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# LSE STUDENTS' UNION

LSESU ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

LSE

The London School of Economics and

23

01

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02

# INTRODUCTION

BY JAMES RELF,  
General Secretary & Chair of the Trustee Board

➤ LSE Students' Union (LSESU) is the hub for student life here at LSE. Together, we engage and empower students throughout their journey at LSE and work to advance their education, as set out in our charitable objects. In 2022, we celebrated the 125th anniversary of the founding of LSESU, a history rich in progressive change as an institution which, since 1897, has gone on to shape the leaders of tomorrow.

LSESU continues to see growth in its level of engagement through its responsibility and oversight of all sports clubs, societies, and elections at LSE. In 2022/23, we facilitated 2772 events across the year, organised by our 300 sports clubs and societies. This growth was inspired by the campus' complete opening up since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside LSESU's expansion into the new Marshall Building at the beginning of the year. Additionally, we saw record levels of participation in our democratic functions, with a 25% turnout in the 2023 Lent Term Elections (more than double the sector average), empowering students to lead LSE.

LSESU's Advice Service and Hardship Fund continues to be accessed more than ever before in light of temporal challenges in 2022/23, such as inflation, the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact of industrial action led by the University and College Union (UCU). In 2022/23, the Advice Service handled 674 cases and

administered £101,918.16 in Hardship & Childcare Fund Awards.

This year, we have seen a significant change in our leadership team. In February 2023, we said farewell to our CEO James Hann who, across five years, had overseen LSESU's split from Arts SU, and steered the organisation through the pandemic. We welcome Ben Whittaker as LSESU's new CEO, whom I am thrilled to work closely with in devising the new LSESU strategy, due to launch in 2023/24.

We now look to the next 125 years, noting the opportunities and challenges it may bring, and reaffirming LSESU's commitment to advance every students' education and support the school's founding purpose, which is "to know the causes of things for the betterment of society".



**James Relf**  
LSESU General Secretary 2023/24.  
Chair of the Board of Trustees 2023/24.



“

It is important to reflect on the year and our journey, but what excites us most is the path in front of us.

”



## 03 INTRODUCTION

BY BEN WHITTAKER,  
Chief Executive

➤ I'm very happy to be writing to you as the new CEO of LSESU, having started in May 2023. It is an honour to follow in the footsteps of James Hann, who has shown exceptional dedication and leadership during his tenure. I extend my heartfelt thanks to James for his hard work and unwavering commitment to the betterment of LSESU.

With that, I am pleased to report that the Students' Union has maintained strong performance across all key areas of our work. We remain steadfast in delivering outstanding services to students, focusing on key aspects that contribute to an enriching student experience. This accomplishment is a testament to the collective efforts of our dedicated staff, whose commitment to quality continues to drive our success.

Our financial standing remains strong, providing a solid foundation for future endeavours. I want to express my thanks to the incredible student officers who tirelessly contribute towards transforming our work. Their innovative projects, campaigns, and activities help to enhance the overall experience for their peers and fellow students, creating a vibrant and dynamic student community.

However, my vision extends beyond

maintaining the status quo. Looking ahead, I am excited about focusing our strategy on achieving excellence in all aspects of our work, with the goal of fully transforming the student experience at LSE.

Reflecting on the past year, I am confident that LSESU will continue to deliver sector-leading work. We will persevere in our dedication to ensuring that LSE students have the best possible experience during their time with us.

The journey ahead is filled with promise, and I am eager to collaborate with the entire LSESU and LSE community to build on our successes and explore new avenues for growth and innovation.

**Ben Whittaker**  
LSESU Chief Executive

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# THE UNION AND ITS TRUSTEES

LSESU is a not-for-profit organisation run by and for The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) students. Our aim is to help our members make the most of all the life-changing experiences open to them during their time at the university.

➤ Founded in 1897, LSESU is both a charity and a company, operating under the 1994 Education Act and registered with the Charity Commission.

