

Trading Insight

September 2026

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*UK ON-TRADE - CGA OPMS Data, MAT to 23rd March 2026

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Beer, wines & spirits

A major growth oppo

As retail outlets continue to adapt to changing shopper habits and declining tobacco sales, beer, wines and spirits (BWS) presents a significant opportunity to drive revenue and basket spend. Recent analysis from AF Blakemore and Global Brands highlights just how important the category has become within the retail landscape and why more students' union shops should consider stocking alcohol or expanding their existing range.

There's been a shift in convenience purchasing. The key drivers are the huge price gap between retail and bars / clubs which means students are drinking before heading out (further fuelled by the cost-of-living crisis), and grab-and-go purchasing – **70%** of all RTDs bought in retail stores are consumed on the same day.

According to the SOS UK Students, Alcohol and Drugs survey, **76%** of students intentionally participate in "pre-drinking" before their night out begins.

These findings go some way to explain why beer, wines and spirits is now one of the most valuable categories in retail, accounting for an average of **15%** of total store sales. In fact, the category generates more sales for the channel than soft drinks, confectionery and vapes combined, making it a main contributor to store performance.

The value of the category is also reflected in customer purchasing behaviour. Overall, **£1 in every £3 spent in retail outlets is on beer, wines and spirits**, making it the third-highest spend category after tobacco/vapes and impulse purchases.

Spend per occasion in convenience has also increased **+11.2%** YoY, resulting in over **£12.5M** value growth.

For retailers looking to offset declining tobacco revenues, BWS presents an opportunity to drive additional purchases and increase basket value. However, of the 60+ SU retail outlets, only **19** currently sell alcohol. We have 30 outlets in the Retail plus programme, yet only 13 of these sell licensed products. This means the majority are **missing out** on one of the largest and most valuable retail categories available.



portunity for retail

With brand owners keen to support growth through promotions and retail initiatives, joining the Retail plus programme would not only create additional retail revenue, but also strengthen the appeal of the programme for suppliers.

BUILDING THE RIGHT RANGE

For outlets considering adding alcohol, or for those looking to expand their current offer, the key is to stock products that cover both the largest sales segments and the fastest-growing trends.

No and low alcohol products provide options for the estimated **27%** of students who currently choose not to drink alcohol. Flavoured products and RTDs appeal to less frequent drinkers and those looking for new experiences. RTDs are worth **£277M** in convenience, growing at **+28%** (+£61.3M) YoY. Mainstream beer, wine and spirits brands continue to satisfy regular shoppers and deliver the largest share of sales.

Before going ahead, make sure you check the [legal requirements](#). This includes obtaining a valid premises licence from your local council, appointing a personal licence

holder as your Designated Premises Supervisor, having processes in place to prevent alcohol sales to anyone under 18, and adhering to permitted licensing hours.

Choosing not to sell alcohol may mean missing out on a valuable revenue stream, but if you are considering expanding into the category, it should be balanced with a strong commitment to responsible retailing and student wellbeing.

If you'd like more information, please contact the Trading Support team and we'll be in touch.

Sources:

- AF Blakemore & SPAR International basket analysis 2025
- Nielsen 52 w.e. 18th July 2026, off licence BWS
- Global Brands - The Fourth Category: A Mid-Year Update on Ready to Drinks
- NIQ Homescan RTD Data (Convenience) 52 w/e 11.07.2026
- Students, Alcohol and Drugs Survey 2025, SOS UK

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From green ideas...



...to commercial

For many students' unions, sustainability is a fine balancing act. Commercial outlets are under pressure to protect margins, maintain student footfall and deliver operational efficiency, all while meeting environmental targets.

At Warwick Students' Union, sustainability has become part of day-to-day commercial decision-making. Over the past few years, a range of relatively simple changes have helped reduce waste, cut carbon emissions, and improve profitability without compromising the student experience.

Goodbye single-use cups...

Once upon-a-time, Warwick SUs weekly Circling event in the Dirty Duck used over 400 single-use cups, costing around £840 per year and generating a huge amount of unnecessary plastic waste.

Since introducing branded reusable cups, these costs have plummeted. By investing in 600 reusable cups at a cost of £1.07 each, then offsetting this initial expenditure through a modest increase in the Circling pint offer, from £2.00 to £2.50, the switch paid for itself in less than four weeks.

More recently, they've partnered with Thatcher's to introduce 1,500 co-branded reusable cups. These can be reused for up to three years and have a lower replacement cost per cup compared with the original purchase.

Lee Solloway, Food and Beverage Manager said: 'These simple changes have meant more than 12,000 disposable cups have been taken out of circulation each year. The students



ercial cheers!



fully support the reusable model, we've strengthened our commercial relationship with Thatcher's, and have a financially self-sustaining model in place.

'For commercial teams considering similar initiatives, the changes Warwick SU has made show how small actions can have big environmental and financial benefits'.

