ACADEMY
of SOCIAL
SCIENCES

CAMPAIGN
for SOCIAL
SCIENCE

Annual Review 2023

Promoting understanding of our contemporary human world

Contents

From the President

I'm pleased to introduce the Annual Report for 2023 - a year filled with activity which built on the momentum of previous years and advanced progress in many areas of the Academy's work.

This past year has shown growing recognition of the value that the social sciences bring to our everyday lives. Within government and policymaking, this is illustrated, for example, by the breadth of social science related topics and research fields represented in the UK Government's new Areas of Research Interest database. In education settings across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, increasing numbers of students are choosing to study social science subjects, with psychology, sociology, business studies, economics and geography ranked in the top 12 most studied subjects at A Level in 2023.

The Academy's work over the past 12 months has served to build on this wider context and has been reflected in the engagement shown with our activities. The Academy's second year of its podcast, the We Society, was most successful with over 152,000 listens across the 16 episodes and in reaching the top of the science and social science Apple pod charts. The recently published policy report, *Reimagining the recipe for research and innovation: the secret sauce of social science*, was covered by various sector media including *Wonkhe*, *Research Professional*, *Times Higher Education*, the *Financial Times*, the LSE Impact blog and *Nature*. While the Campaign for Social Science's events programme throughout the year attracted over 3,000 registrations.

This year has not been without its challenges, with significant changes to a small staff team, but under the excellent leadership of the Chief Executive and a renewed, motivated and highly capable team in place, the Academy has delivered strongly against its strategic objectives and laid solid foundations ahead of the next strategy cycle.

As our influence and networks grow, I am reminded that it is our community who makes the work of the Academy possible. I thank our trustees and committee members for their guidance and governance of the Academy, the dedicated staff team for ensuring we continue to deliver against our mission, and our Fellows, member social science societies and Campaign supporters for their ongoing support in all that we do.

Will Hutton FAcSS

From the CEO

2023 was the final year in our current strategy cycle (2020-2023). The past three years has seen the Academy grow its scope of work, its external profile and reputation; and its core income. The Academy has also modernised its visual identity; professionalised its operations; developed its fundraising and new partnerships; managed the risks arising from Covid-19; built its staff team; and created a sustainable platform for future growth in its work and the organisation.

2023 was a year of three distinct parts. The first was in refreshing our strategy for the next five years (2024-2029). Led by the Executive Committee, consultations were held widely with Academy committees, Fellows, learned society members, staff and other stakeholders. The outcome is a progression from the former strategy, ambitious in its scope, with a new addition to our six objectives which recognises the importance of enhancing the public's engagement with the social sciences.

Secondly, we saw a significant change in our staff. We appointed to three posts vacated through job changes, career shifts into research, and retirement; and to two newly funded posts. We used the opportunity to restructure some roles and the new team members, who mostly started in the first half of the year, got off to a great start. We also warmly thank those team members who left the Academy for their many contributions over the years. We end 2023 with the decision to remain a virtual organisation for the foreseeable future and with a staff team of nine, the majority of whom work full time and deliver core activities.
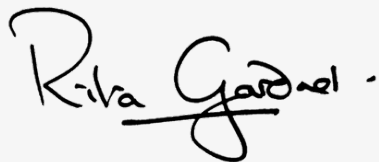
Thirdly, the summer and autumn in particular was the focus of much externally-facing activity. Part of this was in bringing to successful fruition initiatives that had been agreed, and funded, in very late 2022, and which required new ways of working, new areas of work and new partnership collaborations. Three stand out and are described more fully in the succeeding sections of this report: the EDI strategic partnership with ESRC (UKRI) and learned society members; and the two major policy reports on social science research. The latter used data-driven approaches to evidence the substantial contributions and impacts of the social sciences collectively, and in association with STEM.

Both reports launched in January 2024, attracting excellent media coverage and both will underpin the Academy's advocacy for the social sciences in 2024 and beyond. These three projects also mark important milestones: a strategic partnership and associated funding from the ESRC; and the first major collaboration between the Academy of Social Sciences and the British Academy (BA). Professor James Wilsdon FAcSS, the team at Digital Science and

Professor Melinda Mills FBA FAcSS and her team are warmly thanked for their work on the policy projects, as are Academy staff and colleagues at the BA.

There were other step changes in the Academy's work too, notably in the We Society podcast series, hosted by President, Will Hutton; in the launch of a new Campaign for Social Science hub and UK-wide events programme entitled 'Election 24'; in the standing of our academic journal, *Contemporary Social Science*; and in our communications activities. All promote the social sciences in different ways; to public audiences, to decision-makers, to the academic community, and in expanding our social media and web presence generally.

None of this could have happened without the vital contributions of trustees, committee chairs and members, the many Fellows who brought expertise and time, and our staff team, not least those who ensure our operations, including the high-profile conferment of Fellowship and membership, run smoothly and professionally. Finally, the Academy also ended the year well financially with a modest operating surplus and some helpful returns on our invested reserves. Warm thanks to all involved.

