

AMOSSHE Executive meeting

28 March 2025 | AMOSSHE National Office

Formal meeting time: 10:30 to 15:30

Attendees: Jill Stevenson (JST), Sarah Sweeney (SSW), Emma Bales (EBA), Chris Warrington (CWA), Andy Shanks (ASH), Aleata Alstad-Calkins (AAL), Keith Houghton (KHO), Paul Rossi (PRO), John Bloomfield (JBL), Benjamin Parsons (BPA), Emma Maslin (EMA), Julia Jean-Baptiste (JJE), Jaimee Shan (JSH), Angela Scanlon (ASC), Ian Munton (IMU), Sammy Li (SLI)

Apologies: Michelle Scop (MSC), Sally Lambah (SLA)

Minutes

Welcome, minutes and matters arising

Item 1 Standing item: Reserved business, Conflicts of interest and check for any other business.

No conflicts of interest declared.

Item 2 Standing item: Minutes and matters arising

The Executive agreed that the minutes of the January 2025 meeting are accurate.

Action log

- 31 JBL / BPA to devise / share a process for responding to requests to work with AMOSSHE that come through Chairs or other Executive members. Ongoing JBL will share the process with the Executive team.
- 32 JBL and BPA to extract actions from the Rules of Association paper in order to implement the changes. **Complete**
- 33 JBL and EBA to review ideas about extending Executive terms from two years. Closed
- 38 JBL to review the allocation processing with AMOSSHE's accountants to better stabilise showcasing income. Complete
- 8 EBA and JBL to look at risks associated with the EGM/AGM. Complete
- 17 Policy and research group to start a project to collate examples of practice for tackling harassment and sexual misconduct, and delegate to the Benchmarking group where required. Complete
- 23 JBL and BPA to revise the strategy progress tables to indicate where a task is dependent on the progress of another task. **Ongoing**
- 27 JBL to include the Sustainability group terms of reference in the papers for the January 2025 Executive meeting. **Complete**
- 30 IMU to get in touch with Culture Shift to understand the work they are doing and the intended outcomes related to their version of the Sexual Misconduct Survey. **Closed** IMU will share a summary.
- 31 All Executive Members to review the Stakeholder Mapping spreadsheet and advise JBL about any gaps or updates before the next meeting. Closed
- 32 JBL to share the live link to the stakeholder mapping document to the executive members. Complete
- 33 JBL to explore version control and viewing experience of the executive to ensure it is clear for all Executive Committee members to follow. Closed

- 34 JBL and National Office to send monthly reminders to the executive committee to refer to the stakeholder map and send in any updates to the National Office team for updating.
 Closed
- 35 Executive Committee members to let EMA know who is attending the roundtable events set up by the student support champion to ensure that we have people attending all roundtable events. Closed
- 36 KHO to send through form from AHEP groups for National Office to check over. **Complete**
- 37 JSH to contact IMU who has tentatively volunteered Aberystwyth University for CPD10.
 Complete

Item 3 Standing item: Policy update

Enough self-swab kit

The Executive discussed further information about the self-swab kits not noted in the paper.

The Executive agreed that we will continue to highlight information about the organisation but not seek to put out a public statement at this time.

ACTION: JBL to discuss / follow up about self-swab kits with other sector organisations, including NUS.

ACTION: CWA to share the self-swab kits briefing to university senior leadership with the Executive.

Industrial action

JBL and the Chairs provided a verbal update on feedback sent to John Blake. JBL said that John Blake emphasised that regulation is not currently being planned.

The Executive discussed the implications of this approach for AMOSSHE members. No actions at this time.

Duty of candour

The Executive discussed AMOSSHE's potential stance on duty of candour if it is to be introduced formally in the sector. It is difficult to determine at this time. Student Services aspire to be candid and transparent in their work in order to be supportive, but that work will still be determined by other legislation and responsibilities.

Higher education mental health and implementation taskforce

JST and JBL did not provide a verbal update from their meeting with Lawrence Morton, as this had not taken place.

JST provided a verbal update on taskforce outputs and findings.

The Executive discussed AMOSSHE's role in the implementation of the taskforce outputs. There's a concern that the outputs of HEMHIT, though valuable, need to be coordinated / consolidated with each other (and other frameworks / guidelines) to ensure there isn't a proliferation of conflicting information and/or duplication of effort.

ACTION: JBL to add an item to the June and July Executive meetings to interrogate each of the HEMHIT outputs and consider their implications for the work of Student Services, and what AMOSSHE can do to support members.

ACTION: EMA to review the 'Higher education mental health and implementation taskforce' part of paper 24-25-30 before its publication after June to ensure accuracy.

Discussion and approval items

These agenda items were discussed and approved as per the directives within each paper.

Item 4 Draft budget 2024/25

The Executive Committee agreed a budget deficit of £7000 for the 2025-26 academic year, with the agreement to return to a balanced budget in the 2026-27 academic year. The Executive Director will seek out measures to reduce the deficit within the budget, and present an updated budget at the June Executive meeting.

If decisions need to be made between now and the next meeting in June, the Chairs will agree those decisions and present the changes to the Executive meeting in June.

Item 5 AGM agenda and membership fees

The Executive Committee discussed the membership fees, and considered an increase in line with inflation. Many felt that member decision-making will be whether to cut membership altogether or not, and therefore a slight increase in cost (up to £24 extra for the most expensive tier) won't make the difference in the decision.

The Executive agreed to propose an inflationary (3%) fees increase, for the membership to agree at AGM.

Key communication points: the benefits of membership, the value of money of our membership, the works we've done to drive change in the sector, and the rationale for increasing fees.

ACTION: JBL to convene a group (Commercial Growth?) to discuss the implications of including an inflationary fee increase (or no change in case of deflation) in our rules of association.

The Executive decided not to attempt an online poll for membership fee voting.

The Executive decided to reduce the length of the AGM to 30 minutes maximum and use this as an opportunity to confirm the details and provide some information to members on the development of our work and announce the newly elected Executive members.

ACTION: JBL and EMA and Executive members to emphasise the importance of attending AGM at regional and National lead member meetings.

ACTION: JBL and BPA to reduce the AGM to 30 minutes.

