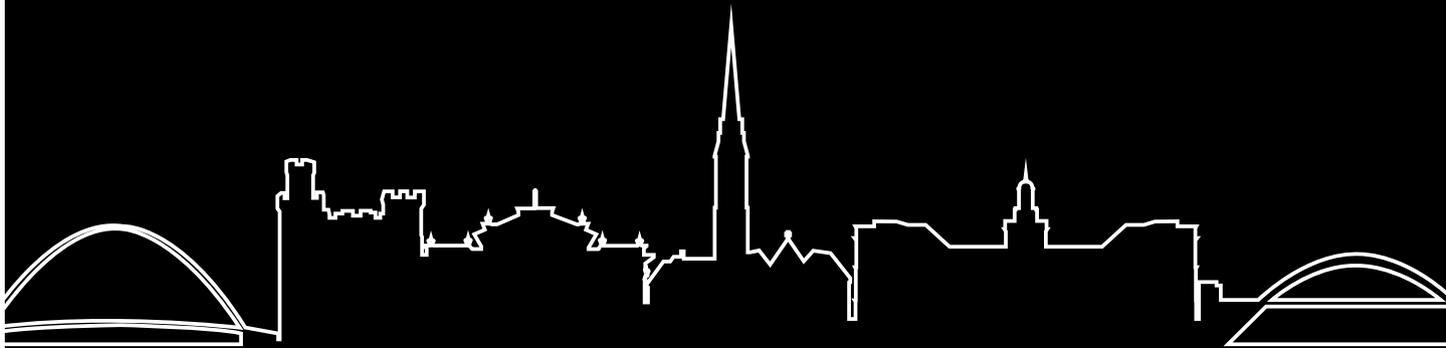


**2015 /  
2016 /**

**NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION  
IMPACT REPORT**



**DEMOCRATIC   INCLUSIVE   SUPPORTIVE   PROGRESSIVE  
SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE   FUN**

**NUSU**  
NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS' UNION



SU OF THE YEAR 2016 - EDUCATE NORTH AWARDS

# WELCOME

## TO THE NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION IMPACT REPORT 2015 - 2016

"One of the main reasons I wanted to become President of Newcastle University Students' Union lay in the truly fantastic experience I had during my time as a student. It was to the credit of NUSU that I had such a good time, and it is brilliant to see the continuing fantastic work and that NUSU is receiving the appropriate recognition.

It's the Union's job to listen to its members and implement measures to enhance the student experience as much as possible and the continued high performance nationally demonstrates the good work that NUSU is doing. Once again, we were ranked 4th in the Russell Group for student satisfaction, placing us as one of the top research intensive Students' Unions in the country. Our satisfaction rate of 80% was well above the sector average and led to a joint 14th place nationally against all comparative institutions. Our international student satisfaction

continued to increase and jumped us from 7th to 4th nationally, whilst we also maintained our high standard in the Times Higher Survey by ranking 8th nationally. In addition, and something I know means a lot to many students, we were acknowledged as the most sociable place to study in the country! These culminated in NUSU winning the 'Students' Union of the Year' award at the Educate North Awards 2016, and really demonstrated what a well-rounded and exciting experience NUSU offers. This Impact Report serves to highlight the tangible differences NUSU makes to the lives of students and also serves as a check to us to make sure we are delivering on the areas that matter most to our students. The student experience is paramount to both the University and ourselves and I hope this year we can build on the fantastic work already being done."



Jack Taylor / President 2016/17

WELCOME

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# TRUSTEES REPORT

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### Where We Are Heading

We are pleased to report on another very successful year for NUSU. This was the first year in the delivery of our new 3 year strategic plan, and was a very positive start in helping shape our future aspirations. Student satisfaction with our activities and services remained strong across the board cementing our place as one of the leading Students' Unions in the country, and culminating in our 'Students' Union of the Year' award at the Educate North Awards.

This report will highlight progress against the strategic themes outlined in our 3 year plan, outline the major impacts and achievements of the organisation, and give a flavour of student feedback and thoughts which we value greatly. We will continue to strive to fully understand the needs and wants of all of our students and to remain agile in the delivery of a bespoke student experience for each and every one of them. The NUSU 3 Year Strategic Plan can be viewed in full at

[www.nusu.co.uk](http://www.nusu.co.uk)

## OUR VISION

### The Long Term Goal

Our vision moving forward will be to enhance the student experience in everything that we do



Sabbatical Trustees 15/16

## OUR VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

### How We Wish to Work

We are an organisation led by our community of students at Newcastle University; we exist to serve this community and recognise that it is made up of various groups based on common interest and common experiences, such as faith, ethnic origin, status (home/overseas), course of study, disability and health; our community's wants and needs and in turn control our direction and purpose. In all that we do we look to demonstrate the following values:

### DEMOCRATIC

Our members are at the heart of our decision making. We represent and empower them. We are supportive, responsible and accountable.

