

# DISORIENTATION GUIDE 2023/24

# Contents Note

This guide covers a wide variety of topics and issues, some of which may be distressing. We advise all students to be mindful of this whilst exploring this guide. A complete list of the topics discussed and covered can be found in the contents pages.

The content of this guide has been produced with contributions from innumerable students and community groups. The views and experiences represented are diverse and do not align with any one organisation, political purpose, vision of the city, or with Cambridge SU as a charity. They share the common project of community-building, of looking after each other and our environment.

The groups listed in these documents aren't affiliated with or endorsed by Cambridge SU, but have reached out to or worked with the Welfare & Community officer to put together a brief summary of their work. Their words are their own, and are not statements made or endorsed by Cambridge SU. Pages written by contributors are marked as such, with 'written by ...' in the top right-hand corner of the page. The resulting guide is a collage of ideas and entry points into the landscape of Cambridge. It makes no claims to authority.

The guide aims to burst bubbles, to resist the siloing of struggles, and the individualisation of the issues we face living and studying in Cambridge. As we fight for justice, meet the people who make us happy, build the communities that give us hope, I encourage us to remember the words of Diane Di Prima:

NO ONE WAY WORKS, it will take all of us  
shoving at the thing from all sides  
to bring it down.

-Harvey

# (Dis)contents

<b>Contents Note</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>(Dis)contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introductions</b>	<b>8</b>
Introduction to disorientation	8
Principles for General Navigation	10
How this guide was built	11
Cambridge Resilience Web	12
<b>Health and Wellbeing Support</b>	<b>13</b>
Briefing: Mental health in Cambridge	14
Student Advice Service	15
Concrete Rose	16
Spotlight on: University Welfare Support	17
the politics of care	17
Student Wellbeing Service	18
University Counselling Service	18
Mental Health Advice Service	18
Harassment and Violence Support Service	19
Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC)	20
Sexual health	21
Gender expression funds	22
Exams	23
Reasonable Adjustments	23
Cambridge Alcohol Action	24
Cambridge Nightline	24
Spotlight on: Intermission	25
Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)	26
Fundraising	26
Volunteering	26
Disciplinary Reform Action Group (DRAG)	27
LGBT+ mental health support	28
Spotlight on: Harm reduction	29
Support for Gambling Harm	30
End Everyday Racism	30
Racial Harassment Advisor	31
Options for reporting misconduct, harassment and discrimination	32
Briefing: A short timeline on racist incidents in colleges	33
How to: stay safe around the police	34
Know your rights (Network For Police Monitoring guidance)	35
Reading List: Health and Wellbeing	36
<b>Cost of living and working</b>	<b>37</b>
Questions	37
Briefing: Cambridge City cost of living and working	38
Cambridge Community Kitchen	40
Funding	41
Crane's Fund	41
Other funding	41
Universities and Colleges Union (UCU)	42

Justice4CollegeSupervisors	43
Briefing: Joining a Trade Union	44
But what have unions ever done for us?	44
Spotlight on: Marketisation	45
Cambridge Defend Education	47
Cambridge Solidarity Fund	48
Briefing: uncomfortable Cambridge university history	49
Spinning House & Cambridge University Constabulary	49
Protests Against the Admission of Women	49
The Grafton Centre/the Kite	49
Living Wage	51
Karim Foundation	51
Briefing: what does your college pay its staff?	52
Key findings	52
Cambridge City Foodbank	53
Briefing: Unions in Cambridge	54
Reading List: Cost of Living and Working	55
<b>Studying in Cambridge</b>	<b>56</b>
Questions	56
How to: make the most of your degree	57
Cambridge Latin American Research in Education Collective (CLAREC)	58
Spotlight on: Workload	59
Briefing: the Reading Week	61
Spotlight on: lecture capture	63
Cambridge University Public Engagement Team	64
Spotlight on: Decolonisation	65
The university and colonialism	65
What is decolonisation?	65
Briefing: materiality of colonialism in university	67
Reading List: Studying in Cambridge	69
<b>Land and housing</b>	<b>70</b>
Questions	70
Spotlight on: town/gown divide	71
Cambridge Land Justice	73
How-to: Live out of College	75
House viewing tips	75
It Takes A City: supporting our homeless neighbours	76
1: Winter Accommodation:	76
2: Modular Homes	76
3: Help In Your Hands:	76
4: How you can support our work:	76
Volunteer	76
Donate and fundraise	77
Basic Information and Signposting	77
Embrace	78
Jimmys	79
Briefing: Universities and homelessness	80
City council housing support	81
Risk of homelessness	81

Support for houseless people	81
Renter support/housing advice service	81
ACORN	81
Spotlight on: rent	83
How-to: do rent negotiations	84
How-to: organise a rent strike	85
Briefing: rent strike wins	87
Reading List: Land and Housing	88
<b>Communities</b>	<b>89</b>
Questions	89
How-to: Find Community in Cambridge	90
Briefing: Community events	91
Cambridge Bike Party	91
Illumina Cambridge Fireworks Night	91
Mill Road Winter Fair	91
Cambridge Pride	91
Cambridge Solidarity Hub	92
Briefing: LGBT+ students of faith	93
Cambridge Majlis	94
A New Perspective	95
Briefing: what is your role in organising	95
FUSE	96
SU BME campaign	97
How-to: send an FOI	98
Trans Liberation Cambridge	99
Cambridge Queer History	99
LGBT+ Campaign	100
Trans inclusion guide	100
How-to: facilitate a meeting	101
SU Women's Campaign	102
Cambridge University for Reproductive Rights	103
Cambridge Women's Resource Centre	104
Cambridge Citizens	105
SU Disabled Students Campaign	106
How-to: Make your events accessible:	107
SU Class Act campaign	108
Spotlight on: Access to Cambridge	109
SU Access Schemes:	109
University run schemes:	110
College schemes:	111
External Schemes:	111
SU International Students Campaign	113
Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum	114
How-to: mapping power	115
Reading List: Communities	116
<b>Climate</b>	<b>117</b>
Questions	117
The climate crisis in Cambridge	118
Cambridge Climate Justice	119

Cambridge Climate Society	120
Cambridge Zero	121
Student Societies Climate Fund	121
Postgraduate Academy	121
Green Officers Network	121
Climate Cafes	122
SU Ethical Affairs Campaign	123
Briefing: green places to escape in Cambridge	124
Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination	125
Cambridge Sustainable Food	126
Plant-based Cambridge	127
Students Organising for Sustainability	127
Cam Valley Forum	128
Cambridge Doughnut Economics Action Group (CamDEAG)	128
Community growing spaces in the city	129
Friends of the Cam	130
Cambridge Friends of the Earth	130
ORCA for Environmental Liberation	131
Who are SLB?	131
How-to: Stay safe on a protest	132
How to go on a protest	132
How to make a placard/banner	133
Briefing: recent climate wins (and battles to come)	134
Reading list: Climate	135
<b>Migration and international solidarity</b>	<b>136</b>
Questions	136
Briefing: Borders and universities	137
Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group (CamCRAG)	139
Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign (CRRC)	140
Demilitarise Cambridge	141
A Timeline of Demilitarise Cambridge	142
Spotlight on: Demilitarisation	143
Student Action for Refugees	145
Cambridge Refugee Scholarship Campaign (CRSC)	146
Cambridge University Freedom From Torture	147
Reading list: International solidarity	148
Cambridge University Palestine Solidarity Society (PALSOC)	149
Solidarity Hummus Recipe	150
Acknowledgements	151

# Introductions

## Introduction to disorientation

Cambridge University is a disorienting place. This is partly because it wasn't designed for most of us: its fortified colleges serve the same purpose of exclusion as its barely-manageable workload, its barely-navigable procedures, and its barely-mentioned history of violence. After decades of marketisation, students are customers who are paying for a closed, rigorous few years of academic excellence.

The aim of the disorientation guide is to open up the experience of being a student at Cambridge. To be open about how hostile, lonely, and overwhelming this place can be, and why it's like this. To be clear that support is there, and easier to access than you think. And to open up possibilities to make your university experience different to what university culture expects of you: the burnout ('academic rigour'), the oppression (quirky Cambridge 'tradition') and the normalised precarity of existing in this unaffordable city. The last of these guides was published in 2019, so as a fresher I didn't really have any resources which were honest with me. I wish someone had told me that I wasn't alone in feeling out of place, unwelcome, overwhelmed, or politically hopeless.

The disorientation guide is a primer for landing in Cambridge (which is so much more than the university). It starts with three principles:

- 1) Everything is not alright, despite what they're telling you
- 2) If you think everything is not alright, you're not alone
- 3) This is where you can find those of us who refuse to accept this status quo and will work to change it.

This guide is intended to replace the communities of care which naturally develop while you're studying here, but to accompany them. This guide was designed by students who know how hard living in Cambridge can be, but who know a more democratic, more sustainable kind of education exists, and have seen it modelled in corners of this strange place: on picket lines, in community kitchens, and city-wide celebrations. It calls you to trespass out of the 'Cambridge bubble'.

The university is so much more than its workload, its bureaucracy, and the conditions currently imposed on us. This guide believes wholeheartedly that we are the university, and, as we build student and staff power, we can transform it.

- Harvey Brown, Welfare and Community Officer, Cambridge SU 23/24





## Principles for General Navigation

- 1) Don't read it all. Keyword search (Ctrl-F) is your friend. You know best what you're interested in and what you need. Getting involved in any of these organisations will automatically link you into the work of many others. Nothing happens in a bubble.
- 2) Bring friends. Whatever you're looking to get out of this guide, don't keep it to yourself. Getting involved in something new can be scary, so it's nice to try things with others.
- 3) Be honest with yourself and others. There are no contracts here, but be honest about your commitments. Everything in here is voluntary - try things out, see what works: this is what university is about. But don't commit to something you won't be able to follow through on. Capacity may vary, but be honest and open about what yours is. If others aren't: ask them.
- 4) Ask for wishlists. Ask what a person or an organisation needs before you try to help them. They know best, and you can't build relationships by assuming what others need.
- 5) Don't try and know it all. This guide doesn't pretend to be comprehensive. It's a start, but be open to learning with others, from others, and in community.
- 6) Be gentle with yourselves and others. Be accountable to each other, understand when others get things wrong, but recognise when harm is done and how it can be repaired. If we've messed up somewhere, or you're not happy with this guide, you can help us do better next time by reaching out to [welfare@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:welfare@cambridgesu.co.uk).

## How this guide was built

- 1) The archive: Cambridge has an incredible radical history which has been archived by generations of students and local activists. In consultation with some of them, we have reproduced some of the features of previous Disorientation Guides, SU reports, and archive zines.
- 2) The community: We reached out to a host of local organisations, who wrote their own entries - or asked to us to write one for them if there wasn't capacity - and recommended other organisations we could include. These entries were approved by the organisations themselves.
- 3) The resilience web: linked at the end of this introduction, the resilience web is a map of social action in Cambridge. You can explore activism and volunteering by theme, and explore the ecosystem of people working to improve life in our city.
- 4) The SU: Cambridge SU is the representative body for all students at the University of Cambridge. The groups listed in these documents aren't all affiliated with or endorsed by Cambridge SU, but are communities and spaces in which students are welcome. We encourage students to engage in new spaces with the safety and welfare of themselves and others in mind. Community-building is one of our five organisational values, and as a student union, we've produced this guide because we know students find community in many different ways, and want to encourage our members to do this intentionally and with a knowledge of the wealth of movements for change which exist in this city.

## Cambridge Resilience Web

The Cambridge Resilience Webs are interactive digital maps of most environmental and social justice related organisations working within and for the Cambridge area. These webs are separated into three: the City, Anglia Ruskin and the University of Cambridge.

These webs are a tool to help you find organisations to link with, volunteer at, or otherwise reach out to. We believe there is a lack of crosstalk and visibility between the multitude of Cambridge-based groups working towards the same common good and we hope to combat this in the long run.

Explore the wide range of social justice organisations in Cambridge here:  
<https://resilienceweb.org.uk/>

# Health and Wellbeing Support

## Questions

I'm struggling to adapt to life in Cambridge?

How do I take a break from my studies (intermit) and what support is available to me?

I feel overwhelmed and don't know what to do?

How can I access gender-affirming resources in Cambridge?

Where's the support for care-experienced students like me?

Where can I access sexual health products?

I'm worried about my substance use, where should I go?

How can I access sexual violence support services?

## Briefing: Mental health in Cambridge

When you arrive in Cambridge you will probably be briefed on 'welfare': how to contact the college nurse, who your college welfare tutors are, and how to register for a GP. In the university and the city there are so many organisations who can provide support when you need it.

The welfare system is vast and often confusing, but many of the organisations listed here can help you navigate it, particularly the Student Advice Service, who have helped compile this guide. The Stepped Care model adopted by the university is a useful way of categorising the services provided by the university.

These services are improving, but the increasing demand for them indicates that expansion of welfare-provision cannot come without structural change to how the university operates.

Termtime is exhausting, for our bodies and our minds. Resting, although sometimes encouraged, is made difficult and inaccessible by intense workloads and normalised burnout ('week 5 blues'). This is a global issue: 35% of 19,000 students surveyed in 2018 reported experiencing mental ill health, with contributing factors including demanding workloads, pressure to succeed and financial stress. Marketised UK Higher Education is also failing staff, with 55% of lecturers reporting extreme stress or mental illness, according to a [2019 YouGov](#) survey.

Alongside these vital mental health services, then, we must organise for structural change in Cambridge and beyond, whether that's reforming and standardising the intermission process, fighting for a reading week, or campaigning for increased access to free and accessible healthcare.

These battles must occur alongside fighting the underfunding of the NHS and other state support services, and approaching community health as a collective problem. We need holistic solutions, from more control over our working environments, to improved access to the natural world and biodiverse spaces in which we can rest and explore.

Collective care is how most of us get through university, and most of life, so just as important as the resources listed in this guide is looking out for each other, making time to care and support your friends and neighbours. This, ultimately, is the only way to orient yourself in Cambridge.

## Student Advice Service

The Student Advice Service offers free, confidential, and impartial advice and support to all Cambridge University students - undergraduate and postgraduate - from any College or course. You can come to the Student Advice Service with any issues or problems you might experience as a student, from making friends to working relationships, from exams to intermission, and from welfare concerns to finance.

We are here to help you navigate your way through the Collegiate University informally and formally. We can support you by:

- Explaining and guiding you through University and College procedures
- Helping you to explore your options
- Providing assistance and/or representation
- Signposting to other services
- Listening
- Providing information

We can provide this support in person, by email, phone and video call.

You can request an appointment with an Advisor, send an email or submit an enquiry here <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/student-advice-service/contact/>

You might also wish to access the advice and resources provided on [these pages](#), attend any information sessions or workshops the Service is hosting that are relevant to you and get in touch as soon as possible if you have a question or need advice.

## Concrete Rose

(Written by Concrete Rose)

Concrete Rose is a local organisation providing pastoral support and accommodation to young people and students facing challenging circumstances.

We provide mentoring support for care-experienced, estranged and/or independent students. Students can sign-up to receive weekly, one-to-one support from a local volunteer mentor.

Mentors provide an extra layer of support and are people students can turn to for advice, guidance and encouragement. All mentors are thoroughly vetted, trained and supported.

We also hold social events which give an opportunity to develop peer support networks with other care-experienced, estranged and/or independent students.

Students can sign up to mentoring here: <https://forms.office.com/r/HgPFrgG2tQ>  
Find out more on our website [www.concreterose.co.uk](http://www.concreterose.co.uk) or get in touch via our social media at:

Email: [alison@concreterose.co.uk](mailto:alison@concreterose.co.uk)

Facebook: Concrete Rose Collective

Twitter: @ConcreteRoseCIC

## Spotlight on: University Welfare Support

While mental ill health will vary according to individual circumstances and needs, the university now uses a 'stepped care' pyramid to categorise their wellbeing resources according to student needs. You know what kind of intervention will meet your needs best, and you don't have to have 'gone up the steps' to access the care you need.

Level 1: preventative care and early intervention: support from personal tutors, supervisors, J/MCR welfare officers and the Student Advice Service.

Level 2: preventative care and early intervention: the newly-created Student Wellbeing Service's advisors, College wellbeing advisors, your Director of Studies, and University Counselling Service support.

Level 3: 'mild to moderate risk of impact to functioning' including 1:1 counselling, whether that's from the UCS or your college counsellor.

Levels 4 + 5: emergency support if mental illness is having a significant effect on your everyday life. College and University staff members can refer you to the Mental Health Advice Service, and longer term medical interventions can be organised through NHS services. You can also always dial NHS 111 Option 2 if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

### the politics of care

Care is about more than response to crisis, however. Care is political: care means building communities which look after all of us. How do you do this among your friends? Your neighbours? Is care work something which disproportionately falls on people of whom it is traditionally expected (e.g. women, people of colour)? Who isn't being cared for in our communities?



## Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Service supports taught and research postgraduates. The service offers online and in-person appointments and is available through the academic year, including the summer months. Postgraduates can self-refer for an initial appointment. We work collaboratively with postgraduates on mental health and wellbeing areas including:

- exploring support options and resources with a consultation appointment
- support with challenges which may be impacting on your life, studies or research
- applying evidence-based strategies for maintaining or improving your mental health and wellbeing
- managing low mood, stress and anxiety, overcoming perfectionism or procrastination

## University Counselling Service

The University Counselling Service provides one-at-a-time therapy sessions aiming to reduce waiting times and support most students in one session. More sessions can be provided at the student's request. You can also access group workshops and self-help resources.

<https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>

## Mental Health Advice Service

The Mental Health Advice Service supports students with mental health issues that have a significant impact on their everyday lives or academic work. This service can be accessed by referral only from a College or University supporting staff member.

<https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/mha>

## Harassment and Violence Support Service

The Harassment and Violence Support Service provides practical and emotional support to students who have experienced sexual assault, violence or rape recently or in the past.

Sexual Harassment and Violence Advisors (within HVSS) can provide the following:

### **Trauma-informed emotional support:**

Supporting you to manage the impacts of sexual violence and/or intimate partner abuse.

Helping you to understand better how trauma can impact you.

Enabling you to develop positive coping strategies.

Supporting you to re-build your self-esteem.

### **Practical support:**

Providing you with impartial information around your options for reporting both within the University and externally.

Support to manage any difficulties/issues that have arisen due to the incident/s.

Supporting you through any reporting process you choose to engage with.

Signposting and referring you to appropriate support services both within the University and externally.

<https://www.studentsupport.cam.ac.uk/harassment-and-violence-support>

You can make an appointment directly with an advisor here:

<https://forms.counselling.cam.ac.uk/titanium/Hwc/Main/Menu>

The SU's WOMCAM have compiled a list of local and national resources for victims and survivors here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C6R2G1v-B34RdEwl84AVP4s6BeeXE6dEqqrGcfMkeqI/edit>

## Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC)

The Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre provides advice, information and support to all disabled students and students who have access requirements. The ADRC supports individuals with any disability, medical matter or injury. They can write a Student Support Document (SSD) for you, help you apply for assistive technology, and provide 1:1 support.

The ADRC can support you with:

- Disability Student Allowance (DSA). This is a grant for UK home students. It covers things like specialist equipment, some human support and additional travel costs.
- Other funding and grants.
- Funding if you're an international student.
- Recommending support while you study and exam access arrangements such as getting extra time in an exam.
- Specialist one to one study skills sessions, specialist mentoring and other human support.
- Screening assessment for dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, ADHD or Autism, and advice about getting a diagnosis.

Get in touch or make an appointment here:

<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/how-get-support/contact-and-find-us>

The SU Disabled Students Campaign also has a useful [Resource Library](#) based at the SU, and you can find more support and advice for Cambridge students on their website.

The DSC also runs several [online communities](#) (usually over Facebook), which are good port of call for welfare advice and sharing experiences.

## Sexual health

Every year, Cambridge SU distributes around 40,000 sexual health supplies to Cambridge students and our Welfare Officers also work in tandem with local charities to provide free STI test drop-in sessions.

J/MCR officers can order sexual health supplies for their college from the SU, and there should be a collection point in your college.

The iCash clinic on Mill Road offers free, routine sexual health screening kits which can be discreetly delivered to your address in plain packaging. They can also provide emergency contraception, HIV testing, PrEP and further support and advice:

<https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/contact-find-us/our-sites/lime-tree-clinic>

Check out the Student Advice Service's resources on sexual health (including emergency contraception, safe sex and consent) here:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/sexual-health-scheme/>

NHS sexual health hub:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealthtopics/Pages/Sexual-health-hub.aspx>

## Gender expression funds

Cambridge SU offer £50 grants for gender-expression covering:

- Costs of travelling to and from trans-affirming services
- Items such as binders, packers, breast forms, and concealing underwear
- Smaller items that aid in gender expression, such as clothes and make-up
- But it cannot be used to make donations to any charitable or crowdfunding initiatives e.g. GoFundMe.

Any registered student at Cambridge University can apply and you can expect a response within 5 days of application. Complete this form to apply: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/surveys/gefapply/>.