The Executive approved the items on the AGM agenda, with the removal of the year in review items.

ACTION: JBL to draft a final agenda for the AGM.

Item 6 CPD structure, CPD topics

The Executive approved the structure of the events programme for 2025/26 academic year.

The Executive approved the topics for the first two events of the programme (student death and professional development / self care).

IMU and ASH will be the leads for the student death event(s).

EBA and AAC (KHO backup) will be the leads for the professional development / self-care event.

ACTION: JSH to schedule initial CPD1 and CPD2 meetings.

Ideas for CPD topics:

- Possibly we could have separate (but linked) half day online CPD events on student death and prevention / postvention. These might be linked with a discount to book both, if our system allows.
- Winter Conference could focus on dignity and respect, barriers to community cohesion, diversity of the student population and how to coexist on campus. Inter-professional education. Focus on sharper / knottier issues. We will need to collaborate with EucA on the theme.
- Mental health looking at the various frameworks and outputs. We could get feedback from the National Conference sessions.
- Connecting up frameworks (Disabled Students Charter, UMHC, EmilyTest, E6, etc.).
- Harassment and sexual misconduct, perhaps later in the year to review how the first year of E6 went down.
- Disability support and reasonable adjustments, and assessments. Engagement with UKAT.
- Compassionate communications.
- Bite size learning in collaboration, for example with AGCAS, UKAT, NASMA etc.

ACTION: JSH and BPA to meet with EucA to agree a theme for Winter Conference to present at the June Executive meeting.

ACTION: JSH and EMA to meet UUK to discuss collaboration and co-ordinating dates to ensure there are no clashes.

Item 7 Strategy oversight update and five year targets

SSW introduced the strategy targets and impact measures. The Strategy Oversight group and the three main workstreams have been working on statements and measures to help us determine how we're progressing and (in 2030) whether we've achieved our aims.

We need to ensure that we measure impact year on year, because if we wait until the end of the strategy terms, we will have lost some organisational memory because of Executive terms ending.

ACTION: JBL to share the strategy targets / measures paper with the Executive for review by email once this has been signed off by the strategy oversight group. The agreed statements will be presented at the June Executive meeting.

Item 8 Empower our Community workstream

SLI discussed progress with this workstream, focusing on the online discussion groups, which were soft launched this year. The workstream group is looking at what each group should focus on, for example, topic based groups (aligned to our resources topics, for example, transition / induction, along with groups about professional / leadership development). Also, groups focused on different member demographics (for example Black Student Services leaders, Small and specialist providers). Finally, time-bound thematic groups (for example, responding to the E6 condition).

The group is discussing maintenance of the groups – how / when do we create them, who maintains them, when do groups close?

A benefit of the groups is to eliminate unnecessary emails that Jiscmail generates.

Item 9 Update from Cultivate Excellence and Influence our Sector workstreams

JST gave an update about the work of the Influence our Sector group including the potential meeting with Minister Smith.

SSW gave an update about the work of the Cultivate Excellence group, including the Professional Recognition and Career Development portal and the launch of The Pivot.

Points for noting and any other business

There were no other points for noting.

Item 15 AOB (any other business) None.



AMOSSHE Executive meeting

28 March 2025 | AMOSSHE National Office Formal meeting time: 10:30 to 15:30

Agenda

Welcome, minutes and matters arising: 10:30 to 12:30

Item	Title	Status	Presented by	Paper
1	Standing item: Reserved business, Conflicts of interest and AOB check	Discussion	Jill Stevenson	
2	Standing item: Minutes and matters arising	Approval	Jill Stevenson	24-25-29
3	Standing item: Policy update / Mental Health future planning	Discussion	Emma Maslin Jill Stevenson	24-25-30

Lunch: 12:30 to 13:00

Discussion and approval items: 13:00 to 15:15

These agenda items are to be discussed and approved as per the directives within each paper.

Item	Title		Presented by	Paper	
4	Draft budget 25-26	Approval	John Bloomfield	24-25-31	
5	AGM agenda and membership fees	Approval	John Bloomfield	24-25-32	
6	CPD structure, CPD topics	Approval	Leads	<u>24-25-33</u>	
	Cr D structure, Cr D topics	Approvai	Benjamin Parsons		
7	Strategy oversight update and 5 year targets	Approval	Sarah Sweeney		
,	Strategy oversignt update and 5 year targets	Арргочаг	Leads		
8	Empower our Community	Discussion	Leads	24-25-34	
9	Update from Cultivate Excellence and	Discussion	Leads	24-25-35	
9	Influence our Sector workstreams	DISCUSSION	Ledus	24-25-36	

Break: 14:45 to 15:00

Points for noting and AOB: 15:15 to 15:30

These agenda items are only to be discussed if members have particular questions.

Item	Title		Presented by	Paper
10	CPD events update (Cultivate Excellence)	Noting	Jaimee Shan	
11	EDI and sustainability oversight groups	Noting	Strategy leads	
12	Communications update (Operations)	Noting	Julia Jean-Baptiste	24-25-37
13	Finance management report (Operations)	Noting	John Bloomfield	
14	Membership update (Empower our Community)	Noting	Benjamin Parsons	
15	AOB (any other business)	Discussion	Jill Stevenson	



