



# Elections Playback 2023

Charlotte Britton-Stevens

Union Development Project Manager &  
Second in Command of Elections

# The Elections Support Service

# What we did in 22/23

**Returning Officer** for 150 students' union elections

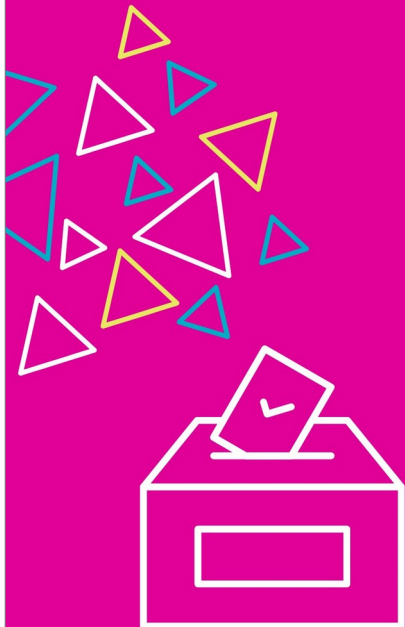
- 36 in Autumn 2022 & 114 in Spring 2023 (busy!)
- DROs rated us 8.2/10 (very satisfied)
- 5 Development Webinars & 15 Triage Drop-ins

## **Surveys**

- Elections Survey (76 SU responses)
- Candidate Demographic Survey (141 candidates from 12 SUs)

# 2023 Elections Report

## Annual Elections Report 2022-23



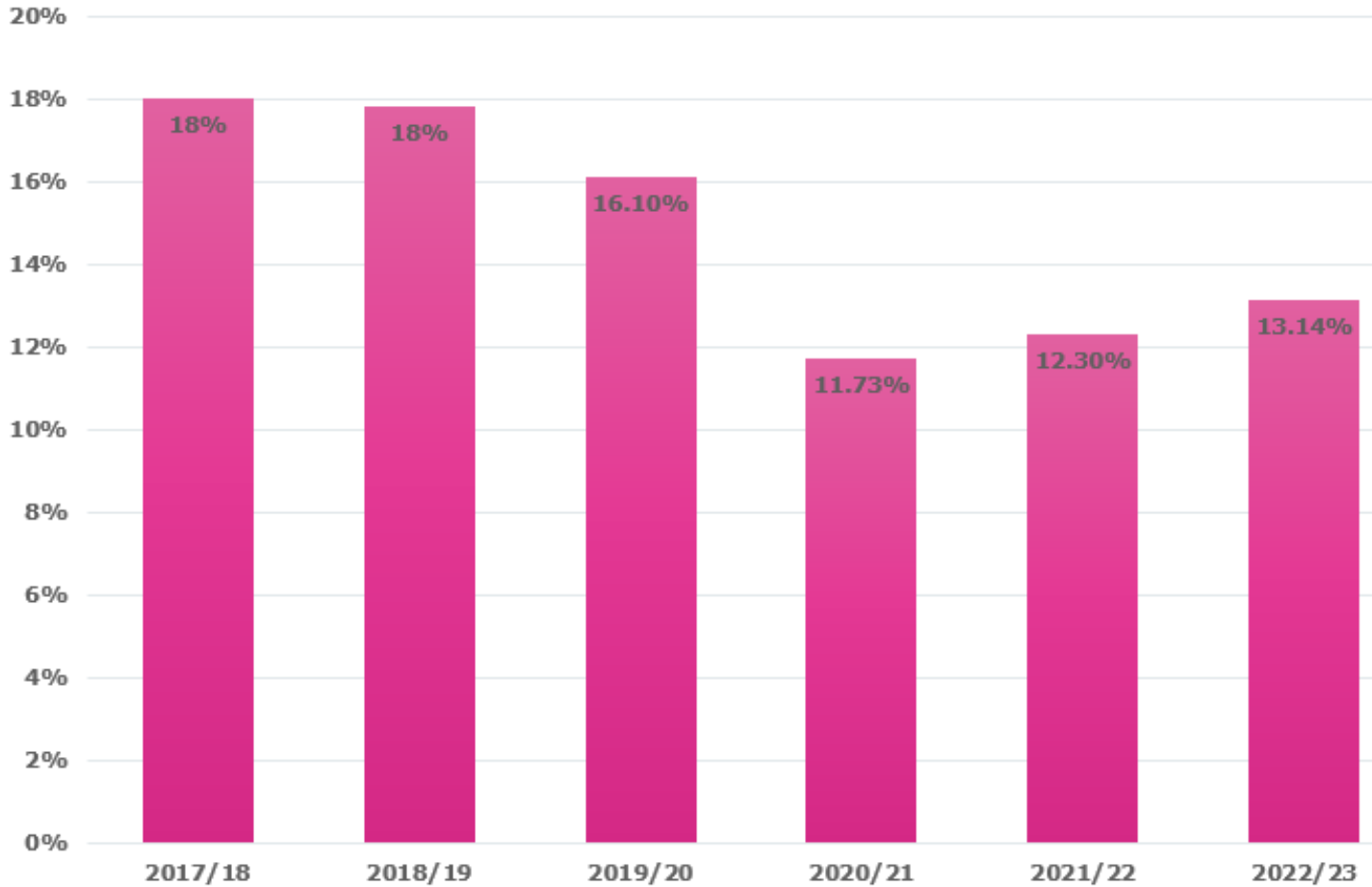
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# Elections Survey results