All LSE students automatically become LSESU members when they enrol at LSE. By joining us, our members gain access to all of our groups, such as societies, athletics union clubs, and campaigns, and services such as our gym and independent Advice Service.

Since we are a member-led organisation, any member can step up for election in a range of elected representation posts, ranging from volunteer trustees and part-time officers, to full time paid sabbatical officers. Our members can also use their voice and vote in **regular elections, Union General Meetings (UGM), and Annual General Meetings (AGM).**

Our Trustee Board has overall responsibility for the legal, strategic, and financial health of the Students' Union. This means that they are the ultimate decisionmakers and have collective responsibility for all activities at LSESU. The Trustee Board makes sure we're the best we can be today, while also thinking about how we can be better for the future. Trustees are guided by three main considerations:

1



To make sure everything we do **BENEFITS** our students

2



To ensure that the Union is **FINANCIALLY SOLVENT**

3



To ensure that everything we do is **LEGALLY PERMISSIBLE**

The Trustee Board consists of up to four external trustees, five sabbatical officers, four students and one external member (or more) appointed by the trustees themselves. Internal trustees are elected by our members during first (Michaelmas) or second (Lent) term elections, serving up to two years. The trustees work closely with LSESU staff and make major decisions about the activities and services of the Union.

All trustees undertake an induction programme and are given briefings on the organisations operations and goals. The induction programme, delivered by the company secretary, covers the nature of the trustee role, provides an understanding of the legal responsibilities of being a trustee, and provides an appreciation of LSESU's vision, mission and values, as well as the relationship between

trustees and staff teams. Newly elected or appointed trustees are invited to attend one or more board meetings before taking up their positions.

The board undertakes regular self-assessment and further development initiatives as required, ensuring commitment to continuous improvement and effectiveness.

The Students' Union's governing document is its **Constitution (Memorandum and Articles of Association)**, supported by the **LSESU Byelaws**. These set out in detail the rules that we follow. A list of the current trustees are available at: [www.lsesu.com/union/trustees/](http://www.lsesu.com/union/trustees/)

After the student led democracy review in 2022/23, plans are in place to radically change how LSE students can input into Union activity.

# STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

> **The trustees** (who are also directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards) and applicable law.

Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its net incoming resources for that year.

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

**In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:**

- > **Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.**
- > **Observe the methods and principles in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.**
- > **Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.**
- > **State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed, and explained within financial statements.**
- > **Prepare the financial statements presuming that the organisation will continue to operate unless it is inappropriate to presume that it will not.**

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, sufficient to disclose at any time, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity at that time, and to enable the trustees to ensure that, where any statements of accounts are prepared by them under section 132(1) of the Charities Act 2011, those statements of accounts comply with the requirements of regulations under that provision. They are responsible for such internal control as they determine necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the financial and other information included on the charity's website.

On behalf of the Trustee Board



**James Relf**  
LSESU General Secretary 2023/24.  
Chair of the Board of Trustees 2023/24.

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# OUR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

➤ LSESU OPERATES ON DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, working for and with our members. Our members are represented by people they elect, such as trustees, part-time officers, and full-time Sabbatical Officers. The Union holds regular Union General Meetings (UGM) through which students are able to propose and vote on motions.

Student representation is delegated to the General Secretary who, along with fellow student officers, focuses on policy, lobbying, and advocacy, in order to ensure that LSE’s students are heard in university fora. The 2022/23 Sabbatical Officer team is made up of four full time officers (Education Officer, Activities and Development Officer, Community and Welfare Officer, and the General Secretary).

The Union also employs a number of non-student core staff to provide continuity, consistency, and knowledge in the management of its many activities. Day-to-day operational and staff management is delegated to the Chief Executive, who is accountable to the Trustee Board for strategy implementation and operational performance.

