

Edge Hill Students' Union Limited (A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisers For the Year Ended 31 July 2025

Company registered number 07329036

Charity registered number 1143764

Trustees

Christopher Bull (Appointed 9 December 2024)

Dewi Bloor (Appointed 1 July 2025)

Sarah Ellis

Bill Hancox

Maggie Lam (Resigned 30 June 2025)

Eri Mountbatten-O'Malley

Orna Murphy-Horton (Resigned 13 June 2025)

Paige Rivers (Resigned 30 June 2025)

Sophie Rowley (Appointed 1 July 2025)

Ali Syed Shabab (Appointed 1 July 2025)

Registered office

Edge Hill Students' Union
The Hub
St. Helens Road
Ormskirk
Lancashire
L39 4QP

Independent Auditors

Dains Audit Limited Statutory Auditor Suite 2, Albion House 2 Etruria Office Village Forge Lane
Stoke on Trent Staffordshire ST1 5RQ

Solicitors

Weightmans LLP 100 Old Hall Street Liverpool L3 9QJ

Trustees' Report for the Year Ended 31 July 2025

The Trustees present their annual report with the charity's audited financial statements for the year 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025. The Annual Report serves the purposes of a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019). Since the charity qualifies as small under section 382 of the Companies Act 2006, the Strategic Report required of medium and large companies under the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors' Report) Regulations 2013 has been omitted.

Structure, Governance and Management

Edge Hill Students' Union is a student-led educational charity. It is a company limited by guarantee (Registered No. 07329036) with the Trustees as company law members, and a registered charity (Registered No. 1143764).

The Students' Union is 'separate but part of' Edge Hill University and subject to the University's Charter and Statutes. It also owns a trading subsidiary, Edge Hill Students' Union Trading Limited, which is currently dormant.

As a charity we have a Trustee Board which oversees administration, governance and legal compliance. The Trustee Board consists of up to four elected Student Sabbatical Trustees, up to four appointed Student Trustees, and up to four appointed Independent Trustees who offer professional experience, knowledge and expertise. The Trustee Board has delegated the day-to-day running of services and provisions to the Chief Executive (CEO) through an agreed schedule of delegations. Paul Malone was CEO throughout the year under review and left the Union's employment during early September 2025. The Union has engaged an interim CEO pending the recruitment of a permanent replacement for Paul.

The Trustees receive regular reports from the Chief Executive and finance colleagues. The Chief Executive coordinates the staff team of the Students' Union who work closely with the elected student officers to provide services and provisions to benefit our student members. Staff ensure that the strategy and operating plans are delivered in line with agreed budgets. The Students' Union's governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association and related bye laws.

The Students' Union operates on democratic principles. The Sabbatical Officers are elected by cross campus ballots annually in accordance with the Education Act 1994. Each officer has a specific portfolio remit as well as being jointly responsible for an effective and clear student voice to the University on issues which matter to students.

Governing Bodies

The Trustee Board has responsibility for overseeing the administration and management of the Union. They are responsible collectively for the overall well-being and strategic direction,

efficient operation, and good governance of the Union, including compliance with legal and financial requirements. The relationship between the Board and Chief Executive is fundamental to effective governance and management of the Union. One element of this is ensuring the Chief Executive is appropriately managed and remunerated. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure that the Chief Executive has clear objectives, to review performance and consider the development of their employee alongside that of the charity. The Board uses benchmarked salaries and benefits paid to Chief Executives in students' unions and the wider voluntary sector to determine a suitable level of remuneration. The Board has plans to strengthen this area of its responsibility with the establishment of a formal remuneration committee during the next financial year. The Students' Union employs full and part-time staff to ensure the effective management and operation of its wide range of activities. Those employees are accountable to the Chief Executive for the performance of their duties.

Recruiting and Training of Trustees

Whilst there is no formal written policy in place for induction and training of trustees, the Union ensures that all trustees are taken through a specifically organised training programme. For our sabbatical and student trustees this typically takes place within a broader range of induction activities.

