



Trading Insight

July 2025

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Introducing the Commercial Enterprise Group

Best Bar None

Spiking awareness

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Chloe Neuberg - chloe.neuberg@ab-inbev.com

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Outlets must install one or more draught brand of Camden Hells, Camden Pale or Camden Stout before 31/09/25 to be eligible for the promotion. The new installations cannot replace any existing BBG brand. For each brand installed, the outlet will receive a free-of-charge 30L keg. The keg will be sent after the install has been completed. Promoter: AB InBev UK Ltd, 90 Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1EN.

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nuS charity TRADE CONVENTION

IN *pictures*





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next year!

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*Valid for July - contact us for more details

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sarah@allwag.co.uk



07375 496524

Collation & Fulfilment



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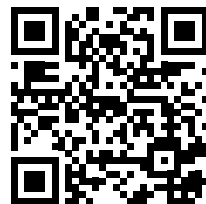
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*based on 2 large cups at RRP



Get Freshers Ready

Have you thought about freshening up your Freshers offering in line with current trends? Here's some ideas...

Micro cocktails

Mini versions of contemporary classics or new inventions served in smaller glassware giving your customers the opportunity to try multiple drinks without overindulging. They also tick a box for those wanting to moderate their drinking (and spending) but still have a fun drinking experience and the aesthetic appeal will certainly be a social media driver.

Embrace tech

There's an App for that! If you don't already have one, it's worth looking in to so your students can book, access rewards, see what's on, and stay connected.

AI is no longer 'optional' and is great for saving time and optimizing efficiency. It can improve customer experience, help manage stock, automate everyday tasks, and provide smart insights in to student purchasing habits to help you make better decisions.



Multi-purpose spaces

Having space with multiple uses gives students more reasons to visit - especially during traditionally quieter periods. Incorporating live music, open mic nights, themed nights or games leagues can drive footfall. Linking loyalty reward programmes, deals and cross-promotions at these events will also boost attendance. Think about different seating, strategic lighting and where possible, using outdoor spaces.

What's on the menu?

If you offer snacks, whilst crisps aren't going anywhere, functional, **protein-packed bites** are surging as consumers look for nutritional, feel-good food.

Healthy drinks that support immunity, gut health and stress relief such as kombucha and mushroom-based drinks are still in growth.

Nostalgic tipples such as soda stream and retro flavours are seeing a rebirth.

Sweet flavour fusions have gone viral with Strawberry Matcha, Chocolate Pistachio (who hasn't seen Dubai Chocolate???) and Spicy Honey soaring. There's huge opportunity here if we look at the stats. Dubai Chocolate* for example has had a +967.76% YoY growth in social conversations, 7,067 social mentions across 1.5m UK users but only appears on 0.24% of menus! *Tastewise: Q2 2025 and Beyond.



Perks

Loyalty schemes help to build good relationships with your students and encourages word-of-mouth referrals. Tailor your programme to reflect student preferences and consider different models such as:

- **Tiered offers** where the benefits increase based on number of visits
- **Membership club** - a one off fee gives exclusive benefits and discounts
- **Points-based programmes** i.e. 1 point per drink purchased which the student can collect and use towards future purchases
- **'Treat receipts'** - an offer on their receipt for an item purchased later in the day i.e. a breakfast receipt gives them a discount on a dinner time purchase

Strategic pricing

The cost of going out has risen dramatically over the last few years with venues battling price rises in raw ingredients, energy, staff and National Insurance hikes which have inevitably been passed on to the consumer. Higher prices obviously put customers off - especially in a climate where they have less disposable income so think about re-engineering your menus. Using a volume over market model (loss leader pricing), reducing the cost of your top selling items and giving customers the promise of a good deal, could lead to higher footfall. And with higher footfall comes the opportunity to upsell.



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ETHICAL SUPPLY CHAIN UPDATES

For over 25 years NUS Services has led the way on ethically screening our suppliers, and constructively engaging with them on issues of concern.

In the early days we had our own supplier assessment questionnaire, although we now work with Ethical Consumer, who do ethical screening of our suppliers for us ahead of each of our tender processes.

Ethical Consumer provide us with detailed screens and comparative scores for all the companies we invite to tender, allowing us to know how each supplier is performing against various commitments in our Supplier Ethical Code of Conduct, which we have grouped into agriculture, animals, climate, company ethos, packaging, tax conduct and workers rights.

