

YHA England and Wales: Helping to Fight the Plastic Crisis, One School Group at a Time



Purpose/objectives of the project activity

The aim of the project is to eliminate single use plastic bottles from YHA's hostel network. In October we installed Water Refill stations at 4 sites on a trial basis. These 4 hostels equate to around 20% of our total annual groups trade. This means that every year at these hostels over 100,000 single use plastic bottles are no longer going out of our doors and into customer's hands. Due to the success of the trial, we are planning to install these at a further 13 YHA hostels in England & Wales. The investment from this fund will generate enough savings to roll out to the rest of our network and means we will be single-use plastic bottle free for groups within two years. Once the roll out is fully completed, this project will save over half a million plastic water bottles being distributed every year.

School groups currently use half a million single use plastic water bottles as part of their YHA packed lunches every year and they cost YHA over £60,000. This is a huge number and one that we endeavour to reduce due to the ongoing plastic crisis that the world is currently facing.

YHA have over 120 hostels in a variety of locations including city, coastal and rural. Many of our hostels are located in or near National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty. We can protect the future landscape by removing water bottles as this is one of the items that are regularly littered.

We hope that by removing single use plastic and communicating this change to schools, children will be educated on the benefits of using a re-usable water bottle and will carry this

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HI Sustainability Fund 2018



knowledge forward with them when it comes to making purchasing decisions. Behaviour change is a huge part of tackling the plastic crisis and YHA hopes that educating young people on environmental initiatives will have a positive impact on the environment.

The initial trial is proving successful and therefore we would like to roll out more Water Refill stations.

We are requesting funding for a further 13 Water Refill stations at the following YHA hostels – YHA Swanage, YHA Conwy, YHA Keswick, YHA Grinton Lodge, YHA Penzance, YHA Ravenstor, YHA Sheringham, YHA Ironbridge Coalport, YHA Grasmere Butharlyp Howe, YHA Haworth, YHA Broad Haven, YHA Patterdale and YHA Eyam.

These hostels use in excess of 65,000 single plastic water bottles per year.

YHA will match the £10,000 donation and pledge this amount. This will allow us to equip these 13 hostels with a Water Refill station. The cost of each Water Refill station unit, including marketing materials and installation is £1500 which therefore amounts to £19,500 in total. These hostels currently spend close to £12,000 a year on single-use plastic water bottles.

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The Sustainable Development Goals that the project addresses and how

This project addresses many of the Sustainable Development Goals that are set out.



It promotes good health and well-being by encouraging the public to drink more water as there is a free alternative to purchasing bottled drinks that can often be unhealthy. YHA are also part of the UK National Refill scheme which allows users to find places to refill their bottles using the Refill app. This means that not only school groups and guests can take advantage of the Refill stations, but also members of the general public who wish to use them are able to, introducing YHA to a range of new users who can learn about HI whilst refilling their bottles.

Responsible consumption and production – YHA will look at all areas where we can replace single use plastic with a more environmentally friendly alternative. As we use a high volume of single use plastic water bottles, it seemed the perfect place to start. Using Water Refill stations eliminates the need for single-use plastic water bottles.

It addresses the issue of climate change and climate action. Researchers have found that several greenhouse gases are emitted as common plastics degrade in the environment. Due to the sheer volume of plastic waste in our oceans and in landfill, it's no surprise that this is having a huge impact on our environment. By removing single use plastic water bottles, that are so easily disposed of within minutes of use, from our network we can take a step in the right direction to being more sustainable and environmentally focused.

It's no secret that plastic is in our oceans. This last year more than ever, a spotlight has been shone on a crisis so significant it is likely that irreversible damage has already been done.

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What we can do however is to look at ways that we can eliminate needless single use plastic from our network and educate our guests on the benefits of using a re-usable bottle. This initiative addresses the Sustainable Development Goal – Life Below Water as it recognises the need to dramatically reduce single use plastic consumption in order to prevent these ending up in our oceans.

Following on from this, it also addresses Life on Land for similar reasons. As previously stated, YHA hostels are in all areas of England and Wales – city, coastal, rural etc. Littering in all areas but mainly National Parks is a prominent issue. Whilst our teams regularly conduct litter picks in their areas, removing a source of the litter can only benefit the wider environment.

