



CHESTER
STUDENTS'
UNION

IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

"As President of Chester Students' Union, it has been a privilege to represent and support our students throughout this academic year. This report highlights just some of the incredible achievements, progress, and impact made possible by the dedication of our student community."

Over the past year, CSU has continued to advocate for the needs of our student members, ensuring that students remain at the heart of every conversation and decision. This year has also been about strengthening connections between students, University staff, and the wider community, challenging ourselves to be inclusive, proactive, and collaborative in everything we do.

None of this would be possible without the students who continue to shape our Union with their ideas, energy, and determination. Thank you for being part of CSU and for helping make our community something to be proud of."

Lily Watson, President



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

"I'm delighted to share the work our incredible Union team has achieved this year.

2025/26 marked the launch of our new five-year strategy, setting out an ambitious vision to support and empower every student at Chester during their studies and beyond. We deliver this through our mission, ensuring every student experiences the value of CSU across four key themes:

- *Voice and Empowerment*
- *Community and Connection*
- *Support and Advocacy*
- *Personal Development*

*As our benchmark year, this report reflects the dedication and hard work of our staff and officers, who show up every day with our student members at the heart of everything they do, guided by our shared values of being **proactive**, **collaborative**, and **inclusive**.*

This year has also been about building momentum. We've seen more society events, more student-led activities, and more new ideas than ever before. That energy comes from you, our students. CSU provides the infrastructure, but our members make it all possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. While this year has been incredibly rewarding, I have no doubt the best is yet to come."

Jamie Morris, CEO





MEET THE TEAM



Jamie Morris
CEO



Jawanza Ipyana
Head of Membership Services



Ben Hockley
Head of Business Support



Alison Hewitt
Business Support Officer



Phil Jones
Student Advisor



Chris Lightfoot
Senior Student Advisor



Holly Robinson-Crane
Democracy & Campaigns
Coordinator



Noah Thorley
Student Voice Coordinator



Alexandra Fellows
Communications Officer



Fergal Clancy
Student Engagement Manager



Esme Naylor
Student Groups Coordinator



Samantha Smith
Events & Opportunities
Coordinator

COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

Societies

Our societies have continued to go from strength to strength this year, demonstrating the power they have in connecting people. We've had a 16% increase in the number of societies, a 30% increase in academic societies and a 64% increase in their memberships. Memberships of our societies as a whole have gone up by a whopping 54%!

Our societies have shown new students that there is a community here for everyone. From Anaesthetics and Critical Care, to Chess, to the David Attenborough Society - you have shaped our student community and should be proud of all your achievements - we know we are!

**87 affiliated
societies**

**2448 society
members**

**292 students
in leadership
roles**

**100% of the
society
development
grant used to
support our
societies**



COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

Events

This year, we've seen a shifting events programme with more student-led events than ever being created for our members, as well as a new enthusiasm for trips, whether it be Conwy Castle, Chester Zoo, or Go Karting, where will they take us next?

We also opened our new student space this year: the Studio, in which we've held over 80 student-led events. This diverse space has not only been used for parties and celebrations, but also for workshops, panels, and conferences.

Most importantly though, we've had a **huge 30% increase** in attendees saying they made a new friend at our events compared to last year.

6000+
attendees at
CSU led
events

90% of
attendees said
they made a
new friend at
our events

700
attendees at
CHESTIVAL



COMMUNITY & CONNECTION



Our International Societies continued to create opportunities for students to connect as a whole, celebrate their communities and build a sense of belonging through their own events.



Cultural celebrations including Holi, Iftar and Eid provided opportunities for students to share and celebrate their cultures with the wider student community, and feedback from these events demonstrated how meaningful this is to them.

International students highlighted the importance of seeing their cultures represented at Chester, with students expressing gratitude and a stronger sense of belonging by being able to celebrate traditions and events that are meaningful to them.

Our impact is only possible because of the incredibly dedicated students that choose to get involved, represent their peers, build communities and create positive change at the University of Chester.

Our debut CSU Awards celebrated the students, societies and student leaders whose contributions have made a lasting difference to our community, from outstanding Student Voice Representatives and society leaders, to student activists and those creating opportunities for others.

With 13 individual and group awards presented, alongside recognition for Society+ achievements, the awards highlighted the breadth of student-led impact across the University.

