

BREWDOG

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It's Freshers!

Autumn is here and with it Freshers: An exciting and exhausting time for teams across the country welcoming a new intake of students to campus, keen to discover all there is to know about student life.

As we enter the new academic year, there is a definite air of desire to connect with other students' unions, to share and learn from members experiences in this challenging landscape. The cost-of-living crisis continues and students socialising digitally presents a real challenge that means operators need to be keener than ever to encourage students into their venues. In this issue we hear from the team at Loughborough SU as they take us through their approach to Freshers this year, we also hear from Jo Barton on plans for an alcohol-free venue at Leeds Trinity SU and how their events calendar supports the new proposition.

Lincoln SU has launched a new competitive socialising area for the new term, and we went along to see how it is shaping up. You can read all about it on page 24. On that note we spoke to many unions over the summer about working with suppliers to fund a competitive socialising initiative to help members to offer it to their students. This has been signed off so keep a look out on Connect for more details in early October.

For retail stores and cafes, we know how important a competitive meal deal is so we have worked with members to refine and strengthen our offering so we have a core deal with great brands included priced at £3.99 plus their customers can upgrade any element of the deal for an extra £1. We'll be hosting review and share meetings with members on best practice in October with more details on a national promotion to drive footfall to be announced soon.

Finally, as the Autumn term gets underway, the lens on sustainability increases as we further our work with the Sustainable SU's Charter Group. This initiative sees like-minded commercial operators at SUs come together to agree actions on 12 core principles. You can find out why the group is so important to members and how your union can get involved on page 34.

All that remains is to wish SU commercial teams the best for a successful Freshers trading period. ■

Jo Heuston

Jo Heuston, Assistant Trading Director

NUS Services Merseyway Innovation Centre 21-23 Merseyway Stockport. SK1 1PN.

www.nusconnect.org.uk

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DRINK BEAVERTOWN BEER RESPONSIBLY





Gearing Up for Freshers is a rite of passage for any new student - a time-honoured tradition where commercial outlets play a crucial role in welcoming new students to university or college life.





It's tricky to find any information on its exact origin, but we do know Freshers roots date back to the early 20th century when universities across the UK started to organise events to welcome new students.

In fact, while first year students have been referred to as 'Freshmen' or 'Freshers' since Victorian times, the original events were known as 'Welcome Weeks' – a term many are returning to following the less-thanpositive reputation of 'Freshers'

The association with copious amounts of alcohol, 'Freshers flu', and the joke that no one remembers what happens during Freshers has resulted in some universities and colleges rebranding the event, taking steps to remove

negative connotations and promote a more inclusive and safe surrounding for incoming students – the original objective of the events.

For new students, regardless of how we brand them, welcome events are an opportunity to meet new people, get a taste of what lies ahead, and explore all the different activities they can immerse themselves in as part of the student experience.

For students' unions, it's a window of opportunity to create a positive and inclusive experience that's likely to result in regular custom throughout a students' academic journey. Those first few weeks can shape their overall perception so making them feel comfortable and connected, and creating a sense of belonging and community from the offset is key. Your venues can help foster valuable connections from both an academic and well-being perspective.

Hosting induction sessions, practical workshops, tours and information fairs will help students understand their study programmes and academic environment while social gatherings, volunteering opportunities and introductions to clubs and societies give students the chance to form new friendships, build support networks and get involved in campus life. But remember, not everyone is a social butterfly so include some quieter activities on the programme too.

It's important to show students that your SU is committed to nurturing the holistic development of students. It's what's unique about our venues compared to the high street - students get more than just a beer! They can access a huge range of resources and support that will equip them with the tools to manage the challenges of university or college life.





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Lee Solloway, Warwick Students Union

"Balancing quality and price while building SU menus is tough. Mark from JJ Foodservice understood our needs without a sales push. He reviewed our current menus, offering the best products at the best price. Switching key items has saved us around 25% per term without compromising quality. I'm extremely happy with JJ Foodservice."

Kristie Staley, Preston Students Union

"Everyone at JJ Foodservice, from delivery drivers to our account manager Mark, is reliable and helpful. Ordering online is quick and easy, with reminders making my job simpler. After a year with JJ, I highly recommend them. Mark has been fantastic, helping us find the best products and ensuring great value for money."

