



Cardiff  
Students'  
Union

Undeb  
Myfyrwyr  
Caerdydd

# Annual Impact Report

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2021-22

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The heart of  
Cardiff student life

# Our strategic cycle

In 2021, we launched our new Strategic Plan which will take us through to 2025. This academic year was the first year of the five-year cycle, and represents the first year of following the new vision and aspirations.

## Our Strategy

The strategy aims to rebuild activities and services to pre-pandemic levels of student engagement, income and satisfaction, whilst recognising that not all of these will return quickly due to the lack of student memory and changing student expectations following Covid-19.

This strategy has a greater focus on student wellbeing and a focus on the services that help students combat loneliness and isolation, those being the greatest impacted during the pandemic and associated lockdowns.



# Our mission

## Student leadership

- › We will ensure that students are involved in decision making at all levels across the organisation and feel empowered to create change.

## Inclusion

- › We are committed to engaging with all our student members, through reducing barriers to participation and reaching out to under-represented groups.

## Partnership

- › We will ensure we develop effective and impactful partnerships with organisations that help us achieve our strategic priorities from Cardiff University, the wider community and the students' union sector.

## Diversity

- › We will celebrate the diversity of our staff and student membership, and will support students to be a voice for change in challenging injustices throughout education and society.



**Hannah**



# Sabbatical Officers



**Chris**



**Charlotte**



**Gina**



**Orla**



**Meg**



**Sebastian**

# Wins for students

✨ We launched a Winter Wellbeing programme and Wellbeing Takeover activity, engaging with 20,000 students across multiple events and activities.

✨ We secured significant funding for the development of the student study spaces at the Heath Park campus IV Lounge.

✨ We introduced “Heath Park on Tour” to support students on placement in other parts of the UK.

✨ We lobbied and achieved a tuition fee reduction for returning postgraduate taught students.

✨ We hosted the first Welsh Varsity tournament after the Covid-19 pandemic with over 5,000 Cardiff supporters heading to Swansea.

✨ We launched a sexual harassment campaign during Freshers' Fortnight to raise awareness.

# Chief Executive

2021 was an important year for Students' Union activities and services to bounce back after two years of disruption. I'm pleased to say, on the whole, we did just that.

It was a fantastic year for our not-for-profit enterprises achieving positive income levels after two years of limited opportunities. Our student activities such as Societies and Athletic Union, who rely heavily on volunteers to deliver their work, achieved record breaking memberships.

Alongside that, we launched our new Strategic Plan and an updated organisational brand – both of these projects positioning us for success in the future.

**Daniel Palmer**  
**Chief Executive**

**We're really proud of what we've achieved, here's the highlights //**





# Students' Union President

It was great to see Students' Union activity return to nearly normal in 2021, we know our services are at the heart of the Cardiff student experience.

In 2021 we prioritised student wellbeing, as students told us this was most impacted throughout the pandemic. Thanks to external funding, we were able to deliver free events and activities aimed at improving student wellbeing and loneliness, I'm pleased to say over 20,000 students took part in initiatives such as Feed Your Flat, hundreds benefited from therapy dogs, free period products and so much more.

**Gina Dunn**

**Vice President Education 2021-22**  
**Students' Union President 2022-23**





# Our new brand

In 2021, we launched our new brand and visual identity. After the challenges of the last year, developing our new brand came hand-in-hand with the exciting opportunity to rebuild so that our students know who we and what we do.

Cardiff Students' Union is an organisation with many services that weave together to make something amazing and we needed a new brand that reflects that.

Our icon is Cardiff Students' Union. The strands of everything we do, our services, our values, the experiences and aspirations of Cardiff students, are all woven together to create our story.