Relationship with Edge Hill University

The relationship between Edge Hill University and the Students' Union is established in the Code of Practice approved by both organisations. The Students' Union is grateful for the continued support of the University demonstrated in the 'Block Grant' it receives from the University which is typically based on a proportion of the University's turnover, and in addition to this, the Union receives a 'Rent Grant' to cover space occupied by the Union which is owned by the University. Although the Students' Union aims to generate supplementary funding from various mutual trading activities in its new building, it will always be dependent on the University's support. There is no reason to believe that this or equivalent support from the University will not continue for the foreseeable future. The Union also benefits from other support from the University in the form of services such as facilities management.

The positive relationships that the Union enjoys with senior members of University staff enables the Union to discuss and resolve issues of importance to its members.

Relationship with Edge Hill Students' Union Trading Limited

The Students' Union has one wholly owned trading subsidiary, Edge Hill Students' Union Trading Limited (Company Number 08613438). Since 1 August 2017 there has not been any activity in this company. Edge Hill Students' Union Trading Limited will continue to exist, to address any significant non-primary purpose trading carried out by the Students' Union in the future.

Risk Management

The Union's risk management strategy includes the annual review of the risk policy and a risk register summary update at each Board meeting. The process identifies major risks and assesses their impact and likelihood of occurrence. A risk score is then formulated for each risk so they can be prioritised as low, medium, or high. The risk register identifies the risk owner,

mitigating controls in place, actions required to mitigate further, and the deadline for those actions.

Risks which have recently attracted the attention of trustees, and which continue to be an issue include, ensuring that there is a successful portfolio of commercial activity in the new SU building in the face of local competition. The successful implementation of the recent Higher Education Freedom of Speech Act remains a risk given the diverse range of student groups facilitated by the Union. The nature of students' unions means that they experience a more rapid turnover of trustees than other charities. This brings its own intrinsic risks, and the trustees are keen to mitigate them by ensuring a robust trustee induction process. Finally, both the University and Union have recently undergone changes in senior leadership which represents both risks and opportunities. The Board are keen to ensure that this period of change is used to strengthen our collaborative relationship with the University.

The current financial pressures affecting Higher Education in the UK are well documented. The consequential effects of these pressures for students' unions are becoming increasingly apparent and are evident in the reduction of grants for some unions. The Board are aware of the potential for a similar impact on our students' union. Finally, reputational damage arising from high-profile activity by a student, trustee or staff member remains a risk.

Our plans and strategies for managing risk include maintaining effective internal controls, a risk register, incident reporting and monitoring systems and insurance cover wherever appropriate.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Students' Union's vision is 'to create the best student experience we can for as many Edge Hill students as possible'. The Union exists for the advancement of education of students at Edge Hill University for the public benefit. This is through:

1. Promoting the interests and welfare of students during their course of study and representing, supporting, and advising students.
2. Being the recognised representative channel between students and Edge Hill University and any other external bodies.
3. Providing social, cultural, sporting, and recreational activities and forums for discussion and debate for the personal development of students.

The Students' Union operates within the requirements of the University to satisfy the 1994 Education Act. The Articles state that the Students' Union will always seek to:

1. Ensure that the diversity of its membership is recognised, and that equal access is available to all members of whatever origin or orientation.
2. Pursue its aims and objectives independent of any political party or religious group;
3. and, Pursue equal opportunities by taking positive action within the law to facilitate participation of groups discriminated against by society.

In pursuit of these aims for the public benefit, the Students' Union will ensure the diversity of its membership is recognised, valued, and supported and has established departments and services for use by its members and to support its work with the University and other organisations on behalf of students.

These services include our advice centre, our representation and democracy work, our societies and activities programme, the bar, retail, food, and launderette outlets. Sabbatical Officers of the Students' Union sit on many senior level committees of the University and meet regularly with the Local Authority, members of the Community Safety Partnership and other providers of public services affecting students. In setting our objectives and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Organisational Changes

The financial challenges confronting Higher Education have been extensively reported. As a students' union we have not been insulated from these financial challenges. These pressures, and issues associated with the new building, were the main drivers for restructuring the students' union staff team during the year. In addition to the redundancies required to ensure that the charity remains sustainable, we have generally experienced a higher level of staff turnover this year than usual. This included the departure of our long-serving CEO, Paul Malone, who resigned from the organisation following the end of the financial year in September.