Carbon-busting menus

Creating sustainable menus can be complex. Customers expect choice and value, and any change to firm favourites carries a degree of risk.

At Warwick SU, beef burgers represented some of the venue's best-selling menu items. Prior to a menu review, two of the three beef burger options were served with double beef patties as standard. Together they accounted for around 21% of weekly food sales.

Rather than removing beef altogether, the commercial team chose a subtle but effective alternative: changing portion sizes.

To ensure students still had a choice, double burgers became single-patty burgers with the option to add an extra patty for £1.50.

Over a two-year period, this minor change significantly reduced overall beef consumption with 34,247 burgers sold and 3,060 customers opting to upgrade to two patties which meant a reduction of 20,057 burgers being served. This delivered an estimated carbon saving of almost 75 tonnes of CO₂e.

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The environmental savings were accompanied by stronger commercial performance. Before the change, double burgers sold at approximately £10.00 with a gross profit margin of around 69-70%. Following the menu revision, gross profit margins increased to approximately **75%** with their flagship 'Smash Burger' seeing a **30% sales growth** during the first year! This was achieved without removing portion choices and students felt the overall value had improved. For SU catering teams, this is a compelling example of how menu engineering can reduce environmental impact without alienating customers or sacrificing sales.

Smart beer...

Some of the most impactful changes we can make happen behind the scenes.

Historically, The Dirty Duck (the SU bar) carried out weekly beer line cleaning using traditional 'purple' chemicals. While effective, the process produced a lot of waste, high water consumption, significant labour requirements, and the disposal of chemical waste.

With 12 cellar lines operating across the venue, the cumulative environmental and commercial costs were substantial.

In 2024, Warwick SU brought in the System28 beer line cleaning system from LineClenze Environmental Technologies.

The system extends the cleaning cycle from every seven days to every 28 days while maintaining beer quality and cellar standards. It also uses their patented Uneek cleaning powder which requires less water and produces waste certified safe to be reintroduced into the water system.

The annual retail value of beer and cider no longer lost during cleaning is approximately **£7,819**. Or from another angle, this is an additional **1,908 pints sold** rather than wasted.

What links all three of these initiatives is that none required radical transformation. They were practical changes rooted in sustainable and commercial decision-making. By replacing disposable cups with reusable alternatives, repositioning a burger menu and modernising cellar operations, Warwick SU has demonstrated that sustainability can strengthen, rather than hinder, commercial performance.

For students' unions looking to improve their sustainability credentials, Warwick has shown you don't need a major cash injection or operational overhaul to make a meaningful difference.

Why not sign up for the [Sustainable Unions](#) programme today and join other members on the journey to making environmentally responsible decisions that protect the planet and your **revenue**.

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WHAT ARE STUDENTS ACTUALLY BUYING?

When it comes to stocking shelves, fridges and bars, students' unions face a constant challenge balancing student expectation, changing trends and limited space.

The good news is that those decisions don't have to rely on guesswork.

Across our membership, we collect and analyse purchase data totalling £32M from SU outlets, giving us a unique view of what students are actually buying. Rather than relying on assumptions about student preferences, we can see purchasing behaviour in real time across retail, catering and licensed outlets.

This means we can identify which products are performing best, which categories are in growth, which brands students consistently return to, and where buying habits are changing.

Student spending habits are often influenced by value for money, health and wellbeing, convenience, sustainability and social trends. By taking a data-driven approach, buying teams can make more confident evidence-based decisions about ranging, promotions and stock allocation, helping them optimise sales while delivering what students genuinely want.

LICENSED TRADE

Licensed wet sales entered the 2025/26 trading year with purchasing increasing by £523,700 (+3.9%) to £13.89 million. While seven out of nine categories delivered growth, the gains were highly concentrated, with just four categories accounting for virtually all of the net increase: Draught beer and cider, cocktails and packaged soft drinks. For bar managers, this highlights the importance of ensuring the strongest-performing products remain visible and available.

Cocktails

The cocktails category delivered the most dramatic growth of any drinks segment, rising by £162,364 to £212,622, an increase of 323.1%.

Much of this growth has been driven by the arrival of BuzzBallz, which generated £102,357 in sales, alongside White Claw, which reached £45,743. Together, these two brands contributed 90% of the category's uplift.

Within the BuzzBallz range, three flavours account for the majority of sales:

BuzzBallz Strawberry Rita: £47,651 (47%)
BuzzBallz Tequila Rita: £26,477 (25.9%)

DENTS NG?

BuzzBallz Chill Mango: £16,626 (16.2%)
White Claw has also performed strongly, with Black Cherry generating £15,669 in year-to-date sales, closely followed by Mango at £14,698.

For buyers looking to capitalise on the growing ready-to-drink cocktail trend, these products represent the strongest opportunities within the category.

Draught beer

Draught beer remains the largest category, growing by £199,548 (+4.4%) to £4.73 million.

