heard it, ensuring that the lessons of history are never forgotten

Women's Muslim Community Club Launch

The **Women's Muslim Community Club** is a vibrant and inclusive space for Muslim women at Dudley College to come together, share experiences, and support each other. The club provides a welcoming environment where members can engage in meaningful discussions, explore topics related to faith, culture, and identity, and work on community-driven projects. The club also creates a strong sense of community and connection among members. The Women's Muslim Community Club seeks to foster understanding, respect, and solidarity both within the Muslim community and the wider college environment.

Introducing your Digital Union



We are thrilled to announce the launch of our brand-new website, developed in collaboration with MSL to create a digital platform designed specifically for Students' Unions. This new website marks the beginning of an exciting chapter for our Union, offering an enhanced user experience, improved functionality, and up-to-date, accurate information that will better serve our members. It will also significantly increase our chances of securing successful funding bids, providing us with the tools we need to grow and thrive.

"We were delighted when Dudley College SU contacted us last year to explore whether MSL might be able to support the Students Union in their ambition to better support and engage with their students.

Working together with the team at Dudley College SU, we have spent the last few months working together to build a system which will support student activities for years to come.

The dedication and hard work of the team at Dudley has been commendable, and it has been a pleasure working on this together. However, this is just the start of our journey, as now and into the future the Students' Union will be able to provide a better, more enriching experience for their students during their time at Dudley College.

We wish you all well, and welcome you to the MSL family. We are here to support you on your journey for what we hope will be a long lasting partnership for many years to come." Said Amy King, Implementation Manager at MSL.

To celebrate this milestone, which is a key part of our Strategic Plan, we hosted an exciting launch event. The event featured speeches from Jack Stokes, President of Dudley Students' Union, Amy King, Implementation Manager at MSL, and Diana Martin, CEO & Principal of Dudley College. It was not just about unveiling the new website—it was about launching a new era of collaboration and strengthening the partnership between the Union and the College. The atmosphere was filled with positive energy and excitement, marking a pivotal moment in the Union's journey. This event not only showcased our new digital face but also signified the bright future ahead as we continue to evolve and support our members in meaningful ways. Check out our new website here: [Dudley SU](https://www.dudley-su.co.uk)



ESOL Homelessness Project

As part of our **Youth Social Action Project**, we have been working closely with ESOL students (ages 16-18) to plan and deliver initiatives that make a real difference in the local community. The students were determined to address important issues and decided to focus on homelessness and food insecurity. Their dedication led to a series of impactful actions:



- **Food & Clothing Donations:** The students successfully collected two trolleys filled with food and clothing to support those in need in our community.
- **Political Engagement:** They invited a local MP to speak about government efforts to combat homelessness, discussing both local and national initiatives.

- **Partnerships:** Through collaboration with **Black Country Foodbank** and **Heaven's Kitchen**, we are ensuring that the donations are distributed to those who need them most.
- **Fundraising:** The students also raised £200, which will be used to create care packages for homeless individuals.

In recognition of their hard work and commitment, **Black Country Foodbank** has invited the students to visit their warehouse to see how their donations are being used to support the community.

Next Steps: We are continuing our efforts by partnering with **Heaven's Kitchen** to organise and deliver a community event in Dudley, furthering our mission to support those in need and create a lasting impact on the local community.

Mental Health Day at Inspired Campus!

A huge shoutout to Kaynat, our incredible Inspired Campus Leader, for organising and delivering a truly fantastic Mental Health Day at Inspired Campus! The event provided students with the perfect opportunity to unwind, de-stress, and recharge, offering a variety of fun and engaging activities aimed at supporting mental well-being. Students were able to enjoy gaming, table tennis, and music, all carefully chosen to help reduce stress and promote relaxation. The day was filled with positive energy, creating an environment where students could connect, take a break from their busy schedules, and focus on their mental health. Kaynat's hard work and dedication to creating this event ensured that it was a memorable and beneficial experience for everyone involved. It was a day that truly celebrated the importance of mental well-being and the power of connection.

Ramadan Iftar Event

The Students' Union recently hosted a special Ramadan Iftar event, bringing together students from all backgrounds to learn about and experience the significance of the holy month. Organised by Vice President Usman Shahid, the



event aimed to foster understanding, reflection, and community spirit.



Attendees had the opportunity to hear from a local Imam, who spoke about the meaning of Ramadan and its values of self-discipline, gratitude, and generosity. Usman also shared personal insights into his faith, highlighting the importance of Ramadan in his life. Delicious food was provided by the in-house catering service Stir, what was left over was donated to the local mosque.

The event provided a platform for students to ask questions, engage in meaningful discussions, and deepen their understanding of Islam and the traditions of fasting. As the sun set, everyone came

together to break their fast, sharing a meal and embracing the spirit of unity that defines Ramadan.

This Iftar gathering was a testament to the SU's commitment to inclusivity, education, and cultural appreciation, leaving students with a greater sense of connection and community.

The Imam at Dudley Central Mosque said ***"This is a really important event that brings communities together and helps educate people about the significance of Ramadan."***

Final Notes from us



Dudley Students' Union stands firm in our commitment to fighting for a fairer, more inclusive future for all students. Whether through grassroots activism, national campaigns, or practical initiatives like lifesaving first aid training, we are taking real action to empower and uplift our student community.

But this is just the beginning. Change doesn't happen overnight—it

happens when we stand together, raise our voices, and refuse to accept injustice. We will continue to push for a Fair Deal for Our Future, demand better pay, better education, and better opportunities for every student, and ensure that no one is left behind.

This is our moment to lead. Together, we can build a future that works for everyone.

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

- Instagram: **@dudleysu_**
- Tiktok: **@dudleysu**
- Youtube: **@dudleycollegesu**
- Facebook: **@dudleysu**
- Website: <https://www.dudleysu.co.uk/>