

de montfort 

IMPACT REPORT

De Montfort Students' Union | 2024/25

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Introduction

This year, more than ever, students have had to navigate a world not built for them. In a climate where the loudest voices often dominate, and where some use students' experiences to serve their own ends, our community has shown remarkable strength and integrity. Students have modelled what it means to lead with empathy, to collaborate rather than divide, and to persist with optimism in a sector that demands constant adaptation.

At DSU, we've witnessed that resilience every day. The 2024/25 academic year, the second year of our three-year strategic plan, unfolded amid significant flux across higher education, global conflict, and political change in the UK. While universities across the country faced falling recruitment, visa restrictions, and financial pressures, DSU remained anchored by purpose, proudly (and loudly) the central hub for students on campus and beyond.





Our strategic focus on Visibility, Empowerment, Belonging, Opportunity, and Experience has guided every decision. Progress is tracked through our student-majority Trustee Board, our representation on DMU's Board of Governors, and the contributions of our external trustees, ensuring students remain central to all we do.

This year, student engagement has grown across every area. Following consultation, our full-time elected roles were renamed from Executive Officers to Student Voice Leaders, with new remits shaped by students themselves. Representation has strengthened at all levels, from Course Representatives and Liberation Officers to students sitting on DMU's Board of Governors, making student voice visible and valued in decision-making.

At the same time, DSU has deepened its civic and community engagement, offering work placements through DMU, The Prince's Trust, and local charities, and collaborating with community partners. These connections help bridge the campus with the city and demonstrate DSU's role as both a social enterprise and a catalyst for community.



In this report, you'll see how these values come to life; in our democratic renewal, our financial stability, our growing partnerships, and our inclusive approach to employment and student leadership. Each page reflects the collective effort of staff, student representatives, trustees, and volunteers who believe in the transformative power of belonging. In an ever-changing sector, we continue to balance stability with innovation at DSU, adapting to shifting campus patterns, tightening budgets, and evolving student expectations. We are not here to stand still.

As we move into 2025/26, the final year of our strategic plan, DSU stands steady, ambitious, and united. Our teams are energised, our foundations are strong, and our commitment to empowering every student to belong, thrive, and succeed remains unwavering.



Sarah Bradley
CEO, DSU



Student Officers

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Student Voice Leaders

Each year, DSU student members elect five full-time Student Voice Leaders (previously called Executive Officers) to represent them. These elected leaders also sit on DSU's Trustee Board as charity trustees and company directors, ensuring that all activity and funding are directed towards student benefit.

Two of our Student Voice Leaders also sit on DMU's Board of Governors, representing student interests at the highest levels across the University.

Following a review of DSU's governance and representative structures during 2023/24, the titles and remits of our full-time officers were updated to Student Voice Leaders to better reflect their role as facilitators of student representation and change-makers within the University community.

Our Student Voice Leaders are supported by the DSU staff team throughout the academic year to deliver projects, gather feedback through Student Council, and work with the University on key matters affecting students.

The 2024/25 academic year saw multiple projects and campaigns delivered by your Student Voice Leaders (Executive Officers), discussed further in the report.

STUDENT VOICE LEADER ROLES

Welfare ★ Opportunities & Engagement ★ Academic
★ Union Development ★ Equality & Diversity ★



FLUFFY ADEWOLA



WELFARE

Our Welfare Student Voice Leader led key work on wellbeing, safety, and empowerment.

SAFE TO SAY, SAFE TO SHARE CAMPAIGN

Encouraged students to speak up about harassment and access support, while collaboration with Liberation Officers advanced initiatives on consent and healthy relationships.

THE DSU PANTRY PROJECT

Co-led on this project which is now approved in partnership with DMU to support students experiencing food insecurity.

SELF-CARE BOOTCAMPS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VIBE CHECKS

Introduced to strengthen community and wellbeing year-round.

PRIYA KARASALA



OPPORTUNITIES & ENGAGEMENT

Our Opportunities and Engagement Student Voice Leader championed fairness and access for students.

FLEXIBLE FUTURES CAMPAIGN

Advocated for more flexible tuition payment options and sustainable funding for student groups.

WORK WITH DMU SPORT

Worked closely to build stronger collaboration between DSU and University-led sporting activity.



JUDITH OLURANKINSE



UNION DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATION COSTS PROJECT

Advanced this project, maintaining ongoing discussions to make graduation more affordable for all students.

CULTURAL CLASH PROJECT

Co-led on this project, a celebration of diversity that brought together student groups through shared cultural experiences.

RAMISH AYUB



ACADEMIC

COURSE REP DROP-INS

Strengthened visibility and connection with Course Representatives through these sessions and ongoing engagement.

THE TIMETABLING PROJECT

Worked closely with the University to address scheduling inconsistencies and improve fairness across faculties.

KOMAL SHAHZADI



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Our Equality and Diversity Student Voice Leader stepped down mid-year to pursue a new opportunity, however their early contributions supported DSU's ongoing work.

EMBEDDING EDI ACROSS INITIATIVES

Supported DSU's ongoing work embedding EDI across initiatives. Their remit was shared among remaining Student Voice Leaders to ensure continuity and collaboration.



LGBTQ+

Our LGBTQ+ Liberation Officer represented student perspectives at the Trans Rights Conference, attending alongside the Women's Liberation Officer to advocate for inclusivity and equality.