### SUPPORTIVE

We make sure that our students feel as though they're supported in the best way possible, regardless of their circumstance.

### SUSTAINABLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

We will work on ethical and environmental best practice and encourage students to make a difference to the world and communities around them.

### PROGRESSIVE

We look to the future, seeking new opportunities and partnerships. We are innovative, imaginative and creative, and happy to work in collaboration with others.

### INCLUSIVE

We will support diversity, involvement and equality. We will provide services and facilities which reflect the diverse needs of our membership.

### FUN

We want your time with us to be as enjoyable as possible.

## OUR MISSION

### Why We Exist

Our mission for 2015-18 is to have a positive impact on the students of Newcastle University and the communities in which they live. To help us achieve this we will focus on 5 strategic themes, and we will be reporting back on each of the themes in this report.

### Strategic Themes:

- Understanding our students
- Providing our students with a strong voice
- Developing our students
- Supporting our students
- Provide a social hub and develop a sense of belonging within student and local communities.

### These are supported by 5 key enablers:

Finance, People, Building and Operations, Digital and IT, and Communications.

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT

It is with great pleasure, and an overwhelming sense of pride, that I look back on another very positive year for NUSU and assess the many achievements and impacts that we have created for our students. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly winning the 'Students' Union of the Year Award' at the Educate North Awards, which recognised the outstanding contribution we make to the student experience at Newcastle.

Our key indicators remained very strong, and the staff team worked very hard to ensure that we continue to deliver one of the best possible student experiences in the country. As a membership organisation we will only ever be as good as the students say we are, so we remain focussed on ensuring that their priorities are our priorities. We must not be complacent, and continue to strive to improve and develop our offer to ensure we remain relevant and effective.



## NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

### *Ranked 4th in the Russell group*

The National Student Survey is one of the strongest measures we have for student satisfaction and in summer 2016 for the second year running we were ranked 4th in the Russell Group. Our score of 80% (against a sector average of 69%), placed us joint 14th nationally against comparator organisations.

## TIMES HIGHER SURVEY

### *Ranked 8th nationally*

For the second year running NUSU were ranked 8th nationally in the Times Higher Survey, which asks students whether they have a good Students' Union. Newcastle was also recognised as the most sociable place to study in the UK.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER

### *Ranked 4th nationally*

The response we got from our international students was once again the most positive by far of all of our indicators. 97% of students completing the survey expressed their satisfaction with NUSU. This ranked us 2nd in the Russell Group and 4th nationally.

## POSITIVE IMPACT

### *89% positive impact*

Our internal NUSU survey is available for all students to complete on an annual basis. This gives us a good indicator from the whole student body as to whether we are delivering what they want. This year 89% of students completing the survey agreed that we were having a positive impact on their overall university experience.

## EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

### *86% think we campaign effectively*

NUSU ran a number of high profile campaigns this year including the very successful 'Divestment from Fossil Fuels' campaign. In addition our Course and School Reps excelled in driving change at the front line. 86% of students felt that we campaigned effectively on their behalf.

## UNDERSTANDING STUDENT NEEDS

### *89% said we understand their needs*

This year for the first time we asked students to comment upon whether NUSU understands their individual needs. 89% of respondents agreed that NUSU did understand their needs as a student which was a very positive response. Furthermore, 83% also agreed that there was always something on offer that they could get involved with.

## FACILITIES AND SUPPORT

### *90% would recommend to a friend*

86% of students rated our facilities as good or excellent and 99% as satisfactory or better, and similarly, all things considered, 86% of students also rated NUSU overall good or excellent and 99% satisfactory or better. Furthermore, 90% of students would recommend NUSU to a friend.

Overall, another fantastic set of results and I must thank the Officers and whole staff team for their dedication and commitment to ensuring we continue to deliver a first class student experience.

*Simon Gerry / Chief Executive*

# SU OF THE YEAR 2016

EDUCATE NORTH AWARDS

# PROVIDING OUR STUDENTS WITH A STRONG VOICE

## OUR OFFICER TEAM WINNING FOR STUDENTS

Secured a ground breaking agreement by the University to divest £65 million from fossil fuels over the next 5 years.

Ensured the University abandoned plans to introduce a Fit to Sit policy after the University cited the student body opposition as a clear need to not introduce the policy.

Lobbied and worked with the University to allow students to self-certify illness of up to 1 week. This will take away the need for students to pursue a Doctor's note in such circumstances.

Secured a £90,000 investment to improve safety in Leazes Park; this will be particularly helpful to first year students crossing the park to Castle Leazes and Richardson Road.  
Secured space to ensure that law students can continue to gain experience through the McKenzie Friend project.

Developed a new NCL+ advanced award in leadership, in conjunction with the Careers Service.