The leading brands are Madri and Guinness, which together generated sales of £1.56 million and contributed £264,227 in additional year-on-year growth. Both continue to be popular with students and remain key products for union bars.

However, the strongest growth story comes from Jubel, which more than doubled its sales to £363,566. The brand delivered an increase of £193,348, representing growth of 113.6%, making it the fastest-growing major beer brand in our portfolio.



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COCKTAILS

While growth is being driven by a handful of successful brands, the category remains polarised. Several brands are experiencing declines, with combined sales falling by £485,000 year on year. Among them is Carling, which, despite its reputation as a dependable value lager and still generating a substantial £699,704 in sales, saw volumes decline by 9.5%.

These figures highlight that premium and flavoured beers are driving growth, while some traditional mainstream lager brands are coming under pressure.

Cider

Draught cider sales increased by £82,123 (+6.3%) to £1.39 million, supported by strong performances from fruit-led brands.

Thatchers was the clear leader, increasing sales by £133,374 to £348,247 and the brand alone contributed more than 60% of category growth. Old Mout also performed strongly with sales of £169,803.

Among the leading cider brands, Rekorderlig and Kopparberg are also in growth so are worth considering if you're looking to expand your flavour range.

The current best-selling products are:

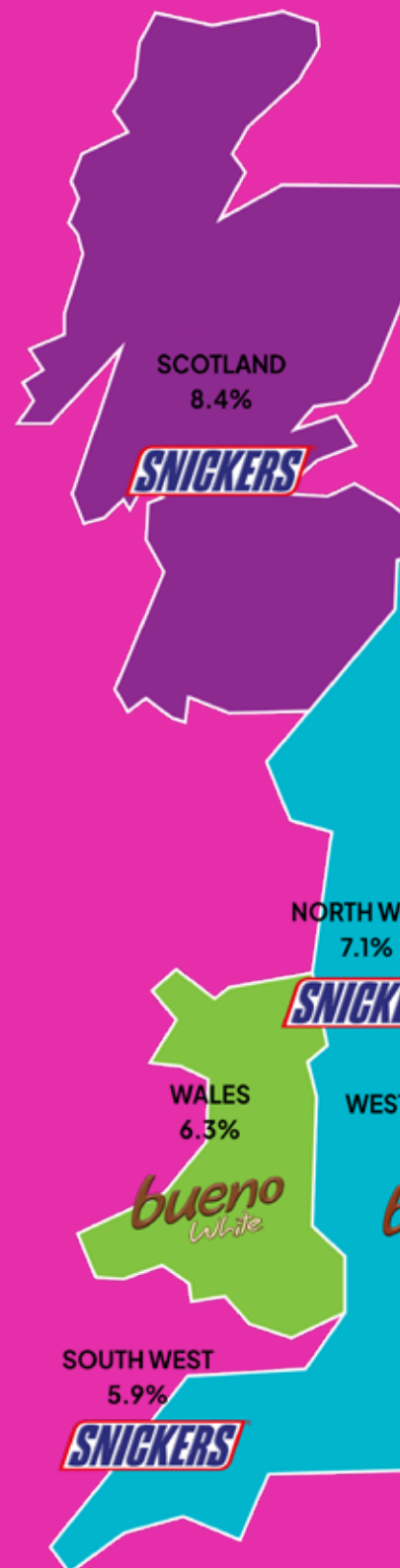
- Thatchers Juicy Apple 50L
- Thatchers Gold 50L
- Thatchers Apple Fusion 50L
- Old Mout Berries & Cherries 30L

These products account for almost 60% of selected draught cider sales, highlighting the importance of having core ranges on your bar.

RETAIL

Confectionery

Confectionery was the largest year-on-year growth driver within retail, increasing by £249,000 (+25%) with single



chocolate bars and sharing bags delivering an additional £51,000 in sales (+10%).

The top-selling products were:

- Snickers
- Twix
- Kinder Bueno

The fastest-growing products were:

- Galaxy Milk
- Galaxy Smooth Caramel
- Twix Xtra
- Grocery

Grocery purchasing remains heavily convenience-led. Instant noodles and noodle meals account for 57% of packet and dried goods sales, making them the standout products within the category.

Rice remains the second most popular line; however, the overall packet and dried goods category is declining. This may suggest students are purchasing core grocery items through supermarkets and discount retailers, while relying on campus outlets for convenience and top-up shopping.



Sports Nutrition

Sports Nutrition continues to perform well, growing 7% with annual sales reaching £226,100.

While Grenade remains the category leader with 38% of total sales, the strongest growth is coming from:

- Arla Protein
- Huel
- Vitamin Well

Protein drinks now account for 52.2% of category sales, while edible protein products have declined and now represent 47.8% of the category.

For SU retail outlets, the data indicates increasing demand for convenient, ready-to-drink protein products for students who are health focussed with active lifestyles.

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CATERING

Catering food sales increased by £296,800 to £3.48 million, representing growth of 9.3%. 24 of the 32 food categories recorded growth.

