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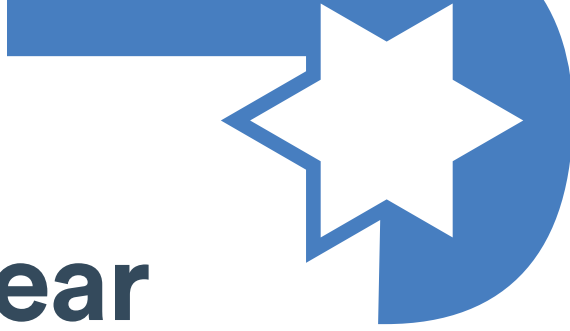
Annual Review 2016/2017

Our year...
In words.
In pictures.
In numbers.

UJS | UNION OF
JEWISH
STUDENTS

Registered charity number 313503 (Bnai Brith Hillel Foundation)

UJS | THE VOICE
OF JEWISH
STUDENTS



**“Over the past year
Jewish students
have grown stronger
and stronger.”**

Josh Seitler, UJS President 2016-17

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Looking back... and forward

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Looking back...

**Josh Seitler, UJS President
2016-17**

I can't believe I am writing this at the end of the 2016/17 year. It feels like I've only just started – and now it's the end of my time as UJS President, and the close of our Union's 98th chapter.

This time last year, people looked at Jewish students with pity. There was concern about antisemitism on campus, worry that anti-Israel movements were growing in strength and a negative tone around Jewish students' experiences on campus.

I am so proud to be able to say with confidence that a year later, campus is not just a safe space for Jewish students. It's better than that: Jewish students continue to thrive on a daily basis. Up and down the UK, Jewish students are pioneering new initiatives, from Antisemitism Awareness Week in London to innovative pro-Israel campaigns

in Scotland, with interfaith, social action and so much more in between. Campus is buzzing with activity and Jewish students are leading so much of it. New J-Socs are starting and more Jewish students are standing up and fighting for what they believe in.

UJS is only as strong as the students we represent, and over the past year Jewish students have grown stronger and stronger. There have been tough times on campus over the last year and we have come out fighting.

I was advised by a former President to aim to leave UJS in a better place than when I started. Thanks to the incredible UJS team that I have been privileged to lead and the thousands of Jewish students across the UK who have worked tirelessly for others – and who have given you a glimpse of their stories within this Annual Review – I can safely say that we have achieved that goal.

I cannot wait to see what next year will bring and I want to say thank you to everyone who has helped to ensure that Jewish students can do more Jewish things across the UK.

...and forward

**Josh Holt, UJS President
2017-18**

Since Jewish students put their faith in me to lead our union back in December, I have been itching to start delivering for Jewish students and I am so excited to get started.

The past year has not been without its challenges to our community, but thanks to the work of the dedicated team of 2016/17, Jewish students now find themselves in a far stronger position. It is my honour to be able to start my term from this place, building on what has been achieved and working to deliver my mandate. I am looking forward to ensuring our union is as inclusive as possible, empowering Jewish students across the country, widening the scope of opportunities available, and ensuring we can express our convictions loudly and proudly. J-Socs are at the core of our union, and I cannot wait to work with them, helping to make Jewish life on campus the most amazing it can possibly be.

Our year in numbers

360

activists benefitted from UJS leadership training and development opportunities in Europe, Israel and the UK.

350

student Labour Club members were trained in identifying and combatting antisemitism, following reports of antisemitism within the Oxford University Labour Club.

6,000

students engaged in our 'Bridges not Boycotts' campaign that ran concurrently to a week of anti-Israel hostility in February. On campuses from Exeter to Manchester and on social media, 'Bridges not Boycotts' offered dialogue and discussion as an alternative to divisiveness and intimidation.

3,500

students, university staff and local community members, including Jewish people and those of other faiths, cultures and backgrounds, attended one of 38 J-Soc Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations this year.

60

students ran in local and national elections, including full- and part-time leadership roles within their Students Unions and the National Union of Students. 45 were successful and have already begun representing their peers, electing new NUS leadership and passing a range of policy including combatting antisemitism in the student movement at a national level.

