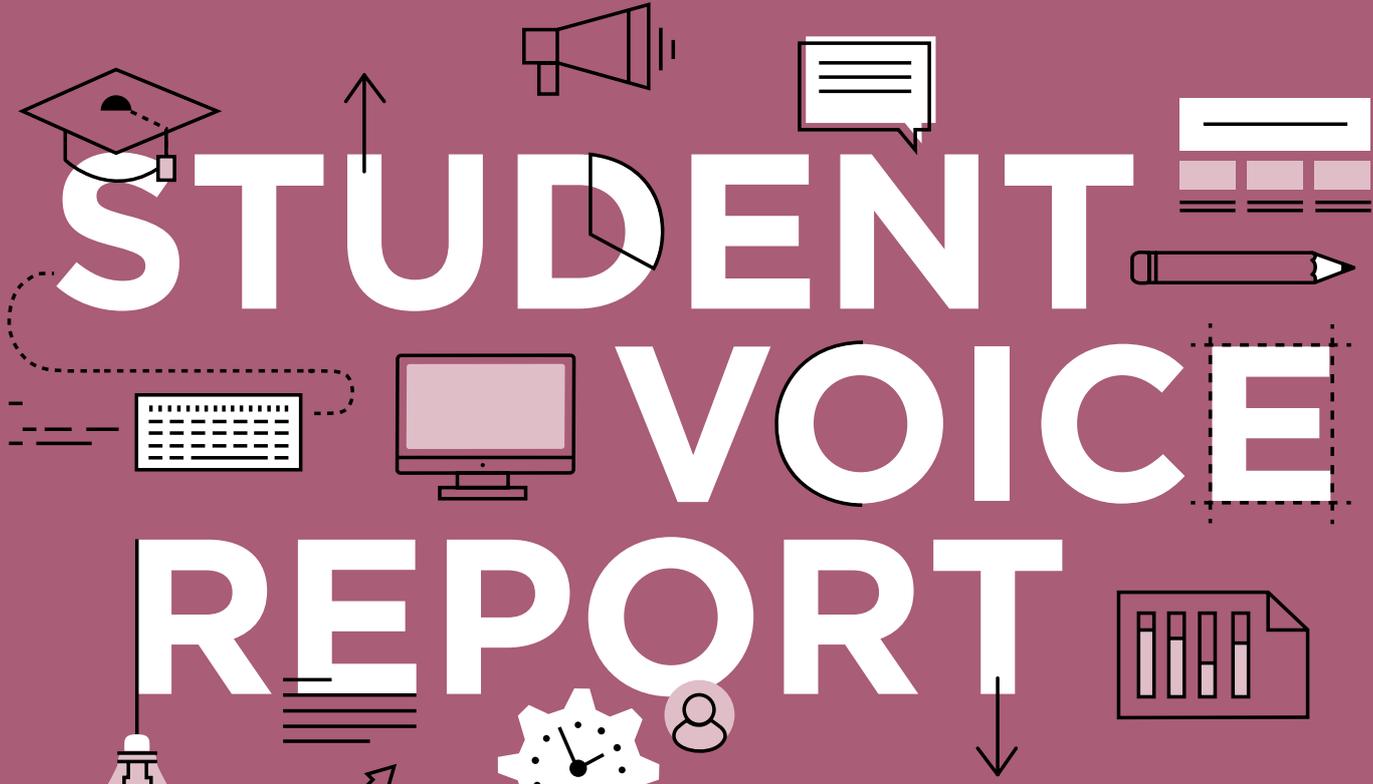


Sheffield Hallam Students' Union



# STUDENT VOICE REPORT

2016 / 17

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# Education Officer's Report

**I'm probably quite biased in saying so, but I truly believe that the 2016/17 academic year for Sheffield Hallam Students' Union has been one of the best so far! The activity undertaken by the officers and the engagement from students has been astounding, which is such a positive for amplifying the student voice to all corners of the University.**

In terms of attendance and engagement, we have had record breaking Student Rep Welcome Events at both campuses, Education Conference, Student Rep training, election candidates and turnout, and attendance to the joint UCU/NUS national demonstration - the list seems endless.

We've developed strong relations with trade unions such as the UCU, standing against precarious work contracts and many other issues; all of which have a huge impact on teaching quality and student experience.

The amount of political engagement with students has increased dramatically. In 2014, we had no students attending the national demonstration and getting involved on a national scale, this year we had over 50 with a waiting list of almost the same size and with those same students getting involved in many other campaigns across the Students' Union.

Our outstanding rep system and the degree to which reps have engaged with their positions and training opportunities pays testament to the collaborative working between students and staff, the Students' Union and the University.

We teach Student Reps to convey both the positives and the negatives of the student experience, and reps are very much the critical friend of course staff and academics. In the same kind of way, the Students' Union must convey both the positive and negative viewpoints of the student voice, and work as a critical friend of the University.

The political and policy changes for higher education in the UK over the past academic year have proven to be one of the most difficult for Students' Unions and Sabbatical Officers across the country to navigate,

with the future outlook seemingly not providing too much to cheer about either.

We have worked as a Students' Union locally to challenge SHU against the unfairly measured Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which brings about unjust fee hikes and further marketisation, as well as working nationally against harmful aspects of the Higher Education and Research Bill. It is imperative that all Universities not only listen and respect the student voice on larger issues such as these, but act upon it as a valued and authentic source of information to direct and shape the University.

In my experience, one such example of this is the TEF - which is a topic that has been met with a surprising degree of awkwardness when brought up, especially when it comes to student opinion. Although the Students' Union perspective on this TEF is met with initial sympathy from an overwhelming majority of management and academic staff who understand the downsides of the TEF, the concerns are quickly brushed aside as though there is no further discussion or decisions to be had.

It is essential, as a Students' Union that we challenge behaviour that perpetuates a feeling that the student voice is superficial, only being valued where it is welcomed.

It has to be the priority of Students' Unions to stand up for the rights of all students and project the student voice, and for the University to listen and act - no matter how hard the subject and/or result may be to hear.

It's my real hope going forward that an even greater and more positive relationship can be fostered with the University on this basis where student feedback and the student voice is treated as a key influencer in university decision making and direction and not reduced to a tick box, tokenistic exercise or simply an item on an agenda.

Together, we can (and will) construct a Students' Union and co-create a university that embeds a student voice which is empowered through becoming the respected and authentic voice within the University and Students' Union.

**Luke Renwick**  
*Education Officer 2016/17*



# Introduction: Outline

Sheffield Hallam Students' Union (SHSU) is delighted to present the Student Voice Report for the 2016-17 academic year, reflecting the student experience through the collection and analysis of feedback from students at Sheffield Hallam University.

By collating this information into a single report, we are able to establish clear actions, priorities and goals which can be reached through a joint partnership with students and the University. This report considers feedback, both positive and negative, to give a fair and balanced view of what is working well, and what could be improved at Sheffield Hallam University. Prior to the main body of feedback, there is a description of how the feedback is gathered, a summary of what has been learned this year with recommended outcomes for improving the student experience, and the impact of previous reports.

The main body of the Student Voice Report is structured with four main sections, which shows a change from previous years. The first section, 'Teaching and Learning', considers the student experience inside the classroom, such as group feedback relating to quality and styles of teaching, and course structure and timetabling. The second section 'Student Environments' begins to consider the student experience in a broader sense, with different settings one experiences as a student, and the facilities available; from the University, to work placements, to their own home. The third section, 'Representation and Support', relates to the academic experience outside the classroom, and concerns how academic issues are dealt with, the Rep system, resources available, and the financial situation for students. The fourth and final section, 'Wider Experience', covers other aspects of University life outside of academia, such as mental health support, food and drink, and the role of extracurricular activities on life at University.

Student feedback has always played a key role in improving the student experience at University; the importance of which has been acknowledged at a governmental level this year, reflected in how heavily it feeds into the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This has been a hot topic amongst students in the past 12 months, particularly with those that are engaged with the Students' Union and political student movements, and some of this feedback is illustrated in the body of this report. The proposed TEF is one way in which the Government hopes to improve teaching quality at University, however we believe that this is not the only way in which views can be effectively gathered and presented in order to effect change. Moreover, the Student Voice Report addresses a wider university experience, as teaching quality is just one part of what it means to be a student, and thus the Student Voice Report is fundamental in ensuring the student experience can be assessed and improved.

We would like to thank everyone, both Students' Union staff, University staff, and the thousands of students who have contributed their feedback in the last 12 months.

# Impact

This report does not merely summarise the feedback it receives, but intends to make change happen, through considered recommendations made by the Students' Union. Recommended outcomes made within the report are acted on following publication, with progress and implementation of these actions overseen by the Student Voice Committee. This committee, a joint strategically focused working group of students, University and Students' Union staff, and Elected Student Officers, meets throughout the academic year to improve the student experience as a result of student feedback.

In the months following the 2015-16 Student Voice Report, the following actions have been made:

- Recommendations have fed into the Assessment Journey Programme. As part of this, electronic copies of feedback are a requirement for all Level 3, 4 and 7 work during 2016-17, and will be implemented for all other students from 2017-18.
- The Students' Union has worked in partnership with Campbell Property to introduce a cross-campus bus, as a result of student feedback. This free bus service is now available to all Sheffield Hallam students, running every half hour all day every day throughout term time.
- The Students' Union urged the University to ensure that funding to support its most disadvantaged students continues at the same level or higher. The University had previously spent £1 million on the Student Support Fund and the same amount has been available in the 2016-17 academic year. Changes have been made into how funding is allocated, and the University believes that more money has been paid out to students in need this year than the last, as a result.
- In response to student feedback that campus food prices be reduced, new offers for students for 2016-17 have included: discounts on some key products such as coffee and other "student choice products"; £1 Wednesdays, all items £1 for two Wednesdays each year. The "Proven Bakehouse" brand now runs at Cantor café providing a range of basic food products and all items under this brand are available for £1.
- Following recommendations for expanded leadership training programmes, from September 2016, an additional 50 places will be available at Level 4 for students on the Career Mentoring scheme. The provision is also being developed on an ongoing basis.

*For a full list of recommendations from the 2015-16 report and the actions taken, see Appendix C.*



# Methodology

The Student Voice Report is commissioned by the Sheffield Hallam Students' Union's Education Officer, and is compiled by the Student Watchdog Manager. A Student Voice Editorial Team supports this process, ensuring the report fully reflects the views of students and of the Students' Union itself. The views of students are formed using a wide range of quantitative and qualitative research and feedback that aims to understand the student experience here at Sheffield Hallam University.

Research is conducted by the Students' Union throughout the year, with areas for research often inspired by Officer manifestos, by instances where issues have been raised anecdotally by students, or where the University has measured lower satisfaction itself through national surveys. National surveys, such as the National Student Survey (NSS), or University-led projects such as the University Welcome Survey, are often referenced when applicable. It is noted that research conducted by the Students' Union often does not receive the same levels of response rate of national or University-led projects. Students' Union research does have immense value however, and issues raised in this report are based on a 'triangulation of opinion' (i.e. when the same issue is found via multiple feedback mechanisms). When a theme or issue occurs in separate projects, it is significantly more likely to affect the wider student population.

Breakdown of the data by demographic details (such as faculty, year group, fee status, disability status, etc.) is conducted where possible, in order to fully understand the feedback received. Free-text feedback is also gathered and key themes identified, with direct unedited quotes from students included throughout to illustrate the feedback received. A cross-comparison of these various data sets has highlighted areas where satisfaction is lower or where students feel change is needed to improve their University experience, and these form the main themes of the report.

*A full list of research data sources can be found in the appendices, with an additional section giving a description of each source.*

# Executive Summary

## Themes

Various and wide-reaching themes have been found within the student feedback received by the Students' Union during this academic year, and recommended outcomes have been made throughout this report in order to address these issues.

The subject of teaching quality has been raised, with a particular focus on ensuring that teaching is interactive and engaging, with a reduction in the amount of purely PowerPoint based lectures to make teaching more of a two-way personalised conversation. Feedback was also received regarding course organisation, with students asking for a reduction in timetable gaps, more communication in relation to last-minute changes to their timetables, and concerning a perceived lack of contact time. Linked to course organisation is the reoccurring issue of scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon, which can act as a barrier to participation in extracurricular activities.

Feedback relating to three different student environments has highlighted a number of issues regarding University spaces, placements, and student accommodation. Safety concerns have been raised by students about specific University buildings, as well as inconsistencies in the cross-campus experience. Students on placement have faced issues with regards to financial support, notice for when they are due to start, and in some cases, a lack of contact from the University whilst they are on placement. The cost of student accommodation has been an increasingly widespread worry for many of our students, with our research highlighting issues with the types of accommodation available to students, and the need for more properties to be snug accredited.

