



SENSE OF BELONGING SCHEME REPORT 2024-2025

AUTHOR: Hannah Thomas - Sense of Belonging Scheme Intern

EDITED BY: Conor Munro-O'Brien - Activities Development Coordinator

Executive Summary

The NUSU Sense of Belonging Scheme (NSBS) has proven to be a valuable tool in fostering community and enhancing student engagement at Newcastle University. This report presents an in-depth evaluation of the funding scheme, which has now entered its third year. The evaluation reviews the objectives and successes of the scheme.

The funding has significantly contributed to increasing student participation in societies, with over 2,400 students engaging during the 6-week free membership period. Approximately 26% of students converted their free memberships into full memberships, showcasing strong engagement. The funding also allowed societies to host diverse and inclusive events, including social, academic, and wellbeing activities, which helped students, especially those from underrepresented groups such as international students, feel a sense of belonging and community, based on the data collected.

This meets NSBS aims of improving student engagement, encouraging a sense of belonging, and supporting academic and social integration through well-funded events. The scheme has been particularly successful in offering students a chance to test societies without a financial commitment, within the 6-week free membership period.

Introduction

The NUSU Sense of Belonging Scheme (NSBS) was facilitated by over £40,000 from Newcastle University, aimed to financially support academic societies in providing various welcome events to give potential members a taster of the events and environment the society would provide throughout the year. To ensure that funding was being used appropriately, all societies filled in an application form when requesting a grant and agreed to NUSU's code of conduct (Appendix A). This meant funding was allocated in line with the code of conduct; this includes an event that could cater to many members, proportional to their society or an event that created a sense of belonging through shared activities, providing a space for social interaction. This ensured that funding was not allocated for events such as bar crawls that may not be inclusive and accessible to students from all backgrounds.

The reasoning behind funding academic societies, compared to all societies and clubs is due to data from student consultations in previous years explaining how sense of belonging for students is based on social and academic factors, making academic societies the ideal environment to target, this is explored in more detail in previous reports.

The evaluation has shown that the increase in funding this year, has been associated with an increased sense of belonging and student engagement across diverse backgrounds as shown by an increase in memberships bought and society respondents. With over 4000 memberships bought by 2,400 students during the 6-week free membership period, the increased participation at events compared to previous years, reflected by committee, is supported by SUMs data. Committee focus groups noted that this is likely due to increased capacity, free food/refreshments and events like pottery painting that were supported by the NSBS funding and would otherwise not be possible due to financial constraints. This is further supported by a conversion rate of 26%, representing the proportion of students that bought the year membership after using the 6-week free membership. This was calculated by dividing the total number of memberships by 6-week free membership and multiplying it by 100.

Research background

Following previous years, Theory of Change (ToC) will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of NSBS by examining the relationships between input (funding and communication), activities (events and social opportunities), outputs (increased society members and student participation), and outcomes (improved student belonging and engagement).

A detailed breakdown of the Theory of Change methodology and its application to NSBS as well as the research background for this scheme can be found the [2022/23](#) and [2023/24 report](#).

Data Collection and Methodology

All data was collected through SUMs, along with member and committee surveys that provided context for engagement with the NUSU Sense of Belonging Scheme (NSBS). SUMs data focuses on student participation across various demographic groups, including academic stages, gender, ethnicity, and disability, to better understand the overall impact and engagement following the funding of NSBS. To see the questions respondents were asked, please refer to Appendix B to E. In addition to surveys, focus groups were arranged to provide in-depth feedback from both committee and members, unfortunately this feedback collection was limited due to the attendance of members.

The members survey collected feedback from students who participated in the NUSU Sense of Belonging Scheme, focusing on their experiences during the 6-week free trial, events attended, and overall satisfaction with the scheme. A total of 180 students responded to the survey which is 57 students higher than the 123 respondents last year, providing valuable insights into how the events and 6-week free trial membership impacted their sense of belonging and social integration.

Data Analysis

A total of 2,465 individual students participated in the NSBS by purchasing 4,112 memberships during the 6-week free membership period which is an increase from last year. Out of these, 1,052 memberships converted into full memberships, representing a conversion rate of 26% across all students. More academic societies applied and were approved for funding this year with 55 societies taking part, which is 4 more than last year. The average conversion rate per society was slightly lower, at 24%, suggesting a consistent but moderate level of conversion across academic societies.

Demographic

Academic Stages

The distribution of memberships across different academic stages revealed varied engagement levels with NSBS. Stage 1 students exhibited the highest level of engagement, purchasing a total of 1,768 memberships, with the majority (average of 1.46 memberships per student) purchasing one membership, although some were heavily involved in multiple societies. Stage 2 students followed, with 373 memberships purchased, reflecting moderate engagement, likely due to their established place in the university community. Stage 3 students, while purchasing 208 memberships, showed slightly reduced involvement, possibly due to the pressures of final year studies. Stage 4 students, with 87 memberships purchased, demonstrated even lower engagement, likely because of increased academic focus in their final year. Stage 5 students showed the least participation, with only 22 memberships purchased, reflecting the limited time or interest in extracurricular involvement at this stage.

An ANOVA test revealed no statistically significant differences in membership purchases across academic stages, indicating that while engagement varies, it remains relatively consistent across the academic progression. The data highlights that Stage 1 students are the most active, while Stage 0 and Stage 5 students show minimal participation. This can be explained by Stages 0 and 5 collectively making up 3.63% of the university's students compared to Stage 1 accounting for 24.13% of university students.

Further detailed data on each stage is available in Appendix F.

Home/International

The data collected from the members survey, showed us that 84% of people that filled the survey were Home students (n=152), while 16% were international students (n=28).

Of the international students that responded to the survey, 71% noted they look for their sense of belonging within academic societies (n=20), compared to 18% (n=5) that look for it in cultural societies such as South Asian Society and the 11% (n=3) that look for it in sports clubs. This reflects the members survey results where many international students have expressed how NSBS enabled them to find that sense of belonging within their academic society, meeting a central aim of the scheme.