This year the students' union has fitted out its new building which will be a focal point for student activity and social life on campus. The next financial year will require the Union to re-engage in regular, consistent, primary purpose commercial activity to ensure that this new facility is fully utilised in pursuit of our charitable objectives.

Building

Our new building had a faltering start. An expectation that the building would be practically complete for the start of the 2024/25 academic year was not fulfilled and attempts to operate services in a building which was still under construction were ultimately unsuccessful. Our first successful events in our new spaces were therefore not delivered until graduation 2025. This has had two notable impacts on the students' union.

Firstly, we have experienced a two-year hiatus in our commercial operations, rather than the one-year hiatus we expected. The associated loss of trading colleagues, changes in students' social and commercial habits means that our organisational memory and knowledge associated with our night-time economy on campus is significantly diminished.

Secondly, a significant investment of our reserves has been required to complete the fit out of the building. The magnitude of this contribution to the project was unexpected and the reduction in our reserves will reduce our organisational resilience and flexibility at a time of financial challenge for the sector. A priority therefore, is to rebuild our reserves in the next and subsequent financial years and this is reflected in our Reserves Policy.

Representation

One of the primary roles of any students' union is the representation and amplification of student voices regarding their educational and student experiences. This year there has been

discussion about the future shape and operations of the course representation system at Edge Hill. The Union is keen to reconcile the perspectives of the University and the Union so that the system can be a catalyst for the further improvement of the student experience at Edge Hill. We have continued to amplify student opinion both within the three University faculties, at University-wide committees and at relevant bodies in the wider community.

The National Student Survey (NSS), which is an independently conducted survey of all UK final year undergraduate students, includes a question regarding how well students think their union represents their academic interests. It was excellent to see the Union's score for this question increase this year from 70.9% to 77.3%, reflecting the improved performance of the Union in this area. Edge Hill Students' Union now has a score which exceeds the national benchmark.

1. Representation Framework and Channels

Role of Presidents and SEMs

Students at Edge Hill University, elect three presidents each year by secret ballot to represent them to the University. At Edge Hill, each President is elected with responsibility for one of the three Faculties: Education, Health, Social Care and Medicine and Arts and Science. These elected officers serve for a term of one year and can be re-elected once.

Alongside these elected officers the Union employs permanent Student Engagement Managers. These colleagues offer a range of support to the elected officers, assist with stakeholder management and provide important continuity in our relationships with University colleagues

SSCFs and Programme Boards

Staff Student Consultative Forums (SSCFs) and Boards are formal meetings held in faculties to ensure that student feedback is received, considered and influences the design and delivery of academic programmes and experience of students. These forums provide valuable insights that help shape SU campaigns. Feedback from these groups is carefully fed back to the wider team, fostering a broader understanding of recurring trends across the University.

Our Elected Presidents and Student Engagement Managers attended the vast majority of Faculty based SSCFs throughout the 24/25 academic year alongside Faculty Based Programme Boards. The Union has responded to all faculties which have approached Elected Officers and SEMs to ask for guidance and feedback on how to hold engaging SSCFs and how the format can be improved,

2. Faculty-Based Representation

Faculty of Education (FoE)

Our Faculty of Education President held regular drop ins for students. A popular theme for student feedback was placement experiences. Concerns were raised with faculty staff, who were able to address concerns and ensure students' expectations were realistically managed.

Progress was communicated back to students to provide guidance and reassurance. Later in the year the same elected officer was able to effectively address concerns raised at drop ins regarding timetabling issues, assignment deadlines and car parking issues. This proactive approach increased the SU's visibility, ensuring that the FoE's student body is actively engaged in shaping their academic and professional development.