Support for students is important particularly for our disadvantaged students and those who are struggling financially, which has been raised throughout and in its own specific section. The wider student body relies on support from a strong Student Rep system, with recommended outcomes being made on increasing its effectiveness and the awareness amongst both staff and students. Also affecting the majority of students is the need for easily accessible core texts and recommended reading, as well as affordable printing; both of which have been addressed within this report.

Finally, students have given us their views on the wider student experience, which highlights the need for more mental health support, how the University can help students get reasonably priced and healthy food on campus, and how the Students' Union and the University can work together to get more students than ever involved in extracurricular activities through the introduction of academic societies for every course. Above all else, students wish to be healthy, happy, supported, given the chance to socialise as well as to achieve, and to have value for money as a student at University.

# Recommended Outcomes

Recommended outcomes are listed below by report sections. Whilst the majority of recommended outcomes made are directed towards the University from the Students' Union, some recommended outcomes made are aimed towards the Students' Union itself. Several recommended outcomes listed have joint responsibility, and both the University and Students' Union must work together towards achieving the recommended outcome.

1.0 Teaching and Learning			
Themes	Recommended Outcomes	SHU	SHSU
1.1 Teaching Quality	1. Students report teaching to be consistently interactive and engaging, with the use of PowerPoint reduced where possible.	●	
1.2 Course Organisation and Communication	2. There is a measured annual reduction of timetable gaps.	●	
	3. Regular and consistent communication is made with students regarding scheduled teaching, changes to timetables, and effective use of non-contact time.	●	
1.3 Wednesday afternoon scheduled teaching	4. There is a measured annual reduction of scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon.	●	
	5. There is clear communication with students as to why teaching may be scheduled at this time.	●	
2.0 Student Environments			
Themes	Recommended Outcomes	SHU	SHSU
2.1 University Spaces	6. Investment is made to ensure the safety of Sheffield Hallam students in and around the new Sheffield Institute of Arts (SIA) building.	●	
	7. In-depth research is conducted into the difference in student experience between City and Collegiate Campus.		●
	8. Students at Collegiate Campus are able to withdraw cash on campus.	●	
2.2 Placements	9. The effectiveness of financial aid processes for placement students is fully reviewed.	●	
	10. Students across faculties consistently receive accurate and timely communication throughout their placement.	●	
2.3 Accommodation and Living	11. Through work with the City Council, assurances can be made that the type of new accommodation being built matches student demand.	●	
	12. The profile of the snug scheme is raised amongst landlords and the student population, to increase the number of snug accredited properties.	●	●

3.0 Representation and Support			
Themes	Recommended Outcomes	SHU	SHSU
3.1 Student Reps	13. Agendas are sent out before staff-student meetings and minutes are recorded and issued in a timely manner.	●	
	14. Staff and student engagement with the Student Rep system is improved, and Reps are better supported in engaging a wider range of students.	●	●
3.2 Bursaries and Funding	15. Funding to support the most disadvantaged students continues at the same level or higher.	●	
	16. Students are educated on the support available when they need money urgently.	●	●
3.3 Learning Resources	17. All core texts and recommended reading materials are accessible online for all Hallam students.	●	
	18. A free printer is installed at Collegiate Campus.		●
4.0 The Wider Experience			
Themes	Recommended Outcomes	SHU	SHSU
4.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing	19. Support sessions are available for all students around exam times and coursework deadlines.	●	
	20. Peer networks supporting students with mental health issues are developed and greater resource is utilised to combat stigmas associated.		●
4.2 Student Meals	21. A 'Proven Bakehouse' style outlet is developed at Collegiate Campus.	●	
	22. Students are given advice and information on cost effective ways of buying and preparing healthy and wholesome meals at home.	●	●
4.3 Extracurricular Activities	23. Academic Societies, covering every course, are available to Sheffield Hallam students.	●	●

# 1.0

## TEACHING QUALITY



## 1.1 Teaching Quality

In the 2016-17 academic year, the Students' Union has been interested in looking at whether students feel they get value for money on their course. The quality and style of teaching is a key factor in this, as each student pays a significant amount of money in University fees, and expects that high quality teaching.

Prior to the winter break, the Students' Union conducted several focus groups that discussed various aspects of the student experience, including value for money and their expectations around teaching. In all focus groups, students confirmed that they had considered teaching quality and the style of prospective courses before they started, and this played a large part in their choice of both course and University. Subsequently, students in the majority of focus groups predominantly felt that teaching quality had differed (although only slightly) from their expectations, with several reasons given.

*"...I expected to be doing some more hands on kind of learning whereas it has just been reading out of text books and writing up what you have found. It's just not engaging at all I don't think."*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

In order to measure this specifically, the Students' Union surveyed students about their teaching experience, receiving over 200 responses. Through this survey, over 3 quarters of participants agreed that they carefully considered teaching quality when choosing to apply to University. Whilst most generally felt that the style and quality of teaching is similar to what they expected, one of the main reoccurring themes highlighting a difference from expectation was that of lectures relying too much on PowerPoint presentations.

*"The lecturers read off the slides! Then take attendance, but don't add anything extra to the lectures. If I attend lectures, I expect to have an advantage over those who do not, and as of yet, I don't"*

- Teaching Quality Research, 2016

By asking students to estimate how much of their teaching was in the form of lectures, seminars and practical hands on learning, and what they would like it to be, it became clear that many would like more hands on learning than they currently receive. This opinion is particularly true of ACES and D&S students; when asked more generally how they like to learn nearly 90% stated they like to learn 'by doing practical work or activities'; an opinion shared by participants from all faculties. These views are also reflected in Staff Student Committee Meetings (SSCM), with the below quote as an example.

*"Students also like interactive seminars and lectures, with comments also asking for them to be made more interactive"*

- D&S SSCM, 2017

**"when asked more generally how they like to learn nearly 90% stated they like to learn 'by doing practical work or activities'..."**



# 1.2 Course Organisation & Communication

The way in which teaching is scheduled is often as important to students as the quality of the teaching itself. Whilst the task of scheduling teaching for more than 35,000 students and over 1,600 teaching staff each year using only limited teaching space is a daunting one, we believe that student feedback is crucial to improving course organisation. Naturally, because of the importance held by students for their weekly schedules, issues are frequently raised regarding this issue.

One of the most frequently occurring themes recorded via the 'All I Want for Christmas' campaign were regarding timetabling and course organisation. Whilst most of these comments were nonspecific, the volume of comments particularly surrounding timetable gaps and a perceived lack of contact time, suggests there are significant issues that affect a large proportion of students.

Large timetable gaps are not only perceived as an inconvenience, but for some, it is felt that this has an significant impact on time management when commuting, and can even lead to poor attendance and a subsequent impact on academic performance.

*"A large number of students reported long gaps in their timetables ... This has caused a low engagement rate and many students finding it difficult to have a part time job..."*

- SBS Reps Report 2016-17

The issue of timetable gaps has been recorded in various staff student committee meetings with reps from various faculties. This suggests that the issue is University wide, and therefore targets are needed across all faculties, to reduce large timetable gaps and ensure a minimum amount of scheduled teaching for full time students.

*"...there are comments about large gaps and frustrations regarding having only one session in a day, resulting in poor attendance..."*

- D&S SSCM 2016-17

This was raised in last years Student Voice Report, with a recommendation for the University to achieve a measured reduction in timetabled gaps. The University has made some progress in addressing this through the utilisation of new timetabling software, identifying where gaps of more than three hours between sessions appear, and whole days where students come to campus for only one hour of scheduled activity. This is a positive step welcomed by the Students' Union, however a measured reduction is needed in order to show that this is effectively addressing the issue.

## Recommended Outcome 2:

There is a measured annual reduction of timetable gaps.

The other common theme found in feedback relating to course organisation was that contact time is often less than expected; a finding reflected in our Teaching Quality Research. One of the themes arising from the comments in the Teaching Quality Research, when students were asked how teaching and learning has differed in comparison to expectations, centred on students expecting there to be more contact time.

*"The access to lecturers was so [much] less. There could have been forums for discussion. Everything is left up to us to explore"*

- Teaching Quality Research 2016

Additionally, when students were asked what they would change about their teaching many repeatedly commented on how they would again like more contact time with teaching staff. Rather than this appearing to be an issue with the contact time itself, where the University has guidelines with regards to a minimum amount of contact time scheduled, students have often made these comments when there is a mismatch between expectations and reality. It appears that there is a lack of explanation or consistent communication behind teaching and learning in general, with messages getting lost early on.

*"Planning within lectures never quite works, communication isn't always good."*

- Welcome Survey 2016

Some Reps for example have also fed back that there was a great deal of information given at the start of the year around structure, support, organisation, and timetabling, which is then not followed up on throughout the year. These issues suggest a need for regular and consistent communication channels with students giving detail of timetables, maps and/or directions to rooms, how to contact their teaching staff and when, and alerting them of changes to their timetable with reasonable notice. Furthermore, this regular communication must manage the expectations of students, to ensure they are aware of what to expect in specific sessions, and also what support they are able to access should they need it.

The University currently uses several methods to communicate with students such as via email, SMS text messages, Blackboard, Unihub, or even utilising social media, however there does not appear to be a consistent approach of connecting with students across the institution. It is recommended therefore that regular and consistent communication with students is needed about their course organisation and structure, in order to ensure student expectations are more in line with what is delivered.

## Recommended Outcome 3:

Regular and consistent communication is made with students regarding scheduled teaching, changes to timetables, and effective use of non-contact time.

As a suggestion, the Students' Union has noted a demand for a Sheffield Hallam App which, if developed intelligently, could combine the above elements into a single communication channel providing a resource for students as well as push notifications for last minute cancellations or timetabling changes.

Last year, the Students' Union aimed to conduct more research into course organisation and structure of courses, with a particular reference to deadline bunching during winter exams. Since the last Student Voice Report, the University have worked to ensure exams and deadlines are not too closely bunched during this period, with staff encouraged to use the 'assessment scheduler', and the Students' Union has measured the effects of this in our Cost of Going to University Research. It was found that from the nearly 600 students we spoke to who had exams during the winter period, the majority of students felt their exams were evenly spaced out, easy to find, and were satisfied with the way their exams were organised. We are pleased that the majority of students feel positively about the organisation of the winter exam period, and hope the University continues to take into account student feedback when teaching, assessment deadlines, and exams are scheduled throughout the year.

# 1.3 Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching

Leading on from the discussion around course organisation and structure, one issue persists in the minds of many students; Wednesday afternoon scheduled teaching. This issue has been repeatedly raised year-on-year since the 2012-13 Student Voice Report, and the Students' Union continues to receive feedback from dissatisfied students in the 2016-17 academic year.

The University aims for there to be no scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon for all undergraduate students, to allow for participation in competitive and recreational sport, and other extracurricular activities. There are occasions however where teaching is still scheduled at this time, often due to the need for specialist equipment, or last minute staffing issues. This academic year, the Students' Union gathered further feedback from students to understand what effect this is having on the student and the individual team, and to what extent they understand the reasons behind why they might be asked to attend scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon.

Through our Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching research, the views of over 200 students who are members of a University sports team were recorded, with only one third stating they had never had teaching scheduled on a Wednesday afternoon. Although the University data shows a significantly reduced amount of scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon, this issue is still reportedly affecting the majority of sports members who responded to the survey.

The majority of participants who completed the survey agreed that this issue not only had a strong impact on their team selection, but also on them personally, and even a negative impact on their academic performance.

*"I've had to miss seminars to play! Really students shouldn't have to miss teaching to play sport at uni, and it has affected me this year as it's a lot more difficult to catch up!"*

- Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching 2016-17

With strong links between habitual physical activity and academic performance being not only measured, but an accepted principle in UK HE environment, it could be argued that it is more important to ensure those students who are at key stages of their study face fewer barriers to sports participation. It was found however that second and third year students in fact experienced more of a barrier to sport than first years, and were more likely to not attend scheduled teaching in favour of sports participation.

More than half of students surveyed stated that the sports programme was a main factor for why they chose to come to Sheffield Hallam University, and over one third said they would consider dropping out of University if they were unable to take part in sport. Whilst this may not be an option that most would seriously consider, it does highlight the importance of sport for many of our students. Interestingly year 2 and 3 students reported that they felt they were more likely to drop out of University than their team, although this may not translate into actual drop-out rates, could still suggest that the importance of sport is strengthened as students' progress through University.

