IT DOESN’T STACK UP...
How disposables compare to reusables
The UK festival and live event industry generates a huge volume of waste through the widespread use of disposable plastic and paper cups at events. This waste has a large impact on the environment...

The sheer volume of disposable items used has a massive environmental impact from manufacture and disposal.

Every time a drink is served, at least 1 new cup must be manufactured.

Due to the complexity of sorting disposable cups from mixed waste, most are disposed of to incineration with energy recovery, or to landfill.

Plastic litter is everywhere - 1 in 6 fish in UK waters have ingested plastic.

Landfill and incineration of plastic leaches pollutants into the environment.

More than 90% of the environmental impact of disposable cups is caused by manufacturing them and then only using them once.

85 million
85 attendees at live events in the UK each year

7,000+
7,000+ outdoor events per annum

100+
100+ million plastic cups every year

8.3
8.3 billion tonnes of plastic produced in the last 60 years

500
500 years for plastic to degrade

8m
8m tonnes of plastic dumped in our oceans in 2017

Only
Only 9%

Have been recycled in the last 60 years
THE REUSE EFFECT...

Even when they are recycled, single use cups have a significantly higher environmental impact due to the cumulative impact of manufacturing.

Reusable stainless steel cups

1. Manufacture  
2. Use  
3. Wash
4. Recycle
After 1000+ uses

Reusable plastic cups

1. Manufacture  
2. Use  
3. Wash
4. Discard
5. Downcycle
After 75+ uses

Disposable cups

1. Manufacture  
2. Use  
3. Discard
4. Dispose
5. Downcycle
>65%
<35%
### THE NUMBERS...

The figures stack up from both an environmental and cost perspective...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses recyclable materials</th>
<th>Disposable (Single Use) Paper Cups</th>
<th>Disposable (Single Use) Plastic Cups</th>
<th>Reusable Plastic Cups</th>
<th>Reusable Stainless Steel Cup (Recycled Steel)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recycled</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To landfill or incineration</td>
<td>0-34%</td>
<td>0-34%</td>
<td>&gt;0.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuseable</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>75+</td>
<td>Infinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pint carbon footprint (CO₂e)</td>
<td>17.2g</td>
<td>70.0g</td>
<td>168.0g</td>
<td>178.6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 pint carbon footprint (CO₂e)</td>
<td>1,290.0g</td>
<td>5,250.0g</td>
<td>633.1g</td>
<td>642.3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw material per cup (g)</td>
<td>11.8g</td>
<td>20g</td>
<td>48g</td>
<td>113g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste material per 75 uses (g)</td>
<td>885g</td>
<td>1,500g</td>
<td>0g</td>
<td>0g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Impact per no. uses; Reusable vs disposable

- Includes washing and transport

#### Cost per no. uses; Reusable vs disposable

- With in-house washing

![Graph showing CO₂ emissions and cost comparison](image-url)
THE SOLUTION...

Switching to reusable cups across the UK events industry would not only reduce manufacturing costs, but also the massive environmental impact of disposable cup use.

Each year, for every 1 million reusable event cups in regular use:

- 1,000 tonnes of carbon emissions would be avoided
  - Equivalent to the energy used by an average UK household for 75 years

- 300 tonnes of waste would be saved
  - That’s about the weight of 167 Transit Vans...

A reusable cup has a lower environmental impact than a single use cup after less than 3 uses.

Sources:
- An Introduction To The UK Event Industry In Numbers | https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/blog/uk-event-industry-in-numbers-d800/
- https://plasticoceans.org/the-facts/
- Bath Inventory of Carbon and Energy (ICE) | http://www.ghgprotocol.org/Third-Party-Databases/Bath-ICE
- LCA Calculator | http://www.lcacalculator.com/