The Trustee Board meets at least five times per year to receive reports from subcommittees, officers, staff, and the Chief Executive, to review the Union’s strategic and operational performance, and to review and agree organisational policies.

## EMPLOYEES

In 2022/23, the Union employed an average of



and the total number of student staff employed in the year was



Staff are employed to provide key services such as our Advice Service, support for student groups, academic representation, and our range of catering facilities. Staff are overseen by senior leaders.



## SENIOR LEADERS SALARIES

(Key Management Personnel)

➤ The remuneration of senior management is consistent with human resources policies across the organisation, with the policy objective of ensuring that they are provided with appropriate incentives to encourage enhanced performance and are, in a fair and responsible manner, rewarded for their individual contributions to the Union’s success.

The appropriateness and relevance of the remuneration policy is reviewed periodically including reference to comparisons with other unions to ensure that the Union remains sensitive to the broader issues of pay and employment conditions elsewhere.

Delivery of the Union’s charitable vision and purpose is primarily dependent on our key management personnel. Staff costs are the largest single element of our charitable expenditure.

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# OUR IMPACT

➤ **2022/23** saw a full return to campus and in-person learning. The Union is delighted to see students being able to enjoy brand new state-of-the-art Marshall Building facilities, new events, and access to campaigns such as Consent.ed, Rejoining Stonewall, and Bring Back the LSE Nursery.

BE KIND.  
LET'S  
LOOK OUT  
FOR ONE  
ANOTHER.

COMMUNITY IS KINDNESS.

BE KIND.  
LET'S  
LOOK OUT  
FOR ONE  
ANOTHER.

COMMUNITY IS KINDNESS.





# STUDENT VOICE

“It’s often hard to admit one needs help, but it’s also deeply reassuring to know that LSE is ready to use its resources to help you at what seems like your worst. The help came through quite quickly after I asked and provided the necessary information, and I can’t adequately express how much the support has meant for my mental wellbeing. I’m truly thankful.”

Advice Service User

➤ **Representing students** is at the core of our mission. Our student voice and representation team ensure that all our representative and democratic channels are run effectively and openly.

LSESU is responsible for training and supporting Academic Representatives (ARs). This year, we supported **676 Representatives**, electing **158 of these positions in-house**, and had **78.5% of ARs**, and **87.5% of Department Representatives** reporting that they felt satisfied with their experience.

Following on from the **2021/22** democracy review, **2022/23** saw most of the recommendations implemented, with new positions voted in for the **2023/24** academic year.

Whilst our Michaelmas Term elections only secured an **8% voter turnout**, **77% of the roles were contested**, and we saw an increased representation across all underrepresented demographics (BAME, international, postgraduate, and mature students).

The Lent Term elections, which is when we elect our main representative roles was the first set to elect the posts from the new democratic structure, and the engagement with these elections were LSESU’s best, with a **25% voter turnout**, and all positions contested/filled for the first time.

**2022/23** also saw implementation of other recommendations from the democracy review,

introducing Student Town Halls and Student Panels.

Student Panels are comprised of students selected to be representative of the wider LSE population. An initiative designed to empower the voices of the unrepresented, their introduction proved a success, with the highest number of policy proposals ever received (**29 proposals, 18 discussed, and 15 passed**) and were given positive feedback, with **97.5% stating they would recommend joining to a friend**, and **100% reporting feeling supported** by SU staff.

Our Representation Team also delivered the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), as well as the BME Mentoring Scheme; an initiative which have continued to grow year-on-year, with **230 mentor/mentee matches in 2022/23**, with **79% of mentors**, and **97% of mentees reporting an “excellent” or “good” experience**. The schemes reach and impact secured LSESU a nomination at the National Diversity Awards.

LSESU also exists to support its students through any challenges they face. Our Advice Service plays a key role in helping students as they navigate LSE’s internal assessment regulation processes.

