

UNiDAYS

**British Beauty
Council x
UNiDAYS**

January 2026



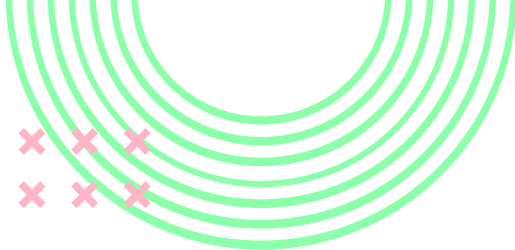
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Methodology

- Quantitative interactive survey sent to UNiDAYS members via The Counsel and boosted by CRM to ensure sample size.



Region: UK

Sample size: 3533 UNiDAYS members

In-field: 5th January 2026 - 7th January 2026

Summary



Summary

- The British Beauty Council is working with UNiDAYS and Sephora on its Student Shadow Board, enabling students to shape the future of beauty.
- The students have created a 'Manifesto for Change', calling brands and businesses to do better when it comes to sustainability.
- We wanted student feedback to learn how we can all make sustainability clearer, more affordable, and easier for Gen Z to access.



Summary

- Sustainability is **important to students** when they are buying beauty products. The majority of students recycle their beauty empties and typically seek out sustainable brands when they shop.
- The majority of students know that most beauty empties can be recycled. However, there is potentially still an education piece to be done for the **26%** who are currently unaware of this. This could include clearer information on beauty products to further increase knowledge levels and recycling behaviours.
- **Price** is by far the biggest barrier to students using more sustainable beauty products. There is typically a desire from students to be more sustainable but there are practical barriers in place – indeed an overwhelming **86%** of students would be encouraged to purchase more sustainable products if there was a discount, loyalty points or store credit in return for doing so.
- Opportunities to increase sustainable behaviours include beauty products being **clear** on how they can be disposed of and having their sustainability **claims verified** by an independent third party.
- Most students think brands do not offer enough refillable products and would use them if they were available.

Sustainability importance

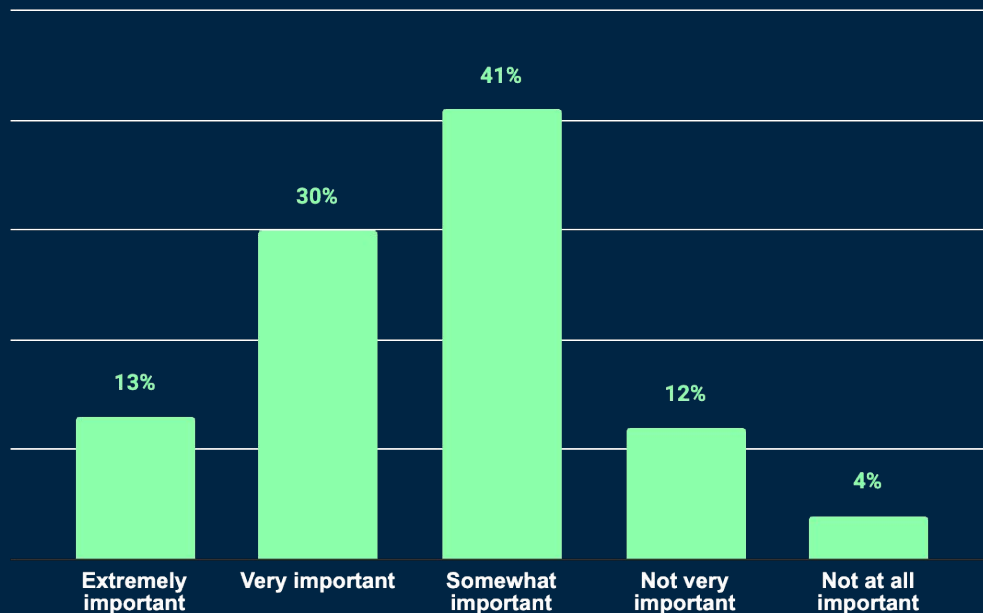


British Beauty Council Sustainability importance

Sustainability is important to students when they are buying beauty products.

