



SUSTAINABLE FOOD & DRINK ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

The University Catering and Retail Services Team is committed to leading by example in sustainability, with a clear public commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. This commitment is embodied in the University's Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan, which focuses on three principal areas:

Sourcing: Prioritising locally sourced produce from suppliers that meet exacting standards for sustainability and ethical practices.

Environment: Reducing plastic usage, minimising packaging, and decreasing the consumption of ruminant meat.

Society: Enhancing consumer information, highlighting seasonal produce, and actively engaging with students and staff.

To advance these goals, the Catering and Retail Services Team has implemented eight core initiatives that are monitored and evaluated annually. These initiatives, shaped by principles of behavioural science and pricing strategies, aim to promote informed choices rather than restricting options. By providing clearer information, the initiatives empower students, staff, and visitors to make more sustainable dining choices. Examples include:

- A “meat-second” approach on menus, which places plant-based options as the primary choice.
- A 40p charge on disposable cups to encourage reusable alternatives.
- Promotion of plant-based dishes through dedicated events and seasonal pop-ups.

We track the impact of these initiatives using a dashboard that monitors metrics aligned with our sustainability goals. Key performance indicators include the percentage of vegan meals sold, the ratio of dairy to non-dairy drinks, and the number of hot drinks served in reusable cups.





Key Achievements This Year

- **Plant-Based Milks:** We used 13,900 litres of plant-based milk, accounting for 10.5% of all milk used.
- **Vegan and Vegetarian Meals:** Across all licensed premises, retail outlets, and residential facilities, we served 132,554 vegan and vegetarian meals—an increase of 29,345 meals from the previous year. Vegan and vegetarian options now make up 32% of total meals served.
- **Reusable Cups:** 48.8% of all hot drinks were served in reusable cups, demonstrating considerable progress in reducing single-use waste.
- **Veganuary:** During January, we served 7,380 vegan meals in our retail outlets, representing 51.5% of all meals served that month.
- **Campus-Grown Produce:** Our garden kitchen produced over half a tonne of fresh produce, used directly in campus recipes.
- **Fairtrade Products:** 303,364 Fairtrade items were sold, marking a 26.1% increase from the previous year.

Educational Engagement with Students

Our team is deeply committed to supporting the student community, providing educational activities designed to enhance culinary skills and knowledge around sustainable food practices. These activities include:

- **Cooking Demonstrations:** Direct sessions where students learn sustainable cooking techniques and practical meal preparation.
- **Consultancy Opportunities:** As part of academic studies, students engage in consultancy projects that offer real-world insights into sustainable food services.
- **Insight Groups:** Students are invited to participate in insight groups, where they can contribute ideas and feedback that shape our service's strategic priorities.
- **Food Cultural Events:** We celebrate our diverse campus community by hosting “taste of home” events, offering students from around the world a chance to share their culinary traditions with peers and enjoy a sense of home.

Building a Stronger Future

This year, we have deepened our collaboration with the Grounds team to expand the ‘garden kitchen’, which uses both traditional planting and hydroponics to provide fresh, sustainable produce year-round. This initiative has been instrumental in promoting local, campus-grown food, and we plan to expand it further in the coming years.

The Catering and Retail team remains committed to using and promoting Fairtrade products, embedding ethical and sustainable practices across all areas. We are proud to have achieved a two-star rating in the Fairtrade Universities and Colleges Award for 2022-2024.

In addition, as part of our membership with the Sustainable Restaurant Association, we were thrilled to receive the three-star rating—the highest possible grade—in the SRA Food Made Good Sustainability standard. This achievement, reflecting improved scores across Sourcing, Society, and Environment pillars, highlights the team's dedication to continuous improvement through reduction, reuse, and recycling efforts.

