



Annual Membership Survey 2024

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AMS 2024

The Annual Membership Survey is a key business activity for the OU Students Association. Each year, all students who are current members of the Association are invited to participate in the survey. Their feedback on key areas of our services plays a crucial role in helping us better understand what our members need from us, and enables informed decision-making across the organisation.

About the survey

In 2024, 2699 students took part in the AMS, or 2.2% of the 121439 students who were invited to take the survey.

The survey was incentivised with prizes (two tablets and shopping vouchers).

Recommendation

Explore alternative survey platforms

This year's response rate to the survey remains consistent with that of 2023 (2.4%) and 2022 (2.3%). However, a comparison of click rates at the start of the survey with the actual number of respondents completing the survey showed that we were losing around 80% of students interested in taking the survey. This can be explained by the feedback we have received from students about difficulties with signing on to MS Teams in order to take the survey (the AMS is hosted on MS Forms). This has been a barrier to participation since 2020 and exploration of alternative survey platforms is recommended for future iterations of the survey.

Awareness

- Overall awareness
- Awareness of the SLT/BoT
- Awareness of our activities
- Awareness of our services

Overall Awareness

Overall, 79% of respondents were aware of the Association.

This marks consistent year-on-year improvement (4% increase since 2023 and 9% increase since 2022).

In 2024, 36% of respondents selected 'Yes, and I know what is available to me as a member'.

- This marks consistent year-on-year improvement (4% increase since 2023 and 11% increase since 2022).
- This increase is particularly important because it measures not just awareness but also understanding of what the Association offers to students.

Awareness of Student Leadership Team and Board of Trustees

In 2024, there was a 2% increase in the awareness of the Student Leadership Team, with 10% selecting 'I know who they are and what they do'. This is an overall increase of 4% since 2022.

Awareness of individual members of the SLT also saw an increase of 3%, with 21% selecting 'I know some members but not sure of their role'. This is an overall increase of 14% since 2022.

Awareness of the Board of Trustees remained the same, with 5% selecting 'I know who they are and what they do'. This has only shifted by +1% since 2022.

Awareness of individual members of the BoT saw an increase of 2%, with 13% selecting 'I know some members but not sure of their role'. This is an overall increase of 9% since 2022.

Awareness of SLT and BoT

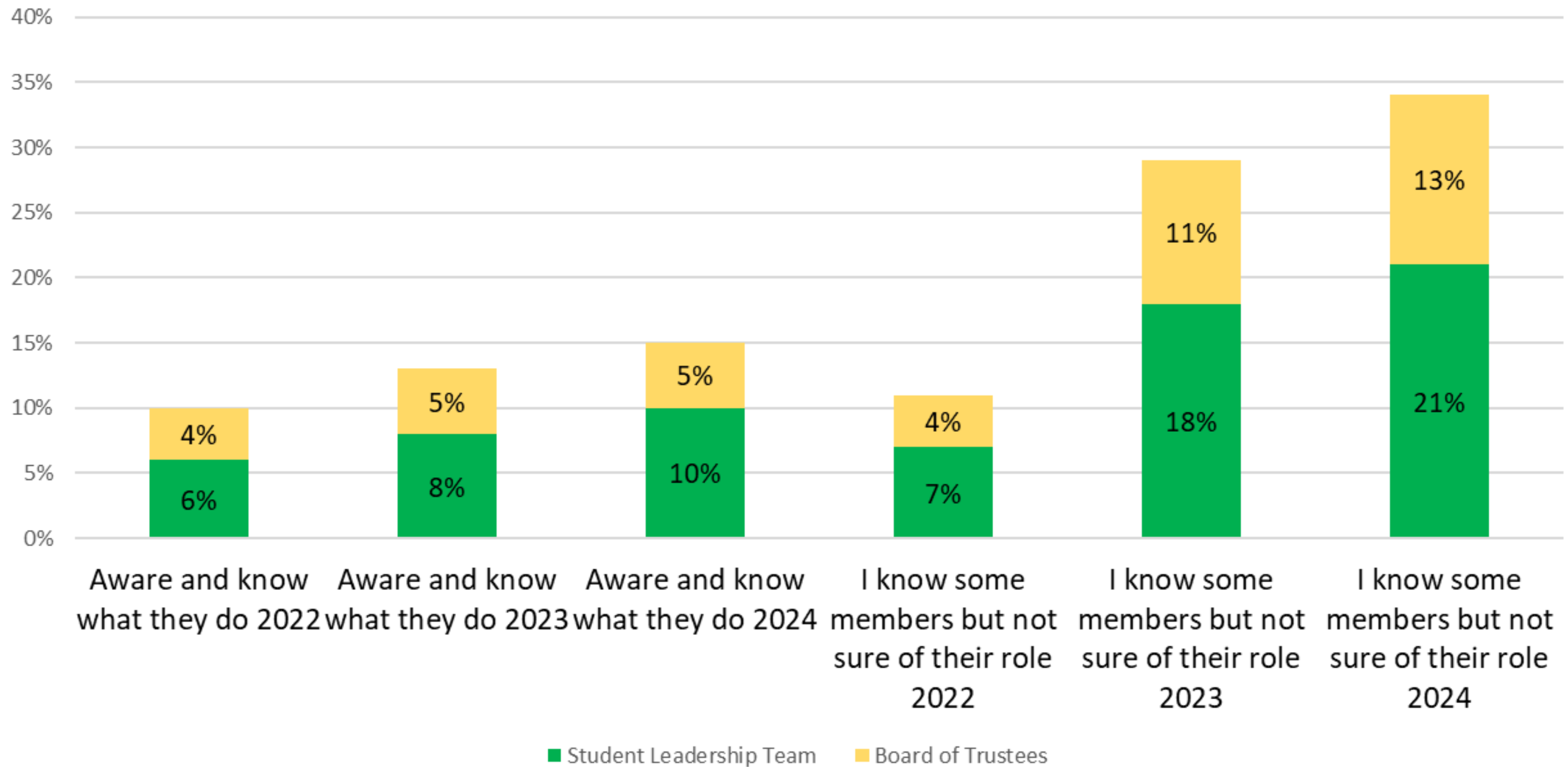


Figure 1

Our Activities and Services

The AMS 2024 analysis presents both students' interest in, and previous experience of, participating in the Association's activities and using our services. Student feedback from 2022, 2023, and 2024 has been compared along three scales:

- Previous experience of taking part in an activity, or using a service
- Awareness of and future interest in taking part in an activity, or using a service
- Interest in the activity or service but students were not aware that the Association offered it.