They also hosted visual information stalls raising awareness and celebration of the LGBTQ+ Flags and their meanings.

GLOBAL MAJORITY (BAME)

Our Global Majority (formerly BAME) Liberation Officer curated the Reflections of Identity student art exhibition for Black History Month, a striking celebration of self-expression and culture.

They also co-led the Flexible Futures campaign, advocating for equitable tuition payment plans and collaborating with the Welfare Student Voice Leader on Safe to Say, Safe to Share to build safer, more inclusive spaces.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Our International Students Liberation Officer worked closely with DMU through the Debt Collection Working Group to ensure international student perspectives were heard.

They represented students at the International Student Employability Symposium, lobbying for stronger post-study career support and accessible pathways to employment.

MATURE STUDENTS

Our Mature Students Liberation Officer fostered community and connection through a series of drop-ins and discussion sessions, creating welcoming spaces for mature learners to share experiences and build networks.



Membership

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The Voice Team has had a strong year, driving forward initiatives that strengthened academic representation and empowering our Student Leaders. Through close collaboration with partners within DSU and DMU, our work this year has focused on enhancing democratic processes and streamlining representation structures.



KEY PROJECTS

1. COURSE REP ELECTIONS REFRESH

This year, we worked closely with the University's Associate Professors of Student Experience (APSE) to address concerns raised around the course representative election process. By consulting both students and staff, we identified key barriers and developed a new, collaborative approach to course rep elections designed to strengthen relationships between DSU, DMU, and students.

Together, we presented a joint paper to the Education Committee, resulting in the approval for course reps to be elected internally within programmes, with DSU taking the lead on training and staff support. To support this, we launched a Learning Zone Student Voice Shell accessible across all programmes, offering guidance on how to elect course reps and engage effectively with student voice systems.

2. ONLINE VOLUNTEER TRAINING PLATFORM

To support our multiple DSU student volunteers, we worked with the Opportunities Team to launch an Online Volunteer Training Unit via Learning Zone. This new platform ensures every DSU volunteer receives consistent induction and training across DSU. Streamlining the process will improve accessibility, accountability, and volunteer confidence across DSU. The platform successfully launched in August and is now an essential part of the DSU volunteer journey.

3. ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION FRAMEWORK

Alongside the election refresh, we worked with the APSE's again and developed a new Academic Representation Framework to bring greater consistency across faculties. Previously, each faculty had its own approach to representation so this framework established a clear, University wide standard. It ensures every programme hosts a Student Voice Committee (SVC) once per teaching block, supported by a live Student Voice Log Tracker available via the programme's Learning Zone Student Voice shell.

Staff now assist with student voice activity on each programme, helping students feed directly into Programme Management Boards. This framework, co-developed with APSE, was approved at Education Committee and is now embedded into the Student Voice Learning Zone Shell for all students to access.

4. STUDENT COUNCIL

Following reflective discussions with Executive Officers, Liberation Officers, Council Chairs, and Scrutiny Panellists, we reimagined the traditional Student Council into a more engaging and accessible Council Café model. This rebrand was launched in the final term to encourage better attendance and open conversation in a more relaxed setting. Moving forward, we plan to introduce online motion submissions to increase student participation and accessibility.





5. CHANGE IN OFFICER REMITS

We also supported the Head of Membership with a review of our Officer Remits in collaboration with Student Leaders. The updated structure provides clearer focus areas for our elected student officer roles, aligning them more closely with student priorities.

The refreshed Student Voice Leader roles now include:

- **Academic Experience:** Focused on teaching, learning, and assessment strategy
- **Communities:** Representing societies, sports clubs, volunteering, and extracurricular life
- **International Experience:** Supporting the needs and inclusion of international students
- **Employability:** Advocating for skills, career readiness, and job opportunities
- **Inclusion and Wellbeing:** Promoting mental health, equity, and support for marginalised groups

Our Liberation Officer roles have also been enhanced to provide stronger advocacy and tailored support for key student communities, including; Disabled Students, Mature Students, Global Majority Students (formerly BAME Students), LGBTQ+ Students, Women Students, and a new role; Student Parents, Carers and Guardians.

In addition, our Faculty Lead Representatives roles were expanded to elect two roles per faculty; one representing Undergraduate students, and the second representing Postgraduate students. The focused remits now ensure students across all academic levels are effectively represented in faculty discussions and University decision-making.

6. STUDENT LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS

The 2025 Student's Union Elections saw a total of 5,100 individual students' votes, with 23,683 votes cast in total across all positions. There are 11 student leadership positions up for election, including 5 full-time Student Voice Leader roles, and 6 part-time Liberation Officer roles. 32 students stood as candidates across these roles. This continued engagement reflects the strength of our democratic structures and the enthusiasm of our student community to take on leadership roles at DSU.

This year also saw the introduction of Student Leadership Day during the nominations period, a new event designed to make the elections more accessible, engaging, and informative. DSU transformed Level 1 into an interactive event space where students could explore the election process, pre-record questions for candidates, view the election timeline, and learn about the personal and professional benefits of running for a leadership position. The event also featured collaborative workshops with DMU focused on Timetabling and Attendance Policies, giving students a hands-on introduction to lobbying for change a key skill for any future Student Voice Leader.