With students demonstrating that the impact of repeated scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon could be non-attendance, it is argued that a reduction in scheduled teaching is not only in the best interest of students who participate in sport, but also in the best interest of the University. Removing this barrier to participation could have a positive impact on attainment, student satisfaction, and the University's reputation for prospective students. For this reason, we urge the University to commit to a year-on-year reduction of the total number of scheduled teaching hours recorded at the end of

the academic year annually, in order to reduce this barrier to sport and other extracurricular activities at a manageable level.

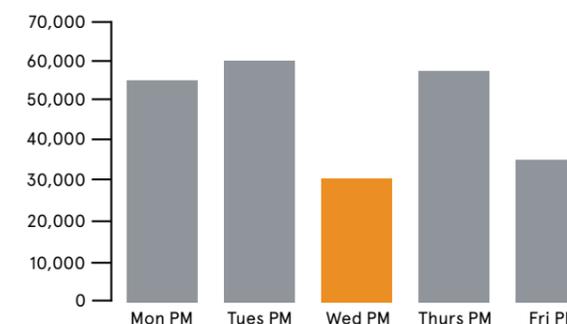


Figure 1: Total afternoon scheduled teaching hours for all Sheffield Hallam students during 2016-17 academic year, by day.

### Recommended Outcome 4:

There is a measured annual reduction of scheduled teaching on a Wednesday afternoon.

The research also found that only approximately one third of students understand why teaching is occasionally scheduled on a Wednesday afternoon, and only a slightly higher proportion believe the University tries its best not to schedule teaching at this time. A breakdown of these results has highlighted a link between lack of understanding, not believing the University does its best, and the student being more likely to not attend scheduled teaching.

A faculty breakdown illustrates this link exists when results are broken down, with D&S and SBS students reportedly less likely to understand why teaching is scheduled at this time, and are also more likely not attend it. In order to address this problem, and to ensure students are still encouraged to attend

lectures, we urge the University to more clearly communicate to students why teaching must be scheduled at that time, in order to improve perception of University organisation, and to have a positive effect on students' academic performance.

*[on the best thing about Sport at University] "It helps to keep students healthy, both physically and mentally"*

- Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching 2016-17

This therefore suggests that communication from the University on this issue with students will have a direct impact on their attendance, and subsequently their academic performance.

### Recommended Outcome 5:

There is clear communication with students as to why teaching may be scheduled at this time.

“It helps to keep students healthy, both physically and mentally”

- Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching 2016-17

[Student on the best thing about Sport at University]



# 2.0

## STUDENT ENVIRONMENTS



## 2.1 University Spaces

University environments should be a safe space, where all students feel they are supported, protected, and have a strong sense of belonging. With student safety being of the utmost importance in University spaces, the Students' Union has surveyed students in relation to the new Sheffield Institute of Arts (SIA) building, after informal feedback was received highlighting concerns around student safety at this location.

During May and June 2016, several hundred students were consulted with regards to how they felt working and studying within the new SIA building after it moved to its new location, the Head Post Office, in early 2016. Feedback highlighted that whilst most were satisfied with the building resources and amenities within, comments about what they did not like about the building were very often linked to how unsafe they felt due to some members of the public loitering outside of the building.

*"The building is situated in a place where drugs are handled and drunk people fight on a daily basis. I was offered to buy [drugs] a few times and as a woman you approached by men..."*

- SIA Personal Safety Surveys, 2016-17

The safety concerns were highlighted particularly by female students, and those that often have to carry expensive equipment in and out of the building. Some students even reported that members of the public had even gained entry to the building and approached students.

The University are aware of the need for improved safety in and around the new building, and as a result have increased lighting, cut back trees and bushes, and increased security patrols around the building. The Students' Union contacted the same students this academic that had previously completed our SIA survey in the summer of 2016, to see if these changes had been effective.

Students reportedly felt safer outside of the building in the morning, however still felt equally unsafe from early evening onwards, when the issues had been most frequently reported.

*"[it is] the same as before; the later it gets the rougher it gets"*

- SIA Personal Safety Surveys, 2016-17

The vast majority of students also reported walking is their main mode of transport, and so ensuring students can travel between University buildings by foot is a key priority. With 80% of students surveyed reporting that they believe there is a threat to their personal safety when they are at the new SIA building, the Students' Union urges the University to invest significantly in improving the safety features of the building. Based on recommendations made by the students themselves, this includes increasing the frequency of security patrols outside of daylight hours, the installation of CCTV cameras, and introducing swipe card access to gain entry to the building.

### Recommended Outcome 6:

Investment is made to ensure the safety of Sheffield Hallam students and staff in and around the new Sheffield Institute of Arts (SIA) building.

The Students' Union has also received feedback with regards to the facilities in other buildings at both campuses. In the 2015-16 Student Voice Report, the Students' Union urged the University to increase the number of bookable rooms for study and group work. In response to this, the University has increased the number available in Adsetts, and rooms are now available on the ground floor of the Charles Street building. Despite more rooms being made available, the demand from students for more bookable spaces is still high. The SBS Rep Report for example highlighted a need for more of these spaces, particularly around exam times in the winter period and towards the end of the academic year. It has also been noted by students in D&S and H&WB that there is a particular need for more rooms that can be pre-booked around this time at Collegiate Campus.

Room availability itself is a challenge, and the University has shown a commitment to allowing students to book a wider variety of spaces. However this has highlighted a particular problem around inconsistency of experience between the two campuses.

*"Students studying at Collegiate feel disadvantaged by less access to computers in the library, lack of academic skills workshops and less variety of food than City campus..."*

- D&S SSCM 2016-17

The Students' Union aims to measure to what extent the experiences of students differ between campuses in the coming academic year, as there has been a large amount of informal feedback received about a variety of differences, both relating to academic and non-academic aspects of University life.

#### Recommended Outcome 7:

In-depth research is conducted into the difference in student experience between City and Collegiate Campus.

An example of a recurring non-academic inconsistency between campuses that has been received via the Education Officer relates to the lack of cash machines at Collegiate campus. This is a particular issue for international students who have reportedly struggled to load money to SHUcards from international banks, and therefore had to leave the campus in order to buy lunch. Whilst there may be more complex issues that the Students' Union will aim to measure in the coming year which may lead to a differing experience between campuses, the installation of a cash machine at Collegiate campus will have a positive impact for our students based in this part of the city.

#### Recommended Outcome 8:

Students at Collegiate Campus are able to withdraw cash on campus.



**"Students studying at Collegiate feel disadvantaged by less access to computers... and less variety of food than City campus..."**

- D&S SSCM 2016-17

# 2.2 Placements

For many, the student experience is not limited to University classrooms and learning centres, and the University has a responsibility to ensure that students are in an appropriate safe and supportive environment when on placement. Sheffield Hallam University has developed a reputation for offering excellent placement opportunities to students, partnering with large organisations on a local, national and international level.

It is widely acknowledged that completing a work placement module as part of a University course can help a student to achieve a higher degree class, and a better, more highly paid employment after graduation<sup>1</sup>. This positive difference to employability only exists however if the placement is considered to be 'successful'<sup>2</sup>. Ensuring the placement system runs effectively for students is key to helping students achieve. Conversely, a bad placement experience could lead to poor academic performance, or students dropping out from University all together, with the Students' Union receiving feedback from students reflecting this.

*"We had placement problems and quite a few of us wanted to leave the course at that point..."*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

In the 2015-16 Student Voice Report, the Students' Union committed to further investigate support needs for placement students in the following academic year. This was achieved through a survey circulated to students on placement with the help of placement teams in each of the four faculties. Although levels of support for this research varied between faculties, enough feedback was gathered from students to breakdown results for three of the four faculties. Due to issues with circulation, D&S students are sadly under-represented. This research focused on several aspects of the placement experience including travel, support from the University, and notice period. Placement experience is unique to each faculty, and this is reflected in the analysis. It should be noted that there is often a difficulty in establishing what type of financial aid students are describing, as the term 'bursary' is often used to describe various types of grants, expenses, or even scholarships.

H&WB students reported the lowest levels of satisfaction with travel distance and affordability. These placements are often not self-organised however, being more difficult to find due to the nature of the courses, and so it is understood that students are not able to simply arrange for placements that are closer to where they live. The Students' Union also measured placement satisfaction via the Cost of Going to University research, particularly in relation to placement bursaries and grants, which are often used for travel. In our survey, agreement was notably low with the statement "I received financial help for my placement quickly and at the right time".

*"I feel we need to be given a sum to pay for these costs beforehand, as I have struggled to find petrol money"*

- Cost of Going to University, 2016-17



<sup>1</sup> Brooks, R. & Youngson, P. L. (2016). Undergraduate work placements: an analysis of the effects on career progression. *Studies in Higher Education*, 41 (9), 177-181.

<sup>2</sup> Driffield, N.L., Foster, C.S. and Higson, H.E. (2011). 'Placements and degree performance: Do placements lead to better marks, or do better students choose placements?' *Association of Sandwich Education and Training*, online.

Open comments relating to placement 'bursaries' reveal that participants are not only dissatisfied with delays in the application, with reports that this cannot be completed online, but also with the timing of when the 'bursary' itself is received. For this reason, we urge the University to review the financial aid process, to see whether the 'bursary' can be both processed and paid more quickly to students on placement, enabling students to plan and pay for travel before their placement starts.

### Recommended Outcome 9:

The effectiveness of financial aid processes for placement students is fully reviewed.

Whilst the vast majority of placements in H&WB are allocated, there is more flexibility in other faculties to self-organise. In this academic year, roughly one third of all SBS placements were self-organised by the student, and the placement team in that faculty supports the student with contact with the placement provider, and preparation for the placement itself. However, satisfaction for receiving sufficient notice from the placement team as to when, where, or how students would be doing their placement was relatively low for SBS students, with just over 40% of students surveyed stating they 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree' that they were satisfied. Additionally, when asked to openly comment, students stated there was a delay with receiving their 'authority to start' letter. Whilst the support that has been received is seen as positive from this team, delays of giving notice have affected student satisfaction with placements in general.

The findings from this research could also provide context for why satisfaction with support and advice from the University is lower for SBS than the institution average, as measured by the NSS. Therefore, it is recommended there is a review of the process of giving notice to ensure consistency across all faculties for when students receive start date information. This may also be linked to a wider issue around contact, communication and support from the University as part of the placement programme.

When students were asked to rate how much they agree with receiving sufficient support from the University, just over 50% of ACES either 'mostly agree' or 'definitely agree' with this. This is the lowest of the four faculties, reflecting measured satisfaction with support and advice from the University via the NSS. When asked to openly comment, students stated they had little contact from the University since they started their placement.

*"I had a placement visit but otherwise no contact from the University regarding my placement"*

- Placement Satisfaction Report, 2016

The SBS Rep Report states that, for their students, being able to keep in contact with their tutors, even just via email was seen as 'fantastic' support, showing the benefit of regular contact in other areas. Therefore, it could be suggested that the support from the University needs to be consistently available across all faculties, perhaps by having regular catch ups between students and placement staff within the University, or even just checking in via email or messaging the student directly. Linking to the previous point of ensuring consistency around giving notice, there is clearly the need for more regular, accurate and consistent communication from the University.

### Recommended Outcome 10:

Students across faculties consistently receive accurate and timely communication throughout their placement.

## 2.3 Accommodation & Living

A significant proportion of the student experience takes place not in University or on placement, but in the students' own home. Student accommodation, and any issues experienced in this area, will have a very substantial effect on the individual, often impacting on wellbeing, academic performance, and even retention.

The Students' Union receives a great deal of feedback on housing issues via the Advice Centre through its partnership work with the snug scheme, from Student Reps asking for support, through to Officers being asked for their personal guidance. This academic year, the Students' Union also conducted a survey (Housing and Accommodation Report) aiming to more formally measure student opinion on student accommodation, to find what is impacting students most urgently.

Cost was a recurring theme; with the most common issue faced being increasing rent prices. This was reflected in feedback gathered outside the survey, such as comments received during our Focus Group research and via the Costs of Going to University research.

*"I have definitely noticed a change in the last few years; the accommodation that I was perhaps paying £86 [per week] for back then is now upwards of £100 a week"*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

The experience of this one student is reflected not just in rising rent costs in Sheffield, but nationally, as measured by the NUS on a national scale in their Accommodation Costs survey<sup>3</sup>.

*[On surprising extra costs] "Rent! I didn't know living in Sheffield would be so expensive. My flat was the cheapest we could find and it's £92 a week which is rather a lot"*

- Cost of Going to University, 2017

The NUS has noted that studio apartments (single bed-space combining living room, bedroom, and kitchenette into a single room) are often the most expensive per person weekly rent, and that this higher cost provision drives up the average cost of other private student accommodation. Others such as national property and real estate consultants have

picked up on this national trend, highlighting 'studios' as the room type showing the fastest growth in private purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) in recent years<sup>4</sup>. The increase in this particular type of accommodation has caused concern as growth is often not due to demand but through return of investment on land costs, meaning supply has begun to outstrip demand for studio apartments.