This has been analysed of each type of activity and service.

Note: Please refer to Figures 2-5 and Table 1

Activities (Figures 2-3)

Student-led support groups: The proportion of respondents with previous experience remains consistent, with a slight drop of 1% in 2024. Interest in participating in the future remains high at 60% (33% were already aware while 27% had only just heard about it through the survey).

Volunteering and Representation: The proportion of respondents with previous experience remains consistent. Interest in participating in the future remain high at 67% (34% were already aware while 33% had only just heard about it through the survey).

Freshers: There has been a slight drop (1% each year) in respondents with previous experience between 2022 and 2024. However, during that time there has been a drop of 7% in students' expressing interest in participating in the future. Overall, 43% were interested in 2024 (22% were already aware while 21% had only just heard about it through the survey), as opposed to 50% in 2022.

Activities (Figures 2-3)

Face-to-face events, meet-ups and conferences: The proportion of respondents with previous experience remains consistent, with a drop of 2% in 2024. Interest in participating in the future remains high at 62% (35% were already aware while 27% had only just heard about these through the survey).

Online events, meet-ups and conferences: The proportion of respondents with previous experience remains consistent. Interest in participating in the future remain high at 67% (41% were already aware while 26% had only just heard about these through the survey).

Societies and Clubs: There has been a slight drop (1% each year) in respondents with previous experience between 2022 and 2024. Interest in participating in the future remains high at 67% (40% were already aware while 27% had only just heard about it through the survey).