11 POSITIONS

32 CANDIDATES

23,683 TOTAL VOTES



IMPACT

25% increase in Course Reps

349 → **537** With over 130 of these Course Reps choosing to continue their roles the following year!
in 2023/24 in 2024/25

Student Leadership Elections

4167 → **5022** → **5100**
individual student voters in 2023 individual student voters in 2024 individual student voters in 2025

22% increase in student votes from 2023 to 2025
↑ **1.5%** increase in student votes from 2024 to 2025

Attendance & Timetabling Student Leader Workshops

20 students actively engaged in the Attendance and Timetabling Student Leader Workshops, signing up to take part and directly contributing to the development of new University policies. Their input ensured that student perspectives were embedded in decision-making, leading to more transparent, flexible, and student-informed policy outcomes.



CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

COUNCIL CAFE ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE

Student Council meetings struggled to meet quorum, achieving it only once. In response, we established working groups to review barriers to participation and explore new engagement methods. This reflection directly led to the creation of the Council Café a rebranded, more inclusive format designed to make student democracy accessible, welcoming, and relevant.

Alongside this, the DSU Project Working Group and focused workstreams were introduced to sustain engagement and ensure continuous improvement.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP ELECTIONS COMPLAINTS

This year's elections saw an increase in complaints related to candidate behaviour, despite close collaboration with the University's security team. To address this a series of recommendations were suggested in our review to strengthen the elections process.

Moving forward, DSU will introduce electronic complaints form to simplify submissions and improve transparency. Additional measures around campaign team conduct and candidate expectations will also be implemented ahead of the next election cycle to ensure fairness and accountability.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT & ATTENDANCE

We also faced challenges around engagement and attendance among some student volunteers, with instances of missed responsibilities in key roles. These issues have been discussed within the Governance Project Team and will inform proposed amendments to the DSU Bye-Laws.

These changes, to be presented at the next Student Council, will help clarify expectations, strengthen accountability, and ensure volunteer roles remain active, meaningful, and effective for both students and the wider DSU community.

Opportunities

The Student Opportunities team helps students build connections, memories, and skills beyond the classroom. For many students, especially commuters or those balancing other responsibilities, finding community can be challenging. Through student groups, projects, and varied opportunities, we create pathways for students to pursue their interests, develop professionally, and feel part of university life.

KEY PROJECTS

1. ACADEMIC SOCIETIES

Getting together and making friends on your course is instrumental in having a great University experience. DSU launched a project to ensure all DMU courses were covered by a corresponding community.

This offering is shaped by students; some academic societies cover multiple courses, whilst others are unique to one course. This project will continue, as we seek to ensure each course has a primary, secondary and tertiary society linked to it.

2. GIVE IT A GO

In a society where the typical student has less time, and less financial freedom it is important that we provide low cost, low commitment opportunities. For these students we have relaunched our 'Give it a Go' programme. This programme brings together a schedule of events organised by both DSU and DMU, as a one-stop shop for students who are unable to participate in other existing activities.



3. DSU CELEBRATES

DSU Celebrates is our annual awards night, which celebrates the achievements of student volunteers across the organisation. We saw a drop in student attendance compared to the year before, despite an increase in the number of nominations.

The high number of nominations shows a student appetite for reward and recognition opportunities, but more research is needed to understand how the event itself can be improved. Next year’s celebration will be guided by an organisation-wide events review.

4. STUDENT LED SERVICES

Demon Media have transitioned to a new governance framework known as a ‘Student Led Service’ after previously existing as a society. At the end of the academic year interviews were hosted in collaboration between the current committee members and DSU, to successfully recruit the 2025/26 Demon Media student leaders.



IMPACT

2600

students involved
in sports clubs &
societies

86%

of groups
successfully
completed their
elections

513

room bookings
(more student
group events on
campus)

4.21%

increase in overall
participation (from
2023/2024)

330+

students joined an
academic society

100+

attendees joined
across Give it a Go
events

43%

increase in sign-ups
for Run for Redfern
(from 2023/24)

150

runners joined Run
for Redfern

£1800

raised in Run for
Redfern (+£800
from 2023/24)

86%

of groups
successfully
completed their
elections

136%

increase in funds
requested from the
development fund
(from 2023/24)

98.4%

increase in funds
allocated from the
development fund
(from 2023/24)

148%

increase in funds
allocated via
golden ticket fund
(from 2023/24)

11%

increase in
nominations for
DSU Celebrates
(from 2023/24)



CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering engagement has not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and we have witnessed this through our online volunteering brokerage. Volunteering has so many benefits for the community and the volunteer so, to meet this challenge head on, DSU partnered with DMU Engage to broaden the volunteering roles advertised through the online platform.

We are also focused on revitalising student-led volunteering opportunities and exploring fundraising projects on campus through Raise and Give.

REVITALISING STUDENT GROUPS

Student group engagement has fluctuated in the post-pandemic period, with periods of growth followed by decline as students navigated changing circumstances.

DSU took proactive steps to stabilise and rebuild participation through our comprehensive audit and 'Save a Student Group' initiatives, over 10 student groups were prevented from closing as a result!



