

Green Impact Universities and Colleges Excellence: Final Report

The Final Report is an opportunity for you to celebrate your hard work and achievements in Green Impact Universities and Colleges Excellence. We hope that a lot of your projects will continue after the submission deadline, but you should aim to summarize your work so far.

Please ensure your Final Report consists of no more than six pages and includes at least three photos.

Name of team: UPP BGV

Project name: FOOD WASTE RECYCLING (2014-2015)

1.0 Aims and Objectives

1.1 Aim: To raise residents' awareness of food waste

In relation to the Food Waste Recycling scheme:

- All 2090 UPP residents using communal kitchens received an individual Welcome Pack prior to the October launch
- user guides to the food waste recycling trial were placed in each communal kitchen in October
- all residents in BGV and Duryard received an invitation to attend the Recycling/Food Waste Survey launch event at UPP Ross House Reception on 10/3/15
- all residents were invited to take part in an online survey for completion concerning food waste and recycling facilities in March 2015

On the basis of the above information and communication opportunities and the observations and feedback arising from the online Housekeeping Survey completed by residents (December 2014/January 2015), UPP Housekeepers Kitchen Surveys (January 2015) and project related Flat Visits (February 2015), there is clear evidence that the aim to raise residents' awareness of food waste has been met.

1.2 Aim: To reduce the amount of food waste going into landfill

Almost 2200 kilos of food waste was collected from the external food waste bins during the 2 months (November/December 2014) following roll-out of the food waste recycling service. Based on a typical weekly external food waste bin weight of 80 kilos, UPP's Waste Contractor has produced illustrative figures to show savings made *before* and *after* the change to full operation of the food waste recycling service. The figures 'before' are: *cost per week £1760.00, weekly weight of general (non-recyclable waste) 12000 kilos*: the figures 'after' introduction of the service show: *cost per week £1749.60, with a combined weekly weight of non-recyclable and food waste 11240 kilos*: the bottom line of these figures is *less expenditure and less waste into landfill*. There have continued to be weekly

collections from food waste bins located in each of the 8 external bin stores provided by UPP for residents at BGV, Duryard, Lafrowda, Rowe and St Germans. Other users of the service have been the University's retail outlet at Birks Grange to dispose of out-of-date produce and UPP's staffroom food waste caddy. These factors are clear evidence that the second aim has been met.

2.0 Summary

Provide a short summary of your projects progress

The scheme started extremely well following its launch on 20th October 2014 and was well supported by residents up to Christmas. Term 2 saw a reduction in food waste output and a residents' survey in March indicated only 45% of residents who responded were recycling their food waste. Term 3 should see an increase in the use of the food waste service as a result of surveys undertaken in March and action taken by UPP in response to student feedback which includes the issuing of a Green Survey leaflet at the beginning of Term 3, the introduction of the option to use biodegradable liners and the enhanced support and engagement of UPP's Housekeeping staff. In addition, a list of measures to improve the service in readiness for the September 2015 student intake is being addressed when, for the first time, the food waste recycling service will be in place immediately on the students' arrival on campus which should provide a prime opportunity for residents to adopt food waste recycling as "the norm" in their accommodation.

3.0 Project Outcomes

The SMART action plan was not used as part of the Project Plan as agreed with UoE Green Impact leads.

3.1 Key Performance Indicator Update

- Between the project launch on 20/10/14 and Christmas 2014, 2200 kilos of food waste were diverted from landfill and recycled through anaerobic digestion (off site)
- From Week 7, the waste contractor was able to provide UPP with food waste weights per bin store by location to enable closer monitoring of output
- Residents have provided very useful feedback on the food waste service: current residents are now able to use biodegradable liners in their food caddies; other improvements to signage and facilities provided are to be implemented before September 2015.
- On 18/2/15, Barbara Bodkin and Izzy Jones (UoE Green Consultant) visited 10 communal kitchens and received positive face-to-face feedback from residents concerning the recycling and food waste facilities provided, particularly when residents were informed of the option to use caddy liners for food waste (at their own expense). Other issues raised by residents were the ease of use of the recycling facilities, all bins to be labelled on arrival, recycling poster could be improved both in terms of its design and position i.e. to be placed behind the kitchen recycling bins rather than on the noticeboard away from the bins and a rota template may be useful for the start of the year. All these issues are being addressed as indicated in KPI above.
- Refer to comparative Waste weights and cost figures as provided by Waste Contractor (UKWSL) in para 1.2 above.
- A Housekeeping Survey conducted with residents in December/January enabled residents to raise issues regarding food waste bins and a feedback poster issued to residents in response by UPP's Cleaning Manager included the following paragraph under the statement that "Some students said that they do not like the food waste bins":

"The food waste bins do involve some work on your part and we understand this is not always a nice thing to do. However the environmental benefits are huge. Liner bags often split and you would still need to carry the bin to the bin store. However liners can be bought in supermarkets. Our Site Environmental Team are running a recycling campaign through the Green Impact and working with the Guild of Students to heighten awareness."