## A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT ELSE THE OFFICER TEAM HAVE BEEN UP TO THIS YEAR:

Prepared a full Student Written Submission for the University's Quality Assurance Agency audit ensuring a full account of student feedback was considered, as well as organising 56 students to speak to the auditor to ensure student views were heard.

Attended over 200 University meetings, ranging from the 'Richardson Road Design Team Meetings', to University Council.

Presented assessment and feedback survey results to University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee members to ensure student views are heard and changes made as a result.

Gained more meeting space for clubs and societies with the development of a new space in the NUSU Lounge.

Ensured Officers of NUSU received full financial information and consultation on any increases in rent in University accommodation.

Secured funding to deliver Suicide Prevention training for students and staff, improving support for vulnerable students.

Prepared a full report on the experience of 'Students with Disabilities' for the University to use to action improvements in the student experience.

Met with 24 Head of Schools to outline plans for the year including further developing the use of Recap

Worked with NUSU staff to launch our new sports programme, Inclusive Newcastle, which has gained us accreditation to the Federation of Disability Sports and is ensuring access to sport for all students.

Delivered more than 65 induction talks to first years to ensure they all knew what was on offer where in the University.

Worked with the Student Advice Centre to liaise with trading standards to withdraw the use of 'holding paperwork' by a local Letting Agency. These documents or 'Agreements to Rent' were in actual fact legally binding contracts used by the agent, unbeknown to the student tenants.

# AND BACK AT THE STUDENTS' UNION

The Officers have delivered training to more than 1000 volunteers, including Club and Society Officers, and Course, Community and School Reps.

Allocated over £265,000 in grants to Clubs and Societies.

Helped with the set up and ratification of 32 new societies; provided 180 Clubs and Societies access to thousands of Freshers at the Freshers' Fair and 60 stalls at the Refreshers Fair.

Ensured a diverse programme was delivered in Early Arrivals Week and Freshers' Week with over 300 events and activities, and distributed 4500 welfare packs to Freshers, including our 'It's Not Ok' leaflet on sexual harassment.

We have run campaigns on Sexual Health Advice and Guidance (SHAG) Week, Alcohol Awareness, Black History Month, Save A Life Week, Disability Awareness Week, Stressed Out Students (SOS) and held a festival to raise awareness and interest in the divestment in fossil fuels. During SHAG week, 450 students accessed STI testing and we have given out 1700 condoms in our new, free, machines.

Produced a Housing information supplement to give you all the facts on the private rented sector and ensure you know what the pitfalls are before you sign your contracts and ran our first Housing Fair with 450 students in attendance.

Produced and distributed 20 editions of our award winning student newspaper, The Courier, and picked up the runners up prize at The Guardian Student Publication of the Year awards for 'Student Publication of the Year'.

Held trials and selected the Newcastle University 'University Challenge' team.

Held Teaching Excellence Awards (TEAs), giving our students the opportunity to recognise members of staff who they believe have excelled. We received 333 nominations in all and the best practice examples were shared with the University to help further improve teaching.

Developed a new 'Love Newcastle' website to give students all they need to know about living in the city, and provide access to make change through Community Reps and local councillors.

Organised a series of Celebrating Success Awards, recognising societies, community volunteers, academic reps, sports clubs and the hard work of all NUSU volunteers.

# OVER 100 CHANGES TO THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE AT COURSE LEVEL

Our Course and School Reps have also worked hard this year on behalf of their fellow students to represent their views and issues and to try and make a real difference to ensure everyone's academic experience is the best it can be. The NUSU 'Your Voice' team delivered 41 Academic Student Representation Induction Talks and trained all 56 School Reps and over 650 Student Chairs, Student Secretaries and Course Reps. Over 100 changes were made to the academic experience at course and school level as a result of the work of our Reps, and two thirds of students said they felt the representation system was effective.

A few examples of the changes affected by our Reps:

*Steps taken to simplify attendance monitoring for international students, by moving the process to e-portfolio and supervisors being educated regarding visa procedures.*

**Rep: Timur Osadchiy, Computing Science (PGR)**

*From next year, MyImpact will be introduced for all FMS postgraduate students, after students agreed they wanted their own personal website about their research linked to their supervisor's page.*

**Rep: Rebecca Brennan, Institute of Genetic Medicine (PGR)**

*Staff and Postgraduate Reps working together to promote peer-led training workshops and video tutorials for laboratory and analysis techniques, as part of a new 'open lab book' initiative.*

**Rep: Kile Green, Institute of Cellular Medicine (PGR)**

*In response to student concerns, staff agreed to provide temporary out of hours access to the Cassie Building, as key computer software was only available there. The school is looking at a number of options to resolve this issue permanently by improving access to the software or increasing the time students have to complete the assignments.*

**Rep: Louise Westoby, School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences (UG)**

## WHAT THE STUDENTS THOUGHT OF THE STAFF

The annual Teaching Excellence Awards once again had a very positive impact on both staff and student relationships. With 333 nominations from across the University, students were only too keen to give up their time to highlight how particular members of staff had supported them. This year more emphasis was placed on sharing the content of the nominations with those who had been nominated, their schools and the wider University, to ensure that examples of good practice were highlighted.