# Turnout

Average Turnout (2017/18 - 2022/23)



# Turnout

## **A record-breaking year for some!**

- High of 34.2% and low of 1.3% - avg. 13.1%
- Average turnout for SUs with fewer than 10,000 students was 13.5%
- 12.7% for those with 10-20,000 students
- SUs with more than 20,000 students averaged a 13.4% turnout
- SUs with no budget allocated for their elections averaged a 4% turnout, significantly below the national average

# Nominations & Voting Periods

## **Nominations**

- In 2022, 42% of respondents had nominations periods of 29+ days, down to 26.3% in 2023
- No discernible link between nomination length and candidate numbers

## **Voting**

- Longer voting periods on the decline: 1.3% had 9+ days of voting this year (7% in 2022)
- Average remains 4-5 days of voting (51% of SUs)



# Voting Systems & Platforms

## Systems

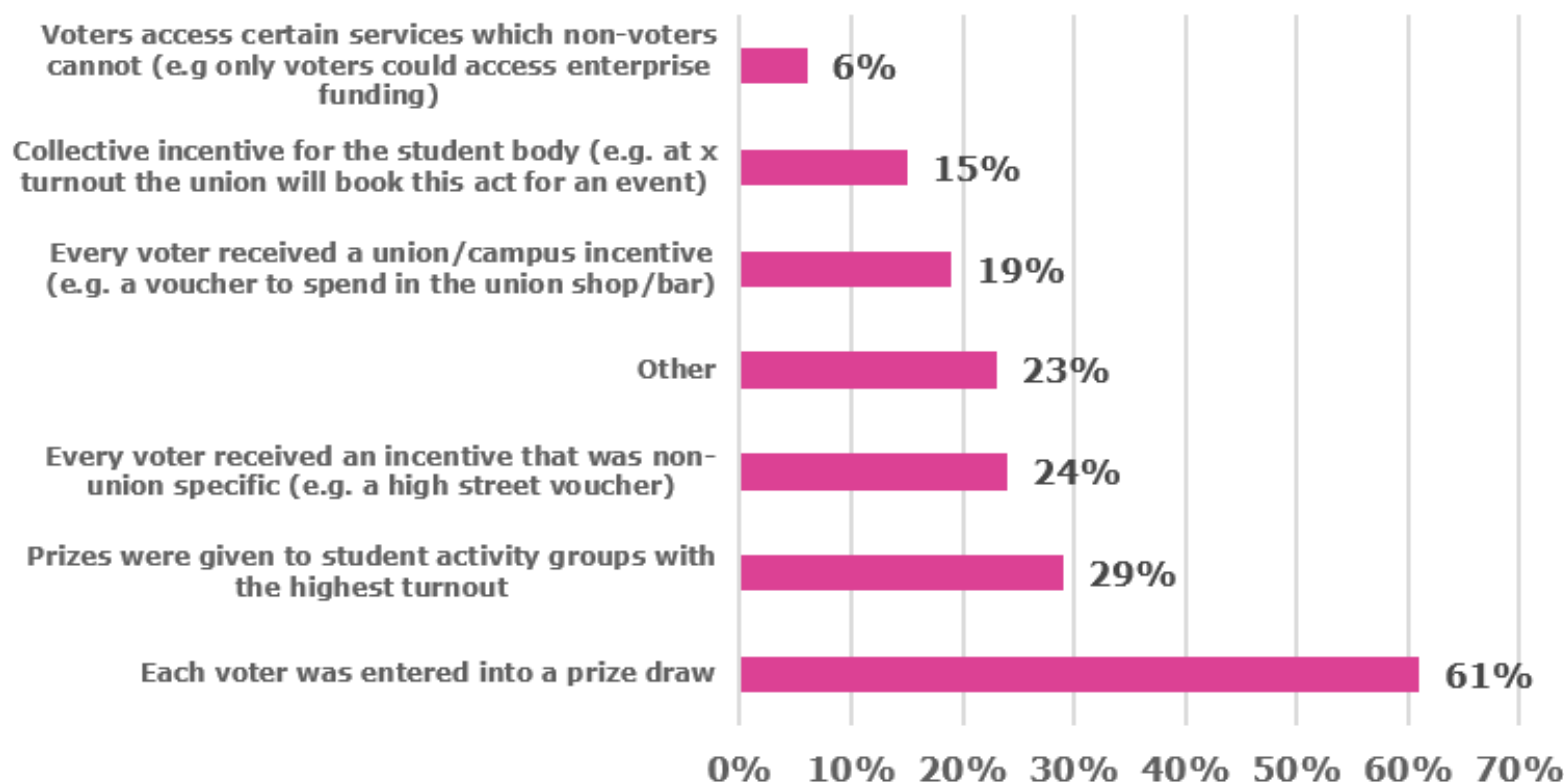
- You still love STV (54%, down from 74% in 2022) and AV (34%)
- 91% run elections entirely online (no paper ballots)
- 82.9% allow voting 24 hours a day

## Platforms

- 54% use MSL, 25% use Union Cloud, 11.8% use SUMS and 9.2% use other platforms
- The (anecdotal) rise of VLE Voting