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 to promote the social sciences in the UK for public benefit. We showcase, champion and advocate for the social sciences, raising awareness – in policy, business and with the public – of their immense value in understanding our contemporary human world, while also working to help secure a flourishing future for the social sciences sector.

Our distinguished Fellowship of 1,600 leading social scientists from academia, the public, private and third sectors has expertise covering the full breadth of the social sciences. Their evidence-led research and practice addresses some of the major challenges facing communities, society, places and economies. Our 48 member social science societies (learned societies) cover the full breadth of major disciplines, and many of the sub-disciplines and study areas, that collectively comprise the social sciences.

The Academy's Campaign for Social Science demonstrates how social science improves public policy, society and all our lives. It highlights the value of applied social science research and advocates for its greater use in decision-making and in government.

Our vision

The social sciences flourish in the UK and sustain their world leading stature. They are widely valued for their contributions to society, economy, environment and well-being; and led by confident and capable communities of academics and other professionals, learned societies and students.

Our mission

To enhance and safeguard the social sciences in research, professional practice, and education; and to champion and foster the understanding and application of social sciences in policy, business and public life.

Our strategic objectives for 2020-2023

The Academy's strategy for the period 2020-2023 was underscored by six objectives which set the medium-term framework for our work in delivering our charitable purpose.

- **To champion the social sciences**: promoting the vital role of social science in improving decision-making, society and lives.

- **To sustain the health of the social sciences in research and education**: enabling a thriving and confident community.

- **To recognise excellence in social science**: with an expert and engaged Fellowship.

- **To widen participation and skills in the social sciences**: recognising the importance of social mobility, diversity and employability to people and society.

- **To foster innovation and application of the social sciences**: informing and helping to address challenges of our time.

- **To ensure a sustainable future for the Academy of Social Sciences**: as the only body that exists solely to represent social sciences in the UK.

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 2023 our work addressed five of the objectives.

Image: President's lunch in 2022 © AcSS

Key highlights

100,000+
website visits

2
major new policy
reports completed

£68,780
in funding awarded as part of
our collaborative EDI Project

152,381
listens on all We Society
podcast episodes in 2023

12
partnered and
co-badged events

4,000+

REF Impact Case Studies analysed as part of '*The SHAPE of Research Impact*' report

48

member social science societies

103

new Fellows elected

152,000

downloads of articles in *Contemporary Social Science* journal

32

new comment pieces for our Campaign hubs

3,000+

registrations for Campaign for Social Science events

Championing the social sciences

Throughout 2023, the Academy has continued to champion the social sciences in the UK. Primarily through its Campaign for Social Science, the Academy has worked to demonstrate the contribution of social science research and practice to addressing key challenges and opportunities facing the UK and the wider world, so that what they contribute to society is better understood, valued and used by a wide range of audiences, including policymakers and the wider public.

Engaging the public through the We Society podcast
Season three and four of the Academy's podcast, the We Society, saw host, Will Hutton, invite leading social scientists, practitioners and thought leaders to discuss some of the most pressing challenges confronting the UK and our world at this time. Guests included Professor Heaven Crawley discussing how migration can drive development, Polly Neate FAcSS exploring how we perceive housing in the UK, Kenan Malik on the history of racism, Professor Daniel Susskind discussing how livelihoods are set to change in the face of artificial intelligence, Minette Batters on whether farming can reach net zero, and Vivienne Stern MBE on the future of universities. The podcast reached the top spot in both the Apple podcast science chart and the social science chart, with the total number of listens exceeding 152,000 in 2023.

Image: Professor Daniel Susskind and Will Hutton recording an episode of the We Society © Daniel Susskind.

Social science policy insights ahead of a General Election

As part of our work to champion the social sciences and promote the vital role they play in improving decision-making, society and lives, the Campaign for Social Science launched *Election 24: ideas for change based on social science evidence*. Ahead of a likely UK General Election in 2024, this new project draws on the expertise of distinguished social scientists, many of whom are Fellows of the Academy, to identify evidence-led, positive and constructive policy suggestions on key policy areas including the cost-of-living crisis; climate change and living standards; health and social care; immigration; and higher education, amongst others.

Alongside a new hub on our website hosting 20 comment pieces, in 2023 we hosted two webinars discussing health inequalities and migration policy, and joined forces with Cardiff University at the Festival of Social Science to celebrate lifelong wellbeing in Wales, the University of Glasgow to explore the challenges of climate policy, the University of Southampton to discuss the possibilities of sustainable growth, and the University of Birmingham to examine wealth inequalities.

The project is ongoing, with further events, comment pieces and video recordings planned through 2024.

Promoting social science through the Campaign

In addition to the Election 24 project, the Campaign for Social Science offered a full programme of events in 2023.

The Campaign's flagship event, the Campaign for Social Science Annual Sage Lecture was delivered by journalist and broadcaster, Professor Gary Younge FAcSS, on Political 'Realism' in an Election Year. In the online lecture, Gary drew on research evidence to consider the changing nature of political discourse and electoral culture, spotlighting some of the policy areas covered by the Election 24 project. Professor Jane Green FAcSS provided a response to Gary's lecture, which was watched live by over 500 people, the majority drawn from public audiences. The networking reception that followed featured Will Hutton and Gary Younge in conversation on the state of British politics and political culture today.

