

Dear Aylwyn and members of the SUBU board,

Thank you for letter and I fully appreciate your role in ensuring that SUBU's financial costs are transparent, proportionate and demonstrably beneficial to your members. While I have answered your questions as best I can below, I would really value the opportunity to speak directly to your board on this matter as so I can more easily address your concerns and provide the required clarity.

1. Expenditure on Investigations and "Other costs"

In May 2022, NUS commissioned Rebecca Tuck KC to lead an independent [investigation](#) looking at recent allegations of antisemitism as well as historic matters and broader culture. NUS worked closely with the Union of Jewish Students throughout.

We are confident that the investigations have been thorough, fair and conducted within the strictest parameters of policy and law throughout. There is no room for doubt that this process has been as robust as it gets.

The KC's report gave us the confidence to tackle antisemitism head on, ensuring that Jewish students feel safe and welcome within NUS and in every corner of our movement. It contained a number of recommendations to strengthen NUS's ability to deal with risk, all of which we have taken forward and many of which address your concerns.

i ..A full explanation of the nature of this expenditure, including confirmation of how much, if any, of these sums were used in relation to the Dallali case and related investigations.

NUS UK spent around £1m on the investigation and subsequent implementation of the Action Plan between 2022 and 2024. Whilst this is a significant cost, it is important to balance it with the significant positive impact that the work has had on NUS and SUs.

The 'return' on that expenditure has been massive including:

- The long-term protection of our movement from being destroyed by antisemitism
- Step change in knowledge, skill and practice in NUS and in SUs
- Practical information, guidance, tools, resources, and training for NUS and SUs

The value of this work has been brought into sharp focus as NUS and SUs navigated increased campus tensions as violence and war escalated in Israel and Palestine since October 8th 2023.

For legal reasons, we are unable to comment on any activities (financial or otherwise) related to the previous NUS President. I am only able to provide the following statement;

“We are pleased to confirm that a settlement has been reached between Shaima Dallali and the National Union of Students, bringing an end to the proceedings before the Employment Tribunal. The terms of that settlement are confidential between the parties and shall not be disclosed.

The parties would like to make the following things clear:

NUS accepts that pro-Palestinian and anti-Zionist beliefs may be protected beliefs, as may pro-Zionist beliefs.

As a private individual Ms Dallali is, and as President of NUS she was, entitled to hold protected beliefs.

As has been noted repeatedly in the media, NUS was very concerned by a tweet that was written by Ms Dallali when she was a teenager, before she was even a student, in 2012. Ms Dallali has accepted that while it was not her intention, the tweet was antisemitic. Both parties accept that Ms Dallali has repeatedly apologised for that tweet.

Throughout this matter, Ms Dallali has suffered truly horrific abuse, which has included death threats, threats of sexual assault and flagrant Islamophobia. This is wholly unacceptable, and NUS categorically condemn it.

Ms Dallali now has the right to move on with her life and her career free from harassment or abuse.”

ii Furthermore, we seek assurance that robust financial controls and governance mechanisms are in place to avoid such extraordinary liabilities in the future.

Following publication of the report, the NUS UK board have identified key risks through a robust risk management processes, involving the wider NUS Group to ensure consistency of management. As part of the annual business planning process the major strategic and operational risks that NUS UK faces and the ways in which they are being monitored, managed and mitigated, are assessed by the Board. Failure to respond appropriately to compliance requirements; failure to rehabilitate our image with wider stakeholders; and inadequate governance arrangements leading to poor decision making and lack of oversight, were identified as key related risks and you can find further information in our [Annual Report 2024](#).

Our [Antisemitism Action Plan](#), based on Rebecca Tuck KC’s recommendations includes a number of commitments to ensure robust risk management such as an enhanced candidate check process; strengthened governance; and establishing an antisemitism advisory panel to ensure effective oversight of delivery. Progress against the plan can be found [here](#).

Our new candidate preparation process has been in place since 2023 and was introduced in our 2024 NUS Full Time Officer elections. We produced a guidance [note](#)

for SU's in line with our approach which details good governance and how risk is now managed in elections.

2. Return on Investment for Member Unions

NUS UK strives to ensure unparalleled return on investment for members, having sharpened our focus in recent years to allocate maximum resource to national change making that will deliver tangible and widely felt benefits to students' lives. We have also redesigned our democracy to ensure it accurately reflects the priorities of our member unions and students' directly, as well recognising the national context; opportunities and challenges for winning. This has led to four campaign priorities over 2025/26; student funding, transport, international students' rights and trans rights, alongside strategic priorities to build a more powerful student movement.

i. Campaign and policy successes over the last 24 months that have achieved national change students.

Key wins over the past two years include;

- A 3.1% increase to the maintenance loan, representing a **£1.2 million uplift for SUBU students**
- A 34% increase to the apprentice minimum wage, accounting for a **£2.2million pay rise** for SUBU apprentices
- Winning votes at 16 increasing electoral power for students and young people
- Student protections limiting early sign-on and rent up front in the Renters Rights Bill
- Reintroducing targeted maintenance grants for the poorest students, which stand to **benefit up to 2900 SUBU students.**
- Saved the Graduate Route Visa for international students in 2024, so over **2600 SUBU students** can continue to access it.
- Organised students to flip 21 seats at the 2024 General Election

A detailed paper on impact and value for SUBU and member unions accompanies this letter.

ii. Any future plans or reforms that aim to enhance accountability, value for money, and strategic alignment with students' unions' priorities.

Alongside the reforms to our accountability and governance outlined in 1) there are a number of strategic developments to maximise benefit for member unions.

Since 2020 NUS UK and NUS Charity have operated under separate but complementary strategic plans but in August 2024 the Boards instigated an organisational renewal process to enable all parts of NUS to achieve more for our

membership by working more closely together. The three areas of focus of organisational renewal are; excellence, reputation and growth. Specific goals within this shared strategy include

- Winning major shifts in post-16 education across Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England towards an accessible, lifelong system that prioritises social justice
- Developing SUs so that 80% of students in post-16 education have access to a powerful local and national students' union
- Build new business and infrastructure around data, partnerships, and discounts that delivers significant income to SUs and NUS, and builds political power through engagement
- Build a politically powerful, mobilised and collective UK youth & student movement that shapes national and local policies

We will be consulting members to shape how they engage with this strategy at [Strategy Exchange](#) on 3-4 December in Belfast and would love to see SUBU senior managers be part of this conversation.

I hope this information provides some clarity and reassurance for the SUBU Board, and we would be pleased to discuss any of the matters raised directly with you at a future board meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Kat Stark