### Further support:

- Most college J/MCRs also run a gender-expression fund, which may have different criteria. Get in touch with your welfare officers to find out what support your J/MCR can offer.
- Action for Trans Health has a Solidarity Fund which opens at various times in the year and offers larger grants, usually up to £250: <https://actionfortranshealth.org.uk/fund/>

## Exams

### Reasonable Adjustments

The Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC) is the main source of support for students who require reasonable adjustments as a result of a disability, physical or mental health condition or injury. You can also ask your tutor for advice on reasonable adjustments and for support in applying for them.

The ADRC can provide eligible students with Student Support Documents (SSD) or summary emails to suggest reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to alleviate any academic disadvantage faced as a result of a disability or long-term health condition.

Adjusted Modes of Assessment (AMAs) could be put in place where an Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) does not adequately address the needs of a disabled student.

An AMA will relate to the specific needs of the individual student. Examples could include replacing a written examination with an essay, a portfolio of essays or a long extension.

<https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/colleges/examination-arrangements>

For more information on exam mitigation, exams affected by illness, and how decisions are reviewed, visit the Student Advice Service's Exams page.

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/exams/>

## Cambridge Alcohol Action

We are a group of students and residents of Cambridge campaigning for change on wellbeing and for better support for those affected by alcohol harm in the university and community.

We know the intensity of alcohol harm in Cambridge, and that too often it is treated as a disciplinary, rather than welfare, issue. We've collected resources on our Instagram about support services you can access in the local area and through national helplines.

We've also collected data on the millions that the university and colleges invest in alcohol corporations without contributing to services for the harm they cause, and are working on a campaign for divestment. If you want to get involved in this campaign, in our outreach project supporting young people affected by family addiction, or in any of our other work, please get in touch. We're keen to hear new ideas and support campaigns and events you want to launch.

For information on the state of alcohol harm and what you can do about it, as well as where you can find support, go to @cambridgealcoholaction + [https://linktr.ee/cambridgealcoholaction?fbclid=PAAaZCZ4IW07DLqQ3kpEo4xcRBk8epa4\\_Nl9mn5srRa5AslljNhhJjdAnsgE\\_aem\\_AVPrj7EliUhlKwVEfO8meklOfpCZnxcaAZVsXDwTosOzUivhX7o3EPNsxBZkzeCNfZM](https://linktr.ee/cambridgealcoholaction?fbclid=PAAaZCZ4IW07DLqQ3kpEo4xcRBk8epa4_Nl9mn5srRa5AslljNhhJjdAnsgE_aem_AVPrj7EliUhlKwVEfO8meklOfpCZnxcaAZVsXDwTosOzUivhX7o3EPNsxBZkzeCNfZM)

## Cambridge Nightline

Cambridge Nightline is an anonymous, confidential, non-directive and non-judgemental listening and information service for students of the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University. Nightline is run by students, for students.

If you would like to speak to a trained student peer listener during term time (7pm-7am), you can contact the Nightline listening and information service anonymously by live chat, telephone call, email or skype.

01223 744444

<https://cambridge.nightline.ac.uk/>

## Spotlight on: Intermission

Intermission allows you to take time out of your studies for reasons of medical or grave cause. This could include physical or mental illness, bereavement or unforeseen financial difficulties. The purpose of intermission is to allow students to take a complete break from your studies and alleviate any academic disadvantage you may face.

The process, however, is often unnecessarily difficult. In the SU's [2022 Intermission Report](#), 44% of respondents disagreed that the intermission system is fair. 75% disagreed that intermitting students are adequately supported. Several central University services, such as the University Counselling Service, are not available to intermitting students. Many intermitting students can't access vital college housing or welfare resources.

Even after returning from intermission, many students reported feeling lonely and only 45% agreed they were able to find community upon returning.

Intermission is a lifeline for many students, but it shouldn't be this difficult. The University has stated that they want to improve the intermission service, and the SU is fighting for increased welfare support during intermission, standardisation of intermission process, and access to university resources for intermitting students. If you've experienced intermission and want to support into this work, please get in touch with the SU Welfare & Community Officer.

Meanwhile, if you need support going through the intermission process, including templates for personal statements and advice for obtaining medical evidence, contact the SU's Student Advice Service (which is open to intermitting students!) or explore their online resource here:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/academic/intermission/>

You can also join the **Disabled Students' Campaign Intermission Solidarity and Support Group** on **Facebook**, where you can anonymously ask questions and get support from others with experience of intermission.



## Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)

(Written by CRCC)

Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) offer free specialist emotional, therapeutic and advocacy support to women and girls across Cambridgeshire who have been subjected to any form of sexual violence, no matter when the abuse happened.

Our counselling and advocacy support services are for survivors of all genders. CRCC is an LGBTQIA+ inclusive organisation.

If you have been subjected to any form of sexual violence, we are here for you with free and confidential support.

Website: <https://cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk/>

Email: [contact@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:contact@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk).

### Fundraising

Our work wouldn't be possible without the support and dedication of the amazing people who donate their time, energy and money to support those who need our services. However you want to get involved, it makes a huge difference! We're here to support you with your fundraising plans, ideas and any questions you might have.

One new way you can support is by joining us for the TTP Cambridge Half Marathon and raising vital funds to support local women and girls in our community. This fantastic flat course is great for first timers and experienced runners looking for a PB alike. We have charity places available or you run with us using your own place in the event.

For more information and to join visit: <https://cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk/cambridgehalf/>  
Or email us at [fundraising@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk).

### Volunteering

We're always looking for people to join them, bringing their passion and skills to supporting survivors of sexual violence and abuse. We have volunteer roles in three areas of the charity: emotional support, fundraising and trustees.

For more information visit our website or email [volunteering@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk).

## Disciplinary Reform Action Group (DRAG)

(Written by DRAG)

We are a group of students campaigning to improve the disciplinary procedures for making a complaint in the University through the 'Office of Student Conduct Complaints and Appeals' (OSCCA), which has consistently failed students in delivering justice, particularly around sexual misconduct. OSCCA was created in 2017 as a result of student activism. We aim to continue the resilient and emotionally exhaustive work by student activists and SU officers, that fed into and pushed for this reform. We are generational, collective and resilient.

This year many of our 9 demands were successfully integrated into OSCCA's review of these demands, a result of persistent student activism. This activism has also led to the creation of a Racial Harassment Advisor, who sits within the HVSS and is taking up their post in October 2023.

The process of reporting remains, however, difficult and often re-traumatising. There remains a culture of silence and a lack of transparency in OSCCA's data. HVSS can help you with navigating the OSCCA process and provide welfare support, and the Student Advice Service have also produced a useful resource on reporting procedures:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/academic/discipline/>

To get involved in our ongoing campaign to reform the disciplinary procedure, reach out to Rosie, the SU Women's Officer, or Harvey, the SU Welfare and Community Officer. DRAG is also looking at variations in college procedures, to collectively design best practice disciplinary procedures in the collegiate university. Any Cambridge student is welcome to join the group:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/ourpriorities/liberation/reformthedisciplinaryprocedure/>

See our guide to the new OSCCA policy [here](#) and our latest blogpost [here](#) to understand more of our history.

## LGBT+ mental health support

For more resources get in touch with your college LGBTQ+ officer or the SU LGBT Campaign.

## The Kite Trust

We support the wellbeing and creativity of LGBTQ+ young people in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and surrounding areas through information, one-to-one support and groups, working exclusively with trans or gender-questioning young people.

<https://thekitetrust.org.uk/contact/>

### **MindOut LGBT**

MindOut is a mental health service run by and for lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer people. They work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities and to make mental health a community concern.

<https://www.mindout.org.uk/get-support/mindout-online/> / They do webchats, check their website for active times.

### **Switchboard**

Switchboard is an LGBT+ Helpline that aims to provide safe space for anyone to discuss anything, including sexuality, gender identity, sexual health and emotional well-being.

<https://switchboard.lgbt/> / Call: 0300 330 0630 / [chris@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:chris@switchboard.lgbt) (72 hour response time) They also have a webchat.

### **Mindline Trans+**

Mindline Trans+ is an emotional and mental health support helpline for anyone identifying as transgender, non-binary, genderfluid, etc.

<http://mindlinetrans.org.uk/> /

<http://bristolmind.org.uk/help-and-counselling/mindline-transplus/> / Call: 0300 330 5468  
Fridays 8pm to midnight

### **Mermaids**

Mermaids supports transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse children and young people until their 20th birthday (and offer student support for under 25s), as well as their families and professionals involved in their care.

<https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/contact-us/> / Call: 0808 801 0400 / Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm

### **Gendered Intelligence**

Gendered Intelligence is a charity that works to increase understandings of gender diversity and improve the lives of trans people. They have a lot of links to websites and resources.

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

### **Cambridge Diamonds**

They are a friendly and informal transgender and non-binary support and social group based in Cambridge.

<http://www.diamondstgc.org.uk/>

## Spotlight on: Harm reduction

At the SU we know that people take drugs for many reasons, and we want to minimise the negative impacts of drug use. As of 2023, we provide free drug-testing kits to allow you to test what your substance is in order to reduce the harm of taking an unknown substance:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/news/article/cambridgesu/Free-Drug-Checking-Kits-available-at-the-SU/> We are also encouraging J/MCRs to collect kits to distribute in colleges.

A harm reduction approach really isn't standard practice, however. Most Cambridge colleges' current rules dictate that even though welfare support is in place, drug taking

and possession is still a 'disciplinary offence'. Students can be temporarily/permanently 'sent down' - excluded - if they're found in possession.

These punitive measures discourage students suffering from substance abuse to seek help/support. A 2022 [report](#) by Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) highlights surveys that suggest just three in 10 students would be confident to disclose information regarding their drug use to their institution.

While we wait for higher education to change its approach, the team at the Student Advice Service have compiled a list of information and local non-punitive support services (outside of colleges) on our website:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/news/article/cambridgesu/Drug-Harm-Reduction-Resources/>

#### Harm Reduction Case Studies

**Keele University:** Keele has a duty of care to all its students and will ensure that support, advice and information is provided to any students who are experiencing problems with alcohol or drug misuse (this includes referral to suitable external services).

**University of the West of England (UWE):** UWE adopt a 'harm reduction' approach in which they provide a free Drugs and Alcohol Service to students who would like to discuss their substance use with a professional. They also aim to reduce the harm of alcohol and drug use by providing students with the knowledge resources to inform their decisions, stay safe and access additional support.

## Support for Gambling Harm

Are you worried about your own or someone else's gambling? GamCare provides information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling harms. Speak to one of our advisers on 0808 8020 133 or via live chat (Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

If you're between 11 and 19, you can also find information and support related to gambling at <https://bigdeal.org.uk/>.

## End Everyday Racism

End Everyday Racism is a resource to anonymously share your experiences of racism in Cambridge. Document your experiences as they happen—in college, offices, lectures, supervisions, dorms, porters lodges, departments, laboratories, etc—to add to a collection of stories from around campus.

Our project, based in the Department of Sociology, collects accounts from across the University, in order to understand how racism is experienced at Cambridge and advocate for institutional change.

Documenting everyday racist incidents validates these experiences and helps acknowledge them for what they are: unacceptable. No incident is too small or insignificant.

We've released two [reports](#) of our research since we launched in 2018, revealing the many ways in which students and staff witness racism in Cambridge.

You can get in touch and report your experiences here:

<https://racismatcambridge.org/report/>

## Racial Harassment Advisor

As a result of persistent student campaigning, the University appointed a Racial Harassment Advisor, based in the Harassment and Violence Support Service (HVSS).

They can provide the following:

### Emotional Support:

- A safe space to discuss your experience of racial harassment, discrimination, or violence.
- Helping you to explore the impacts and supporting you to manage these.

### Practical Support:

- Providing you with impartial information around your reporting options. They can advise you on how to raise your case formally either through a college procedure, with the University, or with the police.
- Support to manage any difficulties/issues that have arisen due to the incident/s.
- Supporting you through any reporting process you choose to engage with.
- Signposting and referring you to appropriate support services both within the University and externally.

## Options for reporting misconduct, harassment and discrimination

**University Anonymous Reporting:** Use this form to anonymously report inappropriate behaviour from students and staff members. No action will be taken, the information is recorded for monitoring purposes.

**University Report+Support:** Use this tool to report inappropriate behaviour of students and staff with contact details. A member of the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) will contact you within a week to discuss your options.

If reporting another student, you can raise an informal complaint - a mechanism used to reach a behavioural agreement, by limiting the interactions between the students which won't investigate the behaviour and it won't make any findings - or raise a disciplinary concern (more information can be found [here](#)).

If reporting the behaviour of a staff member, you can raise a **student complaint** through the Report and Support tool (more information can be found here: <https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-complaints>).

The full flowchart for OSCCA procedures can be found here: [https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/rs-flow\\_chart\\_students.pdf](https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/rs-flow_chart_students.pdf)

### **End Everyday Racism Incident report**

A safe and confidential way of recording racist experiences at Cambridge that have happened to you, someone you know or you've witnessed.

### **Report to your college**

Speak with your Tutor, College Discrimination & Harassment Contact or someone you trust in your College about your experience. When wanted you can ask about the formal procedures and how to initiate these. You can then formally report your experience using your College's relevant procedure, e.g. Harassment & Sexual Misconduct procedure, Complaints procedure or Discipline procedure.

### **Report to the Police.**

## Briefing: A short timeline on racist incidents in colleges

2018 - Dr Priyamvada Gopal [reports](#) being denied entry to King's College by porter, and head porter later refuses to address her as 'Dr'. Students come forward to [share](#) similar experiences.

2018 - the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic officer of King's College Student Union, [collects](#) evidence of profiling in the college by porters

2020 - porter at Clare who resigned as a city councillor over trans rights motion [remains](#) at college

2020 - End Everyday Racism release [first report](#), in which 78 community members disclosed witnessing or experiencing racism, with over 50% experienced in colleges. The report noted that "porters' impact on racialisation at the University of Cambridge is significant".

2020 - Catz [apologises](#) after a master's student is prevented by porter from entering college.

2021 - a PhD student delivering Covid-19 care packages for students at Trinity College [reports](#) 'racial antagonism' after porter stopped him. SU issues statement in response.

2023 - End Everyday Racism release [2nd report](#), in which further racist incidents were reported. The report echoes its predecessor's call for anti-racist training for porters.



## How to: stay safe around the police

Increasing police powers means that, more than ever, police powers may be used with impunity. The new Public Order Bill gives police forces more power to 'stop and search', which are already [disproportionately](#) used on people of colour. It is important, both for the welfare of the person being stopped, and to challenge potential police [abuses of power](#), to stop if you see someone being stopped and searched.

Given recent and historical police impunity, if you want to show up for friends and neighbours being stopped, you can use the acronym DROP IN to intervene:

### **D is for detained.**

You can ask the person if they are being detained. Note that being detained isn't the same as being under arrest. If they don't know, they can ask the police. If they are not being detained, they are free to walk away.

### **R is for record.**

We have the right to [film the police](#) and do not need their consent. You can ask the person if they are happy with you filming the interaction, and you can narrate your actions as you do so to provide clear evidence that you are not obstructing the arrest if an officer later claims this. At the end of the interaction, you can send the footage directly to the person if they are not taken to a police station.

### **O is for officer who?**

You can ask for the [name, rank, badge number](#) and station of the officers present. If they are plain-clothed, you can ask to see their warrant card. You can film their badge numbers, which should be visible at all times.

### **P is for under what power?**

You can ask the police under what power are they stopping the person. Most stops happen under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (MDA) or Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (S60).

Under both PACE and MDA, police need reasonable suspicion to stop someone. You can ask if the person stopped "fits a description". If so, that description needs to be more than just age, race and gender. Reasonable suspicion must include information or intelligence about, or some specific behaviour by, the person concerned.

### **I is for item.**

Reasonable suspicion also includes what item the cops are searching for. The police can only search you in places where the item can reasonably be found - if they're looking for a stolen bike, they do not need to be searching under someone's jumper.

### **N is for no personal details.**

Whether you are someone being stopped or an intervener, you do not have to give the police any [personal details](#) or answer any questions.

Know your rights (Network For Police Monitoring guidance)

Five key things to remember if you are approached or detained by the police:

#### No Comment

You do not need to answer police questions.

#### No Personal Details

You do not have to give them under ANY stop and search power.

#### No Duty Solicitor

The police will likely offer you a duty solicitor if you are detained. Instead, you can use a recommended solicitor with protest or other specialised experience.

#### No Cautions

Accepting a caution is an [admission of guilt](#).

#### What Power?

You can ask officers what power they are relying on to challenge them to act lawfully.

## Reading List: Health and Wellbeing

### Quick reads

General introductions to the themes of this chapter:

[‘Students are building their own support groups as universities fail to act on racism’](#),

Michaela Makusha, *gal-dem*, 2021

[‘Battling burnout: towards a regenerative activist culture’](#), Laurence Cox, *Red Pepper*, 2023

### In depth

Longer explorations of mental illness and how we could organise healthcare:

*Mad World: The Politics of Mental Health*, Micha Frazer Carroll (2023)

*Health Communism*, Beatrice Adler-Bolton and Artie Vierkant (2023)

### Fiction

Challenging fiction which explores illness and getting better:

*Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys (1966)

*Woman on the Edge of Time*, Marge Piercy (1976)

### In Cambridge

Short articles about specific struggles in our city:

[‘Burn-out, binge-drinking and being a function: on coping in Cambridge’](#), Harvey Brown, *Dispatches*, 2023

[‘How UK universities are dealing with a mental health crisis that has left a surge in students needing support’](#), Paul Gallagher, *iNews*, 2023

**Student Minds Cambridge** also has a great archive of blog posts here:

<https://studentmindscambridge.wordpress.com/our-blog-speak-your-mind/>

# Cost of living and working

## Questions

What grants are available to me as a postgrad?

Where can I access financial support for medical costs?

How can I financially support folks in need in the city? How can my college do this?

Why should I join a trade union?

Why should I support my striking supervisors?

What is marketisation and why won't the SU shut up about it?

## Briefing: Cambridge City cost of living and working

Cambridge is an expensive place to live. Many workers at the university, including student workers, aren't paid a real living wage and, even though Cambridge is as expensive as London, there is no Cambridge pay weighting.

Students, locals and staff across the city are feeling the accumulating burden of the cost of living crisis and over a decade of austerity. One in ten workers in the city finds themselves in insecure employment and foodbank use has more than doubled in less than ten years.

Meanwhile as the marketisation of higher education continues, conditions inside the university continue to decline, as high staff workloads and a managerial disregard for structural solutions to student and staff workload are dismissed. Academic workers have faced real-terms pay-cut of [25%](#) since 2009, and, whilst pension-cuts have been restored, the central University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), of which Cambridge is a member, continues to resist union calls for fair pay and conditions and tackling casualisation and sector-wide pay gaps.

There is a 19.6% gender pay gap among Cambridge academics, according to most recent data available (2017), while the race pay gap currently stands at 2.9%.

The university and colleges' relationship with the local community continues to exist on a spectrum from indifference to hostility, and the 'town/gown' divide represents the extreme economic inequality in the city.

Against the backdrop of both local and national austerity, people in Cambridge are organising to care for each other and fight for better. From Cambridge Community Kitchen to Cambridge City Foodbank, and many of the growing collectives listed on page 71, there are plenty of ways to get involved in fighting food poverty in the city. Cambridge Solidarity Fund provides no-strings cash grants for people who need it, and Cambridge Street Aid distributes grants to houseless folks in the city.

The trade union movement is resurging in Cambridge, with union organising across schools, the NHS and local universities. In the trade union movement, there exists an opportunity for students to become part of a community of workers who continue to struggle against exploitation.

As these struggles come together, we are coming to see what solidarity means in practice: dignity, community, and visions of a world in which all are free from oppression.



## Cambridge Community Kitchen

(written by CCK)

Cambridge Community Kitchen is a food solidarity collective dedicated to tackling food poverty in Cambridge. Every Thursday and Sunday we cook 250 free hot meals and deliver them to people around Cambridge.

As a collaboration between The Lockon, the local community and other independent volunteers, we aim to provide hot, hearty, vegan meals for anyone who needs one, while strengthening our community and building new systems for mutual care.

Students can go to our website and either volunteer for CCK or apply to receive free meals.

Volunteers can help with cooking, cleaning, admin, delivery, and other things too. There's a role for everyone to help out!

CCK is a great way to meet new people, take some time away from studying, and get to know the city by doing a delivery shift. A cooking shift is 4 hours long, from 3pm to 7pm, and will involve chopping, cooking, and chatting with other volunteers. Each shift will have a team lead and there's some induction videos which will help you orient yourself in the kitchen.

A delivery shift is 2 hours long and you'll get sent a route on your phone. Volunteers on bikes or in cars are welcome, and we recommend delivery shifts for anyone wanting to get to know Cambridge.

To sign up as a volunteer, find out more or to receive free meals visit <https://cckitchen.uk/> or email us at [cambscommunitykitchen@gmail.com](mailto:cambscommunitykitchen@gmail.com).

