

ACADEMY
of SOCIAL
SCIENCES

CAMPAIGN
for SOCIAL
SCIENCE

Annual Review

2025

Promoting understanding of our
contemporary human world



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From the President & CEO

There has never been a greater need for the Academy of Social Sciences to be a strong, visible and effective advocate in its promotion of the social sciences for public benefit in the UK. This report sets out the ways in which the Academy has risen to those challenges in 2025.

Our universities in the UK are the fulcrum of the social sciences. As a training ground in teaching and inspiring some 47% of the next generation, in spearheading research and innovation on the many social and economic challenges, locally and globally, and as leading collaborators on civic responsibilities for their local, regional and devolved nation places and communities. UK social science is respected as a world leader, but it remains unclear how long that will be the case.

The social sciences currently are under an unprecedented level of threat from two quarters. A combination of changing global geo-political and educational contexts. The outcomes of a succession of UK governments that fail to recognise the value of the HE sector, and the social sciences within it, to the nation and to our international earnings, reputation and diplomacy. One of many examples is the increasingly narrow focus placed on research in STEM and life sciences as the 'engine to growth and prosperity' without sufficiently recognising the role that the social sciences – economics, law, finance and business studies to name but four – play in generating growth and prosperity themselves, as enablers of STEM innovation in society and in informing policy.

For the past three years – and more – we have progressively ramped up our work and activities to meet the challenges facing the 'health' of the social sciences in higher education and the embedding of greater social science awareness among decision makers. Our approach has combined advocacy and knowledge exchange with our convening power and key partnerships across the sector, not least those with our 47 member learned societies. Essential underpinning has been provided by the work of our Campaign for Social Science in showcasing evidence-led research impact and in publishing two associated policy reports at the UK-wide and regional levels. This draws heavily on the work of our Fellows and the wider social science applied research community and we thank them all warmly.

The Academy's intent to tackle longer-term systemic issues for social science with new and sustained vigour was signalled by the publication of a major research report in December 2025. This focused on enhancing the social science infrastructure within Whitehall, which was found to be insufficient in the face of the very significant demand for social science evidence across UK Government and some very challenging issues to be addressed. The aim is to improve lives and policymaking.

Our work in promoting EDI in a pragmatic and action-oriented way is another

systemic issue that features among our strategic priorities. In 2025 we completed very successfully a three-year programme, in association with the ESRC and member learned societies, to provide data, build capacity, share good practice and support innovation. A follow-on, Academy-led, three-year programme for 2026-2028 to foster inclusivity in the social sciences was agreed at the end of 2025, kindly supported by the ESRC (UKRI). The 'pipeline' into and through the social sciences was also supported by launching a new careers section on our website.

The We Society podcast, hosted by President Will Hutton, completed its third full year in 2025. With nine series and over 435,000 all time listens to its credit, it is the Academy's main vehicle for enhancing the public understanding of social science and how it informs and impacts on peoples' lives. Once again, it achieved the number one spot in the Apple science and social science podcasts in season 9. It complemented an active events programme for public audiences throughout 2025, and the successful completion of a major project to define our key messages and upgrade the 'What is Social Science' section of our website.

The Academy worked increasingly in partnership with the social science community. It plays an important role in the social science ecosystem in the UK and is the only organisation dedicated solely to the promotion of the social sciences. Many Fellows contributed time and expertise to our activities and to advising the Academy, not least our trustees and committee members and our journal co-editors. We supported the learned societies through the CEOs committee, successful advocacy for their involvement as expert advisors in REF 2029, the EDI project and a newly formed policy working group. We worked closely with the group we convene of social science leaders in research strong universities and with Campaign supporters.

We could not achieve this without the financial support we receive and partnerships we mutually enjoy. From Campaign supporters – many of whom themselves faced very difficult financial circumstances – from our Fellows and learned society members as subscriptions and from the donors who support our projects. Thank you all. We ended the year with a small financial surplus overall, after appropriate budget mitigation measures.

Finally, we are completely indebted to a small, dedicated and professional staff team who go the extra mile on every occasion. It is a credit to them and their leadership that the Academy is in good shape and good heart and enjoys a high profile, recognition and respect. With the need for the social sciences and the challenges to them both unlikely to diminish in the coming years, there will remain much to do.



Will Hutton FAcSS



Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS

About the Academy

The Academy of Social Sciences is the UK's national academy for academics, practitioners and learned societies in the social sciences. **We exist, as a charity, to promote the social sciences in the UK for public benefit.** We showcase, champion and advocate for the social sciences and their applications, raising awareness – in policy, business and with the public – of their immense value in understanding and managing our contemporary human world, and helping to secure their flourishing future.

Our strategic objectives for 2024-2029

The Academy's strategy for the period 2024-2029 is underscored by six objectives which set the medium-term framework for our activities in delivering our charitable purpose.

- **Embed social science evidence and mindsets more fully across governments and decision-makers**, enhancing awareness of, demand for, and use of social science evidence and building greater parity of esteem between the social sciences and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths).
- **Safeguard the social sciences: seeking to sustain their 'health'** in secondary education, higher education and research, and their funding, in a complex setting subject to changing political pressures.
- **Foster strong, skilled and diverse pipelines of social scientists** for the benefit of the social sciences, society, employers and individuals.
- **Grow the public image and understanding of social science** with the long-term aim of achieving parity of public recognition with science and technology.
- **Recognise and support excellence in the social sciences**, recognising that the UK is a world leader in this sector and that the social science 'ecosystem' needs nourishing.
- **Ensure a sustainable future** for the Academy and its work to 'promote social sciences in the UK for public benefit'.