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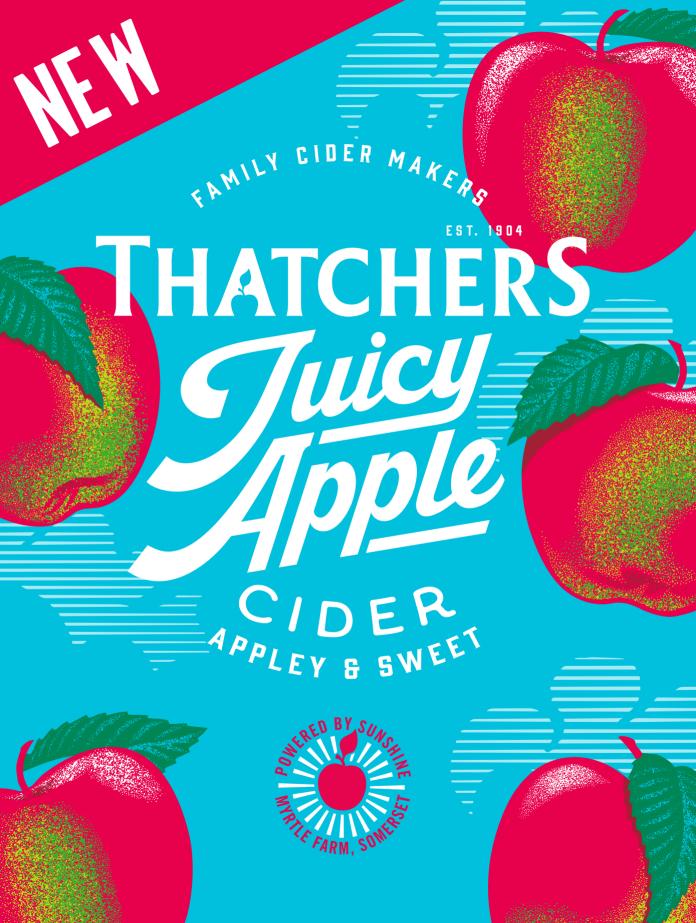
In the UK, the total flavoured milk category is now worth £685 million with sales up 11.9%.

CHOCOLATE BOOMING

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STONE WILLY'S

Revitalising Freshers: Loughborough SUs In

Loughborough Students' Union (LSU), has refined its approach to welcoming new students over the past few years. Director of Social Enterprise, Dan Gallagher tells us how.

"Throughout my 12-year tenure within various students' unions (from humble beginnings as a casual member of 'Tech Crew' to now, Director of Social Enterprise); the goal has always been twofold: delivering an exceptional student experience (through the delivery of a value-driven, safe and compliant introduction to university life) whilst also establishing the foundations for achieving longer-term financial sustainability - aiming to generate significant revenue—over half a million pounds from venue operations alone.

"Recognising a shift in student demographics and preferences from our own data and that of industry, we've evolved to deliver a diverse array of activities, balancing alcohol-based and non-alcohol focused events to support students as they settle into university life, meet new people, and get to know the campus.

"A number of my personal highlights which showcase our approach to delivering activities, events and opportunities that cater for all tastes and interests included Yestival, an exclusive Alton Towers Takeover, themed events and end-of-Freshers balls".

Yestival

Delivered through a fortnight-long activation, a purpose-built space which played host to numerous events/activities designed to allow students to discover what they can 'Say Yes' to at LSU spanning volunteering projects, fundraising opportunities, social groups, sports clubs and more.





novative Approach



Alton Towers Takeover

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Street Food Markets, Club Nights, Live Music, Wellness Days, Quizzes, Society Showcase and end-of-Freshers balls.

"Alongside the delivery of Freshers' Week 2024; the summer period at LSU has also played host to the delivery and execution of multiple capital projects; investing over £1 million into revitalising our facilities, including two retail outlets, enhancing our main event space for live music, and initiating new projects like a coffee shop and bar refurbishment. These improvements are not just physical but pivotal in enhancing our operational delivery and student engagement.