Not only is this increase in studio apartments contributing to rising costs in the area, but our accommodation survey found that it does not meet demand, as two thirds of students consulted would describe a 'shared house or flat' as ideal University accommodation. In addition to cost, one bed apartments can often isolate students, and with frequent reports of loneliness amongst the student population, we urge the University to work with the City Council's Planning and Housing Departments to review the increasing numbers of high-end studio apartments being built in Sheffield. This is to ensure that student demand is at the heart of decision making, with our findings suggesting low-price shared accommodation would be preferred.

### Recommended Outcome 11:

Through work with the City Council, assurances can be made that the type of new accommodation being built matches student demand.

Not only are students concerned with the price of accommodation, but with rising costs comes greater expectations for the quality of accommodation. Via our accommodation survey, students frequently listed various problems with their accommodation,

and subsequent poor communication from landlords when challenged.

*"Mould and mice and the landlords aren't bothered."*

- Housing and Accommodation Report, 2017

The regularity of this issue is echoed in the substantial number of students who visit the Students' Union Advice Centre with similar issues. The Advice Centre records issues related to housing as being the single most frequently recorded type of issue in the first half of the academic year.

Issues with property maintenance have also been received, and reported on, by the student reps, as listed for example in the SBS reps report. This has also been measured via the University Welcome Survey, with reports of furniture being found broken on arrival. Often issues reported such as broken fixtures and fittings, non-working internet, or damp problems, can be prevented before the student even moves into the property, by insuring the property is snug approved. The snug property inspection standard is awarded when a student home meets a required standard, and the landlord is considered to be 'fit and proper'.

In our Housing and Accommodation Report, almost 80% of students surveyed say they were more likely to trust snug landlords, and over 60% said they were more likely to sign for a snug accredited property. Whilst this scheme is clearly valuable to students, and the benefits have been recognised by students, our survey found that just under half of all respondents stated they knew what snug was. There is undoubtedly the need therefore to promote the snug scheme more widely to all students, to ensure they are aware of what snug means from the moment they become a student at Sheffield Hallam. The Students' Union therefore aims to increase the proportion of students who know what snug is through greater promotion of the scheme and housing fairs.

Currently, approximately 400 properties are snug approved which, although a fantastic achievement, is still only a small proportion of the total number of student properties in Sheffield. To increase the number of snug approved properties, the benefits of being snug approved need to be better communicated not only to the wider student body, but to landlords.



*"... two thirds of students consulted would describe a 'shared house or flat' as ideal University accommodation."*

An increase in snug approved properties would reduce the number of property maintenance issues faced by students, and improve the overall student experience. We therefore recommend that the University not only works with the Students' Union to increase the profile of snug amongst students, but also amongst landlords offering properties to Sheffield Hallam students.

### Recommended Outcome 12:

The profile of the snug scheme is raised amongst landlords and the student population, to increase the number of snug accredited properties.

<sup>3</sup> National Union of Students. (2013). Accommodation Costs Survey. Available: <https://www.nus.org.uk/global/campaigns/accommodation%20costs%20survey%20%20web.pdf>. Last accessed 30th Mar 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Cushman & Wakefield. (2016). UK Student Accommodation Report. Available: <http://www.cushmanwakefield.co.uk/en-gb/research-and-insight/2016/uk-student-accommodation-report/>. Last accessed 30th Mar 2017.



# 3.0

## REPRESENTATION AND SUPPORT



## 3.1 Student Reps

There are over 1,600 Student Reps who work in partnership with the Students' Union and the University to improve the student experience at Sheffield Hallam, making sure that students have a voice at course, department, faculty, and University level. Student Representation is also a valuable source of collective feedback on the wider student experience and a route for communication and dissemination of actions between the student body and the Students' Union and University.

The Annual Student Rep Survey, conducted by the Students' Union aims to measure the experience of Student Reps and their opinion of the effectiveness of the system itself. Overall, satisfaction with the Student Rep system is high, with around 90% of Student Reps stating they would recommend being a Rep to a friend. To those students who are aware of how it works, the Rep system itself is known to be a valuable programme, and one that can affect change and improvements that really matter to students on a course.

*"...we have Course Reps that feedback and they can get stuff changed, so yeah we just feedback to them"*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

Despite this, there are several aspects of the Rep system that can be improved further. Our Annual Student Rep Survey shows although there has been a slight increase on Reps reporting they have received minutes after staff-student meetings, from 60% to 63%, there is still room for improvement. Furthermore, when breaking the data down by faculties, there continues to be inconsistencies with receiving minutes. In addition, the survey showed only 64% of Reps reportedly receiving an agenda before the meetings, with large inconsistencies between faculties.

In the 2015-16 Student Voice Report, the Students' Union urged the University to ensure expectations are met with regards to the distribution of Staff Student Committee Meeting materials, such as agendas and minutes. This issue has been raised with Senior Quality Officers however there has been little measurable improvement in the distribution of materials. An effective Rep system relies on a smooth running system of recording discussion points and actions taken, distributed in a timely and efficient manner, so that all Reps are given the resource to work in

their role effectively. As a result, the Students' Union recommends the University ensures agendas are consistently sent before staff-student meetings and minutes are recorded and sent in a timely manner.

### Recommended Outcome 13:

Agendas are sent out before staff-student meetings and minutes are recorded and issued in a timely manner.

Staff engagement with the system is relatively high with around 80% of Reps stating the staff on their course are engaged, however when the data is broken down by faculty there are large inconsistencies. Furthermore, Reps have openly commented within the survey on how they would like more staff attendance at meetings and improved communication via email.

Engagement with the Rep system, particularly from staff is fundamental to a successful Rep programme, and all staff members should be encouraged to attend at least one Staff Student Committee Meeting per academic year to give Reps the opportunity to give feedback from students on their course.

*"Ensure that tutors actually turn up, otherwise there is no one to give the feedback about the subject to"*

- Annual Student Rep Survey, 2016

Engaging the wider student body in representation activities is also fundamental to ensuring the Student Rep system is effective. Only half of Reps who participated in our survey agreed that they felt that students on their course were engaged with the Rep system, which in turn makes it very difficult for Reps to gather feedback and represent their course.

Student Reps themselves have identified the issue that many students simply are not aware of the how the Rep system works or what influence it may have on their University experience; a view that we have found when speaking to students in other capacities such as the Focus Group Research. Improving both staff and student engagement with the system therefore needs to be a priority for both the University and the Students' Union, if the Student Rep system is to continuously improve.

*"I know about the course reps but I don't know what is happening at the back stage"*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

The Annual Student Rep Survey also shows 'social media' and 'face-to-face' remains the most popular methods for Student Reps to gather feedback from students. However, ease of gathering feedback from students remains relatively low, with just over 50% of Reps stating they find it easy to gather feedback. In addition to more engaged staff and student body, gathering feedback can be improved by ensuring Reps are given the training and the tools to do the job.

*"To those students who are aware of how it works, the Rep system itself is known to be a valuable programme, and one that can affect change and improvements that really matter to students on a course."*

The Students' Union and the University must work together to achieve this, and to support Student Reps to try different methods of gathering feedback, for example by using surveys, to try and improve ease of gathering feedback and improve the success of the system overall. It is recommended therefore that the Students' Union and the University work together to improve staff and student engagement with the Student Rep system, with a particular consideration for the importance of gathering and understanding feedback from all students.

#### Recommended Outcome 14:

Staff and student engagement with the Student Rep system is improved, and Reps are better supported in engaging a wider range of students.

The Student Rep system has been significantly improved and refined over the last few years, thanks to the hard work of the Students' Union Education Officers Representation Team, University staff, and Student Reps. Student Reps themselves have noted improvements following the creation of Department Reps, and the introduction of the Unitu platform has been also well received. There have also been comments made by the wider student population that show changes made as a result of the Student Rep system are worth shouting about.

*[on a specific course issue] "It has got better since our course rep meetings and stuff, they are a lot better with it now"*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

*"I know about the course reps but I don't know what is happening at the back stage"*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

## 3.2 Funding & Finances

The financial burden of University is significant for a large proportion of our students, many of which need to take loans to cover fees and their living costs. We believe it is imperative that every student is able to afford to go to University, to ensure Sheffield Hallam University is accessible to all, no matter what the individual's social or financial background may be.

The Students' Union continues to oppose rises in tuition fees, and support students in their campaigning activities to reduce or even remove fees all together. What can often be overlooked however, is the financial burden of years of living and studying whilst at University. This burden is reflected in our Cost of Going to University research, which found from our large sample, that approximately three quarters felt persistently worried about money.

*"...the prices of things going up, your loan goes down, you don't get quite as much for the money you have, it's all a bit more pinched than it was..."*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

With many students having struggled with their finances at University, we asked students where they turn to during a financial emergency. Whilst most stated they turned to parents or other family members, students had also turned to various other means of getting cash quickly. When commenting, students informed us of a number of ways they have earned money that worryingly could be considered 'reckless'. These methods range from drinking games and dares, to borrowing money from friends, banks, and pay day lenders without being able to pay back, gambling, medical trials, and in a small number of extreme cases, being paid to remove their clothing or to engage in sexual activities.

*"I didn't have enough money to last the last week...so I put it all on a bet to double it"*

- Cost of Going to University, 2017

The Students' Union Advice Centre sees students with financial issues on a daily basis, with frequently occurring issues such as receiving the incorrect amount of money from Student Finance England (SFE), problems with childcare funding, housing benefits

issues, or international students suffering with a wide range of financial issues. Despite the large numbers of students who visit us for support, our Advice Centre has already been able to secure almost half a million pound in additional or emergency funding for students in need in the first 6 months of this academic year.

Often those who need support are our most vulnerable and most disadvantaged students, and our Advice Centre has found emergency funding can still be difficult to obtain, particularly for international students. We must continue to support these students however, with finances becoming an ever persistent stress for our students. The Students' Union therefore urges the University to continue to provide the same, or even an increased, level of funding to emergency support funds, in order to help our most disadvantaged students.

### Recommended Outcome 15:

Funding to support the most disadvantaged students continues at the same level or higher.

The Cost of Going to University research highlighted that financial stresses are not only a concern for large number of students, but are having significant impacts for many of them. One of the most surprising findings was that one third of participants admitted that they had gone without food because of money concerns. Approximately one in four had also sold possessions in order to make rent, pay bills or buy food, and the same proportion have considered dropping out of University altogether as they feel they cannot afford to continue.

Over half the participants are in some form of part time employment; however this presents its own problems for students. Many reported that they did not feel they had the time to work alongside studying, showing concerns that this could impact on their University work. These concerns are valid, as academic studies have also illustrated that time-term working can have a detrimental effect on degree results<sup>5</sup>.

*"It can be stressful to split my time between making money and studying"*

- Cost of Going to University, 2017

The Students' Union Advice Centre has also seen a growing number of cases where students have found some temporary or cash-in-hand employment, but are not aware of their rights as employees. As a result, there have been a number of cases of students being underpaid, unfairly dismissed, or asked to perform tasks outside of their role or responsibilities. As many students are not fully aware of the support available to them, and some are often desperate for money, a large number are vulnerable and can be taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers.

Bursaries, grants, and the Sheffield Hallam Hardship fund are some ways in which students can obtain additional money, however our Cost of Going to University Research found that less than 40% were aware of how they could apply. Of those that did receive bursaries, many made suggestions for improving the application process by making it clearer, and having more advertisement to students that the bursary exists.

Our research has established that many students are both desperate for money and are subsequently vulnerable in their attempts to get themselves out of difficult financial situations. In response to this, the University and the Students' Union must work together to educate students on their rights, and what support is available to them when they are desperately in need of cash whilst they are a student. From bursaries, to additional funding, to what to look for in part time employment, we urge the University to help us ensure students make informed choices in difficult financial situations that affect a significant number of our student body.

### Recommended Outcome 16:

Students are educated on the support available when they need money urgently.

*"Our research has established that many students are both desperate for money and are subsequently vulnerable in their attempts to get themselves out of difficult financial situations."*

<sup>5</sup> Callender, C. (2008). The impact of term-time employment on higher education students' academic attainment and achievement. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23 (4), 359-377.

# 3.3 Learning Resources

In this report, we have discussed learning spaces within the University, ensuring libraries and learning centres are suitable for our students. The specific learning resources available to students within these spaces however can make a crucial difference as to how equipped students are to achieve their academic goals. As learning resources are critical to academic performance, the Students' Union receives a large amount of feedback relating to resources such as computers, text books, printing, and equipment that available for student use.