Nearly half of all growth came from three areas:

- Frozen meat
- Packet and dried foods
- Potato products

Frozen Meat

At supplier level, JJ Food Service has overtaken Brakes to become the leading frozen meat supplier, accounting for 41.4% of total sales.

Chicken continues to dominate catering purchasing, followed by beef and mixed meat.

The current top-selling lines in the whole category are:

- Carisma Southern Fried Chicken Mini Fillets
- JJ Premium Halal Crispy Southern Fried Chicken Strips
- JJ Halal Southern Fried Chunky Chicken Bites

Potato Products

Potato products remain a staple of the catering shopping list, with chips and fries accounting for £275,897 in sales and representing 83.2% of the category. They also contributed 73% of all net growth within potato products.

The top-sellers are JJ Super Crisp Double Crunch 3/8 Skin-On Fries (11.9% share) and Sysco Premium Coated Thin Skin Fries (11.2% share)

Hash Browns and Rösti (+33.0%), Potato Shapes and Specialities (+34.3%), Jacket and Baking Potatoes (+22.3%) are ones to keep in mind as they're delivering some of the strongest growth so there could be opportunity to expand menus if you're not already offering these familiar favourites to students.

The category data clearly demonstrates the power of collective purchasing and the strength we have when we work together. By leveraging our combined buying power and sharing insight across the category, we can create greater value, negotiate from a stronger position and ultimately deliver better outcomes for everyone.

If you'd like further insight on product performance, please email trading@nus.org.uk and they will forward your enquiry onto our Commercial Analyst, Emma Bailey.

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*CGA TOP 20 CRAFT BEER BRANDS REPORT, 24/01/2025



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*Source: By volume sold, Off Trade Nielsen Tot_Cov, On Trade CGA (2025)

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Student drinking habits continue to evolve, with younger consumers increasingly seeking drinks that deliver both quality and familiarity. For students' unions, understanding these preferences is essential when building a range that resonates with today's drinkers and drives repeat purchases.

Fruit cider remains a popular choice, with Kopparberg retaining its position as the UK's number one fruit cider[1] and importantly, the most loved drinks brand among young consumers[2]. Crucially, Kopparberg has more drinkers aged 18–24 than any other beer or lager brand[3], making it a must-stock product for SU bars looking to meet student demand.

Another trend gathering momentum is the growing popularity of apple cider among younger drinkers. Kopparberg Crisp Apple taps into this demand with a genuine apple cider profile, complemented by the brand's signature touch of sweetness, offering an approachable style that appeals to both existing loyal consumers and those looking to try something new.

Brand loyalty also remains an important factor at the bar, with Kopparberg drinkers showing the most loyalty. 80% of drinkers specify their cider brand when ordering[4], highlighting the value of stocking products that consumers recognise and trust. For students' unions looking to balance changing tastes with dependable favourites, offering brands that students actively seek out can help create a range that meets expectations while supporting sales throughout the academic year.

[1] By volume sold, Off Trade Nielsen Tot_Cov, On Trade CGA (2025)

[2] Savanta, Most Loved Alcohol Brands 2025

[3] KANTAR WOLRD PANEL Buyers (000) Actual | 18–24 | Total Trade | 12 m/e | 30-Jun–25

[4] CGA OPUS June 2025

As students' drinking habits continue to evolve and the range of available choices grows year on year, quality, authenticity, and execution are becoming increasingly important drivers of purchase behaviour. For SUs, partnering with brands that have an authentic story, a proven track record, and a commitment to exceptional execution not only helps build loyal consumers but ultimately drives greater sales and profitability.

The Spanish beer category is experiencing strong double-digit growth YoY and shows no signs of slowing down. In fact, Spanish beer now commands more taps on the average bar than ever before and has overtaken standard lager for the first time in history, highlighting the growing popularity of Spanish lagers across the UK.

At the heart of this growth is San Miguel, the world's number one Spanish beer. For over 135 years, San Miguel has travelled the globe, bringing people together over great-tasting beer.

In the UK, San Miguel is also the number one Spanish lager demonstrating its strong consumer appeal and trusted reputation nationwide.

San Miguel's ethos is centred on helping consumers embrace a Spanish Summer state of mind, no matter when or where they are.

Through the award-winning Spanish Summer, No Matter When campaign, those aspirational, sun-soaked moments are

brought to life for consumers across the UK. The campaign has reached 97% of UK adults, with an average frequency of more than 12 exposures, and is amplified through impactful trade activations.

These include consumer promotions offering the chance to win a trip to Ibiza, headline festival partnerships with Boomtown, Creamfields, Fly Festival and San Miguel Presents, as well as collaborations with leading cultural platforms such as Mixmag, ensuring the brand remains highly relevant and culturally connected.

