

Fairtrade Impact Report 2023 - 2025

Introduction

Queen's University Belfast recognises the importance of Fairtrade and ethical trading, due to the impact these activities can have on worldwide communities. By supporting Fairtrade, the University is supporting enhanced opportunities, better pay and improved working conditions for farmers and suppliers across developing nations.

To ensure Queen's commitment is absolute, we become accredited with Fairtrade status in 2023. As part of the criteria, this report has been created to provide an overview of Fairtrade activities, and an understanding of Fairtrade recognition, within Queen's University Belfast.

Fairtrade Events

A range of events highlighting Fairtrade and focusing on ethical consumption are hosted throughout the year, including during Fairtrade Fortnight.

Fairtrade Fortnight

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight the Student's Union hosted two Fairtrade Coffee Mornings for newly arrived students. Free Fairtrade tea, coffee and buns were made available to recently arrived students – enabling them to form new connections whilst learning about Fairtrade. The coffee mornings took place on Sunday 15th and 22nd September.

A Fairtrade Stall was hosted as part of Fresher's Fair which coincided with Fairtrade Fortnight (9 – 22 September). Students were able to learn about what the University are doing around sustainability, how they can get involved and the benefits of Fairtrade to workers, the environment and them as individuals.



Fairtrade Fortnight and World Fairtrade Day was recognised via an online campaign both via social media and through our internal staff newsletter.



FAIRTRADE

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

Fairtrade Fortnight takes place from **9 to 22 September 2024**. This year, Fairtrade Fortnight is focusing on supporting Fairtrade and purchasing Fairtrade products more regularly.

Staff can get involved in Fairtrade Fortnight in a range of ways.

Ways to get involved

- Within Faculties and Directorates, colleagues are encouraged to **host a Fairtrade Fortnight Coffee Morning**. Send photos of your coffee morning, containing your baked goods, to the Sustainability Team and the best photo will win a Fairtrade hamper. Contact Campus Food and Drink to make sure your tea and coffee supplied are Fairtrade.
- You can **shop a range of Fairtrade items** in Spar and Union Shop (One Elmwood), such as tea bags, coffee, hot chocolate, biscuits, snack bars, chocolate bars and sweets.
- A great selection of [Fairtrade items can be found in your local Co-op](#) and [a range of Fairtrade-inspired recipes can be found here](#).

[Find out more.](#)

[Read less](#)

European Week for Waste Reduction: Repair Cafe

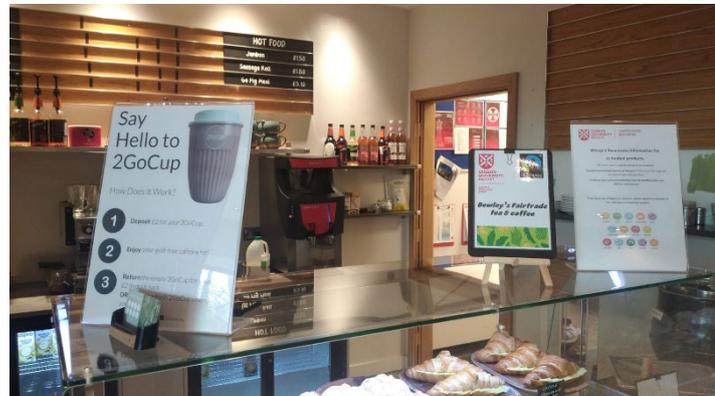
A Repair Café was hosted as part of European Week for Waste Reduction on 18 November 2024. The event focused on sustainable, ethical purchasing and repairing rather than purchasing new. A total of 100 people attended this event.

Fairtrade tea and coffee was provided, with information provided to attendees on the importance of what they purchase and the impacts they as individuals can have.



Fairtrade in Queen's

Efforts have continued to ensure Fairtrade is embedded as far as possible in Queen's University activities. This includes within our catering, and clothing options.



Research and Education

Laura Steele, an academic within the Business School, hosted a 'Focus on Fairtrade' session with her students on the 27 June 2024. They learned about ethical business practices, the Fairtrade Accreditation and how our purchasing practices can have a major impact on society, and the environment.