Exec Board	Action No.	Agenda No.	Action	Actioned to	Status
Jan-24	31	6	JBL / BPA to devise / share a process for responding to requests to work with AMOSSHE that come through Chairs or other Executive members.	JBL, BPA	Complete
Jan-24	32	7	JBL and BPA to extract actions from the Rules of Association paper in order to implement the changes.	JBL, BPA	Complete
Jan-24	33	7	JBL and EBA to review ideas about extending Executive terms from two years.	JBL, EBA	Closed
Mar-24	38	4	JBL to review the allocation processing with AMOSSHE's accountants to better stabilise showcasing income.	JBL	Complete
Jul-24	8	7	EBA and JBL to look at risks associated with the EGM/AGM.	JBL, EBA	Complete
Nov-24	17	3	Policy and research group to start a project to collate examples of practice for tackling harassment and sexual misconduct, and delegate to the Benchmarking group where required.	PRAG	Complete
Nov-24	23	4	JBL and BPA to revise the strategy progress tables to indicate where a task is dependent on the progress of another task.	JBL	Ongoing
Nov-24	27	5	JBL to include the Sustainability group terms of reference in the papers for the January 2025 Executive meeting.	JBL	Complete
Jan-25	30	1	IMU to get in touch with Culture Shift to understand the work they are doing and the intended outcomes related to their version of the Sexual Misconduct Survey	IMU	Ongoing
Jan-25	31	6	All Executive Members to review the Stakeholder Mapping spreadsheet and advise JBL about any gaps or updates before the next meeting	Executive	Closed
Jan-25	32	6	JBL to share the live link to the stakeholder mapping document to the executive members.	JBL	Complete
Jan-25	33	6	JBL to explore version control and viewing experience of the executive to ensure it is clear for all Executive Committee members to follow.	JBL	Ongoing
Jan-25	34	6	JBL and National Office to send monthly reminders to the executive committee to refer to the stakeholder map and send in any updates to the National Office team for updating.	JBL	Closed
Jan-25	35	6	Executive Committee members to let EMA know who is attending the roundtable events set up by the student support champion to ensure that we have people attending all roundtable events.	Executive	Closed
Jan-25	36	7	KHO to send through form from AHEP groups for National Office to check over.	KHO	Ongoing
Jan-25	37	8	JSH to contact IMU who has tentatively volunteered Aberystwyth University for CPD10.	JSH	Complete



Spring 2025 policy update

Quick links

Policy updates for discussion

- Enough self-swab kits
- Industrial action
- Duty of candour
- <u>Higher education mental health implementation taskforce</u>

Policy updates for noting

AMOSSHE policy and research work

- Office for Students' 2025-2030 strategy consultation: AMOSSHE response
- Collating examples of practice in tackling harassment and sexual misconduct

UK legislation and policy updates

• Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

England legislation and policy updates

- Office for Students' new chair announced
- Changes to Disabled Students Allowance

Devolved nations legislation and policy updates

- Medr strategy and planned consultation (Wales)
- Consultation on part-time students and support for disabled students (Scotland)

Policy updates for discussion

Enough self-swab kits

In summer 2024, AMOSSHE were made aware of a not-for-profit organisation giving out self-swab rape kits to students in Bristol. The kits are advertised for an individual to use if they've been raped in order to have DNA evidence of the alleged perpetrator. They claim to freeze half the sample before testing so that the user can have this given to the police as evidence if request¹. The organisation are currently giving out the kits for free to students in Bristol. However, they are currently crowd-funding their business and charge £20 per kit for those outside of Bristol².

In autumn 2024, we were contacted about the self-swab kits by the Department for Education (DfE) who were interested in understanding the scope and impact of the organisation from our membership. We received intel from the DfE that the organisation were branching out to other areas of the UK. Whilst members of the organisation have reached out to other universities, they are not established in these areas as of yet.

¹ Enough. (2025). FAQs. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://myenough.com/kit

² Enough. (2025). Enough DNA kit. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://myenough.myshopify.com/

The following organisations have published statements and advice regarding these self-swab kits which the DfE are signposting to organisations. These are:

- Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine³.
- NHS England (South West)⁴. Joint statement with other organisations including Bristol City Council and The Bridge Sexual Assault Referral Centre.
- NHS inform Scotland have been directing staff and students to the FFLM statement and NHS
 inform information on sexual assault referral centres⁵.

All highlight concerns around how the user and alleged perpetrator's DNA is used and stored. They also list the ways in which victims of rape can report to the police and get help from sexual assault referral centres. The organisation have received media attention from the BBC⁶ and the Guardian⁷. These articles include critics of the organisation, although members have told us that these criticisms do not go far enough.

AMOSSHE have published a couple of resources highlighting this external guidance via our monthly newsletter. The most recent information put out in the newsletter was January 2025⁸. We added the self-swab kits to our February monthly members meeting to understand the impact of the kits on their student community (if at all). Members were concerned that the information available on the organisation's website changes significantly almost on a weekly basis. The terms and conditions also seem to indicate possibility of DNA data being used to develop commercial products.

Members from AMOSSHE South West asked if we'd be putting out a statement reflecting our position on the kits. We've been mentioned by AHUA (Association of Heads of University Administration) as potential collaborators in a joint statement, although we've not been approached yet. We're aware that other organisations have tried to already engage with the organisation, but the organisation do not appear to be interested in changing their approach. The organisation are litigious and have issued cease and desist letters to organisations and universities when they've been criticised in their approach. Members are also concerned that the organisation could take a conversation out of context and use it misleadingly.

³ FFLM. (2024). Position statement 'self-swabbing kits' for survivors of sexual assault or rape. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://fflm.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Joint-Position-statement-on-forensic-self-swab-services-after-sexual-assault-or-rape-with-FAQ-10-09-2024-v3.pdf

⁴ NHS. (2024). News. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://www.england.nhs.uk/south/2024/11/22/joint-advice-on-getting-help-after-rape-and-sexual-assault-and-the-use-of-self-swab-kits/

⁵ NHS. (2025). Turn to SARCS. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.nhsinform.scot/turn-to-sarcs ⁶ BBC. (2025). DIY testing could put rape survivors 'at risk'. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyez8qxk57o

⁷ The Guardian. (2025). 'DIY swab kits? It's better than doing nothing': the controversial scheme to tackle rape on campus. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/16/diy-swab-kits-scheme-campus-rape

⁸ AMOSSHE. (2025). Navigating self-swab rape kits and support networks. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from https://www.amosshe.org.uk/resource/navigating-self-swab-rape-kits-and-support-networks.html

Question for executive:

- Do the executive have any further information on the self-swab kits not noted here?
- Being mindful of the litigious nature of the organisation, our current recommendation is to continue to highlight information about the organisation but not seek to put out a public statement at this time. Does this executive agree with this approach?

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Industrial action

JBL met John Blake, Director for Fair Access and Participation at the Office for Students (OfS), for a meeting in confidence. This was in relation to protecting the student interest in the event of industrial action. They're publishing a response imminently which sets out their expectations for providers before, during and after industrial action. These include developing and implementing contingency plans to minimise disruption to students, provide support to students to help navigate disruption, and to offer compensation to students where suitable redress cannot be offered. If these are not carried out by a provider, the OfS could move to enforcement either at individual or sector level. This includes implementing a condition of registration.