How important is sustainability to you when you are buying beauty products?

- Close to half (**43%**) of students feel that it is “extremely” or “very” important to them, whilst another **41%** feel that it is “somewhat” important.
- Just **16%** of students felt that it was not important to them, demonstrating a strong desire from most students to shop sustainably.



Base: All respondents

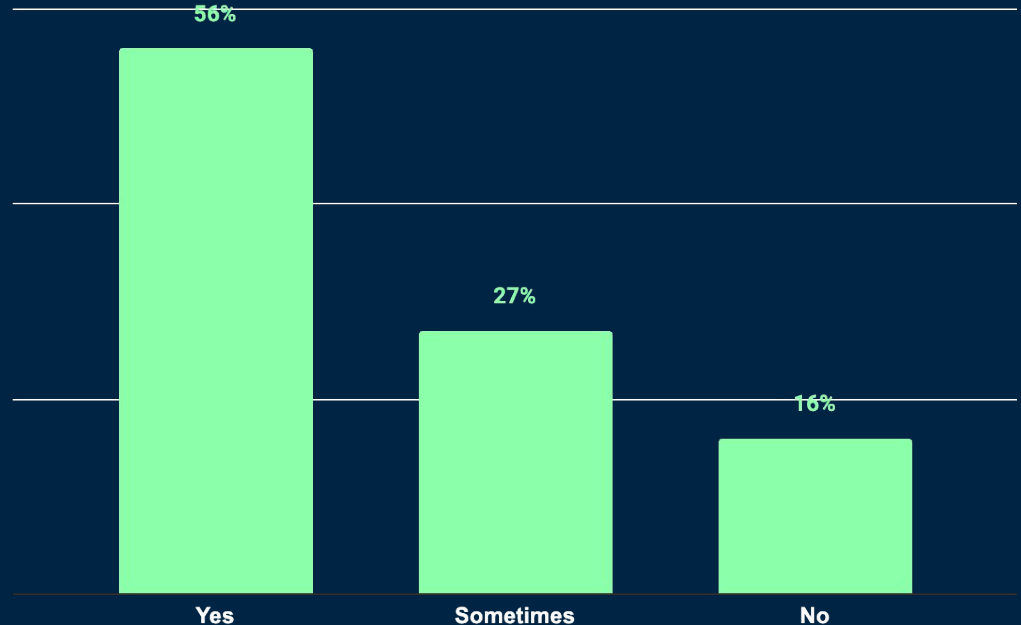
Sustainability behaviours



British Beauty Council Recycling behaviours

Over half of students will always recycle their beauty empties.

Do you currently recycle your hair and beauty (toothpaste, moisturiser, SPF, deodorant, mascara etc) empties?



- A further **27%** of students sometimes recycle them, meaning **84%** of students are always or sometimes recycling their beauty empties.
- Potentially, increasing the awareness levels that most beauty empties can be recycled would support those **16%** of students who are not always recycling them.

