

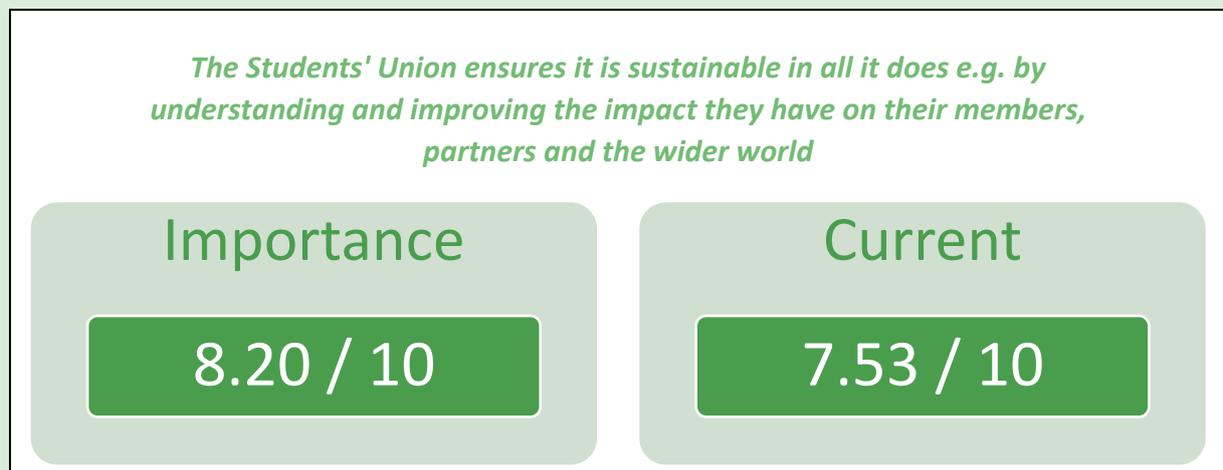
Student Life Survey Sustainability Results

Introduction

The results in this report come from Sheffield Students' Union's Student Life Survey 2018/19. The Student Life Survey took place in November 2018 and 3397 students at the University of Sheffield completed the questionnaire. The results were weighted by gender, faculty, level of study, fee status (home/ international), and year of study to be representative of the student population.

Students Union

Sustainability is one of Sheffield Students' Union's strategic values. This section reports on feedback from students on sustainability at the SU. Respondents were given the statement *"The Students' Union ensures it is sustainable in all it does e.g. by understanding and improving the impact they have on their members, partners and the wider world"* and asked to rate this statement on a scale of 0-10 for how important it was to them, and how they feel the Students' Union scores currently.



Students commented on the importance of sustainability and gave suggestions of how the SU could continue its work on sustainability in the future

"I would really like to see the Union educating more about environmental/climate issues i.e. palm in shop projects, recycling information, more plastic free/recyclable in the main shop etc."

"The zero waste shop was a great example of making things happen. Having a sustainable university would greatly improve my experience of being a student here because sustainability in all areas is something that ensure the livelihood of all of us in the future."

"Could be more sustainable by stopping sale of plastic bottles altogether and offering microwaves so people can bring own lunches rather than buying packaged goods."

Making a change

The next sustainability question focussed on the extent to which students feel empowered to make change on sustainable issues and causes. The result for this question is consistent with the result of the 2017/18 student life survey, with little change from the previous year but a noticeable increase from 2016/17.

How far do you agree with the following statement: I feel empowered to make change on sustainable issues and causes?

6.73 / 10

Comments on this section were mixed with some students feeling like they have more ability to make change than others.

"I have no personal burning urge to contribute to developing a more sustainable world or influence policy; I will just make small changes myself."

"Sheffield student union sustainability week has made me more aware of the issues the world is facing."

"If it's one thing that I've learnt so far at Sheffield, we have the power as students to effect change. As such, I am constantly encouraged to think about the contributions that I can make towards sustainable development to not only Sheffield, but other national/international arenas."

Recycling

Finally, the survey contained three questions about recycling facilities around the university. The questions covered how students rate the current recycling facilities, whether they feel they have enough information around which bins to use, and how confident they are that waste is properly recycled.

On a scale of 0-10, how would you rate the recycling facilities around the university campus?