"To manage such extensive projects efficiently, we utilise a robust project management system, ClickUp, which ensures every element of our planning is meticulously organised and aligned with our strategic goals. This tool integrates inputs from various departments ensuring comprehensive oversight, accountability and efficiency.

"At LSU, our approach to Freshers is a testament to our commitment to adaptability and excellence. By continuously evolving and responding to the changing needs of our students, we enhance their initial experience at Loughborough. Our efforts underscore the importance of innovation in student engagement, proving that with the right strategies, the impact of Freshers can extend well beyond a single week of festivities".





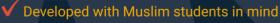
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SPOTLIGHT ON: MOONSHINE VODKA

During the 1920s, the prohibition of alcohol came into effect across the USA, making the manufacture and sale of alcohol illegal. Prosperity was on the rise and so was social change, with social change being fuelled by one thing; Moonshine.

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MONSHINE VODKA



SUS SIGNUPIO affiliate marketing

In the last issue, we launched a new pilot where students' unions can earn extra income through affiliate marketing. If you missed the article, you can find out more <u>here</u>.

It's great to see so many SUs recognise the potential of using their own channels to create a bit of extra revenue.

53 unions came along to the launch webinar at the end of July and over half of those went on to express an interest in taking part in the pilot at the time of writing this article - so by the time you're reading this - we'll have more on board!

If you didn't manage to attend but would like a recording of the webinar, just drop the membership team an email and we'll send it over.

There's unlimited capacity for this programme so if you'd like to take part, all you need to do is complete this <u>expression of interest form</u> and we'll send you the due diligence form to get the ball rolling.

This is a 'work in progress' so you can expect to see new deals added as we develop and grow the programme but if you have any specific questions, do get in touch with Lizzie Bone.







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Meal Deal - an essential

PROPOSITION

Meal Deal is already an essential proposition for a students' union convenience store. However, for a third of students, the cost of living crisis has made it even more important according to NUS Charity tracked studies.



As you might expect, convenience is the top driver for a Meal Deal purchase followed closely by value for money.

Students are keen shoppers looking to ensure the price they pay represents a great deal in respect to the individually priced items as well as what else is available on the high street.

In 2024, students expect to be paying under £5 for a premium Meal Deal and under £4 for a standard deal that offers them healthy options, dietary choice, a variety of ranges and inspiring choices as well as their favourite brands.

The new deal also includes new brand; Tanpopo with rice bowls, Sushi boxes and snacks to add more choice to the deal. You'll also see innocent juices and Aqua Libra water as new additions!

Remember colour coding, displaying your items so they're within easy reach, and making sure your Meal Deal is located in an easy-to-shop and easy-to-find location in your store are key steps to success.

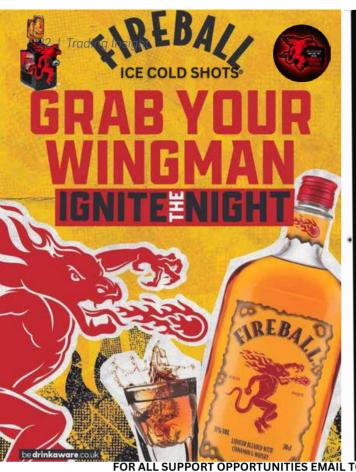
In the Autumn, our new Meal Deal will launch with an increased focus on vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options as well as the inclusion of Halal ranges

across both sandwich suppliers all for a ceiling price of £3.99.

The option for customers to premiumise any item in the Meal Deal from a limited range adds a £1 upsell to the core deal.



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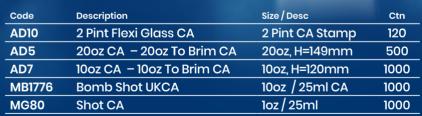
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Towers expands with 'End Zone' an

Lincoln's Ultimate Competitive Gaming

Towers, a sports bar at the heart of the University of Lincoln and run by the Lincoln Students' Union, is elevating campus entertainment with two dynamic new gaming areas: 'End Zone' and 'Dug Out.' These sleek additions enhance the student experience and welcome the Lincoln community, making Towers the go-to spot for both classic and modern gaming, as well as live sports.