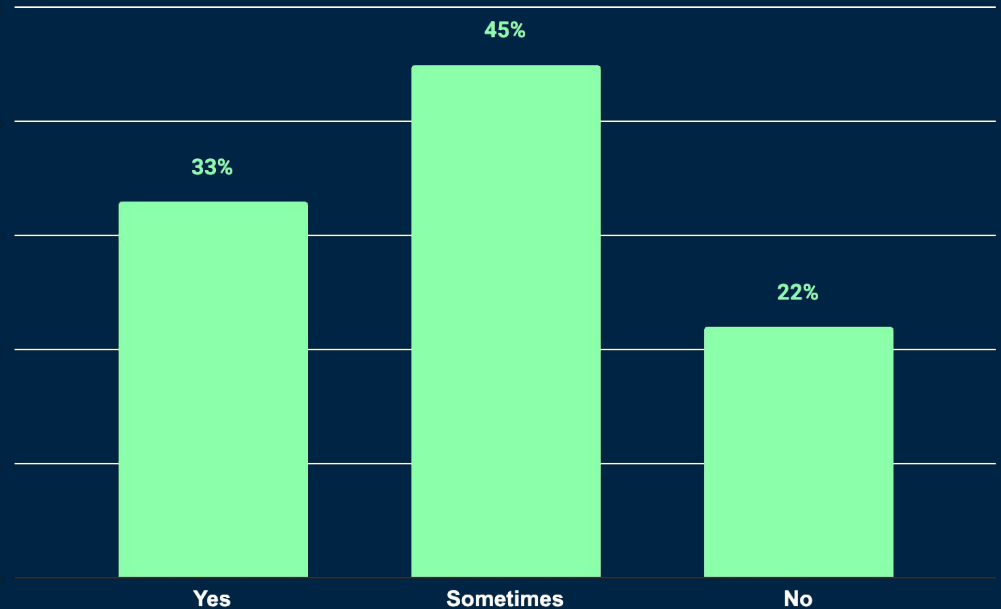
Base: All respondents

British Beauty Council

Beauty brands

Students will typically look for sustainable beauty brands when they shop.

Do you actively seek out sustainable beauty brands when you shop?



→ This includes 1 in 3 students who actively seek out sustainable beauty brands when they shop and close to half (**45%**) who sometimes do.

→ Less than a quarter (**22%**) of students do not seek out sustainable beauty brands when they shop - highlighting an intention from the majority of students to try and shop sustainably.

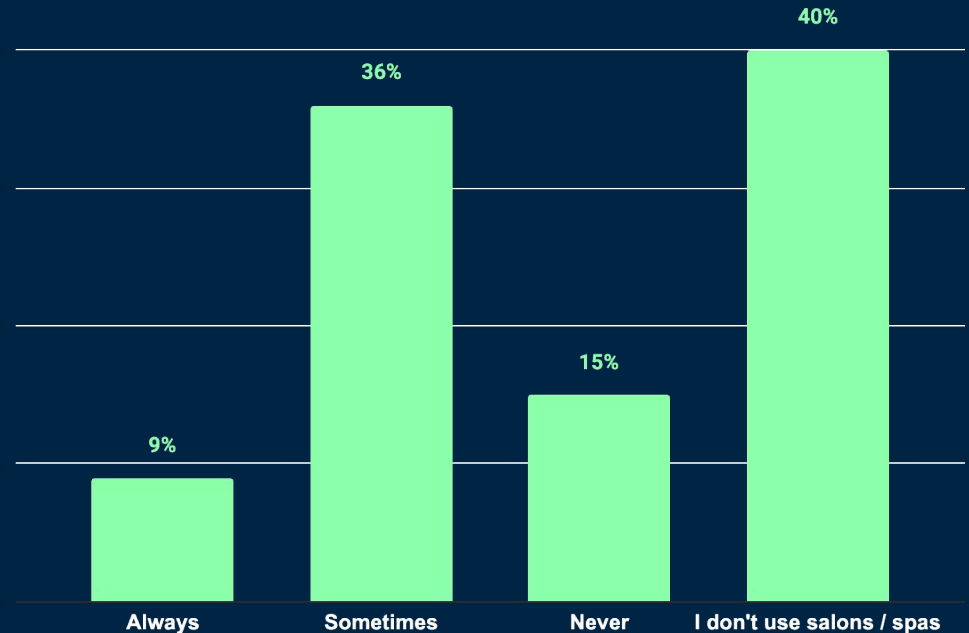
Base: All respondents

British Beauty Council Eco-credentials

There was a more mixed response for students choosing salons or spas based on their eco-credentials.

Do you actively choose a salon or spa based on their eco-credentials (e.g. use of sustainable products, good recycling systems)?

- This could be an area to potentially increase awareness or education amongst students as to the eco-credentials of spas and salons.
- Of those who use spas and salons, the majority sometimes do so based on their eco-credentials but there are currently more who never take this into consideration than always doing so.