Ethnicity

The ethnic distribution of memberships shows that White students made up the largest group, with 1,951 memberships purchased, followed by Asian or Asian British - Indian students with 315 memberships. This is a large gap of 1636 memberships between the two ethnic groups. Other ethnic groups, such as Chinese, and Black or Black British, had notably fewer memberships purchased.

Gender

The gender distribution of memberships indicates that female students were the primary participants in the scheme, with 60.97% of memberships purchased by females. Male students purchased 38.70% of memberships, a significantly smaller proportion in comparison indicating a lower engagement with the scheme than their female counterparts. There were also 0.32% of memberships where gender was undeclared.

To further understand the gender demographic, the below data has been extracted from the Members Survey that accounts for non-binary students (Figure 1).

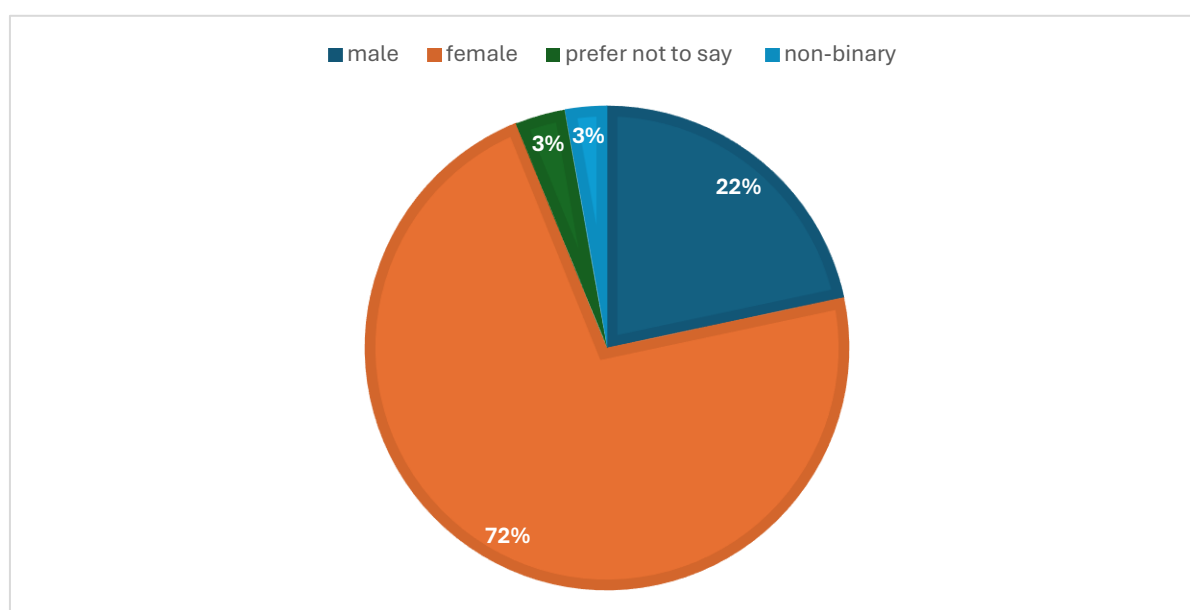


Figure 1: A PIE CHART TO ACCOUNT FOR NON-BINARY STUDENTS BASED ON THE MEMBERS SURVEY

72% of respondents identify as female, 22% male, 3% non-binary and 3% prefer not to say.

There is not a large change between Members Survey data and SUMs data, suggesting that the survey data is a representative sample of the students that took part in the scheme. The members survey also enquired about sexual orientation of respondents to get a deeper look into underrepresented groups that NSBS impacted positively (Figure 2).

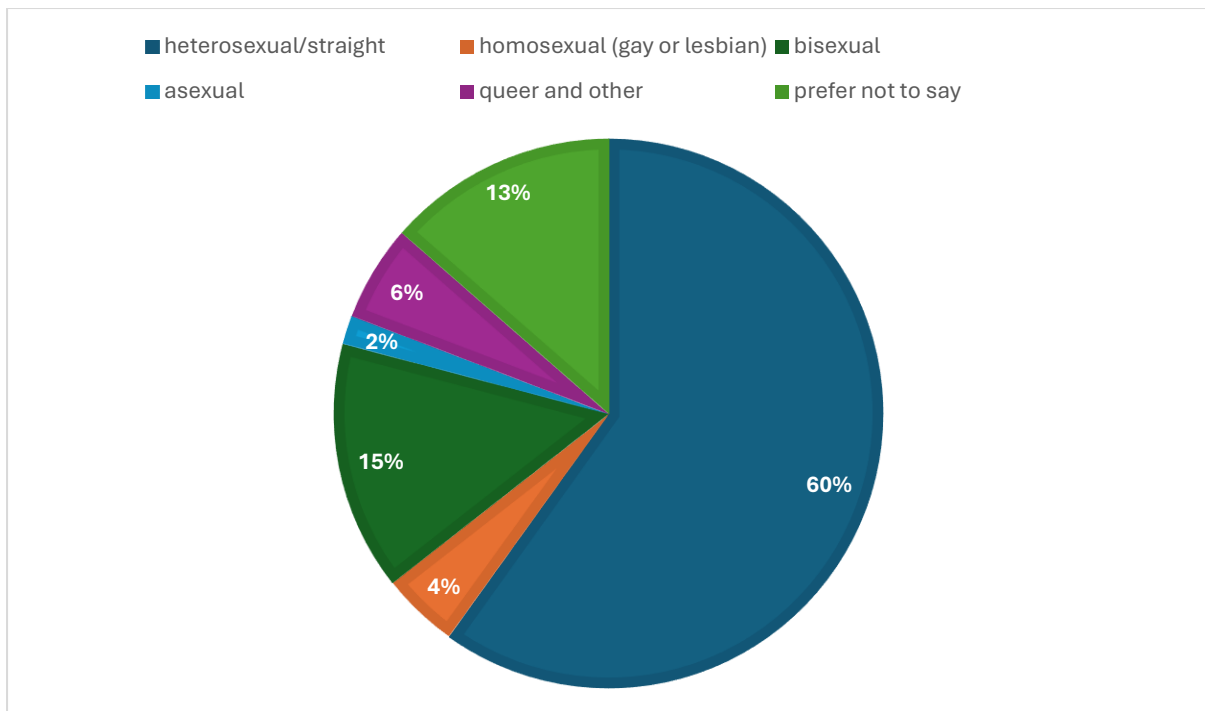


Figure 2: A PIE CHART SHOWING SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF MEMBERS SURVEY RESPONDENTS

60% of respondents identified as heterosexual, 15% identified as bisexual, 13% preferred not to say, 6% identified as queer/other, 4% identified as homosexual, 2% identified as asexual. A few respondents noted that the societies they engaged with were inclusive and welcoming, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, suggesting that the events did a good job of fostering diversity, improving the sense of community and belonging within the academic community.