James Brooks, Chief Executive of Lincoln Students' Union, commented on the expansion, stating, "We are thrilled to introduce 'End Zone' and 'Dug Out' as part of Towers' evolution. Our aim has always been to create spaces that foster community and engagement, and these new gaming areas do exactly that by offering something for everyone—whether you're a casual gamer, a sports fan, or just looking for a great place to socialise."

The 'End Zone' stands out with high-quality pool tables and shuffleboard, offering a fresh twist on traditional bar games. It's a lively spot where students and locals can unwind, challenge friends, and enjoy a vibrant atmosphere.

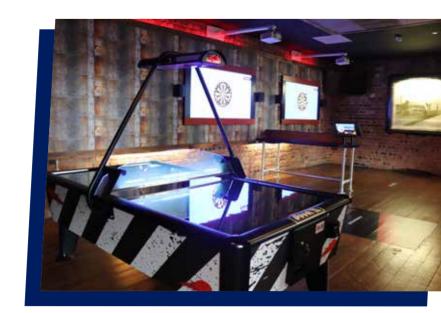
Adjacent to the 'End Zone,' the 'Dug Out' delivers a high-tech gaming experience with virtual darts and air hockey, providing immersive gameplay that brings these popular sports to life. For those who appreciate traditional games, Towers has dedicated a separate space for classic dartboards, ensuring that fans of all types of darts can find their game.

Gavin Shields, who has led on the project and serves as Head of Food & Beverage at Lincoln Students' Union, added, "The introduction of 'End Zone' and 'Dug Out' marks an exciting



d 'Dug Out':

Hub



chapter for Towers. We worked with Home Leisure to design these spaces to cater to a wide range of interests, and we're particularly proud of how they combine modern technology with the timeless appeal of traditional games. We believe these new areas will quickly become favourite spots for both students and the wider Lincoln community."

Both the 'End Zone' and 'Dug Out' are available for private hire, making them ideal for events ranging from birthday parties to team-building activities. The versatility of these spaces, combined with Towers' renowned welcoming atmosphere, makes them perfect for any occasion.

With these new gaming areas, Towers sets the standard for student life and community engagement. By blending modern gaming with classic bar games and flexible event spaces, Towers is becoming Lincoln's top spot for live sports, entertainment, and socializing. Whether you're aiming for a perfect pool shot, scoring in virtual air hockey, or watching a match with friends, Towers is where the action is.



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Why NO2LOW has a space in SUs

In spite of the growing appetite for no and low alcohol drinks, many exclusively alcohol-free bars are struggling to survive.

While the cost of living crisis and increasing overheads has played a big part in their success (or downfall), sale rates are generally lower as customers tend to order one alcohol free drink and stay a couple of hours compared to bars serving alcohol where customers have several drinks over a longer period.

But no2low can't be ignored...



The 'sober curious generation' are growing and it's important as students' unions that we balance our offering and recognise the potential for higher sales in months such as Dry January and tap into events where no and low alcohol drinks would be more appealing. Having a good range of no2low drinks along-side your usual bar offering is really important so all students feel welcome and relaxed at your venue.

Deputy CEO / Commercial Manager, Jo Barton tells us why Leeds Trinity has called time on alcohol...

"As with a lot of SUs and high street operators, our licensed trade has struggled this past year and despite offering deals, free events, and a great range of products in a safe, fun space; we were still struggling to get the footfall we desired. So, between January and June 2024 we conducted two in-house surveys and recruited Alterline to complete a local survey to see what our students wanted. The results spoke volumes. 77% of our students on average across the three surveys said that they did not use the space because it sold alcohol and wanted an alcohol-free space to socialise.

"We wrote a paper to submit to our Trustee Board and the university which received great enthusiasm and support from all parties to make the changes for the next student intake. So, from September 2024, Freshers Fest launches with Trini-Tea Central – our new café lounge space that will offer a range of hot drinks and food, milkshakes, craft sodas, tea-infused mocktails alongside fabulous, sweet treats. The space will also host a range of wellbeing style events with regular 'crafternoon' sessions, face yoga, bakes and boardgames, and themed quizzes.