Base: All respondents

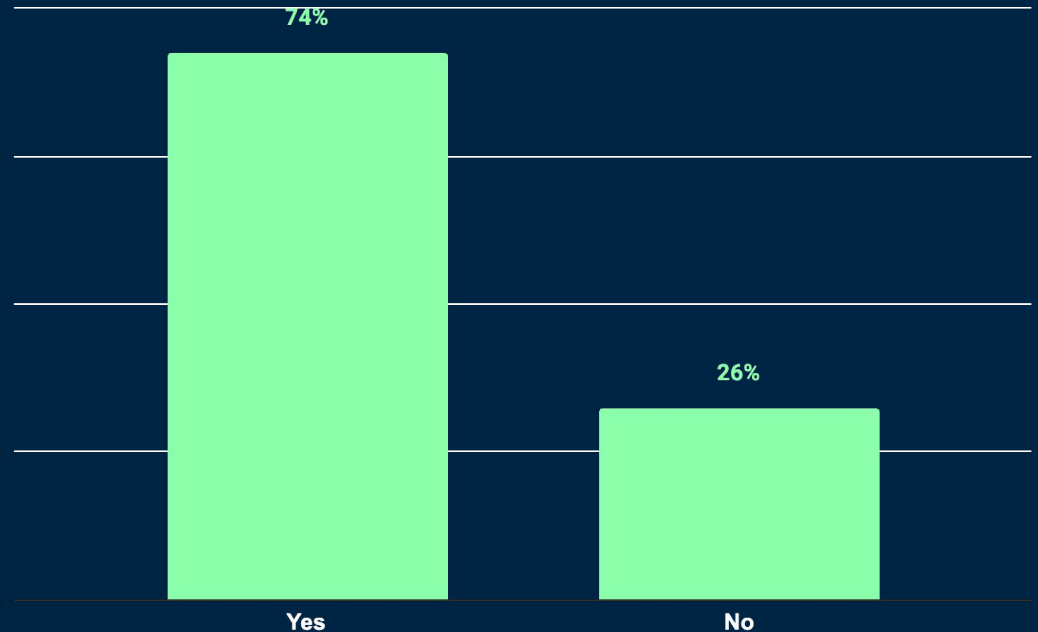
Sustainability knowledge



British Beauty Council Recycling awareness

The majority of students know that most beauty empties can be recycled.

Did you know that most beauty empties can be recycled?



→ However, there is potentially still an education piece to be done for the **26%** who are currently unaware of this to increase knowledge levels.