Participation in activities 2022-2024

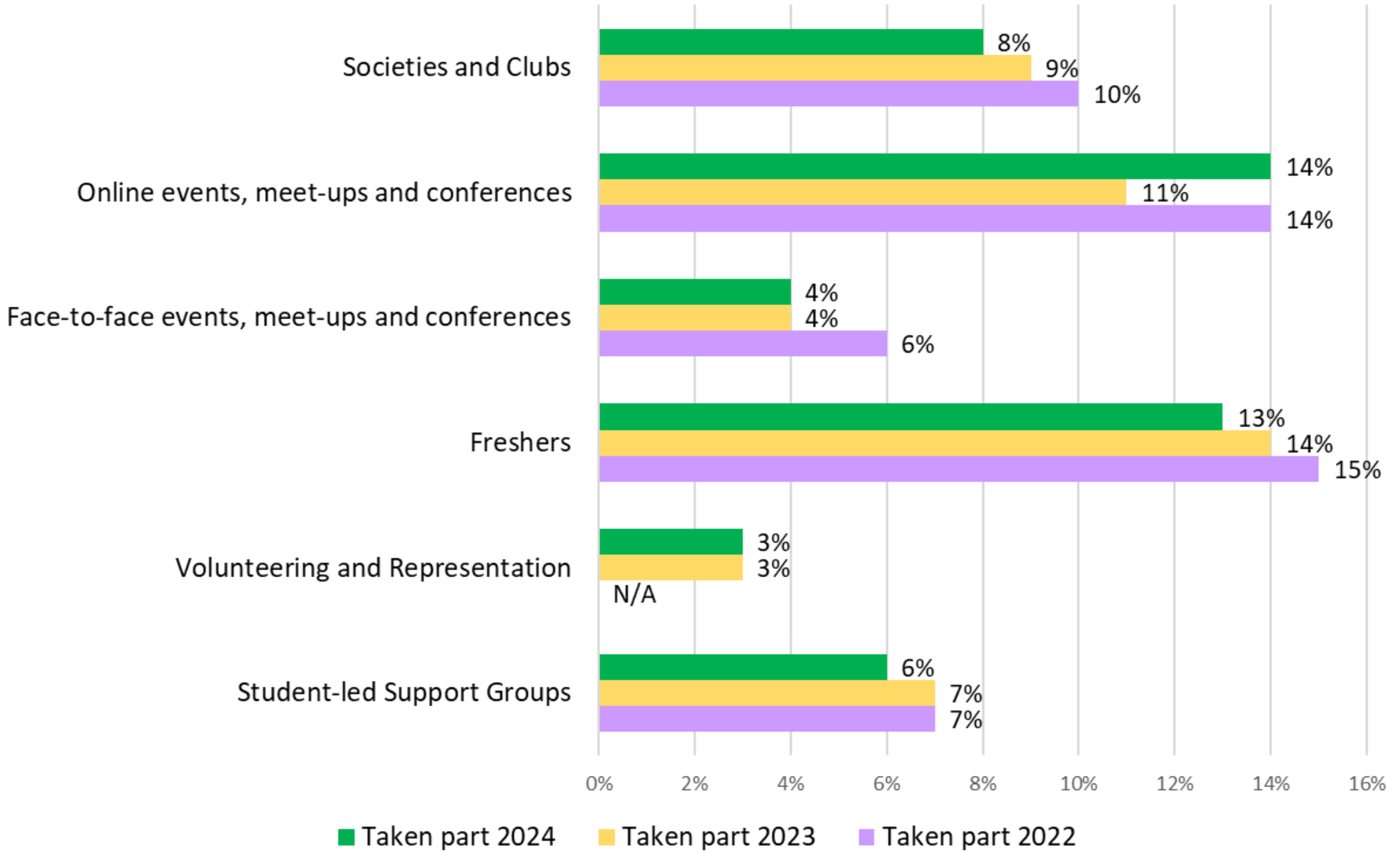


Figure 2

Interest in Activities 2022-2024

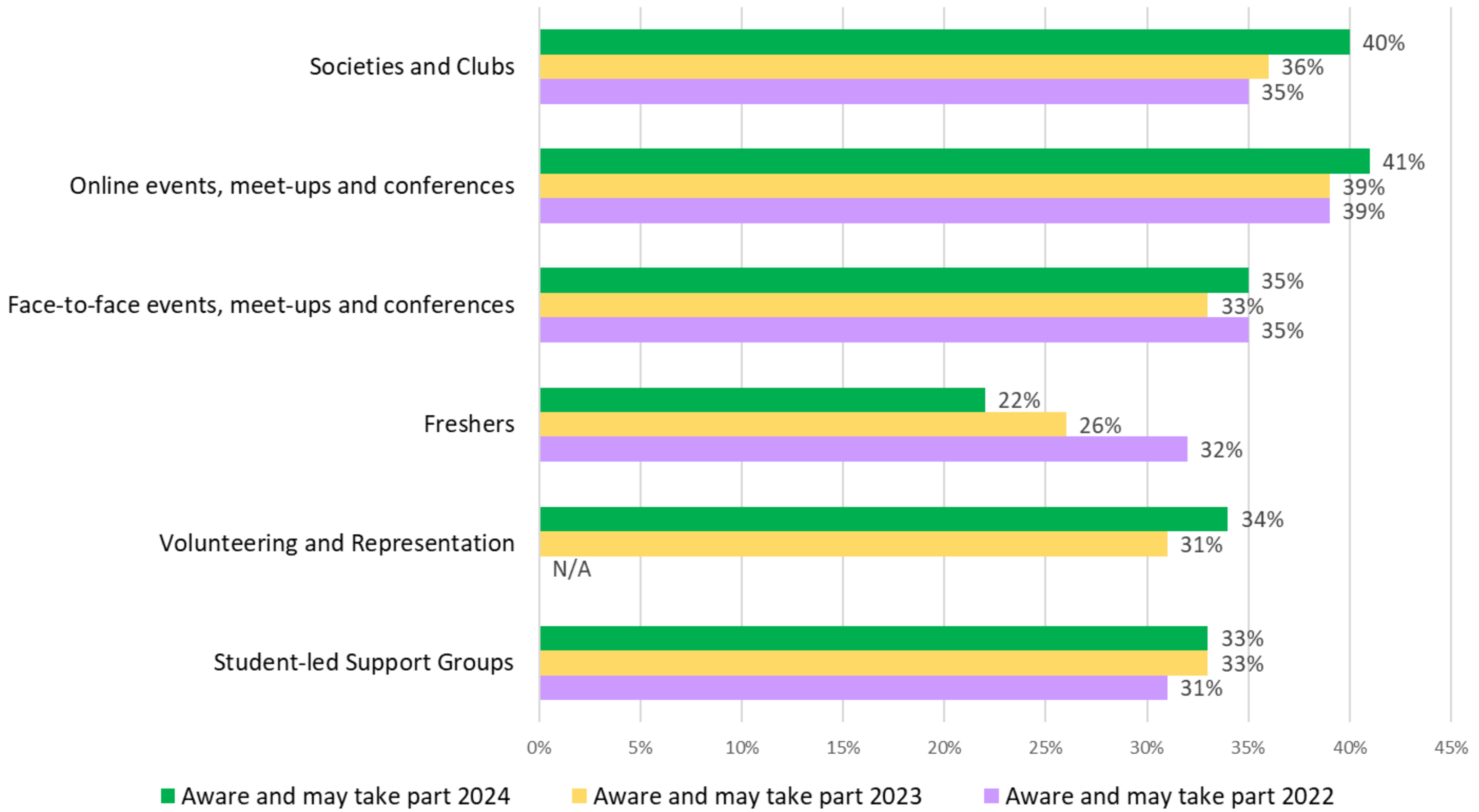


Figure 3

Services (Figures 4-5)

Individual Representation Service: The proportion of respondents who have used the service remains consistent. Interest in using the service in the future is high at 75% (22% were already aware while 53% had only just heard about it through the survey).

OU Students Shop: The proportion of respondents who have used the service has dropped by 3%. Interest in using the service in the future remain high at 70% (37% were already aware while 33% had only just heard about the shop through the survey).

Ouset (Association's affiliated charity): The proportion of respondents who have used the service remains consistent. Interest in using the service in the future remains high at 74% (19% were already aware while 55% had only just heard about it through the survey).

Services (Figures 4-5)

Student-led EDI Groups: The proportion of respondents who have used these services – the OU Pride, BAME and Disabled Students Group - remains consistent. Prior awareness and interest in using the service have increased for all the Groups between 2022 and 2024 (5% for OU Pride, 4% for BAME Students Group and 4% for the Disabled Students Group). It is notable that there is considerable interest in joining these groups, from students who do not share these protected characteristics. For example, BAME students represent 14% of the survey respondents, while interest in being part of the group was at 32%. Exploring ways in which ‘allyship’ could be explored in relation to these groups would help more students get involved in meaningful ways.

Mental Health Services: The proportion of respondents who have used the service remains consistent, though it is recommended that demographic profiles for the users of each service – if such data is available – would be helpful in raising awareness of these services in a targeted way. Prior awareness and interest in using these services in the future were at 26% for SHOUT (5% increase since 2022), 26% for Talk Campus (1% increase since 2022) and 25% for the OU Wellbeing App (1% increase since 2023).

