SUSTAINABLE SUSSEX
JUNE 2023

WASTE REDUCTION, REUSE AND RECYCLING POLICY

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

WASTE REDUCTION, REUSE AND RECYCLING POLICY

This is the official University of Sussex policy on waste reduction, reuse and recycling. It replaces previous policy documents on this topic.

PURPOSE

This policy document is designed to provide further guidance and guiding principles on waste reduction, reuse and recycling to enable us to realise our strategic commitments around waste as set out in **Sustainable Sussex**, the University of Sussex Sustainability Strategy and **Action Plan**.

Ultimately, it is intended to help us to realise our vision of being one of the most sustainable universities in the world, by encouraging responsible consumption and production in relation to waste and the promotion of the circular economy[1]. The goal of which is to help reduce climate change, pollution and the loss of both aquatic and land related biodiversity.

OBJECTIVES

I. To meet our goal of reducing the volume of waste produced per student by 10% by 2025.

II. To achieve our target of recycling 50% of our waste by 2025, including a:
   a) 55% sub target of residential waste
   b) 70% sub target of non-residential waste.

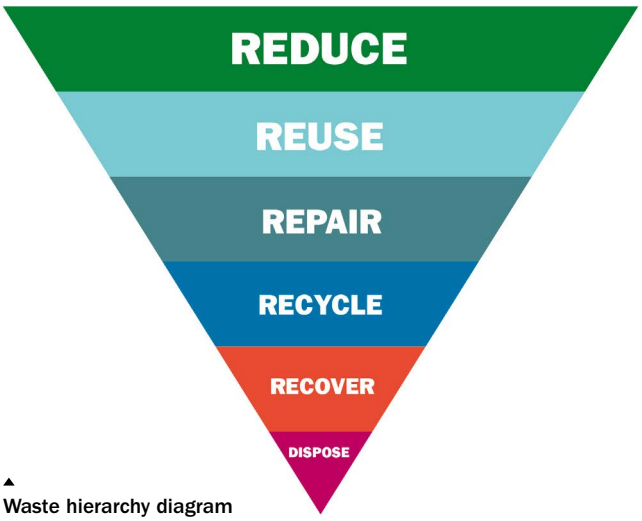
III. To improve our monitoring and measurement of waste management – enabling us to set a target for all waste streams by December 2024.

IV. To promote adherence to the waste hierarchy and to embed these principles throughout the University campus through a programme of education, engagement and culture change.

V. To improve waste signage and facilities.

VI. To minimise the use of single-use plastics and disposable items.

VII. To encourage our partners and supply chain to adhere to the principles set out within this policy – ensuring appropriate recycling targets and innovation are included within all waste contract tenders by December 2024.



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Waste hierarchy diagram

[1] The term circular economy appeared for the first time in 1988 in *The Economics of Natural Resources* and describes an economic system of closed loops in which raw materials, components and products lose their value as little as possible, renewable energy sources are used and systems thinking is at its core.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. WASTE HIERARCHY LED:

We, as an institution, support the use of the waste hierarchy to guide waste management decisions and education. We will always try to prioritise waste reduction, over reuse, over repair and over recycling, with waste recovery and disposal only used as last resort options.

- **Reduce** – we will reduce the volume of waste produced by:
  a) reducing the number of disposable items that we procure (including single-use plastics)
  b) preventing surplus food becoming waste, through redistribution to the local community
  c) educating staff, students and the wider community on the merits of the circular economy and how they can be more sustainable in their daily lives.

- **Reuse** – we will support the collection of items for charity and redistribution amongst both our campus community and the wider community – for example, through our British Heart Foundation charity collection points and the supporting of sustainable fashion thrift fairs.

- **Repair** – we will encourage the repair and upgrading of assets rather than their replacement, where this is the most cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and embodied carbon from a full life cycle analysis perspective.

- **Recycle** – we will provide first-class recycling facilities and education to meet our target of recycling 50% of waste by 2025. We will minimise recycling contamination and maximise engagement and innovation in this area. This includes deploying a network of waste champions to help collect and sort recycling (including food waste), and to take part in regular waste audits and compositional analysis sessions with us.

- **Recovery** – we will continue to meet our obligation of sending zero general waste to landfill. Instead, all general waste that cannot be recycled will be converted to energy via an energy recovery facility or the use of anaerobic or aerobic digestors.

- **Disposal** – in very specific circumstances we may need to dispose of certain types of hazardous waste, such as radioactive materials, in a secure manner that protects the environment, including aquatic ecosystems. These materials are covered by our separate **Hazardous Waste Policy** and **Ionising Radiation Safety Policy**.