The first five objectives all directly serve our purpose and provide public benefit in doing so; the sixth supports the Academy's capability to deliver its purpose now and in the future. In 2025 our work addressed all of these objectives.

Embedding social science evidence and mindsets

With their unique understanding of people, societal structures, economies, behaviours, governance, public health and welfare and place at multiple scales, the social sciences are vital in helping to inform and influence government and societal responses to the many varied challenges we face in the UK and globally.

Throughout our activities in 2025, the Academy continued to engage meaningfully with policymakers, civil servants, and with wider civil society, to share knowledge and reinforce awareness of the value and positive impact the social sciences bring to all our lives.

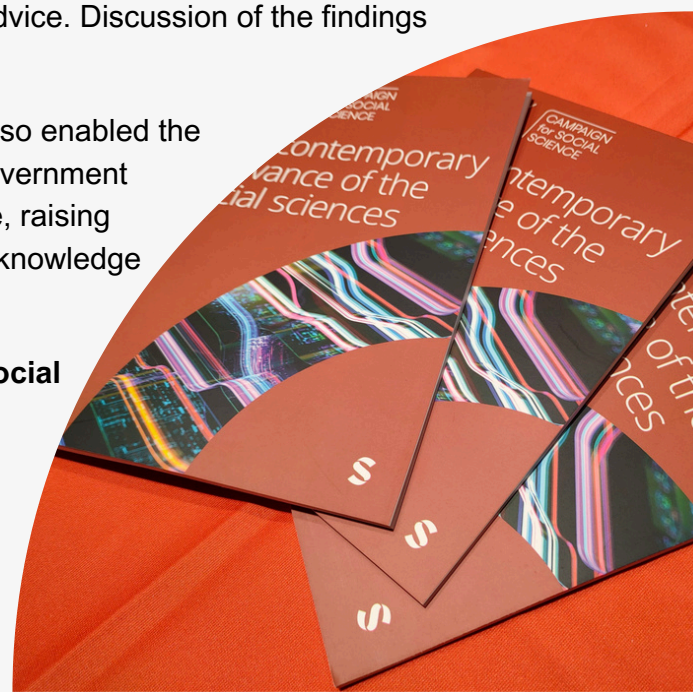
Enhancing the evidence ecosystem in Whitehall

It is thus no surprise that approximately 80% of the UK Government's Areas of Research Interest, on which departments seek expert information and advice, relate significantly to the social sciences. 2025 culminated in the publication of a research report outlining the findings of our major project examining how the UK Government draws on evidence in its policymaking and implementation. [*Enhancing the evidence ecosystem: improving outcomes for government and citizens*](#) focused on the evidence infrastructure and processes as these are key to how the system works. It drew on desk-based research, a mapping exercise, an international comparator study, and interviews with more than 40 senior figures well-versed in Whitehall evidence, analysis and policy. The main focus of the findings was a clear and consistent call for social science evidence to be better embedded in government decision making in order to improve outcomes for citizens. The 12 recommendations set out considered ideas for areas of change in order to meet the need and opportunities for giving a wider and richer mix of evidence more weight in the system. They span four areas: science advice and evidence, the analysis function, policy formulation and external expert advice. Discussion of the findings with interested parties continues in 2026.

The report's publication, and wider project, has also enabled the Academy to deepen our engagement with UK Government departments and senior figures in the civil service, raising awareness of the value of social science insight, knowledge and evidence to decision making.

Showcasing the contemporary relevance of social science

This year's major Campaign for Social Science policy report, published jointly with Sage in November 2025, showcased the essential role



the UK's social sciences play in harnessing the many opportunities and mitigating the numerous challenges we face in our contemporary human world. [The contemporary relevance of the social sciences](#) demonstrates how social science contributes to the wellbeing of the UK and its devolved nations and regions through eight broad principles, each of which is set out in detail, along with supporting evidence and case studies, serving as a user-friendly reference for policymakers, academics and practitioners. The report was launched with a webinar featuring contributions from leading social scientists, and its audience included senior policymakers and civil servants. Copies of the report were also sent to over 60 senior politicians at Westminster, Holyrood, the Senedd and Stormont, with follow-up discussions taking place in the months after publication.

Sharing the regional benefits of social science through collaboration

The Campaign also published [a report](#) in partnership with eight Midlands-based universities to showcase the positive impacts of social science research taking place in the Midlands region, for the benefit of the Midlands region and its communities. At a time when regional development is at the heart of UK Government policy, the report exemplifies the economic, social and civic roles of social science faculties in Midlands universities as powerhouses of ideas, research, innovation and leadership, and which seek to understand and help to address some of the most pressing challenges in their region. Through case study examples – selected by the universities – the report highlights the vital role of universities in collaborating with other higher education institutions, regional government, business and communities to stimulate and capitalise on opportunities for growth while responding to long standing challenges around economic growth and productivity, and on health and inclusivity of workers in the region. It is an excellent example of the collective positive impact that social science research brings to bear in a regional context. It is also a useful tool for the Academy, and others in the community, in showing how the social sciences are working to bring substantial regional impacts at scale.