First in Immediate family to enter Higher Education

78% of those who filled the members survey were not the first in their immediate family to enter higher education (n=138), 20% were the first in their immediate family to enter higher education (n=35), and 2% prefer not to say (n=3) (Figure 3)

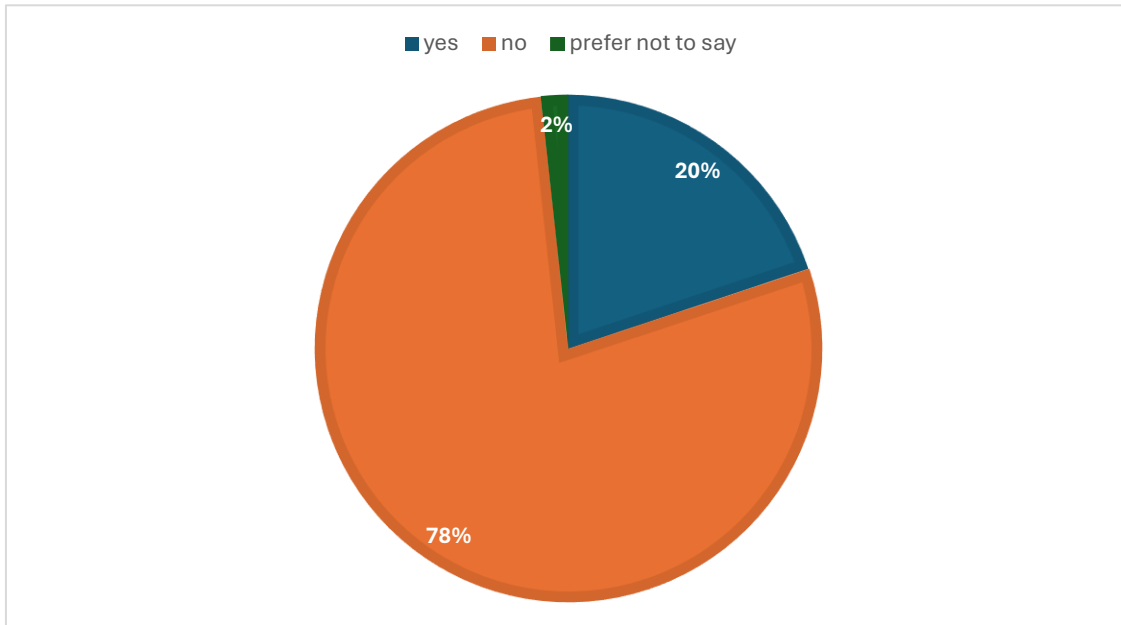


Figure 3: A PIE CHART SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO WERE THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILY TO ENTER HIGHER EDUCATION BASED ON THE MEMBERS SURVEY.

Some respondents who were the first in their family to attend university mentioned that the welcome events played a key role in helping them feel included and supported, indicating that the funded activities reached out to those who might not have had access to the same social networks.

Underrepresented student groups

39% of respondents of the members survey are not classed as an underrepresented group (n=67), 29% accounts for the intersection of more than one underrepresented group listed (n=49), from and ethnic background and home postcode in an area of low higher education participation accounted for 9% of respondents respectively. Low family household income accounts for 4% of respondents (n=7), while disabled students account for 3% of students (n=6) (Figure 4).