The Campaign collaborated with its corporate sponsor, Sage Publications, to deliver three events in the Social Science Perspectives series on gender
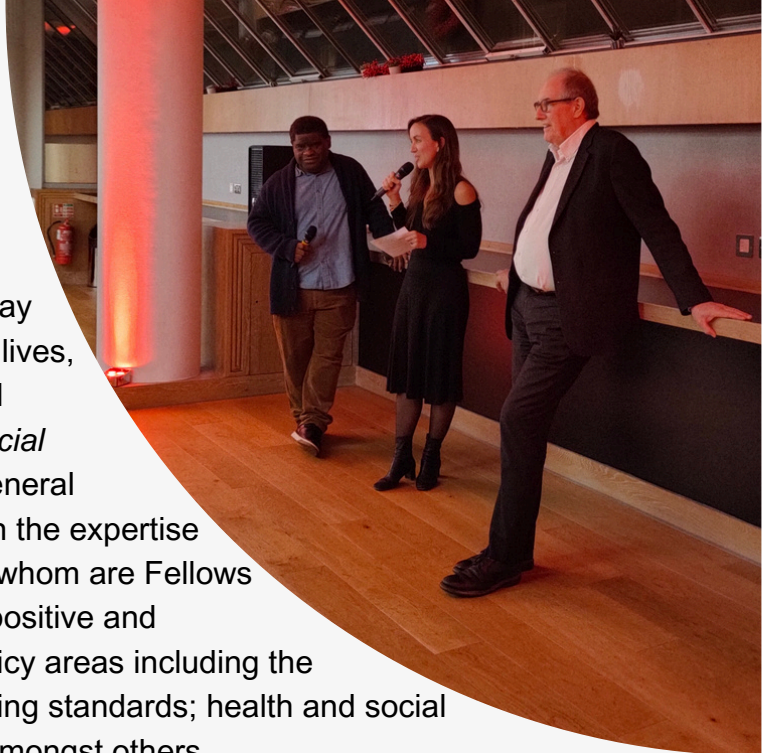
Image: L-R: Professor Gary Younge FAcSS, Katie Metzler and Will Hutton in conversation © AcSS

in UK politics, the impact of AI across society, and migration and environmental displacement. The Campaign also collaborated on events with its university supporters at King's College London, University of the West of England Bristol, and Anglia Ruskin University.

As well as the many new comment pieces provided for the Election 24 project, the Campaign further enriched its website content with an additional 12 comment and analysis pieces across its other online hubs that provide social science insights and perspectives on Covid-19, living standards and levelling up, and climate and sustainability.

A 'Supporters in Action' case study collection comprising exemplars of applied social science research impact from across all the Campaign's 34 supporting higher education institutions was also launched in 2023.

Image: L-R: Councillor Satvir Kaur, Professor Chris Armstrong, Alice Brock, Professor Jane Falkingham OBE FAcSS, Professor Jagjit Chadha FAcSS and Councillor Daniel Fitzhenry at an Election 24 event in partnership with the University of Southampton © AcSS

The secret sauce of social science

While the UK's talent pool has significant strengths in the social sciences, current UK Government initiatives have placed a strong priority on new technologies and STEM related research and innovation. During 2023, the Academy worked in close collaboration with Digital Science and Professor James Wilsdon FAcSS to publish a report emphasising the vitally important, yet often poorly understood, role of the social sciences to the UK's current research, development and innovation system.

'*Reimagining the recipe for research and innovation: the secret sauce of social science*', sets out four distinct ingredients the social sciences contribute to helping STEM research to be applicable to the wider world, and emphasises the need for a research culture and funding that reflects that symbiosis.

The report presents four themes that the social sciences contribute to the UK's research and innovation system which are summarised as:

1) **Social sciences enable whole-systems thinking.**

2) **Social sciences are critical for good policy development.**

3) **Social sciences underpin smart and responsible innovation.**

4) **Social sciences are essential to international collaboration and tackling shared global challenges.**

The report, published by the Campaign for Social Science and Sage Publishing, was launched at a roundtable event in early 2024 with senior figures from ESRC, UK Government, Higher Education and broader civil society in attendance. Following the launch, the report was covered by various sector media including *Wonkhe*, *Research Professional*, *Times Higher Education*, the *Financial Times,* the LSE Impact blog and *Nature*. An accompanying policy briefing was produced and shared with key parliamentarians and ministers to highlight the key findings of the report to inform future decision making in this space.

Sustaining the health of the social sciences

The Academy is a leading advocate for the social sciences in the UK and works to influence governments and other decision-makers on matters of policy, funding and infrastructure that underpin the 'health' of the social sciences. Where appropriate we advocate collaboratively with our learned society members. In 2023 a key focus was in gathering evidence to underpin our advocacy.

Advocating for social science with government
Throughout 2023, the Academy developed a suite of briefings setting out our position on a number of key policy issues, including international students, employability of social scientists, numeracy and the social sciences, and ensuring a thriving social science research community in a challenging research and development landscape. Member learned society inputs also helped inform our response to key policy announcements during the year on research fellowships, Horizon Europe association and the UK's net zero plans.