Cardiff  
Students'  
Union

Unc  
Myf  
Cae



# Engagement and satisfaction

**Student engagement in the year largely bounced back, and in some areas increased compared to the previous year that was heavily impacted by Covid-19.**

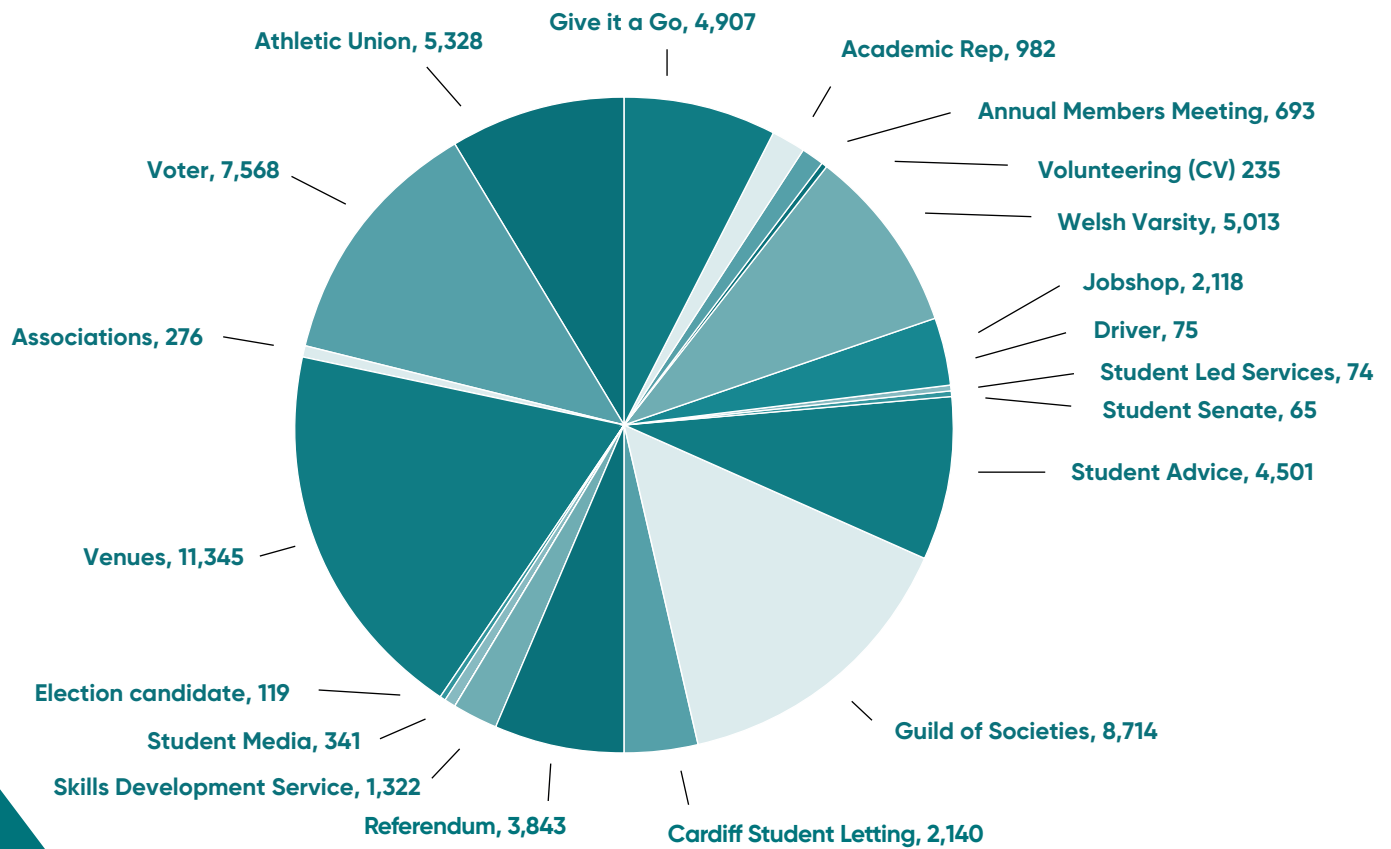
Within the year, 22,144 unique students were engaged in activities with the Union (2021: 17,401), with 58,581 engagements with different services between them (2021: 29,529). This engagement is comparable with the 2019 and 2020 years that were only minimally affected by Covid-19, changing behaviors and social restriction.

As can be seen in the graphic, many services saw an increase on previous years engagement, where some services have been slower to recover. Areas that saw a strong bounce back included the Athletic Union (sports clubs), societies and Give it a Go. Community volunteering and skills development have seen a slower recovery.