Social science insights to 'good growth'

In 2025, the Campaign commenced a new programme of work to showcase research and evidence-based insights from the social sciences on how the UK might address challenges around growth and productivity. At year end, the [Achieving Good Growth hub](#) featured 23 comment pieces written by Academy Fellows and other leading social scientists from a wide range of perspectives, plus recordings and video content from four associated events. One of these events, in collaboration with the Fairness Foundation, led to a joint briefing paper on *Wealth inequality and growth in the UK*.



We absolutely need to champion the full range of disciplines that represent the social sciences, and this report [The contemporary relevance of the social sciences] does that, I think, in an outstanding way.

Professor Linda Bauld FAcSS,
Professor of Public Health,
University of Edinburgh and Chief
Social Policy Adviser, Scottish
Government



Safeguarding the health of the social sciences

In a year filled with deepening financial pressures for many higher education institutions in the UK, the Academy's work advocating for the sustained health of the social sciences sector, and its supporting ecosystem, was more important than ever. Throughout 2025, the Academy continued to leverage its networks within the social science community to provide evidence and a collective voice in support of retaining the UK's world-leading reputation across the breadth of social science research and education. Not least as this sector provides so much public benefit in terms of its education, research and civic roles.

Supporting higher education institutions

One of the best ways in which the Academy feels it can promote the social sciences is by supporting those who are making the case for the retention and value of social sciences within the UK's universities. We do this through a confidential and collaborative Forum for executive Leaders of Social Science (FLSS) in research strong universities. Chaired by Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams FAcSS, the forum met termly to share knowledge and insights and discuss challenges being faced by the community in the higher education sector. These meetings were well attended and were positively received by forum members. Over the year the forum held informed discussions with external guests from UUK on the public perception of higher education; from City-REDI on social science engagement with the Industrial Strategy and Local Innovation Partnerships; and on institutional strategies and change in the social sciences in response to current financial pressures, with case studies from Glasgow and Sheffield.



I have found FLSS to be an incredibly valuable network. I have been impressed by the work that the Chair and Academy CEO have done to bring the most pertinent topics to the table. I've also really appreciated the safe space created for research intensive university leaders in the social sciences to share experiences and concerns, and consider where we can best support the Academy in driving policy agendas that are in all our interests and those of the wider public.

Professor Ruth Blakeley FAcSS,
Vice-President and Head of Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Sheffield



Social sciences and REF 2029: embedding expertise

To ensure that discipline-level social science expertise was thoroughly embedded within the set up of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), throughout 2025 the Academy played a positive, pro-active role in engaging with the REF 2029 team on behalf of the social sciences. In a new setting with revised procedures, we successfully made the case, with our learned society members, for the REF team and appointed sub-panel chairs to make use of the pan-UK, independent advice and expertise that sits within the learned societies. Over and above that, we were pleased to be included on the selection panel for the Panel C Chair and were delighted to welcome Professor Jane Falkingham FAcSS into this role. We were also heartened to see ten Academy Fellows appointed Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the 13 expert sub-panels in the social sciences to assess research in REF 2029.

Advocacy through consultations

The Academy responded to several important consultations and inquiries, often in association with our member learned societies, as part of our work to advocate for the health of the social sciences in the UK, at various levels. We do not have the resources to get involved in all relevant consultations, so we focus on those we perceive to be most important. These included a submission to [Westminster's Education Committee inquiry into Higher Education and Funding](#), and to [Westminster's Science, Innovation & Technology Committee's inquiry on Science Diplomacy](#).

We also actively engaged, together with member learned societies on the consultations around the Department for Education Curriculum and Assessment Review that followed the Post 16 Education White Paper published in October 2025. The Academy convened meetings with two panel members and learned society representatives and coordinated a joint response to the consultation. The recently published outcome and actions helpfully sustains the presence and status of social sciences within both vocational and academic post 16 education.

A new policy working group was also established with policy leads from member learned societies to further joined up advocacy across the community and help ensure that the voice of the social sciences is heard more fully within policy discussions at a UK Government and devolved government level. This has already resulted in collective responses to several consultations.

The Academy's International Advisory Group continued its work through its series of [policy briefings](#) which identifies interdisciplinary solutions to complex challenges facing society from a global standpoint. The series focuses on four key themes: green issues, health, digital, and population change.



Fostering the pipeline of social scientists

Promoting the skills and employability of social science graduates, as well as the importance of inclusivity in education and higher education, has been a key part of the Academy's activities throughout 2025 to work towards our objective of fostering the pipeline of social scientists.