The Advice Service also provides housing advice and funding for students experiencing financial hardship. **2022/23** saw **674 cases** and **£101,918.16** awarded to students. This was achieved while maintaining the exceptionally high levels of satisfaction, with **93% of users saying they would recommend the service**.

# COMMUNITIES

START



2022/23 was a big year for LSE Students' Union (LSESU) Clubs and Societies - there was a notable rise in participation and engagement with student activities following the pandemic.

The LSESU Societies team supported **266** registered LSESU Societies with **6398** individual memberships sold. Of these **6398** memberships, **59%** were aged 18-21, **62%** were undergraduates, and **55.91%** were female. The breakdown between academic years were as follows: **63%** 1st Years, **20%** 2nd Years, **15%** 3rd Years and **2%** 4th Years. LSESU Societies organised **1808** events, including **55** Flagship events in Winter Term alone. Examples of the former included a week-long German Symposium, a Diplomacy Ball for over 400 students, and two Model United Nations Conferences for University and High School students alike. As part of the support for these events, the Societies Team also processed 795 financial reimbursements totalling **£406,000**.

During 2022/23 year, the Students' Union Fund (SUF) which serves to support LSE students by supplying funding to bring their inspiring ideas and activities to life, awarded **£120,722** across **122** student-led projects and initiatives. This was a **154%** increase in the number of applications received compared to 2021/22.

In the annual Society and Sports Club Committee Elections, we elected **677** Society and **234** Sports Club Committee Members (**911** total) to lead our student groups.

The LSESU Sport and Recreation team supported 41 Sports Clubs, with **2793** memberships sold. We entered a record number of teams into BUCS (48) and LUSL (27) competitions, with 10 league winners and 5 cup winners. The Women's Table Tennis team were promoted into the Premiership division to compete against the best players in the country.

The LSESU Athletics Union organised various union-wide events, including an AU Fight Night, AU x RAG Fashion Show in the Marshall Building, and an AU Ball hosting 850 students to celebrate the sporting success of LSE students.

The LSESU gym generated **£104,000** in gym memberships, made up of **£31,500** from Freshers memberships, and **£11,600** from Summer School memberships. In the Marshall Building, the team introduced a new online booking system to make facility bookings more accessible and easier for its users.



“LSESU is a big help. I’m so grateful that they are there to support me at LSE!”



# SABBATICAL OFFICER PROJECTS

Our Sabbatical Officers are at the heart of our representation work.

➤ Depending on their role, they have core responsibilities (such as attending stakeholder meetings, internal panels, and LSE fora, such as boards and committees) as well as their own projects based on campaigning commitments. Some of these projects included only one Sabbatical officer, and others were done as a team.

This year, members of the Sabbatical team:



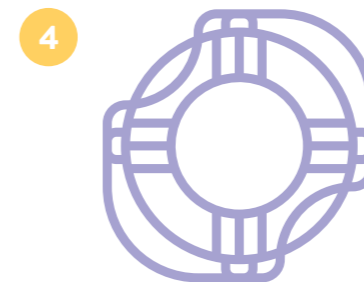
**1** **Recruited** the new CEO, bringing a brand new direction for the Students Union. Ben joins us with vast knowledge of higher education and extensive strategic development skills, with the new strategy focusing on the improvement of student satisfaction and departmental delivery.



**2** **Launched** The Charity Shop in collaboration with Raising and Giving (RAG) and Sustainable Futures Society. This initiative contributes significantly to the vibrant community atmosphere on campus, giving a second home to a vast collection of previously loved items.



**3** **Led** the campaign against LSE's decision to withdraw from the Stonewall Charter, lobbying to rejoin and to introduce additional support measures for the School's LGBTQ+ community, as well as pushing LSE to stop the use of NDAs by signing the Can't Buy My Silence pledge.



**4** **Supported** the Turkish relief efforts through a selection of fundraisers, including stallholding and other activities, generating money that directly supported charities on the ground during the devastating earthquake.