Working in partnership with the FoE SU team, The Education Society built strong professional links with the FoE Employability team, offering feedback from students regarding issues such as suitable professional placements for BA Education students, appropriate tailored careers guidance and the sharing of good practice that has been witnessed by students whilst on placement.

The SU Marketing & Communications and FoE Communications teams met during the year to discuss suitable collaboration going forwards, how to share best practice on reaching current and potential students and how best to apply communications strategies throughout the student recruitment process.

In the FoE, SSCF themes included the good provision of wellbeing and academic support available for students which was primarily accessed from lecturers, module leads and personal academic tutors. Areas in which improvements could be made included timetables which were sometimes released too close to course starting dates, which students felt left them unable to organise themselves and their commitments such as childcare in a timely manner. Feedback was also gathered about the proximity of placement and assignment deadlines. Potential improvements to post-graduate distance learning provision to address inconsistencies in organisation and delivery were also noted.

Faculty of Health, Social Care and Medicine (FoHSCM)

One of our student advisers now attends the St James campus on a weekly basis. Feedback gathered helps ensure that both campuses' needs are understood and addressed. The information gathered is then communicated to the SEM during regular one-to-one meetings and at weekly team meetings, where it is used to inform reports and feed into faculty discussions through key meetings and forums.

Students at St James campus have raised issues including difficulties in finding suitable student accommodation in Manchester; access to University support services and access to some social opportunities. Raising these issues has resulted in an increased on-campus presence from university support staff.

In the FoHSCM, SSCF themes included dissatisfaction with room allocations and last-minute changes. While these changes can sometimes be unavoidable, for example, when a guest speaker cancels, the faculty is now working to minimize these disruptions. Students requested that PowerPoint presentations be shared in advance to help them prepare for lessons. Concerns were raised and addressed concerning outdated and overused simulation

equipment, which was perceived as limiting effective learning opportunities. Students also felt that more prompt information regarding placements would help them be better prepared.

The FoHSCM President successfully launched the 'Monumental' program in partnership with Edge Hill Sport. This initiative is designed to foster a supportive, inclusive community for male students, encouraging regular engagement in a non-judgmental environment. By focusing on personal development through self-reflection on elements of the 'wellbeing wheel,' participants gain valuable tools and habits to navigate life's challenges.

The Monumental initiative also sparked collaborative student-led events for November, including a charity football match and featured in the EHU's "What's in Your Head?" mental health podcast series with Sara Ainscow & Chris Kirkland. Monumental has been rolled out to male staff members as an ongoing mental health peer support network.

We delivered a dedicated winter semester Welcome Fair for 'January Starters' within the FoHSCM foyer. The event provided students and staff with the opportunity to connect with SU services, student societies, external partners and university departments showcasing a wide range of opportunities to enhance their university experience. Feedback suggested that the winter Welcome Fair, alongside the SEM and President guest speaking within lectures, significantly improved awareness of the support, resources, and extra-curricular services available through the SU.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)

Student feedback which was gathered and addressed by the Union included changes made to some reading week arrangements which were made at short notice. Some course changes within Sports Psychology were highlighted as a concern by students, while some language modules were under threat in other courses. Discrepancies in how long students waited for feedback which had been noted by students when comparing their courses were also a cause for concern.

Through concise, impactful interviews with staff and students, the campaign aimed to showcase how these initiatives inform teaching and impact the student experience. These interviews were posted on SU social media.

The FAS team supported students within Biosciences and HIGGS to organise end of year celebrations in the new SU building, the first of which took place on the 2nd of May and the latter on the 16th of May. Both were a great success. These events were student led with support from the SU. Students campaigned, fundraised, decorated and marketed these events entirely by themselves. We received great feedback from students who attended and have built a positive collaborative relationship with EHU catering/conferencing team who provided the food and service.