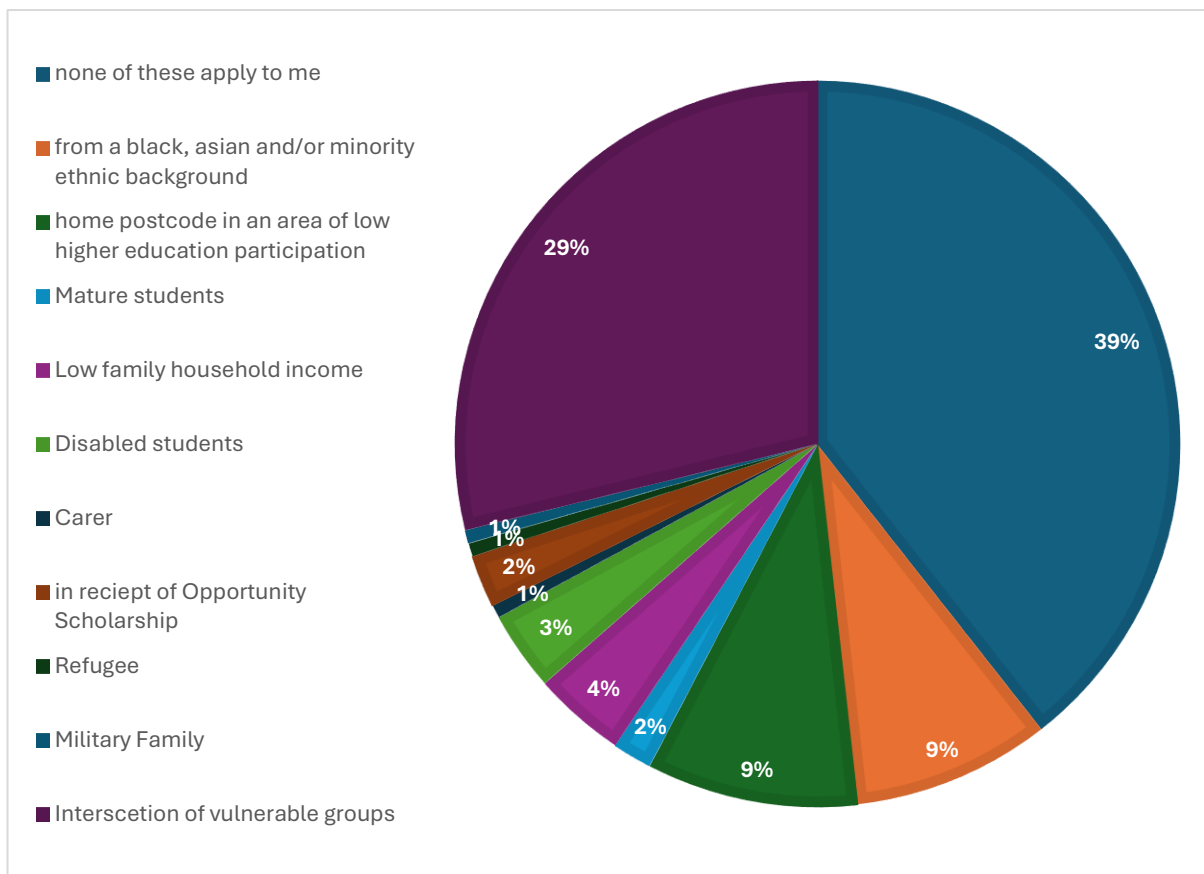


Figure 4: A PIE CHART SHOWING THE DIFFERENT UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS REACHED BY NSBS BASED ON THE MEMBERS SURVEY

While the largest proportion of respondents (39%) were not from an underrepresented background, the remaining 63% were from different underrepresented groups, demonstrating that the NSBS was successful in reaching these groups. This is a significant achievement, especially when comparing to the general university population; majority of students are within the 18-21 age range (49.7%), and a significant portion are UK home students (63.5%) or of British nationality (62.1%). While Chinese (13.4%) and Indian (3.6%) students make up smaller proportions. The university population statistics show that underrepresented groups are a minority, therefore it is clear that NSBS successfully and effectively has reached a broader spectrum of underrepresented communities. It is almost important to note 29% of respondents identified as more than one underrepresented group, which means they likely face compounded issues such as financial and social barriers. The high engagement and participation with these groups along with survey responses suggest NSBS is successful in taking away these barriers in order to improve sense of belonging.

Activities (welcome events and socials)

Member respondents attended a variety of events designed to help them introduce and integrate them into university life and meet other students. The most popular events were:

- Pizza Night
- Pottery Painting
- Pub Quiz
- Yoga Sessions
- Day Trips

Key Findings

- Many respondents enjoyed events that prioritised interaction with students outside their immediate course, like pub quiz and pizza nights, as they provided an informal, relaxed setting to meet new people and engage in conversations, helping them meet their current group of friends within the society. This is shown by a total of 150 students attending Geography's pizza night. While others appreciated the bookshop crawl for its practical benefits, like discovering affordable places to purchase books and getting them accustomed to the city.
- Respondents appreciated how academic society welcome events provided the chance to speak to students in different years about university life and academic expectations. These interactions helped many respondents feel more settled and reassured about their studies. It also allowed students to meet people with similar interests, which allowed them to connect over shared hobbies or academics such as Dermatology's Skin Care Workshop.
- Other events, such as pottery painting, provided a different kind of engagement. Respondents appreciated these events for their more chill and non-academic nature, offering a break from studies.
- International students highlighted that events such as meet-and-greets and socials helped them better understand how things operated at the university and gave them an easier point to meet home students.
- Majority of students appreciated the variety of events available, from more active options like yoga to sober events, which allowed students to interact in different ways, accommodating a range of preferences.

Analysis

The variety of events offered during the 6-week free trial was appreciated by students, especially since they provided a balance between social, academic, and wellbeing-focused activities. Events that allowed students to interact across years and disciplines were most valued, suggesting that NSBS was successful in encouraging cross-year engagement and fostering a sense of community within the societies.

For committee the primary motivation for applying for the funding was to organise a variety of welcome events aimed at increasing membership numbers and fostering a sense of community among society members. The funding allowed societies to host a variety of events, including social gatherings, workshops, and professional talks. Several societies highlighted the impact of the funding in enabling them to run more frequent events, offering multiple opportunities for students to engage with their societies and meet new members. Societies used the funds to purchase refreshments for events, making them more accessible and enjoyable. For example, funding was used for pizza nights, coffee mornings, and other social activities that created a more inviting atmosphere for new students, enabling more people to attend. This funding enabled societies to execute their welcome events successfully, creating increased engagement and a sense of community.

Memberships and Student Participation – Output in terms of Theory of Change

Many committees mentioned their goal of increasing membership by hosting a diverse range of events, including socials, workshops, and interactive talks, especially at the start of the academic year.

Respondents were asked whether they decided to buy a full membership after the trial period and the reasons for their decision. 54% of those who purchased full memberships stated they enjoyed the activities, appreciating the sense of community, and wanting to continue attending the events. Many expressed that the trial allowed them to make a more informed decision without the financial pressure of committing immediately. 46% of respondents who did not buy a full membership often mentioned financial reasons as a barrier, with some indicating they were already connected to people through events and didn't feel the need for continued participation. Majority of the people who did not convert their trial membership to a full membership said they eventually would but hadn't got around to it at the time of the survey.

Respondents were then asked if they would have bought a full membership without the 6-week free trial based on the member survey. Most respondents (41%) were not sure about joining their academic society without the 6-week free membership (n=73). There was a minor difference between people who would buy a membership without the 6-week trial and would not (n=55 vs n=50).

In the survey the majority of respondents (74%) stated that the 6-week trial did affect their choice to join their academic society (n=133), while a minority said it did not (n=47). After looking into the minority, a few of these respondents include undergraduate stage 2 and 3 students who likely have been a member of their society previously.