Additionally, we set criteria bespoke to each category, such as coffee sourcing, cotton sourcing and palm oil.

These comparative scores allow us to identify which companies are most aligned to our own values and ethos, as well as highlighting potential ethical issues of concern that we would want to investigate and engage on should we list the company. This rigorous approach to ethical and environmental issues is what sets us apart from the other consortiums, and we are proud to remain a trailblazer on all things ethical and environmental in supply chains.

Category	Company	Screen type	Screening criteria / 100										Total / 700	Ethiscore / 100	Coffee sourcing / 100
			Climate / 100	Animal products / 100	Workers / 100	Tax conduct / 100	Company ethos / 100	Agriculture / 100	Packaging / 100						
Hot beverages	Cafédirect	Full	80	90	100	100	90	60	20	540	78	80			
Hot beverages	Cafeology	Full	100	80	100	100	60	30	40	510	74	90			
Hot beverages	Paddy and Scotts Cafes	Full	40	40	100	100	50	40	20	390	62	80			
Hot beverages	Kiss the Hippo	Full	10	0	100	100	60	60	30	360	56	90			
Hot beverages	Beyond the Bean	Full	40	70	30	100	20	0	20	280	40	n/a			
Hot beverages	Kokoa Collection	Full	10	70	20	100	20	10	40	270	39	n/a			
Hot beverages	Liverpool Coffee Roasters	Full	10	0	60	100	20	30	50	270	44	80			
Hot beverages	We Love Coffee	Full	10	70	20	100	30	0	30	260	34	10			
Hot beverages	Espresso Plus	Full	80	0	0	100	20	10	20	230	29	0			
Hot beverages	Lost Sheep Coffee	Full	10	0	60	100	20	10	30	230	34	40			
Hot beverages	Matthew Algie & Company	Full	70	40	50	0	10	20	40	230	36	60			
Hot beverages	The Real Coffee Company	Full	10	80	20	100	20	0	0	230	32	30			
Hot beverages	Broderick Group	Full	10	70	20	100	20	0	0	220	32				
Hot beverages	Italian Beverage Company	Full	10	30	10	100	20	20	10	200	29	n/a			
Hot beverages	Hard Lines Limited	Full	10	0	20	100	30	0	30	190	24				
Hot beverages	Fresh on the Go	Full	0	0	40	100	20	0	0	160	25				
Hot beverages	Trading Post Coffee Roasters	Full	10	0	10	100	20	10	10	160	26	50			
Hot beverages	200 Degrees Holdings	Full	20	0	50	0	20	10	40	140	21	30			
Hot beverages	Starbucks Corporation	Full	40	0	0	0	0	40	0	80	10	0			
Hot beverages	Costa	Full	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	30			

Ethical Consumer comparative scores from the recent hot drink tender

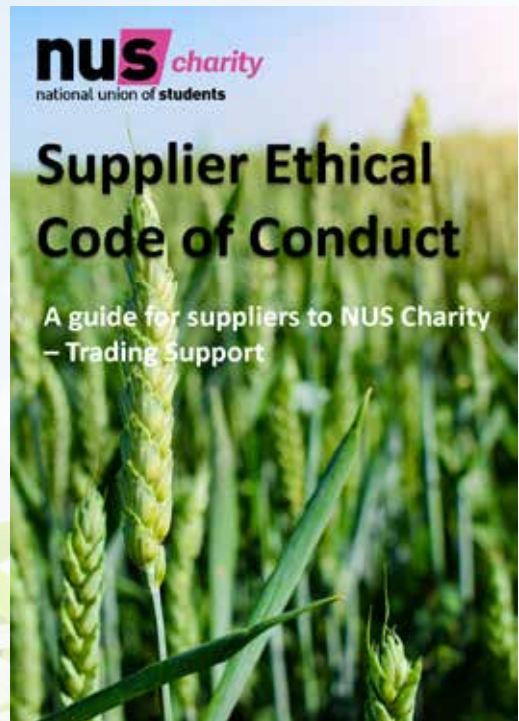
ATE FROM RECENT TENDERS

In future, we intend to set strategic targets for the average Ethical Consumer scores achieved in each category, meaning we will need to either raise supplier scores through constructive engagement, or delist suppliers that score poorly in subsequent tender processes.