As part of our advocacy work in 2023, the Academy responded to consultations on plans for REF 2028 and how population statistics are compiled, in addition to widening our public affairs network through correspondence with Ministers, civil servants and parliamentarians about policy related to the health of social science.

To encourage and help facilitate our wider communities to engage with social science inputs into policy work, the Academy continued to publish a monthly policy monitor, which lists the consultations and inquiries from the UK's four legislatures and governments that require social science evidence. A monthly policy update on recent news in the policy sphere which related to or impacted the social sciences in the UK was widely shared with and beyond the Fellowship.

The SHAPE of research impact

At the end of 2022, the Academy, in its first major collaboration with the British Academy, commissioned researchers at the Leverhulme Centre for Demographic Science to assess the value of research in the social sciences, humanities and arts (SHAPE) disciplines and its global societal impact. Led by Professor Melinda Mills FAcSS FBA the programme of work analysed the REF2021 Impact Case Study dataset to establish a robust evidence base for the Academies, higher education sector and policymakers to explore and articulate the value of SHAPE research both in the UK and around the world. The work was done throughout 2023.

The resulting report, '*The SHAPE of Research Impact*', uses a range of powerful examples to demonstrate the ways in which social sciences, arts and humanities research is an investment in innovation, in people and in places, with diverse impacts across a range of policy areas. Some of these emphasise SHAPE's world-leading impact across the globe, spreading knowledge, improving lives and bolstering the UK's position and global status.

'*The SHAPE of Research Impact*' demonstrates how research in the social sciences, arts and humanities is:

1) **Bolstering UK expertise and strength in areas of competitive advantage**

2) **Tackling societal challenges**

3) **Helping to understand people and empower communities here in the UK**

4) **Spreading beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to create impact**

5) **A smart investment, with impact providing value for money**

The report was launched in January 2024 with a webinar hosted by author and journalist Dr Gillian Tett OBE FAcSS and was attended by over 100 individuals from the higher education and policy sectors. Media coverage was secured in *Research Professional*, with further articles from the Academy focused on how university-based social science research is contributing to tackling societal challenges published at *Times Higher Education* and the Higher Education Policy Institute's blog.

The Academy worked with the British Academy to develop accompanying messaging documents to share with policymakers focused on the report's key messages, plus an additional briefing document specifically highlighting the value of social science research impact to the UK.

Building relationships

Following the establishment of the Forum for Leaders in Social Science in 2022, which offers a knowledge sharing and discussion space for those with executive and lead responsibilities for the social sciences in universities, 2023 saw Professor Nick Vaughan-Williams FAcSS succeed Professor Richard Black FAcSS as Chair. Meetings throughout the year continued to be well attended and offered the opportunity for members to discuss a range of topical issues being faced by the community.

In addition, the Academy continued to build upon its strategic relationships and alliances with other UK organisations and international sister bodies in support of the social sciences. It also further developed its wider networks in support of the promotion of and advocacy for the social sciences with policy and decisionmakers.

Image: Networking at President's lunch in 2022 © AcSS

Recognising excellence in the social sciences

The Academy recognises and celebrates excellence in social science research and application through its highly regarded Fellowship. It also works closely with, and supports where possible, the strong community of learned and professional societies in the social sciences, most of whom are affiliated member societies.

At the close of 2023 the Academy membership comprised 1,528 paid Fellows and 48 member social science (learned) societies.

Fellowship
The Academy welcomed 103 new Fellows during 2023 from across academia and the public and private sectors, conferred for their eminence, impact and wider contributions to social science. All Fellowships were peer reviewed to ensure the Academy continued to sustain excellence in its professional community and were conferred in two rounds during the year. The retention rate remained high at 93%.

22% of new Fellows self-identified as from ethnic communities; 40% identified as women; and 85% were from the academic sector. The latter underrepresents the extent of Fellows' involvement in 'practice' as many academic Fellows are engaged in applied social sciences. The number of nominees residing in England was 73%, and 20% were from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We are grateful for the work of our Nominations Committee (chaired by Professor John Scott CBE FBA FAcSS) and our Practitioner and Academic Fellow Search Committees, chaired respectively by Andy Ross FAcSS and Professor Ian Rivers FAcSS. We also thank our Fellows and member learned societies for their nominations. Fellows are warmly thanked for contributing their expertise to a range of the Academy's activities throughout the year, including speaking at events, submitting comment pieces to our themed Campaign hubs, as guests on the We Society podcast, featuring in our 'Meet our Fellows' series, as committee

Image: Some of the Academy's Fellows L-R, top to bottom: Prof. Paresh Wankhade, Prof. Judith Harford, Prof. Franklin Obeng-Odoom, Prof. Helen Kennedy, Prof. Huck-Ju Kwon, Prof. Neil Pollock, Prof. Tanya Wyatt, Prof. Onyeka Osuji, Prof. Gitanjali Nain Gill, Prof. Stephanie Decker, Prof. George Saridakis, Prof. Anya Ahmed and Prof. Tejendra Pherali.

members and much more. In particular, 242 (16%) contributed insights to our online strategy consultation, a figure well above sector industry standards.