7.51 / 10

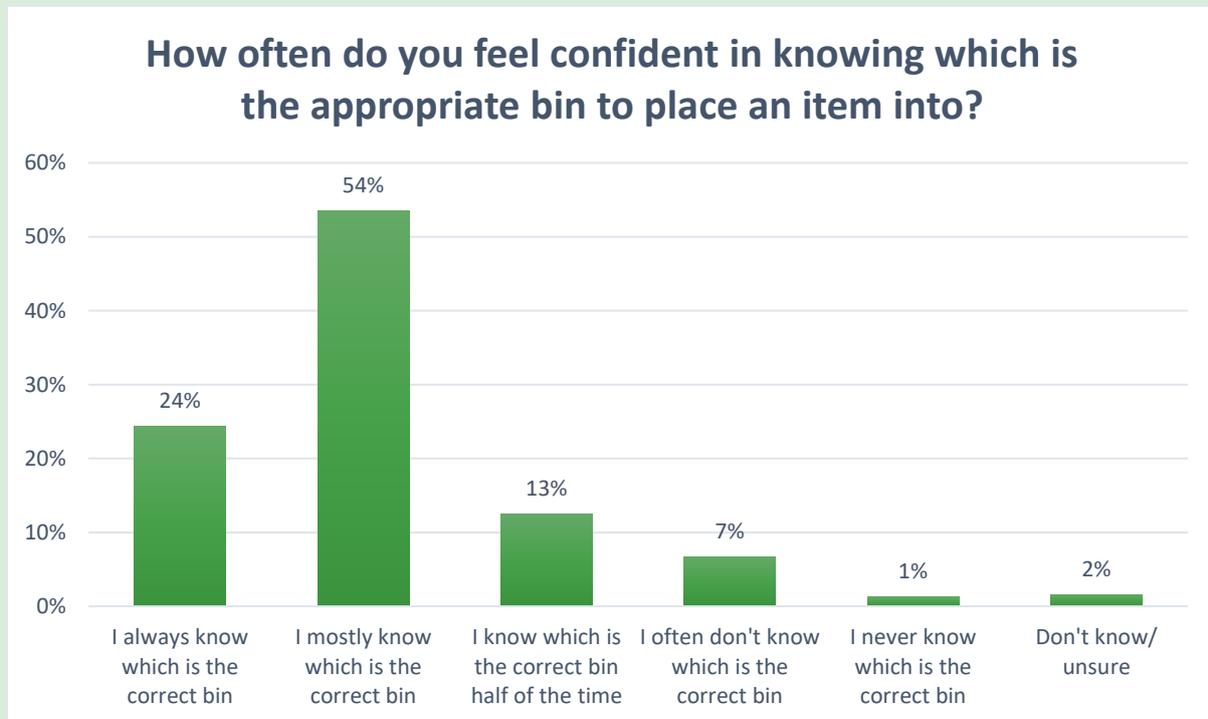
One theme of comments from students focussed around more bin provision and a better range of recycling facilities.

“There needs to be more recycling bins outside on campus, rather than just inside buildings.”

“There are no plastic recycling in Allen court, please provide some.”

“Many recycling bins have shaped openings e.g. circular for bottles; this doesn't allow me to put other plastic items in this bin that don't fit this shape.”

“Placing a single bin on campus makes no sense, please place each time at least two bins (one for recycling too). Also a lot of students eat on the seating steps in front of the Octagon; however there is no bin for their picnics... to be improved.”



Another theme of comments left by respondents was the desire for more information and guidance around which items to place in which bins. Some students also commented that they don't believe everyone use the recycling facilities properly.

"I'm not sure which bin is for coffee cups and I also don't feel like everyone knows how to recycle."

"Sometimes the pictures on the IC bins aren't exactly clear to what they mean, especially thinking in regards to international students."

"More needs to be done to encourage recycling. The bins are a good start, but it is often unclear as to what should go where, which means that people don't bother trying to recycle at all."

"Sometimes I get confused, because the bins have pictures that don't apply to all items. In other words, if the logos are clearer (or if there is a description) it would be better."

"There aren't often enough recycling bins around uni in areas where there is a lot of waste. Also, not many people know how to correctly recycle e.g. that recyclables have to be clean or that it's only firm plastic not flimsy plastic that can be recycled, which ultimately means that those correctly recycled materials will still end up going to landfill as they won't be sorted out from what others put in with it."

On a scale of 0-10, how confident do you feel that items placed into university bins are properly recycled?

6.85 / 10

Several students commented that they did not know whether university waste is properly recycled and that more broadly it is hard to know how reliable this is across the city.

"I feel like having designated bins isn't a guarantee of actual recycling taking place from the SU or local council."

"I do not know anything about the Universities efforts to recycle and ensure the bins go to the correct places for disposal."

"I once saw someone emptying a recycling bin at a train station and putting it into general waste, so am worried this happens frequently across organisations and institutions."

Next Steps

The SU development officer and other SU staff will consider these results as well as the full list of comments from students. They will discuss the best way to use these insights to improve sustainability work at the students' union.