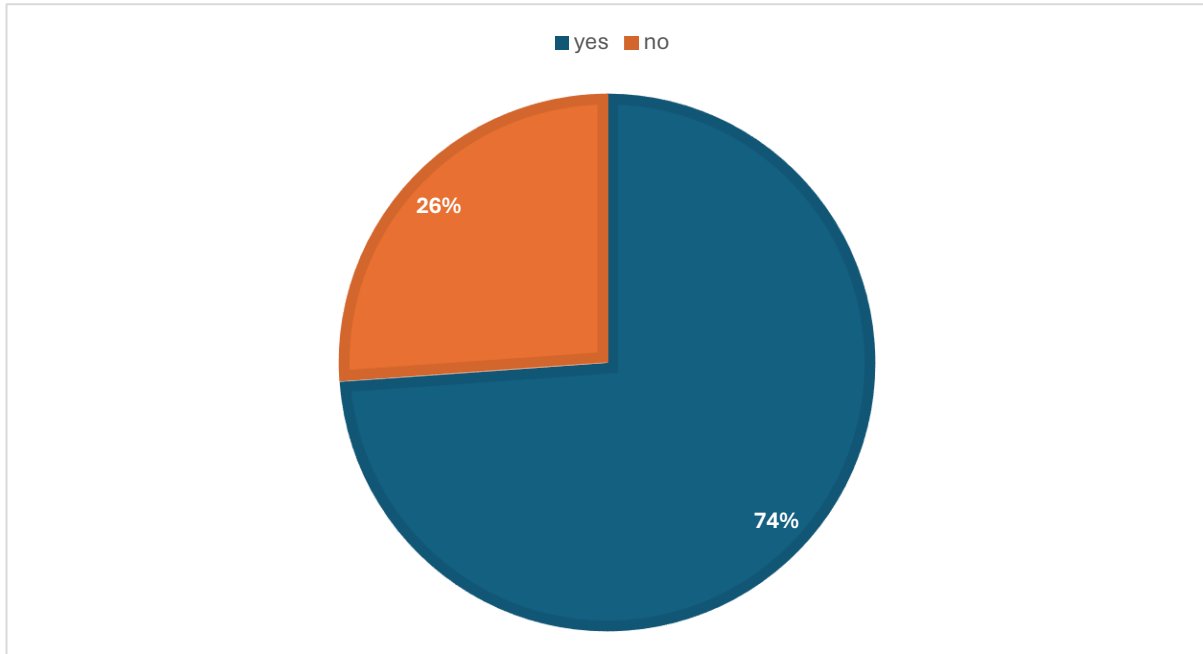


Figure 5: PIE CHART SHOWING THE EXTENT THAT THE 6-WEEK FREE TRIAL IMPACTED RESPONDENTS' CHOICE TO JOIN THEIR ACADEMIC SOCIETY

When asked about the usefulness of the 6-week trial, many respondents expressed that it allowed them to experience the society without the obligation of a full-year commitment. This was particularly valuable for students from low-income backgrounds, as they could make more informed decisions on whether to join a society without upfront financial commitment. Majority of respondents agreed that the 6-week trial was useful (n=148), in comparison to 8% of respondents that disagreed (n=12) (Figure 6).

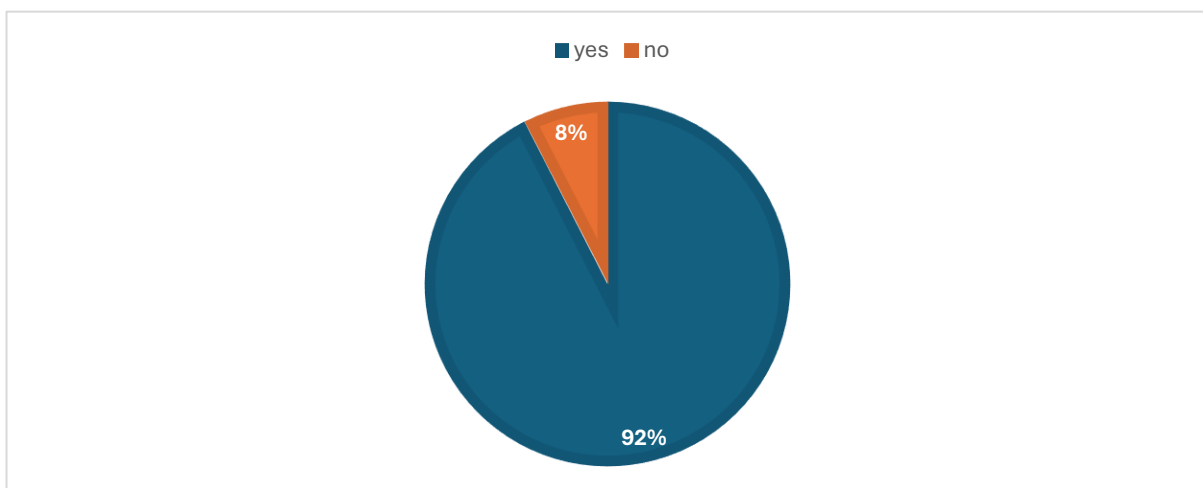


Figure 6: PIE CHART SHOWING WHETHER MEMBERS FELT THE 6-WEEK FREE MEMBERSHIP WAS USEFUL.

Some respondents mentioned they would have joined regardless of the trial, indicating that the trial might not have had a significant impact on their decision to commit, however helped them attend events at the start of the year when financial costs tend to be higher. Similarly, students reflected on financial constraints as barriers to buying a membership and noting the usefulness in NSBS in taking away this barrier.

Academic Society Committees were also asked on how they felt the project impacted their membership numbers, 48% strongly agreed that welcome events boosted society membership numbers, 33% agree and 19% neither agree nor disagree. With 81% agreeing that NSBS helped boost society membership numbers, the scheme has achieved a central aim of achieving a sense of belonging through supporting academic society communities. Smaller societies, or those left with limited funds from previous committees, cited the funding as essential for providing events they otherwise couldn't afford. For example, the Geography Society noted they needed financial support to revive the society and attract new members which was successful.