## Funding

### Crane's Fund

Crane's Charity is a fund available to students at the University of Cambridge who need treatment for physical or mental illness, which cannot be obtained under the NHS.

Examples of when funding might be provided include:

- medical, surgical, or psychiatric treatments

- items associated with such treatment (for instance, nursing home, convalescent accommodation, travel etc.)

- treatment for injuries resulting from accidents

Although you might wish to discuss your financial situation with your College Tutor, you can submit the application yourself. Crane's fund applications have to be approved before you pay for treatment - they can't be reimbursed retroactively.

Intermitting students are also eligible to apply for financial support from Crane's Fund.

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/medical-support-fund-cranes-charity>

### Other funding

It may be that, at some point during your studies, you find yourself in financial difficulties which have arisen as a result of unexpected or sudden changes in your circumstances. In this case, you can discuss your situation with a variety of people from both the College community and the University. In College, you can access support from your Tutor, Senior Tutor and, in some colleges, a Student Finance Officer or equivalent. You can also speak with an Advisor at the Student Advice Service who can help you explore options that might be available to you.

We've got a list of available funding here for both undergraduates and postgraduates, with specific funding available to estranged and care-experienced students:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/finance/>

Student money advice:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-finance-need-to-knows/>

Student budgeting planner:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/students/student-budgeting-planner/>

## Universities and Colleges Union (UCU)

(Written by UCU)

UCU is the trade union representing academic, academic-related and professional services staff at the University. We also have a large membership among PhD students. With around 1800 members across all departments and faculties, this means that lots of the people who teach, research, run the libraries, archives, museums and computer services are UCU members.



We would like to encourage students to support our campaigns and strikes as our working conditions are student learning conditions. We work for equality and against all forms of discrimination and oppression and we are fighting for a better Higher Education system for all.

We often work on campaigns with student organisations including the SU, for example over HE funding. Students can support their supervisors striking for better pay and conditions by joining the SU breakfast run programme, where students bring tea, coffee and solidarity to staff on the picket line. We sometimes have music too!

When we are on strike we have an open invitation to students to visit our picket lines and demonstrations and get involved in our teach out programme. Teach outs are where we turn the idea of university education into open and participatory forms of learning, where we challenge power and connect critical thinking about the world we live in with action to change it. Teach out sessions are often led by students or developed in collaboration with students and usually take place on picket lines or at our strike venues.

If you are interested in joining UCU as a member or learning more about our national fight for fair pay and conditions, please get in touch at: [comms@ucu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:comms@ucu.cam.ac.uk)

## Justice4CollegeSupervisors

(Written by J4CS)

We campaign for better working conditions for supervisors in Cambridge. The supervision system is broken, with supervisors overworked and underpaid, with a large proportion of us not even having contracts for our work. For both undergraduates and supervisors this is a bad thing, we are campaigning for better pay and contracts for all.

We've had an open letter with over 1200 signatures and over 600 supervisors deliver postcards to university and college admin staff. As a result of this supervisors will be paid for the mandatory training they have to undertake. The colleges however are not moving on pay and contracts, so we are building to a boycott of the supervision system.

If you're a supervisor who wants to support our fight for contracts and better pay, get in touch here:

Twitter: @CambridgeUCU

Email: [admin@ucu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:admin@ucu.cam.ac.uk)

## Briefing: Joining a Trade Union

By GMB Union

Trade Unions are a crucial tool in empowering, representing, and supporting young people in the workforce, yet youth membership in Unions is disproportionately low. Education has been heavily impacted by industrial action, yet not enough has been done to outline the benefits of Union membership to graduates entering a more precarious workforce with fewer employment rights. On top of this, half of all reps in the trade union movement are expected to retire in the next ten years, with insufficient numbers of young people ready to take the mantle. We think it's time to change things.

GMB Trade Union has set up a Young Workers network for all young people (workers, students, and activists), making sure that in our long careers, we can have a say in how we and others are treated in the workplace. We encourage working and non-working students to get stuck into our campaigns and start accessing the benefits of Union membership early on. For students currently working, or set to graduate, a GMB membership ensures you have a voice in the workforce and helps protect your rights.

From employment rights education, to campaigning with different workers (we represent Amazon workers, school support staff, retail staff, and more!), there is lots to get involved with. Whether you're a lifelong trade unionist, or just want to find out more, contact [jasmin.deans@gmb.org.uk](mailto:jasmin.deans@gmb.org.uk) or [madeleine.fisher@gmb.org.uk](mailto:madeleine.fisher@gmb.org.uk) and we can point you in the right direction.

But what have unions ever done for us?

The two day weekend

The 8 hour work day

Minimum wage

Negotiations with employers

Collective bargaining strength

Original trade unionists believed that an injury to one was an injury to all. They staged protests, coordinated strike action, and won better living and working conditions for all of us.

## Spotlight on: Marketisation

by 12 Pints Press

Marketisation is the process by which the logic of markets is imposed on an organisation. In higher education, this has meant a concerted attempt by successive governments to turn universities, which were previously (for all their flaws) *public institutions*, into *private corporations* competing to provide a product.

The marketised university competes to provide a product (degrees and other qualifications) to its customers (students). Marketisation has been at work in UK Higher Education since Thatcher's government in the 1980's; accelerating under Blair and Brown's New Labour government with the introduction of tuition fees and the National Student Survey; and fortified in 2010, when the Lib-Dem/Tory coalition government tripled tuition fees to £9000 and cut teaching funding dramatically.

The need to extract fees from students (under a regime in which fees are capped) is also behind the massive rent increases of the last decade and the increasingly lucrative and exploitative market for 'student accommodation'.

International students continue to face the highest fees in the marketised university, while simultaneously facing increasing bureaucratic red-tape and visa-insecurity in the wake of the 'hostile environment' policies ramped up in the last two decades.

Marketisation changes what the university *is*, and the kind of care it can provide. The university as a business is dependent on student fees (which, unlike public funding, are an asset that can be borrowed against, enabling speculative capital expenditure). The focus is less on actual service provision, but selling itself, expanding corporate partnerships, and protecting itself from potential dissatisfied 'customers'.

The only things that matter about teaching or learning to the higher education market are those things that can be measured, whether on a balance sheet or on a league table: "would you spend money here again?". The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), through which the market regulator, the Office for Students, officially grades universities' undergraduate teaching, is based mostly on metrics with no relation to teaching.

This has a huge effect on both working and learning conditions in the university. The increasing casualisation and real-terms pay-cuts of staff within higher education is a direct result of marketisation and attempts to cut costs (while vice-chancellors and senior managers continue to receive year on year pay rises). The bureaucracy which comes with market logic means increasing workloads for staff and metric-based performance assessment. Meanwhile, universities and colleges continue to outsource non-teaching contracts to cost-cutting external corporations, and often ignore the precarity of cleaning, maintenance and catering staff.

As students there are many ways we can resist marketisation. Simple actions, like boycotting the National Student Survey (NSS) sent to all final year undergraduates in the UK, are one way to resist the logic that our education is a commodity. Importantly, however, we must remember that the opposite of private is public, and universities like Cambridge have never been public. Cambridge University has been excluding and harming those outside its walls (online paywalls, figurative financial barriers, and physical walls are all included) [since its inception](#). It continues to ignore poverty on its doorstep and gatekeep its vast land-ownership in the city, keeping rents (not just student rents) high across Cambridge.

To oppose marketisation we must demand the opening up of the university: open access, democratic governance and free education. The distribution of university wealth, resources and prestige widely and for the benefit of everyone.

## Cambridge Defend Education

(Written by CDE)

Since our founding in response to Tory tuition fee hikes in 2010, CDE has been at the epicentre of student-staff solidarity work at Cambridge. We organise for a fair, just, and equitable university for all, where education stands not for private profit, but as a transformative catalyst for liberation - resisting the mandates of the neoliberal institution by insisting on the possibility of a university with freedom and radical imagination at its core.

Marketisation has underpinned ever-worsening pay and employment conditions for university workers, a downward spiral we believe students have a huge power - and responsibility - to resist. To this end, our work is marked by an unconditional solidarity with striking staff, through direct actions, picket-line support, and vital consciousness-raising within the student community.

Our organising is prefigurative. Through regular, open, and non-hierarchical meetings, we arrive democratically at consensus-driven strategies for this project of transformation, seeking to learn from, and care for, one another at every turn. We know that a resilient politics cannot exist in the absence of joy, and we forge friendships that fuel our fight. Our time together is urgent, determined, and committed - but very, very fun.

Join us or find us on social media for meeting dates and details of upcoming actions:

Instagram: @cambridgedefendededucation

Facebook: Cambridge Defend Education

Twitter @CamDefendEd

## Cambridge Solidarity Fund

Cambridge Solidarity Fund redistributes wealth among the residents of this city, which is known to be one of the most unequal in the UK.

We help folks who are in financial crisis - perhaps waiting for Universal Credit, unemployed due to the pandemic, or simply in work and still struggling to make ends meet. People are the best judge of their own needs, and everyone can apply for a no-strings-attached grant of up to £40 to help themselves to meet those needs.

And we help wealthy folks who believe in redistribution or tithing by making it a very easy thing to do! There are many ways you can support us as a student in Cambridge:

- 1) Donate! Whether you've got a surplus of student loan at the end of a term and want to make a one-off donation, or you can spare £5 a month, we know times are tough, but contributing to the fund is a great way to support your neighbours: <https://opencollective.com/cambridgesolidarityfund#category-CONTRIBUTE>
- 2) Put up our flyer. In your window, your J/MCR, that faculty noticeboard that's always a bit empty, you can message us for our flyer - we'd love to see it everywhere!
- 3) Talk to your college and campaign for them to support the community. What if Cambridge Colleges diverted a little (or a lot) of their money to folks struggling on their doorstep? Individual donations are fantastic, but organisations with the wealth and power of Cambridge colleges have a lot of redistributing that they could - and should - be doing.
- 4) Fundraise. Host a charity formal (although we're [not a charity!](#)), make some art with your friends and auction it for us, put on an open mic: these are just some of the ways that students and people in the community have supported us. We'd love to see your creative ways of supporting the fund.

Since launching in 2021, we've distributed over £65,000 back to the community, but we've never had this much demand. We open the fund once a month, and the last three months we have had to close applications within less than two minutes of opening.

Find out more about the fund, our principles of mutual aid, and how you can support us, contact us at:

<https://cambridgesolidarityfund.uk/about/>

Twitter: @SolidarityCam

## Briefing: uncomfortable Cambridge university history

While the university often celebrates its contribution to science and the many famous people who have walked through college gates, much of its history is swept under ornate carpets. Although these are just a few examples, their legacies, like the legacies of colonialism explored on page 37, remain. How does this history affect people's differing experiences of being a student in Cambridge? How does it affect living and working near the university?

### Spinning House & Cambridge University Constabulary

In 1825, four years before Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police, the Cambridge University Constabulary was founded. Thanks to the Universities Act of 1825 which essentially enabled vice-chancellors to create their own police force, university constables could police not only students, but the town itself. For the next 70 years, this police force [terrorised local people](#) - especially women, imprisoning suspected sex-workers and "small offenders", in the Spinning House on Regent's Street, a university-owned workhouse, in which many local people were incarcerated, and some [died](#). The constabulary technically still exists, although after it was challenged in court, it lost many of its police powers. Procter street patrols continued until the 1960's.

### Protests Against the Admission of Women

In 1897, as university fellows voted against granting women full degrees, thousands of male students celebrated by desecrating an effigy of a female student and marching on Newnham College. Another violent mob stormed the gates of Newnham in 1921, when a poll recommended the formal admission of women. The last College to admit women was Magdalene, in 1988, when the college flag was hung at half mast, with many male students, fellows and porters donning black armbands in 'mourning'.  
<https://thetab.com/uk/cambridge/2019/04/28/strippers-coffins-and-black-arm-bands-how-cambridge-reacted-to-the-admission-of-female-students-122516>

### The Grafton Centre/the Kite

In 1959, the university campaigned extensively for the demolition of the Kite – a majority working-class residential area – to make way for a car park and more amenities for students. Jesus College, as one of the major landowners in the area, used its significant power to lobby for the demolition, and in 1971, the council agreed to the university's proposals. Despite strong local resistance, the area was gentrified and the Grafton Centre was built a decade later. Today there is discussion of demolishing the Grafton to make way for science labs.

For more on the uncomfortable history of the university and the resistance to its power locally, visit Lost Cambridge <http://lostcambridge.wordpress.com> or check out the work of <https://www.uncomfortablecambridge.com/> .





## Living Wage

Is your college paying staff enough to live on?

The Real Living Wage (RLW) is calculated annually by the Living Wage Foundation, unlike the £9.50 minimum wage (£9.18 for under-23s), takes into account the cost of household goods and the cost of living. 2022's RLW was £10.90 for places outside of London, and the University of Cambridge, as well as 13,000 other accredited employers, pays the real living wage, as of 2022.

The annual Taylor's table, produced by the SU and the Living Wage Foundation, revealed in 2022 that only three colleges pay the RLW, with 13 colleges paying some employees less than minimum wage. Emmanuel College paid some of its student staff £6.83 an hour. Fitzwilliam College is in the process of accrediting.

If you believe all workers - young, student, casualised, outsourced - should be paid a real living wage, you can get involved with the SU's annual living wage table by contacting the Welfare and Community officer, or you can contact your college directly to see whether they pay their employees a real living wage.

## Karim Foundation

(Written by the Karim Foundation)

We aim to relieve poverty by providing food, fuel and emergency support for local people in financial hardship.

People who come forward for help will first be asked about their current circumstances and financial situation. This information will be carefully assessed by the Karim Foundation. Emergency financial support will only be provided to those who are in urgent need where they are struggling to buy food, heat their homes or pay their bills. The Karim Foundation can only help with gas and electricity if the need is extremely urgent.

One of the best ways that students can get involved is by fundraising for the Karim Foundation. In 2021, students from Hills Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge raised hundreds of pounds during Social Action Week to support locals in need.

[info@karimfoundation.co.uk](mailto:info@karimfoundation.co.uk)  
<https://karimfoundation.co.uk>

## Briefing: what does your college pay its staff?

The Living Wage campaign has historically been very active in Cambridge, and there's been some major wins across the city in the last decade. In 2022, after years of student and community organising, the University of Cambridge officially became a living wage employer.

The picture across the colleges varies wildly, however. Many colleges still don't recognise a union. Most do not pay all their employees a living wage. In parallel with the organising that workers are doing in the central university, college pay must also be scrutinised and acted on.

Last year, the Real Living Wage outside London was £10.90 (National Living Wage was £10.42). The year before (2021-22) it was £9.90. In 2021, Pembroke, St Edmund's, Churchill, Robinson, St Catharine's, Homerton, Wolfson, Lucy Cavendish, Fitzwilliam, Emmanuel, Magdalene, Peterhouse, and Clare Hall did not pay their workers a living wage, with Emmanuel paying workers the least with £6.83 an hour (student workers in their bar). The underpaying of workers in colleges - especially casualised workers - has, unfortunately, not changed.

With the launch of Cambridge Citizens, an alliance of institutions organised by Citizens UK who run the Living Wage Foundation, and a resurgence of trade union organising, now is a good time to turn attention back to miserly employers and the broader role of Cambridge Colleges in the city.

### Key findings

- One college accrediting, and minor improvements for six colleges in college staff pay, but picture hasn't changed dramatically from last year
- 11 colleges did not pay all directly employed staff a living wage in 2022/23
- Of unaccredited colleges claiming to consider/match RLW without formal accreditation, 66% did not meet standards required for RLW accreditation
- 9 Colleges do not hold data on how much external contractors/agencies pay their employees
- Emmanuel college bottoms the table again
- One college refused to disclose data for the first time
- Only one college uses London weighting for RLW, despite Cambridge being as expensive as London

## Cambridge City Foodbank

(Written by Cambridge City Foodbank)

Cambridge City Foodbank distributes food parcels to people experiencing hardship in Cambridge, as well as advice and support through our partner organisations including Citizens Advice. With our team of volunteers we run eight welcome centres and two social supermarkets, as well as regular food donation drives. We're working to end poverty in Cambridge by collaborating with other anti-poverty organisations, and organising the foodbank community to campaign for change.

We're building a campaign team to combat the local causes of poverty, led by people with lived experience of the issues that bring people to need the foodbank. We need people to get involved because the need for foodbanks is rapidly increasing - after already increasing 127% between 2015 and 2021 -and we are distributing more food than we are receiving in donations.

This is not sustainable, and it's not right that the basic needs of some in our community can only be met through generous donations by the public. We're starting off by getting involved in the Trussell Trust's campaign to get the UK government to guarantee that the level of social security payments is enough to afford the essential items like food and heating.

If you want to get involved in our local campaign to get the government to Guarantee Our Essentials, send us an email. You can also organise a donation drive in your college or society. And we're always looking for volunteers so if you can spare some time on a regular basis head to our website to find out how to start volunteering.

[Cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk](http://Cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk)  
[trusselltrust.org/essentials](http://trusselltrust.org/essentials)

For getting involved in Guarantee Our Essentials contact [kate.mcintosh@ccfb.org.uk](mailto:kate.mcintosh@ccfb.org.uk)

## Briefing: Unions in Cambridge

Many trade unions have been taking industrial action in Cambridge over the last few years. Going to a picket line is a great way to show solidarity with striking workers, whether you just go to say hi, bring baked goods, or organise a group of students to support. If you're near a picket line, it's always good to ask why people are striking and how you can support.

The more people who show up on a picket, the harder it is for bosses to ignore the voices of the workers: the longer the picket line, the shorter the strike. Deepening student connections with the local trade union movement is a key priority for organising in Cambridge. There are just a few of the unions who you can support in Cambridge:

**Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU)** - When workers went on strike against McDonald's in 2018, students joined the picket lines on Newmarket Road.

**Unite** - One of the largest unions, Cambridge students and workers joined in solidarity with striking dockers at the port of Felixstowe, which is owned by Trinity College, in 2022 to demand an intervention in the dispute with multinational corporation CK Hutchison. UNITE also represents many Cambridge University staff. Get in touch with the Cambridge office here: 0122 335 3048

**National Education Union (NEU)** - in 2023, thousands rallied in coordinated strike action by national unions, with Cambridge's largest rally in many years, including teachers striking for fair pay and conditions. [cambridgeshirebranch@neu.org.uk](mailto:cambridgeshirebranch@neu.org.uk)

**RMT** - As workers across the country mobilise to save ticket offices and take strike action in the national dispute over working conditions, pay and job security, there are often picket lines outside Cambridge station - show your support if you can!

**Royal College of Nursing (RCN)** - in 2022/23 over 100 staff and supporters braved sometimes sub-zero temperatures on the Addenbrooke's roundabout to show solidarity with the nurses' struggle for a fairly-funded, fairly-paid NHS. [eastern.region@rcn.org.uk](mailto:eastern.region@rcn.org.uk)

## Reading List: Cost of Living and Working

### Quick reads

General introductions to the themes of this chapter:

[‘Why are we talking about Britain’s cost of living crisis? The real culprit is bosses’](#)

[“greedflation”](#), Sharon Graham, *The Guardian*, 2023

[‘How a Cumbrian Community is Building Working Class Confidence’](#), Craig Gent, *Novara Media*, 2023

### In depth

Longer explorations of work, what it means in our society and how we could organise it differently:

*The Work of Living: Working People Talk About Their Lives and the Year the World Broke*, Maximilian Alvarez (2021)

*Lost in Work: Escaping Capitalism*, Amelia Horgan (2022)

### Fiction

Challenging fiction which explores worlds of work:

*The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. Le Guin (1974)

*We Want Everything*, Nanni Balestrini (2022)

### In Cambridge

Short articles about specific struggles in our city:

[‘A Revolution Fights on its Stomach: the story of Cambridge Community Kitchen’](#), Edie Turner, *New Socialist*, 2022

[‘Cambridge college workers need a union’](#), Bob Arrowsmith and Evan Wroe, *Varsity*, 2020

# Studying in Cambridge

## Questions

How do I make the most of my degree?

How do I deal with burnout?

What is the university doing to decolonise?

Why aren't my lectures recorded?

Why is my workload so high?

## How to: make the most of your degree

What the university expects of you is impossible. Unmanageable workload and burnout are normalised at a university with no reading week or even weekends. The best way to make the most of your degree is to know what you can *manage* and what you *enjoy*, and find the pockets of your course where you can explore and be challenged by these things. Your degree won't be fun if you're burnt out, or only doing work because you have to.

Your tutor and the college nurse are also here to support you. The ADRC can help with assessment and offer 1:1 sessions, and this [Camguide](#) for undergraduate study skills can help new students find their feet.

If you're an undergrad, don't be afraid to submit plans, or to let your supervisor/DOS know if you're struggling. Make the most of your degree by looking out for your own and others' welfare, by taking time to explore the city and to apply and share your knowledge outside of lectures and labs.