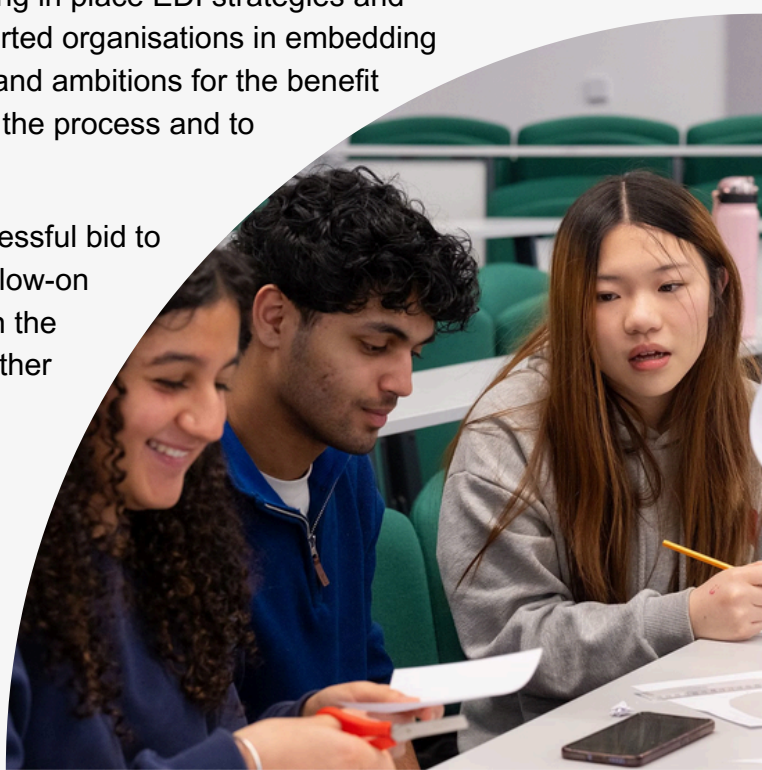
Progressing inclusivity in the social sciences

The Academy's [three-year EDI](#) partnership project, a joint programme between the Academy of Social Sciences, its member social science (learned) societies and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UKRI) came to an end at the end of 2025. Throughout the last two and a half years, the project has helped to build capacity for leadership in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) among social science societies, and to advance their work in understanding and enhancing their own inclusivity initiatives, as well across their discipline communities in higher education. The project has done this through providing a substantial website hub of free resources, supporting 13 funded projects, delivering 14 events, publishing seven new reports and a number of knowledge sharing documents, and monitoring EDI data for both academic and teaching staff and for student populations in social sciences in UK higher education. Throughout, the project has been guided by the EDI working group.

The programme, to date, has empowered and facilitated organisations to engage with and further inclusivity in a meaningful, pragmatic, collaborative and well-informed way in their activities. It also helped build their capacity and sustainability for such work, with many organisations putting in place EDI strategies and champions as a result. In short, it has supported organisations in embedding inclusivity principles, commitments, actions and ambitions for the benefit of higher education communities; to learn in the process and to collaborate readily and effectively.

Following the success of this project, a successful bid to ESRC resulted in confirmed funding for a follow-on project to commence early 2026. Building on the foundations already in place, this aims to further the trajectory of capacity, collaboration,

Image: Careers workshop delivered by Discover Economics as part of their EDI initiative funded by the AcSS EDI Small Grants Fund © Discover Economics, RES



innovation and leadership in inclusivity in the social science learned societies and in particular their work with their higher education communities to embed inclusivity more fully through the discipline lens. An important new element is to use the Academy's expanding network of contacts working in this space, in social sciences and beyond, to draw together and share knowledge of 'what works' and in what settings to enhance inclusivity in a lasting and meaningful way. The project draws on the Academy's strengths in convening, collaborative working, its learned society members and our experience in this area.



The AcSS ESRC EDI programme has enabled a real focus on tangible projects that tackle issues that are relevant to learned societies and our communities. The impact of the activities and outputs will continue to resonate as we embed the learning across our organisations.

Chief Executive,
Royal Statistical Society



Showcasing careers with social science

At the beginning of 2025 we launched our refreshed careers with social science webpages. This is part of the Academy's ongoing work to raise awareness among decision makers, employers and students of the skills and employability of social science graduates. Aimed at secondary school students choosing their GCSEs and post-16 qualifications, and university students of the social sciences, these webpages provide an information resource on careers with social science, together with links to other useful resources including discipline focused ones. As part of the refresh we published nine new 'I am a social scientist' profiles showcasing the variety of jobs and sectors that utilise social science skills, knowledge and expertise.

We have promoted this content throughout the year and used both GCSE and A Level results days, as well as National Careers Week, as opportunities to highlight the wide array of careers linked to studying the social sciences.

Growing the public's understanding of social science

The social sciences make a positive contribution to all our daily lives – through the economic value they provide, the tangible differences they make to society, the innovation they facilitate and through guiding good policy decisions. Throughout 2025, the Academy worked to further highlight the importance of the social sciences to us all and to share new understanding on issues relevant to our lives arising from recent research. The prime audience for this work was civil society and the wider public.

Raising awareness through the We Society podcast

Spearheading our public engagement work this year, the Academy released three further seasons of the [We Society podcast](#). Host, Will Hutton, was in discussion with leading social scientists and public figures on topics ranging from solving the productivity puzzle and improving social mobility to protecting against misinformation and rethinking child poverty policy. We were delighted that the podcast reached the top spot in the Apple Science and Social Science Podcharts once again this autumn, and reached in excess of 435,000 all-time listens by the end of the year.

Another milestone for the podcast in 2025 was our collaboration with the Nuffield Foundation and Leverhulme Trust to produce the We Society. All three organisations believe in the importance of engaging the public to raise awareness and understanding of the important, and powerful, evidence-led insights and knowledge that social scientists contribute to helping contextualise, inform and solve many of the economic, environmental, educational and societal challenges we face today. Through this collaboration the We Society podcast will continue to help promote the innovative social science research taking place across the UK which benefits people, communities and society at large. Season 8 and 9 of the podcast have been produced through this collaboration thus far. All seasons are available to listen [wherever you get your podcasts](#).