## Satisfaction

81.4% of students stated the Students' Union has a positive impact on their student life.





# Awards



**We achieved second place in the WhatUni Student Choice Awards for best Students' Union in 2022.**



**Our society-led event, 'Nerd Varsity', won Best Event at the National Societies Awards.**



**Our Athletic Union achieved 11th place in the BUCS championships  
(Which made us the highest ranked non-sporting University).**



**On 25th November, Xpress Radio celebrated 25 years of broadcasting with 25 shows in one day.**





# Cardiff community

A priority for CSU was ensuring the continuation of student groups after two years of inactivity and loss of student memory throughout this time. This year saw an incredibly positive bounce back of group memberships, the establishment of core events and new initiatives from student groups.

## Activities engagement in numbers:

- › 5,331 members of the Athletic Union which is our highest membership level on record.
- › 93 BUCS teams competed weekly in fixtures which was an increase in 5 teams on the previous year. 831 BUCS fixtures were played with 1,080 students competing weekly.
- › The Guild of Societies ended the year on 7,257 members and 251 affiliated societies, this is an increase of 6% and 34%.
- › Over 1,000 committee members completed online training, a new initiative for 2021.
- › Over 400 members joined student media across Gair Rhydd, Quench, CUTV and Xpress Radio, a significant increase on previous year.

## Give it a Go

- › This year saw a 20% increase in Give it a Go (GIAG) attendance. The team ran 36 day trips which engaged with 916 students. Thanks to HEFCW funding, trips between January and March were made free to attend, with more than 1,200 students on waiting lists.
- › 8,300 student took part in GIAG student group taster sessions, allowing them to trial activity before signing up. This was a 20% increase on the last full year of activity.



# Academic

**CSU aims to support students in all aspects of their academic life, empowering them to shape their education and provide support should things go wrong.**

2021 saw a return to in-person teaching, whilst still retaining elements of the learning alterations that were introduced during the pandemic. The Student Voice and Student Advice team supported students to navigate changing times, here's a summary:

- › Spring Elections, Speak Week, academic community events, and Campaign Officer support are notable areas of success for the team this year with significant student engagement in all of these areas.
- › A new Academic Community Project was established between January and March which aimed to bring together students and staff at a school level. Academic connectivity was lost during the pandemic, these events aimed to build cohesiveness and increase belonging. Over 1,000 students attended across the 12 events.
- › A second Heath Park on Tour initiative took place bringing together students on placement far from Cardiff. Students had previously told us they felt isolated, lonely, and forgotten when on placement in North Wales.

## Activities engagement in numbers:

- › 1,021 Academic Reps were trained which was a slight decrease on previous numbers due to changes in course type and structure.
- › 7,432 individual voters engaged with the Spring Elections, a 18% reduction due to a change of Amazon vouchers, however we still maintained top voting numbers across all UK Students' Unions.
- › 5,436 Speak Week cards were completed, a 500%+ on the previous year.
- › 705 students attended the AGM.





**Across Freshman  
weekly club nights  
215,000 attendees  
during the 32 weeks  
average of 6,700**



# Student experiences

**CSU aims to deliver exceptional events and services for all students, with a focus on a diverse offering throughout the day and night. This was the area most significantly impacted throughout the pandemic so the focus for 2021 was to re-establish the building and all its services in the mind of students, ensuring the offer improved in line with student expectations.**

There was overperformance in many of our commercial venues throughout 2021, having previously been the most substantially impacted throughout lockdown periods.

Across Freshers' Fortnight, live music and our weekly club nights, our venues saw over 215,000 attendees come through our doors during the 32 trading weeks, which is an average of 6,718 attendees per week. Our weekly Wednesday club night saw an average attendance of just over 3,000 people which equates to just over 75,000 attendees this year across 25 events.

**Across Freshers' Fortnight, live music and our weekly club nights, our venues saw over 215,000 attendees come through our doors during the 32 trading weeks, which is an average of 6,718 attendees per week. //**



The Venues Department has generated a £4.4m gross turnover this year. It is the first time that the department has achieved over £4m.

