

Impact Report 2022-23

NUS UK's work across England,
Wales, Scotland and NI

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Welcome

Our movement has fought to protect students against the worst of the cost-of-living crisis. Now it's time to work towards a better future.

It has been an unrelenting decade to be a student. Unrelenting too for student representatives and people working in the student movement. Sustained budget cuts in all four nations; the impact of Brexit on student mobility and international students; ongoing industrial action; a global pandemic; and now a cost-of-living crisis stretching students' budgets to breaking point and reducing their access to education. Across society, more workers have taken strike action for fairer pay and working conditions, with the majority of the public sector not getting a real-terms or above-inflation pay rise since 2007.

Our movement has stood up for students facing the worst impacts of this crisis. Soaring inflation and sky-high bills are affecting almost everyone, so making sure student voices and experiences are being heard above the noise has been crucial in 2022-23. By working together, NUS and Students' Unions have delivered inspiring campaigns, extensive research, practical solutions, and unrelenting media coverage at a local and national level. It is only by working together than we have made sure that students' stories have been told and our case has been put to Uni and college senior management, government, and the public. Governments listened too – across the UK we won more than half a billion pounds in extra support for students, including huge boosts to maintenance funding in Wales, Scotland and NI, as well as £15 million hardship funding for students in England.

These wins undoubtedly helped and will continue to help students across the UK to deal with the ongoing impacts of high inflation and access their education. But these solutions are just sticking plasters that fail to recognise that our education system is fundamentally broken and is continually failing those it should be lifting up. Students are the doctors, nurses and public sector workers of tomorrow, but instead of supporting them to realise their aspirations, governments are putting more and more barriers in their way. With

a general election on the horizon, it's time to get students thinking about the future of education and ready to vote for that vision.

With this in mind, we launched a coalition campaign – Turn Up – focused on voter registration for young people, ahead of May's local elections in England and NI. This is a campaign in partnership with key youth organisations. In the run up to the next General Election, we want this to be the biggest ever youth voter registration campaign, and we'll need the help of each and every one of our supporters and member students' unions to make that a reality. We'll make sure students are registered to vote, have access to free voter ID and are empowered to Turn Up and make an informed vote on polling day.

We will also lead the National Conversation on Education 'Our Future' creating the vision on how we can rebuild the system with students at the heart. This will form the basis of a student manifesto calling on all parties to pledge their support for students.

Officer Leadership

NUS is led by six elected full-time officers, and the officer team set the following leadership intentions when their terms began in summer 2022.

Community

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

Voice

Ensuring relevance by listening to and amplifying the voice of students.

Support

Championing and supporting students' unions and officers to ensure our student movement is sustainable.

£580m
to support
students
with the
cost-of-living crisis

Across the UK we won:

- £580m in hardship support and maintenance funding increases
- Student support to rise by 40% in NI, 11% in Scotland and 9.4% in Wales
- Real Living Wage for all public sector apprentices in Scotland
- EMA increased by a third in Wales for FE students
- £40m for students in NI via the UK spring budget
- More than half of universities in England pledged to stop using NDAs
- 5,000 students and young people enfranchised with free voter ID worth £75,000
- £2 cap on bus fares in England
- Over 100 European SUs, SAs and societies opposed blocking of GRR Bill
- £15m hardship funding in England, £3.6m in Wales and £2.8m in NI
- 70 SUs and 800 students submitted evidence to MPs' cost-of-living inquiry
- Student accommodation included in rent freeze in Scotland
- 85% of MPs emailed and over 10,000 emails to MPs/MSPs/MSs/MLAs
- Student renters in England protected in Renters' Reform Bill
- NUS Scotland 50th anniversary reception at Scottish Parliament
- Half price public transport for young people in NI
- Welsh Government student mental health working group established
- 150 officers from 80 SUs/SAs wrote to the Chancellor ahead of the Budget
- Sector-leading research on student cost-of-living crisis in all four nations
- Regulations to tackle harassment and sexual misconduct in HE in England
- Media coverage worth £17m in equivalent ad spend

NUS Strategy

NUS' purpose is to bring about ahead-of-the-curve change at a scale that students and SUs couldn't achieve alone.

Our enduring hope is for a just society where everyone can access opportunity and possibility through lifelong education. Our value is measured by the change we collectively make in the world.

