

Guidance on sustainable and ethical purchasing: prizes and products

The Students' Union at UWE is [committed to embedding sustainability into everything we do](#), from our campaigns to our competitions. We have been the highest-scoring students' union in the UK for four years running in the [NUS Green Impact awards](#) (2016-2020). We do this because our students have told us how much [they care about the climate emergency](#).

To continue and expand our sustainability work, we are striving to continually reduce the negative impact of our events and competitions, while using our purchasing power as a force for good, for example, choosing local, sustainable and ethical businesses to source products and prizes from.

It's also a way of us voting for a better and more sustainable future by aligning what we spend with our values and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This is also important in the context of UWE Bristol being committed to becoming [carbon neutral by 2030](#) and their participation in the [UK Plastic Pact for 2025](#).

When making purchasing decisions we should consider resource use and apply the principles of the waste hierarchy. We should always try to reduce the quantity of material we consume in preference to reusing or recycling it. Therefore, we would always advocate for minimising the purchase of items, unless they are necessary. It is already stipulated that all Students' Union activity and Students' Union groups should avoid using single-use plastic and balloons/helium balloons for events.



Image [Credit](#)

You can [find out more about the waste hierarchy, and view different infographics here](#).

What is this guide for?

We have put together this guide to help you to make sustainable purchasing decisions on the occasions when items/vouchers are deemed necessary (e.g. for engagement, such as competitions and events). It is designed to provide ideas and options for where you can source ethical and sustainable prizes and products. It is not a comprehensive list of all of the options out there. Rather, it is a selection of ideas to provide a starting point.

Please note: you must still purchase in line with The Students' Union Financial Regulations and work with your Staff Support Coordinator in The Students' Union for approval on purchasing before proceeding (SUOpportunities@uwe.ac.uk).

What to consider?

When considering the environmental impact of items that you are purchasing you should think about:

- The environmental impacts of the item's production
- How, and how far, the item is transported to you
- The labour involved in the supply chain

Before purchasing you should also consider:

- Do you need to buy this item?
- If yes, can you source items made from sustainable materials (e.g. bamboo) and avoid single use plastic?
- Can you shop local and support an independent business?

Gifting Experiences

Rather than buying items to giveaway, how about gifting experiences?

The Lanes

The Lanes is Bristol's boutique bowling experience. With five vintage lanes, Italian cuisine courtesy of Ray's Pizza, and even its own karaoke room; a night at The Lanes will always be eventful. You'll even get a student discount on bowling walk-in rates. Find out more [here](#).

Axe Throwing

Whistle Punks on All Saints Street have taken axe throwing out of the woods and brought it to the city. You will get taught how to safely and successfully throw an axe, then it's your turn to compete against your friends. Book [here](#).

Escape Rooms

60 minutes for a team to solve the clues and find the key to open the door before time runs out!

- <https://lockedinaroom.co.uk/bristol>
- <https://www.bristolescaperooms.co.uk/>
- <https://puzzlair.co.uk/escape-room-bristol-about-us>

Airhop

You have probably heard that Bristol is now home to the world's largest trampoline park. Airhop is great for all ages and abilities and even features a gladiator-style ring, assault course and trampoline-floored basketball court. As a student, you will also receive a 20% discount when you present your student card. [Check them](#) out near Cribbs Causeway.



Catch a film at the Watershed

The Watershed offers three cinemas, a pervasive media studio, a café and bar. They present a diverse programme of films, events, festivals and workshops. Check out their online 'what's on' section to see the great selection of films and documentaries they show. [Click here](#) for more information.

Check out We The Curious

The amazing science centre is full of interactive exhibits where you can enjoy science in a range of creative ways. There's even an amazing planetarium right on Millennium Square. [Check them out](#).



Cat Café

You & Meow is Bristol's very own cat café and will not only give you a chance to meet some furry friends but will also provide you with all the cat puns you could want. Catte or Cat White? You & Meow has got your coffee order covered. [Click here](#) for more information.