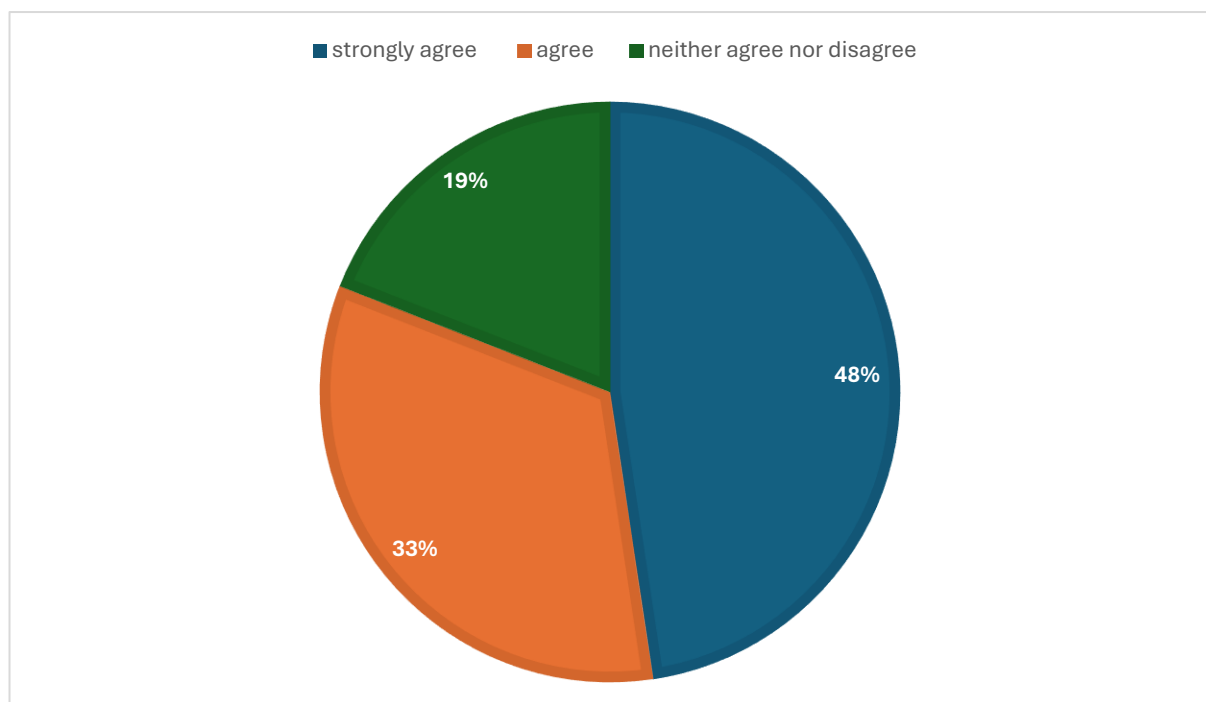


Figure 7: COMMITTEE'S VIEWS ON IF THE NSBS BOOSTED SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Academic School Membership Breakdown

The School of Medicine, which represents 9.03% of the total university population, accounted for 14.77% of all memberships purchased under the NSBS scheme. This indicates a higher engagement with the scheme relative to its university size, suggesting that the School of Medicine has embraced the initiative effectively. In contrast, the Business School, the largest academic school at the university, with 12.82% of the total university population, had a lower representation in the scheme, contributing to just 7.18% of the total memberships purchased. While still significant, this suggests a relatively lower participation rate compared to its overall size. The School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, which comprises 3.26% of the university's total student population, had a participation rate of 7.30% of students engaged with the NSBS scheme. This indicates a higher-than-expected level of engagement, reflecting strong interest despite the school's smaller size.

This data demonstrates that while the largest faculties, like the Business School, have a large number of students, their engagement with the scheme is relatively low compared to smaller schools like the School of Medicine, which shows strong participation in relation to its size.

Sense of Belonging – Outcomes in terms of Theory of Change

For many, sense of belonging meant building connections with others to help create a feeling of community and inclusion, making the university experience more meaningful and fulfilling. This was supported further by respondents who found friendships with like-minded individuals essential in making a community. These connections encourage students to participate in different opportunities the university offers such as attending lectures, seminars and accessing societies, clubs and study spaces.

Survey participants were asked how participating in the society's activities influenced their connections with others, including students from other years.

Key Findings:

- **University Community:** Many respondents mentioned that participating in events helped them make new friends, including students from different year groups. This cross-year interaction allowed them to gain advice and insights from students in other stages, helping students understand academic expectations. For example, first year students reported benefiting from the guidance of second and third-year students regarding navigating university life. These relationships are essential in creating a supportive and inclusive environment that extends beyond academic performance, contributing to students' overall sense of belonging.

- **Shared Experiences:** Respondents also noted that events provided an opportunity to reassure each other about university life. Students found comfort in connecting with others who shared similar experiences and hobbies. The welcome served as a foundation for stronger interpersonal relationships that continued beyond the event itself, solidifying the bonds formed during these activities.
- **Long-term friendships:** Some students highlighted that they were able to build friendships with others in their course and society and were now meeting up regularly or studying together. This is notable outcome of participation in NSBS-funded events, aligning closely with the Theory of Change, demonstrating that initial social interactions fostered by the funding scheme led to stronger, more sustained academic and personal connections.
- **Academic Community:** It is also noted that many respondents go to lectures and seminars with people they've met through their respective academic society, building confidence and social connection within academic courses. This positively influences engagement with academics.
- **Increased sense of belonging:** Majority of respondents (66%) agreed that they feel a sense of belonging within their academic society (n=100). While 69% of respondents agreed that attending welcome events helped improve their sense of belonging. This data indicates that events were effective in fostering a sense of belonging and community, aligning with the goals of NSBS to improve student engagement and increase students' feelings of inclusion within their academic societies. By funding events that encourage social interaction and participation in society activities, the scheme has significantly enhanced students' sense of belonging within the university environment.