What's so special about us?

As a coordinated collective, students play a unique role in our society, creating hope, vision and solutions for the future.

Students' unions and NUS exist to harness the collective power and potential of students at a local and national level. We are one of the largest social justice movements in the world and our defining feature is that we are the vanguard of social change.

100 years of social justice

NUS was founded on Ivison Macadam's idea that 'if students are cooperating today surely there is hope for tomorrow'.

In the last 100 years our movement has proudly faced into society's most existential challenges: war, fascism, apartheid, oppression, poverty, universal public services. History shows that it is students who find the solutions to society's challenges.

our movement exists to make education & the world better through the collective power of students

Independent investigation into antisemitism

In May 2022, NUS commissioned Rebecca Tuck KC to lead an independent investigation into recent allegations of antisemitism as well as historic matters and broader culture. NUS worked closely with the Union of Jewish Students throughout. The **investigation report** detailed a shocking account of antisemitism within the student movement.

It is a truly difficult read for all of us but we welcome the clarity it brings to enable us to act with confidence to tackle antisemitism head on.

There is no place for antisemitism within NUS and we are committed to ensuring that Jewish students feel safe and welcome in every corner of our movement.

Our priority now is to take forward the recommendations from Rebecca Tuck KC's independent report to tackle antisemitism in all its forms across the breadth and depth of NUS. We have developed an **action plan** which will help us achieve this and set up an Advisory Panel to scrutinise this plan and oversee its implementation.



Impact 2022-23

Winning for students during the cost-of-living crisis

Campaigning with more than 200 students' unions and 80,000 supporters, our cost of living campaigns achieved so much across the UK:

- £568m extra student support in 2023-24
- £21.4m in additional hardship funding
- EMA increased by a third in Wales
- Real Living Wage for public sector apprentices in Scotland
- £2 cap on bus fares in England
- Half price public transport for young people in NI
- Student accommodation included in Scotland rent freeze
- APPG for Students inquiry into cost of living
- £40m for NI students via UK budget
- NUS cost of living surveys achieved national media coverage

Through a strategy involving member engagement and on-the-ground organising, digital mobilising, extensive media work and lobbying parliamentarians across the UK, we are making sure students continue to be heard during the cost-of-living crisis.

Media coverage worth more than £17m in equivalent ad spend across 2022-23 helped ensure the issue remained relevant and in the news.

Boosting support and reducing students' day-to-day costs

Cost of living campaigns across all four nations focused not only on increasing student support payments, but also on reducing their outgoings. We won rent freezes, reductions in travel costs, and SUs won cheaper food and essentials on campuses across the UK.

Students have been heard by decision makers. 85% of MPs received emails from more than 3,000 supporters, while MSPs, MSs and MLAs were contacted in their thousands calling for support from devolved governments.

70 SUs and 800 students contributed to the APPG for Students inquiry into the cost-of-living crisis. This led to the group of MPs supporting many of our campaign asks and echoing our narrative on the wider societal impacts of student hardship in Parliament.

We also mobilised hundreds of students' unions and student representatives through campaign training days, rallies, open letters, campus visits and more.

Turn Up – The UK's biggest ever student and youth voter registration campaign

In April we launched the Turn Up campaign in England and NI to coincide with May's local elections. These were the first elections in England that required voters to show photo ID before they cast their vote.

We wanted students to know the new rules and be able to take part in democracy, and 5,000 people used the code 'NUS' to get free voter ID worth a total of £75,000 courtesy of our campaign partner, CitizenCard.

Social media posts on the launch of Turn Up were seen by more than a million people and a post promoting CitizenCard was retweeted more than 7,000 times, including by several celebrities and influencers with big followings.

We're just getting started on the Turn Up campaign, which will play a big part in our campaign work in the year ahead as we look to influence manifestos and mobilise students to vote in the next general election.

Our Liberation Work in 2022-23

We mobilised 108 students' unions, associations and societies from across Europe to sign an open letter to the UK's Minister for Women and Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, on the UK Government's decision to block the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.

Working with campaign organisations Not on My Campus and Can't Buy My Silence, we've secured commitments from more than half of universities in England to end the use of NDAs to silence victims of sexual misconduct, bullying and harassment. We also won new OfS regulations to tackle sexual misconduct and harassment in HE in England.