This year's activity has been further strengthened by the most significant update to San Miguel's visual identity in the brand's history. The refreshed design modernises the look and feel of the brand while maintaining its heritage, with best-in-class execution across every consumer touchpoint.

By offering San Miguel to students, you are providing them with a premium, refreshing lager featuring delicate notes of white fruit, banana, and apple, balanced by subtle hints of fresh bread and a floral finish. More importantly, you can have confidence that you are stocking a brand that aligns with evolving consumer preferences, delivers proven demand, and is backed by significant investment in marketing, activation, and execution.

(Source: NielsenIQ, Total Coverage YTD Feb 2026 & CGA, Total UK, YTD Feb 2026)

(Source: NielsenIQ Retail Measurement | GB Beer & Cider | Entire Dataset),

(Source: NielsenIQ, Total Coverage YTD Mar 2026)



SPANISH SUMMER NO MATTER WHEN



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Recognising the people

Congratulations to **Hannah Ward** from University of Sussex Students' Union for being nominated as a 'commercial hero'.

"Hannah always goes above and beyond to ensure that the commercial team is doing what it can to provide for the Union, but also for students. She is kind, caring and compassionate and will move mountains to ensure that her staff are looked after and that commercial does what it can to help the Union out. Whether it's negotiating better deals to get the Union more money, helping a student staff member out, getting people involved in the Union, or stocking something in the shop just for us, Hannah's more than a team player- she's the best!"



We've launched the commercial hero scheme to recognise the people who make our everyday commercial spaces a success.

Maybe you've got a member of your team who goes above and beyond to deliver great customer service, comes up with unique ideas to promote products, or has done something truly amazing that's worth a thank you. Or you may have a team that exceeds expectations despite every challenge that comes their way. Whatever the reason...

[nominate them today.](#)

Commercial Heroes—

who make a difference



Congratulations to **Tom Walling** from Bradford Students' Union who was nominated by Amelia Lavin...

"Tom is my commercial hero because he has an incredible ability to bring out the best in everyone around him. He puts a smile on people's faces, creates a welcoming and safe environment to work in, and makes everyone feel safe and supported. He always goes above and beyond, no matter what challenge is put in front of him. He never gives up, even when things don't go to plan, and constantly proves people wrong through his determination, resilience and belief in what we can achieve. Most importantly, he consistently delivers the results needed, and never loses sight of the bigger picture. What makes him a true commercial hero, is the impact he has on people. He genuinely makes me feel excited to come to work, motivates me to be better and gives me confidence to take on challenges. He has created such a trusting environment that I know I can confide in him about things outside of work too, knowing I'll be listened to without judgement and he'll help me find a solution. For me, that's what makes him a commercial hero- he delivers exceptional results, for the customers' benefit, whilst making everyone around him happier. He doesn't just lead a team; he makes everyone want to be a part of it.

"I just want to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn, grow and shine. Moving away from my friends, family and anything I knew, for University was extremely hard. Tom made that much easier and all the more worthwhile".



Community Engagement & Social Responsibility Award

"It's not just about delivering services, it's about creating spaces that naturally make students feel safe, welcome and connected. Being shortlisted nationally shows our focus on making a real impact"

Tom Walling
Trading & Engagement Manager
Sport & Commercial Services

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award shortlisting...



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3 PARTS

PROSECCO



2 PARTS

EG GIN LIQUEUR



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ETHICAL TRADING

Ethical trading is about ensuring the products and services we list are sourced responsibly, with fair treatment for workers, respect for communities, and consideration for the environment.

As a purchasing consortium, ethics and sustainability are at the heart of what we do. We only work with suppliers who can demonstrate a strong commitment to responsible and sustainable production. While campaigns such as Fairtrade Fortnight play an important role in raising awareness of fair pay, safe working conditions and sustainable livelihoods, our aim has always been to make these principles part of everyday business. By embedding ethics into purchasing decisions, we can ensure responsible sourcing remains a year-round priority rather than a one-off focus.

Consumers not only look at the quality and value of the products they buy, but

also the origin and conditions in which they're produced. Here's a selection of our suppliers who stock fairtrade products and support ethical working practices...

NEUTRAL

Neutral are proud to support Fairtrade Fortnight and the important work it does to promote better conditions for farmers and workers around the world. Even stocking just a couple of Fairtrade styles can help make a difference. Every responsible purchasing decision helps create greater demand for fairly traded products and supports the people and communities behind them. Fairtrade



Fortnight is a great opportunity to start small, raise awareness and show that every choice can contribute to positive change. Watch this short [video](#) to learn how Fairtrade cotton production supports farmers and helps protect the environment.

BEYOND THE BEAN / ZUMA

At Zuma, doing things properly means looking beyond what's in the cup. Their 33% Dark Chocolate is made with Fairtrade cocoa, meaning every purchase contributes to the Fairtrade programme and the work it supports with cocoa farmers and their communities. That contribution helps strengthen livelihoods, improve working conditions and give farmers greater opportunity to invest in the future of their businesses and communities. For Zuma, Fairtrade isn't simply a logo on pack - it's part of how they choose to source ingredients and support the people behind them, helping make the cocoa supply chain fairer from the ground up.