Wider Campaigns

AI in academic work campaign

Officers campaigned for students to be able to use AI safely, positively and appropriately in their academic work, as a response to student concerns around a lack of confidence in its use. Our officer compiled a survey which focused on students' current AI awareness and usage and asked whether students understood and were able to adhere to EHU's policy on using AI in academic work. Over 200 students from the FoE responded, most of whom said they did not feel confident using AI in their academic work and felt EHU's policy guidelines on its use were not easily understandable. This research was supplemented with insight from the union's advice team, who were able to highlight where more support for students was needed based on their casework. This work led to a revised policy, which is more accessible and understandable. Colleagues also agreed to review their session delivery which is aimed at encouraging students to use AI appropriately. These actions were agreed at Academic Board.

Menstrual Health Campaign

One of our Presidents led on a Menstrual Health Campaign to destigmatise conversations surrounding menstrual health by attaining appropriate policies put in place to support students who struggle with their studies and social lives due to menstrual health issues/gynaecological issues such as Endometriosis and Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). She researched the ways in which menstrual health has impacted students' education, asking students what they need to make their university experience successful. She also met with the University's Directorate, ensuring their support for this important cause was given.

Our President met with staff and students from the Manchester St James campus to look at how menstrual health issues such as menopause affected their learning. Staff and students have fully endorsed this campaign.

Healthcare Uniform Campaign

Our officers also set in motion a Healthcare Uniform Campaign, in response to the pressing need for sufficient, affordable healthcare uniforms for students on placement. With many students working up to 40 hours per week, including night shifts, uniforms are quickly worn out and the limited number of uniforms available (students receive 3 tunics and 2 pairs of trousers to last them the entirety of their time at university) often leads to significant stress and logistical challenges. This campaign is a targeted effort to address these concerns, aiming to reduce the physical, financial, and emotional strain on students while ensuring they have the necessary resources to meet professional standards in their placements.

An expanded 'Uniform Campaign' has been advocating for additional mandatory uniforms for healthcare students on placement and necessary adjustments to existing designs, such as nurse paramedics have access to jackets with hoods, allowing them to stay warm and dry in adverse weather conditions—an essential adaptation given that they cannot use umbrellas while providing lifesaving care at the roadside. The campaign has evolved through ongoing discussions with key faculty staff members, particularly as the university reviews its upcoming

uniform tender. This collaboration ensures that student needs and practical considerations are at the forefront of uniform procurement decisions, ultimately improving comfort, safety, and professionalism for students in clinical and emergency settings.

Gender Expression Fund

In addition to the work of our Liberation Officers, one of our Presidents this year has established a Gender Expression Fund (GEF) at EHU, to enable students who would like to express their gender in an individualised way. She contacted colleagues at other Students' Unions across the UK who have established GEFs, who freely offered resources and guidance on how best to pilot and implement a Fund sustainably. A survey was undertaken, asking students if they would appreciate the GEF, how it could help and how they would like it to be promoted. Research revealed that alongside boosting students' wellbeing, the GEF will also help alleviate financial issues for some students. After meeting with colleagues within Student Services, along with EHU EDI Steering Group to discuss the research, the GEF now exists in a pilot form, with an initial fund of £500. The EHSU Trans Students' Officer will take up the campaign this academic year, working in conjunction with EH Student Services.

Liberation and Equality Representation

EHSU employed five part-time staff this year, who are current students representing communities that have traditionally been marginalised in HE. These student leaders – the Women Students' Officer, Black Students' Officer, LGBTQ+ Students' Officer, Trans Students' Officer and Disabled Students' Officer, are fully active in their roles, alongside their academic commitments. Their roles are essential in ensuring that students from under-represented and marginalised communities have a strong voice within the University. Each officer brings experience and insight that enables EHSU to better understand and respond to the needs of diverse student groups. Their work contributes to shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment across all areas of University life.

Liberation Officers are advocates for their respective communities. They lead campaigns and initiatives to address barriers and inequalities, provide vital feedback to EHSU and University leadership to ensure policies reflect the true needs of all students and help create safer, more inclusive spaces through awareness, education, and engagement.