67% of committee members strongly agreed that the funding they received was sufficient to provide welcome activities and create a sense of belonging. A further 19% agreed, while 9% disagreed, and 5% neither agreed nor disagreed (Figure 8).

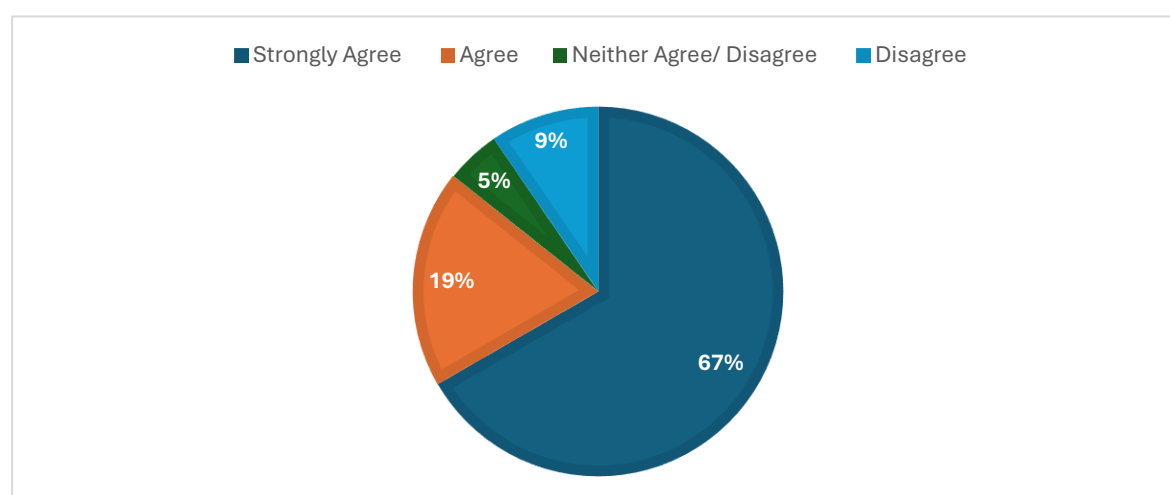


Figure 8: COMMITTEE VIEW ON IF FUNDING RECEIVED WAS ENOUGH TO PROVIDE WELCOME ACTIVITIES AND CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING.

Most societies felt that the funding was adequate for hosting a range of welcome events, such as socials, pizza nights, and networking opportunities. These events were viewed as crucial in fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. However, a small number of societies expressed concerns that they didn't receive enough funding to execute all their planned activities, particularly for larger events that required additional resources limiting their reach.

Academic School Relationship

The success of the Emergency Medicine Society in converting 39% of trial members into full members highlights the importance of a strong relationship with academic schools. This society benefited from strong collaboration, which led to high visibility, engaging events, and greater student participation. Their connection to the academic school helped them attract and retain members, establishing a sense of community.

In contrast, societies like Graduate Medicine society had a conversion rate of 11%, which was likely due to a weak relationship with its academic school. Despite receiving funding, challenges with booking spaces and limited support from the department resulted in less visibility and engagement, leading to lower conversion rates.

Similarly, the European Law Society, a new society, had a low conversion rate of 9%. As a new society, it struggled to establish a connection with the Law School, limiting its ability to host well-attended events and gain recognition. However, the funding allowed the society to bridge this gap and begin to establish themselves as part of the broader academic community.

These cases demonstrate that societies with strong academic ties, like Emergency Medicine Society, experience higher conversion rates and more successful events. Societies with weak relationships can improve by strengthening collaboration with their academic school, which can lead to higher engagement and better conversion rates as it increases society visibility, attracting new members, and fostering a greater sense of belonging among students.

Evaluation

The NUSU Sense of Belonging has played a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and increasing engagement among students at Newcastle University. The evaluation of this funding scheme indicates a clear positive impact on both student involvement and society membership. The analysis highlights how the funding has been used effectively to achieve its objectives and the importance of continuing the scheme to maintain its success.

The funding was primarily used by committees to organise a variety of welcome activities aimed at increasing membership numbers, creating social integration, and promoting a sense of belonging among students. Societies reported using the funds to host events such as pizza nights, trivia evenings, wellness activities like yoga and stress-relief sessions, and academic events like guest lectures and career-oriented workshops. These events were strategically planned to cater to different interests and academic backgrounds, which encouraged broad participation.

The funding enabled societies to scale their events, offering refreshments, booking venues, and covering other essential costs, which would have otherwise been difficult for smaller or new societies to manage. These resources helped societies create more inclusive and accessible events, therefore improving the student experience. Importantly, the financial support provided societies with the flexibility to experiment with diverse activities, which contributed to higher engagement rates and increased participation.

A central objective of the NUSU Sense of Belonging Scheme was to create an inclusive, welcoming environment where students could form lasting connections with one another. The data analysis clearly illustrates that the funding achieved this goal. Over 2,400 students participated in the 6-week free membership trial, and many of them converted to full membership. This high conversion rate (26%) demonstrates that students were not only attracted to the societies but also found value in the experiences offered, encouraging them to become long-term members.

The events funded by NUSU directly contributed to an increased sense of belonging and community among students. Feedback from members highlighted that these activities helped them meet new people and form friendships with students from different year groups and academic disciplines. A strong sense of community was particularly evident in societies where students were able to engage with peers from both their own courses and other fields. The informal nature of events, such as the pizza and quiz nights, encouraged cross-year and cross-discipline interactions, which is a key driver of the sense of community that students experience.

The inclusion of underrepresented groups, such as international students and students with disabilities, was a key success factor in fostering a diverse and welcoming environment. For example, events were organised with accessibility in mind, ensuring that all students, including those with physical disabilities, could

participate. Many societies reported that these inclusive activities helped students feel like they were part of the broader university community, regardless of their background or identity.