Although that sounds ambitious, we have a fantastic track record of constructively engaging with suppliers leading to progressive change. Over the last twenty years, we have engaged with over 40 suppliers, including playing a key role in GSK (who used to own Lucozade and Ribena) relinquishing their HIV anti-retroviral patents in sub-Saharan Africa, and leading on resolution of the issues relating to Coca-Cola bottlers in Kerala, India, who were alleged to be taking more than their fair share from groundwater aquifers in a period of drought.

On the back of the recent tenders round, we intend to constructively engage with AU Vodka over accusations of irresponsible marketing and Mondelez International, who own Grenade, over accusations of ecocide linked to the palm oil they buy.

We'll be creating a constructive engagement hub on our website to keep members updated with live engagements, and members are encouraged to [contact us](#) if they would like to get involved in this important work.



Our [Supplier Ethical Code of Conduct](#), which remains leading edge

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.

Moonshine was home-brewed alcohol produced illegally under the cover of darkness and guided by the light of the moon.

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Introducing the Commercial Enterprise Working Group

The first meeting of our new Commercial Enterprise Working Group took place this month. Not your average committee; this group has been set up to focus on driving forward social enterprise initiatives within students' unions and aims to develop plans to agree and deliver a long term strategy, enhance digital capability, and ensure that our way of working drives strong results for students' unions whilst operating in a truly ethical way. It's an impactful space, designed to support our board and member SUs with new ideas and innovation. We'll be looking at everything from licensed trade and retail to marketing, CSR and ethical supply chains with the overall objective of building long term strategies and plans that support and benefit students' unions and the students they serve.

Meet the Members

We've got a brilliant group of experienced individuals with a wealth of knowledge from across the sector:



Chair: Phillip Dayment

NUS Services Board
Member and Commercial Director at
Cardiff SU



Officer: Deio Owen

NUS Charity Board Chair
and NUS Wales President



NUS Lead: Elizabeth Bone

Social Enterprise Lead at
NUS Charity

NUS Charity Board:

- Manpreet Dhesi – Trustee
- Noah Katz – Member Director

SU Appointed Members:

- Joe Stephenson - Director of Commercial Services, Nottingham Trent Students' Union
- Abigail Savage - CEO at Bishop Grosseteste Students Union
- Alan Warnock - Head of Commercial Services, University of Salford Students

External Appointed Members:

- Jamie Agombar – Executive Director of SOS-UK
- Max Ross – Independent Member with extensive experience in SU commercial operations

Our inaugural meeting was all about connection and collaboration, getting to know each other, reviewing early ideas for a three-year strategy, gathering feedback and exploring how we can make the group a space for innovation and impact.

Join Us!

We're still recruiting and would love more SU representatives to join us.

This is a voluntary role, but one that promises to be incredibly rewarding and influential. If you're passionate about social enterprise, commercial innovation, or ethical business, it would be great to hear from you.

To apply, contact the [membership team](#).

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OPENERS & TAP HANDLE. PLUS SOCIAL MEDIA SUPPORT,
TRAINING, & EVENT SUPPORT.

Raising the Bar: A Year Recognition for Best Bo

As the academic year drew to a close, the Best Bar None programme celebrated another successful round of assessments, culminating in an awards ceremony at Trade Convention. It marked the end of months of dedication, collaboration, and a shared commitment to raising standards across students' union venues.

Over the past year, assessors Alison Inch and Adam Parton travelled more than 3,000 miles and reviewed over 1,000 documents and policies, highlighting the demands of the accreditation process. 37 students' unions earned their Best Bar None plaques; testament to their commitment to operating safe, responsible, and welcoming venues.

And the work isn't over yet! We have six more SUs scheduled for assessments over the summer and autumn.

