



SHUsustainability:

Promoting Green Thinking

Sustainability Report 2019

Kim Orwin - Research Assistant

Introduction

As part of Sustainability Week, students were asked on the Sheffield Hallam Student's Union social media pages to share their thoughts around sustainability and the SU. Students answered two questions on each day of the week on the @hallamunion1 Instagram account, with an additional six sub-poll questions asked on one of the days. Overall, 373 people took part in the questions, however, there were varying levels of engagement throughout the week, see Table 1. Additionally, not all respondents who voted in the poll question responded to the second question which required a written answer.

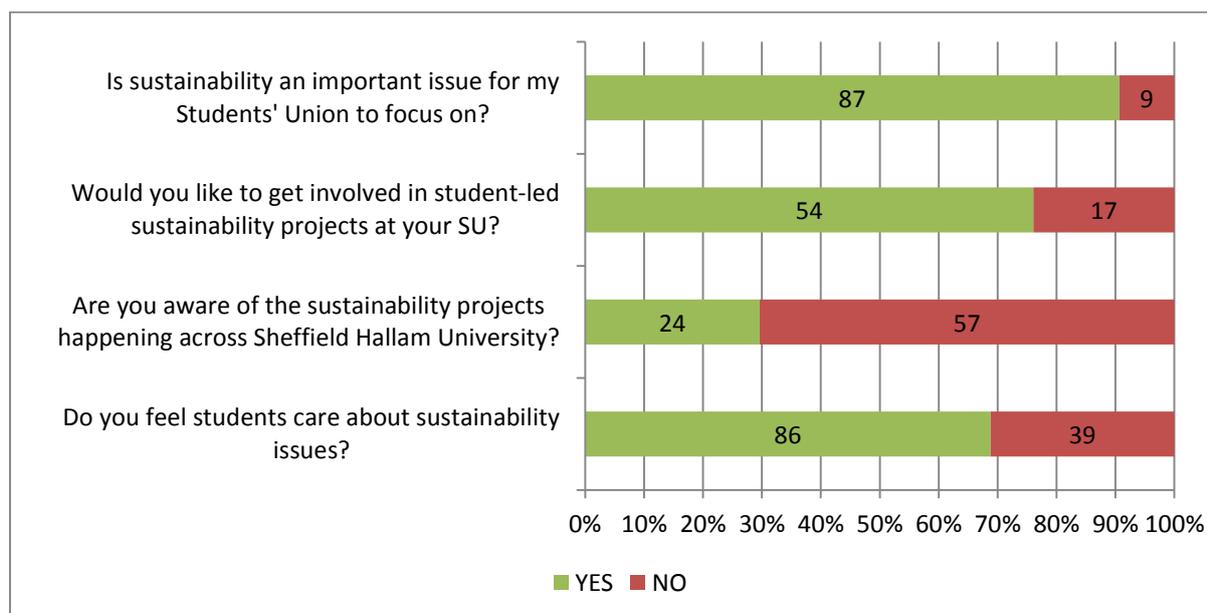
Table 1: Number of respondents to daily poll question

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total
125	81	71	N/A (Rating does not record number of respondents)	96	373

Main poll results

Respondents were asked a series of yes/no poll questions over the week, with an aim to understand student attitudes towards sustainability. Responses are shown in Figure 1. Students believe that sustainability is an important issue for the Students' Union to focus on and that students care about sustainability issues. 76% of students would like to get involved in sustainability projects, but only 30% of students are aware of the projects that are happening across the university.