[The We Society podcast is] a refreshing listen. Really interesting - great conversations with people who consider all sides and perspectives to situations. Always relevant subjects.

Apple podcasts review



Image: Will Hutton recording the We Society Podcast.



Promoting social science through our events

The Campaign for Social Science delivered another [extensive events programme](#) throughout 2025, both online and in-person, often working in collaboration with Campaign supporters and the Academy's member social science societies. These events sought to demonstrate how social science is informing, and should inform, evidence-based policymaking and they provided an outlet for social scientists to contribute to the public debate on key policy issues. A varied range of topics were covered including evaluating of the use of AI in different sectors; exploring the relationship between the UK, EU and economic growth; the role of new towns in meeting the UK's housing needs; and numerous angles on the theme of 'our working lives' as part of the ESRC's Festival of Social Science. The Campaign also continued to collaborate with Sage and The Conversation as part of the Social Science Perspectives series.

In November, the Campaign welcomed the Honourable Julia Gillard AC to deliver the [Campaign for Social Science Annual Sage Lecture 2025](#) on the role of social science in a divided world. Drawing from her experience as Prime Minister of Australia and her current role chairing the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's Business School, Julia highlighted how in a world defined by accelerating change, we need a deep, nuanced data- driven understanding of people, society and place, which the social sciences provide. Reflections followed from Yuan Yang (Labour MP for Earley & Woodley), Stian Westlake FAcSS (Executive Chair, Economic & Social Research Council) and Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS (Director of the Policy Institute, King's College London).

This year's [Academy Annual Lecture](#) was delivered by Professor Mariana Mazzucato FAcSS on the topic of "mission-oriented" growth. In a wide-ranging, highly knowledgeable and inspiring online talk, Mariana drew on her research to illustrate how a mission-oriented approach to policy can stimulate and direct inclusive and sustainable growth whilst addressing the grand challenges of our time.

All of these events were attended by members of the public, as well as those from academic, media and policy circles.



Image L-R: The Honourable Julia Gillard AC delivering the Campaign Annual Lecture; an audience at an event

Recognising Excellence

The Academy's Fellowship and member learned social science societies remain vital to our mission, as sources of expertise, as exemplars of excellence, and as ambassadors for the social science disciplines and wider sector. We promote, recognise and celebrate excellence in social science research and practice throughout these networks. At the close of 2025 the Academy membership comprised 1,725 Fellows and 46 member social science societies. Between the Academy and our members, we embrace a network of tens of thousands of social scientists; we believe this to be the largest of its kind.

Fellows' highlights

The Academy welcomed 127 new Fellows during 2025 from across academia and the public and private sectors, conferred for their eminence in their field, impact and wider contributions to social science. New Fellows were conferred in two rounds during the year and the overall Fellowship retention rate for 2025 remained high at 95%. We thank our Nominations Committee for their scrupulous oversight of the election process; and our Academic and Practitioner Fellows Search Committees, our Fellows and member learned societies for their nominations.

To mark our 25th anniversary year, 2025 saw us award the first [Honorary Fellowships](#) of the Academy of Social Sciences. We were delighted to recognise four outstanding individuals from widely different fields: Gerald Chan, Professor Sir Cary Cooper CBE, Dame Carolyn McCall OBE and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala for their significant contributions to the promotion of social science in this way.

We also congratulate the 12 Fellows who were recognised in both the [2025 New Years Honours](#) and [2025 King's Birthday Honours](#) for their contributions to social science.

We warmly thank all of our Fellows and others for contributing their time and expertise to a range of our activities throughout the year, including speaking at and chairing events, contributing comment pieces to our Campaign hubs and website, as guests on the We Society podcast, featuring in our 'Meet our Fellows' series, as journal contributors, committee members and much more.

Member Learned Societies' highlights

The Academy's network of member social science learned societies and professional bodies enable us to provide a strong collective voice to advocate for the social science sector, and our work with them became further embedded across our objectives throughout the year. Regular meetings also allow for knowledge



Being elected as a Fellow means joining those who are on the path which not only strives to understand the complexity of the social world but who also want to change it for the better. I am proud to be part of the Academy's mission to champion and advocate for the social sciences and the immense value they provide in shaping a better future.

Professor Tim Dunne FAcSS,
Provost and Professor of
International Relations,
University of Surrey



sharing and capacity building to the benefit of all, and above all to the benefit of the social sciences ecosystem. In 2025, we retained membership of 46 societies which include the lead learned societies for all the major social science disciplines, along with many of those representing sub-disciplines and cross-disciplinary areas. We thank them for being part of the Academy and supporting our work.

Throughout 2025 we continued to work closely with our member learned societies to strengthen progress in the sphere of inclusivity in the social sciences through our collaborative EDI Project with the ESRC. The CEOs and Chief Officers of the societies also met on a termly basis to discuss areas of shared interest and concern including the perceived risks and mitigations measures of funding pressures in UK higher education and the Government's Curriculum and Assessment Review in England. This work and that mentioned in other sections of this report demonstrates the convening power of this group. Alongside the existing conference organising subgroup, a new policy working group joint with member learned societies was established as covered more fully in the section on the health of social sciences above.