2023 Public honours

We congratulate our Fellows who were recognised with public honours for their contributions to the social sciences in 2023.

- **Professor Sir Vernon Bogdanor CBE FBA FAcSS**, Professor of Government, King's College London, who was awarded a Knighthood for services to political science.
- **Professor Dame Diane Coyle FAcSS**, Bennett Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, who received Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for services to economics.
- **Dr Kevin Daly FAcSS**, Co-Head of Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa Economics at Goldman Sachs' Global Macro Research, who received an OBE for services to economics.
- **Professor Jane Falkingham OBE FAcSS**, Professor of Demography and International Social Policy, University of Southampton, who received a CBE for services to demographic research.
- **Professor Becky Francis FBA FAcSS**, Chief Executive Officer, Education Endowment Foundation, who received a CBE for services to education.
- **Andrew Haldane FAcSS FRS FRSA**, Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Arts, who received a CBE for services to the economy and public policy.
- **Professor David Halpern FAcSS**, Chief Executive, The Behavioural Insights Team, who received a CBE for public service.
- **Professor Kate Pickett FRSA FFPH FAcSS**, Professor of Epidemiology, University of York, who received an OBE for services to Societal Equality.
- **Professor Tim Vorley FAcSS**, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean, Oxford Brookes Business School, who received an OBE for services to enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Member Learned Societies

Learned societies and professional bodies in the social sciences are at the heart of the Academy as independent bodies affiliated to the Academy through membership. They represent distinct disciplines, interdisciplinary areas, and professional communities, and bring subject specific depth to complement the Academy's social science sector-wide breadth of excellence. Collectively, the Academy and member societies are a large and robust pan-community voice for the social sciences and social scientists.

The Academy actively engaged with its member learned societies throughout the year to encourage networking, knowledge sharing, capacity building and collaboration on advocacy. In 2023 we retained 100% membership of our 48 societies. These include the lead learned societies for the major social science disciplines, together with many of those representing sub-disciplines and cross-disciplinary areas. We thank them for being part of the Academy.

Our Member Learned Societies in 2023

- Association for Psychosocial Studies
- Association of Law Teachers
- Association of Professors of Social Work
- Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK
- Behavioural Science and Public Health Network
- 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
- Joint University Council of the Applied Social Sciences
- 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 Evaluation Society
- University Association for Contemporary European Studies

The CEOs and Chief Officers of the societies met, as usual, on a termly basis to discuss topics ranging from charity commission updates, to the ACCESS programme of social science leadership in climate and environmental challenges. In particular, the Academy and its member societies worked ever more closely together to help advance Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) in the social sciences, in collaboration with the ESRC (page 19). The subgroup Virtual Conferences Network met monthly to exchange insights on operational challenges of running events.

Annual Lecture

Our flagship event of the year, the Academy's Annual Lecture, was delivered by Professor Lucie Cluver FAcSS, who explored the role of social science in protecting us against future global threats. Attended by Academy Fellows and members of the public, Lucie drew on her policy-focused research on the vulnerabilities faced by children and adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa to discuss the questions, challenges and possible solutions that have begun to emerge in the face of shared threats to society.

Contemporary Social Science Journal

The Academy's interdisciplinary and international journal, *Contemporary Social Science*, continued an active programme of work. During the year, Editor, Professor David Bailey FAcSS published highly topical, themed issues on Covid-19, sport and society; People, places and policies beyond Brexit; and Levelling up or down? Regional inequalities in the UK. A general issue involved a mix of early career researchers and well-established names.

For the first time, the journal has a two-year impact factor (IF) of 2.4, and it was ranked sixth in social sciences in the emerging sources citation index (ESCI). In 2023, the journal sustained its upwards trajectory, receiving 152,000 downloads, a growing social media presence and high altimetric scores on many recent papers.

Warm thanks are extended to publishers Taylor & Francis (T&F), and in particular to Jonathan Manley who retired in December 2023.

Image: Professor Lucie Cluver FAcSS delivering the Academy's 2023 Annual Lecture © AcSS

Widening participation & skills in the social sciences

The Academy supports widening participation and skills in the social sciences in principle and in practice. It raises awareness among decision makers, employers and students of the skills and employability of social science graduates; and it promotes and shares good practice in equality, inclusion and diversity (EDI) in education and higher education.

As part of our work to widen participation and skills in the social sciences, this year, the Academy launched its EDI partnership project, a joint programme between the Academy of Social Sciences, its member social science societies and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, UKRI). The project aims to encourage and facilitate greater awareness of, and actions to support, EDI across member social science societies and disciplines, by working together to share resources, learning and to increase the potential to effect real and positive change.

Sharing good practice
To share knowledge efficiently with our member learned societies, the Academy launched an EDI resource hub which drew together free good practice EDI guidance – more than 100 resources – from across the Academy, our member societies and other organisations. Specifically, it focused in 2023 on how to embed and prioritise EDI across six areas: governance and leadership, funding, membership, events, publishing, and research groups and networking communities. It also features resources related to accessible design and inclusive language.