6,576

students celebrated Shabbat and Jewish festivals at events directly supported by UJS. Together with campus partners, our J-Socs hosted thousands more community celebrations, including Purim parties, Shavuot learning nights and Chanukah carnivals.

4,943

Jewish students strengthened their relationships with Israel through activities that celebrated the vibrancy of Israeli culture and heritage, grappled with the challenges of the region, and allowed students to connect in ways that they found personally meaningful. Educational and social events across the country included lectures, conferences, concerts, Yom Ha'atzmaut barbecues, film screenings and discussions, and meeting with Israeli nonprofits and Jewish and Arab activists.

3,825

students benefitted from educational opportunities provided by UJS, including campus sessions, keynote speakers and scholarships to Limmud and March of the Living.

1,450

people engaged with our Reclaim mental health campaign and Liberation Conference that created safe spaces for those of marginalised identities, including disabled, LGBT+ and women students across digital and physical platforms.

772

Jewish students donated their time, money, preloved possessions and even their stem cells to deserving causes this year.

3,050

students participated in peer-led interfaith initiatives throughout the year, from panels and discussion groups in Bristol and London to celebrating Shabbat and Iftar together in Birmingham and Cambridge.

120

potential lifesavers were recruited to the Anthony Nolan register by Jewish student volunteers through our partnership with the national blood cancer charity, now in its fifth year.

Championing diverse Jewish identities

Natasha Zack, Leeds J-Soc

“My experience with Reclaim was very rewarding. It has been a really good way of speaking up, as well as meeting other people who are as passionate about mental health positivity as I am. Reclaim has been such an amazing project and helped bring people together. Mental health is becoming a much bigger issue for students as we are put under so much pressure, so our generation needs to do as much as we can to make it easy to talk about mental health – and Reclaim definitely does that!”

“I am delighted that UJS’ brilliant Reclaim campaign is entering its second year. For too long, mental illness has been treated as a taboo subject and there is no exception within the Jewish community. I am incredibly proud that UJS is at the forefront of this fight against stigma. The positive impact of this hard work will be felt not only by students, but by families and friends as well. I look forward to seeing the campaign’s success continue.”

Luciana Berger MP, President of the Labour Campaign for Mental Health and ex-Shadow Minister for Mental Health



Aim: To raise awareness of mental health issues that students face, statistically proven to be on the rise at present, and play our part in erasing the stigma.

Action: We ran our second annual Reclaim week, engaging students concurrently on digital and physical platforms. A dedicated website hosted students’ blogs and vlogs, giving them a way to voice their own experiences, whilst experienced speakers visited J-Socs across the country to facilitate conversations about awareness of mental health issues, how to support each other and how to practice self care.

Result: Award-winning mental health campaigner Jonny Benjamin OBE addressed 120 students at a Friday Night Dinner hosted by Birmingham J-Soc, speaking about his personal journey tackling mental health issues. Events were also held at Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham and London J-Socs, reaching over 300 students in total. Across the website, campus-based events and our Liberation Conference, over 700 people engaged with Reclaim. We received tens of emails from students expressing their gratitude for the campaign, saying that it had empowered them to speak up or to feel like they were not alone.

Educating ourselves and others

Ilan Fisher, City and Cass J-Soc

“March of the Living was straining, complex and uplifting. Engaging with the Holocaust, the issues it raises, the sheer magnitude and the unbelievable complexity is a journey. What I will take from this experience is perspective of how little I know, of how much was lost and that there is still so much that needs to be done to remember the Holocaust. I would like to thank UJS and the Sir Martin & Lady Esther Gilbert Scholarship for facilitating my journey to Poland. I hope to take what I have learnt and developed over this week and remember the past, to shape the future.”

Aim: To provide a diverse range of educational opportunities, allowing students to critically explore and engage with Jewish history, culture, texts and society.

Action: We offered a variety of multi-day trips, day-long conferences and shorter campus-based sessions, aiming to cover as wide a range of topics as possible to ensure that there was something for everyone.