You can also make your degree better by changing it. Think about how to decolonise your subject. If your interests aren't represented, organise to represent them. Become an academic rep: this is a chance to work with staff to change the curriculum, represent your community of peers, and actively shape students' educational experience at Cambridge.

Become an academic rep:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/aboutus/yourreps/academicreps/#:~:text=School%20Reps%20also%20sit%20on,are%20elected%20in%20Michaelmas%20term.>

Why Cambridge needs a reading week:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/ourpriorities/welfare-community/reformingtheterm/#:~:text=Cambridge%20education%20can%20work%20better,in%20the%20middle%20of%20term.>

Student Advice Service:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/>



## Cambridge Latin American Research in Education Collective (CLAREC)

(Written by CLAREC)

The Cambridge Latin American Research in Education Collective (CLAREC) aims to constitute a space for Latin American perspectives that brings together researchers working on Latin American contexts and all those interested in hearing more about it. It aims to make visible the region's knowledge production and current debates linked to education research towards the diversification and decolonisation of academia.

Since its establishment in 2020, CLAREC has actively promoted dialogues in Cambridge to enhance the university-community relationship. A significant achievement was the "Il Freire Conference: Bridging Popular Education and the University," held from October 17 to 21, 2022. The event occurred simultaneously at the University of Cambridge, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and online, engaging over 2,000 participants from 25 countries. Rooted in "popular education," the approach aimed to empower attendees to collectively address local challenges tied to Cambridge - a city identified as the least equal in Britain. Utilizing techniques from the Popular University of Social Movements, the conference encouraged structured community dialogues, underlining the importance of shared spaces for change. Techniques like semi-structured community dialogues were used, including an open discussion about participants' roles, challenges, and collaborative possibilities. The event commenced with a "mística," a ritual where individuals expressed their motivations, shaping the discussion's terms.

Additionally, CLAREC organized recent seminars in Cambridge, including "Universities in Crisis: Police, Militarization, Protest, and Universities in Peru," showing solidarity with the struggle against state violence in Peru; and "The Role of Education in the Fake News Era," fostering discussions on the global threat of fake news to democracy.

For those interested in learning more about the collective, receiving updates on CLAREC's initiatives, or proposing collaborative projects, they can subscribe to the mailing list at [www.clarec.org](http://www.clarec.org) or reach out via email at [clarec.cam.edu@gmail.com](mailto:clarec.cam.edu@gmail.com)

Instagram: @clareccam

Twitter: @ClarecCam

## Spotlight on: Workload

There is a workload crisis in Cambridge. It's so normalised that it has its own name in the Cambridge vocabulary: week five blues. Where other universities have a break half-way through term, Cambridge prides itself on 'academic rigour': one eight-week term, starting on a Thursday and going through the weekend and ending on a Wednesday.

While week five blues is often treated as a quirky Cambridge tradition (in the Tab's A-Z of Cambridge, A is for 'Anxious'), it's hard to quantify the detrimental effect that the structure of the Cambridge term has on students and staff.

In 2019, the CUSU Student Loneliness report found that 75% of students surveyed felt lonely on a daily or weekly basis, with this loneliness disproportionately affecting BME students, disabled students, care-experienced, working class students and other disadvantaged groups, especially at a postgraduate level. 62% of students surveyed reported that the academic workload was a barrier to making friends and having a healthy social life.

The most recent data suggests that University Counselling Service now sees more than one in ten students (12% of the student body), and this statistic doesn't include those who seek therapy elsewhere. 47% of students seen report suicidal thoughts. 15.6% of clients report alcohol or drug misuse on their pre-counselling form. While the university spends £4.5m a year on mental health services, and its provisions are improving, there is massive work to be done in harm-prevention by structural change: a reading week is one such change.

Imagine if, instead of having to cope with burnout, spend time trying to find welfare support, email supervisors, tutors, DOSes, rest was a de-facto part of the Cambridge term. Imagine if you had weekends. If, as a supervisor, the mid-term break lined up with half term so you could see your children. Rest means more time to make friends, to recover and find sustainable support networks, to spend time in your own company where you're not thinking about work, to explore and participate in the city around you.

A reading week has been on the student agenda for years, and yet, at every step there has been institutional sabotage of this idea. Students back the reading week, but, as the next feature suggests, there has been significant pushback from college managements across the university. Students need rest, and quick-fix approaches individualised to faculties won't cut it. Rest, in our current society is a radical act, and one which, as students protesting the term structure in 2015 found out, something that we must figure out a way to fight for.



## Briefing: the Reading Week

2015 - Cambridge Defend Education launch the #EndWeekFiveBlues campaign, with some students boycotting work during week five and hosting public educative and welfare sessions as an alternative. The campaign, supported by the SU (then CUSU) and several JCRs, attracted local and international press.

2019/20 - The SU (CUSU) publishes the Student Loneliness Report, based on a large student survey, which sees 62% of responding students report that academic workload is a barrier to having a healthy social life. A reading week is floated as a solution.

2021 - After Cambridge SU Council supports the motion, the SU presents the reading week proposal to General Board's Education Committee (GBEC), who receive the proposal with interest and agreed to set up a working group to explore the issue in more depth.

2022 - After a year of attending the Reading Week Working Group, Cambridge SU presidents respond to staff concerns about student mandate by arranging a reading week referendum asking students the question "Do you support the introduction of a full freshers' week in Michaelmas Term and week-long Mid-Term Break/Reading Week in Michaelmas and Lent Terms?" 4300 students voted, with 64% voting in favour of a reading week.

2022 - SU Undergraduate president Zak Coleman presents the reading week proposal to University Council and General Board, who were both largely supportive of the idea. The main takeaway was that introducing a reading week could be a worthwhile change and the Working Group should think of how to practically implement one.

2022 - After the National Student Survey Boycott is called off, the university committed to the following: "Any report from the Reading Week Working Group recommending the introduction of a mid-term break will be considered by the General Board and the University Council by the end of this academic year, following the demonstration of strong support for a mid-term break in the SU referendum."

2022 - membership of the Reading Week Working Group is suddenly expanded to include more college and faculty leadership, and the reading week which students voted for is dismantled by new unsupportive committee members.

2022/23 - Compromises to the reading week proposal are made in the working group which sees the full freshers week removed, as well as the changes to the week structure. The new proposal is sent to more committees for further consultation.

2023 - The Reading Week Working Group updates the proposal to acknowledge feedback from committees, before SU Undergraduate President Zaynab Ahmed presents the proposal to General Board and University Council, where discussions suggest that it should not be presented to Regent's House for a vote. Bhaskar Vira, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education, commits to including the Reading Week as one possible solution to the student workload crisis in an upcoming paper to University Council.

## Spotlight on: lecture capture

Lecture recordings are:

- Crucial for many disabled students
- A lifeline if you get ill or can't attend on the day due to personal circumstances
- Valuable revision tools
- Enabling of different working preferences and models
- An important way to avoid the burden of students having to record lectures themselves
- Completely possible within all faculties and accessible to all students, as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated
- Legal requirement for those with SSDs

Lecture recordings aren't:

- Mandatory university policy.

In spite of considerable student campaigning, recent historical memory, and the blatant ableism of not recording lectures, we are continuing to fight for universal lecture capture. The 'opt-in' strategy adopted by the university means that in many faculties, disabled students are being denied access to essential content. Lecture capture is vital to allow differing modes of learning, as well as making it easier for students to catch up after having an off day.

Get in touch with you SU Undergraduate Access Education and Participation Officer (AEP) or Disabled Students Officer to find out more about the campaign for lecture capture in Cambridge.

If you're not getting the recordings you need or are entitled to, talk to your DoS/tutor/supervisor and email your course administrator.

## Cambridge University Public Engagement Team

(Written by Cambridge University Public Engagement Team)

Interested in getting involved in public engagement?

### **Undergraduates - we need you!**

Our interdisciplinary [Cambridge Festival](#) takes place in the Spring of each year - 2024 dates

confirmed 14th March to 28th March. The festival enables researchers from the University, and our partner organisations, to engage with the public through a variety of in-person and

digital events & activities. Topics cover the breadth of Cambridge research and will be presented across the Festival's four themes: Society, Health, Environment and Discovery!

We are always looking for [volunteers](#) to help deliver the many incredible events in this vibrant festival.

Another important event in the calendar for your diaries... Cambridge opens its doors every year for a special weekend in September giving everyone opportunities to discover the local

history and heritage of their own community. **Open Cambridge** is part of the national Heritage Open Days Scheme, anyone can apply read more about the criteria [here](#).

### **Are you a postgraduate?**

You are able to access a wide range of opportunities from training, grants and awards to advice and resources. We encourage you to get in touch with your public engagement ideas,

and submit events to Cambridge Festival.

### **Interested in Community Engagement?**

We are embarking on developing support, resources and opportunities for communities and

researchers to work together more equitably. In this initial stage we are starting close to home, reaching out to local communities and research communities to understand what people want and need from research collaborations, investing time and care in our relationships. Do you know of a community group who wants to connect with researchers?

Are you a researcher who wants to connect with communities? We want to hear from you! [publicengagement@cam.ac.uk](mailto:publicengagement@cam.ac.uk)

Stay up to date with opportunities through our public engagement mailing list

## Spotlight on: Decolonisation

From the radical archive (written in 2016)

### The university and colonialism

Over the last five centuries, colonisation brought untold destruction and harm to people around the world, for the benefit of a few. The institution of the university has been complicit in this: academia has had an intimate relationship with the forces of military domination and economic exploitation.

Academic knowledge has been used to justify and legitimise the foundations of colonial domination, and itself relied in part on the colonial system to operate.

Academia reinforced the colonisation of people's minds, claiming knowledge from the coloniser as superior and pushing the colonised to believe in their supposed inferiority.

Slaveholders funded departments and wrote political philosophies of 'freedom'. Anthropologists justified racism and taught colonial administrators how to control colonised peoples. The histories of black, indigenous, and other people of colour were erased, rewritten, distorted, and ignored - which was then used to justify violence against 'uncivilised' people with 'no history'. Medicine and evolutionary theories were twisted into eugenics, duly put into practice in committing genocide against 'undesirable' populations. Engineers turn scientific technologies into weapons used to subdue and kill people across the world.

Cambridge University, specifically, has been at the heart of the British colonial enterprise for centuries and continues to foster these same dynamics of power and exploitation across the university. It has active and extensive research collaborations and investments with arms manufacturers and fossil fuel companies that harm people, especially across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

### What is decolonisation?

We often teach, all too uncritically, a curriculum centering the work of eurocentric, white, male scholars. Our curricula assume - or assert - that eurocentric analyses hold true across the world. They neglect significant bodies of work which engage critically with these thinkers, particularly produced by global majority writers, those who are indigenous, queer, part of a diaspora.

For too many marginalised students and staff, academia is often a hostile environment, with the impacts of institutional racism and dominance of colonial thought negatively impacting their experience and freedom to study. Some people are denied the opportunity to examine their own experiences, and sometimes even getting here involves being treated as a suspect through visa conditions, border policing, or Prevent legislation.

Decolonisation is not reducible to 'diversity' or 'inclusion'. It is not just adding to reading lists.

At a minimum, decolonisation involves a critical reflection on what counts as knowledge, who produces it, how it is produced, what we use it for, and how we as individuals interact with it. The decolonisation movement aims to identify, critique, and dismantle the ways in which the university, academic and commercial, historically and presently, enable colonial forms of domination.

To start, It involves hiring academics who deal with these questions; promoting research opportunities and funding for those that work outside of the traditionally eurocentric academic thought; ensuring such research reaches lectures and seminars, and further into the public sphere.

Decolonisation involves asking what the role is of the university in society, shaped as it is by histories of colonialism, and acting towards a future liberated from this oppression and exploitation.

Try starting local: how were Cambridge graduates involved in the transatlantic slave trade? What was Churchill's role in the Bengal Famine? What are the assumptions behind what we're taught? Who profits from our work? Where do we look for work after we graduate?



## Briefing: materiality of colonialism in university

The University's Legacies of Enslavement Enquiry details the university and college's involvement in colonialism through direct investment, alumni benefactions, and its education of people who would profit directly from slavery and the slave trade. We can observe a continuity of coloniality in the curriculum's we're taught, as well as the research partnerships detailed elsewhere in this guide. This colonial history has left a physical mark on Cambridge which forms an inescapable part of our student experience - whether we choose to engage with it or not.

As the report calls for memorialisation of 'the victims of slavery and the slave trade', it is important to note how much of Cambridge still valorises imperial profiteers and colonial investors. We should also note that many of these colonial memorials are being contested by students and formerly-colonised peoples, with some successes already:

### Ronald Fisher

After anti-racist protests in 2020 and a student petition amassing 1500 signatures, Caius college removed a stained glass window commemorating the notorious eugenicist Ronald Fisher.

### Benin Bronzes

Following Jesus College and other institutions across the UK, the university is in the process of returning its looted Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, nearly 130 years after they were stolen during the sacking of Benin city by British imperialists in 1897.

### Jan Smuts

The portrait of Jan Smuts, whose ideas of racial segregation prefigured apartheid in South Africa, was removed from the Christs' College dining hall, but remains hanging in a small 'portrait room' in the College.

### Gweagal Spears

In 2023, the Museum of Archeology and Anthropology (MAA) and Trinity College, the spears' 'owners', voted to repatriate the artifacts looted by James Cook to the descendants of the Gweagal people from whom they were looted in 1770. This took place after decades of demands for their return.

### Webbs Court

The King's College accommodation block was constructed following a substantial donation by wealthy alumnus Rignald Heber Macaulay of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation. The corporation was a major vehicle for British imperialism in South Asia - complicit in brutal, racialised suppressions of local labour unrest.

### The Seeley Library

Noting John Seeley's defense of British imperialism in India, a student-led campaign to rename the Seeley library amassed over 600 signatures in 2021 and led to extensive and ongoing conversations in the faculty and university about renaming buildings. Whether the university choose, like Christ's history society, to cut ties with Seeley's name, remains to be seen.

### Tobias Rustat

After years of student protest, Jesus College attempted to take down the statue of Tobias Rustat, an investor in the Royal Africa Company, but was overruled by the Church of England after a group of alumni appealed the decision in ecclesiastical court. Rustat

remains in Jesus, and the University's Old Schools building, and even has a road named after him just off Cherry Hinton Road.

### Churchill College

In 1942-3, as famine swept across Bengal, Churchill chose to ignore calls for emergency aid from the British government and instead continue food exports *from* India. He denied all responsibility for the mass starvation in which more than 3 million people died, instead blaming Indians' "breeding like rabbits". In his post-war premiership, Churchill oversaw the brutal response to the Mau-Mau uprising, in which over 150,000 Kikuyu were forced at gunpoint into detention camps, where they experienced many brutal forms of torture. A constant defender of British imperialism, Churchill College upholds his name and his legacy, and his bust is proudly displayed near the Plodge.

## Reading List: Studying in Cambridge

### Quick reads:

*General introductions to the themes of this chapter:*

[‘Occupying the University’](#), Cambridge University Students, *Tribune*, 2020

[‘The Fight for the Future of Higher Education’](#), Taj Ali, *Tribune*, 2023

### In depth:

*Longer explorations on what it means to study and how we could organise education:*

*The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paolo Freire (1968)

*Decolonising the University*, ed. by Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, Kerem Nişancıoğlu (2018)

### Fiction

*Challenging fiction which explores learning:*

*Stoner*, John Williams (1965)

*On Beauty*, Zadie Smith (2005)

### In Cambridge

*Short articles about specific struggles in our city:*

[‘Uncomfortable Cambridge: the legacy of exclusion and inequality’](#), Imaan Irfan, *Varsity*, 2023

[‘Students should stop sacrificing themselves for ‘academic rigour’](#), Bella Cross, *Varsity*, 2022

# Land and housing

## Questions

Why is my rent so high?

I'm looking to live out of college but I don't know where to start...

I need help finding accommodation!

How can I support the houseless in Cambridge?

I'm having issues with my landlord and I don't know where to go...

Why is there so much inequality in Cambridge?

## Spotlight on: town/gown divide

Cambridge is the second-most unequal city in the UK. Despite hosting the richest university in Europe, with assets of nearly £12 billion, 1/10 households are in fuel poverty, 1/10 children live in poverty, and 1/10 workers face insecure employment. There is a 12 year gap in life expectancy between the richest neighbourhood (Newnham) and the poorest (King's Hedges), with rents, homelessness and foodbank use on the rise.

Students are not exempt from this inequality. Those granted college accommodation face high rents, ejection from colleges as soon as term ends or intermission is granted, and competition for living space with conferencing services. Meanwhile many postgrads are forced into insecure private accommodation, with dodgy landlords and dangerous living conditions normalised as 'student housing'. Cambridge ACORN are a vital group organising for rent and housing justice in the city.

The town/gown divide is more than a historic rivalry, but an ongoing power imbalance in the city. Where the university and colleges used to have their own bailiffs (abolished 14th century), workhouse and prison (abolished 1893), Member of Parliament (abolished 1950) and police force (never really abolished), they still owns swathes of land across the country, keeping rents high and spaces inaccessible.

The work of Cambridge Land Justice, and other individuals and organisations highlighted in this guide highlight the complete absence of public accountability for the actions of the university towards its neighbours.

Community resistance has been a constant in the face of the university, from workhouse riots in the 19th century to town/gown solidarity in the face of the demolition and gentrification of the Kite (now the Grafton Centre) by Jesus College in the 1970s.

The issues we face in Cambridge do not respect any town/gown divide: cost of living, the climate crisis, pollution, extortionate rents, may not be evenly distributed but these issues affect many of us as students as well as Cambridge residents. These struggles offer sites of solidarity, collaboration and connection through which we can break down the fortified college walls which keep town and gown apart.

How can you break out of the Cambridge bubble and meet people in the community? How can your academic work benefit and include the communities around you? How do you create town/gown spaces which are not arbitrary, but fulfil community needs and desires? How can we build power in community? These questions have no one answer but are essential to getting to grips with the strange city of Cambridge, and the organisations listed here, as well as the green spaces explored on page 69, can help you begin to find your feet.

Resistance to the university: <https://www.varsity.co.uk/comment/24183>

Cambridge history: <https://cambridgetownowl.com/>

## Cambridge Land Justice

Cambridge Land Justice is a town/gown organisation fighting for dignity, community and access for all! We meet twice a month to talk about how we can come together and demand publicly accessible land which is used for public good.

From unaffordable housing to environmental devastation, so much of how we experience space is determined by who owns land. Where land was once held in common, it is now increasingly privatised, policed and managed from elsewhere.

Nationally, Oxbridge Colleges own 126,000 acres of land, or 0.4% of the UK.

We started out mapping the collegiate university's land ownership in the city and asking people to reimagine how land is used and distributed in this unequal city. Around  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the city is owned by the collegiate university, and much of this is 'investment property', with monopoly landownership hiking rents and gatekeeping space. We are currently turning this project into a digital resource for people to report land injustice around them and map ownership onto their experience of the city.

If you are interested in land access and ownership, data science and public knowledge, or bursting the Cambridge bubble and exploring the real Cambridge, come to our meetings at Downing Place United Reformed Church on the first and third Wednesday of every month to find your place in the fight for land justice.

Instagram: [cambridgelandjustice](#)

Facebook: Cambridge Land Justice

Twitter: [@camlandjustice](#)

Email: [cambridgelandjustice@protonmail.com](mailto:cambridgelandjustice@protonmail.com)

Read more about the origins and implications of Oxbridge land ownership here:

<https://www.varsity.co.uk/opinion/23689>

Check out other exciting land justice work happening locally and around the country:

Right to Roam, a national campaign fighting for easy access to open space, and the physical, mental and spiritual health benefits that it brings, enshrined in law:

<https://www.righttoroam.org.uk/>

Land In Our Names: a Black-led growing collective focusing on reparation, food justice and reconnecting Black communities with land in Britain:

<https://landinournames.community/>

Shared Assets: a think and do tank focusing on building new sustainable and collective relationships between people and the land: <https://www.sharedassets.org.uk/>



## How-to: Live out of College

If you don't want to or are unable to live in college you can 'live out' and rent privately. Much like living in college, renting privately is expensive and there are additional costs and stresses which come with living out (including archaic 'live out' fees in some colleges).

If so, you should consider when to look, where you want to live, who you may want to share with, and hidden costs such as furniture, the deposit, monthly bills on top of the rent, TV license, and broadband/phone. Watch out for hidden fees, dodgy landlords, and the university's 'precincts' (which mean you can't reside more than 10 miles from Great St. Mary's Church, unless you apply for an [exemption](#)).