The project addresses 'Partnership for the Goals'. This is because YHA have partnered with 'Refill' - <https://refill.org.uk/>. Refill works by connecting people who are looking for water with thousands of local business, transport hubs and public spaces where they can Refill for free. Anyone can download the free app to find Refill Stations near them where they can refill for free on the go. Here is a quote from their website which sums up their mission -

'We want to disrupt the current social norm that we need to buy bottled water when 'drinking on the go' and make it normal and easy for people to carry a reusable bottle and refill for free when out & about. The objective of Refill is to stop millions of plastic bottles at source each year and prevent plastic pollution by making reusing a bottle simpler than buying a new one.'

All of our hostels are on the Refill app and as such YHA are incredibly proud to be partnered with this scheme as we share the common goal of hoping to prevent plastic pollution, although at present this requires requesting water from our team.

Please see the link below to find out more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U0nNmcecJk&feature=youtu.be>

Methodology

There are clear parameters for this project which are outlined below. We were able to perfect these after monitoring the use of the 4 trial sites that have Water Refill Stations installed.

- The unit will be in clear sight of customers, not tucked away in rooms that people would not normally go to, or where it can be mistaken for any kind of wash up facility.
- They will be connected to a potable water supply.
- It will be inside the hostel.
- It will be installed at an appropriate height for a ten-year-old to use whilst stood with both feet on the ground. School groups are the focus and priority customer for these units.

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- The installation works themselves will cost no more than £600.

A YHA Regional Building Surveyor will assess the area in the hostels that are in their area and find the most suitable location for the Water Refill Station as per the criteria above. Once the location has been decided, YHA will organise a contractor to undertake the works required for the installation. Our Marketing team will order the splashback decal that is positioned on the unit to advise guests what the intended use is. Each decal will also have the 'Refill' logo on it to tie in with the scheme that YHA are partnered with. Further variations could include the hostelling international logo or web address.

Monitoring plan

YHA will monitor the reduction in each hostel's purchasing quantities of single use plastic bottles. We estimate that this will be in excess of 58,000 bottles annually saved from distribution throughout these 13 hostels. We can track this data via our accurate purchasing statistics that are generated monthly through reports.

We are also able to measure the impact with regular feedback from the groups who stay with us, as well as insights from family and individual guests who would like to make use of the Refill station.

Contribution of the project activity to the ten areas

➤ **Financial Sustainability**

As a result of this project we will save over £11,000 per annum. The funds we save as a result of this project will be reinvested into our work as a leading charity; making travel and adventure accessible to all, particularly those of limited means.

➤ **Protecting Destinations**

YHA hostels are in all areas of England and Wales – city, coastal, rural etc. Littering in all areas but mainly National Parks is a prominent issue. Whilst our teams regularly conduct litter picks in their areas, by removing a source of the litter (plastic water bottles), we are further protecting our destinations.

➤ **Our Hostels**

The project will enable us to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing single use plastics. It is estimated that upon completion of this project, YHA will save around 5.4 tonnes of carbon per year (see calculation below).

➤ **Our Nature**

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YHA will continue to grow and expand this project; our aim is that we will eliminate single use plastics water bottles from all our hostels.

➤ **Our People**

We are proud to say that in 2018 we achieved Investors in People Gold accreditation. This prestigious accreditation is recognised across the world as a mark of excellence.

➤ **Our Communities**

➤ **Mobility**

YHA's bursary fund, Breaks, enables children and families facing challenging lives to access opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable to them. We know that for children and families facing poverty, bereavement, life-limiting illness and other challenging circumstances, a break is just something they couldn't imagine.

Supporting social mobility is our key charitable focus. At YHA we believe all children should have the chance to have big adventures, try new things and learn vital life-skills regardless of their circumstances.

Each year we welcome 8,000 children on a free YHA break and 147,000 children on a school or youth group residential. By ensuring that these children are using refillable water bottles, as opposed to plastic bottles, we hope to create a habit for life.