Use of services 2022-2024

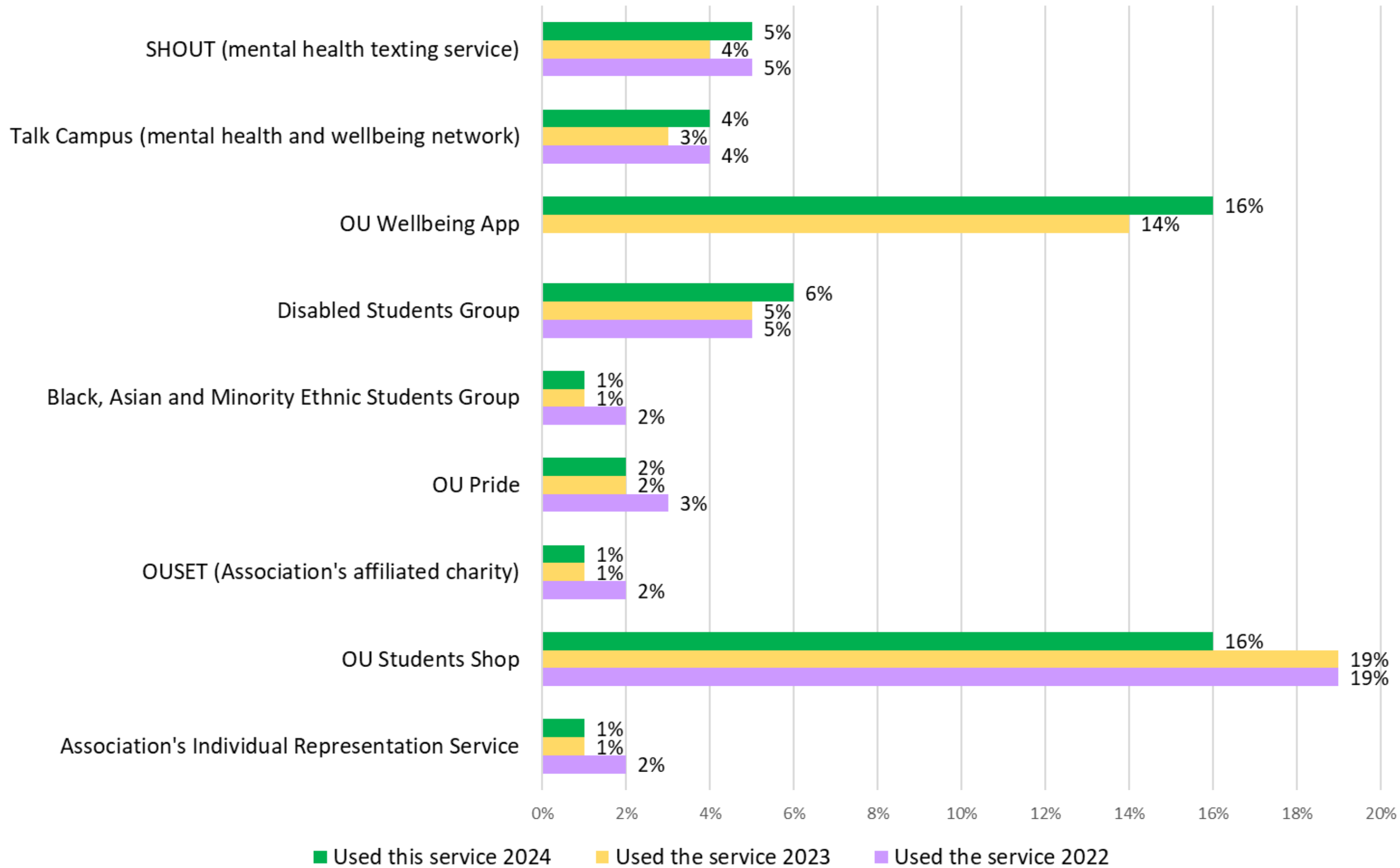


Figure 4

Interest in services 2022-2024

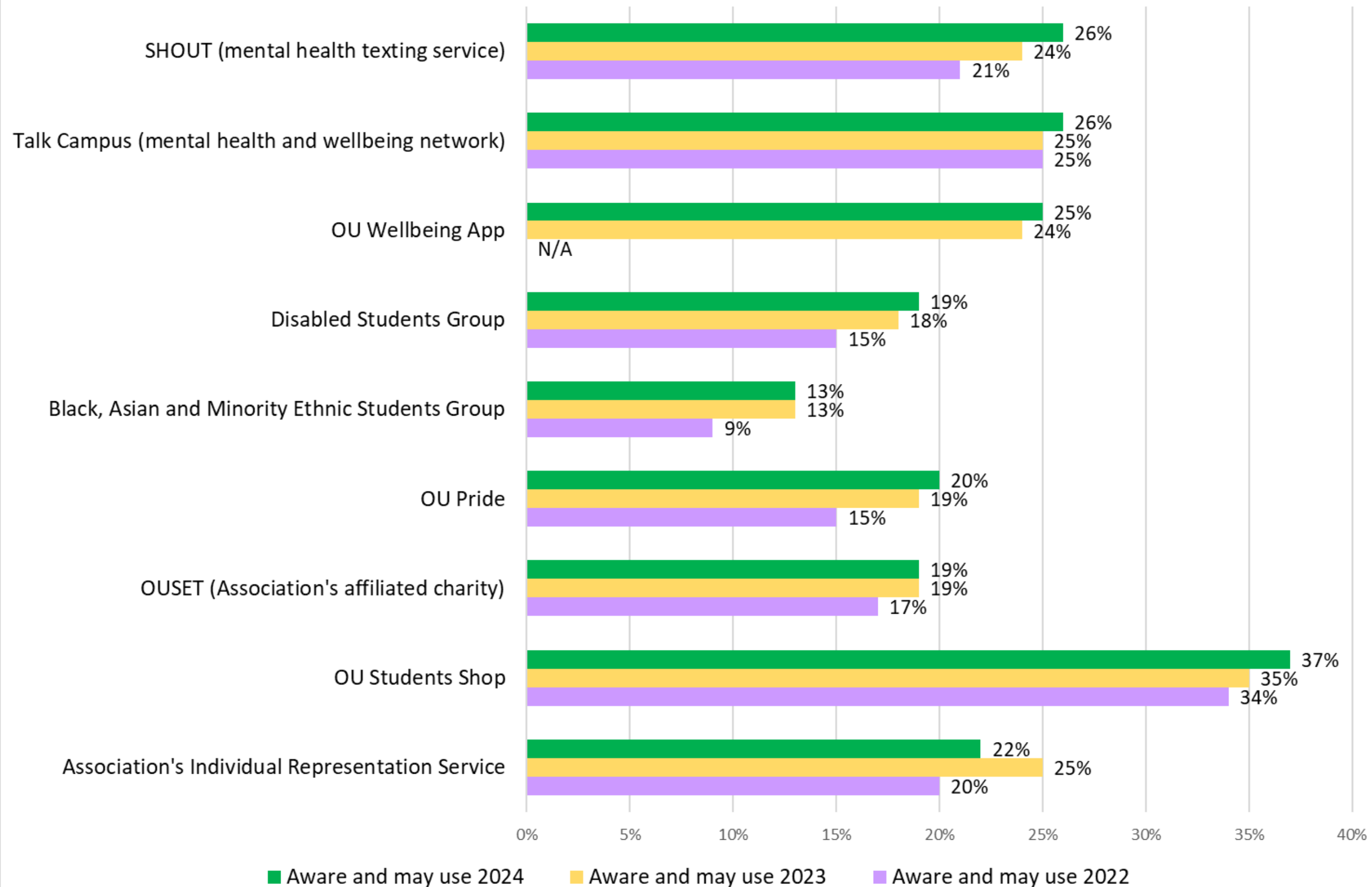


Figure 5

Activities and Services	Not aware but interested 2022	Not aware but interested 2023	Not aware but interested 2024	It's not for me 2024
Student-led Support Groups	43%	36%	35%	26%
Volunteering and Representation	N/A	36%	33%	31%
Freshers	18%	20%	21%	44%
Face-to-face events, meet-ups and conferences	31%	33%	27%	34%
Online events, meet-ups and conferences	30%	31%	26%	19%
Societies and Clubs	33%	33%	27%	25%
Association's Individual Representation Service	61%	52%	53%	24%
OU Students Shop	39%	34%	33%	14%
Ouset (Association's affiliated charity)	62%	55%	55%	26%
OU Pride	29%	31%	25%	53%
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Group	23%	24%	19%	68%
Disabled Students Group	26%	27%	21%	54%
OU Wellbeing App	N/A	41%	37%	21%
Talk Campus (mental health and wellbeing network)	51%	46%	44%	26%
SHOUT (mental health texting service)	44%	43%	40%	30%

Table 1

Communication channels

- Key channels for raising awareness
- Social media channels

Communication channels

In 2024, awareness levels show an increase on all of our key measures: our activities and services, our student representation work, and the Association overall. However, the proportion of respondents who first heard about the Association has dropped for all three channels:

- ‘I followed a link from the Open University’: 27% selected this in 2024, a drop of 18% since 2023
- ‘I visited the Association website’: 16% selected this option in 2024, a drop of 13% since 2023
- ‘I received an Association leaflet with my study materials’: 17% selected this option in 2024, a drop of 10% since 2023

Facebook (25%), Instagram (19%) and the Students Association Forums (21%) remain the most popular channels. Notably, both LinkedIn (10%) and TikTok (10%) use appears to be outpacing Twitter/X (8%) in 2024. It is recommended that Bluesky be added as a channel to gauge social media use amongst students.

Awareness of the Students Association (Channels)

