

# Impact Report and Plan for Action 2022-23

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# Welcome

## 50 years of students making change.

Over the last two years we have mobilised 8,500 supporters, 10 student unions and engaged thousands more in our campaigns.

In Northern Ireland, we got money into students pockets with the covid disruption grants, made the message clear at Stormont that students need more support and secured promises for students in election manifestos.

Across the UK, we demanded students deserved better in response to Covid-19 and won! We created a New Vision for Education and went on Strike to show how it can be done.

Our work on decolonising education set up a political education programme with a library, decol hubs, and a number of regional.

- Laptop and IT support across education.
- Access to Erasmus+ in Northern Ireland, replacement Taith scheme in Wales.
- Student loan threshold frozen after 20,000 supporters took action.
- End use of NDAs pledge signed by 54 institutions.
- 800 supporters with 40 students' unions signing our open letter calling on institutions to divest to decolonise

### Impact 2020-22

As we returned to campuses and in real life events, we continued to fight for students.

- £800 million into students' pockets from rent wins & new student support.
- U-turn on A Level and BTEC exam grades.
- No Detriment policies across universities.
- Post-study work visas extended.
- Student Mental Health in strategies in Wales and NI.

**£800 million into students' pockets**

from rent wins & new student support.

“I really look forward to working with you over the next two years.”

Chloe Ferguson,  
NUS-USI President 2022 - 2024



### Office Leadership

NUS is led by 7 elected full-time officers, the officer team have set the following leadership intentions for their term in office:

#### Community

Building relationships/connections so people feel part of something and work together.

#### Voice

We will ensure relevance by listening to and amplifying the voice of students.

#### Support

To ensure our student movement is sustainable by having student unions & officers who are sufficiently supported.



# NUS - What do we do?

**We exist to make education and our world better through the collective power of students.**

**Our movement exists to make education and our world better through the collective power of students.**

Our first 100 years were spent building collective democracy, resources, and power in an analogue world. Our next 100 will be spent building collective democracy, resources and power in a digital world.

**Today's challenges won't be solved without students, students' unions, and our national union.**

In the last 100 years students faced society's most existential challenges: war, fascism, apartheid, oppression, poverty, and universal public services. Today's challenges need our attention just as much: climate chaos, mental health crisis, inequality, and depleted public services.

History shows that it is students who find the solutions to society's challenges. The NHS was still a pipe dream in the 1930s when students were fighting for students to get access to universal healthcare.

Many viewed Apartheid, LGBT+ and women's rights as marginal causes when students were campaigning in the 1960s and 70s. Climate change was widely mocked when we pushed our first environmental campaigns in the 1970s. And #MeToo was still over a decade away when we gathered our first evidence of

sexual violence and harassment on our campuses.

**Campaigning in the student movement delivers a triple benefit to students, education and to society.**

We've always seen the connection between our education and our world. The unique thing about education is that it's a gateway to society: to the future workforce, and to the leaders and communities of tomorrow. With so many of the population now engaging as a student or an apprentice, post-16 education has never been more important. Education, training, and research fuels our society. And education is the single most impactful place to create lasting societal change.

So when students campaign together we deliver a triple benefit:

- Benefit students' lives here and now through immediate change.
- Benefit education by driving constant improvements in quality, access and outcomes.
- Immeasurable benefit to society by nurturing tomorrow's leaders, workers and citizens.

**Why we do what we do?**

We want to live in a society where everyone can live freely as themselves without structural discrimination or oppression.

Where people have high levels of physical and emotional wellbeing with a strong sense of identity and belonging.





# NUS-USI Impact Report 2020-22

## Students Deserve Better

**Our Students Deserve Better campaign mobilised thousands of students to sign petitions, write to their MLAs, share their personal stories, lobby government and demand change.**

Together we won over £40 million from the NI Executive to support students through the pandemic.

This included:

- £22m for £500 Covid Disruption payment for FT HE students.
- £8.5m to address student financial hardship, digital poverty (£60 grants for FE) and to support student unions with mental health provision.
- £4.1m for the provision of a safe working, learning and research environment.
- £3.1m to compensate universities for lost income arising from rental pauses and releasing students from accommodation contracts.

There were also wins of:

- £2000 recognition payments for health and social care students on placements.
- Period Poverty pilot scheme for HE launching in September.

## Student Mental Health

We worked closely with members on a consultation response to the Mental Health Strategy which failed to mention students.

**Won: Students included in the 10-year Mental Health Strategy**

## ERASMUS+

Working with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) we secured support from the Irish Government for NI students.

**Won: NI students can access Erasmus+ funded by the Irish Government (£2.1 million)**

## Our student unions backed our campaign

- 55 student leaders signed a letter to the Economy Minister
- 10 students unions supported the campaigns over the 2 years.

## Students took action!

Over 11,500 campaign actions by over 8500 students.