Over 40 students split into teams to generate ways in which Queen's University can engage on Fairtrade with our student population. Staff from the Business School and the Fairtrade Committee attended the event.



Fairtrade and Queen's University Belfast

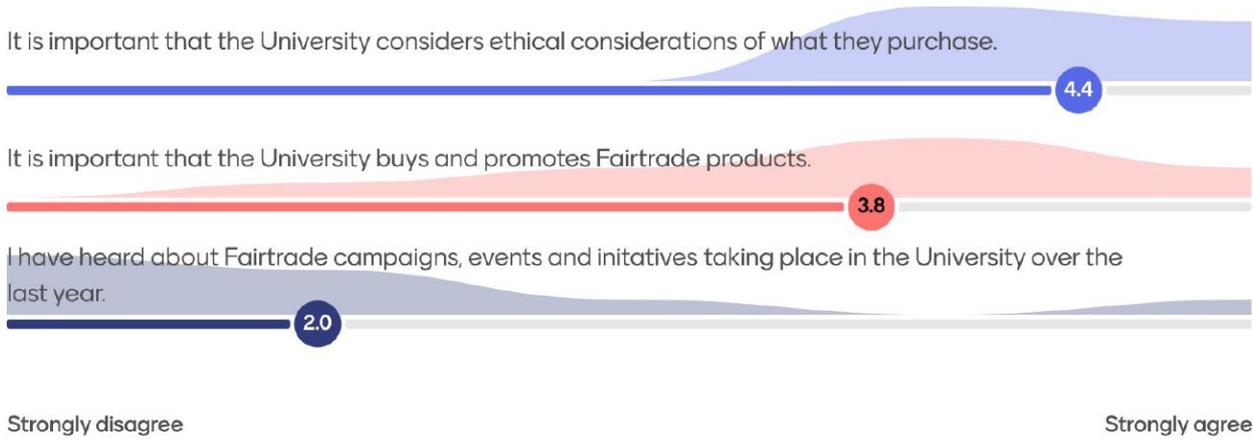
Campus Food and Drink, and The Sustainability Team, hosted a focus group on Friday 4 April 2025 to enable scoping exercises to be undertaken to determine our community's views and knowledge about Fairtrade. The following questions were asked and discussed:

What does ethical purchasing mean to you?

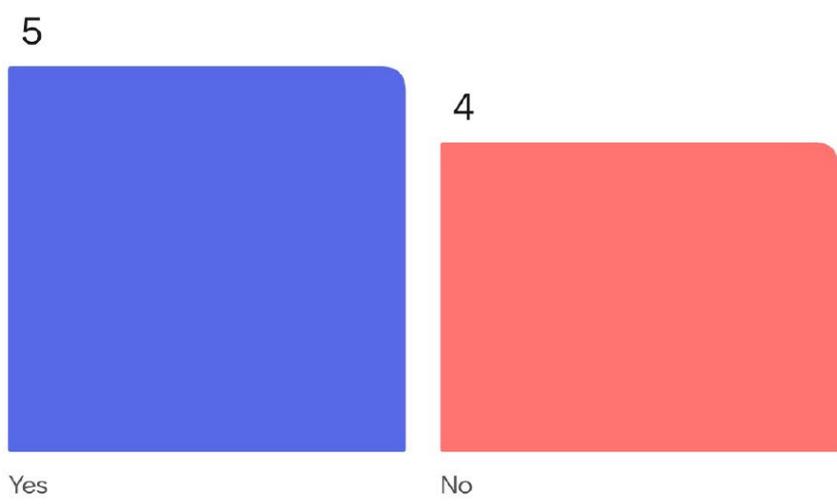


When asked what ethical purchasing meant to them, they talked about fair pay, sustainability and fairness. It was also discussed that as a lifestyle it can be more expensive.

On the scale below indicate if you agree/disagree with the following statements.



Did you know you can purchase Fairtrade products on campus?