TEA (Teaching Excellence Awards) 2016

*"It is most gratifying to read the comments made in the nomination and it actually enthruses me to reflect and consider how I can do even better in the future. Now in my 20th year of teaching at Newcastle it is also very pleasing to note my teaching is still engaging students and encouraging them to learn."*

**Dr Stuart Edwards (UG Dean SAgE)**

# 86% OF STUDENTS FELT THAT WE CAMPAIGNED EFFECTIVELY ON THEIR BEHALF

## CAMPAIGNS

NUSU ran a number of high profile campaigns last year, as well as supporting student groups and societies to run their own campaigns. In total 17 central major campaigns were run. Highlights included the very successful 'Divestment from Fossil Fuels' campaign which led to the University review of future investments, and the escalation of the 'Period Pride' campaign which was taken on at a national level by the National Union of Students. Both of these campaigns had real measurable impact on the lives of students.

Student groups and societies, supported by NUSU, ran some fantastic campaigns of their own including Black History Month, Save a Life, Housing Information Week, LGBT+ Awareness Week, Go Green Week, Drug Awareness Week, Inspiring Women, Disability Awareness Week, Mind the Gap, Stand By Me, and Leave Newcastle Happy.

### Student feedback on campaigns:

*"Inspired me to help in ways of talking about mental health issues, particularly with suicide, which may ultimately lead to helping save lives."*

*"Seeing successful women who also seem down to earth and normal is a huge inspiration. Also, knowing that there are so many likeminded ladies in and around the university is so positive. Thank you so much for organising such a fantastic event-you are inspiring women."*

*"Thank you for all the little things you organise to de-stress students in the exam period. I would never have it in my French university."*



## STUDENT COUNCIL

Once again, Student Council grew in popularity, with a 10% increase in core councillor attendance and our popular casual places fully subscribed at four out of the six meetings. Student Council had a large impact on both NUSU and the student body, discussing policy, student affairs and passing a number of motions including:

Opposing the Fit to Sit policy.

Motion on NUSU response to HE Green Paper.

Addition of ex-convicts as a protected characteristic when referring to the Equality act.

Introducing Electoral Registration as part of University Registration.

### Student feedback from a Councillor:

*"I definitely don't think I would have gained as much confidence in the role without your support, it has been absolutely invaluable, and whoever my successor is I will definitely encourage them to take up the offer of 1-1s as I have found them so useful and encouraging! Thanks again for being such a great mentor!"*

# DEVELOPING OUR STUDENTS

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The graduate job market is fiercely competitive and our members recognise that if they wish to get the job they really want, they have to stand out from the crowd. This year saw the launch of our new 'Go Volunteer' programme which provides opportunities for our members to broaden their horizons and develop wider employability skills which will help them pursue the career of their choice.

Overall, the number of opportunities available increased by 25%. A total of 4,733 individual volunteers undertook opportunities within the programme this year, contributing well over

50,000 hours of their time to volunteering positions and projects. 2,686 of them attend training sessions as NUSU staff and officers delivered 421 hours of training. The number of students receiving the NCL+ award also continued to grow with 264 completing the award and 28 completing the new 'advanced award'. When surveyed 94% of students said they were satisfied with the range of opportunities offered to them under the new programmes, and 83% said they felt more employable as a result of undertaking opportunities with us.



# 83% OF STUDENTS FELT MORE EMPLOYABLE

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## VOLUNTEERING CASE STUDY

A number of community related projects were undertaken this year but none more impressive than the 'Dark Skies Project'. This was a collaborative project with Newcastle University's School of Architecture, where Dark Skies volunteers have designed, planned and built a new community Dark amphitheatre and pavilion in Rochester, North Northumberland. Student volunteers and the local community worked together supporting the Architecture team to create an inspirational new community-owned venue, where people can stargaze, hold musical performances, creative workshops, plays and community events. Schools, community groups, local businesses and visitors to the area will all

be able to benefit from this brand new community resource, created entirely by volunteers.

In creating this fantastic facility our students have worked tirelessly in all weather conditions to clear the site of weeds, move tonnes of local sandstone, build a decking area, create drystone wall seating, and construct the contemporary pavilion building which is faced with hand-made larch cladding and roofed with a pollinator-friendly sedum roof. Over 30 student volunteers have contributed their skills, expertise and energy to this project over the last year, with the site opening to the public in August 2016.