All our Liberation Officers have built excellent professional relationships with EHU staff teams including Student Services, Student Casework, Widening Participation, Comms. and Faculty SLTs. Examples of their work, which is based on student feedback they have gathered, included

- Our Trans Student Officer, listened to concerns from FOE Trans students, who have experienced some difficulties whilst on placement, specifically around use of preferred pronouns. The Officer met with Senior Leadership team at FOE, who have since invited them to contribute to the next FOE training programme for mentors within placement providers. They can discuss Student Voice responses and suggestions of these issues can be sensitively rectified.

- Our Disabled Students' Officer has contributed to EHU's AccessAble guides, acted as a student representative in Usability Testing for Greater Manchester NHS trust and delivered a Q&A session based on their experience and professional knowledge during EHU's Disability Awareness event.
- Our LGBTQ+ Students' Officer is working with Student Services to encourage more staff members to visibly show support and allyship with LGBTQ+ students by wearing rainbow lanyards and pin badges. They are also exploring the possibility of LGBTQ+ specific accommodation being available for students living on campus.
- Our Black Students' Officer has made solid professional links with Black Minds Matter, an organisation that brings awareness and support to Black students who struggle with mental health issues. They have ensured that five Black students have now been trained as Ambassadors for Black Minds Matter and they can offer Mental Health First Aid to their peers.
- Our Women's Students' Officer presented a digital campaign for Women's Health Month in May. They are opening conversations around periods, treatments, taboos, empowerment and advocacy.

5. Representation Beyond the University

Our officers have also continued to engage external stakeholders in their representative efforts in the interests of students.

This year we have maintained relationships with local external organisations including for example:

- West Lancashire Borough Council – reinforcing the message of 'students as local residents' whereby the SU can raise awareness of Council services and signpost students appropriately.
- Change Grow Live – a local drug and alcohol service, a councillor from CGL hosts confidential 1-1 bookable appointments on campus on a bi-monthly basis.
- The Liberty Centre/Women's Refuge – working with SU and Student Services to improve support for students who are domestic abuse victims and survivors.
- SWLICAN – local welfare rights service, working with SU A&G to ensure A&G can signpost appropriately.

The SU worked with FoHSCM nursing students to arrange a meeting with Ashley Dalton, MP for West Lancashire and Member of the Health Select Committee, to discuss a loan forgiveness scheme for nurses. Ashley Dalton listened to their concerns and the solutions they offered, promising to take their feedback to Wes Streeting MP, Minister for Health.

SEMs, Faculty presidents and other SU staff members have successfully encouraged students to attend national events e.g. Pride March and March to Eradicate Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Union was also delighted this year that elected FoHSCM President, PR, won the Nursing Times Award for 'Most Inspirational Student of the Year' 24/25. Judges said:

"An inspirational and powerfully articulate individual, she exemplifies the very best of nursing leadership. Her exceptional communication skills shine through in her advocacy for both herself and others, making a real difference across local and national levels. A passionate champion for the profession, students, and patients alike, she leads by example—driving meaningful change and inspiring all those around her with her insight, courage, and conviction." (Student Nursing Times Awards 2025 - 2025 winners)

This award strengthened student representation, inspired peers, and showcased the SU's commitment to excellence, positively impacting engagement and raising the university's national reputation for student leadership and healthcare education.

Advice and Support

The Students' Union Advice Service has continued to play a vital role in supporting students through complex academic, disciplinary, complaints, housing, funding and wellbeing-related challenges. This academic year has seen an increase in both the volume and complexity of student cases, reflecting the growing awareness of our service and the wider pressures affecting our students.

Our approach has remained student-centred, providing free, confidential and impartial advice to empower students to make informed decisions and resolve their concerns effectively.

Students contact the service via email, phone, drop-ins and booked appointments, with a noticeable shift toward in-person engagement. Students are seeking help with drafting personal statements and gathering evidence for a variety of meetings/panels.

During the year 524 students attended 629 appointments with our advisors. These cases fall into several categories:

- Academic cases involve providing support for students navigating academic appeal procedures, personal circumstance procedures, support to study, return to study, fitness to practise panels and DBS panels.
- Complaints cases involve guidance on formal complaints, stage 1-3 university processes and OIA complaints.