Our Member Learned Societies in 2025

- Association for Psychosocial Studies
- Association of Law Teachers
- Association of Professors of Social Work
- Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK
- British Academy of Management
- British Accounting and Finance Association
- British Association for Applied Linguistics
- British Association for International and Comparative Education
- British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies
- British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society
- British Educational Research Association
- British International Studies Association
- British Psychological Society
- British Society for Population Studies
- British Society of Criminology
- British Society of Gerontology
- British Sociological Association
- British Universities Industrial Relations Association
- Council for Hospitality Management Education
- Development Studies Association
- Economic History Society
- European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology
- Government Social Research Profession
- Housing Studies Association
- Leisure Studies Association
- Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association
- Political Studies Association
- Regional Science Association International, British and Irish Section
- Regional Studies Association
- Royal Anthropological Institute
- Royal Economic Society
- Royal Geographical Society
- Royal Statistical Society
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Scottish Economic Society
- Social Policy Association
- Social Research Association
- Society for Research into Higher Education
- Society for Studies in Organizing Healthcare
- Society for the Advancement of Management Studies
- Society of Legal Scholars
- Society of Professional Economists
- Socio-Legal Studies Association
- UK Association for Language Testing and Assessment
- UK Association for Public Administration
- UK Evaluation Society
- University Association for Contemporary European Studies

Ensuring a sustainable future

The Academy is the only organisation in the UK which exists solely for the promotion of the social sciences for public benefit. Throughout 2025 we continued our work to ensure the Academy's future as an independent, effective and respected social science champion, with sustainable funding and strong community support.

Key work in 2025

The Academy has continued work to streamline its internal processes, including embedding further the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, introduced in 2024. This is proving to be a useful tool for the Academy, aiding the staff team in increasing their efficiency in essential administrative processes related to our Fellowship, in supporting event management and communications delivery, and in more accurate, secure and effective data collection and monitoring.

An important area of development in recent years has been our communications, and the upward trajectory in this work continued throughout 2025. The Academy delivered regular weekly, and often daily, content through our well-established website, eBulletin and social media channels. We reduced our presence strategically on X (formerly Twitter) and expanded to a new platform, BlueSky. This work has been vital in increasing awareness of the Academy and the social sciences with both new and existing audiences, especially across social media. During the year we saw over a 40% increase in new sign-ups to our monthly eBulletin newsletter which is freely available to all, and a doubling in our following on LinkedIn to reach c. 10,000 at year end.

We paid particular attention during the year to managing risk in our incoming resources, notably in support for the Campaign for Social Science from universities who found themselves having to make very difficult financial decisions of their own. We also continued to seek new project-based income, with a focus in 2025 on a major proposal for continuation and enhancement of our work in EDI. This was successful and our work in this area is now funded for a further three years from 2026 by the ESRC (UKRI).

We have continued to maintain strong relationships with our Fellows, member learned social science societies, Campaign supporters, and other funders, collaborators



and supporters of our work. We look forward to continuing to work with all of our communities in the coming years in promoting and advocating for the social sciences in education and research, policy, business, and public life.

Contemporary Social Science Journal

The Academy's interdisciplinary and international journal, [*Contemporary Social Science*](#), made excellent progress in showcasing excellence in applied social science research through a number of highly topical themed issues in 2025. We welcomed Professor Philip Tomlinson FAcSS as co-editor alongside Professor David Bailey FAcSS, and also a range of high-profile and experienced editors to the journal's new Editorial Review Board. Engagement with the journal continues to go from strength to strength, with an improved 2-year impact factor of 3.9, and 211,000 downloads throughout 2025. The Academy extends thanks to our publishers Taylor & Francis and to David, Phil and the editorial board.



Social science is vital in understanding and managing the challenges we face locally, nationally and globally. The Academy of Social Science comprises academics, practitioners and learned societies working together to promote social science for public benefit. I am proud to be a Trustee of this incredible organisation.

Professor Sara Carter OBE FAcSS,
Vice-Principal and Head of the College of Social Sciences,
University of Glasgow



Financial overview

The Academy's financial statements are presented to show clearly how expenditure relates to our main areas of work in the year, which in turn relate directly to our strategy objectives. Thus, there is alignment for the reader between strategy, work accomplished, and expenditure.

We faced two main risks in 2025 that had the potential to affect our income significantly. These were the cost-of-living pressures in the UK and the potential risk to our levels of Fellowship subscription income, which provides core Academy support; and the huge financial pressures on the UK Higher Education sector and the potential impact on the income from HE supporters to fund our Campaign for Social Science. In the event, we sustained our traditionally very high renewal rates on Fellowship subscriptions. Through the adoption of risk mitigation measures from early in 2025, we limited Campaign supporter income loss to c.25% compared with the preceding year's all-time high. We also took action to re-budget and reduce expenditure to bring costs in line with the re-budget.

We warmly thank our Fellows, Learned Society members and Campaign supporters for their commitment to our work and their ongoing financial support in 2025.

The financial outturn on the year for the Academy overall was a very small surplus of £6,418 on a total expenditure of £594,028. A significant achievement for a challenging year. This overall figure comprises a break even on the Campaign's dedicated (restricted) operations, a modest net surplus on the Academy's unrestricted operations (£38,701), and a net drawdown

of other restricted funds to meet the planned expenditure on externally funded (restricted) projects for which funds were raised in prior years. The joint EDI project with ESRC operated within budget, as did the ESSI project. The strategic development fund saw both income and expenditure against it.