If you need support in finding somewhere to live, register with the university's accommodation service ([www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk](http://www.accommodation.cam.ac.uk)), or contact the SU's Student Advice Service, who have helpful resources here: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/advice/information/accommodation/>

### House viewing tips

If you find a property that suits you, try to view it as soon as possible. When working through an agency, ensure that one of the agents goes with you so that they can answer any questions that might arise. A potential checklist for things to look out for could be:

- Traffic noise: visit at peak traffic times to ascertain noise levels.
- Security: check for a burglar alarm, smoke alarms and window locks - if you can't see them, ask.
- Utilities: bear in mind that even a 'furnished' property may not include all the furniture you see at the time of viewing, so clarify as soon as possible. Check that a current gas safety inspection certificate exists.
- Unlicensed HMOs: if a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) doesn't have a licence it means that the landlord is not ensuring the tenant safety measures that they are mandated to by law.
- If possible, have a chat with the current tenants about their experiences of the property and of the landlord (preferably without the proprietor standing over you).
- Join Cambridge ACORN!



## It Takes A City: supporting our homeless neighbours

(Written by It Takes A City)

It Takes A City (ITAC) are a small and rapidly growing charity that is passionate about ending rough sleeping due to homelessness in Cambridge. Everything we do is achieved by working in partnership with others in the city including student societies, local businesses, faith groups, community groups, other charities, and individuals.

### 1: Winter Accommodation:

Crossways, our 24/7 winter emergency accommodation project, provides safety and dignity for some of the city's most disadvantaged rough sleepers and an opportunity to take their first step on the journey from Street to Home. Over the last two winter we have been supported by student groups including Just Love, Embrace Cambridge and Cambridge University Human Rights Law Society through donations of food and other items. Many students also volunteered at Crossways, finding the experience rewarding. 'Helping at Crossways was a great experience for me, and really opened my eyes to how communities can come together to support those who need it most.' –M (Student).

### 2: Modular Homes

A home represents connection and community, the things that many rough sleepers have to leave behind. We have a plan to change this. Our first modular homes will be ready to welcome residents in the coming months. Built by young, disadvantaged people who are themselves at risk of homelessness in New Meaning Foundation's training facility. Residents will be supported by ITAC staff and our amazing volunteers to ensure they don't just survive but thrive as part of a local community.

### 3: Help In Your Hands:

Street Support Cambridgeshire is a mobile friendly website that details all the support and help available to anyone who is facing homelessness or in need in Cambridge and the surrounding areas. There are currently 380 offers of help from 100+ local organisations in areas including accommodation, food, health services, personal items and employment. Save SSC to your phone so you always have the information at your fingertips. You can find the website at: <https://streetsupport.net/cambridgeshire/>.

### 4: How you can support our work:

#### Volunteer

Do you have some time to spare in the daytime/evening during the week or at the weekend? Last winter we worked with over 100 volunteers at Crossways, many of whom were students. We are looking for people to fill the following roles:

Kitchen Assistants (helping prepare and host an evening meal)

Laundry/Cleaning (helping keep the project tidy)

Weekend Assistants (cleaning, tidying and keeping guests company)

Social Activities (art, music, cooking, crafts, etc)

Email [itacinfo@ittakesacity.org.uk](mailto:itacinfo@ittakesacity.org.uk) to find out more.

#### Donate and fundraise

Help us keep the cupboards full at Crossways. We are always in need of UHT milk, sugar, tinned tomatoes, biscuits, crisps, and men's deodorants. We can help you organise a donation drive in your college or halls. Follow us on social media for up-to-date news on

what we need. We work closely with Cambridge Sustainable Food, Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal, and other local groups, so no donation is ever wasted. We welcome anyone interested in donning their running shoes or organising a bake sale to fundraise for us, and are always happy to come and chat to your society or group about our projects.

#### Basic Information and Signposting

If you or anyone you meet is at risk of or already experiencing homelessness, immediately get in touch with the City Council's Housing Advice Service 01223 457918 (or 0330 053 8109 out of hours).

Alert the Council's support teams to someone sleeping rough by logging them on Street Link (<https://thestreetlink.org.uk>)

Hot food, showers, housing support and welfare assistance are available for people sleeping rough at Wintercomfort (Overstream House, 9am-1pm Mon-Fri and 9am-12.30pm Sat/Sun).

## Embrace

(Written by Embrace)

Embrace is a student organisation aiming to support the homeless community by mobilising the resources of students and the university. We work very closely with local homelessness charities to gather information, spread awareness and aid them in the most effective way possible.

We organise to end homelessness in Cambridge at a systemic level by challenging the university to lend support (land for housing, employment opportunities, etc.) to the homeless community

This year we lobbied the collegiate university to employ homeless/vulnerably-housed people, and this project is ongoing. You can apply to become a committee member or college liaison officer (lower commitment) to work on projects and share ideas for taking our work forwards.

Follow our social media to get info about homelessness, volunteering opportunities, donation drives, events, or how you can get involved in our work:

Insta: @embracecambridge

Facebook: Embrace Cambridge

Email: embracecambridge@gmail.com

## Jimmys

(Written by Jimmys)

Jimmy's is a community-based charity providing both support and housing to people who are rough sleeping.

The financial and non-financial support we receive from individuals and organisations is critical to our success in supporting those in need of our services. There are many ways you can support our work: donate, fundraise, purchase goods and volunteer. As an individual and as part of the university, you can find out how you're best placed to support us through our website.

Get in touch to find out more about how you can support our work in the city:

Email: [info@jimmyscambridge.org.uk](mailto:info@jimmyscambridge.org.uk)

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/jimmysin.cambridge/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/jimmysin.cambridge/?locale=en_GB)

Website: [www.jimmyscambridge.org.uk](http://www.jimmyscambridge.org.uk)

## Briefing: Universities and homelessness

In their roles as educators, employers and sometimes landlords, Universities have a huge impact on the economy and ecology of the communities around them. While marketised Universities boast about their economic impact - a 2022 analysis found that Cambridge University adds nearly £30 billion to the UK economy every year - the adverse economic impacts Universities can have are rarely mentioned, felt deeply by some communities but difficult to quantify.

A [2022 report](#) by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) found that homelessness is statistically higher in 'university towns and cities' compared to areas without a university, with the prevalence of rough sleeping more than three times greater. This is partially because the presence of a university within a community tends to make local housing costs more expensive, which is a contributory cause of homelessness.

The report found that Universities could be doing more to both track risk of homelessness among their student bodies, but also support people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. In 2022, Embrace Cambridge launched an employment campaign which aimed to encourage Colleges to provide opportunities to people with experience of homelessness.

In the face of an unjust and exclusionary housing market, Universities can leverage their resources and power to provide accessible and affordable housing to people, and create resources for the community.

Christ Church College in Oxford provides just one example of how University land can be repurposed for public good. The College owns a former Victorian primary school that it offers as a gift-in-kind to Aspire, an employment charity and social enterprise in the city that seeks to empower people facing homelessness, poverty and disadvantage.

How could your College's resources be used to support people experiencing homelessness?  
How could it use its land for public good?

## City council housing support

Cambridge City Council has support in place if you or someone you know is struggling with accessing housing support.

### Risk of homelessness

If someone is at risk of, or is already experiencing homelessness, they should immediately get in touch with Cambridge City Council's Housing Advice Service on: 01223 457918, or 0330 053 8109 for out of hours emergencies. The council will then work to identify what support might be available for them.

### Support for houseless people

During the winter months, the council has a duty to make sure there is provision for those who are rough sleeping or in unstable accommodation when the weather gets severe. There is additional emergency accommodation available from November-March, run by It Takes a City. As well as the organisations listed in this guide, one easy way you can support local services is by downloading the If you come across someone sleeping rough in the city, you can alert local support agencies is through the Streetlink website, which means that Street Outreach team to make sure contact is made with that person:

<https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>

If you would like to support homeless people financially, you can donate to Cambridge Street Aid. This is a grant fund made up of donations, to which people who live or have lived on the streets can apply. There are also various Street Aid contactless donation points across the city. Every single penny donated to Street Aid goes to those in need:

<https://www.cambscf.org.uk/cambridge-street-aid>

### Renter support/housing advice service

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/get-advice-about-housing>

### Safety and Suitability Concerns

If you complain to us about the condition or management of the private-rented property you live in, we can investigate. We can also check whether the property needs a house in multiple occupation (HMO) licence. When you contact us to make a complaint, we'll ask you some questions to help us decide whether we need to visit the property. If we can help resolve the problem without visiting, we will do so.

01223 457900

env.health@cambridge.gov.uk .

### Tenancy Related Issues

Our Housing Advice service provides free, confidential advice to anyone in the Cambridge City Council district. We can provide advice on a wide range of housing issues, from landlord disputes to homelessness.

01223 457918

housing.advice@cambridge.gov.uk

## ACORN

(Written by ACORN)

ACORN is a community union. We are local tenants, workers, students and residents, fighting to fix the issues we face in our homes and our cities.

Landlords, bosses and politicians have set things up so they don't work for regular people. But when we bring people together to take direct action, we use our strength in numbers to improve our lives.

ACORN have worked closely with Cambridge SU in campaigning for renters' rights. When we pick a fight, we get results. We've won thousands of pounds of compensation and repairs for our members.

Across the city, we've taken on the council and forced them to improve their enforcement of the licensing of HMOs (large shared houses).

ACORN also fights on far more than just housing issues. In other cities, ACORN branches have won such campaigns as free meals for kids outside of term, and public ownership of buses.

If you are facing an issue with your landlord or housing provider, get in touch immediately, we may be able to help!

Any Cambridge student can become a member today, and fight for a better deal and a stronger community. We provide plenty of training, and have different teams where you can contribute, no matter your skills or experience. The biggest issues in Cambridge reach far beyond the student bubble, so join the union for the whole community.

Check out our social media for more info on joining, our current campaigns, and your rights as a renter...

Email: [cambridge@acorntheunion.org.uk](mailto:cambridge@acorntheunion.org.uk)

Twitter: @Cambridge\_ACORN

Instagram: @acorn\_cambridge

Facebook: ACORN Cambridge

## Spotlight on: rent

As a student, rent is decided by your college. These rents vary wildly across the university, with Girton students paying an average of £7,100 (53% of your income on a full Cambridge Bursary), and Homerton students paying £4,100 on average for a 30 week residency. Rent bands within each college are also often extreme.

You can see how your college rents compare to others [here](#).

Choosing to rent privately is difficult, with many colleges charging a 'living out' fee on top of the extortionate Cambridge rents, a charge which hits postgrads the hardest.

Colleges frequently use [conferencing](#) as an excuse to move students out of their accommodation outside of term, creating unnecessary stress and instability for students who need to stay through the holidays.

J/MCRs often hold 'rent negotiations' with senior college management, but rent frequently still increases by more than inflation. Informal student meetings lead to finance committee discussion, which will result in rents being approved by the College Council. At Sidney Sussex, Selwyn, King's and others, rent is set to increase by 10% this year despite the ongoing cost of living crisis. The collegiate system makes joined-up campaigning on rent tricky to coordinate.

Nationally, conditions for student renters have worsened since the tripling of tuition fees in 2010, with government funding withheld and profiteering universities using rent hikes as a means of securing income. Many students are forced into precarity by unaffordable rent and unlivable accommodation, with over [50%](#) of students now blighted by cold and mould in their accommodation.

There has been huge student mobilisation around rent in recent years, however, with many successful rent strikes winning money back for students and improved living conditions. Organising within your college or neighbourhood is a way of standing up to exploitative landlords and demanding housing which is secure, affordable and livable for everyone.



## How-to: do rent negotiations

- 1) Your college should organise rent negotiations with your J/MCR. These are not 'discussions' or 'consultations', students should have power in this room.
- 2) If you're a J/MCR officer, find out the key deadlines in advance and work the process back. If they don't think they've given you enough time, lobby for the decision to be delayed an appropriate amount of time. A week is not enough time to prepare.
- 3) Organise pre-meets and debriefs to plan, divide points and reflect at each stage. Try and keep a consistent team throughout the process. Map power in your college to help with planning.
- 4) Make sure everything is in writing! If someone makes a promise to you in a meeting, email them afterwards summarising the meeting in your own words and noting the commitments that were made.
- 5) Make sure you attend a 'Rent Negotiation Training' run by Cambridge SU, talk to J/MCR officers involved in negotiations at other colleges, and keep constituents engaged and mobilised if negotiations break down.

## How-to: organise a rent strike

(Written with input from Rent Strike Manchester)

- 1) Who are you organising with? Talk to your mates, student societies, liberation groups, anyone who is fed up of unfair rent and wants to do something about it...
- 2) How are you communicating? Use social media, petitions, posterage, be creative, get people on board. Contact your J/MCR and the student union for support.
- 3) What are you striking for? Hold a meeting, decide some demands, talk to people about the different rent and housing struggles across the student community.
- 4) How are you working together? Make sure work is fairly distributed and decisions are made democratically - keep meeting regularly.
- 5) What's your timeline? Make sure you know when rent is due, when rent negotiations usually happen and when your strike will have most/least effect. Talk to other rent strike campaigns and learn from other strikes in Cambridge. Try and avoid striking in Easter term.
- 6) How are you withholding rent? Contact Cambridge SU to explore setting up a rent strike fund for withholding student rent (we can do all the admin for you!) Make a form and start signing up students to strike.
- 7) How are you negotiating with management? Email management when you have reached your threshold of striking students, state your demands and demand a meeting.
- 8) How are you building momentum and growing the strike? Use all your support networks, contact the press, organise a protest, link up with other campaigns, go doorknocking - keep meeting regularly and building a community of solidarity.
- 9) What are your contingency plans? Have a plan to reassure strikers when the university responds or if they threaten you, keep building pressure and be creative about escalating your actions.

Check out these resources for practical advice on cancelling direct debits, mobilising students to strike, and an archive of other Cambridge rent strikes:

organising strike:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yjiEl3M\\_J-68M4Wt661hRl9dmbjievM5/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yjiEl3M_J-68M4Wt661hRl9dmbjievM5/view)

Cancelling direct debit:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PMssWxGOqm6qAlAyjakXusvxlxlyo17vVhdLb3s6v650/edit>

Why we strike: <https://www.rent-strike.org/>

Cambridge rent strike

pack: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uVY-dQggaYpfifiX-yrswkpx1JwVXYR8/view>



## Briefing: rent strike wins

### 2004 King's Cambridge

In Michaelmas term 2004, over 100 students successfully withheld rent until the college backed down on rent hikes and agreed to phase out the fixed catering charge.

### 2017 UCL

Despite threats of expulsion, 200+ rent strikers at UCL held firm and won rent bursaries for the following two years, a partial rent freeze and waiving of the late payment fee: a total of [£1.4 million](#) in concessions for students. This was the third rent strike in as many years.

### 2020 Manchester

After hundreds of students signed up to rent strike, and strikers occupied the Opens Park tower for two weeks, University of Manchester students secured [£10.8 million](#) in compensation for students, including a 30% rent reduction, the biggest student rent strike win in UK history.

## Reading List: Land and Housing

### Quick reads

*General introductions to the themes of this chapter:*

[‘This Land is Our Land’](#), Josina Calliste, *New Economics Foundation*, 2021

[‘How to Make a Home in a Housing Crisis’](#), Sophie K. Rosa, *Novara Media*, 2023

### In depth

*Longer explorations on who owns land and how we can live in dignity:*

*The Book of Trespass*, Nick Hayes (2020)

*Tenants: The People on the Frontline of Britain's Housing Emergency*, Vicki Spratt (2023)

### Fiction

*Challenging fiction which explores survival in the face of dispossession and land theft:*

*Jerusalem*, Jez Butterworth (2009)

*My First and Only Love*, Sahar Khalifeh (2010)

### In Cambridge

*Short articles about specific struggles in our city:*

‘Could Universities Do More to End Homelessness?’, Greg Hurst, *Higher Education Policy Institute*, 2022

[“Accessing Land Justice: Combining Pedagogy and Praxis to Challenge University Property Regimes”](#), Elsa Noterman and Camila Penney, *Antipode*, 2023

# Communities

## Questions

How can I get involved in college life?

What free community events can I go to as a student?

How can I explore faith as a queer person?

How can I find my cultural community in Cambridge?

How can I support my local community?

What queer groups are there that I can get involved in?

How can I get to know my neighbours?

## How-to: Find Community in Cambridge

Cambridge is a difficult place to find community, especially when workload is unmanageable and many people don't have much capacity for things outside their degrees. The history of the university has fortified college 'bubbles' and excluded the people of the town from building relationships with students.

Breaking out of an academic or college bubble is hard, but there's lots of amazing ways to find community in your college, from sports and societies to J/MCRs, who run everything from welfare events to bops, to food hubs. They are dedicated to students and engaging with, or being part of, your college J/MCR is a good way to get to grips with college life. Outside colleges there are a wealth of ways to get involved in community life. Cambridge Community Kitchen and many other organisations included in other sections of this guide will help you get to know the city whether you're cooking tasty food or cycling and delivering it around town, you're bound to make new friends and have great conversations.

Cambridge has lots of free community events, but when they're not on you can still see lots of people around and about in the green spaces listed on page 69, or by going to a picket line or protest. Cambridge Solidarity Hub is a great space to find community and meet like-minded people in a relaxed and safe environment.

The groups listed in this section offer safe spaces in which you can find community, which is especially vital given the current political climate of hostility towards many of our friends and neighbours. While Cambridge, as everywhere, is often a hard place to exist as a queer person, the city has a diverse LGBTQ+ history and community and this guide will barely scratch the surface of the solidarity and community-building happening across Cambridge.

As the guide's principles lay out, be aware that not everywhere claiming to be inclusive will be. Make sure you prioritise your safety and the safety of others, and watch out for exclusionary groups which stir up hate against members of our community.

There's also some helpful resources from the Disabled Students Campaign on how to prioritise accessibility when you're building your own communities, from access statements to how to facilitate a meeting.

As you find and build communities of care and solidarity, you may find new ways of grounding yourself in the city, and resisting the narrative that Cambridge is a university and nothing more.

## Briefing: Community events

### Cambridge Bike Party

Once a month, don a costume, grab some lights and ride through the streets of Cambridge with Cambridge bike party for a ride around the city, with plenty of stops for dancing! Rides are typically on the 3rd weekend of the month and all ages and experience levels are welcome! <https://www.cambridgebikeparty.com/>

### Illumina Cambridge Fireworks Night

On the first Saturday of November, head down to Midsummer Common for the Council's annual free fireworks display. Wrap up warm and enjoy bonfire night as a Cambridge Community. <https://www.cambridgelive.org.uk/city-events/bonfire-night>

### Mill Road Winter Fair

Mill Road Winter Fair is a celebration of community along one of the most diverse and vibrant roads in Cambridge. Usually held on the first Saturday of December, the Fair brings together local businesses and organisations, shops and stallholders, musicians, artists and dancers in one day of festival joy. <https://www.millroadwinterfair.org/>

### Cambridge Pride

Every June thousands of people celebrate Pride on Jesus Green, with amazing music, performers and vibes. A highlight of the Cambridge calendar and a massive community joy. <https://cambridgepride.co.uk/>



# Cambridge Solidarity Hub

(Written by Cambridge Solidarity Hub)

Cambridge Solidarity Hub aims to reduce loneliness, increase social cohesion, work for social and eco justice, and develop authentic spirituality by creating expansive spaces that are relevant, safe, accessible and have the potential to influence change. At the heart of the Hub is a collective of dreamers and doers who gather to create new spaces for social and eco justice.

You are more than welcome in Cambridge Solidarity Hub, whatever your identity, experiences, or beliefs. Several of our founding members are LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, and/or disabled and we have struggled to find safe enough spaces in Cambridge. As such, we are passionate about working together to ensure that we are creating safer, braver, accessible, welcoming and affirming spaces for all; and particularly for those who experience discrimination and marginalisation in daily life.

All Solidarity Hub events are at the Hub at Downing Place Church which can be accessed through the double gates on Downing Place unless otherwise noted.

## **Groups**

- 1 st Sunday, 7.30-9pm: LGBTQ+ Social
- 2 nd Sunday, 7.30-9pm: Solidarity Social Action Group
- 3 rd Sunday: 6.30pm-7pm: Solidarity Social Drop In
- 4 th Sunday: 7.30-9pm: Solidarity Scripture

## **Doubling**

Every Monday 4-6pm and Thursday 2-4pm at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87230814508?pwd=L3A2dWZhMFBGRzhma1EwNlVZK3o1UT09>

Doubling is a space to support each other doing whatever work/chores/creating you always want to do, but always put off.

## **Social Action**

Every Wednesday evening at 7-9pm we host drop-in space for people who wish to campaign for change, including groups and individuals. On 1 st and 3 rd Wednesdays, Cambridge Land Justice are a part of this space from 7.30. On 2 nd and 4 th Wednesdays, Acorn the Community Union are a part of this space from 7.

## Briefing: LGBT+ students of faith

Being LGBT+ carries many difficulties in life. Finding an accepting and affirming community is absolutely vital to maintain a strong and stable support network. Many religious spaces and organisations remain overtly or covertly exclusionary towards LGBT+ people, and some religious organisations in Cambridge endorse anti-LGBT practices and will not affirm queer identities or same-gender couples.