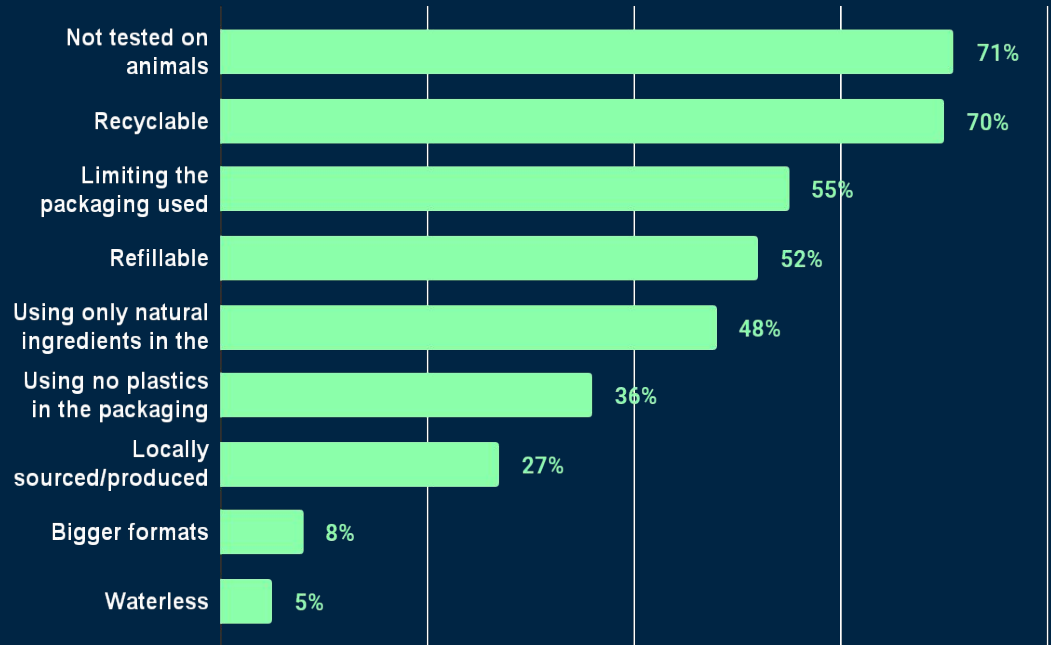
Base: All respondents

British Beauty Council Sustainable brands

Students consider a sustainable beauty brand to be not tested on animals and recyclable.

What constitutes a sustainable beauty brand / product to you? Please select all that apply:

- A product not being tested on animals was selected by **71%** of students, whilst **70%** considered a brand or product would have to be recyclable in order to be sustainable.
- Over half of students also felt that limiting the packaging and having refillable options would make a brand or product sustainable.



Base: All respondents

Discounts

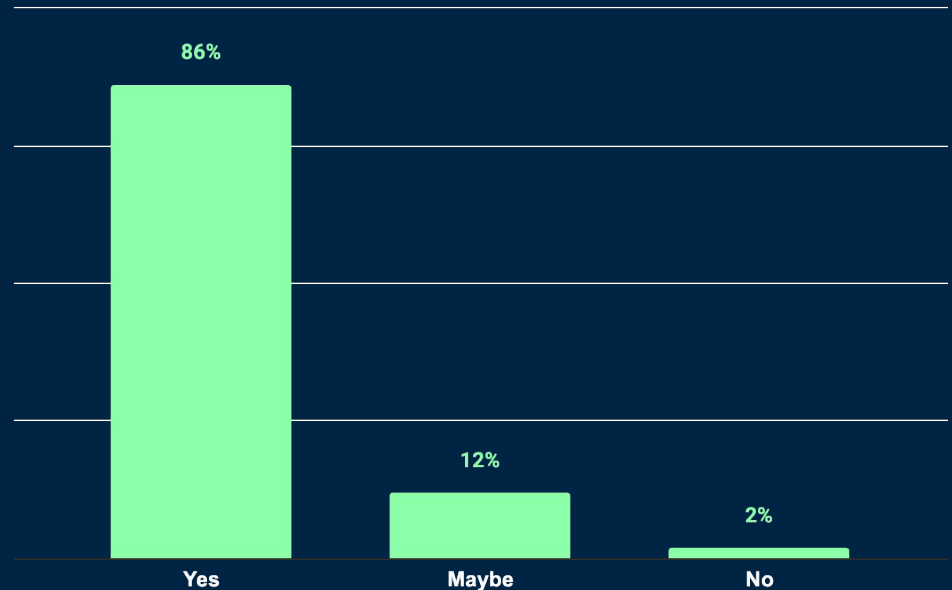


British Beauty Council Recycling discounts

A financial incentive to purchase sustainably would make a significant difference to students.

Would a discount, loyalty points, or store credit for returning empty beauty containers encourage you to purchase more sustainable products?

- An overwhelming **86%** of students would be encouraged to purchase more sustainable products if there was a discount, loyalty points or store credit in return for doing so.
- This suggests that finances challenges are a barrier to shopping sustainably rather than a lack of desire.