### Community Feedback:

*"The new Dark Skies building and amphitheatre were not only novel but were much appreciated by all who used them. At our recent Redefest event over 300 people used the new spaces and all benefitted greatly. I am sure they will continue to be an asset in the future, so our thanks go to the many students who volunteered at the site over the last year."*

*Jim Procter, Chairperson of Rochester Festival Committee"*

## FOCUS ON ROB NOYES: MY INVOLVEMENT

Involvement with NUSU has played a huge role in my student experience. It is testament to the vibrancy and the variety of the Student's Union that there are so many different ways to get involved. Over the years, I have been a representative for my course and later school, the chair of my Student Staff Committee, set up and captained three sports teams, worked as the Environment and Ethics Officer for the Students' Union and led a successful campaign to divest the University from the fossil fuel industry. I have also had the opportunity to volunteer with Go Volunteer, to sit on various committees and to found a sustainability society - 'ReNewcastle'.



## WIDER LEARNING

As soon as you campaign to change one thing, it swiftly becomes apparent that such singular focus is impossible. Problems with how society is structured, are endemic, not felt in isolation or individually enforced. Whether it is the lack of diverse content on your curriculum, the damaging potential of everyday sexism or daily environmental degradation - all are inherently connected. So it was that I elected to work with a variety of groups working to shape a better world in Newcastle. The ever rolling campaign weeks and volunteer projects offer an outstanding chance to meet fantastic friends, to have fun, and do good. It's sometimes difficult to know where to start, and impossible to know how to stop, but there is something for everyone.

## SHAPING IDENTITY

Precisely because of the whirlwind of opportunities and the numbers of people at University, it can be difficult to find your feet. NUSU not only offer you a place in the whirlwind, but also facilitate your own development. Whether it is in direct support services, or invitations to be involved, the Students' Union have enabled me in so many ways to participate on a regular basis. Essentially, they provide a space where you are able to interrogate the questions of who you are and what you want to do. They then provide guidance and opportunities for you to live out your answers.

# SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

## SUPPORT SERVICES

We looked to support our students in a number of ways this year. Our professional advice service continued to see an increase in academic appeals, the number of widening participation bursaries we gave out continues to grow, and our Special Grants programme saw students undertaking life-changing opportunities and activities.

Our professional advisers took on 671 new cases on top of the 92 ongoing cases from last year, with over 90% of cases being academic, housing or finance related. In terms of successful financial outcomes we put over £38,000 back in students pockets whether that be through returned deposits or tax credits. In addition, it is assessed that over £69,000 in University fees were retained where students changed their minds about leaving the University after accepting our help to resolve their issues. However, our services are not all about financial gain and the wellbeing of our students is at the core of our service.



## STUDENT FEEDBACK

When asked 88% of students were aware of our welfare services in the Student Advice Centre and said they would use them if needed. Furthermore, of those that used the service 74% felt the quality of service was good or excellent and 92% satisfactory or above. This is an excellent reflection of the service given that students do not always get the answers they want to hear!

# 92% — SATISFACTION RATE FOR OUR ADVICE SERVICES

# OVER 90% OF STUDENTS FELT THEY HAD AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN NUSU ACTIVITIES

## CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Over 13,000 students joined our Clubs and Societies this year after we set them a challenge of being more inclusive than ever. Research shows that students who are a member of a sports club or society have a much better overall student experience and gain a real sense of belonging to their University.

Our inclusive sports programme (Inclusive Newcastle) moved into its second year and introduced a range of sports and events aimed at disabled athletes, and this was complemented by our bursaries programme which awarded grants to students who could not afford, for one reason or another, to participate as fully as others.

Our student-led sports clubs had another fantastic year with over 4,000 students competing across the full range of sports in the British Universities and Colleges Sport League (BUCS), where we again finished in the Top 10 (9th place overall). Newcastle amassed 2,410 BUCS points, 1,270 league points and 1,140 points through the individual, knockout and cup competitions, an overall increase of 19% from 2014/15. This is Newcastle's highest ever BUCS points total, exceeding the 2,027 achieved in 2012/13. Sports that gained the most BUCS points for the University include Rowing, Rugby Union and Fencing.



*American Football 2015*

We entered 96 teams into the BUCS Wednesday sports programme, who played 1,710 fixtures over the course of the year and won 55% of matches. Thirteen teams came top in their respective BUCS Leagues, including Women's Badminton, Men's Squash and Men's and Women's Basketball and Hockey. This means that we will have 13 Premier League teams for 2016/17, the most the we have ever had and two more than 2014/15.

There were many triumphs throughout the year for a number of sports, including the men's Basketball first team who won Division 3 North and came runners up in the National Cup. They also had a 100% winning record in all BUCS league, play-off and cup matches. The women's first team also competed in premier league basketball for the very first time, finishing 3rd and making it through to the National BUCS Super 8 final.

In Rowing, NUBC were the top ranked university in BUCS for 2015/16. NUBC won the overall Victor Ludorum (VL) at both the BUCS 4s and 8s Head in February on the river Tyne, and at the BUCS Regatta in May, winning a total of 39 medals (13 gold, 11 silver and 15 bronze). The Men's Squash Club also had an outstanding season with the men's first team winning all BUCS league games to gain promotion to the BUCS Premier League for the very first time and reaching the quarter-finals of the Championship KO Cup.