Love Cardiff achieved a record-breaking sales year thanks to a bumper three year in-person Graduation, ending the year on £271k gross profit.

Cardiff Student Letting were able to find students' homes across 379 properties, this was a small decrease on 2020. Here's a summary:

**VKs sold:**





100,000+

Pints pulled

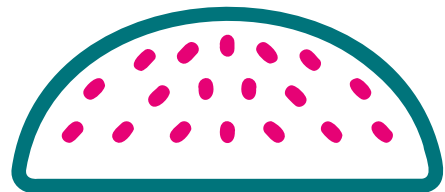


379

Housed rented through  
Cardiff Student Letting

575

Period products given out



5,000

Highest food item sold  
in The Taf: nearly 5,000  
chicken burgers!



5,600

Love Cardiff hoodies  
and jackets sold

1.2m

Jobshop wages paid



2,000

Free food packs

# Wellbeing and future

**A significant focus of 2021-2022 was placed on student wellbeing and mental health as the pandemic had caused isolation and loneliness amongst the student community.**

Thanks to nearly £350,000 of grant funding received from Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), a series of initiatives and events were established. Over 20,000 students were able to benefit from HEFCW funded activities and initiatives, these included:

- › 575 students engaged with our Period Dignity campaign providing free period products to students, this included the addition of more sustainable options such as menstrual cups.
- › 3,832 students benefited from free gym extensions and free sports classes in partnership with Cardiff University Sport.
- › 3,930 students engaged with events targeted at supporting women, LGBTQ+, BME and other student communities. Events included Paws and Relax therapy dog sessions (800 attendees), International Women's Day Conference (120 attendees),

"Feed your flat" food parcel initiative reducing barriers to cooking with new housemates (2,000 students given free food packs) and the re-establishment of Postgraduate Events (240 attended).

- › Providing wellbeing support in Welsh through the translation of core Student Advice webpages and funding for attendance to the Welsh student convention in Bangor (150 attendees) and Welsh Cultural Gig (250 guests).





**I feel like I really have been able to unwind and feel positive about the day //**

**I am always working so rarely relax. This was a great opportunity for me to spend a day taking care of myself. It has really helped //**

**Really helped my mental health and an escape from work //**



In addition to our work on student wellbeing, our Skills Development Service (SDS), which focuses on developing students' skills and employability for the future, was able to return to in-person teaching sessions.

Showing a slower bounce back compared to other services, SDS was able to support 2,306 attendees across 1,237 unique individuals, a slight reduction in previous years' sign-ups.



# Resources

Resources covers both the financial stability of CSU alongside the physical spaces and assets we develop for the enjoyment of students. Financial reports can be found on page 25.

## Spaces

- › We completed redevelopment of the third-floor student Lounge to become a social study space, open 24/7. Students asked for something less formal than the quiet library spaces around campus, that's why we have invested in social equipment including a pool table and board games, to go alongside more relaxed study zones.
- › We installed new CCTV and replaced the Advertising Screens.

## Future developments

- › Starting the work on the development of the Great Hall Balcony space and Welcome Centre refurbishment, both projects have aims for completion by September 2022.



# People

Cardiff Students' Union aim to have an empowered, engaged and equal team across staff and volunteers. Here's how we got on this year:

- › Achieved a 91% satisfaction measure of staff completing the NUS Employee Engagement Survey in response to the "I would recommend this organisation as a great place to work". This is a 16% increase on the previous year.
- › A review and relaunch of the staff reward and recognition package to career staff post-pandemic.

**I would recommend this organisation as a great place to work //**



# Digital and data

Digital communications were the foundation of all marketing during the pandemic, this year saw a return to on-campus delivery alongside continuing to grow digital support.

- › We launched a new CardiffStudents TikTok channel gaining over 1,500 followers by June 2022.
- › Website improvements to cardiffstudents.com achieved over 8 million pageviews over the academic year, a 47% increase.



