

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 – Zero Waste Europe.



Image [Credit](#)

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 comprehensive of all 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 Manager for budget approval before purchasing.

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:** Bristol's boutique bowling experience, more information [here](#).

- **Axe Throwing:** Whistle Punks on All Saints Street have taken axe throwing out of the woods and brought it to the city. Book [here](#).
- **Airhop:** Large trampoline park with a gladiator-style ring, assault course and trampoline-floored basketball court. [Check them](#) out near Cribbs Causeway.
- **Catch a film at the Watershed:** They present a diverse programme of films, events, festivals and workshops. [Click here](#) for more information.
- **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. [Click here](#) for more information
- **St Werburgh's City Farm:** Escape the busy city life and visit [St Werburgh's 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.
- **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.
- **Escape The Room:** 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>

More ideas available through the following news article: [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.

Green Turtle

Another online eco-store, they sell items in a wide variety of categories including kitchen, bathroom, toiletries and gifts. £5, £10, £20, £30, £50 and £75 [gift vouchers are available](#) which can be emailed to the recipient. They only ship within the UK, so again, worth checking where the recipient is living.

Etsy

[Etsy](#) is an online marketplace for independent sellers. You can [buy gift cards here](#) and the code gets emailed to the recipient. Etsy sellers are based all around the world, so if the student is not currently at a UK address they can search for sellers in their country of residence.

Amnesty International Online Shop

Amnesty have an online shop where [you can buy gift vouchers](#) that are emailed to recipients. They have a wide range of products including books, music, clothes and household items. They only offer UK delivery, so again worth checking with the recipient.

Social Enterprises / Companies with ethical qualifications

There are many organisations out there who are striving to use waste products to make something new, such as [Ocean Plastic Pots](#) or to eliminate the waste they produce when making new items like the biodegradable phone cases from [Pela](#). You could explore the [B-Corp directory](#) for an organisation that offers a product you are seeking.

Nursery Spending

- [The Green Stationary company](#) sell recycled papers, pens and more
- [Recycled newspaper pencils](#)
- [Eco Play Dough](#)
- [World of books](#) – second-hand children's books
- [Recyclable felt tips](#)

Bristol-Based Shops

The Students' Union Zero Waste Shop

A great way to support The Students' Union and encourage students to engage with the zero waste shop. A voucher for this would be particularly relevant to students living in halls at Frenchay as we know they'll be able to access it. You can find a copy of the voucher in this folder, which can be edited with the value and the budget code you're using. This can then be emailed to the student, who can show it on their phone to redeem.

<S:\SU\General\Marketing\Design and Print\Community\Green Team\2021\Green Team Gift Voucher>

Zero Waste Shops in Bristol

As above but supporting a zero waste shop in Bristol. This could be a great option for recipients not living on campus. Here's a list of zero waste shops in Bristol:

- Preserve (St George, Gloucester Road, Westbury-on-Trym)
- Zero Green (Bedminster)
- Scoopaway (Gloucester Road)
- Wild Oats (Redland)
- Scoop Wholefoods (Clifton)
- Smaller Footprints (Clifton)
- The Plastic Free Shop (Online)

You can call them up to pay over the phone, providing the name of the person collecting the voucher, who can then go in at their own convenience to get it. The other option is to buy it from the store yourself and give it to the winner.

The other option is to buy it from the store yourself and leave it at The Students' Union Reception for the student to collect (with prior agreement with Buildings Department).

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 Big Retailers

If you need an option that is really accessible and has a wide range of choice, a supermarket or big retailer voucher would work well. This means you are still diverting from Amazon. You could for example, get a John Lewis voucher, which is probably nice for students who wouldn't normally shop there. Here's some other ideas for large retailers:



- Argos
- Sainsbury's
- Tesco
- Asda
- Marks and Spencer

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 of their choice for the voucher to go to. 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!