

University Council: Students' Union Report: July 2026



Introduction

As we approach the end of the financial and academic year, we are delighted to provide University Council with a snapshot summary of just some of the SU's contributions to the student experience here at Sheffield.

We are particularly pleased with our performance given the amount of change and challenge we have come through after the impacts of reduced funding, increased national insurance and compound inflation required a large scale restructuring programme just 12 months ago.

Student Experience: Looking back on 2025/26

As the summer vacation begins we have been taking a look back at our activity during the 2025/26 academic year. Listed below are just a few of the things we have achieved.

- **Societies & Enrichment:** The SU supported 393 active societies this year, with 61 new groups approved. Total membership reached 28,481 registrations (spanning 14,785 unique students), meaning 55.25% of the student body engaged with our society network. Leadership capacity was strengthened via the training of 3,351 student leaders and committee members.
- **Give It A Go (GIAG) Programme:** The delivery of 1,014 separate events generated 14,715 individual attendances and contributed £21,975 directly back into participating sports clubs and societies through ticket revenue.
- **Fundraising (RAG & Bummit):** Student-led campaigns generated in excess of £130,000 for external charitable causes across 251 distinct fundraising events. This includes £70,000 raised via the annual "Bummit" hitchhiking initiatives, which engaged 159 students.
- **Volunteering:** A network of 1,304 student volunteers worked on 47 distinct community projects, with 252 students stepping into designated project leadership roles.
- **Democratic Engagement:** The annual Officer Elections recorded 5,419 student votes cast across 35 candidates. The 2026 elections achieved a voter turnout of 20.4%, exceeding our 20% target. All six full-time officer roles were contested, with at least three candidates per position. The process was modernised by reframing elections as a "job application process" to improve candidate quality and thoughtfulness. The SU Council passed 6 formal student-led policies, and 27 standalone ideas for change were advanced.
- **Institutional Representation:** The SU trained and supported 836 Academic Representatives to represent their peers at course level. We also launched 5 new 'Liberation Facilitator' roles to support marginalised demographics, alongside a revitalised International Forum attracting over 100 stakeholders.



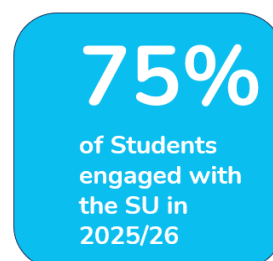


- **Civic & Regional Campaigning:** The inaugural Sheffield Students' Assembly was formally convened on November 7th. The Assembly synthesised student feedback into 9 core strategic demands targeted at municipal stakeholders, focusing heavily on regional transport, nocturnal urban safety infrastructure, and international student integration.
- **Student Advice Centre:** The service managed 4,212 casework queries to support 1,263 students spanning 62 nationalities. The service successfully recovered or secured £617,223 in financial restitution for our members.
- **Welfare:** In response to cost-of-living pressures, the SU launched a dedicated Community Hub in February. The hub has served 1,266 students, hosted 30 workshops, and successfully redistributed 7,770 surplus items reducing food waste.

It is no surprise, then, that Sheffield SU has just been voted the best SU in Great Britain!
(WhatUni Student Choice Awards 2026 2nd place behind Queens Belfast SU).

