

The Ultimate Guide to Non-Alcoholic Socials

Fun. Inclusive. Memorable.

Not all socials need to revolve around alcohol—let's face it, not everyone drinks, and that's completely fine. This guide is packed with creative, inclusive, and enjoyable ideas to help your society to organise events where *everyone* feels welcome. Whether you're after something relaxed, active, or completely out-of-the-box, you'll find inspiration here for alcohol-free socials that everyone can enjoy.

Why Organise Alcohol-Free Events?

Inclusivity: Alcohol-free events ensure that *all* members—whether they don't drink for health, religious, cultural, or personal reasons—feel welcome and included.

Budget-Friendly: Non-alcoholic socials often cost less, so more members can join in without worrying about their wallets.

No Hangovers: Enjoy the fun and still make that early lecture, shift, or training session the next day—no regrets needed.

Variety: Alcohol-free events open up opportunities to try new, creative, and unique activities that stand out from the norm.

Event Ideas: Things to Do Without Alcohol

Food-Themed Socials

- **Potluck Nights:** Ask everyone to bring a dish to share. Pick a theme like 'Around the World', 'Comfort Food', or 'Plant-Based'. It's a great way to enjoy food and try something new.
- **Food Crawls:** Organise a tour of local cafés, food markets, or street food stalls around Norwich Market. It's a fun way to explore Norwich and discover new favourites. [Visit Norwich](#) website has a good list of local food places to visit.
- **Picnic in the Park:** Head to a nearby green space like Earlham Park and encourage everyone to bring a snack or dish to share. Lay out blankets, bring some music, and enjoy a relaxed afternoon outdoors. Norwich City Council has a comprehensive list of parks on their [website](#).
- **International Cuisine Nights:** Pick a country or region and center your social around its cuisine. Order food, cook together, or explore authentic local restaurants. Great for learning about different cultures while sharing a meal.
- **Mocktail Making:** Organise a non-alcoholic cocktail-making session where everyone can try mixing up their own fun and fruity drinks. Add a bit of competition with a prize for the best creation!

- **Brunch Social:** Plan a relaxed brunch meet-up with favourites like pancakes, pastries, and fruit platters. Perfect for a chilled morning or midday get-together.
- **Top Tip** – When planning food-themed socials, always check for dietary requirements and allergies in advance. Providing vegan, gluten-free, or nut-free options ensures everyone can enjoy the event. Clear labelling of dishes is also a simple way to make things easier and more inclusive for everyone!

Film & TV Socials

- **Film Nights:** Host a relaxed screening with a theme like ‘Cult Classics’, ‘Disney Nostalgia’, or ‘Horror Night’. Ask people to bring their own blankets and snacks.
- **TV Marathons:** Pick a popular series and host a binge-watching session. Shows like *The Office*, *Stranger Things*, or *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* work well.

Top Tip – When hosting a film night, it’s important to choose a movie covered under UEASU’s film license. This ensures you’re legally allowed to screen the film to an audience, protecting both your society and the Students’ Union. You can check out the list of licensed films through [Filmbankmedia](#).

Not sticking to licensed films can result in legal issues or fines, so always double-check before your event. Better safe than sorry!

Top Tip – When hosting TV socials, you can show programmes as long as they’re streamed through a public service like BBC iPlayer, ITVX, or Channel 4’s All 4. These platforms are free to access (with a TV license) and can be used for group viewings.

Avoid using personal subscription services like Netflix, Disney+, or Amazon Prime, as their terms of use typically prohibit public screenings. Keeping to public platforms means you can enjoy shows without breaking any rules.

Games and Competitions

- **Board Game Nights:** Bring out classics like Monopoly, Codenames, and Articulate for some low-pressure fun. You can also mix in new games like Exploding Kittens or Ticket to Ride.
- **Video Game Tournaments:** Organise a friendly tournament—games like Mario Kart, Super Smash Bros, or FIFA always go down well.
- **Quizzes:** Host a themed quiz, such as ‘General Knowledge’, ‘Pop Culture’, or ‘How Well Do You Know UEA?’ Add small prizes to keep things competitive.

Top Tip – Did you know UEASU’s bar has a great selection of free board games available to use? Take advantage of this for your games night—there’s no need to spend money or bring your own! From classics like *Jenga* and *Scrabble* to modern favourites, there’s something for everyone to enjoy.