- Disciplinary cases focus on supporting students at cause for concern meetings, non-academic misconduct and academic misconduct panels.
- Housing cases address issues with private landlords, tenancy disputes, deposit returns and poor living conditions.
- Our student finance work focuses on CPR applications and cost-of-living issues.

This year the work of the Advice Service secured financial gains for students totalling £116,924.00. As importantly, our service often sees and supports students through crises, meaning that they are able to continue their University studies

This year in our advice service has been characterised by increasing complex case management. This is mainly because of cases which have overlapping issues for example a student in severe financial hardship may also be experiencing mental health difficulties. This has consequently had a positive impact on collaborative working between the Students' Union Advice Service, and University colleagues in the casework team, Academic Registry, faculty managers, money advice team members, mental health & wellbeing services, inclusion and disability support staff. These relationships are essential for the holistic support of students.

There has been increasing demand for representation support at disciplinary meetings and panels particularly from students on professional practice programmes, undergoing 'fitness to practice' procedures.

A Student Advisor now attends St. James Campus every Wednesday to offer a drop-in session and face-to-face appointments, providing students with vital support on a wide range of issues such as housing, academic concerns, and health and wellbeing. These sessions not only offer personalised advice but also give students the opportunity to ask questions about the Student Union and explore ways to enhance their sense of belonging and student experience, through involvement in societies, events, and other campus or campaign activities. Additionally, the drop-in sessions serve as a valuable opportunity to gather student feedback, which is shared with the wider team to highlight areas where students need help or are finding success.

Societies and Student Groups

Our Societies and student groups help to provide social connection for our students, facilitating friendships and helping students connect with their 'tribe'. The Union's societies and student groups are student led and as a result provide a unique environment for informal learning and skills development. A permanent staff member in the union facilitates these groups, training student leaders, supporting events and providing advice and guidance on finance, health and safety and social media.

During the year 44 new societies were created increasing the figure from 57 in April 2024 to 101 in July 2025. There were a total of 4,532 society members of which 1,984 were unique students. We had over 300 society committee members last academic year including the 3 core roles of each society and many new additional roles on some communities including social media coordinators, diversity & inclusion officers and event coordinators.

Societies hold a variety of events during the year which both raise the profile of the societies and enhance student life on campus. Examples include:

A Movember shave off was held in November with several sports teams all raising money for Movember along with a charity Football match in collaboration with Edge Hill Sport

In January, the SU teamed up with Checklist Society, Uni Boob Team and Women's Hockey for a charity Fun Run to raise money for the Uni Boob Team and Coppa Feel!

We supported the Islamic Society set up two education stations in the Hub during February. These stalls aimed to encourage conversations about learning and culture with one stall focusing on the Qur'an and its teachings and the other allowing students to try on religious headwear such as hijabs and niqabs. Students in the Islamic society want to encourage non-Islamic students to join in and get a better understanding of their religion

During March, in collaboration with the Biosciences society, horticultural society and sustainability society we hosted a Green Fair to educate students and promote sustainability. This included information about different companies and initiatives that attendees could engage with, including University departments, as well as our merchandise supplier who showcased environmentally friendly merchandise for their societies and clubs.

We supported the Big Geek Fundraiser event for a 3rd consecutive year in April. This is a collaborative event between the Dungeons & Dragons Society, Social Deduction Society, and TTRPGs Society. Big Geek was a major success delivered on the ground floor of the new SU Building, bringing together over 200 students in celebration of all things related to gaming, anime, and geek sub-culture. The event raised over £1,100 for three charities, beating the amounts raised for this event over the past 2 years. The event showcased the power of student-led initiatives to unite and inspire

We hosted our annual societies awards during May, which included student society performance and awards and recognition to societies. 12 societies shortlisted for the Societies Award and 5 committee members shortlisted for the Individual Award.

Our SU Team organised 'Queer Prom', based on feedback from LGBTQIA+ students who said they had previously felt excluded from their Proms at school and /or college.

