

2023 – 2024 IMPACT REPORT

For internal and stakeholder use

**10,000 LinkedIn
Accounts
Reached**

**1,000 Total
Website Visits**

**85% Member
Satisfaction**

Leeds Policy Institute
October 2024



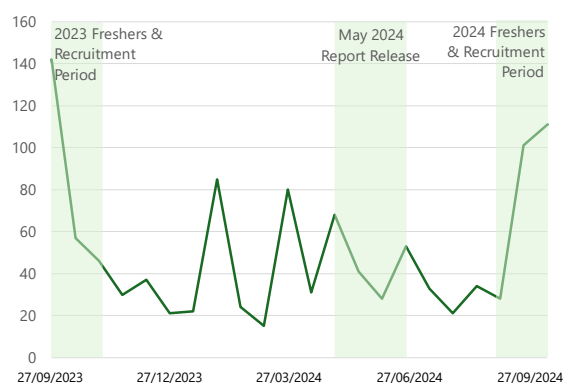
External Impact and Engagement

Leeds Policy Institute (LPI) was founded with the intention of providing students with a place to voice their economic, social, and political beliefs within the **University of Leeds** while supporting them with opportunities to foster their professional development.

This, combined with our unique structure of being a think tank and a society, means we have a mutual objective of maximising stakeholder engagement across all social media platforms as well as our website.

Specifically, the **LPI** committee is dedicated towards maximising engagement from the following groups: students, academics, industry professionals, and politicians (including local councillors as well as MPs).

Chart 1: 2023 – 2024 Weekly Website Visits



Source: Google Analytics, Leeds Policy Institute

The committee has noticed a recent uptick in weekly website visits starting the new academic year (**Chart 1**). This wave is no doubt a product of the new academic year. The committee views the recent slowdown as a potential risk for future engagement and is therefore investing significantly into student outreach to drive membership and campus engagement.

We remain optimistic about our membership numbers which match the majority of top student think tanks across the country, including the **Wilberforce Society of Cambridge University**.

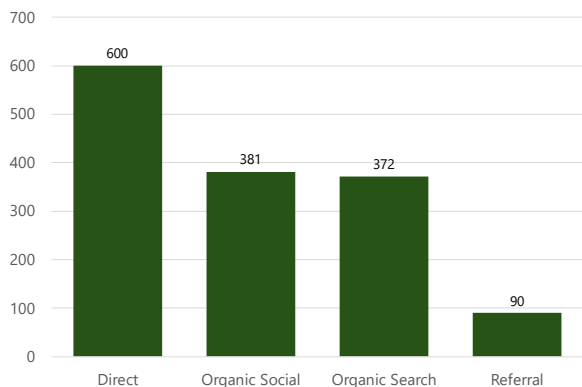
However, the committee is aware of potential risks.

Given these increased efforts, we expect membership numbers to match last year's **80** members, with our campus group chat surpassing the current **120** members. The committee will work towards, at minimum, reproducing last year's membership count to ensure that this year's research output is of comparable quality.

The committee hopes that increased campaigning efforts paired with word-of-mouth advertising throughout the **University of Leeds** campus will yield our targeted membership count of **120** members, enough to substantially increase the quality and quantity of our research output. The committee will continually review its own strategic decisions regarding this process with a public overview being released in next years impact report.

We would like to draw stakeholders' attention to our May 2024 Report release period (**Chart 1**) where a spike in activity led to an extra **122** website visits. Overall, the **Leeds Policy Institute** saw **1108** website visits in the 2023 – 2024 academic year. The committee aims to not only reproduce these results, but also surpass them. We will do this by creating a dedicated **Media and Communications department** to spearhead the active management of social media platforms. The committee sees this as an important step given the sources of our website traffic being skewed towards direct links and organic social media engagement (**Chart 2**).

Chart 2: 2023 – 2024 Website Visits by Source

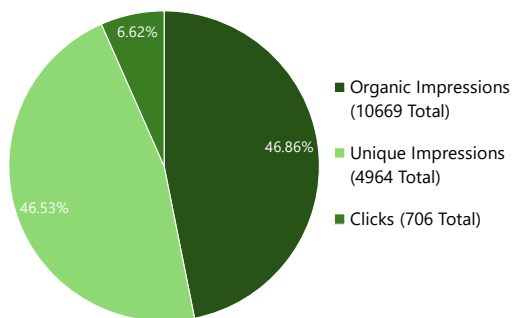


Source: Google Analytics, Leeds Policy Institute

To increase engagement across social media platforms, the think tanks **Data and Insights department** will also deploy **Macrobond**, a sponsor of **LPI**, to produce animated charts showcasing our modelling capabilities in an effort to attract stakeholders and readership.

The committee has identified LinkedIn as an important source of stakeholder engagement from academics and industry professionals (**Chart 3**).