➤ **Our Friends**

We will educate our guests on the benefit of reducing use of single use plastics through the implementation of our water refill stations. The refill stations themselves will display information about the benefits of reducing plastic bottle use. We will also include the project within our communications to ensure the water refill stations are promoted amongst our guests (see communications plan below). The hostels we are focusing on for this project are some of our most popular locations for school and youth group residential; enabling us to have a long-term impact on their lives through this project.

➤ **Consuming Sustainably**

We have already eliminated plastic straws and stirrers from our hostels, and we are continuing to reduce our single use plastic use through this project. We hope that through this project we will eliminate plastic water bottles from our whole network.

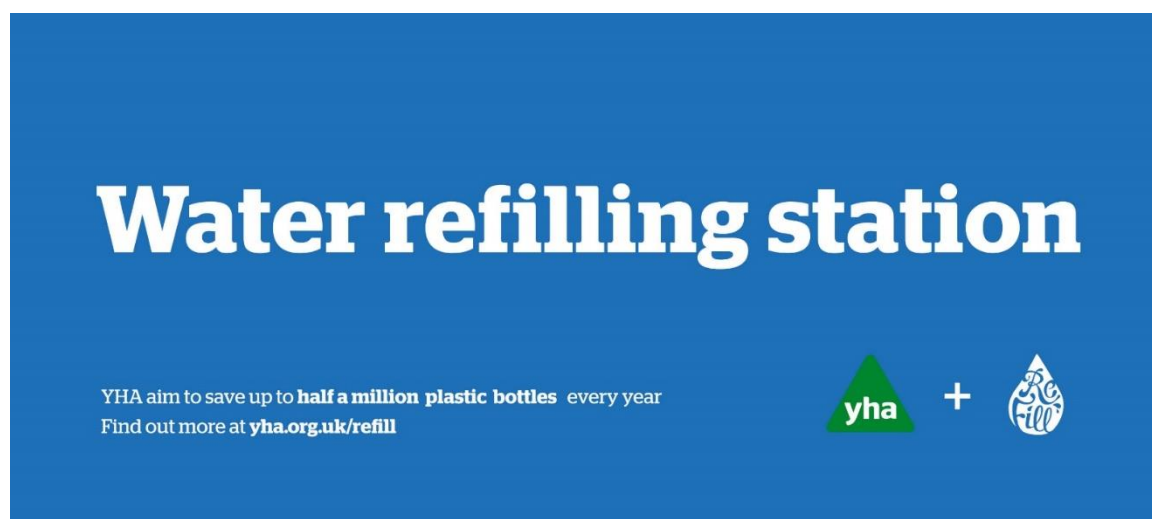
We use sustainable food and beverage suppliers e.g. Creed. Creed has achieved 'zero waste landfill' status for a number of their sites. Creed hold ISO14001 accreditation and continue to invest in environmentally friendly practices

Environment, social and economic impacts

Environmental Impacts

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- The project will reduce the plastic waste and carbon footprint of our hostels (see emission reduction below); our aim is to eliminate single use plastic bottles from our hostel network
- The project will reduce our waste by removing over 65,000 plastic bottles from these 13 hostels each year
- YHA will educate guests on how they can reduce their carbon footprint through a reduction in single use plastic
- Environmentally friendly building materials used in 'water refill station' installation where possible
- Waste from the installation phase will be recycled in accordance of building regulations



**splashboard design*

Economic Impacts

- The water refill project will enable YHA to save on purchasing plastic water bottles (see ROI below). These 13 hostels alone give out over 58,000 plastic water bottles; each bottle costs YHA 20p
- As a result, we will be able to use the funds we save to extend the project across the whole YHA network
- The funds we save will also be reinvested into changing the lives of disadvantaged children and young people

Social impacts

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- Our youth hostels are open to everyone, supporting young people's learning and development and ensuring equity of access for those who are socially disadvantaged or growing up in challenging circumstances are our key objectives. Our projects improve children's physical and mental health, well-being, recreation and life-skills. In particular for those facing poverty, bereavement, disability, life-limiting illness and other challenging life circumstances
- Each year we reach c1.1 million young people. 250,000 young people stay with us (8,000 of whom do so with support from our Breaks Fund), c150,000 are part of 4,100 residential trips taken by schools and youth groups, 7,200 are part of National Citizen Service residential courses
- By ensuring the children that we reach through our work are using environmentally-friendly refillable water bottles, as opposed to single use plastic water bottles, we hope to create a habit for life

Estimation of emission reductions (CO² tonnes). Provide calculations and an estimate of how it will reduce the carbon footprint of the hostel.