Text books as a resource was raised as an issue by a large proportion of students via the All I Want for Christmas Campaign, with students making wishes for improving the availability of key reading materials, particularly in relation to physical copies. Several students also directly named their course, which included Law, Biology and Cinematography.

Availability of textbooks was also highlighted in the Focus Group Research with students commenting on how reading lists would state books that are considered to be 'core texts' and there would only be a few copies available in the library. Furthermore, the availability issue has been highlighted by Student Reps, with feedback asking for more core texts to be available online, or for more copies to be made available.

*"...the desire for more core texts/online texts to be usable by multiple students at once. Promote the ability to suggest books students would like to access..."*

- D&S SSCM, 2017

Even the costs of buying textbooks outright have been criticised, with many students feeding back to the Students' Union that this has been an issue for them personally. Comments often reference both the need to purchase due to the lack of availability in the library, and the fact that books were often very expensive in comparison to the amount of time they were actually used.

*"£150 for course books that weren't required as much as I'd hoped after having paid that amount."*

- Cost of Going to University, 2017

The Students' Union conducted research specifically to measure student opinion of the teaching resources available to them, such as text books, and compiled a Teaching Resources Report as a result. This illustrated that some students have reported difficulty in obtaining the core texts or essential reading materials, particularly during busy times such as exam periods or near assessment deadlines. A significant proportion of students attempt to access their core and recommended texts online, however there have been many issues reported, with texts not being made available online.

*'Some books say they're online but they're not'*

- Teaching Resources Report, 2017

With reports of students across all faculties having problems accessing physical copies of core text books and recommended reading materials, the Students' Union recommends that the University ensures all 'core texts' and 'recommended reading' materials are accessible online for all Hallam students. Not only will online access ensure a consistent experience across campus and that all can access their essential materials, but could address future demand, as our research found that first year students are much more likely to look online for their core texts than third year students.

## Recommended Outcome 17:

All core texts and recommended reading materials are accessible online for all Hallam students.

The report also illustrated how many students were affected by the issue of printing costs, which had also been raised via the Student Reps, Cost of Going to University research, and via the All I Want for Christmas Campaign. Printing costs have become a consistent issue raised by students for a number of years; with student demand for free printing continuing even in this academic year via Student Reps, and multiple formal research projects conducted by the Students' Union.

*"...printing should be free for students up to a certain extent and printing of lecture slides especially should be given to all students. More ebooks should also be made available for core texts as they are so expensive to buy and there are never enough copies in the library"*

- Cost of Going to University Research, 2017

In response to the continuing demand for cheaper printing, the Students' Union made a recommendation in the 2015-16 Student Voice Report for all written feedback to be given electronically, and the University is now moving towards online submission (see Appendix C for more details).



The Students' Union has also installed a free printing machine at the HUBS, which allows for all students to print without paying, with the costs being subsidised by advertising at the bottom of the printing page. Whilst this may not be appropriate for submission of course work, this can be used for notes, drafts, and copies of key texts and journals. Feedback however seems to indicate that a significant number of students are unaware of availability of free printing at the HUBS, and of those that were aware, a large proportion did not use it as they were based at Collegiate Campus.

Throughout this report, we have highlighted the importance of a consistent experience for students at both campuses. As a result, the Students' Union aims to install a free printer at Collegiate Campus, thereby providing a cost free printing option to all of our students. It is clear however that we also need to ensure that the free printers at both campuses are more clearly promoted to students, based on the feedback received about this issue.

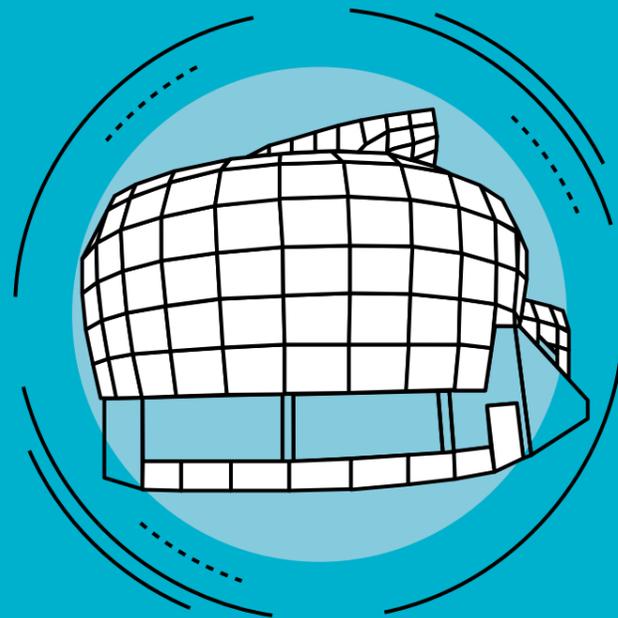
## Recommended Outcome 18:

A free printer is installed at Collegiate Campus.



# 4.0

## WIDER EXPERIENCE



## 4.1 Mental Health Support

Mental health and wellbeing have become an increasingly hot-topic amongst Hallam students, as illustrated in the numerous candidate manifestos for full-time and part-time Officer positions making mental health a high priority in the last few years.

The University has demonstrated clear understanding of the profile that mental health has amongst students, and has conducted research this year into how student mood may be affected by particular elements of their course, listed in this report as the Have Your Say (HYS) report. This investment in understanding the student experience with reference to mental health is welcomed, and the Students' Union urges the University to not only continue this work, but to expand it, along with the resources available to students to deal with these issues.

The Students' Union also wanted to gather a more detailed picture of how students feel about current mental health support, associated stigmas, and their own personal experiences. This aimed to measure issues from inside the classroom that might affect students' mental health, and from the whole spectrum of life as a student at Sheffield Hallam.

Our Mental Health research found that from our 228 responses, a surprising four out of five students reported they had at some point felt stressed, lacked energy or motivation, felt unhappy or down, or felt some form of anxiety at some point whilst they have been a student at Sheffield Hallam. What is more alarming was that the majority had suffered with feelings of hopelessness, feelings of panic, or depressed feelings. Furthermore, more than a quarter had considered self-harming and had suicidal thoughts, primarily reported by female students and disabled students, which raises significant concerns regarding the wellbeing of our students.

*"More awareness needs to be raised that mental health is an issue that affects everyone whether they know it or not"*

- Mental Health Research 2017

When asked about when they had experienced mental distress, a large number of students reported that this often occurred before exams. Furthermore, when asked if they think any of the elements of the students experience have added to these feelings, a

large number of students stated course workload and deadlines have contributed. These findings were also reflected in the University HYS report. Therefore, it is recommended that there is a review of the services offered to students with mental distress in relation to exams and deadlines to establish whether this is sufficient. With feedback suggesting the majority of students are being affected by this issue, a large effort is needed to ensure students are supported during difficult times of the year, and a University-wide approach is needed to ensure that students feel supported across the University, as opposed to relying on a single wellbeing service.

### Recommended Outcome 19:

Support sessions are available for all students around exam times and coursework deadlines.

*"With feedback suggesting the majority of students are being affected by this issue, a large effort is needed to ensure students are supported during difficult times of the year, and a University-wide approach is needed to ensure that students feel supported across the University..."*

More resource specifically for wellbeing services is also needed. When asked how money could be invested for support, students commented on the need for an expanded Student Wellbeing Service as there is often not enough appointments available and students have to sometimes wait a few weeks to see a professional. Additionally, students commented on how they would like more drop in sessions to improve access to mental health service.

*"Student well-being is overbooked and busy so more money invested in that and just general talking therapies in general."*

- Mental Health Research 2017

Course work deadlines and exams are not the only major cause of mental distress however, with two thirds of students stating that issues can often be caused by personal, family or relationship problems.

When students were asked about stigmas around mental health a large number of students stated they believe there is a clear stigma attached to mental health issues. Furthermore, a large number of students stated they believe the University and the Students' Union can do more to reduce these stigmas. Students repeatedly commented throughout the survey how they would like there to be more events and awareness raised around mental health. Additionally students stated they would like the elected Full-Time Officers to be leading on more events to raise awareness on mental health issues. Peer networks are often successful in not only awareness raising, but offering a practical solution to the need for more support for the large amount of students suffering poor mental health.

#### Recommended Outcome 20:

Peer networks supporting students with mental health issues are developed and greater resource is utilised to combat stigmas associated.

Supporting students to develop good mental health should be a priority for both the Students' Union and the University. It is the Students' Union vision to ensure all students are supported, and this can only be achieved with continued work with the wider student body.

*"Campaigns to make the topic more openly talked about, and more support available for mental health issues"*

- Mental Health Research 2017

It is hoped that the University can not only support the Students' Union in its' aim, but acknowledge the impact that improving students' sense of self-efficacy and their coping strategies not only benefits the student, but will have a positive impact on student retention<sup>6</sup>, and subsequently their own performance across the sector in measures such as University league tables.

<sup>6</sup> Devonport, T. J., & Lane, A. M. (2006). RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY, COPING AND STUDENT RETENTION. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 34 (2), 127-138(12)

**"Campaigns to make the topic more openly talked about, and more support available for mental health issues"**

- Mental Health Research 2017

## 4.2 Student Meals

Our Mental Health Research not only highlighted the impact that University life has on academic performance, retention, and personal life, but also revealed something interesting about eating and drinking behaviours; almost half of students surveyed reported that they had developed an 'abnormal attitude to food' since being at University. Issues with cost and availability of food and drink, particularly at University outlets, is a regular topic within student feedback, and the Students' Union this year has attempted to dig deeper into the causes of these issues in this academic year, by gathering feedback as part of Healthy Hallam week.

Prior to Healthy Hallam week, the Students' Union has received feedback relating to food and drink from a number of sources, including Student Reps, the All I Want for Christmas Campaign, Focus Group Research and other surveys. Feedback, whilst often varied, tends to relate to University outlets with two key areas; variety and cost.

'Variety' as a theme most commonly refers to students asking for more vegan or gluten free options. The SBS Reps Report noted that this issue in particular drives people away from University outlets and towards local supermarkets, where the choice is far greater. Feedback relating to cost however occurs more frequently, with students often asking for cheaper food. This has been a recurring theme for a number of years, and illustrates how tight finances can be for students (as discussed in previous sections).

Startlingly, our Healthy Hallam Research found that more than one in three students worry they will not have enough food because they do not have enough money to buy more. Similarly, as previously mentioned, our Cost of Going to University research found one in three students reported that they had gone without food at some point because of money concerns, highlighting the seriousness of this issue for a large number of our students. The Students' Union Advice Centre has also reported a significant rise in the number of students who need to make use of food banks in the local area.

*"The price of the food can often be too much, students have a budget and some of the food for what it is is overpriced. Should be options for meal deals at an affordable price."*

- Healthy Hallam Research, 2017

The Students' Union also used the Healthy Hallam Research to find out exactly how many students believe that University outlets cater to their food and drink needs, and why it perhaps might not. Our research found that only 39% of participants felt that the University outlets cater to their food needs. Reasons for why the majority did not agree vary, but the most common theme was around price of food, with many saying that it is simply too expensive for them. Some of the comments named Collegiate Campus outlets specifically in their feedback as being too expensive; a view reflected in other sources of feedback.

*"better and cheaper food at collegiate"*

- All I Want for Christmas, 2016

Comment received about the University catering outlets are not entirely negative however as some students have commented that there are a good number and variety of outlets, particularly at City campus, and the often friendly and welcoming attitude of staff. There have also been some positive comments received in relation to costs, specifically relating to the '£1 Wednesday' deal, and the budget options available at City Campus. One such budget outlet opened this

academic year at City Campus, Proven Bakehouse, as a response to student demand for low cost food options.

*"Cantor is quite cheap and nice food for lunch"*

- Healthy Hallam Research, 2017

With consideration for the amount of feedback received asking for more low cost food options, the need for greater consistency of experience across both campuses (as mentioned in previous sections), and the positive feedback received regarding '£1 Wednesday' deals and the new Proven Bakehouse, the Students' Union urges the University to consider opening a similar outlet to the 'Proven Bakehouse' at Collegiate campus. Whilst the Granary has a good range of food, there is clearly the need for a more budget option at that campus, to meet the demand for cheap food that is provided by the University.

### Recommended Outcome 21:

A 'Proven Bakehouse' style outlet is developed at Collegiate Campus.

Our research has not only highlighted the importance of the giving students a good range of food options at an affordable price, but the key role that staff play in providing a good student experience. A strong sense of belonging is not only developed through facilities and offers but through the staff interacting with them; examples of this have been found when we have talked to engaged students about why they enjoy spending time at Students' Union outlets.