"Our new outlet will continue with our commitment to sustainability and achieving carbon zero. We're even introducing a surcharge for the use of dairy milk – flipping the norm on its head! This was part of the pledge provided as part of our Carbon Literacy Programme.

"We're excited to launch the new outlet and will be celebrating with a farmers' market outside the space and giving away branded Croc charms.

"The colour palette for the outlet is soft pastels so that it appeals to the neuro diverse population. Staff will be wearing branded t-shirts and pastel aprons with student staff supervisors leading the operation as a truly 'run by you - for you' experience.

"Craft Coolers and mocktails will be available with iced team, juices and alcohol free Clean & Co Spirits for that extra Instagram-able picture / moment.

"Comfortable seating, games, books and a safe space to relax, work or socialise, the central hub of the uni will be the go-to place for our students".

You can see what's happening at Leeds Trinity SU Freshers Fest in their **What's On (Itsu.co.uk)** programme.



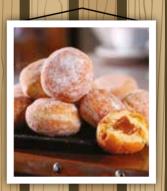


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	Cookies & Flapjack	
F 4647	Cookies & Flapjack La Boulangerie Chocolate Chunk Cookies	30x39
F 4647 F 34334	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	30x39 30x72
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Sustainable SUs Charter Autumn Update



Launched at Trading Summer Conference, the Sustainable SUs Charter is a 12-point plan that sees members across the country working together to formulate an agreed approach to trading as ethical and sustainable operations. In joining the charter, the founding members have shared their commitment to working together to achieve a cohesive plan and in doing so sharing each other's experiences, opportunities and challenges.

As part of the first steps of the charter group, each member is beginning with a benchmarking exercise to understand their current impact from a green house gas emissions perspective. The group is doing this in conjunction with the wider NUS Charity emissions project to understand our supply chain emissions, with a view to working with members to reduce them. The Autumn will bring the first footprint reports into view and discussions will begin around modelling reduction initiatives.

In addition to the emissions project. Each member is currently scoring their operations on the 12 point plan as an additional measurement approach before choosing working group leads in each area of the plan.

Its exciting to have a group of passionate union professionals engaging and leading in Sustainability. Here are a few thoughts from the founder members around why they joined the charter group:

"As Students' Union UCL, we have always held the ambition to be a sector leader in sustainability action. The Sustainable SUs Charter gives us a platform to

continue to lead and share our experience with other SUs, as well as to learn and be held to account by other ambitious and exemplary organisations. The urgency and complexity of this agenda demands we maximise our potential for driving impact, championing good practise, and influencing the sector - and we can do it best by joining forces". James Nediyathu Head of Commercial Services, Students Union UCL.

"Being part of the Sustainable SU Charter is crucial to both me and my organisation as it reinforces our dedication to sustainability. The Charter serves as a powerful platform that unites organisations committed to minimising their environmental impact and improving their sustainable practices. By aligning with this group, we not only affirm our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint, but also benefit from shared knowledge, innovative solutions, and collective action.

"The collaboration within this network enhances our ability to implement effective sustainability strategies, drive meaningful change, and contribute to a more sustainable future for all". Tom Mountain Director of Commercial Operations and Development University of York Students' Union

If you would like to find out more about becoming a charter member you can learn more on <u>NUS Connect</u> where you can read the Charter and request a meeting to discuss it in person.



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*CGA OPM Data P13 2023 - 12 Weeks Ending to 30/12/2023



The Workers Protection Act: Preventing sexual harassment in the work-place.

This October, the Workers Protection Act 2023 will come into force in the UK.

An amendment to the act of 2010, this article aims to give you an overview of the legislation and how it could affect your operation.

Since 1833 the UK has been developing legislation to ensure people in employment have certain rights, starting with the Abolition of Slavery Act and the Factory Act.

A lot has changed over the last 190 years and people now in employment have a variety of workers' rights, whether that be minimum wage, maternity leave, health and safety legislation, or gender pay gap.

Legislation ensures people are treated fairly at work and have procedures in place to report injustice.