This year also saw the introduction of a new marking system for the NUS Charity scheme. Accreditation now hinges on meeting all essential criteria—reflecting the core values of Best Bar None. For those looking to go above and beyond, bonus questions offer the chance to enhance their venues even further. These efforts are now recognised in the new star rating system:

- ★ 1 Star – Accredited with up to 74% of bonus points
- ★★ 2 Stars – Accredited with 75–84% of bonus points
- ★★★ 3 Stars – Accredited with 85% or more

This year's results were impressive with 12 SUs achieving 1 star, 16 earning 2 stars and 9 reaching the coveted 3 star rating!

of r None



Top performers in Category A were:

- Kent SU – 95%
- Bath SU – 92%
- Harper Adams SU – 90%

In Category B, the leaders were:

- UCLan – 91%
- Beds SU – 86%
- Sussex SU – 85%

Several **special awards** were also presented:

- Newcomer Award – Loughborough SU
- Customer Experience & Welfare – Sheffield SU
- Most Improved – University of Sussex SU
- Operational Standards – Kent SU

And for the winners...**A trip to the House of Lords awaits!**

Trading excellence was also recognised during the event with four awards presented for:

- Greatest Purchase Value per Student – Royal Holloway SU
- Greatest Retail Growth – SOAS SU
- Greatest Licensed Trade Growth – University of Brighton SU
- Greatest Catering Growth – Coventry University SU





Looking ahead, the ambition for next year is to get 50 students' unions signed up. Registration will open soon, alongside the launch of a new Best Bar None handbook providing clear guidance on how to meet each assessment criterion.

In preparation for the upcoming implementation of Martyn's Law, we've also formed a new [working group](#) to share best practice and ensure students' unions are ready for the new legislation. This will also be reflected in next year's assessment criteria.

Finally, a series of in-person sessions will be held later this year to review 2025, introduce the new handbook, explore initiatives like LT plus and the Cocktail Programme, and provide valuable networking opportunities. Students' unions interested in hosting or showcasing their Best Bar None work are encouraged to get involved.

Got a BBN question?

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A LEGAL STEP TO NIGHTS OUT

Following the Prime Minister's statement in November last year to crack down on spiking, a new Crime and Policing Bill is currently going through Parliament. The bill includes a new 'administering a harmful substance' offence that covers spiking and non-spiking incidents – for example where a person is sprayed with pepper spray.

The objective of the new offence is to raise public awareness that spiking is illegal, encourage victims to report incidents to the police, improve police response, and obtain more accurate data to inform the prosecution process.

You will probably remember media reports of a worrying surge in drink and needle spiking in Autumn 21. Since then, between May 22 and April 23, the police received over 6,500 reports of spiking – 957 of which were needle spiking, and many incidents go unreported.

Although spiking is already illegal, the new law will increase the maximum penalty for the most commonly used offence, change how and where cases are dealt with, and help the police respond faster.

Michael Kill, CEO at the Night Time Industries Association (NTIA) - whom many of

you will know from our recent Trade Convention - said "We understand that predatory behaviour is a pervasive issue

within society and must be addressed wherever it occurs - across communities, public spaces, and institutions. Over recent years, the industry has worked hard to drive awareness and put robust mitigations in place - through staff training, use of CCTV, awareness campaigns and strengthened partnerships with key stakeholders and policing.

"The NTIA is committed to supporting the government's Plan for Change and its goal to halve violence against women within a decade. We will continue working closely with government, policing, and local authorities to embed a perpetrator-focussed culture of safety and accountability throughout the night time economy."

OWARDS SAFER

It's important we all work to increase awareness about spiking, take preventative measures, train staff on how to spot incidents of spiking, how to deal with victims, and the process to follow when an incident of spiking is reported. We also need to encourage reporting to ensure perpetrators are found and prosecuted.





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* NUS drinks tracker 2024

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NEW
FLAVOUR
FOR 2025!

VANILLA
& CARAMEL
SHOT

SPICED,
PINEAPPLE,
BANANA,
TROPICAL



Keep the conversation flowing and focussed!

We love seeing the engagement on the Commercial WhatsApp group – it's a testament to the energy and collaboration across our commercial operations. However, the informal nature of the platform means the Trading Support team sometimes miss important questions.

To help keep the group effective and inclusive, we're sharing a few simple guidelines to ensure the space remains what it's meant to be: a hub for sharing ideas, best practices, and quick wins.

- Keep the tone positive and respectful
- Make sure messages align with [NUS values and policies](#)
- Never share pricing or sensitive information
- Email trading@nus.org.uk if you have a question for the team. We can't guarantee a response if your question is posted on the group but will endeavour to respond if it relates to more than one SU
- Allow 48 hours for the Trading Support team to respond to email queries. The team will respond during normal office working hours (Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm).

We really appreciate your support in following these principles – it helps us all get the most out of the conversation and track and respond to questions. Other than that...keep the conversation flowing!



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