Supporting EDI initiatives in the higher education sector
As part of our EDI Project, the Academy in partnership with ESRC awarded just under £69,000 in small grants to support five EDI initiatives and interventions by the Academy's member social science societies. After a competitive round of bids from over 40% of the learned societies in the Academy's network and careful consideration, an independent external assessment panel awarded funding to the Royal Statistical Society, the Royal Economic Society, the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Leisure Studies Association, and the British Psychological Society and the British

Educational Research Association (joint bid).

The projects encompass a range of initiatives, aimed at specific areas of challenge in each of the discipline areas. The learning from these has the capacity to be transferred and scaled across the wider learned society network, providing invaluable insight to support EDI progress across social science communities and beyond.

Reporting on the state of EDI in the social sciences
Following a request from member learned societies, the Academy procured and commissioned analyses of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and POLAR4 data. The purpose is to provide systematic insights on the state of EDI in higher education within the social sciences as a whole and in individual social science disciplines. The resulting summary data report, published in 2024, provides top level analysis of how the social sciences are faring across EDI characteristics. It paves the way for member learned societies to interrogate and analyse data on their specific disciplines, to help inform their ongoing EDI work.

Ensuring a sustainable future for the Academy

As the only body in the UK that exists solely to represent the social sciences, in 2023 the Academy continued to work to ensure its future as an independent, effective and respected champion of social science, with sufficient and sustainable funding, and strong community support, was maintained.

Refreshing the strategy

A key area of work throughout the past year has been the formulation of the Academy's next five-year strategy which outlines our objectives for promoting social science in the UK for public benefit between 2024 and 2029. The process was led by the Executive Committee and informed by consultations with Academy Fellows, Council members, Executive Committee, Campaign Board, our member learned societies, Academy staff and other stakeholders. This activity allowed us to engage with our communities to understand what they see as priorities for the Academy's work and for ensuring its future.

This refreshed strategy has six strategic objectives:

1) **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 social science and STEM.

2) **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.

3) **Foster strong, skilled and diverse pipelines of social scientists** for the benefit of the social sciences, society, employers and individuals.

4) **Grow the public image and understanding of social science** with the long-term aim of achieving parity of public recognition with science and technology.

5) **Recognise and support excellence in social science**, recognising that the UK is a world leader in this sector and that the social science 'ecosystem' needs nourishing.

6) **Ensure a sustainable future for the Academy** and its work to 'promote social sciences in the UK for public benefit'.

We look forward to working with all of our communities over the next five years in delivering on the strategy.

Raising our profile

The Academy's communications activities throughout 2023 built on its previous success by establishing consistent and regular communications activity on social media, through our website and via our monthly e-newsletter, to further raise our profile. 2023 saw the Academy establish its presence on LinkedIn for the first time to reach new audiences and increase awareness of the Academy's work. In addition, the website has been further developed providing opportunities to celebrate new Fellows and share the Academy's activities, and news from the social sciences sector more widely, with our audiences.

Retaining support

Strong working relationships with the Academy's Fellows, member social science societies, Campaign supporters, and other funders and supporters were maintained and strengthened in 2023. All four communities are pillars of the Academy's future and add substantially to our work. The Academy's retention levels for its Fellows, learned society members and Campaign supporters remained very strong in 2023, with a further three universities joining the Campaign for Social Science and expanding our supporter base. ESRC (UKRI) are warmly thanked for funding the new EDI partnership project.

Financial overview

The Academy's financial statements are presented in a new format from 2023 that shows more clearly how expenditure relates to our main areas of work in the year, which in turn relate directly to our strategic objectives. Thus, there is alignment for the reader between strategy, work accomplished, and expenditure.

Thanks to strong support from those who fund our work, and to our prudent budgeting and well managed cost controls, we ended the year with a modest positive outturn on both the Academy's unrestricted operations and the Campaign's dedicated (restricted) operations. The new EDI project operated for its first year in 2023 within budget.

Incoming resources totalled £702,371 (2022: £466,642) split between core (unrestricted) £373,653 (2022: £341,682) and restricted £328,718 (2022: £124,960) funds. The major income sources are shown in Figure 1, with member subscriptions comprising almost 50% of total income and around 90% of the unrestricted income. Donations/project funding and Campaign supporter sponsorships account for the majority of the restricted income.

The increase over 2022 in unrestricted income reflects a combination of inflation increases applied to Fellows subscriptions in January 2023 (6%) plus increased income from investments. The increase in restricted income represents growth in the number of Campaign supporters (income of £216,218 in 2023 c/w £174,405 in 2022) and funding for the new EDI partnership project in 2023 (£112,500). [Please note that the restricted income in 2022 is a net figure after subtracting end of project return funds.]