In 2010 the government introduced the Equality Act, but did you know that equality in the workplace has not always been enforced by law, in fact it wasn't until 1975 with the Sex Discrimination Act that equality began to be introduced. The Act made sex discrimination illegal in areas of employment, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services. For example, prior to

the act, your employer could ask if you were planning to start a family.

In 2010 the Equality Act bought together more than 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single act - a new streamlined legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

One of the key areas was clarifying the definitions of discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment and victimisation across all protected characteristics.

Now in October 2024 the Workers Protection Act 2023 will come into force in the UK, an amendment to the act of 2010.

This amendment aims to better protect employees from sexual harassment by prioritising prevention.

Employers in the UK will now have a legal duty to work to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, rather than to react to a complaint.

All employers must be able to detail and demonstrate reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees in the course of their employment.

Despite the positive impact the Act will have on employees and workplaces, there are some significant limitations which will leave some employees unprotected by this legislation.

The Worker Protection Act does not extend to employees that work with third parties e.g. customers or clients.

This amendment is concerning and will have significant implications, given the number of your staff that work in customer and client facing roles.

This concern is further compounded by the fact that many customer-facing roles are zero-hour contracts, leaving an employee vulnerable and potentially unable to report harassment for fear of losing employment.

As an employer, you will already be working towards ensuring your organisation has a positive workplace culture for all employees. As well as policies and procedures to safeguard your staff, you have the legal responsibility to prevent harassment in your organisation.

Many of our students' unions are members of the Best Bar None scheme and part of the criteria is to have well-written policies that cover many aspects of the Equality Act. Regardless of contracted hours, we know students' unions lead the way in ensuring any member of staff can voice concerns to their managers in confidence. As employers, you have an advantage over high street operators who may not have as many channels in place to protect the welfare of their staff. This is why your students choose to become members of your teams.

Although the Act does not come into force until October 2024, it is important that you as employers take appropriate steps now to ensure your staff are protected against sexual harassment at work. These steps could include:

- Looking into your policies and procedures and updating them if they aren't focused on preventing harassment.
- Providing opportunities for staff to upskill and better understand how to be allies to prevent harmful attitudes and behaviours.
- Ensuring all staff understand that sexism and misogyny are unacceptable.
- One of the areas identified during the Best Bar None assessments was that SUs tend to have great policies but they're not always updated in a timely manner, so top tip... Take this as an opportunity to check ALL your policies and procedures not iust ones associated with Workers Rights.

If you are not part of the Best Bar None scheme but would like to view the criteria to see what types of policies and procedures are recommended to be in place then please contact alison.inch@nus.org.uk who will be happy to share these with you.

And remember, there's some handy templates on the <u>BBN page</u> you can use if you're looking for guidance on writing policies and procedures.





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Get in Contact with Claire on...

Tel: 0114 280 0558 claire@jacksons-crs.co.uk Head Office: Surbiton Street, Sheffield S9 2DN



PERCEPTIONS

EATING BETTER and FOUR PAWS UK have published the results of a new survey showing that retailers, food service and government need to catch up with public attitudes towards meat, dairy, supporting farmers and reducing meat consumption.

We're delighted to share the headlines, full report and fact sheets split by country and topic below. You can read the full report in the **Commercial Insight hub** or on **NUS Connect**.

61% of people are willing to cut down meat consumption

The top 3 motivators for change were:







The Eating Better report found that 64% want to choose better meat but are experiencing barriers to doing so. NUS Charity Tracker studies show that 48% of respondents said they were worried about intensive farming practices, favouring a transition to regeneratively farmed agriculture.

The full report offers insights and analysis on attitudes towards reducing meat consumption, the barriers that stand in the way, and the actions which will enable change.





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2024 AB InBev UK Limited, all rights reserved. Over 18's only. Offer available to NUS purchasing members only and can be ordered through ordernusconnect. org.uk/promotions. Outlets must install Stella Artois before 31/09/24 to be eligible for the promotion. The new install cannot replace any existing BBG brand. For the installation, the outlet will receive two free-of charge 50L kegs. The keg will be sent after the install has been completed and the second will be sent in January. Whilst stocks last. BBG reserves the right to remove the promotion at any point. Promoter: AB InBev UK Ltd., 90 Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1EN.

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IN THE NEWS...