Advice

DSU Advice provides free, impartial support to all students; including suspended students who have few other places to turn. Our team guides students through academic offences and disciplinary processes, accompanies them to meetings and hearings, and identifies trends to help DSU address systemic issues. For complex needs, we connect students with specialist external organisations. Students can access support through our website or Student Hub, empowering them to navigate challenges that might otherwise feel overwhelming.



KEY PROJECTS

1. WELLBEING WEDNESDAY

The DSU Advice team continued to deliver our Wellbeing Wednesday sessions in 24/25, empowering Fluffy, Welfare Executive Officer in their role and opening the door for students and partners in February this year.

We listened to students to establish what events they would like and will engage in via polls and conversations at each event. At the end of the last academic year, we had 434 students attend these sessions, which included craft sessions and Therapy dogs.

2. DROP-IN SESSIONS AT THE LIBRARY

In the 2024/25 academic year the DSU Advice team continued a weekly drop-in session at the DMU Library.

This is a joint approach with the Library Learning Service to enable students to access an Adviser in the library. We met with a large number of students, in a space more accessible to them while they were learning.

3. CAMPAIGNS TACKLING STUDENT CHALLENGES

Throughout the year, our outreach activity helped us identify trends and concerns, enabling us to support staff and student officers in addressing student needs. In the academic year 2024/25, students fed back they were most concerned about:

- **Housing** – this led to the introduction of Housemate finder on social media in conjunction with University of Leicester Students' Union
- **Mental Health** – we ran partnership events during Wellbeing Wednesdays, and our Officers ran regular events throughout the year
- **Academic practices** – regular communication given to students via our DSU newsletter to assist them pre-emptively
- **Attendance** – A student project on attendance issues was launched
- **Foodbank referrals** – continued through the academic year due to the cost-of-living crisis

4. COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Through joint working, we expanded accessible mental health and wellbeing support throughout the year. Working with an external mental health agency, we introduced popular café-style drop-ins where students can access support without appointments.

We also facilitated a fortnightly drug and alcohol service through Turning Point and partnered with the DMU International Student Support team to launch a weekly drop-in specifically for international students.

To address isolation and loneliness, we ran joint wellbeing events with the University of Leicester Students' Union, including Walk to Talk and Picnic in the Park; creating informal spaces for students to connect and find community.



IMPACT

746
Academic support cases → **17%**
Reduction in Academic Misconduct cases → Thanks to weekly proactive campaign activity run by the Advice team

Students Reached

55
received Housing related support

62
received Financial support, including foodbank referrals & signposting

307
received Miscellaneous support

434
attended Wellbeing Wednesday

1374
attended a campaign

170
attended Advice team drop-ins

15
attended Brew Monday

350
attended Friday Funday

3513
engaged in total in our events & cases

CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STUDENT CASE COMPLEXITY IS INCREASING

We're seeing a sector-wide rise in complex student cases requiring specialised support beyond standard signposting. We believe this reflects broader societal shifts affecting this generation of students, including increased awareness of mental health and neurodivergence, the impact of AI on academic integrity, varying levels of social skill development, language barriers for international students, and gaps in foundational knowledge around areas like sexual health.

As cases become more complex, we continued collaborating with the University and other students' unions to develop our expertise and share best practice.

IMPACT OF BLOCK TEACHING

The University's transition to block teaching has created concentrated peaks in advice cases at the end of each teaching block. While we support block teaching as a pedagogical model, this bunching effect presents resource challenges for our service. We're working with the University to manage these demand spikes and ensure consistent support for students throughout the academic calendar.



PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

STUDENT-LED EVENTS

The increase in student led events and activities such as Wellbeing Wednesday highlights that DSU is on its way to achieve the Advice Team strategic objectives by empowering our student to strive throughout their studies. The positive change from our campaigns and events highlights the focus of belonging and inclusivity to ensure students feel they can access our service without fear of being judged.

OUTREACH

The increase in our outreach campaigns provides insight into the strategic objectives of visibility, as this helps students know and understand the service we provide as well as creating new opportunities to promote our wellbeing events.



Internal Operations

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Marketing & Communications



The Marketing & Communications team works to increase the visibility and engagement of DSU's Events, Campaigns & Services with the student audience and external stakeholders. This is achieved through the management of DSU's key communications channels which span Physical, Digital and Web spaces.

The team supports the wider organisation by providing technical expertise, campaign and event planning, service delivery support and high-quality content creation geared towards target audiences.

KEY PROJECTS

1. VISIBILITY

In the 2024/25 academic year, the marketing and communications team have made significant progress in enhancing DSU's visibility across both digital and physical spaces setting the foundation for improved engagement and experience with target audiences moving forward.

2. BUILDING & BRANDING

Physical spaces have been utilised and content updated throughout De Montfort Students' Union to further increase the visibility of DSU's Campaigns, Events & Services. A key output from these improvements was the installation of a student leaders feature wall which highlights the core student leaders in position, key projects and a What's on Lightbox which can be regularly updated.

3. ONLINE SHOP MARKETING PLAN

Customer journey campaigns were developed and implemented, focusing on targeting audiences that engage with DSU's online shop.

This has allowed the implementation of automated email marketing to target audiences based on actions taken on the online shop i.e. retargeting customers with abandoned baskets, birthday discounts etc.

Physical spaces have been utilised to increase visibility of the online shop through contravision, installation of lightbox fabric stretch signage and print materials.