While CSU provides the support, opportunities and platform for students to make a difference, it is their passion, commitment and ideas that bring our work to life. Our impact is ultimately their impact.



1,887 points
awarded in
Society+



30
shortlisted
nominees

A huge congratulations to all of our winners:

New Society of the Year: Arts and Crafts Society

Most Improved Society of the Year: LGBTQIA+ Society

Staff Choice Award: British Sign Language Society

Student Activists of the Year: Evergreen Society

Above and Beyond Award: Samuel Taylor

Officer Choice Awards: Amy Jasmine Cooper, Job Russon-Paul and Queen Adozi

Student Event of the Year: Iftars by Islamic Society

Student Voice Rep of the Year: Fern Moffatt

Society+ Award Winners

3rd Place: Evergreen Society

2nd Place: British Sign Language Society

1st Place: LGBTQIA+ Society

And finally, the biggest award of the evening...

Student Leader of the Year

Muhammad Ali



VOICE & EMPOWERMENT

**474 Student
Voice Reps
recruited**

**an increase
of 42%**

This year, 474 Student Voice Representatives (SVRs) played a key role in strengthening student voice across the University, with increased engagement and improvements in the quality of feedback provided.

SVRs went above and beyond to support their cohorts, including developing 12-month feedback and development plans and gathering targeted feedback on the Level 4 induction experience.

Alongside their core representation role, SVRs also contributed to wider initiatives to strengthen student engagement and belonging, including academic society events, focus groups and student drop-ins. Their continued commitment has helped ensure that student feedback is more consistent, meaningful and actionable across the University.



VOICE & EMPOWERMENT

The Student Voice Programme (SVP) continued to strengthen student representation across the University in 2025/26, with SVPs working across eight Schools and Postgraduate Research to champion student voice, increase engagement and build a stronger sense of community and belonging.

This year, SVPs delivered and supported a range of initiatives including hosting academic society events, student feedback projects, focus groups, drop-in sessions, workshops and campaigns, as well as contributing to CSU's feedback on the newly launched academic framework and research into school-level skills development.

SVPs also strengthened links between students and staff, improved awareness of representation opportunities and shared best practice across Schools. Their impact was recognised through multiple CSU Award nominations with particularly positive feedback from both students and staff.

The programme will continue into 2026/27, with a focus on tailoring SVP roles to the priorities of individual Schools and further embedding student voice within the University.



**9 Student
Voice
Partners
recruited**

VOICE & EMPOWERMENT

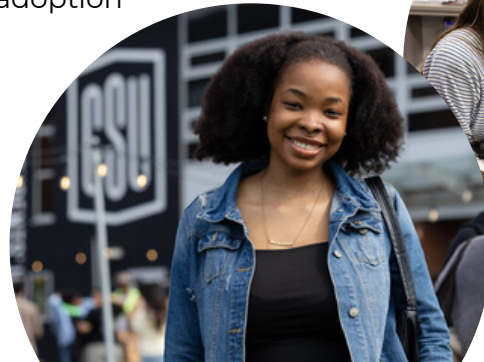
We elected 6 Union Assembly representatives in our October By-Elections, increasing the filled seats to 11. These part-time Officers attended 4 meetings throughout the year, bringing your feedback directly to CSU and mandating actions for the full-time Officer team to take onboard.

**15 candidates
across 7 roles**

Our Spring Elections elected both the full-time and part-time Officers for the 26/27 academic year. We had 15 candidates across 7 roles, and 1035 students cast their votes. We trialled a new Elections Ambassador role, with 4 students funded to spread the word among their student networks. This worked really well and will continue (and expand!) next year.

**4 new
Elections
Ambassadors**

Our brand new suggestions system, **Change It**, received seventeen new suggestions for change, two of which have been completed, eight of which are being actively worked on, and three of which are up for adoption by student activists.



SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

The Advice Service continued to provide vital support to students throughout 2025/26, helping them navigate academic, personal and practical issues.

This year, housing advice was reintroduced for the first time in four years, expanding the support available to our students. The impact of the service was clear, with 97% of students surveyed reporting that they felt better equipped to deal with their issue after receiving advice.

Student feedback also highlighted the wider impact of the advice service, with students describing advisors as providing reassurance, restoring confidence and helping them successfully navigate challenging processes such as appeals and academic meetings.