AcSS Income 2023
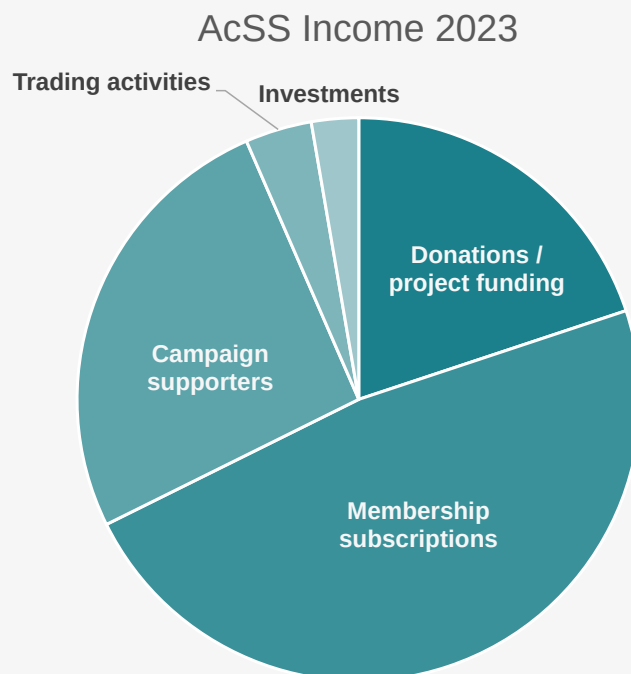
Once again, we had strong, sustained and very welcome support from those funding our core work: our Fellows (93% subscription renewal rate); social science society members (100% renewal rate); and Campaign supporters and

sponsors (100% renewal rate). We are immensely grateful to those who believe in what we do to promote the social sciences and we thank you all warmly.

Total expenditure in 2023 was £643,681 (2022: £618,804). Of that, the unrestricted expenditure was £348,977 (2022: £303,566) and restricted funds expenditure £294,704 (2022: £315,238). The increase in unrestricted expenditure also reflected a contribution to the SHAPE of Impact project in association with the British Academy and an increase in staff costs. The largest single component of restricted expenditure was on the Campaign for Social Science activities, of £179,378 (2022: £160,283). The slight drop in restricted expenditure overall reflected the changing balance of work across other projects. Staff costs across the organisation were, as usual, the single largest item of expenditure.

AcSS Expenditure 2023
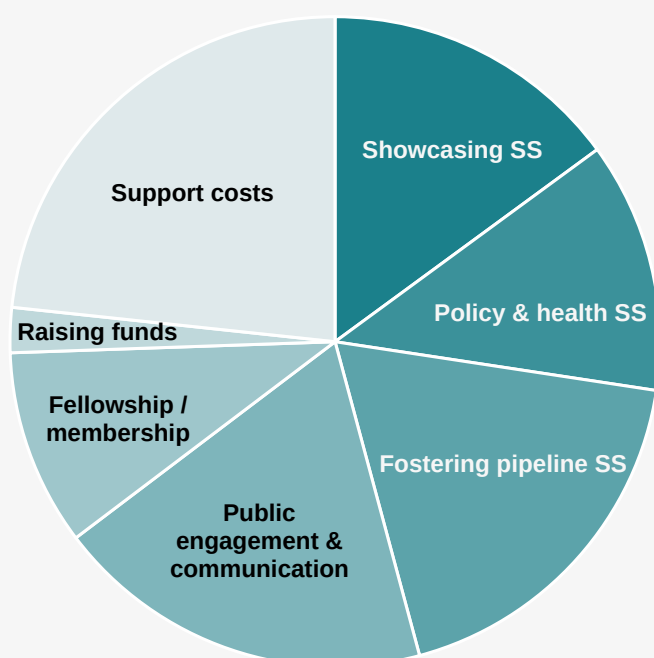
The total expenditure is displayed across the main areas of Academy operations in Figure 2. Broadly equal sums were expended in our work to showcase social science, on policy and advocacy for the 'health' of the social sciences, and in our new EDI project which was the focus of work to foster a diverse and strong pipeline of social science talent. A slightly higher proportion went on public engagement and communications, which reflects the costs of production of the podcast series in addition to developing our communications activities. Remaining areas of expenditure were on the administration of Fellowship and membership and a modest sum spent directly on raising funds. Support and governance costs are distributed across these operating areas in ratio to the staff costs.

At the 2023 year end, the balance sheet stood at £654,134 (2022: £589,783), of which restricted funds comprised £367,865 (2022: £331,528). The majority of the latter relates to two programmes – the Campaign for Social Science (£218,829), and strategic development (£117,999). The unrestricted general fund reserves stood at £285,269 (2022: £258,255). The Academy is thus well placed to invest modestly over the coming years in new initiatives in support of its Strategy, 2024-29, while retaining sufficient reserves (a minimum of 50% of annual expenditure) against the significant risks in its funding environment.

Our supporters

In 2023, the Academy's work was supported by its Fellows, in many different ways, including sharing their knowledge and expertise, using their contact networks, assisting us in matters of good governance and in making Fellowship nominations, ensuring our professional community is continually renewed. Their time, energy and effort are freely given and they are very warmly thanked for their support. Fellows' subscriptions also underpin the core funding of the Academy and its work.