## We put students on the agenda!

- Increased media coverage and regular platform piece on Belfast Live.
- #studentsdeservebetter trending.
- Over 80 politicians signed up to our campaign pledge.
- Our petition to extend the Covid disruption payments was presented in the Assembly.
- Mobilised 800 people to write to MLAs encouraged them to vote in favour of the Supporting Students Motion.
- Supporting Students Motion passed.
- Presented to the Economy Committee
- Presented Students Deserve Better campaign to a number of local councils.
- Protests at Stormont on No Keys No Degrees around the housing shortage
- and for the Support our student healthcare heroes campaign.
- Student House of Horror stories on twitter got over 1 million impressions and directly engaged over 200 people.
- Stop the cuts campaign launched after proposals to reduce financial support for students, cut EMA and apprenticeships.
- Directly lobbied the Minister for the Economy and Minister for Finance on the cuts.
- Students Deserve Better Manifesto secured asks in 5 party manifestos in the 2022 Assembly Election.



THE NUS Officer Team 2020-22



# Campaigns plan 2022-23

## NUS-USI Cost of Survival Campaign

### What's the situation?

We have come out of a global pandemic and into the worst cost of living crisis in 40 years.

Student incomes have been decreasing for over a decade. Student support is the same as it was 13 years ago, despite increasing costs. With inflation skyrocketing and student incomes staying static, more students will fall into poverty.

We need immediate government support to help students to survive the cost of living crisis, as well as longer term strategies to make Northern Ireland a place where students thrive.

Northern Ireland has been left without an Executive or Assembly; caretaker ministers are in charge. We have until 28 October before the Secretary of State will be required to call another election during the winter. Students can't wait. We need additional support and we need it now.

### SMART Goal

**Win cost of living support for students to help them survive this crisis and build the case for a support system where student poverty is not inevitable by design.**

## Our Targets

6 SUs

2k supporters engaged

### We are calling for:

Cost of Living payments for students, Rent freeze, Cuts travel cost.



### Campaign Strategy

This is a crisis and we need urgent action. Students are not included in many of the benefits being rolled out and called for so we need to build a community of support to cut through the noise.

#### Student Stories

We will create the spaces for students to tell their stories and have a voice through events like town hall meetings and rallies but also online and in the press.

#### Simple Asks

We will keep the message simple. Students need support and they need it now. We have 3 key asks for government.

**National** - We will work with NUS to lobby the Treasury for a student support package.

**Local** - We will push at Stormont on housing and transport

**On campus** - We will support student unions making change for students on campus.

### Tactics

**Events** - we will mobilise students at Freshers ahead of a meeting to discuss the impact of the crisis on students with a Town Hall Meeting, supporting rallies and campaigning together.

**Petitions** - we will mobilise students to join our movement by signing up to the campaign and recruiting others.

**Lobbying** - taking the message to where holds the power to make change = Westminster, Stormont and on campuses across Northern Ireland.



# Campaigns plan 2022-23

## Cost of Living: Across the UK

### What's the situation?

Our students are spread across Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They've come to our unis and colleges from all across the world – and just around the corner. What unites us right now is that we are all in a cost of living crisis.

As prices soar, students are being pushed to the brink. Our research has shown 96% of students are cutting back on spending, a third left with just £50 a month after paying rent and bills.

The crisis is having a devastating impact on wellbeing, with 90% of students reporting an impact on their mental health.

Students need money in their pockets, better protections around housing, lower cost of transport and to be able to unionise in the places they work. Across the UK, our shared goal is a student support package.

### SMART Goal

**By July 2023, we will win support for students to survive the cost of living crisis, built a cross-party consensus on NUS' priority issues and laid the foundations for an education where students can thrive.**

This campaign will run in

**nus**  
national union of students

**ucm** cymru  
undeb cenedlaethol y myfyrwyr  
**nus** wales  
national union of students

**nus**  
Northern Ireland

## Our Targets

Across our shared work streams, we will engage:

**190 students' unions, across unis and colleges.**

**45,000 supporters, to build our base of those who back our ideas.**

**850 activists, who will pro-actively engage in our campaign work and get their campuses involved.**

### Campaign Strategy

All of our students share a common problem, but the path to addressing it and the tactics we take are different depending on our national governments and devolved administrations.

In each part of NUS UK, we have different asks to best work with our members. Across the UK, we will share a narrative and our power in the media, and we will team up to strengthen our positions.

We will share lobbying efforts across Wales, NUS-USI and England to target the Westminster government, as we all need them to release funding for our students, and we will work together to lay the foundations for the General Election and win manifesto commitments to the Apprentice Living Wage.

We have a shared commitment to mobilising to organise, building power, and supporting grassroots activism. We'll work with our members to amplify our influence, and build a bold and powerful movement.

### Tactics

We will use our media platforms to keep the spotlight on the student cost of living crisis, continuing to train and support students to tell their own stories, supported by the evidence base we build.

We will focus on a shared lobbying effort for student support through an Emergency Budget, and bring unions into a regrouping effort immediately after this to plan our next steps.



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