Result: We provided full or partial scholarships to Limmud and March of the Living for 33 students, facilitated Lunch and Learn sessions on campuses in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and hosted our second annual Liberation Conference, educating about the diversity of Jewish students' identities. The 12 students who attended Limmud on UJS scholarships were able to learn from their peers and run sessions for others, passing on the benefits of their educational opportunities. Likewise, UJS supported J-Socs in hosting a record 38 Holocaust Memorial Day events that reached a total of 3,500 people, ensuring that Jewish students are not only engaging in educational opportunities themselves but are reaching out to educate others too. Finally, 17 Sabbatical Officers from Students' Unions around the country visited Poland with UJS and the Holocaust Educational Trust.

Contributing to the world around us

Boaz Goldwater and Gabi Mendelsohn, Leeds J-Soc

“As co-chairs of the Leeds J-Soc Ball committee, we gathered our whole Jewish student community together for a fun night that also helped us to raise awareness and funds for a really important cause. Knowing that we have made a difference to others by raising £10,000 for a mental health charity is a fantastic feeling.”



Aim: To encourage Jewish students who are not only creating and strengthening their own campus communities, but are also actively contributing to the world around them.

Action: With a J-Soc Officer partly dedicated to assisting the development of social action initiatives, we provided funding and support for students to get involved in pre-existing social action initiatives and to create their own, according to their passions.

Result: Over 350 students got involved in Mitzvah Day on campus, our Valentine's Day 'Give Your Heart Out' campaign for Save a Child's Heart, the UJS Great Jewish Cookoff that raised funds for the Trussell Trust, and local J-Soc initiatives. Jewish student volunteers also registered 120 potential lifesavers to the Anthony Nolan register as part of our ongoing partnership, which includes a recruitment drive at UJS Summit, the annual national leadership training weekend; J-Soc recruitment events on campuses across the country throughout the year; and Jewish students supporting Anthony Nolan's recruitment drives at NUS Conference each year. David Gould, a Leeds J-Soc graduate, donated his stem cells in March after signing up to the Anthony Nolan register at a J-Soc drive six years ago.

Standing up nationally

Izzy Lenga, Birmingham J-Soc

“UJS empowers students like me by equipping us with the tools to make change for ourselves. I always knew I could make a difference, but I couldn’t do it on my own – logistically, financially or emotionally. UJS supported me to be vocal about the issues that Jewish students face and to successfully run to represent my peers on a national scale. All the hurdles placed in my way were overcome thanks to guidance from UJS. When times get tough, it’s easy to lose sight of the goal. But being part of a national union is like having a family. Just knowing UJS is at the other end of the phone helps me to face challenges head on, and as long as they are there to support Jewish students like me, we’ll keep on going.”



Aim: To equip and empower Jewish students to stand up and represent their peers, including their fellow Jewish students as well as those of all faiths, cultures and backgrounds, at all levels.

Action: We offered training opportunities at various points throughout the academic year for Jewish students who chose to engage in their Students’ Unions or other representative bodies. Jewish students running in local or national elections through their Students’ Unions received further support from the UJS team, as did the students who were elected as delegates to NUS Conference to represent their peers from their places of study.

Result: 60 Jewish students stood for election in full- or part-time leadership roles within the National Union of Students (NUS) and their Students’ Unions. Some of these students were elected as delegates to NUS Conference 2017, where they campaigned and spoke on a range of motions, including working with allies to secure NUS’s commitment to tackle antisemitism within the student movement. Additionally, Izzy Lenga of Birmingham J-Soc was elected Vice President (Welfare) of NUS at the Conference.

Nurturing tomorrow's leaders

Lauren Keiles, Leeds J-Soc

“Through opportunities that UJS gave me, I’ve met inspirational Jewish leaders ranging from politicians to social activists. It’s been invaluable, motivating me to become a leader in our Jewish community in order to make positive change on the issues I’m passionate about, like interfaith work on campus, as well as campaigning for gender and denominational inclusivity in our community. Meeting international Jewish student leaders from cultures as varied as India and Russia has allowed me to witness the positive power of global Jewish student activism, and I can’t wait to see where we’ll go next.”