The Campaign for Social Science was sponsored in 2023 by 34 UK universities from across England, Scotland and Wales, the British Sociological Association, and by lead commercial sponsor, Sage Publishing. Without this support the Campaign would not have been able to progress this year with new activities to promote the social sciences and in particular to showcase the role of social science evidence relevant to public policy. Nor would the Academy have been able to be as active in its policy work to support the standing of the social sciences. We thank them all, and we particularly thank Sage for enabling us to commission data analyses that helped inform our policy report, *Reimagining the recipe for research and innovation: the secret sauce of social science*, and for partnering on, and providing technical assistance for, the Campaign Annual Lecture and other Campaign events. We also extend our thanks to those Campaign supporters who partnered with us on numerous events as part of the *Election 24: ideas for change based on social science evidence* project.

The ESRC (and its parent body UKRI) is gratefully acknowledged for the £112,500 received in 2023 to support the EDI Project. The Academy matches the ESRC staff support contribution with in-kind staff and website support.

Finally, we thank the major UK donor whose donation of £200,000 continues to be used to help our strategic development. We respect his wish to remain anonymous.

Image: Dr Fern Davies and Professor Chris Taylor at an Election 24 event in partnership with Cardiff University © AcSS

Campaign supporters in 2023

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

Our people

The Academy is governed by its Council (Board of Trustees) and supported by six specialist committees, all consisting of eminent social scientists mostly 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. They have responsibility for ensuring the Academy operates within its charitable objectives, providing strategic direction and monitoring of the Academy's performance against annual workplans. The planning, organisation and delivery of the work of the Academy is delegated to the Chief Executive and her staff team. The Council is chaired by the President and comprises 21 members, one-third of whom are elected by the Fellowship, one-third by member social science societies, and one-third are appointed by the Council. Trustees serve a three-year term, renewable for one further term of three years.

Some of the Academy's staff team: L-R: Dr Rita Gardner, Dr Sarah Jones, Annie Hogan, Theresa Flach, Dr Elizabeth Norman-Sargent, Dr Ed Bridges and Amy Williams © AcSS

The Council in 2023

- Stephen Aldridge FAcSS
- Professor Tim Allen FAcSS
- Professor Lisa Anderson
- Professor Nic Beech FAcSS (Honorary Treasurer)
- Professor Richard Black FAcSS
- Professor Tim Blackman FAcSS
- Professor Tony Cook CBE FAcSS
- Professor Bobby Duffy FAcSS (Chair, Campaign for Social Science Board)
- Professor Eileen Green FAcSS
- Will Hutton FAcSS (President; and Chair, Learned Societies CEO Committee and Remunerations Committee)
- Lord Bob Kerslake FAcSS (passed away 1 July 2023)
- Professor Simon Marginson FAcSS
- Dame Jil Matheson FAcSS (Honorary Secretary)
- Professor Tony McEnery FAcSS (Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee)
- Professor Judith Phillips OBE FAcSS
- Professor Sally Power FAcSS
- Professor Vicky Pryce FAcSS
- Professor Ian Rivers FAcSS (Chair, Academic Fellows Search Group)
- Professor Sash Roseneil FAcSS (retired June 2023)
- Professor John Scott CBE FBA FAcSS (Chair, Nominations Committee; elected June 2023)
- Professor Imogen Tyler FAcSS (elected June 2023)
- Professor Kavita Vedhara FAcSS

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's staff

- Dr Rita Gardner CBE FAcSS
  Chief Executive
- Dr Sarah Jones
  Director of Operations
- Dr Ed Bridges
  Head of Policy and Public Affairs
- Steve Grundy
  Senior Campaign Manager
- Amy Williams
  Senior Communications Manager
- Annie Hogan
  Membership and Database Manager
- Dr Elizabeth Norman-Sargent
  EDI Programme Manager
- Ian Williams
  Finance Manager
- Theresa Flach
  Events and Engagement Officer

Looking ahead to 2024

We look ahead to 2024 as the start of our next strategy period with a renewed sense of focus in promoting the social sciences for public benefit in the UK. Our refreshed, outward-looking strategy to 2029 outlines a number of ambitious areas of activity, including work to embed social science evidence and mindsets more fully across governments and decision-makers. In addition, the Academy's team will align further our work to showcase and advocate for social sciences and build on existing work to grow the public image and understanding of social science, safeguard its health in secondary education, higher education and research, and seek to enhance EDI across the social sciences and to foster diverse and flourishing future generations of social scientists.

The UK is facing major challenges, from accelerating environmental change to economic productivity, housing provision, and an NHS under severe pressure, to name but a few. These are multi-dimensional issues that transcend departmental structures. The new government will require cross-disciplinary evidence to help in formulating and implementing policy, including much social science evidence. In 2024 one of our foci will be a major new research-led project to explore if, and how, the UK Government's evidence infrastructure could be developed so as to deliver better outcomes.

Working with our communities, we look forward to implementing this and other elements of our action plan for 2024 as a step towards our vision to see the social sciences widely valued for their contributions to society, the economy, environment and wellbeing, supported by capable and inclusive communities of academics and other professionals, learned societies and students.

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.