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Update

- UPP Housekeeping staff were invited to suggest their ideas on how the waste management service provided could be improved in regards to recycling and how to encourage the residents to use the service fully.
- A UPP Exeter site Waste Working Party was formed, comprising of Housekeeping Supervisors, Environmental Champions and Heavy Duty Cleaners (who have special responsibility for the external bin stores).
- All UPP Housekeeping staff completed a week long survey in January of the student kitchens in which they work, covering 258 communal kitchens, to provide a 'snap shot' of how recycling facilities were being used. This provided an opportunity for staff engagement and raised their awareness of the recycling behaviours of the residents e.g. in one sample of 41 kitchens, between 35 – 39 were correctly recycling plastics, cans, glass and cardboard; whereas only 17 were correctly recycling food waste and 13 were not using this service. The correct/incorrect use of bins for non-recyclables was found to be a 1 : 1 ratio.
- The residents using the food waste service have provided (and received) feedback through a Housekeeping Survey which included recycling facilities, undertaken between 3/12/14 and 4/2/15. In addition, a specific online Recycling and Food Waste Survey took place in March 2015 as part of the Green Excellence Projects undertaken by UPP. As a result of the Green Excellence surveys, a Green Survey leaflet was issued on 20/4/15 to provide feedback to all UPP residents (see Appendix A). A detailed report arising from survey results from BGV residents was produced by UoE Green Consultant, Izzy Jones (see Appendix B).
- On an ongoing basis, issues relating to food waste such as the inclusion of small amounts of paper waste (kitchen towels), the use of biodegradable liners and the prevention of food flies have been raised and addressed.
- The Waste Contractor has provided an excellent service: providing information and support, processing the waste and reporting weekly bin collection weights. The contractor is pro-active in assisting UPP with providing new, user-friendly labels and signage for caddy bins and all bin store bins by September 2015.
- The University of Exeter has been hugely supportive of the project including publicity in Newsletters, Facebook and on Twitter and providing display materials and representatives for a promotional event. Special thanks are due to: the UoE Green Impact leads, UoE Sustainability Manager, UoE Green Consultant Scheme, SGU, Nicola Baker and Catherine Moore.
- Green Consultant Scheme - of particular mention is the success of the involvement with this scheme. Barbara Bodkin was first introduced to Izzy Jones (Green Consultant) by Karen Gallagher (UoE Sustainability Manager) through the Green Consultants training scheme which is an interactive programme comprising of sustainability training, an on-campus project and an internship. Izzy worked collaboratively with Barbara on a Waste Management Strategy on-campus project and their association began at the end of January 2015. Izzy produced a Client Brief a week later and attended 6 meetings with Barbara between January and March, she actively supported the BGV Survey Day Launch event and submitted her final project report on 30th March (see Appendix B). Barbara felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Izzy and their working partnership proved to be mutually beneficial.

- All UPP site Management and Supervisors, Receptionists, Housekeepers and Heavy Duty Cleaners have given continued support to the Green Excellence project, as well as UPP's National Environmental & Sustainability Manager.
- A special Survey Launch event at BGV's Ross House Reception in March also attracted support from Exeter Food Bank, DCFA, a local nutritionist and an Environmental Studies student from Exeter College, in addition to the SGU.
- Within UPP's South West Strategic Plan dated September 2014, in support of the Partnership with the University the Exeter site is required to introduce food waste recycling to further path-find new environmental initiatives in conjunction with the Green Impact programme. The completion of this requirement was formally reported by UPP to UoE Management at the April 2015 Operational Review meeting.

3.3 On-going work – *Please describe tasks still to be completed and the timescales for doing so*

- All planned actions listed under Timescales in the Project Plan have been carried out successfully with the exception of the decision not to go ahead with a wormery feasibility study using staffroom food waste; also the Student Focus Group idea was revised in favour of Flat visits which took place on 18/2/15 when Barbara Bodkin and Izzy Jones visited 10 communal kitchens at BGV to obtain feedback first-hand from residents on the food waste and recycling facilities provided for their use.