Creative Sessions

- **Craft Evenings:** Try activities like tie-dye, friendship bracelet making, or decorating tote bags. Everyone gets to take something home at the end.
- **Paint and Chat:** Set up an informal art session where everyone can paint or draw while chatting. You don't need to be an artist—it's about having fun.
- **DIY Home Décor:** Make fun, budget-friendly decorations like wall art, macramé hangers, or upcycled plant pots. It's a great way to get creative and spruce up student spaces.
- **Knitting or Crochet Club:** Learn a new skill together by hosting a knitting, crochet, or embroidery session. Great for mindful relaxation and everyone can work at their own pace.
- **Upcycling Workshops:** Encourage sustainability by hosting sessions to upcycle old clothes, jars, or other materials into something new, like reusable bags, planters, or desk organisers.
- **Photography Walks:** Combine creativity with fresh air by exploring campus or nearby nature spots for a photography session. Smartphones are all you need to capture some creative shots.
- **Zine Making:** Create a small handmade magazine (zine) where people can contribute art, poetry, or stories on a specific theme. It's collaborative, unique, and something tangible to share.
- **Collaborative Mural or Canvas:** Set up a large canvas (or wall space, if allowed!) where everyone can add their own artistic touch. It's a great bonding activity and leaves a lasting creative piece.
- **DIY Jewellery Making:** Provide beads, charms, and threads for a jewellery-making workshop. Attendees can design bracelets, necklaces, or keyrings to keep or gift.

Top Tip – Seasonal crafts are a great way to keep things fresh and fun! Tie your creative sessions to the time of year—think pumpkin carving for Halloween, Christmas ornament decorating, or making paper flowers in spring. It's a fun way to celebrate the seasons and give everyone something festive to take home.

Explore Outdoors

- **Walks and Picnics:** Earlham Park, the Norfolk Broads, or the nearby coast are all great spots. Pack some food, enjoy a good walk, and have a picnic.
- **Treasure Hunts:** Organise a scavenger hunt or treasure trail across campus or around Norwich. It's a great way to get people working together.
- **Day Trips:** Plan trips to nearby towns, museums, nature reserves, or local attractions. Norfolk is full of interesting places to explore.

Top Tip – When exploring outdoors, take advantage of local transport options to keep things affordable! For bus travel, check out First Bus's student discounts and cheap fares on their [website](#). If cycling's more your thing, Norwich and Norfolk offer plenty of scenic, safe bike routes. You can also rent bikes through the UEA Sports Cycle Scheme, which provides an easy and low-cost way to get around—check out more details on their [website](#). Whether

you're heading to Earlham Park, the Norfolk Broads, or beyond, getting around is simple and budget-friendly!

Sport and Wellbeing Activities

- **Casual Sports Days:** Organise relaxed games of football, rounders, or ultimate frisbee. Keep it low-pressure and open to all abilities. [The Sportspark](#) also has lots of facilities you can use, like courts to hire.
- **Yoga and Meditation:** Book a session or follow a free online video to run your own. It's perfect for unwinding during busy times.
- **Wellness Walks:** Plan a group mindfulness walk through a nearby park, focusing on relaxing and chatting.

Top Tip – If you're planning an outdoor event on campus, here's what you need to know:

Outdoor Events: If you want to hold a large event in an open space (e.g., sports day, picnic), you'll need permission from the University's Event Permission Group. To apply, complete the Event Permission Form and a risk assessment at least 4-6 weeks in advance. Send the completed documents to openspace.events@uea.ac.uk. Once approved, the SU team will be in touch to provide any further support. If you're looking for a more relaxed venue, consider Eton Park or Earlham Park, both just a short walk from campus.

BBQs: For BBQs, if you're hosting for up to 12 people, you can book easily by completing the form [here](#). For BBQs with more than 12 people, you'll need to complete an Event Permission Form and a risk assessment, and this must come from a SU Club, Society, or UEA Department. Send the form and risk assessment to openspace.events@uea.ac.uk for approval.

Skills and Workshops

- **Skill-Sharing Sessions:** If someone in your society is great at photography, coding, or baking, ask them to run a workshop.
- **Guest Speakers:** Invite professionals, alumni, or lecturers to share their experiences and advice on topics relevant to your members.
- **Language Cafés:** Organise casual sessions to practice languages—great for meeting new people and learning something useful.

