

SINGLE USE PLASTICS POLICY

This Union Notes

1. Up to 12 million tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean every year, taking centuries to degrade.
2. Fewer than half of all plastic bottles bought globally are collected for recycling.
3. The UK currently has no deposit return scheme for plastic bottles.
4. UK supermarkets currently generate 800,000 tonnes of plastic packaging every year.
5. Plastic contaminated water is so widespread that a March 2018 investigation by the State University of New York in Fredonia found that 93% of bottled water showed signs of micro-plastic contamination.
6. Plastic alternatives exist in the market that are compostable, but offer the same quality of produce to users.
7. The National Union of Students ran a campaign called “The Last Straw” in 2017/18, calling for a reduction in the use of single use plastic straws.

This Union Believes

1. The levels of plastic pollution in our local and international environment cannot be allowed to continue at its current rate.
 - 1.1. Everybody has an individual responsibility to reduce their impact on our environment.
 - 1.2. Organisations, including Lancaster University and its Students’ Union also have this responsibility.
2. Following an episode of BBC’s Blue Planet II, the public have become more aware of the rising issue of plastic contamination. More of our members now expect their Union to be acting in the best interests of the environment.
3. With increasing numbers of organisations pledging to reduce or cut out their single use plastic use, this Union has a responsibility to reduce the levels of plastic being used in our services and enable students to reduce their plastic use on campus.
4. The small price difference between single use plastics and eco-friendly alternatives is nothing in comparison to the cost to our environment.

This Union Resolves

1. To raise awareness of plastic pollution and ways in which our members can reduce their personal pollution. This will include, but not be limited to:
 - 1.1. Use of re-usable alternatives, including bottles and bags,
 - 1.2. Existence of eco-friendly plastic alternatives,
 - 1.3. Recycling of single use plastics, as well as other recyclables.
2. To lobby the University to increase the number of recycling points around campus.
3. To lobby for bottle filling stations around campus.
4. To reduce the use of single use plastic in all Union and subsidiary operations and campaigns wherever financially viable, through the use of alternative materials.
5. To investigate the viability of removing single use plastic bottles, straws, and bags from its sales.
6. To offer environmentally sustainable alternatives to single use plastic bags in its retail operations.
7. Lobby the University to offer environmentally sustainable alternatives to single use plastic items.