



Green Gown
Awards 2017



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Sheffield Hallam University

Facilities and Services

Closing the Waste Loop

About the project

Summary

Sheffield Hallam is proud to be a zero waste to landfill university, through partnership working with waste contractor Veolia. When recyclable material is segregated on site, the remainder of waste is taken to the local Energy Recovery Facility, where it is incinerated to create energy and returned to our university buildings as heat.

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Profile

- Higher Education
- 31,000 students (full and part time)
- 4,400 staff
- Urban and green campuses with satellite sports facilities

Project partners

- Sheffield Hallam University
- Veolia Environmental Services
- wider benefits region wide (waste) and heat network extends to council, NHS and other HE organisations in the area

The results

The problem

As a large environmentally conscious university, it is a challenge to ensure waste is disposed as sustainably as possible in line with the waste hierarchy.

The approach

Sheffield Hallam, along with key public sector organisations across the city, such as the council and NHS have been long term users of Veolia's district heat network, which incinerates general waste to create low carbon heat energy across the city. A few years ago, the university started to use Veolia to also dispose of our waste, which not only ensures we send nothing to landfill, but also closes a loop with our waste helping to provide the heat for our buildings. We work closely with Veolia in partnership to not only ensure sustainable disposal but to continually improve performance and efficiency through analysis of services and need and increasing awareness by encouraging better recycling onsite through targeted communications campaigns during fresher's weeks and providing tours of the energy from waste recovery facility for green champions and staff.

Our goals

The university has key 2020/21 targets outlined in our [Environmental Plan](#) and endorsed by top management. These include not only ensuring minimising environmental impact through the use of the incinerator, but climbing the waste hierarchy by;

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- **Recycling** more waste before incineration - we achieved our 2020 target this year by recycling 26.3% of waste (target = 25%)
- and **Reducing** the amount of waste produced - we have also exceeded our target this year by reducing waste by floor area by 43.3% (target = 40%)

These goals have been achieved through the partnership working with Veolia and commitment throughout the organisation to reduce our environmental impact.

Obstacles and solutions

Ensuing the waste hierarchy is applied	Although we are diverting waste from landfill, it was important to ensure we reduced, and recycled ahead of this. Our communications and partnership working approaches have ensured that where waste can be reduced or recycled ahead of incineration, this is achieved as demonstrated by beating our 2020 waste reduction and recycling targets early.
Recyclable materials - changes on site	In changing our waste contractor we changed the materials that could be recycled on site. This resulted in the need for a large behaviour change campaign: 'do the right thing' was launched, labels were changed on all bins across the university key channels utilised from digital screens to green champions to clarify the new process. 'Do the right thing' ensures that the recycling bins are always on the right to develop automatic behaviour changes and consistent messages.
Ensuring continual improvement	Once the contract was in place and zero landfill status was achieved it would have been easy to be complacent, however through ambitious targets published in the Environmental Plan, designed to minimise the most potentially significant impacts of the university as identified by the ISO 14001:2015 system, the university was able to work closely with Veolia to continually improve and achieve our targets.

CO2 savings

Please record the annual carbon savings* you have/will achieve with your initiative**.	
CO2t savings 2016/2017:	920 tonnes CO ₂ e estimated
CO2t savings 2017/2018:	920 tonnes CO ₂ e estimated
CO2t savings over the life cycle of the project:	2760 tonnes CO ₂ e estimated over three year contract

The future

Top 3 learnings from implementing your project

- 1 Ongoing communication to key to ensure a smooth partnership
- 2 Have clear aims from the offset and stick to them...
- 3 ...but be flexible and open to new ways of achieving them

Sharing your project

We have shared the project heavily internally through extensive communications campaigns, and this has raised the profile of our zero waste to landfill status especially among the student body. The greater



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understanding of the processes by both staff and students has helped to both achieve our recycling targets and increase the reputation of Sheffield Hallam as a sustainable organisation.

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

Successfully meeting current global challenges can only be achieved through sustainable solutions. To be a Green Gown Finalist reflects the significant commitment we have made to practicing what we teach in terms of finding and implementing those solutions at Hallam and belongs to the entire Sheffield Hallam community.

Further information

SHU Sustainability;

- <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-us/sustainability>
- [@SustainableSHU](#)

Veolia;

- [@VeoliaUK](#)