Tasks identified as in progress and still to be completed are:-

- To improve bin signage and layout of bins in external bin stores, in liaison with Waste Contractor and UoE e.g. consider placing food bin near tap/hose
- To provide durable, informative labels for food waste caddies (samples and quotes are being considered by UPP)
- To consider producing an environmental-themed kitchen calendar (one per kitchen) starting from September 2015 and running for the 2015-2016 academic year, which could include top tips, information and a rota template for recycling/rubbish removal by residents (in liaison with UoE)
- To label recycling bins in kitchens before September 2015
- To improve the information for residents on arrival on where to take their food waste and what can be recycled etc
- To have a local source of supply for kitchen food caddy liners e.g. from Campus shops or provided by UPP
- To improve the design of recycling posters in kitchens and to include food waste as a recyclable waste (in liaison with UoE); aim to have final design of poster laminated and displayed by the recycling bins in kitchens by September 2015 – consider using same themes as on poster for bin store signs.
- UPP Housekeeping staff to check on kitchen visits, from immediate effect, to make sure food waste bins are emptied regularly by residents and to increase support and information given to residents about all recycling facilities.
- To include cleaning of food waste caddies in normal termly communications to residents which remind them of what needs to be done before vacation/departure
- To look at level of food waste service provided for studio accommodation
- To consider ideas for awareness raising campaigns/competitions to encourage recycling (including food waste) in Term 1 of 2015-2016 academic year
- To ensure that Kitchen Talks by Housekeeping staff stress to residents the importance of recycling (including food waste) and to ensure Housekeeping staff have the knowledge to answer questions and give support to residents
- To review rinsing/cleaning facilities for caddies in bin stores to ensure they are more user-friendly

4.0 Project Difficulties & Opportunities

Describe any difficulties that you have faced, methods to overcome these and opportunities. Mention and revisions to timescales or plan that you've had to do as a result

- The use of liner bags in caddies, which at first was not permitted, is now allowed as long as only biodegradable liners are used.
- Food flies can be prevented by emptying bins regularly and keeping them clean – this is the residents' responsibility.
- Barbara Bodkin decided not to look into the feasibility of wormeries as part of the project; it may be possible to do this at a future date.
- After consulting with Excellence colleague, Clare Coe, and Green Consultant, Izzy Jones, it was agreed with Barbara Bodkin that Flat Visits would be more effective than setting up student Focus Groups as a means of evaluating the use of recycling/food waste facilities; this preferred course of action was followed and proved to be very worthwhile.
- The opportunity to work with Izzy Jones, UoE Green Consultant, has proved to be extremely productive and is definitely an option that Barbara Bodkin would consider again for any future projects and would also recommend to others.
- The general Housekeeping Survey which residents responded to in December 2014/January 2015 coincidentally included a section on Waste and Recycling, giving residents the chance to report any difficulties or concerns; these responses were a good early indicator of issues that needed to be addressed such as allowing the use of food caddy bin liners.
- It is not considered necessary at this stage (beginning of term 3) for a further follow-up survey on recycling/food waste to be undertaken with residents this term, as numerous action points are already being addressed in order to improve the service and promote student engagement with food waste recycling in the future.
- The opportunity has arisen for Barbara Bodkin to work with UPP Exeter's Site Student Experience Champion in the future to further evaluate and improve the food waste and recycling service provided for residents

5.0 Excellence Legacy

Provide details of how you will ensure your Excellence Project continues next year whilst you return to the workbook and how it can be applied by other teams/departments

The roll-out of Food Waste Recycling to all communal kitchens in UPP's Exeter residences is of great interest to the University of Exeter along with other initiatives to raise awareness, change student behaviours and contribute to the reduction of the Campus carbon footprint. This Excellence project continues to generate net-working opportunities which will 'pool' a working-knowledge base and provide foundations for innovation and development for future schemes at other Universities. Through the introduction of food waste recycling, there is a positive message getting through to all residents which they are putting into practice; it is hoped that the students will continue to apply the practices and principles related to reducing food waste and diverting food waste from landfill as they continue their studies, and for the rest of their lives, and also take the opportunity to influence others in the future to minimise any negative environmental impact. If this happens as a result of the service provided whilst they are in their first year of study, it will be a significant and far-reaching achievement, as one of the objectives of the Project Plan was that "Residents can apply what they learn throughout their lives and influence/educate others to the benefits."

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Impact of the Project

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The weekly data provided by UPP's Waste Contractor which identifies the food waste weights collected from each of the 8 external food waste bins is an invaluable indicator of the levels of food waste being recycled in particular areas of student accommodation. From this data it is possible to see where peaks and troughs occur and to enable further analysis to be undertaken by UPP staff 'on the ground' to ascertain the reasons for these variances. Daily checks of the bin stores and external food waste bins by UPP's Heavy Duty Cleaners ensure that local issues can be reported and investigated very quickly e.g. contamination of the contents with incorrect waste. As detailed in this report, a significant number of actions to improve the service prior to the arrival of new students in September 2015 are to be put in place. This should help to ensure that the students' use of the food waste service does not become a "one term wonder" and they will continue to use it fully and productively throughout their occupation.



FOOD WASTE CADDY IN BGV KITCHEN



ST GERMANS BIN STORE – EXTERNAL FOOD WASTE BIN



BGV RECYCLING SURVEY LAUNCH EVENT – ROSS HOUSE 10.3.15