SUMA

Suma supplies a range of brands that put fairer trading and better conditions for producers at the heart of what they do.

Weleda's approach to sourcing focuses on fair relationships with its cultivation partners and the responsible use of biodiversity, while its natural cosmetics are certified to the NATRUE standard.

And for chocolate, Tony's Chocolonely is working to tackle exploitation in cocoa through Fairtrade certification, 100% traceable cocoa and its own sourcing principles, including paying additional premiums to support farmers towards a living income.

As a worker-owned wholesaler, Suma is committed to working with suppliers who share their focus on fairer, more responsible food and products. So, this Fairtrade Fortnight, we're happy to help make doing it fair a little easier.





Here's some of the Fairtrade brands available through Suma: Weleda Bodycare, lots of chocolate including Divine, Tony's, Omba, Green & Blacks and Hu and a range of drinks including Charitea, Gusto, Karma Drinks and Lemonaid.



NISBETS



Nisbets supports customers in making more responsible purchasing decisions through an expanding range of Fairtrade products. This includes Fairtrade teas and coffees from Clipper, as well as Fairtrade sugar from Tate & Lyle.



Their commitment goes beyond the products they sell with responsible sourcing and supply-chain evaluation forming an important part of how they work with suppliers. Nisbets is a member of Sedex and use ongoing supplier engagement, audits and due diligence to help identify and manage ethical risks, including labour rights and modern slavery, particularly within higher-risk sourcing regions.



Nisbets achieved FSC® certification in December 2024, and the FSC-certified range has now grown to more than 200 products. These include catering disposables, paper cups, napkins, takeaway packaging and other products made using materials from responsibly managed forests.



PREMCREST



Wish4 FairTrade brings everyday bakes made with Fairtrade ingredients, supporting farmers and communities behind the products students love. From soft, comforting cookies, muffins to grab-and-go bars, Wish4 offers affordable treats with real impact. Choosing Fairtrade isn't just a label - it's a simple way for students to support fair pay, ethical sourcing, and better futures for producers worldwide.



BRAKES

Visit the Brakes [website](#) to see the full range of Fairtrade products.



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**NEW
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A monster oppo

As students settle into university life, particularly first year students, Halloween is a timely opportunity to build relationships and show how their SU can be a hub for great experiences throughout their academic journey.

It's also a monster opportunity to boost revenue. According to a 2024 YouGov survey, the majority (54%) of 18 to 24 year olds have a positive opinion of Halloween, compared to only one in six (16%) who dislike it so if you put on the party, they'll be sure to come!

Here's some simple ideas to spook up your SU outlets:

CATERING CAPERS

Frightening Food and Drinks

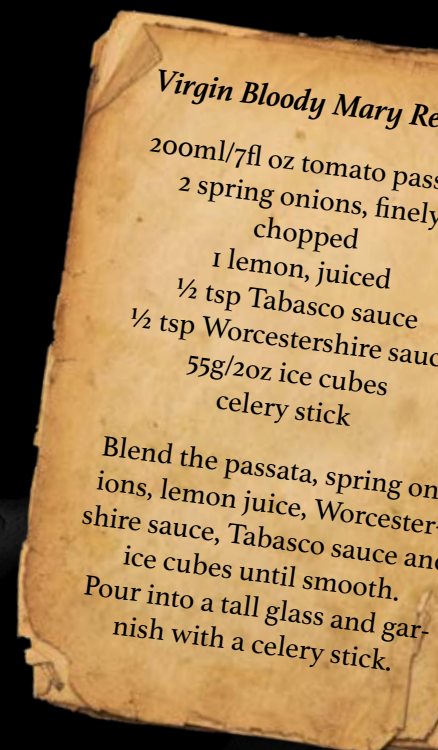
Sell charcoal-dough pizza slices, severed finger hot-dogs, and monster burgers during peak hours.



Run a "Morning After the Nightmare Before" promotion with a themed breakfast menu and Virgin Bloody Marys.

Pumpkin Spice Variations

Expand beyond lattes into pumpkin spice iced coffees, milkshakes, or loaded fries.



rtunity!

LICENSED

Signature Cocktails and Jelly Shots

Serve colourful drinks with scary garnishes. Give your students the wobbles by serving the strawberry, sour apple and black cherry Hard Jellys as slime shots or make the classic Zombie cocktail your signature drink of the evening. **Funkin Zombie mixer is on offer until 31 October.**

If you're in the Cocktail Programme, this could be a great opportunity to earn some extra points!

Glow-in-the-Dark Fancy Dress Party

Hand out neon face paints at the door and award a prize such as SU club night tickets for the best-dressed.

Trick or Treat

Run games on the bar where students have to answer a question or participate in a Halloween challenge to win a drink.