*[on Hubspace] "...food is cheap and the people who work there are really friendly and they know you and recognise you..."*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

Finally, our Healthy Hallam Research produced some interesting findings about how our students prepare food at home. 3 out of 4 students stated they enjoyed cooking and a similar proportion feel confident in their ability to cook food from scratch. Despite this, over half reportedly cook less than 2 or 3 times a week. In order to save money and to eat well, the University and the Students' Union needs to work together to help more students cook healthy food at home, and help students to reduce the cost of their meals whilst at University. By not only providing cheap and suitable food in our outlets, but educating students on the different meals they can prepare at home, at a fraction of the cost of eating out, we can ensure that far fewer students report that they have developed an 'abnormal attitude to food' since being at University.

### Recommended Outcome 22:

Students are given advice and information on cost effective ways of buying and preparing healthy and wholesome meals at home.



# 4.3 Extracurricular Activities

Developing a sense of belonging at University is not only beneficial to the student as an individual, but is key to academic success. Extracurricular activities are a key way to develop this sense of belonging, a view reflected in the University's own Welcome Survey, and this final section addresses feedback relating to this aspect of University life.

The Students' Union has had a keen focus this year on measuring student opinion of the societies and volunteering, sports, and employment opportunities available to all Sheffield Hallam students. Both our Societies Membership Research and our Volunteer Engagement Report showed the majority of participants agreed that involvement in extracurricular activities had a positive impact on their sense of belonging and their social life at University, and it is therefore our aim to encourage as many students as possible to get involved in some form of extracurricular activity.

*"I wanted to get a sense of belonging in a wider social circle other than what was just on my course..."*

- Societies Membership Research, 2016

Before we looked at increasing the number of students involved in extracurricular activities however, we wished to learn more about the types of students who were more likely to take part. Using our membership database, we have analysed the demographic breakdown of students involved in societies, volunteering, and sports teams, and found proportionally more of these students are undergraduate home students aged between 18 and 21, than found in the overall student body. Ensuring all students, with a particular consideration for non-traditional students, are equally encouraged to become involved in extracurricular activities should therefore be a priority.

The same piece of research also highlighted that equality and diversity within societies was seen as a priority, and students place very large importance on the social aspects of extracurricular activities. Even via the Student Reps, students have commented that more should be done to "bring forward diversity

and integration" within extracurricular activities, and therefore increasing the number of students that participate in these activities is a main concern.

The Students' Unions Activities Officer, led on a piece of work as part of the Societies Membership Research, to measure participation at Sheffield Hallam in societies, against 'competitor' institutions.

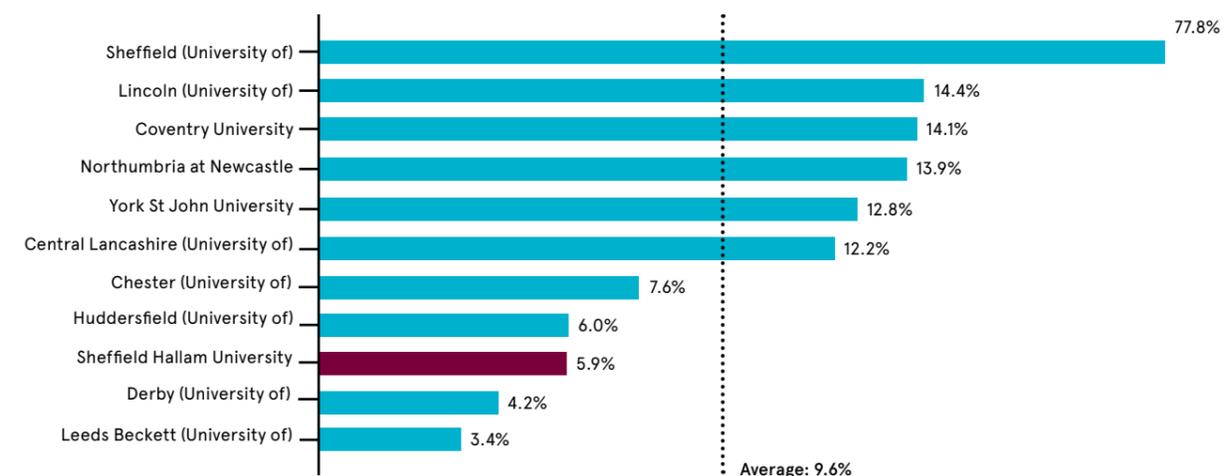
From a sample of competitor institutions, it was found that participation was proportionally relatively low at Sheffield Hallam. Institutions with higher levels of participation often had a significant focus on the promotion of academic societies to its students. The benefits of academic societies, particularly on academic performance are clear, and the need for a higher number of academic societies has been raised via several feedback pathways, including the Student Reps and the Focus Group Research projects.

*"...you can join some of the Uni of societies, because we don't have them at Hallam... that are really applicable to my course..."*

- Focus Group Research, 2016

Again, the Students' Union aimed to measure what effect being part of an academic society had on belonging to a course, and although this survey only received a low response rate it, found that participants were slightly more likely to agree that they had a better relationship with others on their course and their teaching staff, and that their course played a part in their overall identity. The survey also found that the vast majority of participants agree that every course should have its own relevant academic society, with many citing the reason that it would benefit them both academically and socially.

Figure 2: Proportion of students engaging with societies at SHU and competitor institutions (scale capped):



*"It gives people a chance to socialise with like-minded people because some courses have such low contact hours and lectures aren't really a good way to meet new people."*

- Belonging to Your Course Survey, 2016-17

The Students' Union therefore urges the University to support us in the creation of academic societies covering every course, so that all students have a great opportunity to be involved in extracurricular activities at Sheffield Hallam. As with the vast majority of other societies, both academic and non-academic, the Students' Union will support and maintain academic societies once they have been established, however the creation of academic societies that covers all courses requires a coordinated approach that makes full use of the close partnership between the Students' Union and the University.

## Recommended Outcome 23:

Academic Societies, covering every course, are available to Sheffield Hallam students.

The creation of academic societies that cover every course at Sheffield Hallam is a real challenge, however working in partnership with the University, achieving this would help engage students with their course, increase sense of belonging for many students, and have a positive effect on the academic performance of our students.

*[On an academic society] "To meet students on same course to make friends with them so we can share ideas in regards to our courses"*

- Welcome Survey, 2016-17



# Closing Statement

During the 2016-17 academic year, the Students' Union has used a variety of methods to gather feedback from students about various aspects of their University experience. Throughout this report, we have referenced formal research conducted by the Students' Union and the University, as well as indirect feedback we have received, to build a picture of the student experience at Sheffield Hallam University.

We have found students to be both passionate and thoughtful about their student experience, often being proud of their identity as a Hallam student. Despite this, it is felt that getting value for money, particularly in an age of increased tuition fees, is fundamentally important and strongly linked to student satisfaction. Our Cost of Going to University research has found that only just over half of students surveyed feel they are getting value for money, suggesting there is still a lot more we can do to meet student expectation.

Course content, University facilities, and being able to utilise the expertise of their lecturers have all been frequently stated as positives by students, however many more also commented that extra or hidden costs such as for printing or resources, food prices, and style of teaching, has had a more negative impact on what is considered to be good value for money. The student experience is not simply limited to the classroom, but to all aspects of University life, and students can be faced with a wide variety of issues; from teaching quality to mental health to paying for accommodation. This report has highlighted these issues, showing a personal and high quality learning

experience is an expectation of our students, with those who feel supported and given the tools to achieve often being the most satisfied upon graduation. Our students also frequently tell us that they wish to have their voices heard, and this report is one way in which we can provide this voice in a way that both describes issues that students face, and how these issues can best be addressed.

Recommended outcomes have been made as a response to help improve or remove the issues facing students, and it is hoped that the suggested actions are both well received and effective. In the coming academic year, we hope to track progress with regards to these actions, and ensure that the University, in partnership with the Students' Union, continues to provide the very best University experience for tens of thousands of students across Sheffield and the city region.

The Students' Union looks forward to working with the University in the coming year to ensure that the student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, can be the very best for our students.

# Key Terms & Abbreviations

<b>ACADEMIC YEAR</b>	Defined period between 1 August and 31 July of the following year.	<b>NUS</b>	The National Union of Students. The NUS is the national voice of students, helping them to campaign, get cheap student discounts, and provide advice on living student life to the full.
<b>ACES</b>	The faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences at Sheffield Hallam University.	<b>PG STUDENT</b>	'Postgraduate student'. A student on a course such as a Masters, PGCE, or PhD, normally requiring a first degree as a condition of entry.
<b>ATTAINMENT</b>	Refers to the level of the highest degree of education that a person has been awarded or has completed.	<b>PT STUDENT</b>	'Part time student'. Students who are on a course that lasts less than 24 weeks or involves less than 21 hours of study/tuition/work experience during term time.
<b>BENCHMARKING</b>	A process in which practices, measurements and scores are compared against the average of other institutions, in order to reflect on performance.	<b>REP</b>	(also; 'Student Rep') the voice of students on their course. These students are elected or have volunteered to provide a link between the student body on their course, the University and the Students' Union.
<b>BLOCK GRANT</b>	The total amount of funding provided by the Government to an institution, and/or a University to its respective Students' Union.	<b>RETENTION</b>	Completion of the course from start to finish. High retention rates generally relate to low proportion of 'drop outs' or 'withdrawals' from a course.
<b>BME</b>	'Black and Minority Ethnic'. Used to describe students of non-white descent.	<b>SBS</b>	The faculty of Sheffield Business School at Sheffield Hallam University
<b>D&amp;S</b>	The faculty of Development and Society at Sheffield Hallam University.	<b>SHSU</b>	Abbreviation for 'Sheffield Hallam Students' Union'
<b>FE</b>	'Further Education'. Refers to education in addition to that received at secondary school level. Generally up to the standard of GCE A-Level or NVQ Level 3	<b>SHU</b>	Abbreviation for 'Sheffield Hallam University'.
<b>FEES</b>	Refers to tuition fees unless explicitly stated otherwise. Tuition fees are paid to a University or College to attend a course with that institution.	<b>SSCM</b>	Abbreviation for 'Staff-Student Committee Meeting'.
<b>FPE</b>	'Full person equivalent'. When students are taught at more than one institution or are studying more than one subject, head-counts can be split across these proportional to the activity in each.	<b>SW STUDENT</b>	'Sandwich student'. A student on a sandwich course with includes periods (often a year) of work experience or placement in organisation(s) outside of the University.
<b>FT STUDENT</b>	'Full time student'. Students who are on a course that lasts at least 24 weeks, involves at least 21 hours of study/tuition/work experience during term time.	<b>TEF</b>	The 'Teaching Excellence Framework'. This is a Government initiative designed to recognise, reward, and improve teaching excellent in Higher Education providers across the UK. Institutions will be given an institutional rating of Gold, Silver and Bronze for their teaching quality.
<b>GRADUATE</b>	A person who has attained a bachelors or higher degree.	<b>UG STUDENT</b>	'Undergraduate student'. A student on a course working towards a first degree (often such as a BA or BSc), foundation degree, HE certificate/diploma.
<b>H&amp;WB</b>	The faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Sheffield Hallam University.		
<b>HE</b>	'Higher Education'. Optional final stage of formal learning occurs after completion of secondary education. Includes undergraduate and postgraduate level study, and courses leading to HNCs or HNDs.		
<b>HEFCE</b>	'Higher Education Funding Council for England'.		
<b>HOME STUDENT</b>	Students who were a resident in Great Britain and Northern Ireland when they started their course.		
<b>MATURE STUDENT</b>	Generally defined as students who are 21 or over when they started an undergraduate course.		
<b>MODE OF STUDY</b>	Refers to whether a student is a full-time (FT), part-time (PT) or sandwich (SW) student.		
<b>NSS</b>	Abbreviation for 'National Student Survey' (see Description of Sources section for more details).		

