

Dudley Students' Union (DSU) is a student-led organisation that represents the interests and welfare of students at Dudley College. It provides a range of services and activities to enhance the student experience, including clubs and societies, academic support, social events and trips.

DSU is a student **led organization that is managed by a group of elected student officers** whose primary aim is to amplify the voices of students and address their concerns within the college. Each officer is committed to **fulfilling their manifesto pledges**, which were presented to the student electorate at the commencement of their term in office. To achieve this, the officers **plan and execute various events, run campaigns to create awareness and bring about change**, and provide support for DSU-organised activities throughout the academic year, including Freshers' Week, student elections, and charity fundraisers. You'll have the chance to meet some of these officers at the Corporation meeting this report is presented to.

DSU plays an important role in supporting the needs and interests of students at Dudley College and provides a platform for student engagement and leadership development. This report offers an overview of some of the work carried out over the last term.

Dudley Students' Union (DSU) has a number of core aims, which are focused on improving the student experience at Dudley College. Some of these core aims include:

1. **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 organisations, and other stakeholders to ensure that students' voices are heard, and their needs are met.
2. **Skills development:** Encouraging student engagement and participation in the college and wider community through volunteering, fundraising, and other activities.
3. **Creating community:** Promoting diversity, inclusivity, and equality 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.

Overall, the core aims of DSU are centred around supporting and empowering students to achieve their goals and make the most of their time at Dudley College. We hope you see how these are prevalent in the activities shown in this report!

Dudley Community Voluntary Service Kindness Awards

Back in November, we had the honor of participating in the **Community Voluntary Service Kindness Awards**, which celebrated the compassionate individuals of Dudley. This event united a range of organisations, from volunteer groups to businesses, to acknowledge and celebrate those who have made a significant impact in their communities. Among the winners was

Aldrich Gonsalves, who was lauded for his **unwavering dedication to promoting environmental kindness**.

Aldrich works with the Students' Union (and was previously the president elect 2017-19) In the capacity of a Youth Social Action Apprentice, his role is fully funded by the Pears Foundation.

Aldrich's dedication to serving his community and the environment was unmistakable in his efforts to promote green spaces and **initiatives on and off campus**. It was truly a privilege to witness Aldrich being honored with this award, and we were thrilled to have the principal, Neil Thomas, join us in celebrating this accomplishment.



The event fostered a sense of community among students, who came together to acknowledge and celebrate noteworthy achievements.

Moreover, **the occasion provided a platform for showcasing Aldrich's impressive work**, which offered valuable opportunities for skill-building. All in all, the Kindness Awards was a heartening event that underscored the profound impact of kindness on both individuals and communities.

As a previous winner of a Kindness Award in the category of young believer, Student Governor Jack Stokes, had the privilege of sitting on some of the panels to choose the winners of the awards. Both Aldrich and Jack plus many more students from the college, who have honed their skills with DSU, have had the honour of winning one of these awards.

Association of Colleges Annual Conference

Student governors, Mollie and Jack, attended the AOC conference and Festival of Student Governance as a part of their official duties, and their experiences proved to be highly valuable.

They had the **opportunity to network with various organisations and learn more about their role** as well as processes and practices in other colleges



Mollie impressed staff at Unloc with her knowledge and dedication to her governor role so much so they asked her to feature as a spotlight piece on their social media by writing a blog post of her experiences.

Following this event, Mollie and Jack also travelled to London in January to participate in further Unloc training. There they met with other SU Presidents, officers and student Governors from all over

England, **gaining new skills and establishing invaluable connections** with other student governors. The training was highly informative and engaging, and we are confident that the knowledge and **skills they gained have been brought back to the college to enhance their work as student representaives.**

Aldrich Gonsalves and Sophia Daly (Student Development) also attended the AoC conference to present at a breakout session on youth social action projects they have developed at the college. They were **commended by attendees for their high quality activities** which embraced all six principles of social action: youth led, challenging, have social impact, allows progression to further opportunities, has become embedded in a young persons life and has enabled reflection about the value of the activity. They were then invited to present at the 'National Association of Managers in Students Services - Student Experience conference'. Via these events **Dudley College is further being recognised nationally as a beacon in quality student experience and social action.**

Development of a new cohort of student leaders

We are thrilled to introduce our **newly appointed Executive Team**, who are passionate about putting **students at the center of decision-making and committed to delivering quality experiences across ALL Campuses.**



We look forward to collaborating with each of them and are **confident they will play a crucial role in all aspects of DSU**, from event planning to leading campaigns. Their hard work and dedication are truly commendable, and **we feel fortunate to have such enthusiastic volunteers who are willing to invest their time and efforts to enhance the student experience.** The college is privileged to have such a **dynamic and diverse team**, and we are excited to see their contributions make a positive impact in the future.

The Executive are trained in **Prevent, British Values, Safeguarding, event management, allyship, effective campaigning** and much more to ensure they can carry out their roles effectively. They meet every Monday for two hours and contribute a further 2 hours minimum per week to their role.

Events and activities held leading up to the winter holidays...

In collaboration with Cllr Sara Bothul and Alumni officer Amman Ahmed, Youth Police Crime Commissioner, DSU organised a 'Christmas Community Gathering'. The event was aimed at promoting mental health, communication, and stress management during the festive period. The event **drew a large audience** and offered a variety of activities, including appearances by **Santa Claus and his elf, a buffet, and beverages**. It was a wonderful opportunity for the community to unite and revel in the festive atmosphere while also prioritising their well-being.