4. BRAND STRATEGY & CHANNEL PLAN

The Marketing & Communications team have developed a brand strategy designed to outline how DSU engages and communicates with its key audiences in a way that makes sense to them.

This led on to the development of a Channel Plan which outlines the full requirements and outputs for the key channels the team uses to communicate and engage with key audiences.

5. REQUEST PROCESSES & CONTENT BANKS

The Marketing & Communications team has further solidified its processes for providing key activities and support to the wider organisation through a set of key marketing support request processes which automate the key project management activities which eat up time and resources, making the team more efficient in servicing the wider organisation, and providing the ability to maintain a consistent content calendar for key channels.

The development of organisation accessible content banks was created and have been continuously updated to provide a working bank of content for use across the organisation.



IMPACT

ORGANISATIONAL PROJECT SUPPORT

47
projects supported

1500+
tasks completed

39
microrequests

32
website requests

69
event listing and
support requests

2000+
photos/videos
captured



WEBSITE



46k
average monthly
page views

7.8k
average monthly
users

91 secs
average time spent
on site

March
most engaged
month

societies
most regularly
engaged page

INSTAGRAM

160 & **1240**
Instagram feed posts & Instagram stories posted

589,985
views

8679
likes

350
saves, shares &
comments

7308
interactions

7618 → **8503**
followers in August 2024 → followers in August 2025



10,800

active email
subscribers

PERSONAL NEWSLETTER AUDIENCE



41.1%

average open
rate

1.5%

average
clickthrough rate

Thursday

most
engaged day

37,098

active email
subscribers

STUDENT NEWSLETTER AUDIENCE

August

most engaged
month

19.4%

average open
rate

0.8%

average
clickthrough rate

Thursday

most
engaged day

SMS

3765

total audience
growth (from
scratch)

11

messages sent

16.02%

clickthrough rate

4878

total clicks

CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



With the steady and consistent improvements made to the marketing team processes, systems and output, the biggest challenges faced by the marketing & communications team have been in the operational and support challenges highlighted by the improvements and development of the department.

The overall theme of these have been in its current structure, and how that structure can meet the demands of the department operations and wider organisational needs.

Looking forward, the next key step in the Marketing & Communications team development is to better align the department to meet the operational and support challenges through a review of roles, responsibilities, and structure.



Central Services

The Central Services Team consists of Operations and Finance. Operations provide essential support to all staff members to help them work better together. They lead on all HR services, Health, Safety & Wellbeing, IT, and cleaning services and maintain our external contractual agreements with the University ensuring we always remain compliant.



KEY PROJECTS & IMPACT

1. REWARD & RECOGNITION

Over the past 12 months we have completed a full Reward and Recognition review working with an external company to assist in the research and benchmarking. We have rolled out a new Pay and Reward Policy which links to performance, created a new pay scale creating guidance documents to support the implementation of the policy.

We also launched salary extras which is a comprehensive employee benefits platform that offers a range of schemes including instant lifestyle discounts, health and wellbeing tools, financial wellbeing support and salary sacrifice savings schemes such as bike to work and a tech scheme.

2. COMPLIANCE

We reviewed staff contracts getting support from ACAS and CIPD to ensure compliant. We have maintained our accreditations and membership such as Disability Confident Scheme, Fostering Friendly and CIPD. We continue to work with DMU for all aspects of Health & Safety monitoring and introduced an annual Health & Safety Plan for areas that require further attention. Our policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated in line with employment law as well as our own internal review cycle.

3. RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING

We extended the work carried out the previous year into a review of DSU recruitment and induction processes and procedures looking at our own website as well as external jobsites to improve accessibility and increase engagement with prospective employees. By accepting CVs as part of the recruitment process and introducing an ATS platform the number of applications increased by around 90 per vacancy.

4. COMMUNITY

We have supported 6 work experience placements from the King's Trust and LEBC which provided training opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those that struggle to find placements due to a disability or neurodiversity. This supported them to gain skills required for their CV's or assisting with guidance on higher education. We also provided paid placements for current students through the Frontrunner and Recruitment Ready Schemes which are paid for via DMU.

5. STAFF SURVEY

We took part in the NUS staff survey which was completed by 89% of staff (25 out of 29) and an increase of 15% compared to the 2024 staff survey. The data gathered was passed to SMT and a summary of the data and actions to be considered has been presented to Trustees, and our full staff team. We also took part in the NUS Employee Engagement Survey Spotlight Series this year, highlighting our efforts, wins, and wider successes around employee engagement, so that other SUs can be inspired and learn from our journey.

6. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

We worked with staff networks to carry out a full training review and have now agreed an organisational wide training plan for staff mandatory training as well as ensuring personal development training is captured through monthly 121s and PDP reviews.





CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The work we have done in relation to reward and recognition have contributed to staff belonging and empowerment. Our work experience placements raise our visibility in the community and empowers others.

For 25/26 we will progress our work on recruitment and onboarding working with Marketing and Communications to develop our website to highlight the benefits of working for DSU. We are also working on gaining a Healthy Workplace Accreditation and communicating our wellbeing initiatives.