St Werburgh's City Farm

Escape the busy city life and visit [St Werburghs City Farm](#), where you can see sheep, goats, pigs and more. They've also got a café where you can get a bite to eat or a drink. When it comes to ingredients, the City Farm café is provided with meat, vegetables, salad and other wild ingredients all from the grounds of the Farm.

Pirate Bay Adventure Golf

Situated next to Frenchay Campus, [Pirate Bay Adventure Golf](#) is a great activity for you and your housemates to get out and do something fun. The 18-hole course is open until late every day, seven days a week.

Go to the theatre

There is a wealth of theatres in Bristol. From the Hippodrome who host the latest touring west-end shows, to the Wardrobe Theatre who offer a programme of diverse shows that are affordable for audiences. At the Wardrobe Theatre, their programme is a curated mix, comedy, storytelling, live music, poetry/spoken word, dance, puppetry, cabaret, drag, improvisation, new writing and family shows, with an emphasis on emerging artists and Bristol-based work.

Wild Place

[Wild Place Project](#) is a fun family attraction that provides outdoor adventure, play and learning. Meet amazing animals from across the world from the mischievous lemurs of Madagascar to magnificent European brown bears.

More ideas available through the following news articles:

- [Top Ten Bristol Experiences](#)

Online Options

Ethical Superstore

Ethical Superstore is an online shop selling a wide range of sustainably and ethically sourced products. They sell everything from food and beauty products to fashion and household products. Their products are also seasonal, for example you can buy Fairtrade and vegan Easter Eggs!

You can buy vouchers in the following denominations: £10, £20 and £50. With these, Ethical Superstore post a physical, paper voucher to the recipient with the voucher code on. So it's worth remembering that you will need the recipient's address for them to receive it. Alternatively, you could get the voucher posted to you/the office and then just email the code on it across to the recipient. You can [buy vouchers for Ethical Superstore here.](#)

Ethical Superstore do not ship outside the UK or Ireland so you'd need to keep that in mind, depending on your audience. However, for a survey you could offer the voucher as Ethical Superstore, but wait to buy it until you have a winner. Then contact them to make sure they have a UK address and then buy the voucher once you're sure.

Ethical Shop

Similar to the above, this is an online shop offering products from a wide range of ethical and sustainable suppliers. Again, they have a wide range of products including books, clothing, food and household items. You can buy an [online voucher for Ethical Shop here.](#) This gets emailed to the recipient for them to redeem online. They ship internationally, however as they are UK based this does cost more.

Bristol food and takeaway vouchers

Consider first supporting independent food outlets.

- [Zara's Chocolate](#) on North Street- Offers gift vouchers as well as thank you boxes
- [Mrs. Pott's Chocolate House](#) – min £20
- [Oowee](#) – min £10
- [Pieminister](#) – min £5
- [Boston Tea Party](#) – min £5
- [Purezza](#) – min £10
- Biblos, Caribbean Croft and Koocha do vouchers if you call
- [Just Eat](#) – min £15
- [More ideas here](#)

Other Ideas

Charity donation

The winner of the giveaway or competition could choose a [charity to donate to](#) e.g. Mind, Greenpeace, NHS Charities Together.

Oddballs

[The OddBalls Foundation](#) was founded in 2016, to raise awareness of Testicular Cancer. By purchasing underwear from OddBalls, they raise money for worthwhile causes.

Choose a local business

We have had success in previous competitions by allowing the winner to choose a local business for the voucher to be purchased from. Previous winners have chosen Bell Tools, Silver Scene and Caribbean Croft.

BookShop – Shop Local for your next favourite read!

Following its success in the US, the ethical platform [Bookshop.org](#) has arrived in the UK, marking an exciting new chapter for independent stores online. UK bookshops can create their own online shop profiles for the site, earning 30% of the cover price on any sales that come via their links, book lists or shop page.

- [Story Smiths \(South Bristol\)](#)
- [Topping and Company \(Bath\)](#)
- [Mr B's Reading Emporium \(Bath\)](#)
- [Bookshop.org \(supporting local bookshops online\)](#)

Help us develop this guide!

If you have any questions, ideas or contributions for this guide please email thegreenteam@uwe.ac.uk. We would love to know what has worked for you!