



Students' Union or Association name: Liverpool Guild of Students

Case Study Title: Guild Street Swap Shop

Please introduce your case study (2-3 sentences):

This is a brief overview of your case study.

Following on from the Guild's ever popular Swap Shops held three times a semester, a proposal was made following a student officer campaign to trial a more frequent swap shop held three times a week in a more permanent, visible place. This mirrors the activities of other students' unions such as those at Sheffield and Leeds, which have permanent swap shop locations within their Union building. The swap shop launched in Sustainability Week on 25th February and will run across the Semester.

Context

Why was this work needed or how did it come about?

The Guild's Sustainability Team have previously run swap shops approximately once a month across term time. Guild Vice President Holly campaigned strongly for improved sustainability practices across the Guild, including the launch of a more permanent swap shop. As a result, it was agreed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that a weekly swap shop would be trialled. It is also hoped that having a more frequent swap shop would reduce the amount of fast fashion bought by students and encourage a more circular economy model when it comes to clothing and fashion.

A summary of your achievements

This should reflect your aims and cover any positive impacts and outcomes. This is where you can include any specific objectives you have achieved and any key stats and figures.

The objectives of the project were as follows:

- In early February, recruit a minimum of 12 volunteers to staff the swap shop, Tues to Thurs 10am - 3pm.
- Launch the Swap Shop officially during Sustainability Week (24th-28th February) following a trial week to assess ways of working of the volunteers.
- Assess popularity and workings of the swap shop over the summer and incorporate lessons learned going forward to inform the possible development of a permanent swap shop space within the Guild.

Over the course of the project so far, we have recruited and trained 20 volunteers. The swap shop had a soft launch w/c 17th February with a more publicised official launch coinciding with sustainability week on 25th February.

Over 270 items have been donated to the swap shop so far. These are donations that have been directly recorded by the volunteers during the swap shop. Students can also donate items at reception where there is a permanent donation bin. 234 items have been swapped over February and March. In comparison, during the Guild's Black Friday swap shop on 29th November 2024, 243 items were donated and 193 were swapped.

Of the 20 volunteers trained, 12 volunteered for over 7 hours. As such this can be recorded on their [Higher Education Achievement Report](#) which goes alongside their University transcript when they graduate.

Given that we have not yet reached the end of the Semester, we have yet to fully assess the popularity of the swap shop.

Evaluating the impact of your project

How can you evidence the success of your work, and what monitoring and evaluation did you undertake? Qualitative data is as useful as quantitative data so you can add anecdotal evidence here on the overall result of your project. Are there any things that resulted from the project that you can't easily measure? What did students, colleagues or senior managers think about the project?

Quantitatively, we can look to the number of clothes donated and swapped as measures of success for the swap shop (see above). Additionally, looking at the data we can see whether certain days of the week were more popular than others with students donating / swapping items, which could impact staffing levels / days when the swap shop will be open. We can also look at the number of volunteers recruited and trained as well as the number that achieved HEAR accreditation.

Qualitatively, towards the end of the Semester, a survey will be sent out to the volunteers to see how they found the experience of volunteering at the swap shop and whether any improvements can be made. It will be more difficult to assess whether having the swap shop will have impacted the purchasing behaviour of students; however, this may be something we can assess using interactions with a social media post.

Anecdotally, it has been noted by the Sustainability Manager that having swap shop shifts starting at 9.30am with the swap shop opening at 10am may be too early as there is little footfall in the Guild building at this time. Also, the length of shifts being 3 hours may mean that not all students that want to get involved can given their timetables.

All this data will feed into an overall report for SLT produced over the summer that will assess the swap shop to see whether it will continue in the current format and location.

Challenges and Opportunities

What were the barriers (if any) to success and how did you overcome these? Has the project raised any opportunities? If so, how does your team plan to take advantage of them? This is an ideal place to make reference to any unexpected issues or barriers that may have come up. If your plan didn't progress as planned, please explain why and what you did instead.

After initial discussions with the Guild's SLT about the swap shop, it was emphasized that they were keen to ensure the space it was in was still accessible as organisations / companies / the University can hire the space which generates revenue for the Guild. As a result, everything included in the swap shop had to be easily moved and stored elsewhere when it wasn't running and commercial bookings would take priority. We were able to achieve this as the rails are on wheels and can easily be moved into a storage space. However, storage space is limited in the Guild and it has been noted that the current storage space may not be suitable as a long-term solution. This may also impact student recognition of the swap shop as a more permanent fixture as it is not visible when it isn't open.