Top Tip – If you're looking to invite guest speakers, the University of East Anglia has a wealth of resources to help! You can tap into UEA's alumni network or reach out to the university's departments, who may have contacts or suggestions. Be sure to start planning early, as securing a guest speaker can take time—especially if they have a busy schedule. The more lead time you give, the better the chance of getting that perfect speaker for your session! You can explore the UEA alumni network [here](#).

Making Your Socials Stand Out

- **Set a Theme:** Make events more exciting with themes like ‘Retro Night’, ‘Pyjama Party’, or ‘Global Cuisine’. Celebrate cultural holidays too, like Diwali or Lunar New Year.
- **Offer Great Snacks:** Everyone loves food—think hot chocolate bars, cookie decorating, or themed snacks tied to your event.
- **Play Music:** Crowdsourcing a playlist from your members so everyone hears their favourite songs.
- **Take Photos:** Capture memories and share them on social media to show off how vibrant and inclusive your society is.
- **Add Prizes:** Small prizes for games or competitions add a fun, lighthearted edge to any event.

Promoting Your Events

Once you've got everything planned, the next important step is making sure everyone knows about your event. Here's how to effectively promote:

- **Social Media:** Use platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok to spread the word. Post sneak peeks, behind-the-scenes shots, or fun teasers to get people excited.
- **Email Lists:** If you have a mailing list, send out regular updates about upcoming events. Make it engaging by including photos or videos from past socials.
- **Flyers and Posters:** Put up posters on campus, especially in places where students gather, like the library, the SU building, and the café. Be sure to include all the important details like time, date, and location.

Top Tip: Make sure you get permission first by emailing openspace.events@uea.ac.uk for open spaces and posting locations.

Once you've got everything set up, **add your event to the website [here](#)** to make sure it's visible to a wider audience!

Safety and Accessibility Considerations

Safety Guidelines:

Before hosting any event, it's crucial to take basic safety precautions. Make sure all spaces are accessible for everyone, provide adequate lighting for evening events, and ensure emergency contacts and plans are in place.

Accessibility:

Ensure your events are accessible to all members, including those with disabilities. This might include wheelchair-accessible venues, offering alternative formats for

materials, and considering sensory needs (e.g., noise levels for individuals with sensory sensitivities)

Eco-Friendly Events

Sustainability Tips:

Many students are environmentally conscious, so it's important to consider sustainability in your event planning. Here are a few simple tips:

- **Reusable Cups:** Encourage the use of reusable cups for mocktails or drinks to cut down on waste.
- **Food Waste:** Have a plan for any leftovers—consider donating them to a local food bank or allowing attendees to take some home.
- **Digital Invitations:** Opt for digital invitations and RSVPs instead of printing everything out to save paper.

Inclusivity Beyond Alcohol-Free

Cultural Inclusivity:

Remember that alcohol-free events can also celebrate a variety of cultures and traditions. Consider hosting events that feature international foods or activities related to cultural holidays.

Inclusivity for Diverse Needs:

For societies with diverse members, be sure to address a range of needs. This might include offering financial support options for those who need it (e.g., free snacks or transportation for those on a budget).

Getting Started: How to Plan the Perfect Social

- **Ask Your Members:** Run a quick poll or survey to find out what events they'd most like to attend. This ensures your plans reflect what *they* want.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with other societies or groups to bring in more members, share ideas, and maximise your event's impact check out our full list of societies [here](#)
- **Budget Wisely:** While alcohol-free socials are often cheaper, it's still important to plan costs carefully.
- **Promote Inclusivity:** Highlight in your promotion that your event is fun, welcoming, and open to *everyone*—whether they drink or not.

Resources

For guidance on a lot of our event and society processes, be sure to use the Committee Hub.

This is a great place to find resources and support for things like:

- How to **upload your events** to the website
- **Booking rooms on campus**
- **Filling out risk assessments**
- And more!

Access the **Committee Hub** [here](#) to get all the help and information you need to successfully run your events.

Final Thoughts

- Alcohol-free socials are a fantastic way to build a stronger, more inclusive community within your society. They're fun, memorable, and appeal to a much wider group of people. By planning creative, accessible events that focus on connection and enjoyment, you'll make your society a space where *everyone* feels they belong—without alcohol being the focus.
- Get creative, listen to your members, and most importantly—have fun!