Chart 3: 2023 – 2024 LinkedIn Performance

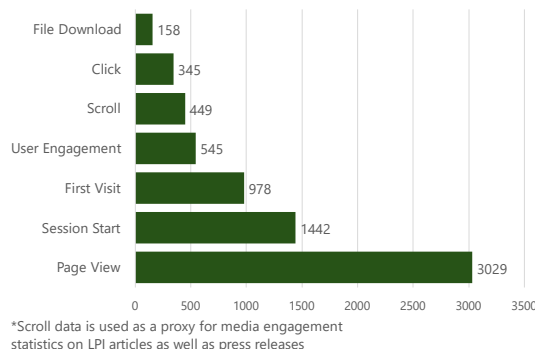


Source: LinkedIn Analytics, Leeds Policy Institute

The committee is satisfied with the performance of our LinkedIn channel this academic year. With a total of **10,669** impressions carrying over into **706** clicks, LinkedIn has carried **64%** of total website visits. When analysing a breakdown of our website traffic by action (**Chart 4**), we note that approximately **10%** of page views end with an action such as a click, scroll, or a file download of our reports.

This percentage is even higher for first visits, sitting between **10 – 30%**.

Chart 4: 2023 – 2024 Website Traffic Actions



Source: LinkedIn Analytics, Leeds Policy Institute

The committee takes note of this as it shows website visits are transferring into real engagement, meaning that our analytics are likely to not be distorted by bot accounts. This also tells us that **LPI's** research output is being read, a useful signal for gauging the quality of our student publications.

We therefore aim to use our new **Media and Communications department** paired with the interactive tools offered by **Macrobond** to continue using LinkedIn as a greater source of website traffic. We will continue targeting Instagram as a main source of engagement for our student community.

We aim to increase our **Public Affairs** efforts, making use of our placement students located in London to secure journalist contacts in high profile newspapers. **The Policy Institute** had already secured a published letter in the **Financial Times** and so we aim to expand our professional network of journalists.

The committee would also like to target outreach to professional think tanks. With the exception of the **Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)**, think tanks - especially centre and centre-left ones - have been unwilling to support student projects.

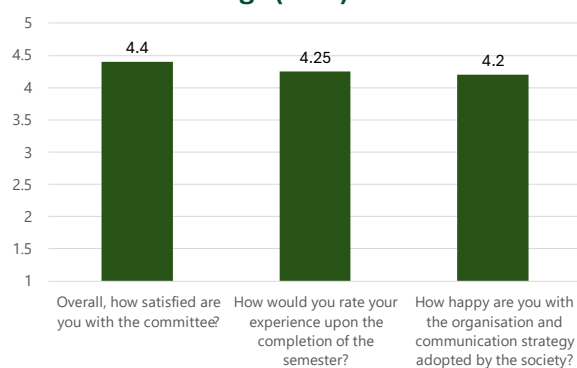
For us, this is a problem. **Leeds Policy Institute** remains as a non-partisan institution; therefore, it is imperative that we receive balanced support from all sides of the political aisle.

Finally, the committee will continue to make use of its professional and academic network to drive external engagement. We will achieve this by reopening positions to our academic council. We will also maintain our relationships with the **Leeds City Council** and the **University of Leeds** through setting up our internal ethics framework. The committee expects that our expansion of the data team and organised use of **Macrobond** as well as **Bloomberg**, will substantially increase the value our publications provide to professionals as well as MPs.

Internal Impact and Engagement

While the opportunity that we provide to students is a great source of pride, we recognise that participation in the society is not without its sacrifices. Volunteering for the **Leeds Policy Institute** carries with it a significant time commitment and as a result, we closely monitor our internal impact and engagement statistics to prevent burnout across our students.

Chart 5: Semester 2 Committee Satisfaction Ratings (1 – 5)



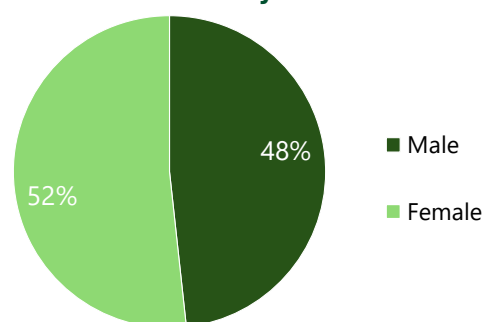
Source: Leeds Policy Institute

We are happy to show that our Semester 2 society survey results reflect the committees’ strong efforts towards making **LPI** an opportunity that has remained accessible for the majority of students (**Chart 5**). Our results show that while working for **LPI** may have been challenging, an overwhelming number of students have been satisfied with their time at **LPI**, with **85%** stating that their time at **the Policy Institute** has provided them with significant value. Only 3 members departed from **the Policy Institute** during the academic year.

Individually, students who have participated in **LPI** research have gone on to work for the following prestigious institutions: Department of Work & Pensions, Oxford Economics, The Home Office, Barclays, the Department for Transport, PwC, University of Leeds, Lloyds Banking Group, Kings College London, the Cabinet Office, GSK, and the Department for Business and Trade.

Societies based in the business school and economics often suffer from the issue of being overwhelmingly male. We are happy to report that the interdisciplinary nature of **LPI’s** research has managed to attract a neutral gender split across the 2023 – 2024 academic year, according to our survey results.