# Finances

## Bounce Back

The Union recovered from a massive drop in income in the prior year, due to Covid-19, and exceeded pre-pandemic levels of income. Turnover increased to £12,318,155 (2021 – £5,967,127) resulting in a net surplus of £1,652,421 (2021 – net deficit £32,322) with reserves increasing to £1,534,034 (2021 – £1,205,186). The Union's reserves have now met the Union's long-stated objective of achieving at least £1.3M in free reserves.

The Union's increase in turnover was driven by exceptional levels of student engagement in our activities and services, increased due to funding from the University and additional grant income from the Welsh Government to support student wellbeing during the pandemic. The Union's commercial turnaround was significantly faster than expected and reflected the consensus from our student members of wanting to make up for lost time during the pandemic.

## Outlook for 2022/23

Over the summer of 2022, we undertook a major capital project to re-align the Union building's front entrance with the Centre for Student Life building, updated our building

reception and expanded the Great Hall. These projects are being funded by a mixture of the Union's free reserves and utilising the additional financial support from the University. The project will be complete by the end of 2022 and will provide a better platform for greater student engagement and income growth.

In the year we expect to make a deficit due to the works undertaken and the impact of increased staff costs, inflation, and sharp increases in utility bills. In addition, we also expect to see the impact on students' lives due to the cost of living crisis. Although challenging, we expect to return to a breakeven position for 2023/24.

## Cardiff Union Services

Within the Union's trading subsidiary, Cardiff Union Services, turnover increased to £5,237,048 (2021 – £1,268,583) resulting in a gross profit of £2,611,536 (2021 – £977,827). Administrative expenses increased to £4,191,369 (2021 – £3,536,902) in the year. Overall, the trading subsidiary reported a profit of £1,088,843 (2021 – reported deficit £547,022). All profits generated by Cardiff Union Services are gift aided to the parent charity, Cardiff Students' Union.

# Trustees 2021 - 22

## Sabbatical Trustees

### Students' Union President:

Gina Dunn  
(from 1st July 2022)

### Students' Union President:

Hannah Doe  
(to 1st July 2022)

### VP Societies and Volunteering:

Shreshth Goel  
(from 1st July 2022)

### VP Societies and Volunteering:

Chris Grieve  
(resigned 17th March)

### VP Sports and AU President:

Olivia Evans  
(from 1st July 2022)

### VP Sports and AU President:

Meg Somerville  
(to 1st July 2022)

### VP Education:

Noah Russell  
(from 31st October 2022)

### VP Education:

Thomas Walsh  
(from 1st July 2022 to 30th September 2022)

### VP Education:

Gina Dunn  
(to 1st July 2022)

### VP Heath Park Campus:

Ashly Alava Garcia  
(from 1st July 2022)

### VP Heath Park Campus:

Sebastian Ripley  
(to 1st July 2022)

### VP Postgraduate Students:

Angie Flores Acuña  
(from 1st July 2022)

### VP Postgraduate Students:

Orla Tarn  
(to 1st July 2022)

### VP Welfare

Rebecca Deverell  
(from 1st July 2022)

### VP Welfare and Campaigns:

Charlotte Towlson  
(to 1st July 2022)

## Student Trustees

Tariq Awan  
(from 1st July 2021 to 31st May 2022)

Matthew Bird  
(from 1st July 2021 to 30 June 2022)

Thomas Mahony-Kelross  
(to 1st July 2021)

Stephen Oldfield  
(to 30th June 2022)

Ryan Singh (to 1st July 2021)

## University Nominated Trustees

Jayne Sadgrove  
Ray Singh CBE

## External Trustees

Natasha Applasamy  
(to 21st March 2022)

Elliot Howells

Richard Roberts CBE OBE

Bethan Walsh (to 7th July 2021)

## Senior Staff

### Chief Executive:

Daniel Palmer

### Deputy Chief Executive:

Ben Eagle

### Director of Finance:

Christine Akers (to 30/09/21)

### Director of Finance:

Jan Boyce from (01/11/21)

### Director of Communications:

Raechel Matthey

### Director of Engagement and

Participation: Steve Wilford

## Registered office

Park Place, Cardiff, Wales. CF10 3QN

Registered Company Number:  
07328777

Registered Charity Number: 1137163



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