## GRANTS

Over £260,000 was given out in grants to our Clubs and Societies, including 63 special grants which were used to fund activities, trips, research, and new equipment. Examples include: Wilderness Medics trip to Yorkshire Dales; Latin and Ballroom inter-University Dance

Competition; a new PA system for the Caledonian Society; Newcastle UNICEF campus bake-off; the Marrow Ball; a new keyboard for the Christian Union; venue hire for the Wind Band; the Teddy Bear Hospital annual fun day; a Yoga retreat in Greece; leadership courses for the Omani Society; entry to the national Pole Dancing competition; the Afro-Caribbean Society's Afro-Clash tournament; Motorsport Society entry to the National Karting championships; performing arts societies venue hire; venue hire and the purchase of percussion instruments for the Chamber Orchestra; and the Comedy Society's trip to the Scottish Student Comedy Festival. The grants also helped in the formation of 32 new Societies which helped expand the breadth and diversity of interest groups. The following pages highlight case studies of how the money was put to good use in the students' own words.

# HOW STUDENTS PUT OUR GRANTS TO GOOD USE

## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA RESEARCH CONFERENCE

“Our grant was used to help fund our maiden Sub-Saharan Africa Research Conference, which we now hope to hold on an annual basis. The conference was attended by scholars from UK universities, as well as private sector experts. All of the conference proceedings are well documented but in particular the conference has actually given the society recognition among postgraduate students and research staff because of our focus on driving research and development in sub-Saharan African countries. The conference created a platform for networking opportunities with stakeholders in the field of development and helped both the experience of staff and students as well as boosting the public image of Newcastle University.”

## COAST TO COAST SOCIETY CHARITY FUND RAISER

“On the 12th and 13th March 2016, the Coast to Coast Society held a charity bike ride from Whitehaven to Tynemouth (140 miles over 2 days) to raise money for Anthony Nolan (a leukaemia charity) and Hospice Africa (a Merseyside-based charity providing palliative care in Sub-Saharan Africa). There were 60 cyclists and 15 volunteers, and the grant received help incentivise the number of volunteers by reducing their entry costs and making it affordable for many more people. This subsequent increase in the number of volunteers helped us raise over £10,000, which will have a huge impact on both of our nominated charities (Anthony Nolan and Hospice Africa).”



## SINGAPORE SOCIETY NOTTINGHAM WINTER GAMES

“As this is a one-time event, it provided an opportunity for our fellow Singaporeans to meet each other and find a “home away from home”, which resonates with the mission of our society. Through this event, our society members were able to mingle with students from other universities (other participating universities include Warwick, Exeter, Birmingham, Manchester and it is not limited to Singaporeans only). As it was a sports event, it fostered our team spirit especially in the Captain’s Ball segment where our Newcastle representatives won the Gold medal. It promoted the sense of belonging and identity, which was beneficial to our society and brought us together. Lastly, the committee members met and networked with external potential sponsors. This helped raise our profile and provided a stepping-stone for incoming committee members to collaborate or obtain sponsorships in future.”

## DANCE SOCIETY GO NATIONAL AT THE SAGE

“This year our special grant was put towards a number of projects. Firstly, it contributed towards the hire of Northern Stage for our biggest Annual Dance Show, where over 200 members performed and over 900 tickets were sold for the three-night show. The weekend of the show was a great success thanks to all of the dancers, teachers and committee who took part; they put in a lot of hard work for weeks before the show to make sure everything ran smoothly and all of the dances were to a high standard.

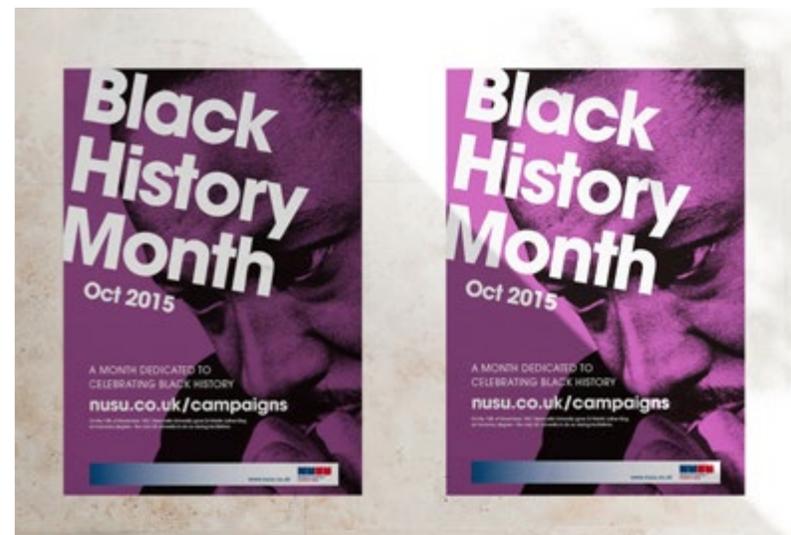
This proved to be a great preparation for our inaugural National Dance Competition which was new to the Dance Society this year. Universities from all over the country travelled to Newcastle to enter our competition which took place at The Sage, Gateshead, and the feedback we received was fantastic from all who attended; it really put Newcastle on the map. As a result of this successful event the Dance Society won the ‘Best Society Event’ at the NUSU Societies Awards, and were shortlisted for the NUS National Society Awards where we were overall Runners Up.”



