

Green Impact Students' Unions (GISU)

Students' Union Case Study

Student's Union Name: Bucks Students' Union

Our case study is on "Bucks New Usage" This is an initiative that has been running for several years within our institution and it is where we offer unwanted household items for free to students.

Bucks New Usage is an initiative which was collaboratively set up with Bucks Students' Union and our multi faith chaplaincy. Several years ago now this scheme was brought to life as it was noted that a lot of unwanted household items such as duvets, plates, cutlery, kettles and toasters etc were left in all 3 of our student halls when it was time for students to move out. At this time it was decided to collect these items in and give them a second home to students who needed them.

The multi-faith chaplaincy has a small outside building which we converted into a small warehouse for Bucks new usage. It required one room and a few book shelves and a clothing rail to display all the items we had collected. We simply got volunteers and staff at the end of the academic year to go into halls and collect any leftover items, clean them and then place them in the Bucks new usage warehouse.

At the start of the next academic year we send a summer mail out letting students know about this scheme to encourage people to use what we have and continue to re-use rather than buy new. We have found this scheme to be particularly popular with our oversea students as they cannot bring over all the household items they will need. On move in day we have a pop up tent which only requires a table and gazebo to encourage people again to pick something off the table rather than buying new. This again has been proven to be popular as it is very common for students to forget something on move in day they will need, by being there on moving day and offering Bucks New Usage we are preventing a potentially unnecessary purchase that may end up in landfill. Bucks New Usage is open all year for students to access whatever they need for free. It is important that students can access all year round as things break or get burnt and will need replacing. We promote Bucks New Usage heavily to all students and it is a scheme that most students have used.

This scheme has had a lot of positive outcomes over the years, students are grateful to receive household items for free as it takes the financial strain off most to buy new household items. Our oversea students also positively praise Bucks New Usage as they feel as if we are supporting them right from the beginning and settling them in well. Lastly the main positive outcome of this scheme is that it is reducing the amount of household items going in landfill and encourage and enticing new students to re-use rather than buy keeping most of our item in the circular economy.

Bucks New usage is an ongoing scheme that we will continue to provide to our students due to the amount of positive feedback we receive from students and the good it is doing for our environment. Moving forward what we may look into doing is having a small pay box within the warehouse and see if students would like to pay something for the items they are taking. This is something that was suggested in our audit as it could be a simple way of raising money for either our RAG charities or an environmental charity which will again support a better and greener environment.

If possible, I would recommend other SU to take up a similar scheme. If you do not have access to a lot of space it could be implanted on a smaller scale such as, you collect the items at the end of the academic year, keep them in a storage cupboard or in the corner of a room over summer and then on move in day simply have a table up and offer to students. It is amazing to see how many students take up this scheme and how many can see the benefits it has on the environment.



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