We launched a Liberation Library, bringing together resources to help Black, Trans, LGBT+, Disabled and Women students design local campaigns.

PROTECT YOUR FUTURE
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NUS Across the Four Nations



Impact in Scotland

The Fighting for Students campaign won a £900 increase to student support payments for undergraduate and estranged students in HE and care-experienced students in FE in 2023-24. The campaign also delivered the Real Living Wage for public sector apprentices, and student accommodation was included in the Scottish Government's rent freeze in the first half of 2022-23.

5,300 students took part in the Cost of Survival survey, and more than 3,000 emails were sent to MSPs about the cost-of-living crisis.

We mobilised 250 students at rallies in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and we led the fight against the UK Government's blocking of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.



Impact in Wales

Through the Thriving, Not Surviving campaign, we won a 9.4% increase to the student maintenance package and the Welsh Government increased the value of the Education Maintenance Allowance by a third for FE students in Wales.

Campaigning on the Welsh Budget won hardship funding worth £2.3m for HE students and £1.3m for FE students, as well as £4.87m for apprenticeships.

Lobbying on the cost of student housing resulted in a commitment by the Welsh Government to publish a rent controls white paper, while NUS Wales will sit on a newly established government working group on student mental health.



Impact in Northern Ireland

NUS-USI won £98m for students during the cost-of-living crisis, including £55m to increase maintenance support by 40% in 2023-24. We also secured a commitment to a full review of the NI student funding system.

We won £40m for students in NI via the UK spring budget and got £2.8m from the Department for the Economy to boost hardship funding. When the Secretary of State announced public transport fares were increasing by 7%, we won a further discount for young people with the yLink card, going from 1/3 off to 50% off.

Our research report on the impact of the cost of living on students 'The Cost of Survival' was picked up in the national media, we hosted a roundtable event with political representatives and mobilised students at the local elections in May with a mini-manifesto.

Impact in England

In the face of a political environment that has become increasingly hostile towards students, young people and education, we harnessed the collective voice of 50,000 supporters and more than 125 Students' Unions to win £15m additional hardship funding, a £2 cap on bus fares across England and widespread media coverage of the student cost-of-living crisis.

In response to the blatant attempt to suppress the voice of students and young people through new photo ID laws, we enfranchised more than 5,000 people with free ID worth £75,000 so they could vote in local elections. We will continue to provide this up until the next General Election to make sure students can make their voice heard

Away from our primary campaigns, we also won increased protections for students in the Renters' Reform Bill as part of the Renters' Reform Coalition. Working with the 20-strong coalition we have been able to fight for students' rights as part of a movement towards a fairer deal for all tenants.

Partnering with other organisations that share our values has expanded our capacity and reach. Working with Generation Rent, British Youth Council and Democracy Classroom on the Turn Up campaign has improved its reach and we are working and learning from Organise Now as part of our student power at work campaign.

Our Year in Numbers

- We won **£580m** to support Students and Students' Unions across the UK
- We mobilised **80,000** supporters in the four nations
- More than **750,000 people** were engaged by our campaigns
- Our social media posts were seen over **3 million** times
- **140** Students' Unions and Students' Associations were part of our campaigns
- Supporters contacted more than **500 MPs** and more than **3,000 emails** were sent to politicians
- We met with **over 250** decision makers, including politicians, civil servants and education sector stakeholders.
- We secured media coverage worth **£17m** in ad spend – **almost ten times our income!**
- Our campaigns were mentioned in **5,000 online articles, 2,000 TV and Radio pieces** and **750 print publications**
- We sent more than **2.5 million emails** to supporters and our new website was viewed **half a million times**.

Our Year in Numbers

Across the four nations...

£580m 

won to help students
with cost of living

3m 

people saw our
social media posts

£17m 

in equivalent ad spend was
secured in media coverage

80k 

supporters took
campaign actions

3,000 

emails were sent to
politicians by supporters

5,000 

online articles mentioned our
campaigns

750k 

people were engaged
by our campaigns

500+ 

MPs were contacted by
supporters

2,000 

TV and Radio broadcasts
mentioned our campaigns

140+ 

SUs / SAs were part of
our campaigns

250+ 

key stakeholders met with
to discuss our campaigns

750 

print articles mentioned
our campaigns