They asked for feedback on this approach from us along with other relevant stakeholders, although they're not looking to change their approach at the present time. JBL consulted the Chairs.

Question for executive:

- JBL and Chairs to provide verbal update on any feedback sent to John Blake.
- What might the implications of this approach be for AMOSSHE members?

Duty of candour

The Westminster government are implementing a statutory duty of candour to public authorities and officials. A duty of candour refers to an open and transparent culture, and is already in place in health and social care settings⁹. The new 'Hillsborough law' will cover government organisations and officials and ensure transparency and honesty during investigations and enquiries¹⁰.

It is likely this approach will be adopted in higher education. The incoming chair for the Office for Students in his pre-appointment interview spoke of considering what a duty of candour might look like in a university setting¹¹. He stated that there's a benefit of doing this for student mental health and for working with bereaved families.

Question for executive:

• What might AMOSSHE's stance on duty of candour be if it was to be introduced formally in the sector?

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⁹ Department of Health & Social Care. (2025). Findings of the call for evidence on the statutory duty of candour. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/findings-of-the-call-for-evidence-on-the-statutory-duty-of-candour/findings-of-the-call-for-evidence-on-the-statutory-duty-of-candour ¹⁰ Institute for Government. (2025). How to legislate for the duty of candour? Retrieved March 15, 2025, from https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/event/legislate-duty-candour

¹¹ Education Committee. (2025). Tuesday 4 March 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025 from https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/cca68d01-5034-4faa-b853-80d20a669696

Higher education mental health and implementation taskforce

JST and JBL are meeting Lawrence Morton, representative from the Department of Education, to discuss the future of the taskforce. They'll be discussing leadership suggestions for the group given that Edward Peck will be stepping down as chair to start his new role at the Office for Students. They'll also be discussing how AMOSSHE could continue to support in the implementation of taskforce outputs.

Other notable updates from the taskforce and sub-groups:

NHS – HE collaboration

The taskforce have produced a guide for HE and NHS leaders. It includes practical information and case studies around good practice in enhancing NHS mental health services for students. They hope this guide will be useful as a framework to inform conversations at a strategic level, particularly around the maintenance and creation of NHS and HE partnership models.

National review of student suicides

The national review of higher education student suicide deaths is due to be published in the next couple of months. They examined incidents of non-fatal self-harm and suspected suicide deaths reported by HE providers for the 2023 to 2024 academic year. This was to identify areas of good practice in the sector and points for improvement. Please note that the following key findings cannot be shared outside the wider executive at this time.

Key findings include:

- A total of 169 incidents from 73 HE providers were reported. This was 107 suspected suicide deaths and 62 incidents of non-fatal self-harm.
- International students accounted for around a quarter of reports (24%).
- 32% of reports identified non-attendance.
- 38% reports mentioned academic problems, with 20% mentioned support to study procedures.
- 70% were known to university support services, often wellbeing services. 47% of reports identified mental health difficulties as a contributing factor. 30% of reports identified a diagnosis of neurodiversity.
- 23% of incidents had occurred in university-managed student accommodation, and 3% on campus.
- Less evidence of postvention support for staff or for student's family.

Recommendations fit into four themes: safety concerns, suicide prevention within university systems, amendments to UUK guidance and safety messages for the wider system.

Update for executive:

- JST / JBL to provide a verbal update from meeting with Lawrence Morton to the wider executive if this takes place prior to the executive meeting.
- JST to provide a verbal update on taskforce outputs and findings to the wider executive.

- What are the executives' thoughts around AMOSSHE's role in the implementation of the taskforce outputs?
- JST, JBL and EMA to continue to monitor taskforce and sub-group updates and circulate with executive and wider membership accordingly

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Policy updates for noting

AMOSSHE policy and research work

HESA consultation

AMOSSHE have signed a letter with other organisations in the sector about the HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) staff record consultation. The letter states we welcome HESA's proposal to widen coverage of the higher education staff record to include technical, professional and operational staff. We also welcome the removal of terminology referring to professional services staff as 'non-academic'.

The other organisations who have signed the letter are:

- AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services)
- AHEP (Association of Higher Education Professionals)
- ASET (The Work Based and Placement Learning Association)
- NADP (National Association of Disability Practitioners)
- UMHAN (University Mental Health Advisers Network)
- CRAC-Vitae (Careers Research & Advisory Centre and the Vitae programme)

The consultation closes on **3 April 2025**. We'll be responding to the consultation on behalf of members. We'll reach out to the wider membership through the newsletter to offer an opportunity to contribute ideas or opinions.

Office for Students' 2025-2030 strategy consultation: AMOSSHE response AMOSSHE responded to the OfS consultation on their proposed 2025 – 2030 strategy¹². Our response to the consultation is publicly available on the AMOSSHE website¹³.

Update for executive:

• The executive committee are free to share with colleagues where appropriate.

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¹² Office for Students. (2024). Consultation on OfS strategy for 2025 to 2030. Retrieved January 22, 2025, from https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-strategy-for-2025-to-2030/

¹³ AMOSSHE. (2025). Office for Students 2025 to 2030 strategy: consultation response. 27 February 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.amosshe.org.uk/resource/office-for-students-2025-to-2030-strategy-consultation-response.html

Collating examples of practice in tackling Office for Students' condition of registration for tackling sexual misconduct and harassment

We received a total of 7 submissions. Majority are detailing their holistic approach to tackling harassment. This has particularly included reporting mechanisms and investigations and support for students.

This is in addition to 12 resources that we already have on the website from CPD events we have hosted in the last two years on tackling harassment and sexual misconduct. We'll be publishing these along with the other submitted examples of practice by the end of April 2025 in a collective resource.

Update for executive:

- The executive are encouraged to advertise this as a resource using social media channels once this goes live.
- We'll be leaving the call for practice open with a rolling deadline for submissions. We encourage executive to submit examples of practice or delegate to colleagues.