* Estimates show that one 500-milliliter (0.53 quarts) plastic bottle of water has a total carbon footprint equal to 82.8 grams (about 3 ounces) of carbon dioxide.

It is estimated that upon completion of this project, YHA will save around 5.4 tonnes of carbon per year. (65,000 x 82.8 grams).

This will have a significant impact on the carbon footprint of each of the 13 hostels and add to our overall carbon reduction as this project continues to be rolled out.

Saved funds and return of investment (ROI). How much do you anticipate saving on bills after completion of the project? Provide calculations and where savings will be invested

Each year, these 13 YHA hostels give out in excess of 58,000 free plastic water bottles with packed lunches, for children on trips and residential. Each water bottle costs YHA 20p to buy.

Last year these plastic water bottles cost YHA £11,712.20.

The project will cost £20,000 to implement. In 5 years, the project will save YHA almost £30,000. In ten years, the project will save us £60,000.

The project will be self-sustaining on completion, therefore the savings generated will be used to invest in refill stations at other sites across YHA's network. A proportion of these funds will also be used to further our work in line with our charitable objective; supporting children facing the most challenging lives.

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Why should the project be funded ahead of others?

The contribution will have a great impact on improving sustainability because:

The 13 hostels we are focusing on for this project have the highest number of plastic water bottle sales, meaning the water refill stations will have a huge impact. These hostels gave out 58,561 free plastic bottles of water through packed lunches in the previous 12 months.

YHA Hostel	No. of Free Water Bottles in Packed Lunches per annum
YHA Swanage	5,393
YHA Conwy	5,173
YHA Keswick	4,472
YHA Grinton Lodge	5,056
YHA Penzance	4,827
YHA Ravenstor	4,635
YHA Sheringham	4,714
YHA Ironbridge - Coalport	4,151
YHA Grasmere Butharlyp Howe	4,253
YHA Haworth	4,421
YHA Broad Haven	3,891
YHA Patterdale	3,867
YHA Eyam	3,708
TOTAL	58,561

At YHA we inspire millions of people to travel each year, and these hostels are amongst our highest profile locations. We will take the opportunity to engage guests with the issue of plastic waste and what they can do as individuals to minimise impact on the environment. There will be information on each of the splashboards detailing how guest can reduce their plastic waste and carbon footprint.

These hostels are also some of our most popular locations for school and youth group residential. Last year at YHA, we welcomed 4,158 schools and youth groups (147,000 children) to one of our life-changing residential. 9,000 children with the most challenging

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lives benefitted from a YHA break. We delivered over 8,000 learning experiences for children and young people. We were also the largest provider of National Citizenship camps, providing over 6,000 opportunities. By encouraging young people to think about how they dispose of single-use plastics; the project will have a long-term sustainable impact.

Outline a sustainable communication plan for guests and stakeholders: how will you ensure guest and stakeholders know you have won the competition and that the project is being implemented? Provide examples.

We will ensure that our guests and stakeholders are aware of the project through a number of means. Firstly, on all of the water points (on the splashboards), we will acknowledge HISF for making the project possible. This will ensure that HISF receives recognition from a large number of YHA's guests. Being in some of our highest profile hostels, this acknowledgement will be seen by approximately 250,000 guests each year. The splashboards will also contain information about the competition and raise awareness about how our guests can reduce their carbon footprint.

The project will also be featured on our website which receives 1.5 million hits each month. We welcome 215,000 unique web visitors each month and have over 40,000 social media followers. HISF will receive recognition for the project through these channels (see web link below).

<https://www.yha.org.uk/food-drink/water-refilling-stations>

The project will also be featured in our quarterly magazine, LiveMore, which has over 330,000 readers.

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