Sage Newcastle

## BAME NETWORK’S BLACK HISTORY MONTH

“The BAME Network organised a series of events for Black History Month 2015. It was a month of talks, workshops and cultural activities to celebrate the achievements and history of Black people in the UK. It was a highly successful campaign, being awarded ‘Best Inter-Society Collaboration’ at the NUSU Societies Awards. The BAME Network also received the Runner Up prize at the Pride of Newcastle Awards, in part for their work on this campaign. Studies have shown that this month, celebrated nationally, engages Black students and diversifies the traditionally Eurocentric curriculum. People of all backgrounds participated and there was a particularly high attendance at the main event, ‘The Role of Music in Black Liberation’. The events line up was also posted on the Newcastle City Council website which meant that they were accessible to the wider Newcastle community which helped to sustain community links.”



Black History Month

# PROVIDING A SOCIAL HUB AND CREATING A SENSE OF BELONGING

We know that the student experience is markedly improved if students have a sense of belonging whether that be through NUSU, their Halls, their schools, or the communities or interest groups they join. Newcastle was once again voted the most sociable place to study in the UK in the Times Higher Survey and we aim to keep it that way.

In our survey this year, 83% of students agreed that NUSU activities had helped create a sense of belonging. Freshers' Week again played a major part in forging those initial links and contacts, and of the 4,500 students who bought wristbands 83% of were satisfied with their Freshers' Week experience. In our first trial year in

targeting Postgraduates with bespoke activities, 92% of those who participated in our welcome activities were satisfied with their experience. The main NUSU building in the centre of campus remains our social hub and we had over 900,000 visitors through our doors this year. We processed over 500,000 transactions through our Bars and Shop and took over 5,000 room bookings for our facilities. The opening of NUSU Central next door increased our overall available space and students were quick to fill it, and make themselves at home. Our Venue hosted over 60 music events, with 82% of students rating our overall events programme as good or excellent.

It was pleasing to note that 92% of students using our facilities found the building welcoming and safe, which reflects our commitment to be as inclusive as possible to all students. As well as our Clubs and Societies which are well known for forging close friendship groups, we ran a number of other programmes to help students get to know each other and try out new experiences. Our Give it a Go and Go Play programmes attracted over 1,800 individual students to participate in over 4,300 opportunities.

**NEWCASTLE VOTED THE MOST SOCIABLE PLACE TO STUDY IN THE UK**

TIMES HIGHER SURVEY 2016



Andy Black - NUSU Venue 2015

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our successful Community Rep initiative recruited 11 reps in four key student areas of Newcastle. The Community Reps have been involved in a number of different community initiatives and campaigns including:

Four litter picks across the campus.

Running a campaign to promote the Critical Safety Arc App.

Supporting environmental campaigns such as Go Green Week and the Fossil Free Campaign.

Helping to organise the 'Leave Newcastle Happy' Campaign.

The impact on the communities that the reps are representing has been extremely positive with Cllr Dan Perry commenting:

*"We are all humbled by these young people giving up their time to do something for our community, which they don't necessarily live in themselves. This has a really positive effect on bringing the community together which is fantastic."*