Aim: To nurture and empower Jewish students of all affiliations to be the leaders of the next generation.

Action: We provided leadership training for 257 students at events throughout the year including our UJS Summit Shabbaton, Time to Lead one-day conference, Activist Training Weekend and Manhigut, our flagship leadership trip to Israel. A further 33 students received UJS’ support to attend leadership development opportunities around the world, including the New York University and World Union of Jewish Students Global Leadership programme; the World Jewish Congress in New York; the American Jewish Committee Global Forum in Washington DC; and the European Union of Jewish Students’ delegation to the European Parliament in Brussels.

Result: The students who have benefitted from these opportunities are taking leadership roles in a huge range of areas. They are co-ordinating local and national campaigns against BDS, creating communities, celebrating Jewish festivals in far-flung cities, building relationships with other faith societies on campuses, challenging antisemitism, championing inclusivity, pioneering social action initiatives and shaping the world around them in so many more ways.

Fighting and defeating BDS

Gabriella Soffer, City and Cass J-Soc

“For my first 3 years of university, I only experienced positivity towards my Judaism and affiliation to Israel. However, in my fourth year, there was a constant barrage of anti-Israel (and often antisemitic) activity. At times, this felt very isolating but it was exceptionally reassuring to be able to reach out to UJS, who guided me in defeating BDS motions and curbing the aggressive anti-Israel tide on campus. On multiple occasions UJS went above and beyond to ensure that our actions worked for all the Jewish students on our campus, of varying political and religious backgrounds. This enabled us along with our friends of other religions, faiths and backgrounds to defeat BDS motions at City – not once, but twice this year!”



Aim: To challenge the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement wherever it arises on UK campuses, as part of our wider activity promoting fair, balanced, respectful dialogue and discussion surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict, and to ensure that Jewish students feel safe on their campuses.

Action: We supported Jewish students like Gabriella at City, University of London, the University of Bath, the University of Manchester and Dublin, as well as allies in Ulster, to defeat BDS motions in their Students Unions. We also ran a two week campaign, 'Bridges not Boycotts', on digital and physical platforms, to help Jewish students raise the profile of coexistence initiatives as alternatives to the divisive and hostile BDS movement on campuses.

Result: Using the campaigning resources, assistance in research and training in speechwriting and debating provided by UJS throughout the year, Jewish students, peers and allies successfully defeated four BDS motions this year. This achievement goes hand-in-hand with the 'Bridges not Boycotts' campaign which reached more than 6,000 students through a combination of campus-based events and online blogs and resources.

Strengthening our multifaceted relationships with Israel

Itamar Rashkovsky, Manchester J-Soc and Lauren Good, Middlesex J-Soc

“Each artistic contributor amongst our [Incubator] group was able to draw upon different meanings in their work and this opened my mind to the innumerable ways in which British Jews understand their relationship with Israel. This was a beautiful way for us to express our emotions towards Israel. I cherished the opportunity to have discussions with different contributors as it allowed us to expand and develop our own ideas and works.”



“Participating in Incubator allowed me to explore my own identity as a progressive Jew and a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, as well as my ever-changing and evolving relationship with Israel, through my creative passions and talents. The works I produced depict my belief that Israel’s existence is imperative for Jewish people of all backgrounds, as a diverse and inclusive society. I was honoured to be able to give back to the community by showing my work at ‘Making Connections’, the Incubator exhibition and I would like to say thank you for the opportunity.”

Aim: To provide opportunities for students to strengthen and enhance their relationships with Israel from cultural and religious angles, including art, food, travel, music, sport and more.

Action: We led, created, supported or facilitated a whopping 225 events on 35 campuses throughout the year, including shakshuka workshops, film screenings, Israeli speakers, Yom Ha’atzmaut barbecues, student-led conferences and more. We also hosted six national events: a concert by Israeli musicians David Broza and Miri Awad; the year-long Incubator programme and its final exhibition; a student bus to support Israeli football team Hapoel Be’er Sheva when they played against Southampton; a talk by Hadassah hospital’s medical clown about the innovative paramedical technique pioneered by his team; and a dance showcase featuring Israeli and British student performers together.