Base: All respondents

Barriers

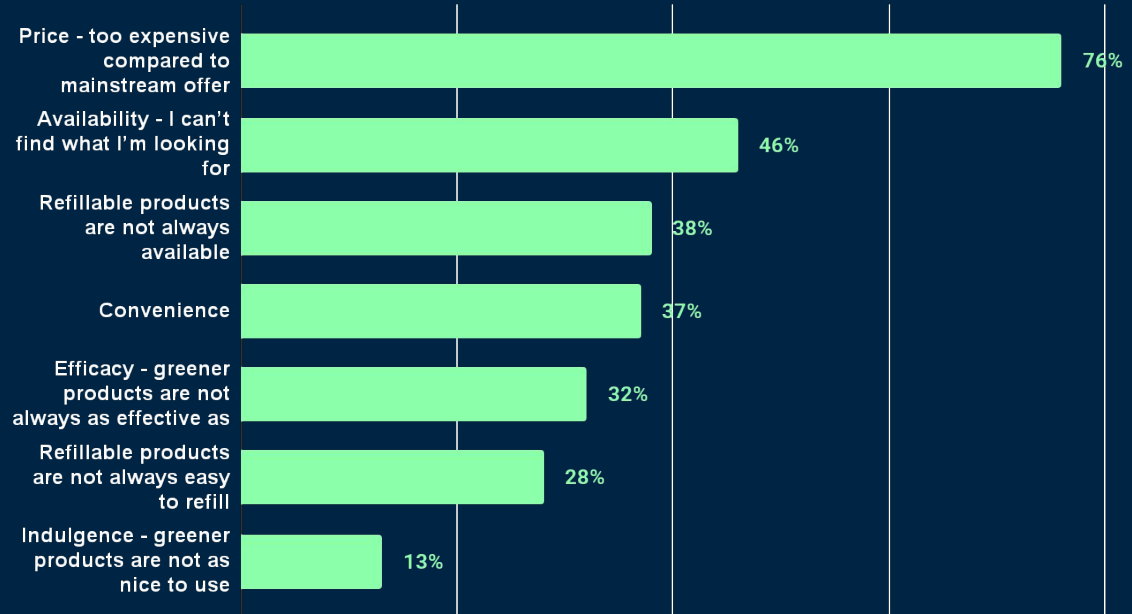


British Beauty Council

Key barriers

Price is the primary barrier to students using more sustainable beauty products.

What are the key barriers to shopping for more sustainable beauty products? Please select all that apply:



→ More than 3 in 4 students (**76%**) selected price as the main barrier to shopping more sustainably.

→ This, again, shows that practical barriers are in place to being sustainable, rather than a lack of interest. This data also tracks with students being far more likely to recycle their beauty empties if there was some kind of financial incentive.

Base: All respondents

Packaging



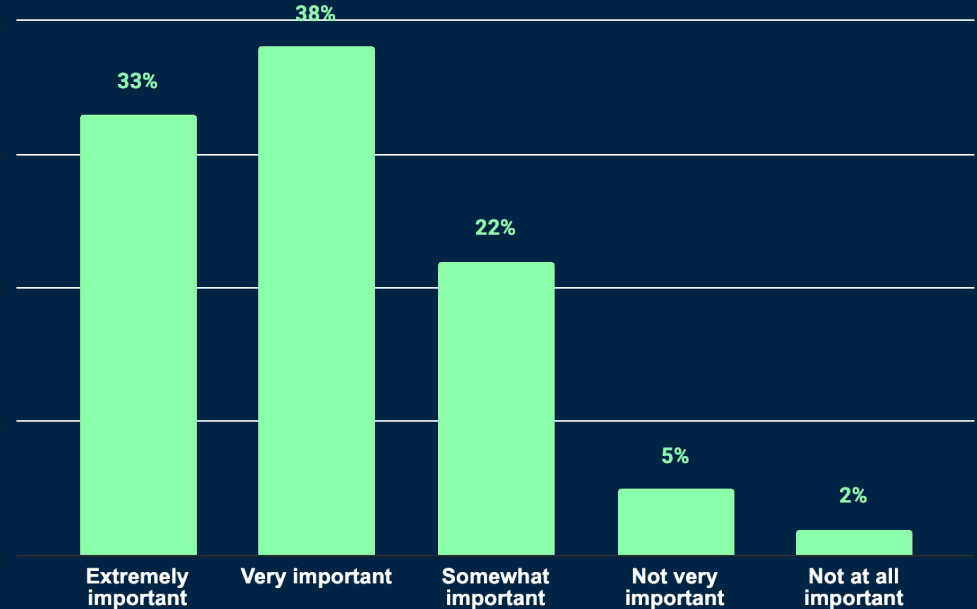
British Beauty Council

Knowledge importance

It is important to students that beauty products are clear on how they can be disposed of.