The Sustainability Manager created volunteer staffing rotas two weeks in advance of shifts. They would also check at this point whether the space had any external bookings and would rota accordingly. When rotas were sent out, students were asked to confirm whether they could attend the scheduled shifts. Had they not responded they would also be chased via email a week before the shift, with a set deadline. If the volunteers were still not heard from by the deadline, the shift would be offered to all volunteers. There were instances of volunteers not turning up to shifts without prior warning. If one volunteer didn't attend, it was assessed whether student staff or the Sustainability Team could cover. If both volunteers didn't attend, the swap shop would either have to open later or close earlier. This only happened once. Over the summer, it will be assessed whether it would be easier for students to select their own shifts rather than being assigned, although this may result in having no volunteers for some shifts.

This year the Guild also launched its [Gender Expression Fund](#) and information provided to successful applicants mentioned the swap shop. As a result, we are keen to ensure that the swap shop is as inclusive as possible, and items are not classified by gender. Currently they are classified by size however this may change to item type e.g. t-shirts, trousers etc.

Value-added benefits

Please outline any value-added benefits. These are anything that arose from the project that wasn't planned, or any additional benefits outside of your original KPIs and objectives. Examples could be building community bridges, strategic community partnerships, engaging hard to reach students, helping to widen participation in sustainability issues, building a stronger Green Impact community etc.

See above for mention of the Gender Expression Fund.

Societies have been in contact asking if they can use clothes from the swap shop for costumes for drama productions. It's been great to see societies taking the initiative and not relying on bought costumes / new items of clothing. It is hoped that we can continue to link in with societies such as through hosting repair workshops.

Conversations have been had with [Zero Fashion CIC](#); a local CIC that promotes clothes reuse and repair. They also run their own swap shop and have been really supportive in giving tips on how best to run the swap shop, as well as donating items that they don't have use for but that students might. They are also keen to help support with repair sessions, and this is something we will continue to investigate in the future regardless of whether the swap shop is able to continue.

Legacy

Please outline where you hope to take this work next and what the legacy effects will be. For instance, will the work continue? Will the project result in any lasting change? Do you plan to share the results with others or is there scope for others to adopt a similar project? What would your recommendation be to others wishing to carry out a similar project?

We are hoping that this work can continue across the years so that the swap shop can build a bigger identity among students. We are also hoping that it can stay in its current location as it gains a lot of footfall from students walking past who may not otherwise engage with a swap shop. Hopefully this will result in students buying less fast fashion. We also want to build on the possibility of using the space for repairs and as such students can gain new skills and again reduce the need to buy new clothes.

We would also like to link in with University departments to offer swapping spaces for specific items such as scrubs and formal interview wear.

We would be more than happy to share the results of our work with other Students Unions looking to start a swap shop.

Resourcing

How did you resource this work? Please include any estimated costs, resources and staff time that were involved (that you are happy to share)

As the Guild has run swap shops in the past, we had a lot of the materials already that were needed such as rails and clothes hangers. We also had clothing donations left over from previous swap shops.

As the swap shop was part of an officer campaign, any spends came from the officer campaign budget. If the swap shop continues going forward it is likely that any additional costs will be absorbed by the sustainability budget.

Two new donation wheely bins were bought for £111.60

Sign holders for the clothing rails were bought for £45.34

Vegan cupcakes were bought to tie in with the launch for ~£90

Assets were created by the marketing team including posters and vinyl for the donation bins however I don't have an exact cost for these, and they will likely come from the marketing budget.

The Sustainability Manager would induct volunteers and create the rota, however once this was established it was passed on to the Sustainability Admin Assistant.

Photos

Please include a photograph (or photographs) relating to your project - you can provide captions for these in this section.

Instagram Posts:

- https://www.instagram.com/p/DGfuH9osgsH/?img_index=2&igsh=MTBtOGljY3Jua25sbg%3D%3D

- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DGOAMAVM2t0/?igsh=MXQ3bnJjbzUwa3lxag%3D%3D>





FIGURE 1: THE SWAP SHOP SPACE!