UK legislation and policy updates Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

Arif Ahmed, Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom at the Office for Students, published a blog on 27 February 2025 highlighting the key changes to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023¹⁴. Key changes were previously listed in the Winter executive policy update¹⁵. Before the act comes into force, the Office for Students are planning to publish guidance and recommendations for providers to ensure compliance. They're also thinking of ways to promote free speech in higher education, such as sharing examples of best practice and hosting events to encourage resource sharing.

Update for executive:

• EMA to monitor the progress of the Act and circulate updates with members accordingly.

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England legislation and policy updates Office for Students' new chair announced

Professor Edward Peck, previously vice-chancellor at Nottingham Trent University and chair of the higher education mental health and implementation taskforce, has been announced as incoming chair of the Office for Students starting on 7 July 2025¹⁶. He had a pre-appointment hearing with the

¹⁴ Ahmed, A. (2025). Update on Freedom of Speech Act. Office for Students, 27 February 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/update-on-freedom-of-speech-act/

¹⁵ AMOSSHE. (2025). AMOSSHE Executive meeting 31 January 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025.

¹⁶ Gov.uk. (2025). Appointments made: April 2024 to March 2025. Retrieved March 26, 2025, from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-non-executive-appointments/appointments-made-april-2024-to-march-2025

Education committee¹⁷. He wants to explore having a duty of candour in the sector and putting mental health in the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework). Professor Peck stressed the importance of the findings following the sexual misconduct survey for understanding what could be improved in the sector. He also spoke of working with the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism.

Update for executive:

- Edward Peck will be starting the role late Summer 2025¹⁸.
- Edward Peck will give an AMOSSHE National Conference keynote which will be his last commitment before he starts his role at OfS.

Changes to Disabled Students Allowance

The Department for Education have removed non-specialist spelling and grammar software from Disabled Students Allowance funding¹⁹. This is because there are free versions available for students to use. DSA can still be used to fund specialist spelling and grammar software, but this must be justified²⁰.

Update for executive:

• EMA will monitor any further DSA updates and will circulate updates with members accordingly.

Devolved nations legislation and policy updates

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Medr strategy and planned consultation (Wales)

Medr, regulatory body for Wales, have launched their new 2025 to 30 strategy²¹ following their consultation in Autumn 2024. The strategy states it will build a common framework for health,

¹⁷ Education Committee. (2025). Tuesday 4 March 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025 from https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/cca68d01-5034-4faa-b853-80d20a669696

¹⁸ Education Committee. (2025). Appointment of Professor Edward Peck CBE as Chair of the Office for Students. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from

https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/46953/documents/242513/default/

¹⁹ Dickinson, J. (2025). DfE stops funding spelling and grammar software for disabled students. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://wonkhe.com/wonk-corner/dfe-stops-funding-spelling-and-grammar-software-for-disabled-students/

Student Loans Company. (2025). Student support information note. February 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/2070/ssin-spelling-and-grammar-software.pdf
 Medr. (2025). Strategic plan 2025-2030. Retrieved March 17, 2025 from

https://www.medr.cymru/en/strategic-plan/

mental health and well-being. This will involve "regulatory conditions to support learner and staff welfare" ²².

Update for executive:

• EMA to monitor the progress of the mental health framework and any regulatory action and will circulate updates with members accordingly.

General policy update (Scotland)

On 5 March 2025 Graeme Dey, Minister for Higher and Further Education, announced that there will be a consultation on part-time students and support for disabled students²³. This will be launched prior to the summer recess which takes place from 28 June 2025.

Scottish government have sent invites to the delivery group for assessing the implementation of the student mental health action plan. We're not yet represented on this group.

Universities' Scotland have sent out a request that all providers in Scotland fill out the EmilyTest's sexual prevalence survey. It is unclear so far as to their rationale for this approach.

Update for executive:

- EMA to monitor the consultation launch and circulate updates with members accordingly. We will consult with Chairs, Policy and Research Advisory Group and / or Executive on a proposed response.
- JST to pursue membership on the Student Mental Health Action plan delivery group.
- JST is speaking to Universities' Scotland regarding the approach to EmilyTest prevalence survey.

²² Medr. (2025). Medr strategic plan 2025-30 – Consultation response report. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.medr.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Medr-Strategic-Plan-2025-30-Consultation-response-report.pdf

²³ The Scottish Parliament. (2025). Education, Children and Young People Committee [Draft]. Wednesday 5 March 2025. Retrieved March 17, 2025, from https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/ECYP-05-03-2025?meeting=16301&iob=139265#orscontributions M5107E442P778C2665103



AMOSSHE draft budget

Each year a minimum of two iterations of the budget for the following year are presented to the Executive Committee for discussion and approval. The initial budget is developed to provide a current understanding of the financial situation and to provide enough detail for setting the membership fees for approval at the AGM.

The final two iterations of the budget are more detailed with further information gathered, primarily on CPD income / expenditure and service costs.

Areas	Income	Expenditure	TOTAL	Notes
CPD incl	£381,671	£370,776	£10,895	Includes sponsorship related to CPD & Conference
Conference				
Executive	£0	£15,920	£15,920	Includes exec residential venue hire, travel costs and exec meeting costs
Central	£33,810	£232,110	£198,300	Includes staff and all software and outsourced service costs
Membership	£186,031	£0	£186,031	Membership fees based on current fees and current membership
TOTAL	£601,512	£618,806	£17,294	
2024-25 totals	£601, 761	£601,714	£47	

Income

Membership income is based on no increase in subscription fees and AMOSSHE retaining all current members.

CPD income is based on the target income for the current year which we have found challenging to meet. Further work will need to be completed to assess in person venue costs (still to be agreed) and an assessment of attendance at CPD events vs CPD delegate prices to see if we are able to increase the prices slightly to offset the reduced attendance levels.

Central income is made up of sponsorship income from annual agreements, mailouts etc and interest from the bank.

Expenditure

Central costs will continue to be monitored for value for money and some of our subscription and outsourced costs will be assessed for value for money. These costs include costs for outsourced services including an initial quote for HR services and financial management software to support the Executive Director. Costs for all our software has also gone up as well as our accounting services and IT services.