Cambridge SU has produced a LGBT+ students of faith guide, from which this list of religious safe spaces is adapted:

### **Jewish Student Society / JSOC**

Holds lots of events for LGBT+ Jewish students. Student led and easy to get involved

### **Student Christian Movement**

UK-wide student-led Christian group especially supporting members of the LGBTQ+ community. They have a Cambridge branch who regularly meet in town.

### **Hidayah LGBTQI+**

Supporting LGBTQI+ Muslims. They have chapters in the UK and US, so you are never short of community building opportunities! Their UK branch hosts social events, educational talks and guidance.

### **QTI Coalition of Colour**

Blogs, socials and discussion spaces facilitated for self-identifying Queer, Trans and Intersex (QTI) Black, Indigenous People of Colour (BIPoC) in Cambridge

### **Inclusive Church**

This is a registration and set of regulations churches can apply for to show that they are inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. In this resource, churches represented in Inclusive Church have a spiral of blue and green circles (the inclusive church logo) on their page. **Downing Place United Reformed Church** is one example in Cambridge.

## Cambridge Majlis

(Written by Cambridge Majlis)

Founded in 1891, the Cambridge Majlis is a historic and influential society dedicated to the recognition, celebration and advancement of South Asia and its freedom struggles past or present.

A famous forum for debates, cultural events and fraternising, it hosted some of the most important leaders from the region in those heady, fateful decades immediately before and after Independence was won, such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Subhas Chandra Bose. Past members include Jawaharlal Nehru and President Emeritus Amartya Sen.

Its work continues - we hold topical debates, host prominent speakers and organise social events. Join the Majlis, not only in contemplation of South Asia's former glories and victories, but also in its discernment and discussion of the issues, quandaries and crises with which the subcontinent is faced today.

We will be hosting debates, speaker and panel events, 'chai + chat' discussion groups and social events for the South Asian community in Cambridge, and anyone else interested in South Asian politics and society.

instagram: [thecambridgemajlis](#)

email: [majlis@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:majlis@cambridgesu.co.uk)

website: <https://cambridgemajlis.org>

## A New Perspective

(Written by A New Perspective)

We are a new group aiming to empower working-class and ethnic minority voices.

We have three main projects.

### **Speaker events**

We bring in speakers from all industries to share their stories and experiences.

### **Story-telling nights**

Our story-telling nights aim to borrow from oral history to help share forgotten stories.

### **Notes to Our Younger Selves**

Our new project 'Notes to our younger Selves' is where we place undergraduates, current state school students and industry professionals in academic conversation.

Check our social media where we post opportunities and events!

Instagram: @anewperspectivecu

Email: anewperspectivecu@gmail.com

## Briefing: what is your role in organising

There is a role for everyone within movements for change, to trial-and-error and shape as you choose. The Slow Factory, a US-based non-profit, have put together this helpful guide to help you find your role in the fight for a better world:

<https://slowfactory.earth/open-edu/roles-for-collective-liberation>

## FUSE

(Written by FUSE)

FUSE's work primarily revolves around fostering a sense of community and support for queer people of colour (qpoc) at the University of Cambridge. We aim to create a space for celebration, solidarity, and change. Our activities include organising events, coordinating with student representatives, and campaigning on various issues relevant to qpoc students.

Our priorities this year are:

- Building a sustainable community around the BME Campaign for qpoc students
- Fostering a network between college BME officers, subject societies, and cultural societies
- Increasing access projects available to BME students with cooperation from cultural and subject societies.
- Advocating for an increase in BME representation in existing mentoring schemes for accessing higher education.
- Creating a community for women and non-binary BME students with dedicated events
- Celebrating the achievements of qpoc students.

Students can get involved in FUSE by participating in their BME Forums, where they can shape the direction of the campaign and get involved in projects.

They can also reach out to FUSE to inquire about joining the group chat for qpoc students who self-identify.

You can follow our work or join our events here:

Instagram: [fuse.cam](https://www.instagram.com/fuse.cam)

Facebook: [FUSE Cambridge](https://www.facebook.com/FUSECambridge)

## SU BME campaign

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Campaign represents, supports, and advocates for all BME students at the University of Cambridge.

We bring together organisations from across the University to campaign for an inclusive Cambridge. We organise events to build communities of care and compassion for BME students, coordinate with JCR/MCR reps and societies to strengthen BME student representation, and campaign on the big issues that matter to BME students - everything ranging from the lack of targeted mental health support for BME students and racist treatment by student-facing staff, to the Prevent Duty and the Collegiate University's continued connections with the arms trade, the fossil fuel lobby, and corporations that profit from the death and destruction of communities across the globe.

Get in touch to find out more about our campaigns and events this term!

Email: [bme-chair@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:bme-chair@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Facebook: [@CambridgeBME](https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeBME)

Twitter: [@CambridgeBME](https://twitter.com/CambridgeBME)

Insta: [@CambridgeBME](https://www.instagram.com/CambridgeBME)

## How-to: send an FOI

Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) give you the right to access to information held by public-sector organisations, including the University and its colleges. They have been a really useful way for campaigns to access information on investments in fossil fuel and arms companies, Living Wage and college expenditure.

Here are some things to remember when you're using FOIs:

- The organisation (e.g. Cambridge University) must respond within 20 days. The organisation has an upper limit of 18 hours to put aside to deal with the request
- If the request would take longer than this, then they can refuse the FOI. Some colleges employ FOI officers to deal with these requests.
- If multiple FOIs are sent to the same organisation, it can refuse the FOI on the grounds that all of the requests together would take longer than 18 hours. However, if it refuses to answer, then it must advise you on how to narrow down your request to fit within the constraints (under section 6.1 of the FOI Act). If they invoke Section 43 (they refuse the FOI because they say it will prejudice their commercial interests), they are required to give you various details. We've found it can work to ask for an internal review of whether Section 43 was appropriate to use.
- To direct the FOI officer to the information you want, you can specify how and where they search for it - e.g. "Key-word search 'Military' between person A.'s emails and person B.'s emails"
- For a complete guide on using FOIs, including a template, check out this doc:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_XnXRJx-\\_kaTRYcDwVT2lhSkIACBAYLTceU5Vh3yX9w/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_XnXRJx-_kaTRYcDwVT2lhSkIACBAYLTceU5Vh3yX9w/edit)

## Trans Liberation Cambridge

(Written by TLC)

We're a non-hierarchical solidarity group focused around advocating for the needs and safety of trans people in and around Cambridge. Our organising aims to build a community space of queer & trans people.

We've organised clothes swaps, fundraising events, protests & vigils.

You can find out more about our events and our work/get involved via the socials linked here: <https://linktr.ee/translibcam>

## Cambridge Queer History

(Written by Cambridge Queer History)

CamQueerHistory is a volunteer collective of people in Cambridge who are interested in organising events about queer and LGBTQ+ histories. We are made up of students and non-students, town and university people, and we particularly encourage people without academic affiliations to get involved! We have organised events on Butch Histories, Queer Medievalisms and run poetry nights and pub trips. This year we are excited to continue researching and connecting with queer people across the time and space of Cambridge.

Our events are all free to attend, and everyone is welcome - you don't have to be in any way associated with the University of Cambridge!

If you would like to get involved or know more please contact us!

Email: [camqueerhistory@gmail.com](mailto:camqueerhistory@gmail.com)

Website: [www.camqueerhistory.co.uk](http://www.camqueerhistory.co.uk)



## LGBT+ Campaign

Cambridge SU LGBT+ is Cambridge SU's Campaign for LGBT+ students at Cambridge. We seek to represent and support all students who self-identify as LGBT. We are a Cambridge SU liberation campaign run by students within the university. We run social and educational events, including regular coffee meets, speaker events, pub crawls and more!

Get in touch or find out more at:

Twitter: @cambridgesulgbt  
Facebook: @cambridgesulgbt  
Instagram: @cambridgesulgbt  
Email: lgbt@cambridgesu.co.uk

## Trans inclusion guide

Written as a response to a lack of centralised information for trans and non-binary students, and a lack of awareness among the general University community about how they can be allies to transgender and non-binary people, the SU LGBT+ Campaign have created this 'Trans Inclusion Guide' as a concise summary of basic information. The guide is designed to be regularly updated, so please get in touch with the LGBT+ Campaign if you would like to update it.

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAEOKMCvzNU/WGbIHDYxyi9XrbbPqTCtYg/view?utm\\_content=DAEOKMCvzNU&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=homepage\\_design\\_menu](https://www.canva.com/design/DAEOKMCvzNU/WGbIHDYxyi9XrbbPqTCtYg/view?utm_content=DAEOKMCvzNU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=homepage_design_menu)

## How-to: facilitate a meeting

How you run a meeting is really important in creating a safe, welcoming space. Here are a few tips from the Ethical Affairs Campaign:

- Try starting a meeting with a 'check in', which usually involves answering a fun question or saying something nice you've done this week, and should involve everyone saying their pronouns if they feel comfortable. You could 'check out' by going around and letting everyone say how they're feeling.
- Make sure you share out the workload and don't force people to take Action Points.
- If you have new people attending, run through how the meeting works. Hand signals can be really helpful so people don't talk over each other
  - 1 finger (point)
  - 2 fingers (direct point)
  - C for clarification
  - P for Process point (e.g. we've skipped something on the agenda)
  - X for 'I want to move on the conversation'
- Remind people to provide content notes for anything they say that could be upsetting.
- Have access breaks if your meeting is over an hour.
- Try to make all decisions using consensus to allow for everyone to have their say.
- Understand your own power/privileges and how that relates to the way you run the meeting. Who is doing the talking? Does everyone feel they can share their thoughts. Breaking into smaller (working) groups mid-meeting is a good way of focussing tasks and disrupting power imbalances.
- Try to make sure what you'll be talking about is circulated a few days in advance so people can add things to it if they perhaps don't feel able to speak in the meeting.
- Taking minutes in a meeting is both useful for keeping track of what was said and allows people who can't access meeting spaces to stay in the loop.

## SU Women's Campaign

(Written by Cambridge WOMCAM)

The Women's Campaign is a space for students who identify as women and/or have gender identities which include "woman". We use 'woman' here as a broad political coalition to actively campaign against misogyny, transmisogyny, sexism, racism, ableism and capitalism in the collegiate university and further afield.

A feminist abolitionist space, we are also a vibrant community committed to learning together and caring for each other; we run book clubs, create zines and throw events, talks and movie nights. Once a fortnight we also have The WomCam Forum which anyone identifying with the Campaign can attend and be involved in; Forum is the hub of the Campaign and your input here determines our direction. If you are interested in feminist organising, or just want to learn more about who we are and what we do, make sure to come to our events! We can't wait to meet you!

Here are some of the key projects we are working on in 2023-24:

- Anti-drink spiking measures in clubs and college bars
- Support for Student Sex Workers: we recently wrote a guide check it out [here](#)
- The Gender Awarding Gap: sign our open letter [here!](#)
- Better street lighting in the city
- Working with other campaigns to ensure we are intersectional in our work

You can find out more and get in touch by joining our mailing list or finding us on social media:

Email: [womcam-chair@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:womcam-chair@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Facebook: @CambridgeSUWomen

Insta: @cambridgewomcam

## Cambridge University for Reproductive Rights

(Written by Cambridge University for Reproductive Rights)

We are a forum for students to learn about, discuss, and campaign for reproductive rights - including abortion; contraception; fertility treatment; parenting rights; reproductive, maternal, and trans healthcare; sexual rights and sex education. We are a non-partisan and evidence-based group, bringing together people from any gender, background, or political home to explore and support reproductive rights.

We run speaker events, panel discussions, workshops, and social events to build a local community where you can talk openly about all aspects of reproduction, know your rights, and contribute to fighting for them. For example, we've hosted a panel discussion on Post-Roe America, a workshop on LGBTQ+ fertility, film screenings and discussion groups on abortion and commercial surrogacy, and attended protests to defend our right to choose in the UK and abroad.

We're also here for you if you need somebody to talk to about getting contraceptives, emergency contraceptives, trans-healthcare, support for pregnancy, or an abortion. While we're not qualified to give any kind of medical advice, we're happy to talk and give support, including going with you to any medical appointments. All enquiries to our committee are completely confidential, and you can email an individual committee member from the 'About' page on our website without it being shared between us.

In addition to our social and informative speaker events this term, we'll also be hosting events that support student wellbeing and provide a way to channel your campaigning energy. There'll be another workshop on LGBTQ+ fertility, with Dr Katalin Lestak, a clinician at Addenbrooke's Hospital. We're leading a workshop with journalist and TikToker Sophia Smith Galer on her Body Atlas Project, where you'll be able to help battle misinformation with a Wikipedia edit-a-thon on all things sex and reproduction. We'll also be fundraising for this term's chosen charity, Abortion Talk.

If you'd like to get more involved in the society, we'll be recruiting for College Reps during Freshers' Week. Our blog will also be open for members' submissions - keep an eye out for themed calls for articles!

We want our events to be as accessible as possible, so most are completely free and open to all. To join our mailing list or become a member go to:  
<https://www.camreprorights.com/join> or get in touch and find out more:

Email: [contact@camreprorights.com](mailto:contact@camreprorights.com)

Instagram: @CamReproRights

## Cambridge Women's Resource Centre

(Written by Cambridge Women's Resource Centre)

CWRC is a welcoming and accessible women's community space in our new building on Sturton Street. Our centre is easily accessible by bus, train, foot or bicycle and has two car parking spaces.

This long established and constantly evolving community of women, offers a realm of services to make life and living a little bit easier. Here you will find practical support and advice on many challenging day to day issues.

Offering a safe environment for all who walk through our doors, coffee room and free WIFI, CWRC encourages and facilitates a sense of friendship; empowering women and helping them to take steps to a better future.

CWRC offers many courses and programmes including the Freedom Programme, which examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors in order to help women to make sense of and understand what has happened to them.

You can find out more and get in touch at:

[www.cwrc.org.uk](http://www.cwrc.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeWomensResourcesCentre>

## Cambridge Citizens

(Written by Cambridge Citizens)

Citizens UK is an alliance of civil society organisations- schools, colleges, faith communities, trade unions - that work together for the common good. We develop leaders, strengthen institutions, and win change.

We are structured in terms of local chapters the newest of which is Cambridge Citizens. If you are interested in how you can work with others, through your institutions, to win change for your community, city or region, get in touch.

If you get involved with Cambridge Citizens, you will work with other people to secure change in the city. It is an opportunity to meet other people and gain an insight into the city.

<https://www.citizensuk.org/>

Twitter: @CambridgeCitiz4

## SU Disabled Students Campaign

The Disabled Students' Campaign aims to unite and represent disabled students at Cambridge University. Disabilities are not always visible and we represent students with mental health issues, chronic illnesses, impairments, sleep issues, and anyone else affected by ableism in the university. The university was not built for us (literally), but our campaign is a place to find solidarity and community.

We have DSC forum twice a term. This is the place where disabled students get together, share grievances, express solidarity, and use all this to fuel the work and policy of the Campaign. The DSC also has an executive committee, who you are welcome to contact if you have any questions. One of the best things about the DSC is that over the years it has become the place for a wealth of resources relating to being disabled at Cambridge. We have an incredible [Resource Library](#) based at the SU, and our web pages are filled with support and advice for Cambridge students.

The DSC also runs several [online communities](#) (usually over Facebook), which are good port of call for welfare advice and sharing experiences. Contact us if you have an idea for a new online community, or if you want to run an event:

Facebook: @CambridgeDSC

Twitter: @CambridgeDSC

Instagram: @CambridgeDSC

Email: [ell.gardner-thomas@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:ell.gardner-thomas@cambridgesu.co.uk)

## How-to: Make your events accessible:

- Use accessible venues: step-free access; gender-neutral and wheelchair accessible toilets; comfortable seating; hearing loops; allocated quiet space; provide water; central location; public transport access; allow food and drink; clearly mark allergens. Point these out when the event starts
- Publish your event with an access statement. You can make one here: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/disabled-students-campaign/projects/access-statement/>
- Allow remote attendance/include live minuting
- Make sure everyone is seated to allow lip-reading
- Avoid jargon where possible, remind people in the meeting that they can ask for clarification
- Develop processes for accountability and complaints

Check out a venue's accessibility using:

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/university-of-cambridge>

This guide to making communications accessible, is also very useful:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PL8KGyNH\\_qpucRJ4MNUhsg8AZSRqR3-L/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PL8KGyNH_qpucRJ4MNUhsg8AZSRqR3-L/edit)



## SU Class Act campaign

The Class Act Campaign are here to offer support and guidance, provide a sense of community and campaign on behalf of students who have experienced economic, social, cultural, or educational disadvantage. There is importantly no strict criteria to Class Act but many students often identify themselves as being from one or a combination of the following backgrounds: working class, low income, state comprehensive, first-generation, estranged, young carer, homeless, care/foster system.

Check out our Class Act guide to Cambridge, including tips for eating affordably, templates for asking for support, and exam resources:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/class-act-campaign/resources/>

We wish to build a community among identifying students and a platform where we can express our voice. Our [private Facebook group](#), alongside the campaign, acts as a network for students with similar experiences to support each other and discuss issues of class, educational background and socio-economic privilege which often feel taboo at Cambridge.

If you have an idea for an event or discussion then don't hesitate to drop us a message!

Facebook: @CambridgeClassAct

Instagram: @cambridgeclassact

Email: [classact-committee@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:classact-committee@cambridgesu.co.uk)

## Spotlight on: Access to Cambridge

Cambridge has a long history of being inaccessible and unwelcoming to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many groups are working to close that gap. Below is a non-comprehensive list of different schemes that exist that students can get involved in:

### SU Access Schemes:

#### Shadowing Scheme:

The Shadowing Scheme is an annual residential in Cambridge that takes place at the start of Lent. Home students in their penultimate year of school education (Year 12 in England and Wales, Year 13 in Northern Ireland, and S5 in Scotland) from under-represented backgrounds come to Cambridge for a period of 3 days where they 'shadow' a current student (Mentor) to their lectures and engage in typical student social activities. Shadows and Mentors also get to attend a formal at a college together. The Scheme is entirely free for Shadows, with their accommodation donated by participating colleges and food and activities paid for by the university as part of the Scheme. Recruitment takes place in Michaelmas. Information is available on the [SU website](#).

#### Alternative Prospectus:

This is a student run website which provides information about the student experience at Cambridge to demystify the university. It does this through providing information and student testimonials about each college, subject and student life as a whole. As it is student run, anyone can contribute from their own experience. You can see the website [here](#) and get in contact with the SU team if you would like to add your own experiences or dispute any facts about your College/Course.

#### CambTweet:

CambTweet is a widening participation scheme, where students across the University of Cambridge tweet about their day-to-day lives, aiming to demystify Cambridge for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Whether they're tweeting about how they prepare for supervisions, working in their Faculties or on how they find time to unwind, these accounts are a hugely insightful account into life at Cambridge.

There are CambTweeters across all undergraduate subjects offered at Cambridge, as well as accounts run for the purpose of improving student understanding of postgraduate life at Cambridge. CambTweeters represent many of the colleges across the University as well - with details of their college and year group posted in their Twitter bios.

The central @CambTweet account (<https://twitter.com/CambTweet>) regularly reposts content produced by our CambTweet community. For prospective applicants, it's a great idea to follow the accounts of the subject(s) you are interested in applying for. Many of them will also host forums for you to ask questions, particularly about the admissions process, so it's best to keep updated! You can also have a look at #CambTweet on Twitter for all of the posts that CambTweeters produce, regardless of their subject.

CambTweet also run regular Q&A sessions, where all of the CambTweeters across the University respond to commonly asked questions about life at Cambridge. These are also a great way to make sure your questions are answered, as they will be on hand to answer specific questions too!

#### Student-Led Outreach Fund:

The Student-Led Outreach Fund is a new scheme this year that allows students to apply to run their own access schemes or projects. A student or group of students can do this by submitting a plan to the SU, who will assess the plan and decide if the project will receive funding (or any other form of support, such as administrative or promotional) in mid Lent term. Proposals will either be supported in their creation, or students will be directed to relevant people in the University who may be organising a similar project already. The fund is open to everyone. The earlier the application the better. More information is available on the SU website.

University run schemes:

CAMBassadors:

CAMBassadors is the main scheme where students can get involved with university run widening participation work. CAMBassadors are student ambassadors for the university's admissions office who are paid to do both widening participation and student recruitment work. This can include residentials, day visits, modelling for promotional material or helping on open days. CAMBassadors are given paid training for their duties and can choose to work on any project they like. More information is available on the university website: <https://www.cao.cam.ac.uk/cambassadors>

STEM SMART:

STEM SMART (Subject Mastery and Attainment Raising Tuition) is a widening participation initiative from the University of Cambridge in association with Isaac Physics, to provide free, complementary teaching and support to UK (non-fee paying) year 12 students who:

- have either experienced educational disadvantage or belong to a group that is statistically less likely to progress to higher education and
- are considering applying to Engineering, Physical Sciences (eg physics, chemistry, earth sciences, materials science) or Biological Sciences (eg plant sciences, pharmacology, physiology, evolution and behaviour, biochemistry) courses at university and are studying A Levels (or equivalent) in maths and science.