Importantly, the funded events also contributed to the academic integration of students. Several societies organised career-related talks, guest lectures, and academic workshops, providing students with valuable opportunities to develop professionally and academically. Feedback indicated that these events helped students from various academic fields feel more connected to their societies and the university, enhancing their sense of belonging not only within the society but also within their chosen academic discipline.

The funding's positive impact is also evident in the increase in membership numbers. A substantial 67% of committee members strongly agreed that the funding enabled them to create a welcoming environment that attracted new students and retained them throughout the academic year. For instance, societies such as Geography and Nutritank reported in focus groups, large increases in membership and higher engagement levels in comparison to previous years. These societies leveraged the funding to offer a variety of events, which not only attracted more members but also helped maintain interest through frequent social activities.

Moreover, committees noted that the funding helped them engage new members in ways that were previously impossible, with the ability to host events that were both large in scale and diverse in nature. The wide range of events, from events like mini-golf and bowling to academic talks and workshops, played a pivotal role in keeping members active and involved.

The funding scheme had a clear and measurable impact on society growth and engagement. The data reflects an increase in membership numbers across multiple societies, with several reporting significant growth compared to previous years. Therefore, NSBS has had a demonstrable positive impact on students' sense of community, engagement, and belonging. The funds were spent effectively in organising a wide range of events that catered to diverse student needs, fostering social, academic, and personal connections. The overall positive feedback from societies and students supports the continued investment in this initiative.

Appendices

Appendix A - Application form - code of conduct/requirements on application form.



64AA5071.pdf

Appendix B – 6-week free Trial Participant Survey.



69291CA7.pdf

Appendix C - Committee Survey



7811544D.pdf

Appendix D - Ethics form – Included at the start of the 6-week free Trial Participant Survey.

Survey Ethics

As part of our evaluation on how well our welcome events funding scheme for academic societies is working, we are interested in student experiences participating in an academic society and your thoughts and opinions about how this may have affected feelings of belonging to your academic school and university community.

We are particularly interested in the views of students who belong to underrepresented or marginalised groups, but opinions from all students are valued. Please answer honestly, with as much or as little detail as you like. If you are unsure or don't want to answer a question, either leave questions blank or write down that you are unsure/don't know.

Demographic data will be collected for the purpose of understanding how the student population is engaging with academic societies.

This survey is anonymous, unless you choose to provide your email address to express your interest in taking part in an additional focus group session or to be entered into the prize draw. Any data used in our research will be anonymised and pseudonyms (fake names) will be used where necessary. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

You do not need to take part and there will be no negative consequences if you do not. If you do not provide an email address, please note that you will be unable to withdraw your response later as your data will not be identifiable to you. If you do provide an email address, you are able to withdraw your data by contacting the team (contact details at the end of the survey) and your data will be removed from the research. You can withdraw your data at any time up until 31/12/24.

This data will contribute to recommendations to the Students' Union on how to improve the academic societies funding scheme. Your data will primarily be used in an evaluation report for this project.

Appendix E - Society Evaluation Form



D9ADB8E3.pdf

Appendix F - Academic Stages Data breakdown

1. Stage 0:

o Only 7 memberships were purchased by students in Stage 0, with an average of 1.14 memberships per student. The median value was 1, indicating that most students in this stage only purchased one membership. The range of memberships purchased in this group was from 1 to 2, suggesting that Stage 0 students are minimally engaged in the scheme compared to later stages.

2. Stage 1:

o Students in Stage 1 were the most active group in terms of membership purchases, with a total of 1,768 memberships bought accounting for a large share of the overall memberships. The average number of memberships per student was 1.46, and the median value was 1.0, indicating that most students in Stage 1 bought one membership. However, the range of memberships purchased in this group varied from 1 to 28, suggesting that while most students engaged with a single society, a few students were heavily involved in multiple societies, reflecting significant variation in student engagement. With Stage 1 being a significant target for NSBS, the membership levels show that this demographic have actively engaged with the scheme, in most cases integrating them into the university community and creating a sense of belonging.

3. Stage 2:

o Stage 2 students purchased 373 memberships, with an average of 1.43 memberships per student. The median value was slightly higher at 1.18, indicating that while most students purchased only one membership, a smaller group purchased multiple memberships. The range of memberships in this group extended from 1 to 17, showing some variability in student engagement, but still relatively modest compared to Stage 1, likely due to being part of the university community already, however some students may be seeking their sense of belonging through academic societies.

4. Stage 3:

o A total of 208 memberships were purchased by Stage 3 students, with an average of 1.52 memberships per student. The median value was 1, and the range

in this group was from 1 to 25 memberships, indicating a few highly engaged students purchasing memberships in multiple societies, but a relatively narrow participation range. This is likely due to students having final year academic stressors and less time to join societies, as well as being integrated within the university community.

5. Stage 4:

o Students in Stage 4 purchased 87 memberships, with an average of 1.44 memberships per student. The median value was 1, and the range was between 1 and 4, suggesting that engagement in later academic stages (Stage 4) is relatively limited compared to Stage 1 and Stage 2 students, possibly due to students focusing more on final year projects or career preparation.

6. Stage 5:

o A total of 22 memberships were purchased by Stage 5 students, with an average of 1.18 memberships per student. The median value was 1, and the range was between 1 and 2 memberships.

An ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test was performed to assess whether there were significant differences in the mean number of memberships purchased across different academic stages. The p-value for the test was 0.884, which is much larger than the standard significance threshold of 0.05. This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in membership purchases across academic stages. This means that the null hypothesis stating 'that the mean number of memberships is the same across all academic stages', cannot be rejected. Students in Stage 1 exhibited the highest observable level of engagement, while Stage 0 and Stage 5 students showed minimal participation.

There is no statistically significant difference in the mean number of memberships purchased by students at different academic stages, suggesting that the engagement with the scheme is relatively consistent across stages of study.



AUTHOR: Hannah Thomas - Sense of Belonging Scheme Intern

EDITED BY: Conor Munro-O'Brien - Activities Development Coordinator