Collaboration

Our societies also participate in initiatives with University partners and colleagues. This strengthens relationships on campus and often offers students an opportunity to learn and develop skills and interests outside their formal study programme. Some examples include:

Recruitment Team

We collaborate with EHSU's Recruitment Team on Open and Offer Holder Days and have been developing a programme of inviting student societies to showcase the SU and student experience. This initiative gives prospective students the chance to speak with current students,

gaining real, relatable insights that support informed decisions and strengthen their connection to Edge Hill as their chosen university.

For the societies invited to showcase their offer, it provides valuable opportunities for members to develop skills, such as networking, communication, and leadership, by engaging with current and prospective students, parents, staff, and external professionals. They also enhance graduate attributes like teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. Additionally, these experiences boost confidence, helping students build a strong support network for both personal and professional growth.

A key success, demonstrating the impact and desire for these interactions is that some societies now have waiting lists to join for incoming new students, reflecting increased student interest and engagement. A standout example of proactive engagement from open and offer holder days is our Mature Students Society, which has established a WhatsApp group of over 80 incoming students. Even before arriving on campus, these students are building networks, sharing advice, and supporting each other, demonstrating the power of digital community-building and fostering belonging to ease transition and build connections.

Sustainability Team & Business School

The Horticultural and Sustainability societies are working on a collaborative initiative called “The Gardens Project” to revamp the campus allotments and Business School roof garden. One of our officers facilitated a meeting with members of the University’s Sustainability team and together along with students a group was able to create a plan, working alongside FM colleagues, to begin to bring them back to life. She is working with the society on a comms campaign as well as fundraising ideas for equipment and seeds. They have a clear and engaging plan to get their ideas off the ground with the goal of hosting their society taster session for 2025 in the newly refurbished spaces.

Birkenhead Sixth Form Visit

One collaboration the SU participated in over summer 2025 was the Birkenhead Sixth Form visit. This involved welcoming 160 students from Birkenhead Sixth Form College to the SU building for an engaging and informative session about the role of a Students’ Union in university life. The visit was designed to introduce the sixth form students to what an SU is, and how it can support them throughout their academic journey—not just at Edge Hill, but at any university they may choose to attend in the future. During the session, students heard directly from key SU staff members, who delivered an overview of the Union’s core functions and values. Through a series of fun, interactive activities, students explored essential services such as student advocacy and advice, paid employment opportunities within the SU, the power of student voice, and the constitutional purpose of a Students’ Union. The FE students also learned about the importance of democracy in student life, including the role of Elected Presidents and Liberation Officers, and how societies help create a strong sense of belonging and student-led community. The session not only deepened their understanding of university life but also helped demystify the politics of student representation in an accessible, student-centered way. To round off the visit, students had time to socialise with each other and the SU team, enjoying a relaxed

atmosphere with games, pool, and informal conversations, offering a welcoming taste of the vibrant student experience that EHSU proudly champions.

The contribution of our societies and student groups was apparent at the University's Scholarship Awards. Excellence scholarships and University Scholarship citations for 9 students highlighted scholars' involvement in creating societies, leading communities or innovating activities from a wide range of societies including The Law Society, Wine Society, Middle East and North Africa Society, Accessibility Society, Christian Union, Horticultural Society and the Neuropsychiatry Society.

Our societies continue to create opportunities for students' personal development, enhance the student experience and create social cohesion at Edge Hill University.

Future Focus

After a period of significant change, the Union is keen to establish greater stability in its operations and relationships. The appointment of a new CEO and changes in the senior leadership at our University, provide opportunities to refresh our most significant stakeholder relationship, which the Union is keen to embrace. This will also provide an opportunity to establish a new strategic plan for the Union.

A priority for the Union must also be delivering commercial success within the new Union building, which will in turn help restore the Union's depleted financial reserves and enable the strengthening of the Union's staff team.

Finally, the Union will continue to develop its representative capability, ensuring that the voices of its members are amplified and contributing to improving the student experience at Edge Hill. In doing so it will aim to retain the most positive aspects of its current faculty based approach while continuing to strengthen its approach to academic representation at a course and subject level.