Chart 6: Leeds Policy Institute Remains as a Diverse Society



Source: Leeds Policy Institute

The committee has already identified and implemented strategies to achieve this. The founding and expansion of our **Media and Communications department** will be instrumental in driving student engagement through regular socials and events. We have already planned to run our regular workshops with the **Leeds University Library Team** as well as the **Financial Times 'FTAdviser'** branch.

The committee has also identified the importance of cross-society collaboration and so we look forward to partnering with a wide range of societies at the **University of Leeds**. The committee also hopes that the **Leeds Pint Index** serves as a monthly source of engagement for students.

Our committee also remains committed to hosting academic events such as speaker events with local policymakers. We hope that collaboration with student societies will increase the frequency of these events.

LPI will aim to present again at the **British Conference of Undergraduate Research (BCUR)** this academic year such that members may enjoy presenting their findings to over **350** delegates once again.

Overview of Finances

LPI is currently in a strong financial position, with a balance of **£1,496.45** starting the new academic year. This provides a solid foundation for ongoing and future activities.

We would like to make a note of the funding that we receive from the **IEA** and our other sponsors such as **Macrobond**. In the previous academic year, **LPI** received no monetary funding from **Macrobond**. Our partnership only extends to their generous support of providing the think tank with licenses to use the **Macrobond** software. **Macrobond** does not limit our use of the software to impede the research that we publish.

While **LPI** has received financial support from the **IEA**, it is important to emphasise that the organisation has no control over our research direction or content. The **IEA** does not review or provide input on our publications, allowing us to maintain our non-partisan and independent stance. We also note that the **IEA's** funding to the society makes a small portion of our total budget. As such, there is no implicit reliance on **IEA** funding, making **Leeds Policy Institute** operationally resilient and our research wholly independent. We appreciate stakeholder concerns and would like to reiterate that our commitment to producing unbiased, high-quality research remains paramount, and we continue to safeguard the integrity of our work. Equally, we thank the **IEA** for its ongoing support through the provision of reading materials, events, and internship opportunities to our students.

Looking ahead, we are actively pursuing additional funding opportunities to support our growth and initiatives. Specifically, we are in discussions with **On Think Tanks (OTT)** as part of their "Building for the Future Initiative," which includes a potential grant.

Securing this and similar funding programs will help us expand our research capabilities and outreach. We also hope that a full partnership with **OTT** will allow **the Policy Institute** to access a wide network of other think tanks that are willing to support student projects to improve the student experience that we provide.

While the committee aims to receive additional funding from private interests, we are aware of the risks that this poses on our operational and research independence. Large sums of monetary support from companies can, in the long term, impede the independence of **the Policy Institute**.

At present, all of our partnership contracts - irrespective of the sum of moneys they provide – all state explicit clauses relating to safeguarding the independence of our research. However, we are aware of *implicit* connotations associated with this.

We believe that the society could make good use of its alumni network in the coming years. A decentralised network of alumni who provide funding to the society, if large enough, would provide **the Policy Institute** with the monetary independence it requires to accept larger sums of money from private interest without the threat of undermining operational and research independence.

We believe strong alumni funding and engagement would improve the student experience, as **the Policy Institute** would not only have greater funds to host more events but would also be able to host better events by tapping into a network of professionals.

Looking ahead, we expect for membership figures to reach at least **80** this year and so **LPI's Treasurer** forecasts a **minimum** monetary balance of **£2,300** for this academic year, enough to cover our operational expenses.

Closing Statement

Overall, we are very pleased with the findings of this report. The strong performance of our website traffic, combined with the engagement we have received on platforms such as **LinkedIn**, is evidence of the existing and growing interest in the work done at **LPI**. We will not only continue to increase our presence on **LinkedIn** in supporting our growth, but also expand our media output on our other social media platforms, including Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter).

The development of a dedicated **Media and Communications department** at **LPI** will

ensure these goals are met, mitigating any identified risks within this report associated with the recent slowdown in our weekly website activity.

We continue to maintain strong contact with our existing network from last year, comprised of academics, local councillors, and writers from prestigious publications such as the **Financial Times**. This will ensure our academic events and speaker sessions continue to maintain the high level of quality from the previous academic year. Nevertheless, we continue the process of expanding our list of contacts, thereby increasing the quantity and quality of activities provided to our students.

We are also hard at work in increasing our cross-collaboration in social and academic events with other existing student societies at the **University of Leeds**, primarily those involved in our main areas of interest such as economics, politics, and finance. This will not only help us acquire more traction and memberships but will also enable us to attract the talent required in producing the highest-quality research papers over the next academic year. Potentially presenting our research at the **BCUR** once more this year will contribute to attracting more attention to our research.

Financially, we expect to be in a very strong position over the next academic year, and we will only continue to improve our position through seeking new avenues in accumulating more funding, including those through **OTT** amongst many more.

Doing so will ensure that **LPI** can host the best academic and social events possible, propelling its students' professional and personal development to new heights.

Overall, the findings of this report, and our response to its identified risks, make us confident that **LPI** will continue to grow and flourish more than ever before over the course of the following academic year.