Executive costs are more challenging to manage as a majority of the costs are for travel to executive meetings, which changes depending on who is elected to AMOSSHE. We encourage executive members to book travel and other expenses as early as possible to reduce costs, the National Office can help with booking this.

CPD costs will change depending on venues chosen for Winter and National Conference with the view of keeping AMOSSHE and members costs for attendance as low as possible whilst providing a good delegate experience.

Conclusion

As the above points discuss there are still many areas of the budget that we can look to save costs, however the scale of the savings may be challenging to overcome without concluding that either areas need to be cut or AMOSSHE needs to work on a deficit budget figure for the coming year. The next iteration of the budget due at the June executive meeting will provide more clarity on the position of the budget.

The Executive Committee should discuss the benefits and challenges of a balanced budget vs a deficit budget for the 25-26 year and what the consequences these decisions may have for future budgets of AMOSSHE.

For Executive approval

The Executive Committee to pass the current budget iteration based on the understanding that the Executive Director seeks measures we may wish to take to reduce the deficit within the budget that will be presented at the next meeting.

If decisions need to be made between now and the next meeting in June that the chairs agree those decisions and present the changes to the executive meeting in June.



AMOSSHE Annual General Meeting (AGM) and membership fees

The AMOSSHE AGM will take place on the Wednesday 14 May from 10:00 – 11:00 online and hosted by the Chairs of AMOSSHE.

The executive committee need to agree areas for presentation at the AGM, particularly in relation to anything that needs to be voted on.

Membership fees

The sector is embarking on a financially challenging time at the moment with rising pressure on student services budgets and members sometimes needing justifications for any significant expenditure. AMOSSHE is also facing rising fees for services, inflation, and an increase in national insurance costs.

The table below lists some options for membership fees to consider. The grey column indicates the increased income for the year with the related % increase in prices compared to the current year total income. When considering these it is important to note that the decreases we have seen in membership this year has been related to additional members mainly with only a small decrease in institutions as part of our membership. By increasing the fees we may be in danger of losing institutions and further additional members. Compared to this time last year we have lost 4 organisations of different sizes and 20 additional members. If, for example this were replicated by AMOSSHE increasing the membership fee by 3% this would equate to over £5,000 and therefore effectively wipe out the benefit of raising fees.

Considering the scenarios and the current pressure on the sector the recommendation is not to increase membership fees for the 2025/26 academic year and focus on utilising this narrative to try and retain members and additional members this coming year. We should seek to understand if there is anything else we can do to help support members making the case to secure AMOSSHE membership this year.

Member category	Current members	Current	2% increa	ase	3% increa	se	5% increa	ase	7% increa	ase
Small and Specialist	44	£495	£505	£10	£510	£15	£520	£25	£530	£35
Tier 1	33	£815	£831	£16	£839	£24	£856	£41	£872	£57

Member category	Current members	Current	2% increa	ase	3% increa	se	5% increa	ase	7% increa	ase
Tier 2	57	£1,020	£1,040	£20	£1,051	£31	£1,071	£51	£1,091	£71
Tier 3	42	£1,215	£1,239	£24	£1,251	£36	£1,276	£61	£1,300	£85
Less than 50% HE	0	£715	£729	£14	£736	£21	£751	£36	£765	£50
International	7	£560	£571	£11	£577	£17	£588	£28	£599	£39
Corporate	2	£1,620	£1,652	£32	£1,669	£49	£1,701	£81	£1,733	£113
Non-profit	5	£935	£954	£19	£963	£28	£982	£47	£1,000	£65
Individual	2	£400	£408	£8	£412	£12	£420	£20	£428	£28
Student	1	£62	£63	£1	£64	£2	£65	£3	£66	£4
Additional	414	£110	£112	£2	£113	£3	£116	£6	£118	£8
TOTAL		£ 186,030.70	£189,751.32	£3,721	£ 191,611.63	£5,581	£195,332.24	£9,302	£199,052.85	£13,022

Other proposed AGM agenda items:

- Present the year in review
- Present the 22/23 year end financial figures
- Election results
- Any Other Business

Executive members may recall that in 2024 we ran an extraordinary general meeting to pass the changes to the rules of association and the new membership fees due to the lack of participation in the original meeting and therefore not quorate for making any decisions. This is an ongoing concern for AMOSSHE in being able to approve any changes we wish to make at the meeting. If the executive committee decide to increase membership fees this year the following points have been discussed as potential ways to reduce the risk of not passing AMOSSHE business and increasing attendance at the AGM.

- Ask members to vote on any change in membership fees in advance of the meeting via an ordinary resolution. This would require 50% of eligible voting members to vote on this via an online survey to pass it but we can do this in advance of the official meeting and then use the general meeting to confirm the changes. We would provide a group discussion space online with all the information as well for members to put their questions on the changes and enable AMOSSHE to respond in an area where all members can see the responses.
- Reduce the length of the AGM to 30mins max and use this as an opportunity to confirm the details and provide some information to members on the development of our work and announce the newly elected executive members.

For executive approval

- To agree any changes to the membership fee and how this should be presented to the membership.
- Approve other items on the AGM agenda

AMOSSHE The Student Services Organisation

AMOSSHE CPD planning 2025/26

2025/26 CPD programme structure

In 2025/26 we propose two in-person conferences (Winter and National) and then online half day (morning) events each month (except for September, January and June). A free personal / professional development event webinar series will take place across throughout the year (one per term). The programme will also sponsored webinars as and when sold.

Winter Conference 2026 will be a joint event with EucA (European Universities and Colleges Association), which would attract an extra 50 European delegates. We will run this in the same way as a normal Winter Conference, but the venue will need to have the extra capacity, and some sessions will be led by EucA members. The campus visits the day before (and an extra night's accommodation) are a must for EucA.

Here's the structure:

- Late October 2025: CPD1 (online half day)
- October / November 2025: CPD1A (sponsor webinar)
- November 2025: CPD2.1 (free 90 minute webinar)
- November / early December 2025: CPD3 (online half day)
- January / February 2025: CPD3A (sponsor webinar)
- February 2026: CPD4 (Winter Conference, one day in person)
- March 2026: CPD5 (online half day)
- March 2026: CPD5A (sponsor webinar)
- March / April 2026: CPD2.2 (free 90 minute webinar)
- April 2026: CPD6 (online half day)
- April 2026: CPD6A (sponsor webinar)
- May 2026: CPD7 (online half day)
- May 2026: CPD2.3 (free 90 minute webinar)
- May 2026: CPD7A (sponsor webinar)
- July 2026: CPD8 (National Conference, three days in person)

Questions for the Executive Committee

Do you approve the structure of the events programme for 2025/26?

