

University of Brighton Food and Drink

'Love Food Hate Waste': Brighton

About the project

Summary

Over the past year, the University of Brighton has focused its efforts on tackling food waste in university restaurants. The university's Hospitality Services and Environment Team have united under the banner of the c-change campaign (the university's award-winning environmental behaviour change campaign), to reduce food waste and ensure that all food waste produced in our restaurants is processed by anaerobic digestion.

Project partners

The Environment Team in Estate and Facilities Management have worked closely with the Accommodation and Hospitality Services department, and the local organisation *Brighton and Hove Food Partnership* who run food waste campaigns in our area.

The results

The problem

The University has 7 restaurants and 7 halls of residences, many of which are catered. Before this project commenced, large quantities of food waste was being produced and sent for incineration. The aim of the project was to find a more sustainable way of processing our food waste, and to reduce the amount produced.

The approach

In January 2015, anaerobic digestion food waste collections were rolled out to all University restaurants, to ensure that all unavoidable food waste is recycled.

Alongside this, food waste reduction initiatives were implemented. To inform this work, Hospitality Services and the Environment Team worked with an MA student, to better understand the causes of food waste in University restaurants. The findings of this student's research informed the development of a food waste campaign. This campaign was run in catered hall refectories and catering facilities across the campuses during Green Week (9 – 13 March 2015), supported by Hospitality Services, which engaged 313 staff and students.

Other initiatives to reduce food waste included:

- Food waste produced at each site being monitored using weight data provided by the food waste collection contractors and staff have been given targets to reduce food waste each month.
- A 'Sustainability Reps' Hospitality group set up, with a rep from each outlet responsible for encouraging positive behaviour change among colleagues, and driving forward projects such as food waste reduction in kitchens.
- A 'Love Food Hate Waste' cookery workshop run in one of the largest catered halls restaurants, teaching halls residents about the impacts of food waste, how to reduce it, and how to cook a simple meal using up leftovers.



Profile

- Multi-site urban HEI
- 25,000 students (includes full and part time students)
- 3,500 staff
- 5 campuses over 3 cities/towns

Category supported by



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Finalist's case study

- Along with other local groups, organising a 'Feeding the 5000' event in October, aimed at serving up a delicious communal feast for 5000 people made entirely out of food that would otherwise have been wasted.
- Arranging donations of the unwanted packed lunches from our summer language schools to local food charities.
- Allowing students in catered halls to come back for seconds if hungry, and piloting tray-free dining.

Our goals

Sustainability is a 'core value' in our University's Strategic Plan. Our work to reduce all forms of waste, including food waste, is a key part of achieving this, as is highlighted by our ambitious Environmental Policy objectives (which include a 75% recycling target, and 10% waste reduction target) and Sustainable Food policy (which commits to reducing food waste in all our outlets, and recycling all food waste produced).

Obstacles and solutions

Obstacle	Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a sustainable method for processing food waste when there are very limited options in the South East, and all options include significant travel. • Reducing food waste in catered halls, where food is pre-paid as part of rent, and there is therefore an incentive to take as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a company in the midlands who already have a collection round near us, and use a system of back-hauling, using trucks which would have otherwise been empty to transport our waste. • Allowing students to come back for seconds; piloting 'going trayless' to limit the amount they can take in one go; asking for feedback on why they are wasting food, and running an engagement campaign to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of food waste.

Performance and results

Between January and July 2015 (the latest set of complete data), an estimated 43 tonnes of food waste have been sent for processing in this way. This has increased our University-wide recycling rates by 14%. As we only have full food waste weight data from January 2015, we are unable to start monitoring the impacts of our reduction initiatives until January 2016.

The future

Lessons learned

Through other projects run by the Environment Team, we have learned the importance of doing in depth research with the target audience when developing a behavior change campaign, and will be applying this to the development of a food waste reduction campaign aimed at self-catered students living in halls of residences.

Sharing your project

We have written a blog post for Greenhouse PR's 'Pioneers' blog (soon to be published on their website), which focuses on our work on food waste, outlines several key elements of the project and its impacts, and provides photo examples of our banners and food waste game to help disseminate our ideas more widely.

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

Sustainability is a core value of the university and is critical to our way of working. We are proud of our work and our continuous efforts to improve. Being a finalist is a great reward to the staff and students who have put their energy into this project, and an excellent encouragement to keep striving to reduce our food waste.

Further information

Website: www.brighton.ac.uk/sustainability

Facebook: [unibrightonchange](https://www.facebook.com/unibrightonchange)

Twitter: [@_cchange_](https://twitter.com/_cchange_)