On average, attendees strongly agree (4.4/5) that the University should consider ethics when making purchases. They noted the importance of fair pay, environmental legislation and buying local. Interestingly, they stated it was less important (3.5/5) for the University to support Fairtrade – with 2 individuals mentioning the importance of buying local products and supporting local accreditations/businesses.

The steering group also highlighted further work is required around the communication of Fairtrade campaigns and events and products within the University, with most stating (2/5) that they had not heard about Fairtrade activities taking place. Just over half of the participants were aware that you could purchase Fairtrade products.

Discussion around increased opportunities associated with local producers and small businesses also took place. The dialogue around the idea of a local market, both crafts and food, was met favourably by both staff and students.

Looking to the future

The university is committed to moving forward with improving Fairtrade in the following areas:

- Leadership and Strategy
- Campaigning and Influencing
- Procurement
- Retail and Catering
- Research and Curriculum

Progress is reported as a standing agenda item in quarterly Fairtrade Steering Group meetings. This plan will be reviewed every 12 months by members of the steering group.

Appendix 1 (2022/23 Information)

Fairtrade events

Panel Discussion: 'Does Fashion have to Cost the Earth?'

As part of European Week for Waste Reduction, Queen's University Sustainability Team and Belfast City Council hosted a panel discussion that allowed staff, students and the local community to join key leaders in our fashion and sustainable textiles industry to discuss ethical consumption within the fashion industry. Panelists included Dr. Laura Steele from Queen's University School of Management, Kathryn Tims from Wrap, Alison Gault from Ulster University, Becky and Connor from Another World Belfast. In total 25 people attended the event. Further information can be found [here](#).



Fairtrade Fortnight

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight, staff and students were encouraged to host a Fairtrade Coffee Morning, with photos posted on social media entered into a Fairtrade Competition. In total, five coffee mornings took place across the two weeks with two winners chosen – Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (staff entry) and the Graduate School (student entry).



Within Fairtrade Fortnight, SU Volunteer hosted a 'Community Gardening with a Twist' workshop. Fairtrade products were promoted and provided at the event.



Sustainable Cookery Sessions, in partnership with Belfast City Council, took place throughout February and March for students in Elms Accommodation. In total, 23 students attended the cookery demonstrations.