Carving Corner

Provide pumpkins and carving tools for a small fee or with a drink purchase and offer a prize for the best creation. See our previously published [article](#) on how to repurpose your pumpkins.

Vampire's Kiss Recipe

Vodka
Raspberry liqueur
Cranberry juice
Splash of lime

Garnish with a lychee 'eyeball'
stuffed with a blueberry.

Witch's Brew Recipe

Midori melon liqueur
Vodka
Lemonade
Lemon juice

Garnish with a black sugar rim
or gummy worms.

NEW

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363767

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*NO data ending 12 m/y PC, 18th April 2024 - Total Protein Market

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Horror Movie Marathon

If you have a screen, stream classic horror films with free popcorn.

Phantom Photos

Create a haunted photo space for students to tag your SU on socials with spooky cocktails in hand.

RETAIL

Spooky Meal Deals

If margins allow and if you have Monster Munch as part of your Meal Deal, run a "Monster Meal Deal" at a slight discount.

Pre-drink Bundles

If you sell alcohol, package popular ranges together as part of a Halloween deal.

Pick 'n' Mix

Set up a retro, self-serve spooky sweet station serving sweets like pumpkin jellies, false teeth, fizzy worms and bubble gum eye balls.

Themed Merch

Sell limited-edition, Halloween-themed university hoodies or t-shirts.

Whatever you've got planned, don't forget to use your social channels to promote your event both before and after the big day. Halloween is one of the most visually engaging and shareable occasions in the social media calendar, with costumes, decorations and themed experiences generating huge engagement.

Instagram and TikTok users share their spooky celebrations, costume ideas and event highlights so building up excitement prior to your event then keeping the momentum going after will increase reach and engagement but could generate repeat visits.



SPOTLIGHT ON: MOONSHINE VODKA

During the 1920s, the prohibition of alcohol came into effect across the USA, making the manufacture and sale of alcohol illegal. Prosperity was on the rise and so was social change, with social change being fuelled by one thing; Moonshine.

Moonshine was home-brewed alcohol produced illegally under the cover of darkness and guided by the light of the moon.

Moonshine Vodka was produced in honour of the prohibition story and the journey to modern life as we know it today.

A premium spirit produced in the UK, Moonshine vodka is made with 100% French wheat grain spirit.

ABV: 37.5%

Availability: 70cl & 1.5L

**Email Adam.alexander@lwc-drinks.co.uk
for more information.**



**MOONSHINE
VODKA**



remember when it was just juice? (yeh neither do we)

the innocent meal deal range has grown a lot since last term



innocent is the no.1 smoothie brand in the market

source: Nielsen GTC, total market, total chilled smoothies (IC & FC) value sales, latest 52 weeks, data to 30.01.2026

core smoothies - 8 x 250ml
strawberry banana - **142005**
mango passionfruit - **142006**



fruit for the thirsty

a refreshing mix of water and fruit

juicy water - 12 x 420ml
raspberry blackcurrant - **350973**



pure juiced fruit and nothing else

core juice - 8 x 330ml
innocent orange juice with bits - **211286**
innocent smooth orange juice - **211287**
innocent apple juice - **250970**
innocent apple & mango juice - **261316**
innocent apple & raspberry juice - **261315**



innocent plus is the biggest & best performing functional NFC range in the market

source: Nielsen GTC, total market, IC & FC Not From Concentrate juice, value sales & uROS (wtd), 52 weeks data to 30.01.2026

innocent plus - 8 x 330ml
blue bolt - **205913**
berry set go - **328744**



a lot in a little

innocent shots are a juicy blend of fruit, veg and vitamins that really pack a punch

shots - 8 x 80ml
ginger & turmeric - **361634**
gut health - **361635**

since 2004 we've donated **£10 million** to the innocent foundation, helping more than 850,000 hungry people



we give 10% of our profits to charity

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That basically means we're officially using business as a force for good, and we intend to keep it that way.



if you need any help getting the right range, drop us an email at mazvydas.koveckis@innocentdrinks.co.uk

Stock the Most Loved Drinks Brand for Young Consumers*



KOPPARBERG

*Source: Savanta, Most Loved Alcohol Brands 2025

be [drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

TENDERS:

Trends, value & market

The next round of tenders will focus on three key categories: catering hot beverages, retail snacking, and licensed PPS and RTDs. Initial discussions are already underway with an aim to have all tenders completed by June 2027.

Take a look at the background to each category, along with the key trends and considerations that help shape our approach.

HOT BEVERAGES



As student habits continue to evolve, the beverages category presents significant opportunities for growth. The category experienced growth over the past year, with sales increasing by 13% and total SKUs rising by 15%. Much of this growth has been driven by the introduction of syrups, which is helping SUs to enhance menus and choice.

The traditional hot coffee format is being challenged from multiple angles. New drinks within a coffee shop format i.e. “instagrammable” drinks such as Matcha have gripped the attention of Gen Z. This age group is also looking to alternative sources for their caffeine intake with wellness and clean energy drinks growing in demand.