THE UNIVERSITY of Worcester's Hangar Bar got some great press coverage in August following a triple win at the Trading Awards and achieving Best Bar None Gold accreditation for the seventh year. Here's what the team from Worcester had to say...

Matt Birbeck (Bar and Events Manager) and Nick Ward (Venue and Events Supervisor) commented:

"We joined the trading consortium as it gives us a platform to grow ourselves as a business. Without the support from NUS, this may have been a struggle being a students' union. The access to suppliers gives us the opportunity to build strong relationships and further grow our business, as well as provide high quality products that we can give to our students. The opportunity to work as a charity also allows us to have a closer relationship with our students and the wider community, giving back to the very people that keep our union going.

orcester Hangar named top student

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"The Best Bar None scheme enables us to converse and communicate with other SUs, making changes in accordance with current trends in the market and from consumer demand, with us all being structured to a similar business scheme. This - along with the strong blueprint NUS provides – enables us to scale our performance within a structure that allows for healthy competition as well as commercial growth.

"The BBN programme has given us a high standard to strive towards. One of our student employees; Ella Page used the NUS cocktail development programme to create a cocktail menu that won her an award in the Student Input and Feedback category".

Sophie Williams, Chief Executive said:

"Being a member of the NUS Trading consortium is part of our belief in collectivism and sharing knowledge and experiences within the sector. The purchasing consortium allows a two-way communication with others in the movement and buying prices that are more manageable in these difficult times. We do not have the resource internally to routinely compare prices or seek new contracts with suppliers. Running commercial outlets, as we all know, is not easy at present, and this provides much needed support to our venue staff".



Nature plays a major part in our production process

Our water is naturally filtered through solid layers of limestone rock for 15 years before it finally makes its way to the surface where we bottle it at the source. So, we want to do everything we can to protect it. That means taking full responsibility for our environmental impact and doing everything we can to protect our planet.



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highly on the Ethical Index Score year-on-year, ensuring that our brand is enlisted in **The Good Shopping Guide.**



Our Water Footprint

Thanks to our 'Raintrain' system (a separated drainage and purification system), we're able to monitor and process all water usage on our site.

Through monthly readings, we are able to analyse and improve our water management. Anything we don't use is then **sent back to nature** via the Raintrain system.

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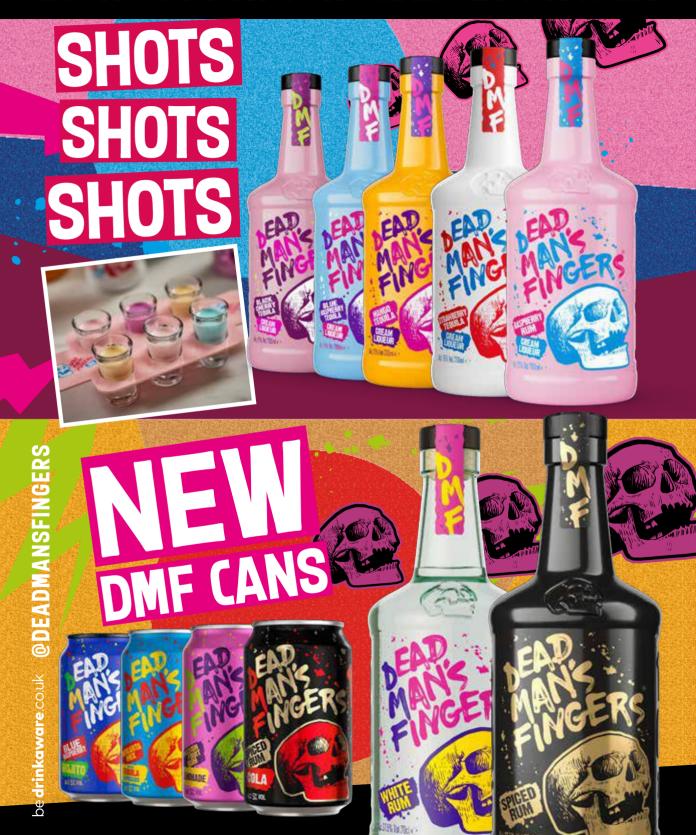
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