**GUIDANCE: Responsible freebies**

Worcester Students' Union (WSU) regularly distributes free items to students. WSU acknowledges that some items are not sustainably produced and can harm the environment if not disposed of properly. Recognising the importance of student choice, WSU is committed to being transparent about the items and their environmental impact. WSU encourages officers, staff, and students to consider sustainable alternatives, including materials, design, and manufacturing processes. To support this, WSU uses specific questions to evaluate the sustainability of all freebies.

**Questions to assess the sustainability of products.**

Raw materials

How are the resources obtained: exploited or extracted?

Is the product made of renewable/sustainable elements?

Are these materials used efficiently?

Does the company have a circular economy strategy?

Analysis phase

Do I need it?

How many times will it be used?

Are there other options more sustainable?

Production

How much energy is used during the production process?

Are they renewable energies?

Is the use of energy done efficiently?

Does the company have a sustainability plan? Are they committed to offsetting their carbon emissions?

Waste

What happens to the packaging after use?

Does the company have a recycling scheme?

Distribution

How are the goods transported?

How far will they travel?

To ensure Worcester Students’ Union (WSU) meets its obligations to reduce the environmental impact of freebies, we will:

* Require officers and SU staff planning to give away items to explicitly include this in their campaign plan and share it with their line manager.
* Bring any event ordering more than 2,000 items for a single campaign to the Sustainability Committee for approval, considering the environmental impact and risks.
* Avoid purchasing any single-use freebies that cannot be disposed of with household/domestic waste (except for contraception and period products).
* Limit the printing of leaflets to no more than 5,000 each academic year.
* Provide students with information on how to responsibly dispose of their freebies.
* Be transparent about the contents of giveaway items so students can make informed decisions, avoiding "surprise" bags.
* We will not use stickers as they cannot be recycled.

**Compliance and Review**

This guidance will be formally reviewed every 2 years but will be regularly reviewed and updated by the sustainability committee as needed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all members of Worcester Students’ Union.

Date of Adoption:

Signed: (SU elected president)

Person responsible for review: Director of Representation and Membership Services