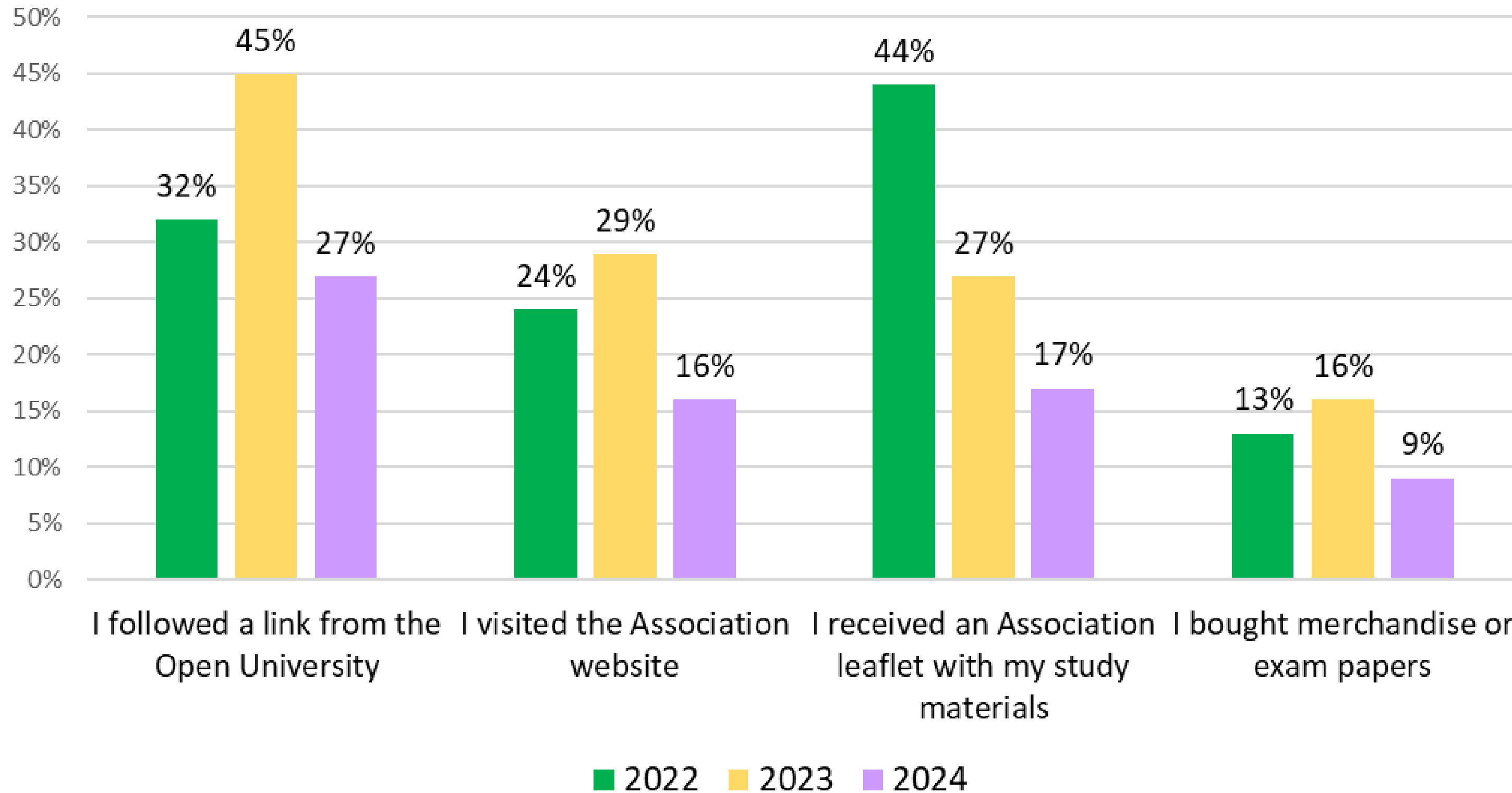


Figure 6

Social Media Channels

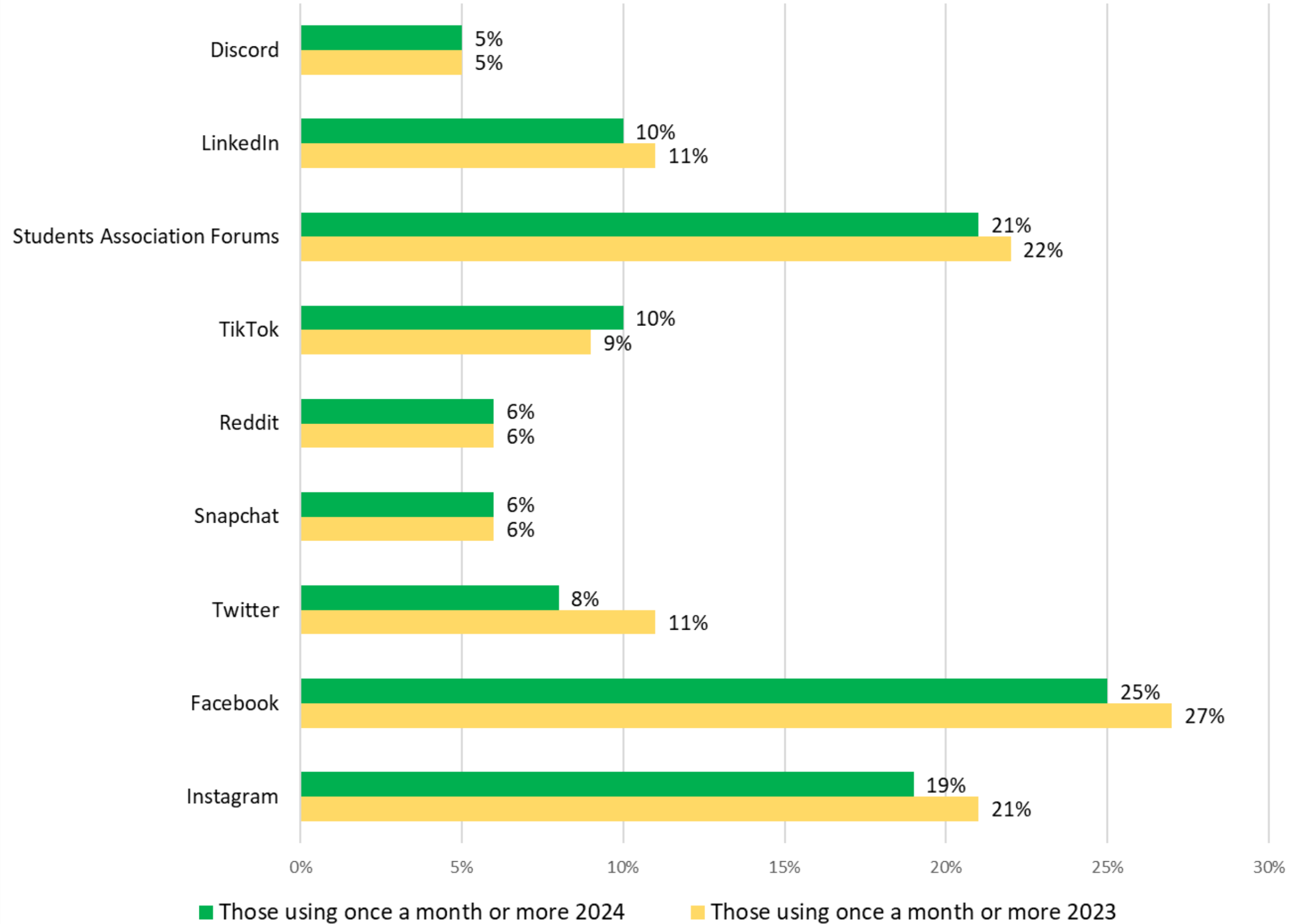
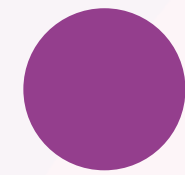
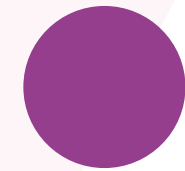


Figure 7

Volunteering and Representation



Student representation



Interest in volunteer roles

Student Representation

Awareness of Student Representation has increased for every measure in 2024. Below are the individual statements that make up the student representation question, with awareness levels compared between 2022 and 2024.