Market insight

We've seen continuous organic growth from Cafeology, whose commitment to sustainability is embedded throughout its supply chain. It's clear from sales analysis that having too many choices can dilute sales and the support we can offer so we've decided to streamline our hot beverage partnerships so we can continue to deliver innovation, broaden ranges and provide the right level of support for students' unions.

Based on current trends, we're looking at two emerging areas: soft clubbing / third spaces and functional drinks.

Soft clubbing / third spaces

Many students' unions have fantastic coffee shops with untapped potential. The sober curious generation are looking for other ways to connect outside of pubs and clubs. Lumina intelligence highlights coffee shops are becoming third spaces for wellness and work with "soft clubbing" on the rise. This format works really well in cool coffee shop spaces with morning or daytime clubbing sessions replacing the lagers with lattes.

Functional drinks

Students are more educated on health and wellbeing than ever before. They look for more than just a daily caffeine fix from coffee. Brands are incorporating adaptogens (stress relief) nootropics (improved focus) probiotics (gut health) and collagen into their hot and cold beverages.

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RETAIL SNACKING

Proximity to supermarkets, rising costs and ever-changing consumer demands place a huge pressure on SU retail outlets to stay competitive. With this in mind, it's vital we identify and react to trends.

Current data shows healthy snacking, premium options and value products are the top triggers for student snack purchasing.

Demand for healthier alternatives such as baked, vegetable, lower fat, cleaner, plant-based and snacks with added health benefits e.g. high protein, high fibre, probiotic, cognitive support continues to grow.

Products that feel indulgent and offer something unique e.g. artisan, handmade, unique flavours and ingredients, alternative textures and limited edition ranges appeal to the student market.

And, as expected, cost of living pressures are driving volume in own-brand snacking and entry price point products.

LICENSED PPS & RTD

The premium packaged spirits (PPS) and ready-to-drink (RTD) category has delivered 3% year-on-year growth. The cocktail category grew by an impressive 323%, driven by the popularity of brands such as BuzzBallz and White Claw.

This growth reflects changing student drinking habits. Today's students are looking for drinks with lower sugar content, fewer calories and greater transparency around alcohol strength. RTD formats offer a convenient way for students to manage their intake, with this information clearly displayed on every can or bottle.

While the category's rapid growth is encouraging, it's important to recognise that much of this success has been trend-led and it's key we look for a "new Buzzballz" to protect the category growth when the demand slows.

As we work through the tender process, there's also other key trends that will steer decisions:

More intentional drinking occasions

Drinking habits across the UK are becoming more selective, with consumers taking a more intentional approach to when and what they drink. Rather than frequent drinking, more and more students are choosing fewer but more meaningful social experiences.

When they do socialise, consumers are staying longer, trading up and placing a greater emphasis on quality. Premium ingredients, elevated serves and well-crafted drinks are becoming increasingly important, with quality taking precedence over quantity. This trend is driving demand for products with premium spirit bases and more sophisticated flavour profiles.

Functional and flavour-led innovation

Health and wellbeing has spilled into the alcohol space, influencing everything from ingredients to flavour profiles. Functional ingredients, including fermented products, probiotics, herbs and botanicals, are gaining traction as students look for drinks that offer more complex flavour experiences. We also expect to see flavours such as seaweed, nori and fermented citrus becoming part of the ingredients with lighter, more refreshing serves such as low-ABV spritzers growing in appeal.

Continued growth of no and low

Unlike the wider UK market, the student sector continues to see strong growth in no and low alcohol purchasing. Research indicates 40% of students are actively reducing their alcohol intake, while 10% choose not to drink alcohol at all.

They are looking for premium serves that don't feel like a compromise to alcoholic alternatives, with attractive glassware, quality garnishes and elevated presentation playing an important role.

Despite growing demand, the category remains under-represented. With no and low alcohol sales increasing by 25% last year and continuing to grow strongly this year, expanding the range and visibility of these products will be a key consideration during the tender process.

Across all the categories, sustainability, ethical sourcing and changing consumer expectations will remain at the forefront of all decisions made. We'll be discussing each stage with the Enterprise Working Group and NUS Services Board, and we'll also hold webinars for all commercial staff to attend so we capture your views and ensure we represent your needs.



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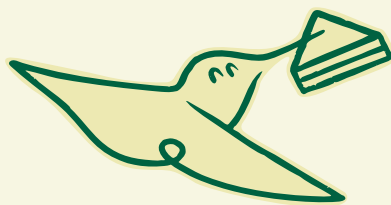
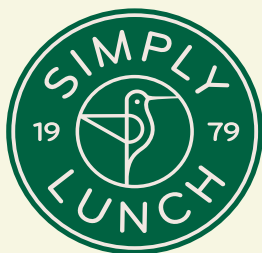
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