**5** **Organised** LSE's first ever week-long Varsity against Imperial College London, providing opportunity for 15 of our sports clubs to participate in the competition. Thanks to a great initial success, Varsity is now set to grow and grow each year.

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# FINANCE SUMMARY



## Income

➤ Our unrestricted income for the year increased to **£4,205,062** (£3,791,625 in 2022), primarily as a result of higher trading income, as more students returned to campus following the return to in-person learning and benefitting from a full year of SU spaces in the Marshall Building.



## Costs

➤ Total expenditure from unrestricted funds, before pensions deficit funding, was **£3,952,539** (£3,601,763 in 2022). Total expenditure from unrestricted funds, including pensions deficit funding, was **£4,121,944** (£3,524,760 in 2022).



## Outcomes

➤ The outcome for the year was a general fund surplus of **£252,523**, before pension funding deficit, (£189,832 surplus in 2022) which the trustees deem a satisfactory result. After the pension charges, this results in a general funds surplus of **£83,118** (£266,865 in 2022).



## Restricted Funds

➤ Restricted funds are funds for which LSESU acts as a custodian. These funds include monies held for Student Groups (ratified sports clubs and societies, which are branches of LSESU). These funds are raised by groups for themselves, or raised through grants received from LSE and other external organisations for specific student-facing projects. During the year there was a net deficit on restricted funds of **£135,727** (£80,327 deficit in 2022) giving a year end balance of **£767,626**.



### Future Funding

➤ LSESU has sufficient funds to meet its future obligations for 2023/24, but an increase in funding remains a priority. The subvention grant from LSE for 2023/24 has been confirmed at **£1,168,796** (£1,140,289 in 2022/23).



### Fixed Assets

➤ New till systems and furniture items were purchased during the year at a cost of **£28,555**.



### Reserves

➤ Unrestricted general reserves at the end of the year were **£505,532** (£316,877 in 2022). **£43,782** was transferred from designated funds to cover the clawback of funding from LSE in relation to the Marshall Building. The **£1,606,311** SUSS pension liability is shown as a separate designated fund as the payments do not fall due immediately (2022 £1,559,311). Total reserves (both restricted and unrestricted) at year end were **£123,935** in deficit.



### Reserves Policy

➤ LSESU reserves policy is that general (unrestricted) reserves should be **£300,000**, and the Union is compliant with this policy at year end. At this level, we believe that we would be able to continue the essential student-facing activities of the organisation in the event of a significant decline in non-School funding, while allowing time to re-establish or re-focus income generating activities. The trustees will review the reserves policy during 2023/24.



## Risk Management

**>** The Trustee Board is responsible for LSESU's risk management and the effectiveness of internal controls. On behalf of the trustees, the Senior Leadership Team performed a review of major risks and presented the outcome and the mitigating measures to the Audit and Risk Committee in February 2023.

Mitigating steps were identified such as data protection training, increasing the number of external Trustee Board Members, and working with LSE on our covid response.



## Relationship with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

**>** The Union receives a block grant from the School and occupies spaces in School-owned buildings. The occupation and use of these spaces is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between LSESU and LSE. In addition to the provision of space, LSE also pays for utilities, caretaking, and cleaning staff. This support is intrinsic to the relationship between LSE and LSESU. Although LSESU continues to generate supplementary funding from various mutual trading activities, it will always be dependent on LSE's support.

The Trustees consider it reasonable to anticipate that this, or equivalent, support from LSE will continue for the foreseeable future, as the Education Act 1994 imposes a duty on the School to ensure the financial viability of its student representative body in one form or another. The Trustees therefore consider the Union to be financially viable for the foreseeable future.

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# LOOKING AHEAD

Despite our pride in the successes of this year, we are committed to continuously developing the Union for the benefit of our members.

## The next year will see:

- > A newly developed strategic plan.
- > A full review of all our democratic procedures.
- > A continued and improved “Welcome” offer for incoming students, including consent education.