Event topics for CPD1 and CPD2

We propose these topics for the first (pre-Christmas) events for the Executive to sign off and assign leads for in March 2025:

- (CPD1? Wed 15 October or Thurs 30 October) Student death bereavement, memorials, staff and cohort support, suicide – in light of new guidance about duty of candour, working with families, and links with neurodiversity. We could also pick up on access to means, HEMHIT's report.
- (CPD2? Wed 12 Nov, Thurs 13 Nov or Wed 19 November) Free webinar series focusing on **personal / professional development** (like CPD4 in 2024/25).

Questions for the Executive Committee

Do you approve the topics for the first events of the programme?

Which continuing Executive Members will be the leads for CPD1 and CPD2?

Event topics for the remaining CPD programme

Reviewing delegate feedback, we would like the Executive Committee to decide on topics for CPD3 (online half day before Christmas) and CPD4 (Winter Conference), plus popular choices for the remaining three CPD events (CPD5, CPD6 and CPD7). In the June Executive meeting we can present the chosen topics again, in sequence with potential dates, and assign leads for each event.

For Winter Conference 2026, we propose the theme 'Campus cohesion', to explore belonging for all.

Here are the topics suggested by 2024/25 delegates so far.

Student Services structure / delivery:

- Policies, leadership, team structures, hierarchies.
- Structures in student support services.
- Managing demand with limited resources.
- Working across student learning services.
- Online student support.
- Defining and embedding student partnership and co-creative practice.
- How to increase funding for university initiatives and programmes.

Communications:

- Crisis narrative.
- Compassionate communication practice rather than theory.

Working with academics:

- How to influence academic colleagues.
- Training academic and perhaps other colleagues to have compassionate conversations.
- Academic support international students, postgraduate specific maybe.
- Training the academic tutor.
- Relationships between professional and academic staff.

Support for specific student groups:

- Commuter students.
- Supporting students struggling financially.
- First generation students.
- Mature students.
- Student diversity.
- Safeguarding adults.

Student engagement:

- Engagement monitoring and proactive reach out.
- Making student support more accessible and increasing student engagement with support.
- More on belonging would be fantastic.

Disability:

- Supporting students with reasonable adjustments.
- Disability support.
- Disability operations / reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments:

- How have people changed their systems and approaches and what have they learned?
 Sharing the successes and pitfalls.
- How can Student Services can take the lead?
- How to bridge the gap between schools and HEIs. Schools are woefully behind and underprepared for talking to disabled students about starting university.

Mental health:

- Insights from colleagues who are working towards the UMHC.
- Mental health campaigns.

Working with the NHS:

• A very interesting point was made regarding recognition of patterns within the NHS, now being seen within HE. I think this is a good point and also expands to that Duty of Care conversation, with NHS services being stretched, our support services are being pushed more and more to hold higher risk, more complex cases and pre-trial therapy is being requesting increasingly, due to SASV/DADV cases. The external services that offer pre-trial therapy are also stretched and it is limited to who can offer this/is offering this. Unfortunately, one of those services in our area has now closed. It'd be interesting to hear from an institution that has pre-trial therapy, if any do? Whether there could be something around this? I can foresee it being something that keeps growing.

Careers / employability:

• Employability and the workings of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme.

Tackling harassment:

- I would like the sector to consider both sides of the sexual misconduct topic reported students, supporting the accused, lack of a fair process, social ostracism etc.
- Dealing with student behaviour where it constitutes a criminal offence and how to manage where the injured party wants to remain anonymous but want us to do something.
- Encouraging student participation in training, developing training for both staff and students.
- I would like to see an event around student conduct policies and procedures as it seems a
 long time since conduct has been on the map, yet it is much needed as it is often overlooked
 but the current environment in my opinion dictates that we should be reviewing this area
 with so many changes and new guidance issued for example around sexual violence and
 harassment and expectations on how the sector responds robustly to this.

Requests for another session on the E6 condition, including:

- A longer session on E6 in June / July would be very helpful.
- I think the OfS should look at all the questions posed and frame a session that is just around answering the key themes.
- Mandatory student training and to get clarity about expectations from higher education providers and guidance, such as what happens to students who don't complete the training are we able to withhold progression or certification? Also, clarity around online training and making it interactive when it's not a live training.
- Other E6 events but with other organisations (such as Eversheds etc.).
- It would be great if you could cover this again but in a different format. Or it would be good to perhaps have a talk / demo from some of the providers (who are also AMOSSHE sponsors).
- E6 Condition when decisions are made by OfS on clarity on appropriate resources for case management. And evidence on suitable training.
- This in more detail would be helpful, or perhaps standalone webinars on each of the key areas of the condition.
- Perhaps a stand-alone session on condition E6 training requirements.
- More advice on 'credible and meaningful' training and what that looks like.
- I would like to see core questions answered in depth with more advice given.

Professional development:

- Tips for career progression.
- Applying empathy and self-compassion to our leadership roles (e.g. Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead" principles) - especially how we adopt leadership principles and innovations to the Higher Education environment.
- Leadership.

Self-care:

- Support for managers staying well in the face of pressure.
- Burnout in student support.

Questions for the Executive Committee

- Do you approve the topic for the Winter Conference 2026?
- Which topics should we prioritise for CPD3, CPD5, CPD6 and CPD7?



Papers for noting

CPD progress update

Here's a summary of the CPD (continuing professional development) events programme for 2024/25 to date.

CPD1 – (partner webinar) didn't take place.

CPD2 – 'Reasonable adjustments: how can Student Services take the lead?' on Thursday 31 October 2024. Half day online event.

- 120 total attendees, 106 paying registrants (97 budgeted), 10 free places.
- 0 sponsors (0 budgeted).