The program functions in three phases. Phase 1 consists of additional work that is set to complement the students' schoolwork and push their abilities. The program also assigns each student a mentor who is a current Cambridge student who they meet every fortnight to discuss a number of themes concerning studying at university, for example; university life, choosing courses and applying to university.

Phase 2 and Phase 3 consist of small group teaching and a 4 day residential respectively, which some mentors attend both to as helpers and to provide a student point of contact.

More information is available here: <https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/stem-smart>

Research placements:

Some University Departments run research internships to support penultimate-year undergraduate students from underrepresented or disadvantaged groups in obtaining research experience to decide whether postgraduate research is for them. These include:

These include:

- [Experience Postgrad Life Sciences](#) in the Postgraduate School of Life Sciences
- The [SHARE](#) programme in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences
- [NanoFuture Scholars](#) in the Nano DTC

College schemes:

Widening participation provision varies significantly between colleges. All colleges do some amount of recruitment work and have a region assigned to them where they are expected to do outreach. Most colleges have a Schools Liaison Officer (SLO) who is in charge of their outreach activities. Most college JCRs also have an Access Officer who coordinates between students and the schools liaison officer. If you are interested in getting involved in college access, you should contact your Access Officer or SLO. You can also see the Area Link Scheme and which regions your College is focused on [here](#).

External Schemes:

InsideUni:

InsideUni is a student-led, non-profit project and website that provides information for applicants. This can be in the form of application guides, student interview testimonials and videos about the application process and student life. Anyone can submit their interview experience, with anything submitted being verified by the site admins for accuracy. More information can be found here: <https://insideuni.org/get-involved/>

Helpful websites:

UG Outreach Events: [www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events-listing](http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events-listing)

PG Outreach Events: [www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events-listing](http://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events-listing)

Student-Led Outreach Events: [www.cambridgesu.co.uk/access/events/](http://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/access/events/)

## SU International Students Campaign

(Written by ISC)

We aim to represent international students through campaigning and running events catering to a diverse range of people, thus ensuring the general welfare of the international community at Cambridge.

Any student of the University of Cambridge who identifies as an international student is automatically a member of ISC. Members are entitled to partake in member-only events, elections, forums, open forums, and can stand for election to ISC's executive committee.

Students can get involved through following our Instagram or Facebook page:

Facebook: @InternationalStudentCampaign

Instagram: @isc\_cambridge

## Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

(Written by CECF)

The Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF) is a charity working in the field of Race Equality. A leading organisation within the voluntary sector in Cambridge, in working with Black and minority ethnic individuals and groups. Bringing expertise in anti-discrimination work and specialisation in asylum and refugee welfare matters. They also give special social, cultural, moral, and practical support to groups and develop projects where needed! To find out more about the CECF, how you can get support or access their services get in touch at:

Phone: 01223 655 241

Website: <https://cecf.co.uk/>

Email: [cecfenquiries@cecf.co.uk](mailto:cecfenquiries@cecf.co.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeEthnicCommunityForum/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/cambridge-ethnic-community-forum>

## How-to: mapping power

- Do your research: find out who is responsible for creating the problem, who has the power to fix it, and who is affected by the issue. Additionally, find out who might support you who isn't yet involved, and whether there is anyone else already working to try and fix things.
- Write the names of everyone you have identified from your research on the map, ranking them based on how powerful they are and the extent to which they support or oppose your campaign.
- Now it is time to scope out your primary targets – the individuals you've identified as having the most influence and being the most likely to give you what you want.
- For each target individual, you need to identify whether you can reach them directly. For example, if it is the Master of the college, they might not be willing to meet you directly. In this case, you need to identify secondary targets who are able to reach the primary target. That might be student union officers, or it might be a sympathetic academic who the master would be more willing to meet with.
- You should now have a logical plan of who you are targeting and how you are going to reach them. Revisit this process as your campaign develops, as it is likely that you will discover more about different people's power and opinions as your campaign develops.

## Reading List: Communities

### Quick reads

General introductions to the themes of this chapter:

['Mutual Aid, Incorporated'](#), Josie Sparrow, *New Socialist*, 2020

['It's Not Rocket Science - It's Just Community: Radical Ffestiniog'](#), Grace Blakeley, *Tribune*, 2022

### In depth

Longer explorations of how we build new communities of care:

*Feminism, Interrupted: Disrupting Power*, Lola Olufemi (2020)

*Viral Justice*, Ruha Benjamin (2022)

### Fiction

Challenging fiction about the joys and pain of living in community:

*Surge*, Jay Bernard (2019)

*There are More Things*, Yara Rodrigues Fowler (2022)

### In Cambridge

Short articles about specific struggles in our city:

['Insight into engaging with the wider Cambridge community'](#), Claire Adler, 2022

['Communities are the key to resisting Cambridge's domination'](#), Harvey Brown, *Varsity*, 2022



# Climate

## Questions

How can I work for climate justice in Cambridge?

How is the climate crisis affecting the region?

How do I deal with my climate anxiety?

Why isn't there more on the climate in my course?

How do I learn more about climate breakdown?

What is the university doing to tackle the climate crisis?

## The climate crisis in Cambridge

The climate crisis is everywhere. It may not find its way into your curriculum, but it continues to shape the university experiences of many students, both home and international. The climate crisis is an existential one, which is already uprooting the lives of people across the world, disproportionately in the Global South.

While Cambridge University claims to be a world-leader in sustainability, it continues to partner with companies profiting from climate breakdown; play host to and defend the world's largest oilfield services provider, SLB; and makes no effort to repair the harm it has caused through decades-long facilitation of oil and gas extraction and exploration.

Meanwhile, Cambridge city and the Fenlands are at ['acute'](#) risk from the climate crisis: from flooding, high summer temperatures, water shortages, and damage to the natural carbon stores in the deep peat of the Fens. Last year, there were record extreme weather events in the city, alongside the ongoing ecological degradation of our river and above-average air pollution, which causes 5.5% of mortalities in the city, according to a [2023 report](#).

It is, as everywhere, the already-marginalised who are paying the price for pollution and environmental devastation.

In the last few years town and gown organisations have come together to fight for climate justice, within, against, and outside of the university. They have used a variety of tactics to mobilise with urgency, from creative direct action, occupations, petitions, workshops and community events. They have already won huge battles in the city, and continue to build communities of resistance both locally and internationally.

As always, this work is not a vacuum. Climate justice is housing justice; it's justice for migrants; it's a just transition and justice for workers; it's decolonisation and reparation for historical harm. Tackling the climate crisis is not just 'mitigation' or 'adaptation', it is an ongoing struggle for all people to be able to live in dignity and freedom. Climate justice, like everything else in this guide, must begin with solidarity.

## Cambridge Climate Justice

We are a student-led group campaigning for Cambridge University to cut all ties with environmentally destructive industries.

We recognise that climate change is not merely an issue of scientific fact, but a crisis that reflects the inequalities of an unfair and exploitative capitalist system, disproportionately affecting already marginalised communities. We seek a decolonial, just transition which has at its heart the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities and justice for the Global South.

Formerly “Cambridge Zero Carbon”, our campaign group led the charge on divestment, producing a comprehensive report on the university’s investments in the fossil fuel industry and generating publicity for the cause through demonstrations and occupations. And we won!

But we know the fight doesn’t end there - as Cambridge Climate Justice (CCJ), we now focus on Fossil Free Research and Careers. We believe that Big Oil should not be allowed to fund climate and environmental research, as it has been shown to weaken academic integrity and it restricts academic freedom of our researchers.

It is even more unacceptable that fossil fuel giants who continue to make record profit amidst the climate crisis are using the funding they provide to energy research as a greenwashing strategy, giving them the social license to continue operating despite their contributions being miniscule compared to what is being spent on new oil projects.

The University of Cambridge, as one of the most influential players in British academia, must take a stand, to ensure the right, unbiased information goes into shaping climate policies in the UK and across the world.

From direct action to lobbying academics, our work is building a community of climate-conscious students who can collectively ensure that the University aids a just green transition. Join our fight here:

Email: [climatejustice@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:climatejustice@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Faebok: [www.facebook.com/CambridgeClimateJustice](https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeClimateJustice)

Twitter: @CamClimJustice

Instagram: CambridgeClimateJustice

## Cambridge Climate Society

(Written by CCS)

The Cambridge Climate Society is a University of Cambridge society dedicated to connecting, educating and empowering people on the most important issue of our time. We connect students to climate initiatives, networks, resources and projects, serving as a focal point for everything climate at the University of Cambridge. The society is open to students at all levels of climate engagement, and events are free of charge. As current and future contributors to the global climate sector, our principles are guided by the Paris Agreement, and by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Currently we're working on a uni-wide climate education campaign, and continuing to run our careers mentorship program, which connect students with professionals in climate-related fields and will open for applications in Michaelmas.

We run lots of free events such as panels, workshops and socials, and everyone is welcome. These are a great opportunity to meet people with similar interests from across the university and beyond. All of these and our other initiatives such as the mentorship program, the education campaign and careers dinners are advertised through our newsletter, social media and website.

Climate Education Campaign - <http://bit.ly/3ja8bMW>

Website - <https://www.cambridgeclimatesociety.com/>

Email: [climate.society@gmail.com](mailto:climate.society@gmail.com)

Insta: [@cambridge.climate.society](https://www.instagram.com/cambridge.climate.society)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeClimateSociety/>

## Cambridge Zero

(Written by Cambridge Zero)

Cambridge Zero provides university-funded opportunities for education, collaboration and seeking out resources for research towards a resilient and sustainable zero-carbon world. They organise events and activities which aim to empower students at the University of Cambridge with the knowledge, skills and experience to tackle the climate crisis. They also aim to improve climate and sustainability education across the University and beyond, and work in partnership with students to achieve this.

If you want to stay up to date with student opportunities with Cambridge Zero and beyond, join their student mailing list here: <https://forms.office.com/e/v5cuB4jvAD>  
Or check out their other projects here:

### Student Societies Climate Fund

Offered by Cambridge Zero, the Student Societies Climate Fund is a termly funding call for all student societies and JCR/MCRs at the University of Cambridge to apply for a share of £1500, available termly, to fund climate-related projects and initiatives.

<https://www.zero.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/blog/news/student-societies-climate-fund-20232024>

Previous grant projects have included ARCSOC garden and Clare Hall Allotment Society.

### Postgraduate Academy

Facilitated by Cambridge Zero, the Postgraduate Academy is a network of postgraduate students from all disciplines at the University of Cambridge, providing a space for connection, discussion and collaboration on climate change and net zero research. The Academy is led by a steering committee of postgraduate students from different disciplines. The steering committee host a variety of events throughout the year, from symposiums to skills-building workshops and networking events.

<https://lists.cam.ac.uk/sympa/subscribe/ucam-cz-postgradacademy>

### Green Officers Network

The Green Officer Network, facilitated by Cambridge Zero, fosters collaboration between the different elected environmental and sustainability representatives across the University of Cambridge's JCRs and MCRs. Together, they discuss and collaborate on environmental issues at the University and beyond. They also organise the Cambridge Green Week, a free programme of skillshares, workshops and talks. To find out more about Green Officer-led Cambridge Green Weeks, follow them on Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/cambridgegreenweek/?hl=en> or get in touch with your local College Green Officer.

You can explore more of Cambridge Zero's exciting projects at <https://www.zero.cam.ac.uk/>

## Climate Cafes

The Climate Psychology Alliance runs free climate cafes three times a month as safe spaces for people aged 18+ to explore fear, anxiety, and other emotions such as anger, helplessness, sadness, grief or depression. The focus of discussion is participants' thoughts and feelings about the climate and ecological crisis. There are no guest speakers and no talks, and it is an advice-free zone. The cafes run three times a month online, and you can sign up [here](#).

## SU Ethical Affairs Campaign

The Ethical Affairs Campaign is the SU's campaign for social and environmental justice. We focus on campaigning around the ways that the practices of Cambridge University adversely affect students, staff, and communities around the world. First, throughout the year we run social justice related events, including speaker events, and skillshares. This culminates in our Michaelmas Political Freshers Week, aimed at educating freshers and other years about how they can get involved in activism in Cambridge.

Secondly, we're elected student representatives to the University on social and environmental justice issues. This means that we have a space on university committees like ESSC (Environmental Sustainability Strategy Committee) and the Transport Working Group. We also get seats on the SU Executive Committee and SU Council.

Finally, we support grassroots student activism. We act as a central coordinating point for different student activist groups to strategise and share knowledge, and we support them in their goals.

Come along to our open meetings! They're usually held every two weeks and open to all students. See our Instagram @ethicalaffairs for dates and times and DM or email [ethical-affairs@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:ethical-affairs@cambridgesu.co.uk) if you have a campaign idea, want our support on something, or have any questions.

## Briefing: green places to escape in Cambridge

Want to flee your degree, spend time with mates outside college walls, or spend time in nature? Cambridge has plenty of community green space to explore:

### Milton Country Park

A short cycle down the towpath towards Fen Ditton, Milton Country Park offers a varied natural habitat with woodland, lakes, and attractive pathways suitable for bikes and wheelchairs.

### Coldhams Common

Host to chalk streams, sports pitches, friendly cows and a community farm, the expansive Coldham's Common is a 15 minute cycle from the city centre and a beautiful spot for an escape from the city centre.

### Wandlebury Country Park

On the Gog Magog Hills, just south of Cambridge, this beautiful countryside estate offers miles of wonderful walks through woodland and wildflower meadows grazed by Highland Cattle.

### Paradise Nature Reserve

Close to the centre of town, just behind Lammas Land is the gorgeous Paradise Nature Reserve. Full of biodiversity and right on the edge of the River Cam, the reserve is a convenient and refreshing spot for a stroll to clear the head, or to spend time in nature.

### Grantchester Meadows

An iconic Cambridge destination, perfect for sitting by the river in summer, and long winter walks.



## Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination

(Written by CCI)

We are champions of imagination and creativity with a particular focus on the importance of nature connectedness for all.

You can help us seed and grow our Fantastical Forest by volunteering at Forest events or alongside school based programmes. More information about our schools work is [here](#) and the Fantastical Forest, our ever growing public art collection of hangings co-created with communities, [here](#).

Check out wealth of free resources, publications, films and links to our research here:  
<http://www.cambridgecandi.org.uk/resources>

Join the CCI mailing list for news of events and opportunities to get more involved  
<http://www.cambridgecandi.org.uk/sign-up>

Email: [info@cambridgeacandi.org.uk](mailto:info@cambridgeacandi.org.uk)

## Cambridge Sustainable Food

(Written by Cambridge Sustainable Food)

We believe in the power of food for change. Our vision is for a different, fairer and more sustainable resilient food system in Cambridge that enables people to have a say in the decisions that affect them and future generations. Our work is focused on partnerships, projects and campaigns that capture the imagination and help deliver change in Cambridge and the surrounding areas.

Students can get involved in our work by volunteering with us and supporting our community food work.

We have a range of opportunities - from helping at our community food redistribution centre getting food out to the community food hubs, helping with food preparation at the CSF kitchen, running our stalls at local community events promoting a more climate friendly diet to helping run holiday lunch events for disadvantaged families and more!

Find out more about volunteering here: <https://cambridgesustainablefood.org/volunteer>  
Or check out our website at <https://cambridgesustainablefood.org/>

Email: [info@cambridgesustainablefood.org](mailto:info@cambridgesustainablefood.org),  
Facebook: Cambridge Sustainable Food,  
Twitter: [@foodcambridge](https://twitter.com/foodcambridge)  
Instagram: [@cambridgesustainablefood](https://www.instagram.com/cambridgesustainablefood)

## Plant-based Cambridge

(Written by Plant-Based Cambridge)

Plant-Based Cambridge is a student society focused on pushing catering services in Cambridge to offer more sustainable options. With sustainability being one of the University's key focuses in the near future, we believe that student awareness and advocacy is essential to push changes in catering services, departments, and colleges. We advocate for 100% plant-based catering provision and encourage the University to move towards this goal, paying extra attention to accessibility needs to ensure that all students and staff are catered for.

Get in touch to find out more about our work for a plant-based Cambridge:

Email: [plantbased@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:plantbased@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Twitter: @plantbased\_cam

## Students Organising for Sustainability

(Written by SOSUK)

Breaking the Bank is a campaign that supports students taking action to defund fossil fuels. [breakingthebank.org](http://breakingthebank.org)

[Invest for Change](#) is a campaign offering students dedicated support to campaign for their universities' money to be invested for climate and social justice. If your College isn't divested from fossil fuels, Invest for Change can support you to make sure it stops investing in Big Oil firms. We also push universities and Colleges to invest in climate and social justice solutions and to challenge all companies they invest in to improve their ethical practices by becoming active shareholders. Email [zak.coleman@sos-uk.org](mailto:zak.coleman@sos-uk.org) or check out the Invest for Change website if you'd like to get a campaign going at your College

## Cam Valley Forum

(Written by Cam Valley Forum)

We are a group working to protect and improve the environment of the River Cam and its tributaries, many of which are chalk streams.

We are currently campaigning for Bathing Water Designation of the River Cam at Sheep's Green, which will impose a legal obligation on the water company to clean up, while also accessing the Environment Agency monitoring and funding to make the improvements happen.

Our work also includes water quality monitoring, conservation and other activities, including manually removing Floating Pennywort in the upper Cam to fight eutrophication in the river.

To get involved in our work, take part in our online [consultation](#) for Bathing Water Designation, spread the word of our activity, sign up to receive our newsletter, be an advocate for our local waterways! Get in touch especially if you are interested in the local geology, ecology.

Email: [Info@camvalleyforum.uk](mailto:Info@camvalleyforum.uk)

## Cambridge Doughnut Economics Action Group (CamDEAG)

(Written by CamDEAG)

Doughnut Economics promotes an economy which respects the social foundation of life and the ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not collectively overshoot the planetary boundaries that protect Earth's life-supporting systems.

CamDEAG organise for education around Doughnut Economics and how this could improve life in Cambridge. We are currently organising a Community Portrait of Place using the tools from DEAL (Doughnut Economics Action Lab) in Cambridge.

You can find out more about our work and sign up on our website:  
<https://www.cambridgedoughnut.org.uk/join-us/>

Twitter: [@camdoughnut](#)

Contact form: <https://www.cambridgedoughnut.org.uk/contact-us/>

## Community growing spaces in the city

Want to get your hands in the soil? While the Cambridge term barely gives us time to rest, there are pockets of growing resistance outside of college walls where you can rest, make new friends and learn more about how to grow food sustainably and in community.

Find out whether your college or faculty has its own garden (many do!) or check out community growing spaces in your area:

- CoFarm on Coldham's Common, CB1 3HG
- Empty Common community garden, near Brooklands Avenue, CB2 8BL
- Midsummer Common community orchard, near Newmarket Road, CB5 8FF
- Nightingale Garden, at Nightingale recreation ground, CB1 8SQ
- Romsey community garden, near Marmora Road, CB1 3PY
- Trumpington community orchard, near Foster Road, CB2 9JP
- Clare College Allotment Society, Castle Court

## Friends of the Cam

(Written by Friends of the Cam)

We campaign for the rights of the river Cam and against all that destroys the river system.

We organise river clean ups, actions drawing attention to river pollution and over-abstraction, talks on ecology and the climate crisis, and our annual Midsummer Declaration of River Rights.

We will have live events (actions, clean ups, talks, celebrations) through the year. Register as a supporter on the website <https://www.friendsofthecam.org/> or contact us via the email.

Website: <https://www.friendsofthecam.org/>

Email: [contact@friendsofthecam.org](mailto:contact@friendsofthecam.org)

Twitter: cam\_friends

## Cambridge Friends of the Earth

We challenge environmentally damaging activities and policies by promoting sustainable alternatives. Locally we're questioning who is benefitting from the growth of the city and the environmental damage we're seeing. More widely, we're keeping up pressure for more credible solutions to climate change from local and national government.

You can find out more information on our website or by getting in touch:  
<http://www.cambridgefriendsoftheearth.co.uk>;

Facebook: Cambridge Friends of the Earth

Email: [camfoe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:camfoe@yahoo.co.uk)

Twitter/X: @FoECambridge

## ORCA for Environmental Liberation

(Written by ORCA)

We're a radical environmentalist group made up of a mix of students and non-students. We meet every week and our work focuses on direct action, creative protest, mutual aid and international solidarity.

Our biggest project is the "Schlumberger Out!" campaign. We're calling for the removal of the major oilfield company from campus, and for them to pay reparation for their global harm. The campaign involves a range of tactics from performances and workshops to civil disobedience.

To find out more or get involved contact us on social media to join our weekly meetings, or come along to a protest.

[https://linktr.ee/orca\\_4\\_e1](https://linktr.ee/orca_4_e1)

### Who are SLB?

SLB is the biggest oilfield services company in the world. Where there are fossil fuels, you'll find SLB's technology, helping companies like Shell and BP extract the last drops of oil and gas from the ground. From the Niger Delta to the Gulf of Mexico, SLB facilitate ecocide and fuel climate catastrophe.