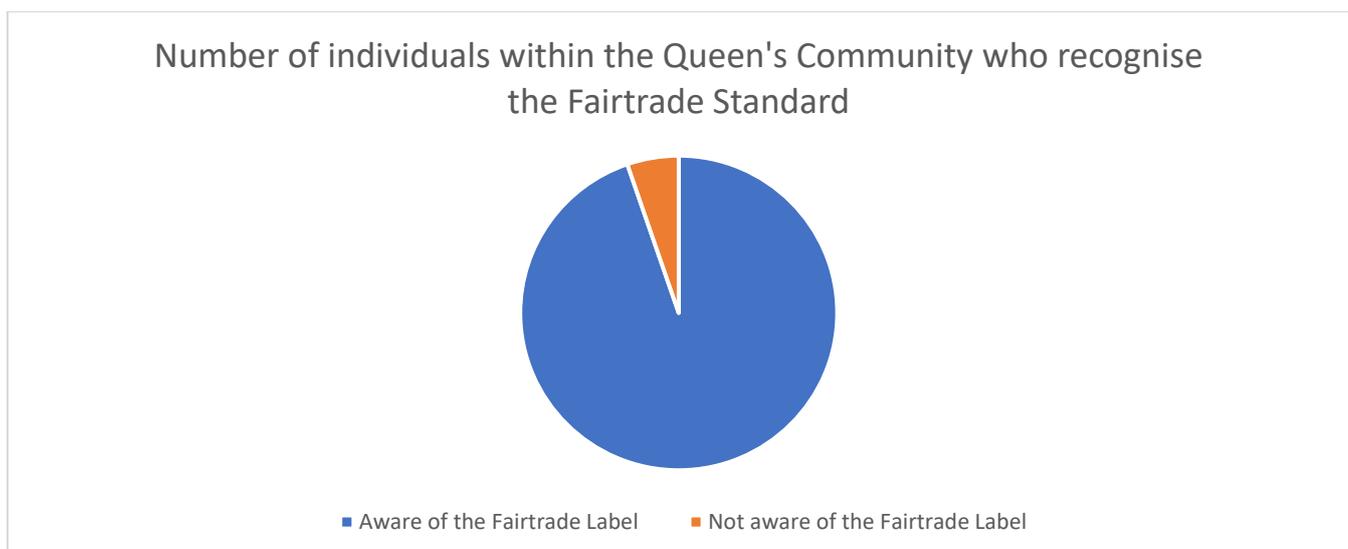


World Fairtrade Day

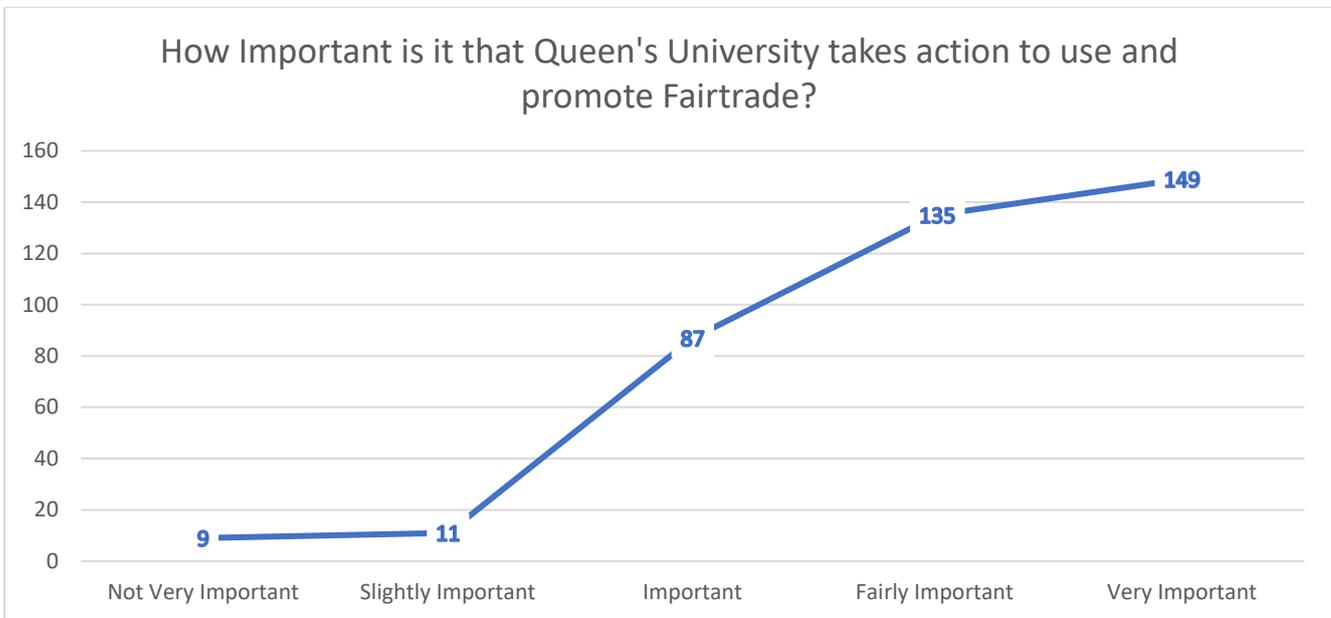
World Fairtrade Day is celebrated in May and will be recognised in Queen's University via a campaign or lunchtime 'Fairtrade, trade justice and ethics talk'.