The leadership team played a crucial role in organising the event and ensuring its success. For some members of the team, the event served as an example of what a successful Students' Union event should look and feel like.



Additionally, the event included a food bank collection.

Cllr Bothul said:

'I would like to say a huge thank you to you and your students' union team for a great evening. It was a very successful with over 100 people in attendance. The main aim was to gather over this festive period as the cost-of-living crisis may lead to many missing out on such opportunities. We were able to have the mayor, fire service crew and even a dance group made of children up to 14 provide a routine for us'.

This event left a **lasting impression** on the children and their families that attended giving them a positive **view of the college its atmosphere and environment**.

As a part of the Student Union's **commitment to environmental sustainability** and in line with the President's manifesto, we arranged a **Christmas market stall in December** at Dudley Marketplace. Our aim was to promote a reuse and donate campaign to **encourage sustainable practices and reduce waste**.

The stall aimed to raise awareness of fast fashion and how recycling is a much more respected idea now with the rise in resale sites such as Ebay and Depop. To ensure accessibility, we priced each item at a maximum of £2. Furthermore, **we contributed three bags of**



clothing to the local charity shops, and all the money we raised was donated to nominated charity of the year Black Country Mental Health.

Our **Vice President of Social Activities, Darnell**, organised a unique event called the "**Perfect**



Generation" with the aim of celebrating music and **motivating young individuals to pursue careers in the performing arts industry.** The event successfully featured diverse performances and provided a stimulating and enjoyable experience for all attendees. It exemplified how one event can accomplish multiple goals.

Our event not only united the community but also **raised funds for our chosen local charity, Black**

Country Mental Health. It also served as a fantastic opportunity for those interested in pursuing a career in the performing arts, as it **showcased various student bands, speakers, and included activities** aimed at enhancing their skills. Darnell and the participating bands should be proud of their accomplishments, as the **event contributed to Darnell's overall course grade** and proved to be a significant achievement.

We often see students that have initially been **class reps stand for leadership positions** with DSU after their positive experience, Mollie and Aldrich as 2 prime examples. **We are proud of the structured and supported approach the college take to learner voice** and this is well demonstrated via the class representative training and meetings. These gatherings serve as a **forum for students to express their views** and talk about any matters concerning their curriculum and overall student experience. The meetings witness significant participation, with **students bringing up a wide range of subjects that pertain to them.** To gain a better understanding of their worries, **we pose targeted questions to learners.** For example on this terms agenda we are asking students about their feelings and ideas around feeling safe on campus and in the surrounding areas.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work

As part of the college's continuous efforts to establish a Transgender support and guidance policy, DSU organised a **Transgender focus group.** Its primary goal was to **collect feedback from Trans students and ensure that their views are taken into account** during the policy's development. The students that participated **actively shared their insights during the group session.** Their involvement was inspiring, and we hope that their valuable input will be taken into consideration during the policy's formation, as it is **crucial to creating a supportive and welcoming environment for the Transgender community.**

We are proud to have once again **collaborated with Lord Ian Austin** to host our **annual Holocaust Memorial event**, the theme this year was 'ordinary people'. **Cassidy Woodrow, a Dudley College Lessons from Auschwitz (LFA)**

Ambassador and student, shared her experiences of the LFA program. Mollie Hehir, also **read a poem titled "Ordinary People, written by DSU staff member Amanda Appleby** which sensitively emphasised that the individuals



affected were everyday people. A massively important event for Dudley, and

we are honored to have once again been a part of it and to have had the privilege of hearing the testimony of another Holocaust survivor, Eva Clarke, an incredible woman with an incredible story to share.



Mrs Clarke later joined the Mayor of Dudley, Association of Jewish Refugees chief executive Michael Newman OBE, Lord Lieutenant John Crabtree CBE, and pupils from St Thomas's School and Dudley College student, Daria, to plant the tree, which was the final planting of the AJR's 80 Trees for 80 Years project.

The native oak tree symbolises the contribution of Jewish refugees to life in Britain. Dudley was selected as the final site for planting due to the borough's long history of welcoming refugees of many different faiths and nationalities.



Tackling issues that will make a difference to our students

The "**Save Our Buses**" campaign aimed to raise awareness about the importance of public transportation and the challenges faced by students when services are facing cancellation. Buses are a **crucial mode of transportation** for many people, particularly those who cannot afford a car or have limited mobility. However, insufficient funding, and outdated infrastructure have threatened the viability of bus services in the region- recently 3 bus services have fallen victim to this, **226, 45 and 002**. As part of this campaign, we talked to key decision makers such as Transport West Midlands, MP's and Councilors. We were determined to save these buses because the **detrimental impact** on our students would be huge. We emailed owners of company's, MPs, and the media to talk about this and with the efforts of many in the community, have now won with amended routes and timetables these bus services are staying.



Final Note on activity – verbal update will also be provided at the meeting

We have of course been doing **other standard activities related to DSU work** from **running a variety of clubs and societies** such as Pool Football, Gamers, Debate, LGBTQ+ and so on, to touring campuses with the pop up shop to taking student **on bucket list trips** such as Harry Potter Studio Experience and London Parliament.

We have also been **conducting other representational work** which has



included **submitting policy to the National Union of Students** which has been shortlisted to be debated at the conference we are attending this March in addition to over 1000 other student union representatives, to **work in the community** such as supporting the Stop and Search Youth Scrutiny panel.

We hope this report highlights to the Corporation the vital work DSU continue to do in supporting Dudley College and our member students.

Further insights will be expanded on via a verbal update at the Corporation meeting.