‘A key activity at the OU Students Association is to represent students' academic interests to the University’:

- 73% were aware in 2024, a 5% increase from 2023
- We have seen awareness increase for this measure by 9% since 2022

‘The Association's Student Representative role has been designed to give a voice to students' academic interests at university committees’:

- 71% were aware in 2024, a 6% increase from 2023
- We have seen awareness increase for this measure by 33% since 2022

Student Representation

All Student Representative volunteers are your fellow students:

- 76% were aware in 2024, a 7% increase from 2023
- We have seen awareness increase for this measure by 33% since 2022

Any current OU student can apply to become a Student Representative:

- 71% were aware in 2024, a 7% increase from 2023
- We have seen awareness increase for this measure by 28% since 2022

These are the highest ever statistics that we have seen in this area, and a big achievement for the Association. This includes having factored in the number of respondents who might have been aware from previously having undertaken a volunteering and representation role, which was only at 3%.

Awareness of Student Representation

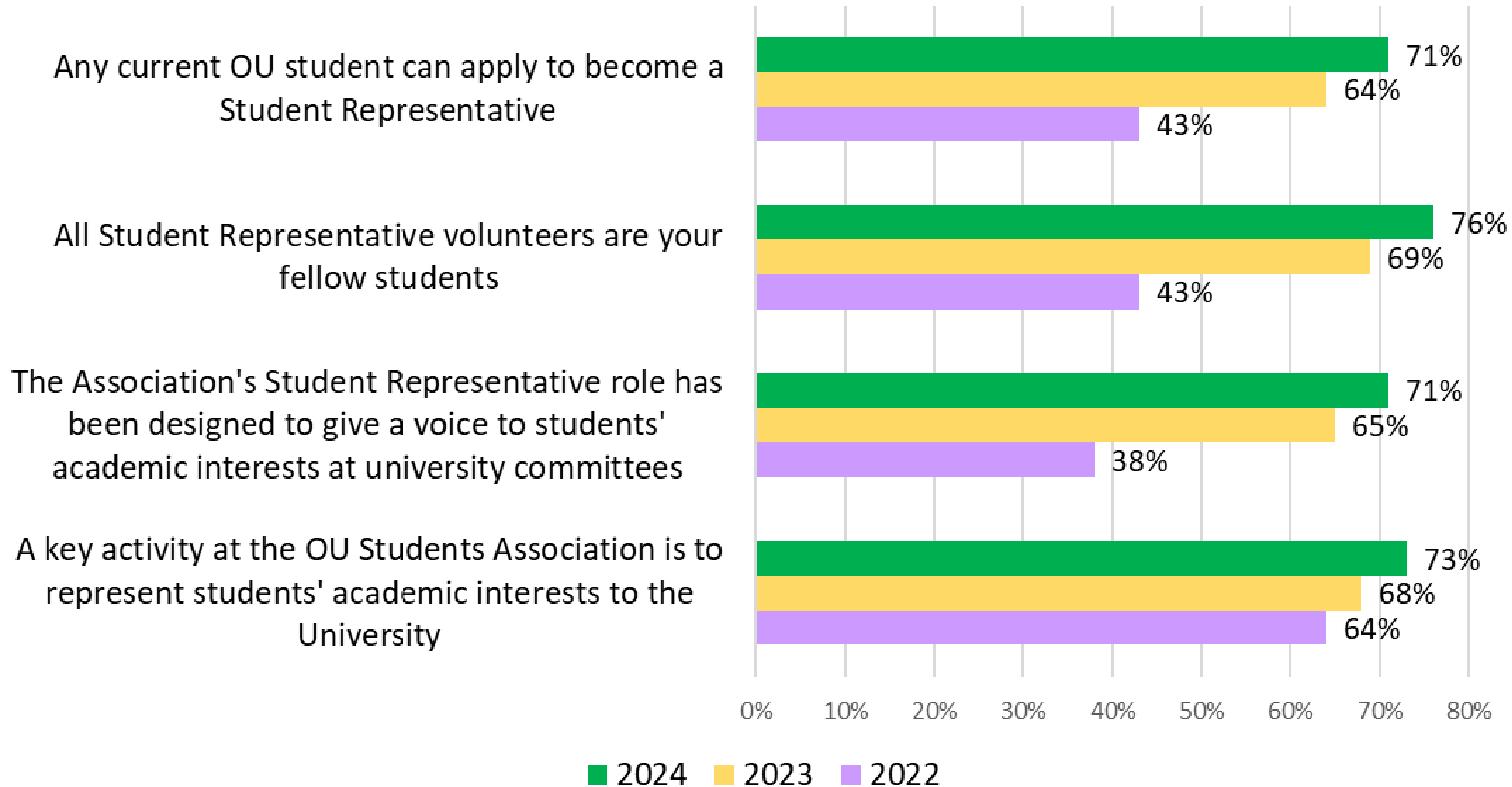


Figure 8

Volunteering roles

Of the survey respondents in 2024, 3% had previous experience of having undertaken a volunteering role. The volunteering categories that elicited the most interest from students (i.e., those who chose the ‘this sounds interesting and I might try it in the future’ option) were:

- Online volunteering (32%)
- Influencing policy and political discussions through campaigns (31%)
- Student Support, including Library Study Volunteer (31%)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (30%)
- Environment and Sustainability online volunteer role (30%)

Awareness of Volunteering Opportunities	This sounds interesting and I might try it in the future 2023	This sounds interesting and I might try it in the future 2024
Online volunteering (Association online meet-up host, forum moderator, club leads)	31%	32%
OU Student Shop Volunteer (including Graduation merchandise volunteers)	26%	26%
Academic representation (including Student Representative, Student Senate Reference Group)	24%	25%
Take part in campaigns to influence policy and political discussions in Westminster, and the devolved governments	29%	31%
Student support (including Library Study Volunteer)	30%	31%
Environment and Sustainability online volunteer role	29%	30%
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Student-led Support Group Committee member)	30%	30%

Table 2

Student Engagement

- Interest in Elections and Sustainability
- Key considerations when engaging with the Association

Student Elections

The proportion of students who would consider voting in the Association's student elections and standing for a role have remained consistent between 2023 and 2024.