Recognition of Fairtrade in Queen's University Belfast

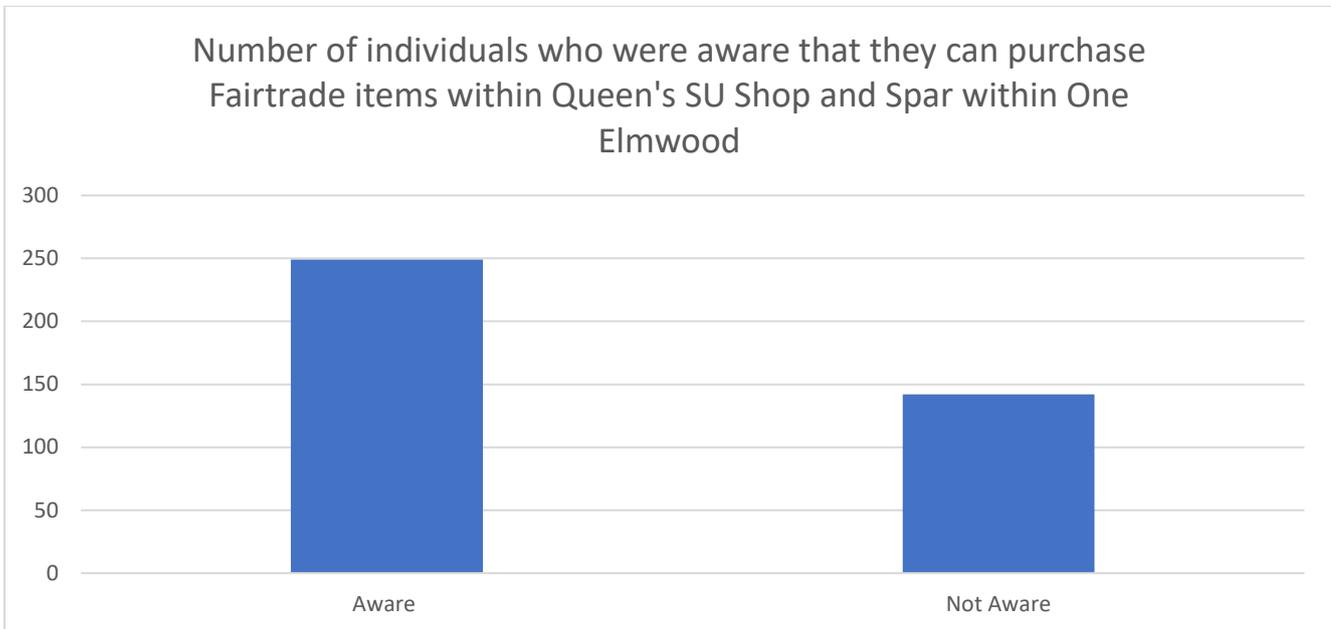
Campus Food and Drink Team within Queen's released a survey in March 2023 to determine if our community recognised and understood the Fairtrade Standard and were aware of the initiatives undertaken within the University around Fairtrade. In total, 391 individuals responded to the survey.



When asked how important it is for the University to take action to use, and promote, Fairtrade 76% of respondents indicated it was important/very important.



Our community were also asked if they were aware that they can purchase Fairtrade items within the SU Shop and Spar within One Elmwood. In total, 64% indicated they were aware the shop sold Fairtrade items.



Overall, survey results were positive and indicate that infrastructure and communications are ensuring our community is aware of Fairtrade. We look to improve these figures year-on-year and measure change via The Campus Food and Drink Survey.

Key actions discussed and agreed following the survey include:

- Enhancing communications around Fairtrade, to ensure staff, students and the local community recognise that Queen's University are supporters of Fairtrade. Communications will be enhanced and included in newsletters, social media and LCD screens.
- Creation of a dedicated Fairtrade stand will be located in the shop location in our One Elmwood building.
- Future Fairtrade events will continue to include both internal and external individuals to promote Fairtrade and ethical consumption.

Research and Education

Key academics are engaged with to ensure trade justice, and ethical consumption, is embedded within modules. Further, the Sustainability Team and Campus Food and Drink work with academics to ensure research opportunities are provided for students within Queen's.

For example, in Queen's Management School discussion in relation to Fairtrade is integrated into a module on Contemporary and Emerging Issues in Management. It is considered within the context of business, human rights, and sustainability. In addition, Dr Laura Steele, a Senior Lecturer within the School, has published a case study and teaching note on ethics and sustainability issues within the global tea industry, which highlights the role of the Fairtrade movement in securing better working conditions on tea estates. Dr Steele produced an accompanying podcast titled ['How do you make a 'good' cup of tea?'](#) in conjunction with Suki Tea, a local Fairtrade certified business.