Incoming resources totalled £589,167 (2024: £774,945) split between core (unrestricted) £390,252 (2024: £392,260) and restricted £198,915 (2024: £382,685)

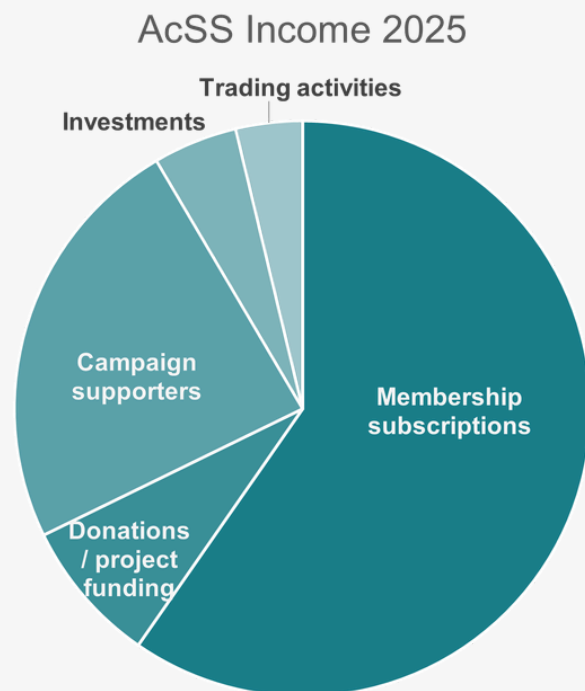


Fig 1. The proportions of income, by source, received by the Academy in 2025

funds. The major income sources are shown in Figure 1, with member subscriptions comprising 60% of total income and around 90% of the unrestricted income. Donations/project funding and Campaign Supporter sponsorships account for most of the restricted income. Investment income in the year totalled £27,851.

The drop in incoming resources compared with 2024 relates wholly to restricted income and is explained by a combination of a 25% reduction in Campaign supporter funding and less income for specific projects as their funding was received largely in prior years. The EDI project ended in late 2025 and the ESSI project completed the bulk of its work by the end of 2025.

Total expenditure in 2025 was £594,028 (2024: £728,208). Of that, the unrestricted expenditure was £358,317 (2024: £382,206) and restricted funds expenditure was £235,711 (2024: £346,002), of which £169,419 was spent on the Campaign for Social Science. The reduction in restricted expenditure reflects the narrative above and in particular that no EDI project grant awards were made in 2025. Staff costs across the organisation were, as usual, the single largest item of expenditure.

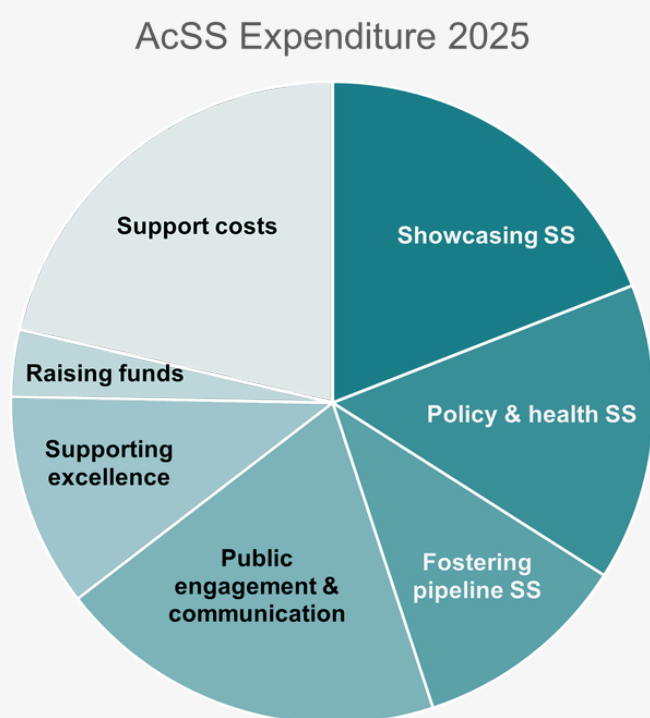


Fig 2. The proportions of expenditure, by strategic objective and support costs, in 2025

The total expenditure is displayed across the main areas of Academy strategic and support operations in Figure 2. Broadly equal sums were expended in our work to showcase social science, on policy and advocacy for the ‘health’ of the social sciences, our work to foster a strong and inclusive pipeline in the social sciences, the main focus of which was our EDI project, and public engagement and communications. Expenditure on fundraising activities (£19,695) remained similar to 2024 and proportionate to the scale of the organisation. Remaining areas of expenditure were on supporting excellence –

predominantly on the administration of Fellowship and membership. Support costs, which include IT, professional and other administrative services, are distributed across the strategic operating areas in ratio to the staff costs.

At the end of 2025, the balance sheet stood at £715,986 (2024: £709,568), of which restricted funds comprised £376,005 (2024: £408,288). The majority of the latter relates to the Campaign for Social Science reserves of £247,087 (2024:

£243,703); and the remainder to income received on grants and donations for specific projects and purposes that is budgeted to be spent in subsequent years.