WHAT STUDENTS SAID

"Your advice and support helped me regain my focus, rebuild my confidence, and continue moving forward."

"My Advisor has been amazing in guiding me through my situation; their advice and reassurance has been essential in keeping me level-headed and focused-minded. They were an anchor during my meeting and provided quiet reassurance and steered me in a good direction."

**33% increase in
students using
our advice
service**

**100% of users
would
recommend the
service to a
friend**



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

At CSU, we want to not only support students through their time at university, but also develop the skills, confidence and experience they need to thrive in their future careers.

292 students held leadership positions in societies this year, an increase from 244 last year, developing their skills in leadership, organisation, communication and teamwork.

We also redesigned our Student Leader Conference in response to student feedback, launching a wider CSU workshop series focused on practical skills and personal development. The redesigned conference saw higher attendance than the previous year and received positive feedback from attendees, providing a strong foundation for further development next year.

Beyond our core leadership programmes, students were also given opportunities to gain experience through initiatives such as the Elections Ambassador programme and student employment, that has led to careers in the Union, and running in our Elections.

Together, these opportunities demonstrate our commitment to ensuring students leave university with more than a degree – with the skills, experience and confidence to take their next steps.



OFFICER ACHIEVEMENTS

VP STUDENT LIFE - WILL

Vice President Student Life Will focused on creating more opportunities for students to connect, engage and feel part of a thriving student community:

- The annual Movember campaign brought together student groups and University partners to raise awareness of men's health and wellbeing, encourage conversations around mental health and engage students through fundraising and awareness activities.
- The introduction of the Society Social created a dedicated opportunity for society leaders and members to connect, collaborate and share best practice beyond their usual activities.
- In partnership with Sport and Active Lifestyle (SAL), the Club Connect Forum was also refreshed to create a more engaging and collaborative space for student leaders to share ideas, challenges and opportunities.
- Alongside this, a review of Union Assembly led to changes to the Union's democratic structures, including new officer roles such as Sports and Sustainability Officers, creating more opportunities for students to be represented and take on leadership roles.

Together, these initiatives strengthened student engagement, collaboration, representation and opportunities for students to shape their community.



OFFICER ACHIEVEMENTS

VP EDUCATION - LUIS

Vice President Education Luis focused on three key areas of the student experience: student wellbeing, collaboration with faculties, and strengthening student voice:

- The Home Away from Home campaign tackled loneliness and the stigma around discussing wellbeing, reaching approximately 118 students through events, generating 7,400+ social media views, and distributing 150 postcards and 30+ wellbeing goodie bags across University of Chester sites.
- A new programme of regular meetings with faculty staff was also introduced, beginning with the Faculty of Science, Business and Enterprise, to strengthen collaboration and ensure student priorities were reflected in faculty discussions.
- To make it easier for students to share their views, particularly for those who may find face-to-face feedback intimidating, Bright Pink feedback boxes were introduced across University sites alongside an online feedback form, providing an accessible and anonymous way for students to have their say.
- In response to varying engagement across campuses, the Officers on Tour initiative brought activities directly to students at different University sites, including Hot Chocolate Chats, helping to make engagement more accessible around students' timetables and locations.



OFFICER ACHIEVEMENTS

PRESIDENT - LILY

President Lily focused on advocating for issues affecting students locally and nationally, while creating a more inclusive and supportive student experience.

- Working alongside other Students' Unions and students, CSU called for a review of the student finance and maintenance loan system, engaging directly with MPs and securing recognition in Parliament for the campaign.
- SHAG Week returned for a second year, providing students with access to free condoms, testing kits, pregnancy tests, sanitary products, information and advice, while bringing together students and University teams to deliver a programme of activity focused on sexual health and wellbeing.
- The Union also partnered with Cool It Events to support safer and more inclusive student events, giving students greater opportunity to shape what they wanted from Chester's nightlife and helping create environments where students feel safe and respected.
- Alongside this, Lily represented CSU nationally at Wonkhe's Higher Education Festival, contributing to discussions around what quality means from a student perspective and advocating for a more student-centred approach to measuring the value of higher education.

Together, these activities demonstrate CSU's commitment to amplifying student voices, influencing change and ensuring that students' experiences and priorities are represented both within the University and beyond.





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