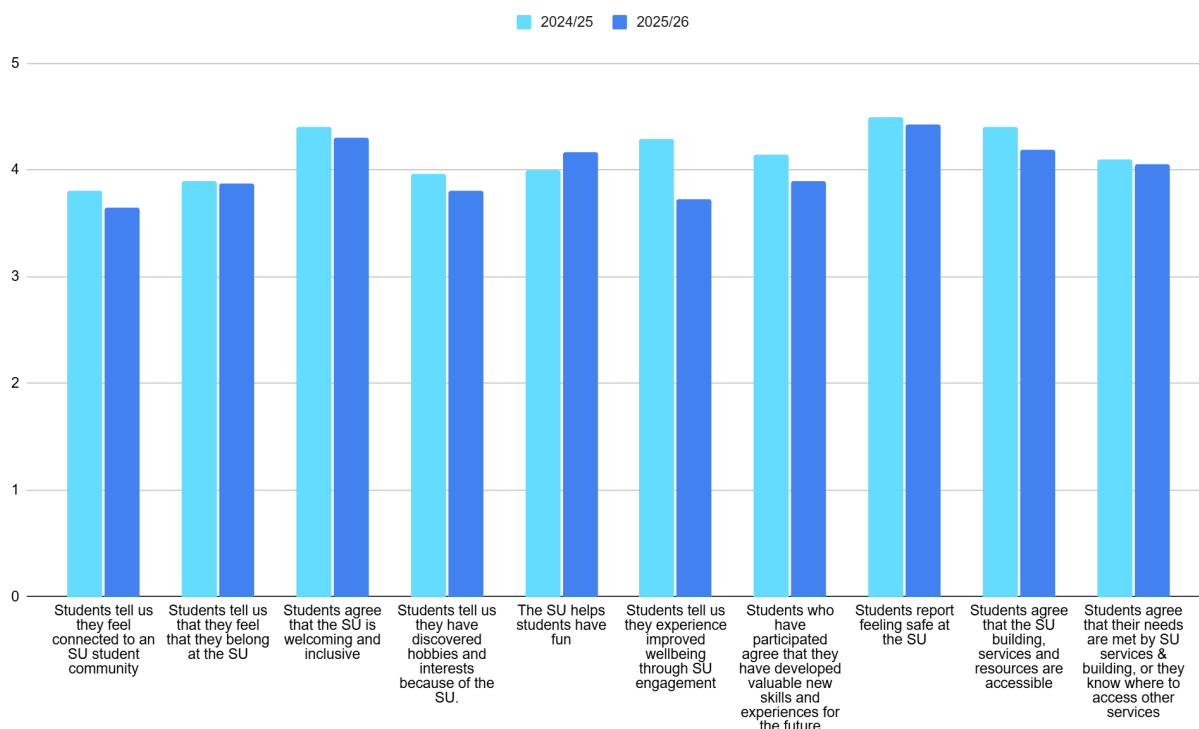
Student Experience: Our 2025/26 KPIs

One of our strategic aims is to engender a sense of belonging in our members and we use 'engagement' as one of our KPIs as we consider it a proxy measure for belonging. Pleasingly, the SU continues to see high engagement rates, with more than three quarters of students engaging with the SU in at least one way. This matters because our research has shown that students who engage with the SU are much more likely to report feelings of belonging at University than students who don't engage.

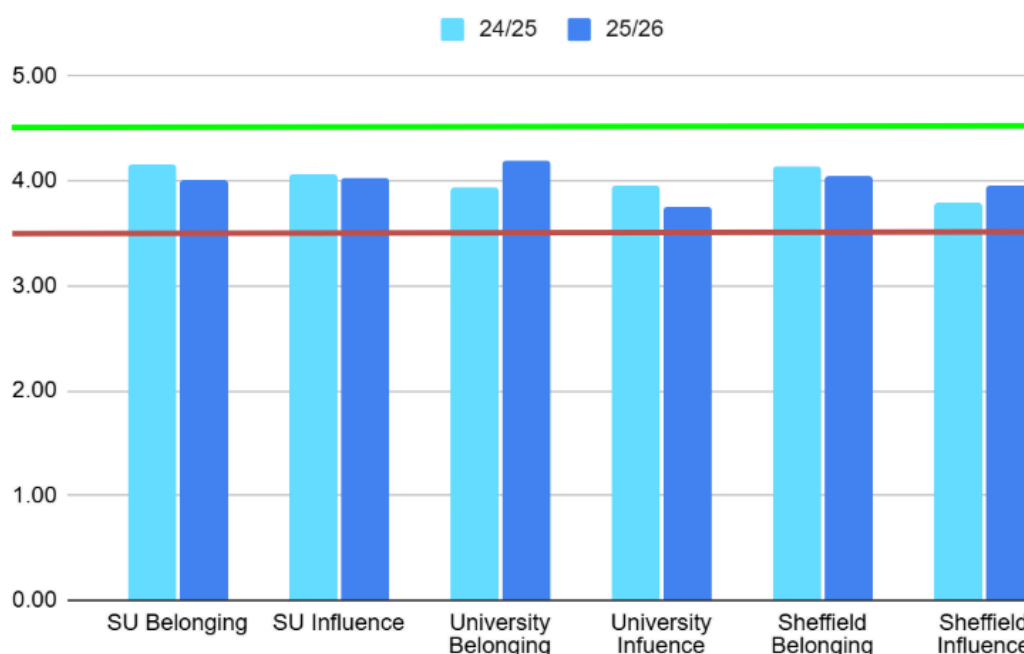


Students who engage with the SU report belonging scores 9–25 percentage points higher across every measure.

One of the roles of our annual survey is to provide quantitative data for our strategic KPIs. The chart below shows the 'belonging' 'marks out of 5' scores that were collected in the survey compared to last year, these remain excellent numbers, achieved at a time of significant change and challenge (including reduced funding and staffing restructuring) and any changes in scores compared to 24/25 are mostly very small.



The chart here summarises the average 'sentiment' scores for student belonging and influence. The scores are all hovering around the 4 out of 5 mark, which is a strong set of results. With only 2 data points we are as yet unable to determine if any of these changes equates to a trend in a certain direction - this will become possible when we have the 26/27 results. We are considering setting both a 'stretch' target and lower performance limit - as represented by the green and red lines.





The KPI data shared today with University Council is a very high-level summary of the full KPI suite. More granular data is available to UoS colleagues on request.

[Looking Forward to 2026/27](#)

Strategic Progress

We continue to evolve our offer to students in line with our strategic pillars of belonging and influence, and to grow our impact through our 4 strategic lenses; SU, University, the city of Sheffield and UK Higher Education. Having restructured our team around these themes last year, we are now well placed to expand our work and build on our long history of high performance towards our goal of an outstanding student experience here at Sheffield.

Goin' to the University of Sheffield

An exciting development for Welcome 2026 is the pilot introduction of the ['Goin' app for Sheffield pre-arrival students'](#). The app focuses on building community and belonging for students prior to their physical arrival, creating connections based on common interests, home country, or other aspects. Student ambassadors will be trained to utilise the system, responding to questions and nurturing authentic, peer-led communities. This pilot project aims to respond to the data and insights over recent years regarding 'cold starts' for new students, particularly those from particular demographics, who arrive without knowing anyone, which then acts as a further barrier to them physically engaging with events or activities. We've secured the University's permission to promote the app as part of pre-arrival communications, with ambitions to potentially expand to offer holders next year, post-evaluation.