GUIDANCE NOTES: Bee Circular Refill Schools (Greater Manchester) Round 1

We're pleased you're interested in making a positive difference in your school and local community through a refill and reuse shop.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Bee Circular Refill Schools programme offers grants of up to **£2,000** to establish and operate a pupil-led refill and reuse shop for their school community.

Schools already operating a refill shop can apply for funding of up to **£500** to sustain and expand their shops.

Applications open week commencing 16th November 2026. The deadline to submit is Noon on Friday 18th December 2026. The fund may close early if a high number of applications are received. We encourage schools to apply as soon as possible.

This guidance will help you prepare your application. Please read it carefully before you apply.

If you run into any issues during the application process, please email: greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Funding Overview

- Grants of up to **£2,000** are available to help schools establish and run a refill and reuse shop.
- Grants of up to **£500** are available to schools already operating a refill shop to sustain and expand their existing shop.
- Open to Local Authority schools and Academy Trusts in Greater Manchester (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan).
- Only one application can be submitted per school.
- Projects must be delivered over 12 months with shops opening at least once per term and more frequently where possible.
- We expect new refill shops to hold their first opening in March or April 2027.

- Schools must explain how the shop will be sustained after the funding ends.

Key Objectives

- Reducing waste and carbon emissions through refill and reuse.
- Building pupil skills, knowledge and confidence in sustainability and climate action.
- Encouraging long-term behaviour change among pupils, staff and the wider community.
- Delivering measurable environmental impact

Project Focus – What We're Looking For

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is offering this exciting opportunity to schools as part of work that enables and encourages the community to refill and reuse more via a school circular refill shop. The main aim of a circular refill shop is to provide an opportunity to reduce the use of single use plastics in the local community for example through the refilling of household hand wash, body wash and washing up liquid. Schools can extend their offer to include a clothing / uniform / toys / books swap shop.

The refill shop should be pupil-led, involve the whole school community including all pupils, staff, families and carers and create lasting changes.

Strong projects will:

- Be pupil-led and involve pupils in the day-to-day management of the shop with roles such as stock taking, sales and marketing and finance management.
- Promote refill and reuse, rather than buying new.
- Help people make better everyday choices in what they buy, use and throw away.
- Include practical, hands-on activities.
- Link to the school curriculum and real-life learning (e.g. mathematics, English, PSHE)
- Help pupils develop practical life skills and awareness of green careers.
- Lead to long-term behaviour change.
- Show clear outcomes (e.g. waste reduced, items reused, behaviours changed).

What Can Be Funded

We will fund costs that are specifically associated with set-up, delivery and maintaining a school circular refill shop. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Products/stock (e.g. 5 Litre containers), pumps, from ethical suppliers
- Point of sale resources (items needed specifically for the project, e.g. banners, trays, card reader)
- Training and external suppliers (specialist refill providers delivering project resources, activities or workshops - see school resources page) However, using a specialist training provider is not essential.
- Gazebos, tables for playground set-up of shop

What We Won't Fund

- Core staff costs that are not project specific (e.g. permanent staff salaries).
- Business-as-usual school activities.
- Projects which financially benefit an individual (e.g. direct payments to participants).
- Projects that promote political or religious beliefs.
- Replacement equipment that is not directly needed to run or sustain the refill shop.
- One-off events with no lasting impact.
- Applications that are incomplete or exceed the character limit.
- Applications submitted outside the official online application process.

Programme Expectations

If your application is successful, you will be expected to:

- Provide project updates at least once per term during the 12-month project.
- Share project updates, images and outcomes for reporting and communications.
- Support GMCA in sharing learning and good practice to inspire other schools.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All applicants must confirm that they will provide monitoring information at least once per term during the 12-month project period.

These include:

- Plastic saved from waste, for example, number of 500ml bottles refilled at shop opening.
- Number of shop openings.

- Examples of pupils developing skills such as problem-solving, creativity and teamwork.
- Number of pupils engaged directly in running the refill shop.
- Wider social benefit (feedback from parents / carers).

What Happens Next

After the deadline has closed, applications will be evaluated by a team of GMCA officers. The following criteria will be considered:

- How well the proposal meets the programme objectives and expectations.
- How you will promote the refill shop and encourage pupils, staff and families to take part.
- How you will continue to sustain your refill shop
- % of pupils on free school meals
- Deprivation Index score

If your project is successful, you will be asked for the following:

- A letter addressed to the GMCA confirming your bank account details
- To complete our New Supplier Form
- To sign a simple grant agreement

Completing the Application Form

Please include all relevant information and costings that will help us evaluate your project. We will not contact you if you do not provide all the required information.

The form is on Microsoft Forms. We recommend preparing your answers in a Word document before copying them into the online form. You will not be able to edit your application after submission.

You must keep within the character limit for each question.

You will need to provide contact details for two members of staff responsible for delivering the project.

If you have any questions regarding the form, contact greencityschools@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk

Guidance for Specific Sections of the Application

About Your Refill Shop – for applications up to £2,000

- Describe how the school will set up a circular refill shop. This may include paying a specialist training provider for enterprise training or using the expertise of a neighbouring school, or the school's PTA.
- Describe the products you would like to sell in your refill and reuse shop such as refillable household and body care products.
- Tell us about any additional reuse activities you plan to offer alongside the refill shop, such as swapping uniforms, clothes, books or toys. These are optional.
- Explain how pupils will help plan and run the shop, with support from school staff.
- Provide details of the intended start date and how often you plan to open your shop.
- Explain why your school needs the funding and what difference it will make to pupils and the school community.
- Explain how the project will continue after funding, including embedding it in school routines, building ownership and maintaining engagement.

About Your Refill Shop – for applications up to £500

This grant supports schools currently operating a refill shop to sustain and expand their enterprise.

- Explain why your school requires additional funding. Is this to sustain the current refill shop or to extend the offer?
- Describe your current School Refill Shop, how long it has been operating, approximate number of openings, approximate number of pupils engaged in its operation since it was launched.
- Issues / challenges the shop has faced and why this additional funding will help e.g. helping you open more often, involve more pupils or reach more families.
- Was the Refill Shop supported by Pupils Profit or another specialist training provider or launched independently by the PTA / school staff.

Budget

- Provide an accurate, itemised breakdown of your project costs.
- List all items which you would like the grant funding to cover (see what can be funded section).
- The grant requested must not exceed £2,000 for a new school refill shop or £500 to sustain / extend an existing school refill shop.

Communications

To support the promotion of the School Circular Refill Shop to the school community, provide a brief description of how the school will communicate the initiative, maintain momentum and what channels you'll use to do this.

For example:

- Engage parents via Class Rep network
- School WhatsApp groups
- School newsletters
- School emails
- Parent Teacher Association communications

We look forward to receiving your application. Good Luck.