Result: The campus-based and national events were attended by just over 12,000 students, all of whom explored and celebrated their multifaceted relationships with Israel from personal standpoints and in the ways that they connected to the most.

Financial review

This year we have honed our well-established events to run them more effectively from a logistics, marketing and financial perspective, while simultaneously delivering new national events and campaigns to inspire and engage Jewish students nationally.

UJS Summit, UJS Student Awards, leadership trips to Israel and elsewhere, Friday night and festival meals, bringing inspiring speakers to campus and Israel engagement are all examples of flagship activities and events that were more successful, based on higher student attendance and positive student feedback.

We also witnessed the positive impact of four J-Soc officers compared to two in previous years, in terms of wider and more regular student engagement. We have visited more campuses and helped to launch two new J-Socs this year. Our loyal donors have continued to support us, and we have been successful in winning new donors, including new patrons, friends, trusts and foundations.

The hard work by our trustees and staff involved in fundraising has been rewarded, with total annual income, including grants from our partner charities, expected to increase by 10% to c.£875,000.

However, our total costs have risen by more than this and therefore we anticipate an increased deficit this year in excess of £100,000. This is because we incurred expenditure on some large one-off projects, we have received a far higher proportion of ring fenced grants, and we have been required to make additional investment following some unique challenges on campus. We continue to work hard to secure additional funding for our core activities. Notwithstanding this, our expected deficit will be far below the deficit recorded in 2013 of £650,000. Our expenditure is also focused in the right place; the proportion of our spend on students through programmes and student services has risen to 77% of total spend this year.

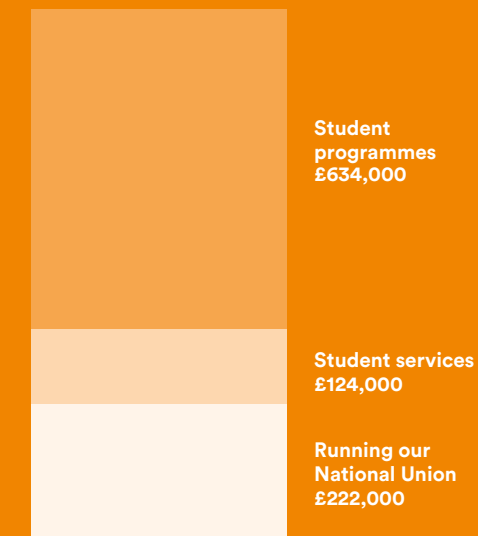
In summary, UJS remains the go-to, umbrella provider for all Jewish students on campus, with the widest reach and range of activities. We will continue our successful work while remaining mindful of costs. We anticipate a substantial reduction in the deficit next year based on current spending levels and anticipated income.

The charts below show the breakdown of our programme costs and total estimated expenditure for 2016/17.

Student programmes



Expenditure for the year



Thank you to everybody who made this year possible and such a success. We would be unable to achieve what we have without such strong support from the community.

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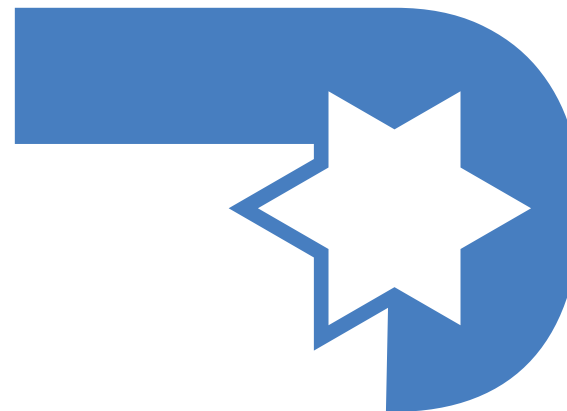
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