

Amazon Not by Default Policy

1.0 Purpose

From the 1st of September 2022 through till the 29th of September 2023, Herts SU spent £13,305.45 on Amazon. The highly regarded publication the Ethical Consumer have been calling for an Amazon boycott since 2012, based on their tax avoidance, workers rights' records and environmental impact. As part of our commitment to improving our environmental impact, we are working to reduce our reliance and spending on Amazon. We are looking to make a cultural shift where Amazon is a last resort, opposed to a first choice!

2.0 Societies

2.1 Grant funding process

- If societies request items from Amazon the team will look to source the item elsewhere. We will prioritise buying the item second hand from sites such as ebay. If the item is unavailable second hand, we will use ethical consumer to see if the item can be sourced from a company deemed more ethical.
- We will respond to the grant funding application suggesting the alternative item that we have sourced.
- The final decision will be made by the society.

2.2 Reimbursements

- Societies will continue to be reimbursed for items purchased from Amazon, but encouraged to source items elsewhere. This is embedded in the 2024/25 committee training and general communications (e.g newsletter).

2.2 Purchase Requests

- If societies request items from Amazon the team will look to source the item elsewhere. We will prioritise buying the item second hand from sites such as ebay. If the item is unavailable second hand, we will use ethical consumer to see if the item can be sourced from a company deemed more ethical.
- We will respond to the purchase request suggesting the alternative item that we have sourced.
- The final decision will be made by the society.

3.0 Process for freebies and decorations:

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- When the Students' Union are looking to purchase freebies or items from Amazon (or elsewhere), the following steps will be taken:

- Is this item necessary? How often can this be used/ reused? Is it worth the environmental impact - if so, what is the rationale?
- Is there a resource to look for the items elsewhere? (i.e student staff task).
- Can this be sourced from a company with a better environmental and human rights record?
- Can this be sourced more locally or using more sustainable materials?

4.0 Process for office items:

- Staff (or student staff) to search for a more ethical company to purchase the item from using ethical consumer. Some examples of alternative affordable shops to use could be
 - ASDA, Tesco or B&M for stationary, snacks, gift wrapping and household items.
 - Superdrug, boots, Lush or a supermarket for toiletries.

5.0 Deliveries:

5.1 In an instance where Amazon must be used, consider the following

- Is this a regular purchase that I can buy in bulk?
- Are other teams also going to need this item? Approach them to see if they would like you to also add more to cover their team.

6.0 Resources

6.1 Ethical Consumer: The Students' Union has access to the ethical consumer company profiles, which should be consulted to make a more informed purchase.

6.2 To involve our Student Staff: This could become a regular student staff job.

7.0 Compliance and Monitoring

7.1 All department plans must reference our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint and expenditure on sites such as Amazon. A number of our students work for Amazon warehouse and their unethical working practices is something we cannot support.

7.2 Where possible, we should use small businesses and managers should commit to this. They are expected to question when purchases are made in their teams from an unethical supplier.

7.3 Amazon expenditure will be published quarterly at staff meetings and a reduction of 10% must be seen.

7.4 SLT reserve the right to cancel Amazon accounts if it is seen that there has been deliberate expenditure without advanced planning.