Commercial

The Commercial team has remained committed to providing students with high quality, affordable experiences, considering ongoing cost of living pressures that they face. Our goal is to ensure every student can enjoy campus life, regardless of financial circumstances. We embrace a social enterprise approach, community, and collaboration to add to students experience here at DMU.

We work in partnerships with local businesses and social enterprises who operate our outlets and by doing so we create authentic, student focused spaces that reflect shared values of inclusivity, sustainability, and social impact.

KEY PROJECTS

1. PROJECT CLICK

Project Click is a large, multi-stakeholder project that aims to meet students' expectations towards commercial spaces and implement various improvements that help students to socialise relax or study, meeting the need of our future students.

2. STUDENT GROUPS

We have continued to engage student groups and societies by expanding access to affordable, safe, and attractive event spaces we manage. Building on the collaboration between teams, we introduced a more streamlined booking process and gathered feedback to guide space upgrades. These improvements have made it easier for students to host inclusive and engaging events, continue building community connections. As a result, we saw growth in interest in using DSU spaces by student groups.



3. PRIVATE HIRE

Financial pressures remain a key concern for many students, so we've focused on creating sustainable income streams that help with these challenges. We have been expanding the use of our venues for external hire and generated additional revenue that supports reducing costs for student focused activities. Our approach is to maximise the use of our spaces and to directly benefit the student experience, from that revenue.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

This year, our collaboration with external commercial partners has progressed significantly through the introduction of DSU Code of Conduct for night-time venues. Designed to promote safety, inclusivity, and respect, the Code sets clear standards for venues frequently visited by our students. We're proud to have 3 venues now formally signed up, demonstrating a shared commitment to providing safer social spaces beyond DSU. This initiative is helping to create a more positive nightlife culture, ensuring students feel welcome and protected wherever they choose to socialise.

5. BEST BAR NONE

After a four-year gap, our venue Lvl1@DSU successfully obtained its Best Bar None (BBN) Leicester accreditation, recognising our ongoing commitment to safety, inclusivity, and responsible venue management. This achievement reflects the challenging work of our team to maintain ambitious standards in staff training, welfare support, and customer service, ensuring that Lvl1 remains a welcoming and secure environment for all students.



IMPACT

0

student end of year
balls in 2023/24



4

student end of year
balls in 2024/25

£55k+

gross income
generation from
private hire

50%

increase in society-
led events

3

venues contracted
with the code of
conduct

2

new outlets in
place

CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Cost-of-living is still affecting our students. This will have a negative impact on potential sales growth and the range of products we can sell through Retail. If sales growth is impacted so will be the chances for employment we can offer our students.

Student entertainment habits continue to change, and the new generation of students seek more diverse, experience led and affordable ways to socialise. Traditional club nights and alcohol centred activities are now less fundamental to student life. We've seen growing interest in smaller, themed, and alcohol-free events. As a response to that, we are rethinking how our venue operates, exploring new formats and daytime opportunities that make better use of our space.

The Commercial Team will continue to build on the progress made from last years' projects into this year, keeping social enterprise at the core of all decision-making. Project Click will advance further, with new outlets introduced and further conversations with the University on space management. Ensuring student safety remains a top priority, both within our own venues and in partnership with external spaces, making the ongoing development of a city-venue Code of Conduct a vital part of this commitment. As sales continue to grow, the Commercial Team is also excited to expand employment opportunities for students, reflecting the positive impact of growth.



Financial Overview

The audited accounts for the year ended 31st July 2025 show DSU made a profit of £36k. These accounts will be approved and signed off by our Trustee Board at our November 2025 Trustee Board meeting.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