How important is it to you that the beauty products you buy have clear, standardised labels showing exactly how to recycle or dispose of the packaging?

- This was “extremely” or “very” important to **71%** of students, again highlighting that the desire to act sustainably is there – but it must be **clear and easily understandable** how a product can be recycled or disposed of.
- Clear labelling could support the **26%** who are currently unaware that most beauty empties can be recycled.



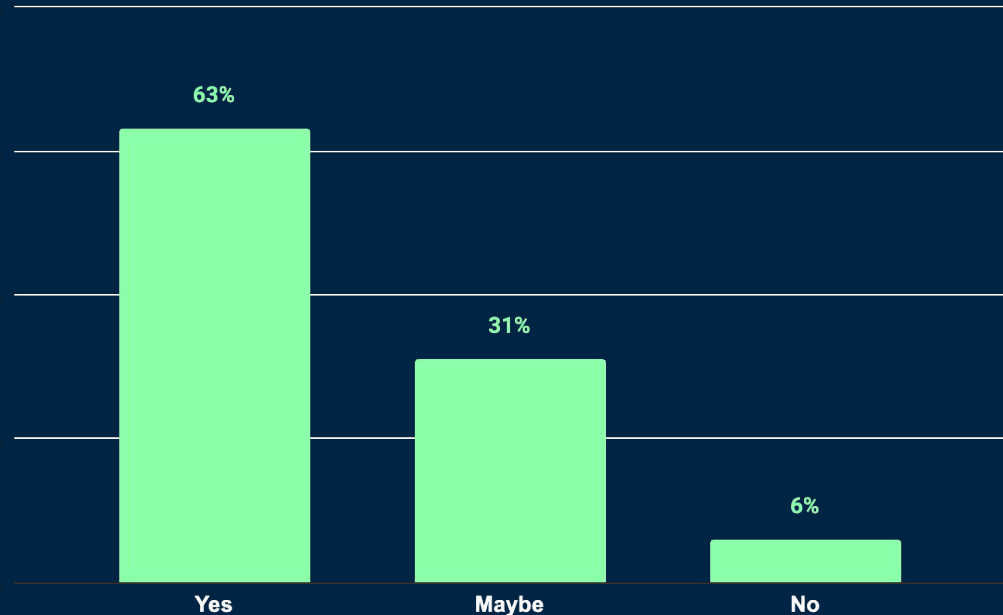
Base: All respondents

British Beauty Council Sustainability claims

Students would be more likely to trust a beauty brand if their sustainability claims were verified.

Would you be more likely to trust a beauty brand if its sustainability claims (e.g., 'natural,' 'eco-friendly') were verified by an independent third party (e.g. Leaping Bunny, COSMOS)?

- Close to two thirds of students (**63%**) said that they would be more likely to trust a beauty brand if their sustainability claims were verified by an independent third party.
- A further **31%** said that they might trust them more, showing that this verification could potentially impact **over 90%** of students.