- Voting in elections: 13% selected 'very likely' and 29% selected 'somewhat likely'
- Standing in elections: 2% selected 'very likely' and 5% selected 'somewhat likely'

Sustainability

In 2024, a new question about how confident students were in their understanding of the concept of Sustainability was added to the survey: 18% felt 'very confident' and 61% felt 'fairly confident' about their understanding of Sustainability.

As their first priority, students selected community litter picks (23%), responsible purchasing (18%), engaging with the OU on their sustainability practices (16%) and talks about sustainability and the environment (15%).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

For 37% of the respondents, 'Knowing that the Association champions Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)' was a key consideration when engaging with our events and activities.

- Respondents would like to receive regular update around our EDI work (28%)
- learn more about EDI-related campaigns (25%)
- participate in EDI-focused activities such as attending talks and contributing to research (19%)
- and contribute content for the Association's online magazine (18%).

Culture

A new question was added to the AMS in 2023, which asked students about the key considerations they had when engaging with the Association. This included statements around values and ways of working relevant to all areas of the Association's work.

The priority areas for students in 2024 remained consistent with the feedback we received after the initial introduction of this question:

- Having the opportunity to socialise with fellow students (49%, same as 2023)
- Having friendly and caring events and spaces (46%, a 2% increase from 2023)
- Being able to take a break from studies and do something fun (44%, a 1% increase from 2023)
- Having online spaces that are safe and actively moderated (44%, a 2% increase from 2023)

Considerations when engaging with the Association

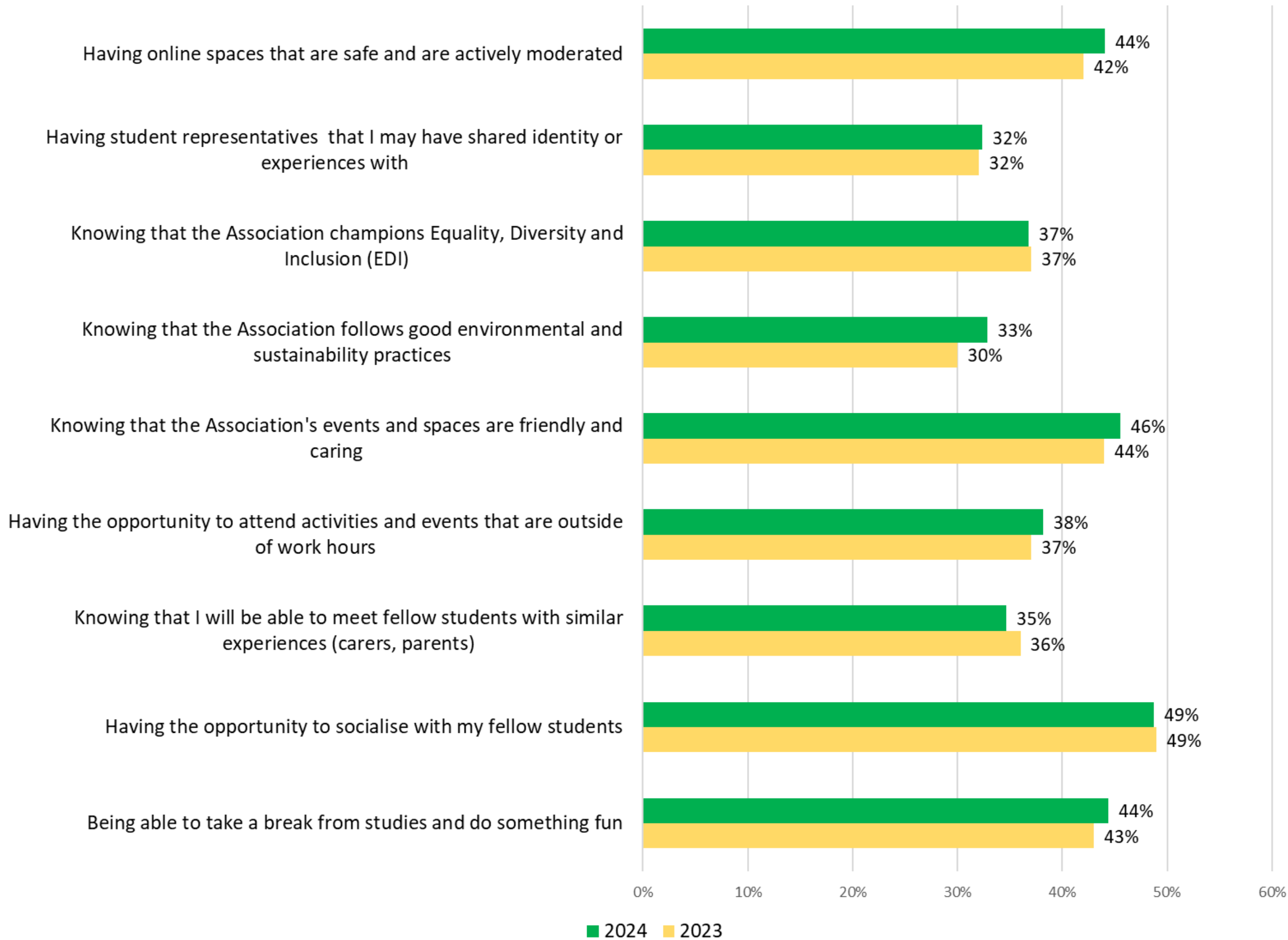


Figure 9