SLB is based on the University of Cambridge's West Cambridge Site, and has been subject to years of protest by student and community climate activists. In light of Nigel Topping's conclusion that the university must cut its research ties with fossil fuel companies, how long can SLB last?

## How-to: Stay safe on a protest

Power concedes nothing without a demand, and protesting is one of the best ways to make demands publicly, and to build some power of our own. Recent legislation is cracking down on the right to protest (for obvious reasons), so it's never been more important to know your rights and stay safe on a protest.

### How to go on a protest

- Go! If you are able, protesting is a really crucial way to show solidarity and campaign for change, so *showing up* is really important.
- Make sure: you have an emergency contact written down, you've got a safe route home, and you know what you're showing up for.
- Do bring: friends, water, face-covering, a creative placard (see below) and comfy clothes and shoes.
- Don't bring: ID, weapons, intoxicants, eye-catching or identifying clothing.
- Remember: you don't have to talk to the police. Police Liaison Officers are there to extract information, and surveil you and your fellow organisers.



## How to make a placard/banner

- 1) Find your materials! Cardboard is everywhere, and paints are cheap if you pool together as a group.
- 2) What's your message? Keep it short and sweet. Everybody loves a pun.
- 3) Keep it simple. Simple, contrasting colours are good (red and black is a classic)
- 4) Remember spacing and use big letters (you don't want to squish words in at the end)
- 5) Think about how it will look in a photo - who do you want to notice it? Double sided signs are fun for the people behind you in a march!
- 6) If you're going big and professional with a banner, the Ruckus Society have a great resource on creative banner design here:  
[https://ruckus-org.nyc3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/production/app/uploads/2017/11/RS\\_ActionVisuals.pdf](https://ruckus-org.nyc3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/production/app/uploads/2017/11/RS_ActionVisuals.pdf) . Or you can just use a single sheet and some paint.

## Briefing: recent climate wins (and battles to come)

### 2020 - University Divests from Fossil Fuels

After five years of student and community campaigning, the University of Cambridge announced that it would divest its estimated £377 million investment in fossil fuels, with many colleges following suit.

### 2022 - BP Institute renamed

After an occupation by Cambridge Climate Justice, Fossil Free Research and local climate justice activists, the BP Institute was quietly renamed the Institute for Energy and Environmental Flows (IEEF).

### 2023 - ChemEng faculty shelve Big Oil teaching deal

After numerous actions by climate activist group This Is Not A Drill and departmental concerns over "the external political environment", the Chemical Engineering faculty paused a collaboration with ExxonMobil, BP and Shell.

### 2023 - Topping report

Years of campaigning by town and gown resulted in University Council commissioning Nigel Topping to write an independent report on the university's fossil fuels ties, which concluded that the university must stop accepting research funding from fossil fuel industry

### 2023 +

While the university has made climate commitments, it falls on students and staff to hold them to it. Recent wins for fossil free research still require implementation, and the university continues to host and defend the world's largest oilfield services provider, SLB. There are ongoing campaigns for climate education, reparations and research for people and planet. Where do you fit into the climate movement?

## Reading list: Climate

### Quick reads

*General introductions to the themes of this chapter:*

[‘Dismantling the Fossil Fuel University’](#), Cambridge Zero Carbon (now Cambridge Climate Justice), 2019

[‘Solving the Climate Crisis means ending our addiction to economic growth’](#), Emilia Reyes, OpenDemocracy, 2023

### In depth

*Longer explorations of what climate justice means in practice:*

[‘Perspectives on a Global Green New Deal’](#), ed. by Harpreet Kaur Paul and Dalia Gebrial (2021)

*It’s Not That Radical: Climate Action to Transform Our World*, Mikaela Loach (2023)

### Fiction

*Challenging fiction for understanding the causes of environmental devastation, and how we fight for climate justice:*

*Potiki*, Patricia Grace, 1986

*The Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler, 1993

### In Cambridge

*Resources about specific struggles in our city:*

[‘Fairness, nature and communities: addressing climate change in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’](#), Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate, 2021

[‘Get Big Oil Out of Climate Action’](#), Clarissa Salmon, Varsity, 2023

# Migration and international solidarity

## Questions

I want to support the refugee community in Cambridge...

Where can I safely seek immigration status advice?

Why are universities ramping up surveillance on campuses?

I'm worried about the companies my department is partnered with...

How can we support refugees in Calais from Cambridge?

What can solidarity look like in Cambridge?

## Briefing: Borders and universities

The university is not exempt from punitive and racist hostile environment policies. Visa costs are extortionate, and the visa criteria for international students is often harsh, with international students sometimes having to prove 'progression' to maintain visas. The sponsorship of the university forces people to become dependent on their employers, indebted and postpone career progressions.

Meanwhile the government plans to prevent international students from bringing dependents with them from January 2024 in further attacks on the ability of international students and academics to exist in the UK.

Across the UK, immigration raids continue as attacks on our communities, with 164 raids by Home Office ICO teams occurring in Cambridge between 2014 and 2021. Many companies are complicit in this violence too, with Byron Burgers, in one notable [2016 incident](#), accused of 'entrapment' when they staged a fake meeting for staff at a London restaurant to be interrogated, and some subsequently deported, by immigration officials. Nationally, communities are coming together to resist raids and defend our neighbours from deportation, with successful raid resistance occurring in Peckham, Glasgow, and Edinburgh in recent years.

We need to resist the culture of suspicion created by the 'hostile environment', as universities nationally ramp up surveillance and use of PREVENT legislation (which negatively affects  $\frac{1}{3}$  of Muslim students, according to NUS data). The university and colleges also continue to invest in companies which produce border technology, and engage in research collaboration with and platform companies and governments complicit in human rights violations around the world, from Boeing to the US military.

Across the UK, however, students and communities are resisting border violence and human rights violations, a thread of resistance which is deeply connected to the work of decolonisation within higher education. CAMCrag organise convoys to Calais to deliver vital supplies to refugees, while Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum and others work to foster a culture of solidarity and migrant support in the city. UCU offers a [support service](#) for academics worried about their immigration status, while People and Planet's 'Undoing Borders' campaign pushes a pledge to prioritise duties of care (following successes in the NHS and schools), and to classify those with temporary migration status as 'home' students'.

Where universities are currently complicit in border violence, the groups in this guide fight for a world in which international solidarity and collaboration are part and parcel of a public university.



## Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group (CamCrag)

(Written by CamCrag)

CamCrag is a registered charity which organises regular weekend volunteer convoys from Cambridge to Calais. We also collect donations of funds to help refugees in Europe and beyond.

We encourage all students with an interest in border policy or refugee issues to come on a convoy. We run donation drop and sorting days and fundraising events for which we need local volunteers.

To learn more about our work, sign up for a convoy, or explore our projects and events, visit our website or get in touch:

Website: [www.camcrag.org.uk](http://www.camcrag.org.uk)

Email: [contact@camcrag.org.uk](mailto:contact@camcrag.org.uk)

Twitter: [camb4calais](https://twitter.com/camb4calais)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/camb4calais>

## Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign (CRRC)

(Written by CRRC)

CRRC exists to campaign for and facilitate the resettlement of refugees in the Cambridge area, providing volunteering opportunities to the local community and support to refugees, with support given currently to around 200 individuals. This includes additional language support, social opportunities to foster inclusion and community, tutoring for children, holiday activities and clubs, material donations, emergency funding in case of hardship, doula support for pregnant women, gardening, assistance with learning to drive and finding employment.

Students with Arabic or Pashtu language skills would be most welcome to help with interpreting. We encourage those able to tutor school-age children on a regular basis to get involved. We also need general volunteers to help source household items and to help out at social events and outings.

Supporting vulnerable refugee families is a very rewarding activity. You will be able to make friends, practise your ESOL skills and help people establish a new life in Cambridge. Please email us or follow us on social media to find out more.

[www.cambridgerefugees.org](http://www.cambridgerefugees.org)

admin@cambridgerefugees.org, twitter: camrefugees,

<https://www.facebook.com/cambridgerefugees>



## Demilitarise Cambridge

Demilitarise Cambridge is a student campaign fighting for the University to cut research ties with arms companies and military bodies and halt the production of research into military technologies.

In the last few years we've staged protests, written reports, and mapped out the sinister influence of arms companies on research and education. Our most recent report revealed that between 2002 and 2020 the university received a minimum of 2568 research grants totalling £109,513,596 from arms-manufacturers and military bodies, with the annual funding almost doubling in this period. During this period, the university's partners produced technology involved in regimes perpetuating alleged war crimes in Yemen, occupied Palestine, and Rojava.

As the 'military-academic' complex continues to expand, we will continue to resist the university's complicity in global violence and fight for a peaceful education system based on public good, not private profit and armed violence..

Join our fight for a demilitarised Cambridge here:

Email: [demilcambridge@gmail.com](mailto:demilcambridge@gmail.com)

Twitter: @DemilCambridge

Facebook: Demilitarise Cambridge

## A Timeline of Demilitarise Cambridge

### 2018

Demilitarise Cambridge emerges from student solidarity protests and begins Campaigning for an arms-free university, resulting in the Cambridge Service Alliance dropping BAE Systems as a partner in late 2018

### 2018

Emmanuel College withdraws nearly £2.9m from the arms companies Airbus SE and United Technologies, following a campaign by Divest & Disarm Emmanuel, which emerged from the demilitarise campaign.

### 2022

Demilitarise Cambridge storms a 'sustainability' talk by Rolls-Royce CEO Warren East and broadcasts a statement from Yemeni journalist Ahmah Algohbary, who revealed the extend of Rolls-Royce's complicity in the Saudi bombing of Yemen.

### 2019/20

University funding body CBELA rejects funding from Airbus and MBDA, citing a 'high level of reputational risk. The university has not accepted Airbus funding since.

### 2023

Five years of research results in 'The Military-Academic Complex', a 50-page report detailing the university's extensive connections and collaborations with the arms industry.

## Spotlight on: Demilitarisation

(CN: military violence)

Kurdish people have been bombarded by Turkey with fighter jets [produced and sold](#) by BAE Systems. Kashmiris face [repression, domicile](#) and [police brutality](#) by the Indian state, partially facilitated by [British technologies](#). Palestinians are [surveilled, attacked](#) and [dispossessed](#) by [British-supplied](#) Israeli armed forces. Yemenites and Bahraini civilians are attacked by aircraft [part-produced](#) by Rolls Royce. Egyptian dissidents are suppressed by munitions and tear-gas [provided](#) by Chemring Group.

Cambridge University has worked with many of these companies, enabling acts of war and oppression.

Commendably the university has cut ties with companies complicit in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and yet, this has not been the case for other conflicts. Even then, this cutting of ties happens after-the-fact, when military technology is already in the hands of governments which bomb civilians, target dissent, and stockpile military technology.

Students and staff are part of knowledge-production for these companies, even if they are not necessarily involved in their 'defence' arms. This year's 'Military-Academic Complex' report revealed that much of the university's relationship with arms companies happens through consultancy bodies and 'spin outs', marketised research which is quickly coopted by arms companies and the interests of multinational corporations.

But this isn't just something happening "out there". Many of us students in Cambridge come from parts of the world that suffer the brunt of the global arms industry. The "us" that they try to "defend" is just a rhetorical tool, an illusion. "We" are this university. We need to be defended from the "defence" industry.

Demilitarisation, like cutting ties with fossil fuel companies, is about preventing global harm and advocating for education which centres people and planet, not profit. Do we want a university that helps these companies profit off the death and destruction that their products are intended to cause? Do we want students trained to find more efficient ways of killing people, recruited from a careers fair down the road? Do we want our academics spending time and contributing their knowledge to solving problems for arms companies?

One example of what demilitarisation might look like was pioneered in the 1970s: The Lucas Plan. Written by workers at the Lucas Aerospace Corporation in 1976 in response to thousands of job cuts, the plan argued that by moving away from military contracts and toward socially useful production, workers could both keep their jobs and benefit their communities.

What would a new Lucas Plan look like in the context of climate emergency and war? The Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) has produced a [series](#) of detailed reports on how a transformation away from arms could be implemented, with an emphasis on renewables. It is the misallocation rather than the absence of funds that is the problem: in 2014, the government spent 30 times more on research and development for weapons than for renewables. Arms manufacturers on the River Clyde could become leaders in wave power technology. Excellent conditions for the development of offshore wind power in the UK could create 150,000 new jobs, replacing careers related to the supply of lethal weapons. A self-defeating approach to national security based on militarism and the proliferation of wars in some of the poorest parts of the world could be replaced by the real security offered by

sustainability, respect for human rights, and international solidarity.

## Student Action for Refugees

(Written by STAR)

Student Action for Refugees Cambridge (STAR) is a newly formed society whose main aims are raising student awareness around refugee-related issues; campaigning for refugee rights and policy reform; and directly volunteering to help refugees and asylum seekers. We are part of a national network of STAR groups, and a university based coalition of Human Rights societies.

Our current projects include supporting the work of local charity CamCrag; ad-hoc community and online volunteering; running speaker events; setting up a social media outreach campaign; participating in a network of Human Rights Society events and activities; and attending Refugee-related protests both in Cambridge and in London.

We are also looking for people who are interested in being college representatives, to coordinate college based applications to the University of Sanctuary project.

STAR hopes to give students direction who feel angry and helpless in the face of depressing government legislation and human rights abuses. We hope to be a bridge between Cambridge town and university refugee rights projects, and serve as a support network for students that want to engage in refugee issues.

Recruitment form: <https://forms.gle/YngJjSopRyEGS2V66>

Email: [star@cambridgesu.co.uk](mailto:star@cambridgesu.co.uk)

Instagram: [star.cambridge](https://www.instagram.com/star.cambridge)

## Cambridge Refugee Scholarship Campaign (CRSC)

(Written by CRSC)

We are a support network for students who self identify as Refugees or from a conflict background. We help prospective students apply for the Rowan Williams Scholarship, and help current students by running social events and trying to help with pastoral issues such as securing housing for the holidays or finding a therapist.

We are a refugee-student led organisation and exist primarily to support students who identify as refugees, as well as improving access for more scholarship students in the future. Non-refugee students are welcome to support our activities, and we would also like to direct you towards the primarily volunteering-based society STAR - Cambridge.

Check out our website and get involved at: <https://camrefugeecampaign.org>

Email: [contact@camrefugeecampaign.org](mailto:contact@camrefugeecampaign.org)

## Cambridge University Freedom From Torture

(Written by CU Freedom From Torture)

We host fundraising and awareness raising events directed towards supporting our parent organisation, Freedom From Torture, which provides therapeutic care and support for survivors of torture who seek protection in the UK.

Students can get involved in two ways:

1) Students can follow our instagram @cambridgeunifreedomfromtorture and come along to all our events. We would love students to join our sponsored runs, pottery workshops, speaker events, protests etc. Increased participation means increased success for our organisation!

2) Students can sign up to become a college representative for FFT. College representatives help us organise the logistics of our events, contribute their ideas for initiatives and publicise FFT within their colleges. We always need a large community of college representatives for our events to run smoothly!

Email: [freedomfromtorturecambridge@gmail.com](mailto:freedomfromtorturecambridge@gmail.com)

Instagram: @cambridgeunifreedomfromtorture

Main Freedom from Torture website: <https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/>

Donation link:

[https://secure.freedomfromtorture.org/page/121429/donate/1?ea\\_tracking\\_id=web](https://secure.freedomfromtorture.org/page/121429/donate/1?ea_tracking_id=web)

## Reading list: International solidarity

### Quick reads

*General introductions to the themes of this chapter:*

[‘Divest Borders Action Guide’](#), People and Planet, 2021

[‘A Case for Abolishing Borders: How to Maintain Life During the Climate Crisis’](#), Amiteshwar Singh, Josephine Becker and Natasha Phang Lee, *shado mag*, 2022

### In depth

*Longer explorations of migration and solidarity across borders:*

*The New Odyssey: The Story of Europe's Refugee Crisis*, Patrick Kingsley (2016)

*Border Nation A Story of Migration*, Leah Cowan (2021)

### Fiction

*Challenging fiction about experiences of migration and the harm caused by borders:*

*Men in the Sun*, Ghassan Kanafani (1962)

*You Exist Too Much*, Zaina Arafat (2020)

### In Cambridge

*Short articles about specific struggles in our city:*

[‘The Military Academic Complex’](#), Demilitarise Cambridge, 2022

[‘It’s not politics, it’s people’s lives’: The students giving up their weekends to help refugees’](#), Daniel Hilton, *Varsity*, 2023



## Cambridge University Palestine Solidarity Society (PALSOC)

(Written by CU PalSoc)

We promote awareness and solidarity with the Palestinians and their on-going struggle for justice, human rights and peace. We aim to establish an inclusive and diverse student movement to raise awareness of the Palestinian anti-colonial struggle for liberation.

We actively campaign for Palestinian rights by empowering human rights-based campaigns, such as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) and investigating how our own institution is violating Palestinian rights.

We also celebrate the wonderful, rich and powerful Palestinian culture that emerges through resistance.

You can get involved by:

- Attending PALSOC Events and feel free to speak to any committee members about an idea or potential action that interests you, or about something you would like to see PALSOC provide
- Contacting us to host a collaborative teach-in with your society
- Joining local demonstrations and boycott campaigns
- Following us on social media and email us on [cupalestinesoc@gmail.com](mailto:cupalestinesoc@gmail.com) to join our mailing list

Instagram: [@cambridgepalsoc](https://www.instagram.com/cambridgepalsoc)

Email: [cupalestinesoc@gmail.com](mailto:cupalestinesoc@gmail.com)

## Solidarity Hummus Recipe

A quick and tasty lunch, snack, or sharing dish, this hummus is a great alternative to store bought hummus, and cooking a meal for friends can even be an act of solidarity. Last term, CU Palestine Solidarity Society teamed up with Cambridge Community Kitchen to make delicious hummus, fundraise for Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), and raise awareness of the ongoing call for [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions](#) of Israel-linked companies. They raised £316 for MAP, and have shared their recipe so you can make it at home too!

### **Ingredients:**

- two cans of chickpeas
- between 1 and 2 lemons (not bottled juice!)
- generous teaspoon of bicarbonate soda
- salt
- one big clove of garlic (i know it doesn't sound much but you don't want to overpower!)
- around 4-5 tbsp of tahini
- a generous splash of ice cold water

### **Method**

- 1) Drain your chickpeas and put in a pot with fresh cold water. Add the bicarb and bring to a simmer for 5-7 minutes (you don't want to overcook them, just to remove the skins)
- 2) Take off heat, drain and put them in a bowl with fresh cold water. Gently rub them and the skins should separate from the chickpeas/float to the top of the water. Discard skins. This is slightly long to do but worth it for smooth hummus!
- 3) Now you just add the chickpeas to a blender/food processor (don't overfill your blender otherwise it'll get stuck) along with your garlic and the juice of one lemon (you can add more to taste towards the end which I usually end up doing)
- 4) Let it blend for 5 minutes until it's become a thick paste. Then add your tahini, scraping down the sides the whole time. Let it run for another 3-5 mins (I know it sounds like overkill but it's worth it) it'll be too thick at this point, but check for salt and lemon and adjust accordingly.
- 5) Now, with the blender running, add a little bit of super super cold water. Don't add too much at first - you can always add but you can't take away!
- 6) At this point, when it's the right thickness, I stream in a veryyyy small amount of extra virgin olive oil. You don't need more than a tablespoon because you'll add extra to the top when serving. Your hummus is done - now garnish with za'atar or smoked paprika and lots of extra virgin olive oil :))

## Acknowledgements

To the contributors, and every organisation featured in this guide: thank you for orienting us, and sharing roadmaps to a fairer future. Without you many of us would not find our feet, let alone a way forward.

To those who came before us, thank you for the archive you've created. The work of generations of students and activists gives us the toolkits we have today. Special thanks goes out to the creators of the previous Cambridge guides, who over the years have kindly shared tips, insights and resources on keeping this practice alive.

Thank you also to those who've preserved these archives, especially Antony Carpen, who continues to recover lost histories and dream of the Cambridges that could've been.

Thank you to the proofreaders, and everyone who has lent an extra eye. The students who've advised and guided while juggling full time degrees have been invaluable. Thank you to Fergus, for patient, diligent, and good-spirited support.

Thank you to the designers, who have shared their creative visions, especially to Lucy, who has put countless hours into making the finished project beautiful and accessible.

Thank you to the comrades who have never given up in liberation, as dream and as practice. Thank you for sharing your passion, your knowledge, and your commitment to building communities of care. Every cold morning on a picket, every hour cycling around Cambridge delivering food in the dark, every evening spent strategising after defeat sustains the world we are trying to build.

Thank you to everyone who has and continues to care for each other in community. The last word belongs to bell hooks: 'The love we make in community stays with us wherever we go. With this knowledge as our guide, we make any place we go, a place where we return to love.'