# Appendices

## A. Table of Data Sources Used

### Students' Union Formal Research:

Source	Year	Population	No. of Responses	Type of Data
Annual Student Rep Survey	2016	Student representatives	389	Quantitative & Qualitative
The Cost of Going to University	2017	All students	2,519	Quantitative & Qualitative
Students' Union Satisfaction Research	2016-17	All students	253	Quantitative & Qualitative
Teaching Quality Research	2016	All students	218	Quantitative & Qualitative
All I Want for Christmas' Campaign (AIWFC)	2016	All students	258	Qualitative
Societies Membership Report	2016-17	Selected students	202	Quantitative & Qualitative
Placement Satisfaction Report	2016	All students	356	Quantitative & Qualitative
Volunteer Engagement Report	2016-17	Selected students	99	Quantitative & Qualitative
SIA Personal Safety Surveys	2016-17	All students	396	Quantitative & Qualitative
Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching	2016-17	All students	203	Quantitative & Qualitative
Mental Health Research	2016-17	All students	228	Quantitative & Qualitative
Housing and Accommodation Report	2016-17	All students	210	Quantitative & Qualitative
Teaching Resources Report	2017	All students	118	Quantitative & Qualitative
Healthy Hallam Research	2017	All students		Quantitative & Qualitative
Focus Group Research	2016	Selected students	29	Qualitative
Women in Leadership Report (WiL)	2016-17	Conference attendees	38	Quantitative & Qualitative
BME in Leadership Report (BMEiL)	2016-17	Conference attendees	21	Quantitative & Qualitative
Belonging to Your Course Survey	2017	All students		Quantitative & Qualitative
Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Advice Centre stats	2016-17	All students	n/a	Quantitative & Qualitative
Understanding our Students Report	2016	Selected students	n/a	Quantitative

### Informal and Rep-based Feedback:

Source	Year	Population	No. of Responses	Type of Data
Staff-student Committee Meeting Minutes (SSCM)	2016-17	Student representatives	n/a	Qualitative
Education Zone Meetings	2016-17	All students	n/a	Qualitative
Community Zone Meetings	2016-17	All students	n/a	Qualitative
Officer Candidate Manifestos	2017	Student Officer Candidates	n/a	Qualitative
SBS Dept. Reps Student Experience Report (SBS Reps Report)	2016-17	SBS Students	n/a	Qualitative

## National and University-led Research:

Source	Year	Population	No. of Responses	Type of Data
National Student Survey (NSS)	2016	Level 6 (final year) students	4,574	Quantitative & Qualitative
Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)	2016	Postgraduate taught students	1,695	Quantitative & Qualitative
Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE)	2014/15	Final year undergraduates	4,197	Quantitative
Welcome Survey (WS)	2016	First year undergraduates		Quantitative
Have Your Say Report (HYS)	2016-17	First year undergraduates	893	Quantitative & Qualitative

## B. Description of Sources

Data used in this report comes from three main areas; formal research conducted by the Students' Union (see 1-18 in the list below), informal feedback gathered by the Students' Union (see 19-23 in the list below) and national surveys and local surveys conducted by Sheffield Hallam University (see 24-27 in the list below). Academic research referenced in the main body of the text has been listed in this section, as well as the full reference being included where it appears.

A cross-comparison of the different data sets has highlighted areas where students indicated that they were less satisfied, or where improvements are needed, and these form the main themes of the report.

Any questions can be directed to the Students' Union Student Watchdog Manager, Pete Crowson, at [p.crowson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:p.crowson@shu.ac.uk).

## Formal Research

### 1. Annual Student Rep Survey 2016

The student rep report is based on an annual survey that is sent to all student reps asking for feedback on their experiences of the student rep system, and the support available to Reps from both the Students' Union and the University.

own societies. The Activities Officer also measured participation at this institution, and benchmarked this against 'competitor' institutions.

### 2. The Cost of Going to University Research

A survey was created that measures student views in 4 main areas: finances at University, bursaries and placement support, winter exams, and the Students' Union. This high profile survey subsequently received over 2,500 responses.

### 7. Placement Satisfaction Report

All students on placement during November and December 2016 were contacted via email to complete a survey. Over 350 students gave us their views on whether they felt supported on placement, affordability of travel costs, and how suitable their placement was.

### 3. Students' Union Satisfaction Research

The Students' Union measures student views on what services we provide, the HUBS building and accessibility, and how effectively we communicate with the wider student body.

### 8. Volunteer Engagement Report

Students who participate in volunteering were consulted on how they feel Volunteering can be improved with the Students' Union, and gave their wider views on motivations for volunteering whilst studying at University.

### 4. Teaching Quality Research

Working with the Education Officer, Luke Renwick, a survey and report is produced measuring satisfaction with current teaching quality, whether teaching styles match the expectations of students, and the learning style students prefer. Staff who were seen as outstanding were also named and praised via this survey.

### 9. SIA Personal Safety Surveys

Two surveys were conducted with students at different points in the academic year, measuring the effectiveness of the changes to improving the new SIA building. This included measuring views of how safe students felt in and around the building, and the effectiveness of improved light and CCTV cameras in the area.

### 5. All I Want for Christmas Campaign 2016

In December 2016 the Student Officer Team ran their annual 'All I Want for Christmas' campaign, collecting feedback on what students would like the University to improve, which was subsequently analysed and reported.

### 10. Wednesday Afternoon Scheduled Teaching 2016-17

Working in partnership with the Sports and Physical Activities Officer, Laura Baggs, this project consisted of a survey completed by students who are Sports members. This survey measures the frequency and impact of scheduled teaching on a Wednesday Afternoon, which acts as a barrier to sports participation.

### 6. Societies Membership Research

Working with the Activities Officer, Peter Neild, feedback was gathered from societies members about the organisation of their

### 11. Mental Health Research 2016-17

Working in partnership with the Welfare Officer, Davey Silver, this project consisted of a survey measuring how widespread issues with mental health are in the overall student population, whether mental health stigmas are still prevalent, and what support is available for students.

### 12. Housing and Accommodation Report

This project consisted of a survey measuring student views on their current accommodation, future living and pressures felt to sign early for a housing contract for the next academic year, the snug scheme, and cost of accommodation.

### 13. Teaching Resources Report

A survey was created to measure student satisfaction with the availability and cost of physical learning resources such as textbooks, online resources such as e-journals and software, and hardware resources such as renting sound recorded technology and cameras.

### 14. Healthy Hallam Research

As part of Healthy Hallam week, a survey was created to measure the eating habits of students, how they purchase prepare and consume food, and student understanding of alcohol consumption and 'units'. Smaller surveys were also conducted to measure perceived University and Students' Union support on a range of health issues.

### 15. Focus Group Research

During December, several focus groups were held with students to discuss teaching quality, tuition fees, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and whether they feel they are getting value for money on their course.

### 16. Women in Leadership Report (WiL) 2016-17

Survey and report measuring satisfaction with the Women in Leadership conference, with a wider reference to female students in leadership roles throughout the Students' Union.

### 17. BME in Leadership Report (BMEiL) 2016-17

Survey and report measuring satisfaction with the BME in Leadership conference, with a wider reference to BME students in leadership roles throughout the Students' Union.

### 18. Belonging to Your Course Survey 2017

Working with the Activities Officer, Peter Neild, feedback was gathered from students measuring sense of belonging that students have specifically to their course. This piece of research also considers the role of 'Academic Societies'.

### 19. Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Advice Centre stats 2016-17

Our Advice Centre offers free, independent and impartial advice on all issues such as housing, academic, money matters, wellbeing, and employment. The data collected through the Advice Pro system indicates issues students are facing.

### 20. Understanding our Students report 2016

An analysis of the demographic breakdown of students involved in sports, societies, and volunteering, conducted to better understand engaged students involved in these extracurricular activities.

## Indirect feedback

### 21. Staff Student Committee Meeting (SSCM) minutes 2016-17

Minutes from Student Rep Committee Meetings, where staff and student reps work together to improve the student experience. Common themes.

### 22. Education Zone Meetings 2016-17

Students may submit any idea they have about their education to the Education Zone. This allows the issue to be discussed and debated, and zone committees can vote on whether a change in policy is to be passed as a result.

### 23. Community Zone Meetings 2016-17

Students may submit any idea they have about the student community to the Community Zone. This allows the issue to be discussed and debated, and zone committees can vote on whether a change in policy is to be passed as a result.

### 24. Officer Candidate Manifestos 2017

Student Officer Candidate manifestos were themed and analysed to highlight trends in what students' campaign for, voted for, and what candidates have raised as a current issue that they believe needs to be addressed.

### 25. SBS Department Reps Student Experience Report (SBS Reps Report) 2016-17

This report is compiled by SBS Department Reps, with SBS course reps contributing. This report collates the feedback the Reps have received about both faculty-specific and University wide that impact on the student experience.

## National and University-led Surveys

### 26. National Student Survey (NSS) 2016

The National Student Survey is a survey of final year students which asks questions about difference aspects of their learning experience, such as academic support, and assessment and feedback.

### 27. Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES) 2016

The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is a national survey specifically for taught postgraduate students, which focuses on students' experience of the course, learning and teaching, and skills development.

### 28. Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE) 2014-15

The annual Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey asks leavers about their employment or further study six months after graduation. The data collected most recently therefore refers to those who graduated at the end of the 2013-14 academic year.

### 29. Welcome Survey (WS) 2016-17

The Welcome survey was carried out with new enrolled students in October 2016, gathering feedback on students' arrival and induction experiences. This replaces the Student Barometer survey, replicating some key measures including overall satisfaction with arrival, living, learning, and support.

### 30. Have Your Say Report (HYS) 2016-17

The University HYS team produced a survey following the HYS event 'your wellbeing', which aims to understand the effects of particular course elements on student mood. This helps the University understand student highs and lows of studying at Sheffield Hallam.

# External research

## Section 2.2

Brooks, R. & Youngson, P. L. (2016). Undergraduate work placements: an analysis of the effects on career progression. *Studies in Higher Education*. 41 (9), 177-181.

Driffield, N.L., Foster, C.S. and Higson, H.E. (2011), 'Placements and degree performance: Do placements lead to better marks, or do better students choose placements?' Association of Sandwich Education and Training, online.

## Section 2.3

National Union of Students. (2013). Accommodation Costs Survey. Available: <https://www.nus.org.uk/global/campaigns/accommodation%20costs%20survey%20v6%20web.pdf>. Last accessed 30th Mar 2017.

Cushman & Wakefield. (2016). UK Student Accommodation Report. Available: <http://www.cushmanwakefield.co.uk/en-gb/research-and-insight/2016/uk-student-accommodation-report/>. Last accessed 30th Mar 2017.

## Section 3.2

Callender, C. (2008). The impact of term-time employment on higher education students' academic attainment and achievement. *Journal of Education Policy*. 23 (4), 359-377.

## Section 4.1

Devonport, T. J., & Lane, A. M.. (2006). Relationships between self-efficacy, coping and student retention. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*. 34 (2), 127-138(12)

# c. Review of Progress from 2015-16 Report - Full Spreadsheet

1.0 Education and Teaching			
Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
1.1 Assessment and feedback	1. Assignment feedback gives explicit suggestions for making improvements	Protocols around assessment design and use are addressed explicitly in online resources provided for staff and students and the 'Assessment Essentials' online resource also gives guidance on pedagogic best practice recommending that feedback should be 'used to identify achievements as well as areas for improvement'.	Achieved
	2. All written feedback to be given electronically.	As part of the Assessment Journey Programme electronic copies of feedback are a requirement for all Level 3, 4 and Level 7 work during 2016/17, and will be implemented for all other students from 2017/18.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	3. The University ensures assessment criteria consistently remain fixed following the start of the module, as stated in assessment framework.	The University has also introduced a revised policy for summative assessment for 2016/17 which makes clear the requirements for the provision of assessment criteria at the start of a module.	Achieved
1.2 Timetabling	4. There is a reduction in timetabled gaps between scheduled teaching sessions.	The Source now hosts a report that identifies where a number of student experience issues occur in the timetable, including gaps of more than three hours between sessions, and whole days where students have to come onto campus for only one hour of scheduled activity. The report is being utilised during the 2016/17 session to identify and resolve potential problems. More is being done to help students understand how best to use time on campus between scheduled sessions.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	5. The University conducts a review where assessment deadline bunching occurs, to inform actions to reduce assessment stress.	All Faculties are now making use of the assessment scheduler to plan student submissions and new reports to enable staff to address assessment bunching at course level have also been developed and released as part of the programme.	Achieved

Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
1.3 Wednesday afternoon scheduled teaching	6. There is the creation of a strategic plan by the University, aiming to reduce Wednesday afternoon scheduled teaching further.	A 39% reduction in teaching activities scheduled for Wednesday afternoons has been achieved over the past three years for standard full time undergraduate students. This downward trend has continued in 2016/17 in all Faculties except ACES, which has experienced an increase in Wednesday afternoon teaching. Demand on specialist space continues to be a constraint and work is ongoing to increase space and improve the way we use it in order to further reduce teaching on Wednesday afternoons.	Partially achieved / ongoing
1.4 Placements	7. The University reviews late placement allocation and identifies where long distance travel is most negatively affecting students.	There has been substantial investment made (in the region of £60k) into the development of resources supporting the relationships with partner schools (a new website and online signing-up process, improved materials promoting the value of placements, a revision of the payments made to schools). This has meant a substantial improvement in the availability of placements. Students on the primary courses all had 5 weeks advance notice of their placement this year, and because of the increased availability of places, it was possible to make better matches for students. Far fewer students were travelling long distances this year compared to last.	Achieved
1.5 Bursaries and funding	8. The University ensures that funding to support its most disadvantaged students continues at the same level or higher.	The University spent £1 million in 2015/16 on the Student Support Fund and the same amount has been available in the 2016/17 academic year. Some changes have been made in the way this funding has been allocated this year, with students who fall into more than one of the eligible categories being able to claim larger sums for support. As a result, more money has been paid out this year than last.	Achieved
	9. There is Students' Union representation in the creation and development of future access agreements and funding agreements.	Representatives from the Students' Union Advice Centre, and the Welfare and Community Officer from the Students' Union are full members of the Student Financial Support Panel, which has a standing item on issues relating to the Access Agreement. The Welfare and Community Officer is working in partnership with the Head of Student Support Services and other Heads of Service on specific student wellbeing initiatives this includes work with Student Funding and Access Support on the affordable healthy eating day which is part of the Students' Union's Healthy Hallam Week.	Achieved