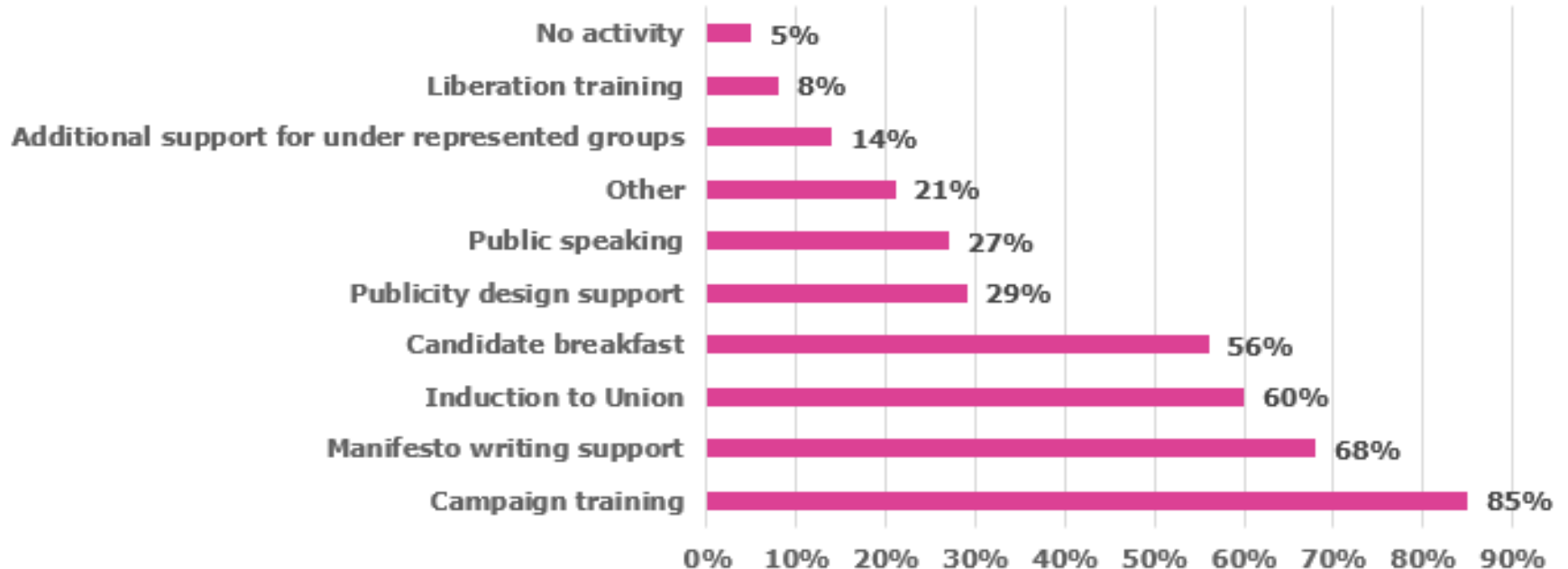
# Voter Incentives

## What did you use to incentivise voting?



# Candidate Support

What candidate development activity did you undertake prior to and during the elections?



# Complaints and Conduct

- Average of 3 informal & 5 formal complaints per election
- Candidate behaviour and conduct during the elections process was the most common complaint (45% this year, up from 39% in 2022)
- Only 2% said social media complaining was the most common complaint (down from 17% in 2022)

# Candidate Demographic Survey

# Overview

## **More of you are collecting your own data**

- 70% collected demographic data this year

## **Fewer of you are using the Candidate Demographic Survey**

- We will find a new way of recording national data
- 141 candidates from 12 SUs only this year, so limited data

# Candidate Demographics

## **Age**

- 52.5% aged 18-22 (70% in 2021)

## **Level of Study**

- Rise of the postgrads (41.1% on Masters/ PhD- only 23% in 2021)
- 48.9% undergrads

## **Nationality**

- 52.5% international students outside the EU
- 36.2% home students
- Less data but anecdotal evidence from DROs supports this

# Candidate Demographics

## Language

- 55.5% speak English as their first language
- 32 different first languages recorded
- How do you communicate rules etc?

## Race

- 25.5% Asian or Asian British- Indian