Figure 1: Responses to Instagram poll questions

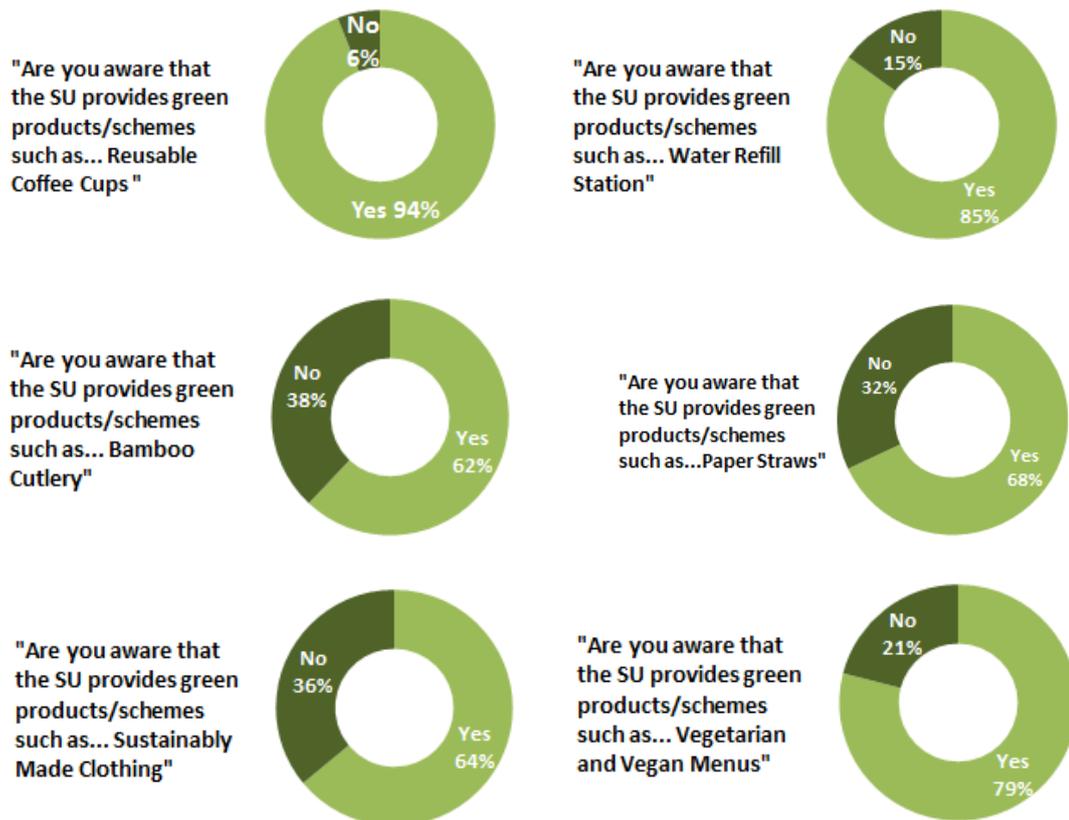


Students were asked to rate 'Green' they believe the Students' Union is. It was rated as 6.5 out of 10.

Sub poll results

Respondents were also asked to demonstrate their knowledge of the 'green schemes' that are provided by the Students' Union. Students were mostly aware of schemes such as reusable coffee cups, water refill stations and vegetarian and vegan menus, but were less aware of schemes such as bamboo cutlery, paper straws and sustainably made clothing, see Figure 2.

Figure 2: Responses to Instagram sub-poll



Comments

Students were asked to comment on a range of questions throughout the week. The first question asked was "What are the main reasons you think students should care about sustainability?"

Responses included:

"Students care about sustainability because they are effectively investing in their futures with buying into recyclable products or helping the environment in many other ways. What us as students do now has a major impact on our future environment and so a positive impact made by everyone will be beneficial in the future!"

"All the issues affect us! We need to take a stand and be more sustainable and think about the way we are utilising resources! It can be hard as a student to be sustainable in every sense as we don't have the money to spend on products not in plastic packaging or being able to choose our electricity providers etc, but we can make little steps toward being sustainable in order to create a positive future for ourselves and future generations"

"Because it's our planet to look after!"

The next question asked was "What are your hints and tips to living a more sustainable student life?"

Responses included:

"Actually separating the recycling and not just throwing it in (the waste bin), taking one of the million cloth tote bags we are given in freshers to the supermarket and getting plastic free fruit and veg"

"Bring your own reusable cutlery to uni. Reusing plastic bags that I have no choice to purchase (like plastic bread bags) to bring my sandwiches into uni"

The next question asked was "What do you think the University could be doing to make a greater green impact?" Responses included:

"Have food waste bins all over both campuses so food waste doesn't just go to landfill! Either send it to a compost heap or create their own and have a self sufficient garden and produce their own veggies from the compost"

"Make recycling bins easier to identify in university"

"One thing I've noticed is when hosting events, someone always arrives with lots of bottled water! It's so unnecessary and most of the time no one takes any."

The final question asked was "If there is one thing which keeps you from getting involved in sustainability projects, what would it be?" Responses included:

"Some people that run the projects are really intense and make you feel guilty for not being all about sustainability and not just doing what you can"

"Not sure I have seen them advertised so perhaps better marketing communications"

"Lots of opportunities are located off campus and for commuters like me that's not super helpful. Could we have more projects on campus please!"

Summary and Recommendations

Overall, Sheffield Hallam students believe that sustainability is important and believe that more could be done to make the Students' Union and University 'greener'. Students are aware of the green schemes available at the Students' Union, but state that they are not aware of sustainability projects around the university. This could be interpreted as students believing that sustainability projects are stand-alone events for them to take part in and students do not see initiatives such as bringing a reusable cup to university as taking part in a sustainability project.

The first recommendation of this report is to create clear branding about what a sustainability project is. This could be themed as a 'green scheme' and attached to recycling bins and at SHSU retail outlets, as well as being used to identify events and volunteering projects online with a sustainable theme.

The second recommendation is to increase the amount of green action events on campus and volunteering opportunities available to students as there appear to be demand for these types of projects.