CPD3 – 'Building a holistic approach to tackling harassment' on Thursday 14 November 2024. Half day online event.

- 75 total attendees, 62 paying registrants (63 budgeted), 7 free places.
- 2 sponsors (0 budgeted).

CPD4 – 'Student Services leadership: self-care, team support and professional development' on Wednesday 20 November 2024, Wednesday 27 November 2024 and Wednesday 4 December 2024. Three part webinar series.

- 115 total attendees, 0 paying registrants (0 budgeted), all free places. (part 1 attendees: 101; part 2 attendees: 82; part 3 attendees: 84).
- 1 sponsor (0 budgeted).

CPD4A – 'Tackling harassment: insights from the Office for Students' on Wednesday 29 January 2025. Free partner webinar with the Office for Students.

CPD5 – 'AMOSSHE Winter Conference 2025: communities and collaboration' on Friday 7 February 2025. Full day in-person (London) with pre-conference activities.

- 152 total attendees, 107 paying registrants (112 budgeted), 45 free places.
- 12 sponsors (14 budgeted).

CPD6 – (partner webinar) didn't take place.

CPD7 – 'Understanding pastoral support models: strategies and methods' on Wednesday 5 March 2025. Half day online event.

- 62 total attendees, 52 paying registrants (63 budgeted), 10 free places.
- 0 sponsors (0 budgeted).

Here are the remaining 2025 events.

CPD8 – 'Beyond the chatbot: transforming student support with Al' on Thursday 27 March 2025. Free partner webinar with Galvia Al.

CPD9 – 'Expect the unexpected: supporting students out of hours' on Wednesday 2 April 2025. Half day online event. Open for booking.

CPD10 – 'Impactful Student Services in a challenging financial environment' on Thursday 15 May 2025. Half day online event. Open for booking.

CPD11 - (partner webinar) TBC.

CPD12 – 'AMOSSHE National Conference 2025' from Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 July 2025. In-person, Birmingham. Call for session proposals open. Open for booking.

EDI and Sustainability groups

The group decided that we needed to shift from looking at Equality to Equity as this is more forward-thinking. This will be reflected in the AMOSSHE EDI policy and any future work. They'll also be creating some checklists for workstreams and projects to consider when implementing new activities.

The Sustainability group have agreed to look at a set of principles by which AMOSSHE can consider our work to ensure we are being as sustainable as possible, some of which will be reflected on considerations for the membership such as travel to conferences etc. Future meetings will also reflect and focus on the <u>Global Sustainability Goals</u> where we will benchmark what we currently do against these and where we may be able to identify changes we can make. A link to the groups current terms of reference is here: Sustainability Strategy Group TOR

Communications activity update

Here are some of the current efforts and communications initiatives that address our challenges with the target audiences:

Members (engaging in a task orientated basis due to workload and other factors)

- We've given members multiple ways to engage with our 2025 to 2030 strategy. This includes
 a presentation in-person at our Winter Conference 2025, a video recording of the
 presentation and PDF, and an interactive game. The game is located on our website, giving
 members opportunity to understand how the strategy will support them in their role
- We've promoted videos on our website of members' perspectives on AMOSSHE related to strategic aims. These are designed to reflect the diversity of roles in the membership.
- We've opened up our call for proposals for our new online, interactive, member-led project (e-zine) to enable members to submit and showcase their work.

Government bodies (AMOSSHE being overlooked, prioritise working on larger projects)

- Emma continues to assist with research conducted by Ben McCarthy and UMHAN on behalf
 of the organisation for HEMHIT. We've invited Ben and Edward Peck to speak at National
 Conference.
- We've got a regular contact meeting with the Department for Education for information sharing.
- We've also sent a letter to Baroness Jacqui Smith (Minister for Skills) to request a meeting to discuss our work.

Policy makers (often involved AMOSSHE in a reactive basis)

- We're releasing our examples of practice in tackling harassment and sexual misconduct by the end of April. This will be useful for those looking to improve their practice in this area.
- We signed a joint letter with other membership organisations in support of the HESA consultation into changing how staff are recorded.

Finance management report

The membership report can be accessed here: Finance management report Feb 25

The figures currently show a loss vs budget of over £63k. This however is largely due to profiling differences for National Conference venue deposit timings (£46.6k) and paying annual costs for software and accountancy fees which are spread across the year (£6k). The final payment for the new website has been accounted for in this year (£5k) as well.

In terms of income you can see we are on or above target for a number of areas apart from CPD income which is a little behind at the present time. I am not sure we will make up the difference within the final few events. We may may up some of the difference through sponsorship income by the end of the year but this is not guaranteed.

AMOSSHE is still in a good position at this stage we have around 7 months of operating costs, this means outside our policy of 6 months operating costs we have just over £30k available. This does not include any monies in the current account, at the end of the year we may be in a position to move some of this back into reserves.

Membership update

Membership level	January 2025	March 2025
Small and specialist	44	46
Tier 1 organisation	30	33
Tier 2 organisation	56	57
Tier 3 organisation	37	42
Additional member	358	393
International organisation	7	8
International additional member	9	10
Corporate organisation	1	2
Corporate additional member	1	10
Individual member	5	5
Non-profit organisation	3	3
Non-profit additional member	1	1

Student member	0	1
Total organisations	178	191
Total members	805	884

These organisations have joined the membership:

- The Northern School of Art (Small and specialist)
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (Small and specialist)
- Abertay University (Tier 1)
- The University of Greater Manchester (Tier 1)
- University of Worcester (Tier 1)
- University of South Wales (Tier 2)
- De Montfort University (Tier 3)
- Durham University (Tier 3)
- Leeds Beckett University (Tier 3)
- University of Central Lancashire (Tier 3)
- University of Warwick (Tier 3)
- Unite Students (Corporate)

As noted in the previous meeting we still had some outstanding payments, these have been chased and finalised which has enabled us to reinstate a majority of members who had lapsed.

GDPR update

41 members have said that they do not want to receive emails, or they haven't yet set whether they want to receive emails or not – previously 59.

177 members have said that they do not want to share their details with other members for networking purposes (including Jiscmail and the online lists) – previously 152.

188 members in total have used one or more of these settings to unsubscribe – previously 159.