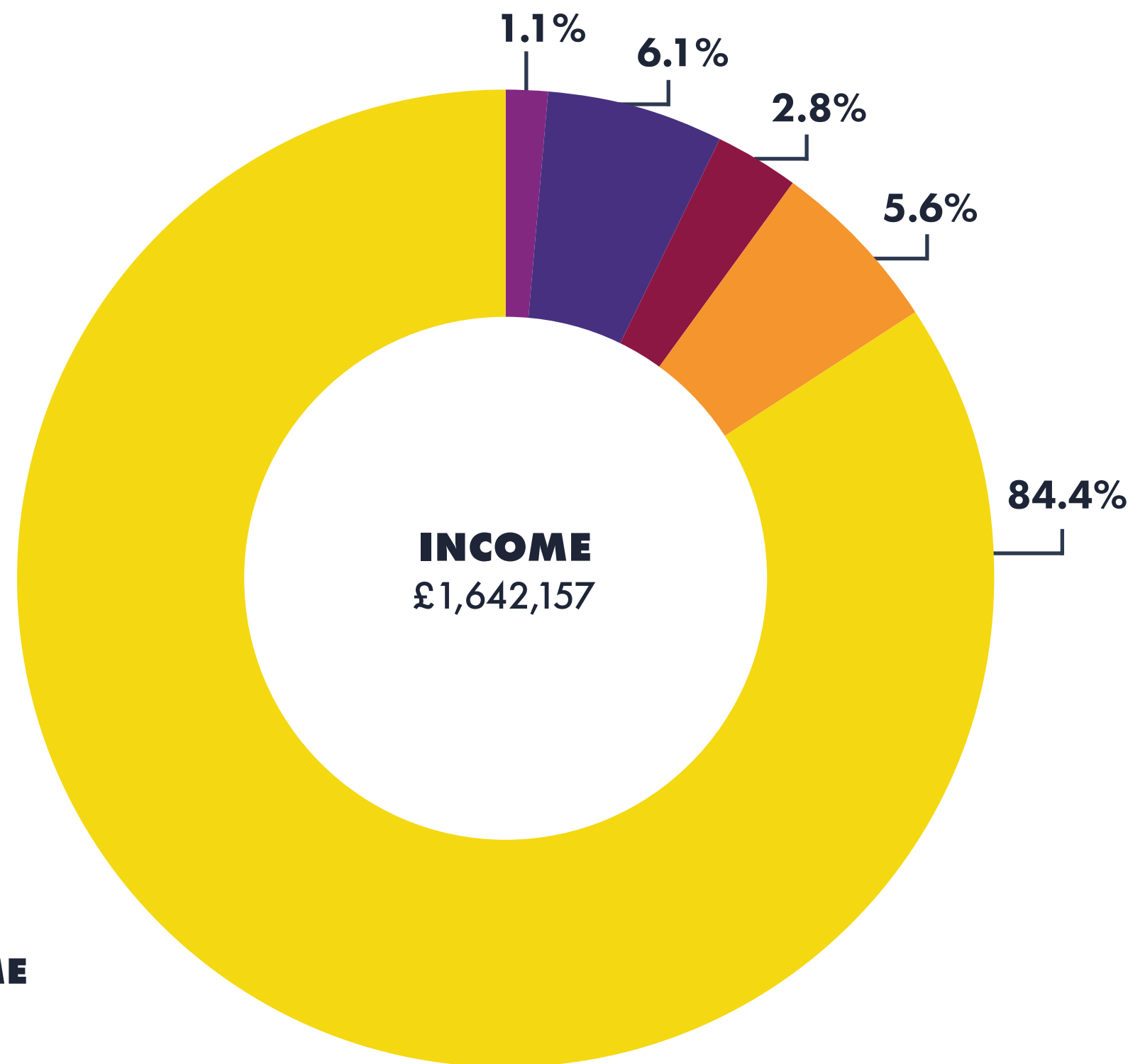
DSU has a reserves policy which is approved by the Trustee Board on an annual basis. Our reserves are held to provide financial stability to the charity as well as allowing us to take advantage of strategic development opportunities and plan for growth. The profit for the year will enhance our reserves position which is above the target policy level with over 3.5 months operating income held in reserves.