2.0 Learning Environment and Resources			
Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
2.1 Graduation	10. There is a change of graduation schedule to a main summer event (to take place in July or September) and an additional winter date (to take place in December or January).	This issue is being given ongoing consideration but rescheduling graduation ceremonies to the summer is a complex issue. Bookings for the City Hall are made (and released) several years in advance and so any change to the timing of the main graduation period is likely to have a three-year lead-in. This extended timescale will also ensure that if a change is to be made it can be communicated to students at the earliest possible opportunity. As this is the case, Registry Services will consider the recommendation about current timing and the impact on overseas graduates' visa position, and consider whether anything can be done in this regard.	Not Achieved
2.2 Computing Resources	11. Teaching staff consider the cost of printing for students, and direct students to use free printing resource for assignments and coursework.	From September 2016, where possible, coursework has been submitted online for levels 3, 4 and 7 (students new to the University) and for all students from September 2017. This should have reduced some of the printing costs to students of assessed work, and this has been confirmed by some, although not all, students in focus groups set up to gauge the impact of the Assessment Journey Programme. The Students' Union have introduced a free printing service for students. Although usage of this printer is monitored, it is used for very varied printing needs, so does not map directly onto students' printing for assessment.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	12. The University conducts a full review of computer software availability, with a particular consideration for the needs of students with specialist computing needs.	A review of specialist software purchasing and its availability across the University campuses is undertaken annually, and Faculty and Directorate communications escalate issues to Digital Technology Services for review. As part of a wider service improvement programme, the Digital Technology Service will review specialist computing need to identify opportunities for improvement in 16-17. As part of the Digital Learning Project, a full benchmarking and analysis of the use of digital services has been undertaken, and a set of recommendations will be made in a full report due in April. As part of ongoing work to improve the support to disabled students and embed more inclusive practices across the University, Library and Student Support Services are reviewing how assistive technology training will be offered in 2017/18 to make it more accessible to students.	Partially achieved / ongoing

Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
2.3 Learning Spaces	13. There is an increased availability of small bookable rooms, with computer access, to facilitate group working.	There has been an increase in the number of bookable rooms available in Adsetts during 2016/17, but students have continued to request additional space that they can book for study or for group work. This has increased directly in some areas (e.g. Performance) as a result of discussion on Unitu. A pilot system has begun in the Maths Department making two rooms bookable for students via the PC booking system. In addition, there is a ground floor student room in Charles Street which is also bookable, which has full AV systems, and is suitable for group work and presentation practice. Looking ahead, there are plans to introduce a new resource booking system that would enable greater availability of room bookings for students.	Achieved
2.4 Cross-campus links	14. The University considers the introduction of a cross-campus shuttle-bus, with links to the University Sports Park.	There is now a cross-campus bus currently in operation provided by Campbell Homes, running a regular service from Norfolk Park to the HUBS and to Collegiate Crescent. Other initiatives to help students with the cost of travel: a discounted Travel master pass is on sale in the Students' Union for SHUcard customers giving discounted bus and tram travel from all providers across South Yorkshire; a Student CityBus ticket for £9 per week; and discounted bus and tram tickets saving an average of 5% per week on any similar tickets.	Achieved
2.5 Textbooks	15. The University supports the Students' Union in the expansion of the Students' Union Book Exchange service.	The book exchange system responds to student concerns about the costs of studying, and provides a sustainable model for students accessing core texts. The University is happy to publicise this venture as requested by the Students' Union. Julia Shakespeare, from the Library team, has been nominated to work with the Students' Union to support this scheme, including supporting disposal of unwanted books after the exchange. Facilities Directorate have offered storage space and transport for books, and communications opportunities to publicise the activity.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	16. The University ensures all students are able to access either physical or electronic copies of all core text books.	Library teams have continued to put efforts into keeping Reading Lists Online up-to-date, as this ensures that course materials are made available as a priority for students. There has also been a change to the licensing agreements that means that a greater percentage of key texts can be digitised and made available for students with no additional cost. The library runs the student book ordering scheme each year (at the end of October and during March) and this gives students the opportunity to order books that they would like to have made available.	Achieved

Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
	17. There is greater communication to students regarding the auto-renewal system for library books.	The auto-renewal system in the library has had significant benefits for students, notably in the reduction of fines paid. It has also reduced the number of enquiries at help desk for the Library staff, meaning these colleagues have more time to focus on supporting students in other ways.	Not achieved
2.6 Food and Drink Outlets	18. The University improves range and affordability of food at University outlets.	Students have requested that food prices on campus are reduced. In response, the Facilities Directorate is working hard to pass discounts on to students, particularly those that use SHUcard. New offers for students for 2016/17 have included: discounts on some key products such as coffee and other "student choice products"; £1 Wednesdays, all items £1 for two Wednesdays each year; points promotion month, a month of discounts to help get even more value from SHUcard points. There are a range of seasonal "meal deal" type promotions in each of the three brands, The Deli, The Granary and Il Barista. The "Proven Bake House" brand now runs at Cantor cafe. This provides a range of basic foodstuffs and all items under this brand are available for £1 when purchased with a SHU card. This approach has been well-received by students.	Achieved

### 3.0 Representation, Support and Opportunities

Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
3.1 Sports Clubs and Societies	19. There is increased funding for sports clubs and societies at Sheffield Hallam.	For the vast majority of clubs there are no costs to the Team Hallam trials with all transport, facilities and equipment paid for. Students wanting to try and get into a sports club later in the year should contact Team Hallam through the Sports HUB in the Students Union and they will be introduced to the club for a free trial.	Not achieved
3.2 Student Reps	20. The University works in partnership with the Students' Union to increase University staff engagement with the Student Rep system.	The University is committed to working in partnership with the Student's Union to support the recruitment, training and development of student representatives, and we are actively improving the way in which we do this. The Students' Union has hosted two staff breakfasts to encourage engagement and discussion in the student representation process and management from academic and professional services staff, and to support the community ethos of working together with student representatives. All the student representative training was delivered with Faculty teams and colleagues from the Students' Union to ensure consistency.	Achieved

Themes	Recommendations	Comments on Progress	Has this been achieved?
	21. The University ensures expectations are met with regards to the distribution of Staff Student Committee Meeting materials.	Regarding the provision of papers for meetings, there are some difficulties with giving students access to Sharepoint sites where meeting paperwork is often held. We included as part of student representative training specific information about obtaining meeting materials and guidance on this matter is also provided on the Working With Student Reps blog. This matter was also raised with Senior Quality Officers and the Head and Deputy Head of Academic Quality and Standards, to ensure greater access to materials and preparatory support for students in advance of Departmental Boards.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	22. The Students' Union and the University works in partnership to ensure there are appropriate numbers of reps in each course/department to effectively represent their cohort.	Last year student representative roles were recorded on the University's student information system, SITS, for the first time and we have continued to work with the SITS team to improve the range of roles recorded on the system as well as reporting out on student representative engagement. Academic and professional services staff regularly review representative recruitment with the Students' Union to ensure that there are representatives from all academic areas and take action where there are gaps in provision. A large number of students took part in the review of student rep training (743) and reported an almost exclusively positive experience.	Partially achieved / ongoing
3.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing	23. The University ensure mental health and wellbeing support is given to all students.	Two task and finish groups have been set up to take forward specific initiatives; one looking at improving the support to students reporting incidents of sexual harassment and hate crime and the other looking at issues relating to drugs and alcohol harm reduction. The Head of Student Support Services is now working with the Chief Operating Officer and PVC Student Experience to look at practical ways of enhancing the support on offer. We are working on improving access to support both on and off campus. From July the University will be investing in access to Big White Wall for all students.	Partially achieved / ongoing
	24. The University has a consideration for specific mental health issues in the sale of exercise supplements at University outlets.	The University initiated the Sheffield Student Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board which has members drawn from both Universities, the NHS, city council, police and voluntary sector with the aim of improving understanding of the services available and raising awareness of the needs of the student population.	Not achieved
3.4 Leadership and Development	25. The Students' Union and University to work in partnership to provide greater resource to leadership training programmes for students.	Current leadership schemes include the Career Impact scheme, the Career Mentoring Scheme, and Common Purpose. From September 2016, an additional 50 places will be available at Level 4 for students on the Career Mentoring scheme. The provision is being developed on an ongoing basis; additions will be recorded regularly as part of the regular updating or responses to the Student Voice Report.	Achieved

## D. Staff Members Named as 'Outstanding' via the Teaching Quality Research

- Andy Gair
- Edwyn Anderton
- Mike Meredith
- Adele Doran
- Elizabeth Barrett
- Mike Robinson
- Adrian Hall
- Ginny Bowd
- Muno Abdi
- Alan Holloway
- Graham Martin
- Muntasir Shami
- Alexandra savage
- Hayley Bradley
- Natalie Haynes
- Alison Campbell
- Heather Wain
- Neil Sissons
- Alison Gibbons
- Henry Bell
- Nichola Cadet
- All the Child Nursing Team
- Holly Castleton
- Nick tiller
- Amy Musgrove
- Jack Black
- Niger Jones
- Andrew Constable
- Jackie Stallard
- Oli Young
- Andrew Hird
- Jaime Waters
- Patrick Wichert
- Anjana Raghavan
- James Bostock
- Paul Aleixo
- Anna Hall
- James Harcus
- Paul Beresford
- Anna Hawkins
- James Heydon
- Paul Crowther
- Annie Jones
- Jeanette Baker
- Paul King
- Antonia Ypsilanti
- Jenny Sloan
- Paul Swainsbury
- Ashley Barns
- Jo Robson
- Peter O'neil
- Beverly Mowthorpe
- Joan Ramon Rodriguez
- Rachel Abbott
- Camilla Bassie
- Joanna Lee
- Rachel Genn
- Carmel O'Tole
- John Joyce
- Rachel Mcmanus
- Charlotte
- John Rowe
- Ranbir Lal
- Christine Straker
- Jon Dean
- Richard
- Claire Marsden
- Jonathan Wainwright
- Richard White
- Claire Taylor
- Jonothan Gorst
- Robert Bradshaw
- Colette Beecher
- Julie Skilbeck
- Rod Radford
- Colin Beard
- June Clarke
- Roland Spencer
- Dan Plumley
- Karl Baker-Green
- Rose Court
- Dani Abulhawa
- Keith miller
- Ruth Deller
- Danny Allwood
- Kevin McDermott
- Sally Billau
- Dave Sayers
- Laura Cole
- Sam Browse
- Dave Wilson
- Laura Coleman
- Sam Burton
- David Broom
- Laura Evans
- Sarah Morris Docker
- David Playfoot
- Leo Guevara
- Sarah Williams
- David Reynolds
- Liane Duxbury
- Scott Jones
- David Ridley
- Liz Dempsey
- Shelley O'Brien
- David Smith
- Lynn Crowe
- Shelley Roche
- David Smith
- Maurice Starkey
- Simon Rose
- Denise Foulkes
- Manny Madriaga
- Tim Spencer
- Dr Mel Lacey
- Marcos Rodriguez
- Toby Lyons
- Dr Nikki Jordan-Mahy
- Marelize Joubert
- Tony Blackshaw
- Dr Xinjun Cui
- Mark Edwards
- Tony Murphy
- Dr. Daniel Allwood
- Mark Heaton
- Tony Price
- Dr. David Smith
- Martin Cooper
- Torsten Schenkel
- Dr. Elizabeth Freeman
- Martin Roberts
- Vicky Heap
- Dr. Nikki Jordan-Mahy
- Matthew Love
- Vicky Thirlaway
- Dr. Phillip Gardener
- Melvyn Ternan
- Wendy Lejuane
- Ed Cope
- Michelle Blackburn
- Will Reader (Psychology)

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The HUBS  
Paternoster Row  
Sheffield  
S1 2QQ