Base: All respondents

Refillable products



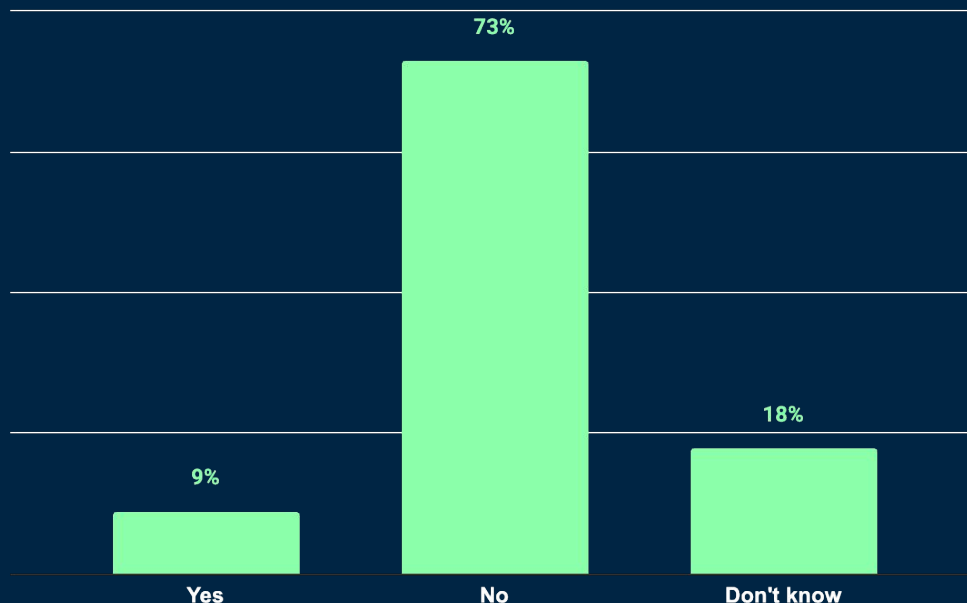
British Beauty Council

Refillable products

Most students think that brands do not offer enough refillable products.

Do you think brands and stores offer enough refillable products?

- Almost three in four students (**73%**) felt that brands and stores do not offer enough refillable products.
- Just **9%** of students feel that there are enough refillable products - this is a clear area to target to improve sustainability efforts.



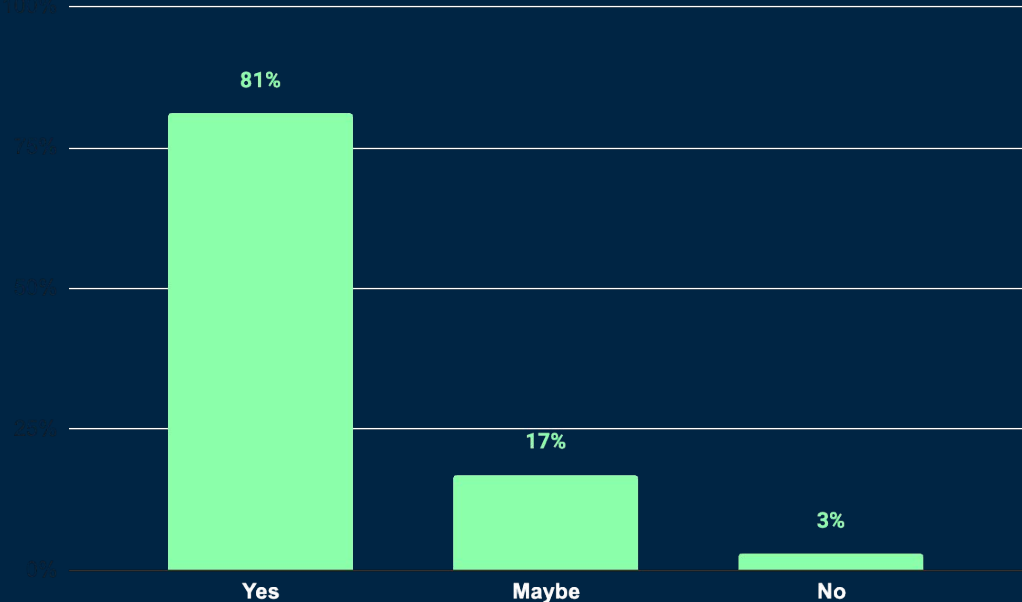
Base: All respondents

British Beauty Council Refill stations

Most students would use refill stations if they were available and accessible.

Would you be willing to refill large, everyday beauty products (like shampoo or cleanser) if a convenient and accessible refill station was available on campus or in a local store?

→ The vast majority of students (**81%**) would refill everyday beauty products if they were available – this shows a high level of desire and a clear opportunity to target.



Base: All respondents

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