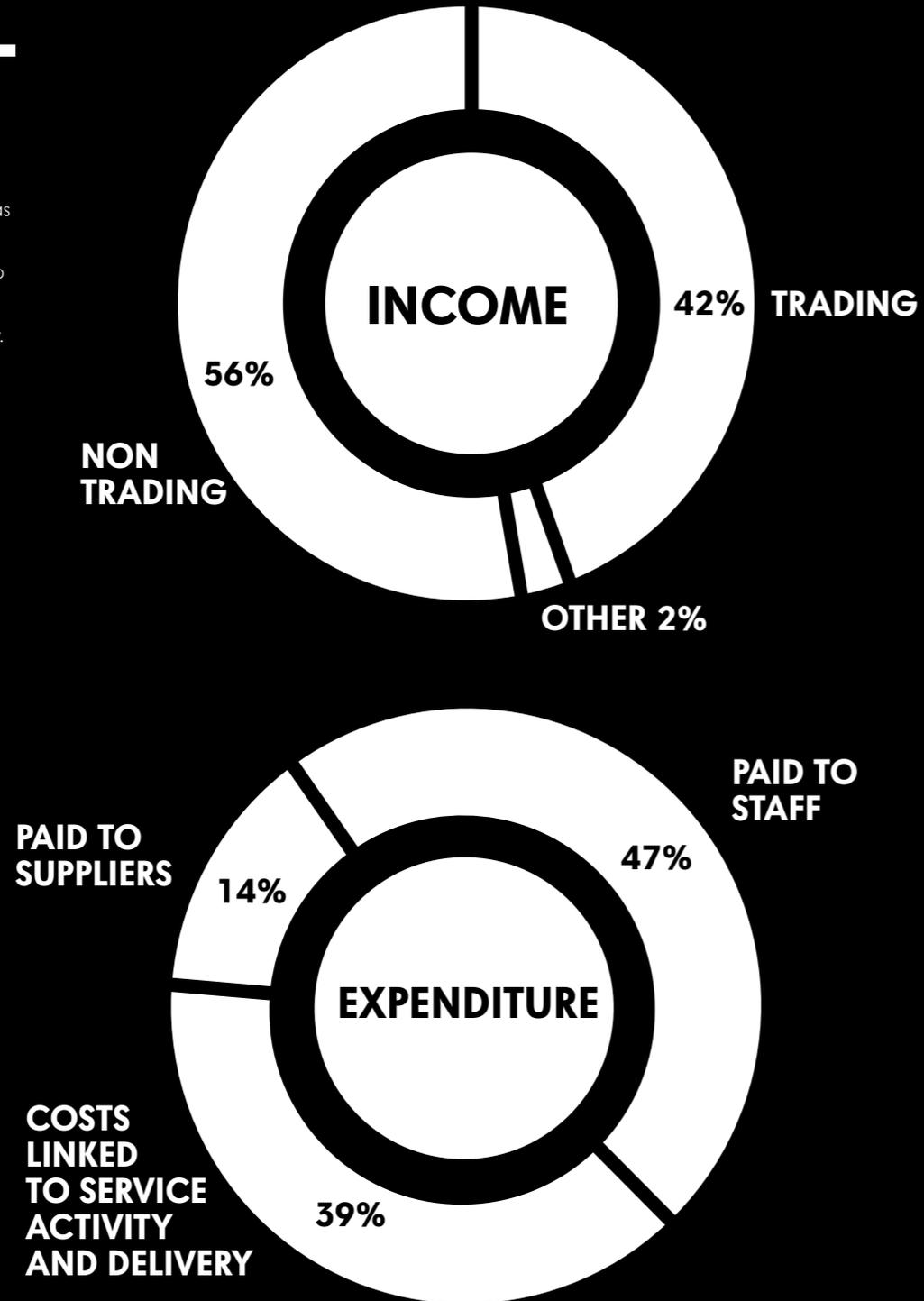
Over 1,400 students were referred to over 140 local community organisations to undertake volunteering opportunities this year, and our Into Schools programme saw our volunteers working with over 2,400 local school children.

### Case Study:

English Conversation Group: new for this year, this project saw students working with over 50 refugees, asylum seekers and non-native English speakers with amazing results. Together they've prepared people for their IELTS exams, enabled the sick to communicate with their doctors without the aid of a translator, and helped parents discuss their children's educational needs with teachers.

## FINANCE

Financially we had a very successful year, with our Social Enterprise bottom line contribution coming in within 1% of expected turnover and 4% of budgeted surplus (subject to audit). Our overall surplus of £95,000 (subject to audit), was well ahead of budget projections due to an underspend on staff salaries in the membership area. This will help move us toward a positive reserves position in line with our Reserves Policy.



## PEOPLE

Our staff continued to drive excellence throughout the organisation, and this year we maintained our overall staff satisfaction at 100%. However, our staff survey results have highlighted some areas to be focussed upon in 16/17. Staff agreeing that they were satisfied or very satisfied remained at 100% with a rating of 1.8 on a scale of 1 (very satisfied) to 4 (very dissatisfied). However, there were decreases in satisfaction on feedback from managers, down 17% to 77%, and communication from upper management was down 9% to 77%.



## AWARDS



## COMMUNICATIONS

Communications with our members is very important to us and we were delighted to learn that 97% of students were satisfied with the quality of our promotional materials. We do have more work to do in ensuring that all students are aware of our activities and services after only 74% said they felt sufficiently informed.

Our new IT system continues to work well for us, and our social media presence continued to have impact. Some of the key metrics were as follows:

## SOCIAL MEDIA

<b>TOTAL EMAIL RECIPIENTS</b>	<b>HIGHEST FACEBOOK POSTREACH</b>	<b>MSL SYSTEM TRANSACTIONS</b>
<b>2.2M</b>	<b>108K</b>	<b>49.5K</b>

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