FUTURE FINANCIAL PLANS

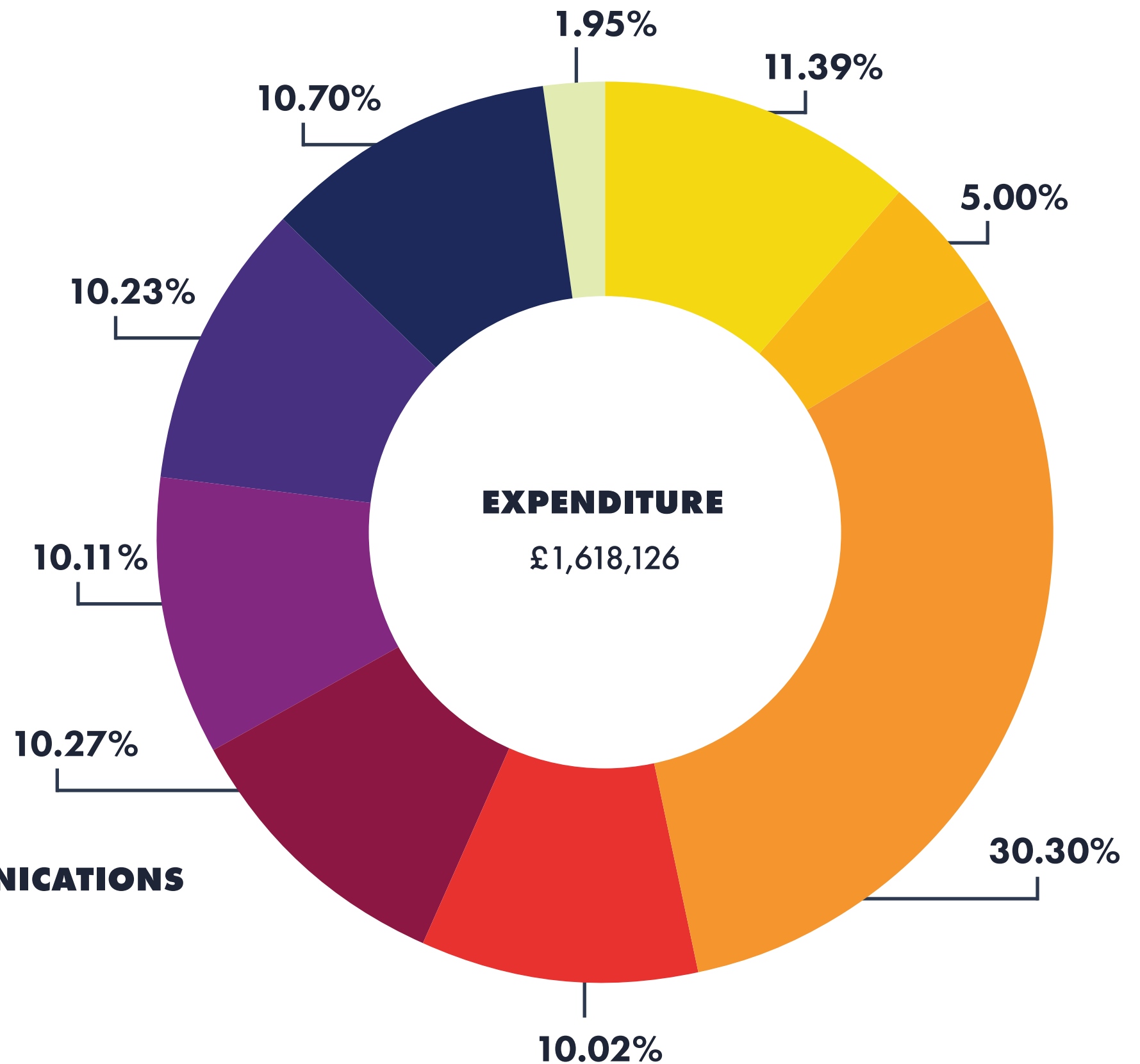
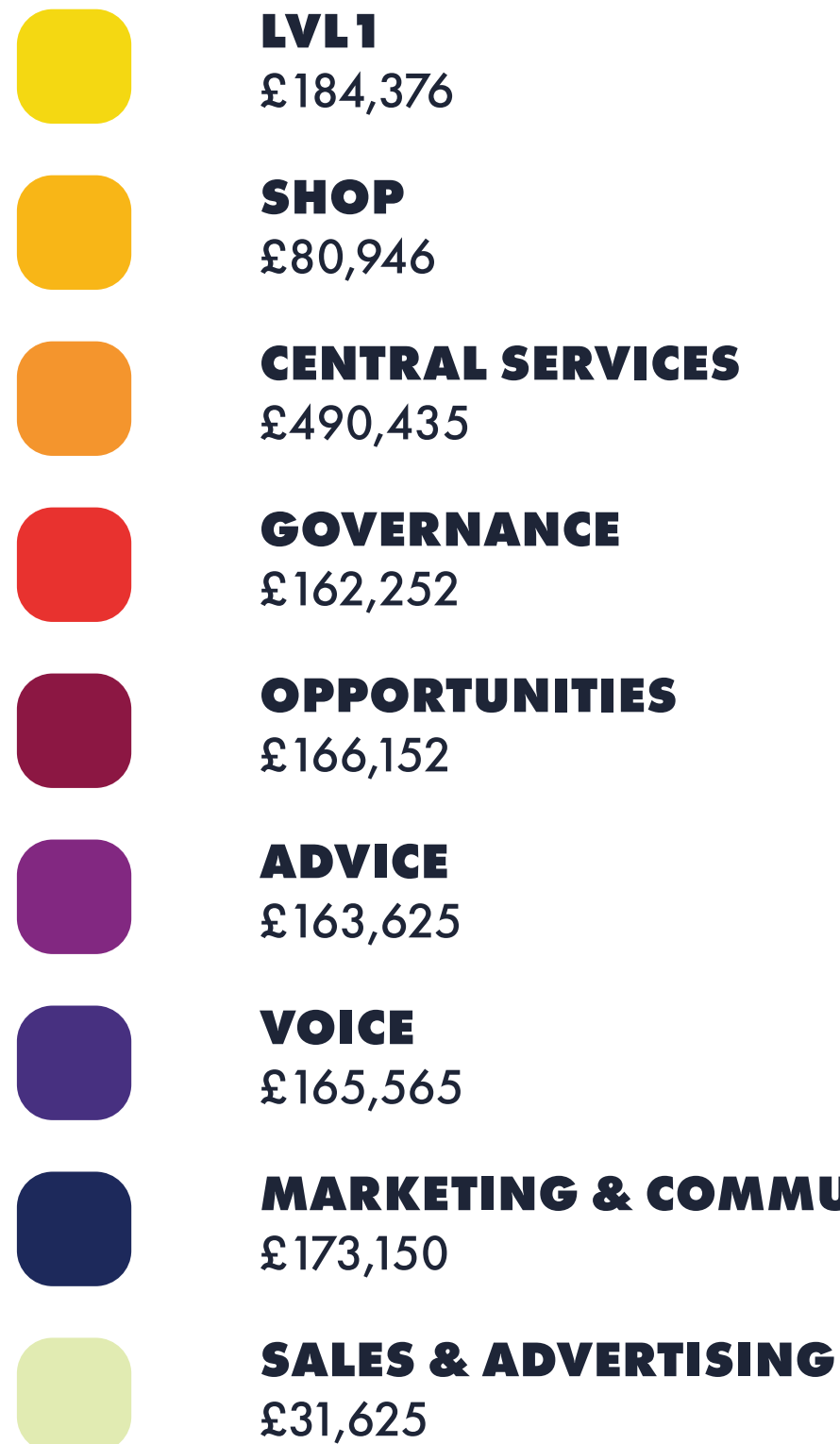
Our trustee board approved our 25/26 budget surplus of £8k which includes a budgeted profit from our commercial services of £28k. This includes a £36k increase in our block grant from the University bringing the total grant level from the University to £1.4m.



INCOME



EXPENDITURE



Thank You

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