- 36.8% from a white background (49% in 2022)

## Religion, Faith & Belief

- 24% Christian (33% in 2022), 17.7% Muslim (10% in 2022) and 12.8% each for Hindus and Atheists.



# Candidate Demographics

## Gender

- 44.7% women, 41.8% men, 8.5% non-binary (up from 4% in 2022)
- 89.1% live in the gender they were assigned at birth

## Sexuality

- 8.5% bisexual (16% in 2022, 18% in 2021)
- Others remain similar to 2022

## Disability

- 17.7% with a disability or long-term health condition (29% in 2022 and 24% in 2021)

# Candidate Demographics

## **Caring Responsibilities**

- 2.2% said they had caring responsibilities
- Down from 8% last year

## **Care Experience**

- 3.6% were care experienced or care leavers
- Similar to last year (4%)

## **Socio-Economic Background**

- Largely similar to last year – most parents/guardians had either an intermediate managerial position or higher managerial position.

# Returning Officer's Recommendations

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- Surveillance culture amongst campaign teams & SU media
- Timelines for complaints
- Only those impacted by sanctions appealing
- Consider if & how rules around conduct are being filtered down to campaign teams
- Historic conduct – encourage a conversation before nomination

We're here to support you

**[elections@nus.org.uk](mailto:elections@nus.org.uk)**



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