The unrestricted general fund reserves at year end stood at £339,981 (2024: £301,280). The Academy will continue to maintain sufficient reserves (a minimum of 50% of annual expenditure) against the significant risks in its funding environment, both in general and specifically to the risks associated with the funding of the Campaign for Social Science which is supported solely by donations from Campaign Supporters, almost all of whom are universities. These risks will continue to be historically high in the next three to five years given the ongoing financial pressures in the higher education sector.

Our supporters

The Academy's work is only possible because of the ongoing support of many individuals and organisations. These include our Fellows who freely give their time to share their knowledge and expertise, assist us in matters of good governance and in nominating individuals for Fellowship. Our Fellows subscriptions also underpin the core funding of the Academy and our activities. We warmly thank them all for their ongoing contributions.

We also gratefully thank the 28 UK universities across England, Scotland and Wales, the British Sociological Association, and Sage Publishing, who support our Campaign for Social Science. Without this support, the Campaign would not be able to deliver its many activities to promote and showcase the social sciences; particularly in demonstrating the relevance of social science evidence and expertise to public policy.

The ESRC (and its parent body UKRI) is gratefully acknowledged for the funding received in 2025 to support the EDI Project. The Academy matched the ESRC support contribution with in-kind staff and website support. We also thank the donor whose gift continues to support our strategic development and the donor who has supported the Embedding Social Science Infrastructure project throughout 2025. We respect their wishes to remain anonymous.

Our Campaign Supporters in 2025

- Sage (Campaign sponsor)
- Anglia Ruskin University (Silver)
- British Sociological Association (Silver)
- City University London (Bronze)
- Durham University (Bronze)
- King's College London (Silver)
- Lancaster University (Silver)
- Newcastle University (Gold)
- Royal Holloway University of London (Bronze)
- Swansea University (Silver)
- The London School of Economics and Political Science (Silver)
- The University of Edinburgh (Silver)
- The University of Manchester (Silver)
- The University of Sheffield (Silver)
- The University of Warwick (Silver)
- University College London (Silver)
- University of Birmingham (Gold)
- University of Bristol (Silver)
- University of East Anglia (Silver)
- University of Essex (Bronze)
- University of Exeter (Gold)
- University of Glasgow (Gold)
- University of Leeds (Bronze)
- University of Oxford (Silver)
- University of Southampton (Gold)
- University of Stirling (Silver)
- University of Strathclyde (Silver)
- University of Sussex (Silver)
- University of the West of England (Silver)
- University of York (Bronze)

Our people

The Academy is governed by its Council (Board of Trustees) and supported by six specialist committees, all consisting of leading social scientists, most of whom are drawn from the Academy's Fellowship. The Academy's Council has overall responsibility for the charity, and its members act as Directors for the company. The Council is chaired by the President and comprises 21 members, one third of whom are elected by the Fellowship, one third by our member social science societies, and one third are appointed by the Council.

We thank all of our council and committee members for their ongoing, guidance, commitment and support.

The Council in 2025

- Stephen Aldridge FAcSS (retired June 2025)
- Professor Tim Allen FAcSS (retired June 2025)
- Professor Lisa Anderson FAcSS
- Professor Linda Bauld FAcSS
- Professor Richard Black FAcSS (Honorary Secretary)
- Professor Tim Blackman FAcSS
- Professor Janet Boddy FAcSS (elected June 2025)
- Professor Sara Carter FAcSS (Honorary Treasurer from June 2025)
- Professor Simin Davoudi FAcSS
- Tricia Dodd MBE
- Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS (Chair, Campaign for Social Science Board, retired December 2025)
- Professor Eileen Green FAcSS (retired June 2025)
- Will Hutton FAcSS (President; and Chair, Learned Societies CEO Committee and Remunerations Committee)
- Dr Megan Lawson (elected June 2025)
- Professor Tony McEnery FAcSS (Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee; retired June 2025)
- Professor Chris Millward FAcSS
- Dr Utsa Mukherjee
- Professor Judith Phillips OBE FAcSS (Honorary Treasurer, retired June 2025)
- Professor Sally Power FAcSS (retired June 2025)
- Professor Ian Rivers FAcSS (Chair, Academic Fellows Search Group)
- Dr Heather Rolfe FAcSS (elected June 2025)
- Professor John Scott CBE FBA FAcSS (Chair, Nominations Committee)
- Professor Imogen Tyler FAcSS
- Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams FAcSS (elected June 2025)
- Professor Kavita Vedhara FAcSS
- Professor Jackline Wahba FAcSS (elected June 2025)

Committees of Council

- Audit and Risk Management Committee
- Campaign for Social Science Board
- CEOs-Chief Officers of Learned Societies Committee
- Executive Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Remunerations Committee

The Academy of Social Sciences

c/o Knox Cropper LLP
5 Floor, 65 Leadenhall Street
London, EC3A 2AD

+44 (0) 300 303 3513



www.acss.org.uk



office@acss.org.uk



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The Academy of Social Sciences is the national academy of academics, practitioners and learned societies in the social sciences. The sector's leading independent voice in the UK, we champion the vital role social sciences play in education, governments and business.

The social sciences include: anthropology; business, finance & management; criminology; development studies; economics; economic & social history; education; geography; law; linguistics; planning; politics; regional studies; sociology; social policy; social psychology & health sciences; social statistics & methodologies; tourism and leisure studies.