2. TARGET CENTRED:

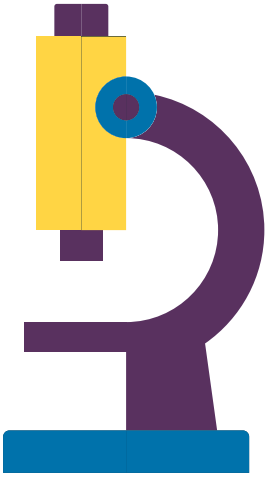
We, as an institution, will set annual recycling and reuse sub-targets, by waste stream, for the following types of waste by 2025 as we work towards our goal of recycling 50% of our waste by 2025:

a) non-residential
b) residential
c) dry mixed recycling
d) glass
e) food and compostable
f) Tetra Paks/cartons
g) mattresses
h) paint/oil/hazardous/technical
i) pallets
j) batteries
k) lamps
l) WEEE (certain types of waste electrical and electronic equipment)
m) metal
n) green
o) wood and bulky.

3. EVIDENCE DRIVEN:

The University will make factual, evidence-based decisions using the best performance data possible. This will include but not be limited to:

a) conducting annual waste audits informed by termly compositional analysis to better understand our waste streams and levels of contamination
b) holding annual lessons learned sessions with everyone involved in the waste management process
c) ensuring clear contractual reporting requirements on each waste stream (by weight produced, percentage recycled, recovered and/or sent to landfill).



4. FACILITY FOCUSED:

We will have the right equipment, storage, signage and facilities to maximise waste reduction, reuse and recycling. This should include but not be limited to:

a) modern, consistently signed dry mixed recycling, glass and compostable external waste bins around campus to support the target of 70% recycled waste from non-residential buildings by 2025
b) provision of food waste recycling facilities in residential kitchens and non-residential buildings when requested by our network of food caddy captains and waste champions
c) provision of appropriate levels of specialist reuse and recycling facilities in other key clearly mapped out locations eg Tetra Pak receptacles, oil, batteries etc
d) adequate mattress and furniture storage facilities to support up to 90% recycling in this area
e) effective clear signage and information on how to use these facilities
f) appropriate waste separation and storage equipment ahead of removal from campus.

5. INNOVATIVE:

We strive to be at the forefront of waste innovation. We will do this through some of the following:

a) researching best practice around waste management and reduction – including storage for increasing material recovery and policy surrounding project waste
b) enshrining innovation requirements into tendering processes and contract management agreements to encourage innovation within our supply chain
c) promoting innovation in the space of reduce, reuse and recycle within our student innovation competitions/grand challenges and wider research projects, methods and lab practices – including use of artificial intelligence to improve sorting
d) producing business cases for waste reduction, reuse and recycling innovations and trials, as and when appropriate.

6. EXTENDED TO THE SUPPLY CHAIN:

We will ensure that our values and priorities surrounding waste reduction, reuse and recycling are shared by our partners in a number of ways, which includes:

a) asking our suppliers questions about waste and recycling in our tender processes as standard, as guided by our **Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework**
b) embedding targets and KPIs in our waste contracts from December 2024 when they are up for renewal – rationalising school contracts and increasing innovation wherever possible
c) improving supply chain reporting – including from our estates and facilities management provider
d) encouraging our contractors to sign up to our policy and pledge to minimise plastic waste as listed in **Annex A** below.

7. EVERYONE ENGAGED:

Practising waste reduction, reuse and recycling is something that we need to do together as a collective body involving all of our staff and students. We will engage as many people on campus as possible in realising our policy in the following ways:

a) recruiting a network of waste champions to help support and promote recycling and to take part in waste audits and compositional analysis
b) running local competitions on who can recycle the most with the least contamination
c) educating staff and students on reduction, reuse and recycling through Welcome Week events, staff inductions and sustainability webinars and road shows
d) engaging students in competitions to design better recycling information
e) encouraging volunteering in the wider community around waste – this includes promoting beach, river and hill cleans in conjunction with the charity **Surfers Against Sewage**.

Exclusions

Please note that this policy document does not include project waste, which will be the subject of a separate policy document by December 2023.

ANNEX A

POLICY AND PLEDGE TO MINIMISE PLASTIC WASTE

We at the University of Sussex are working with our staff, students, stakeholders and supply chain partners to minimise the amount of plastic waste procured and disposed of on our campus.

In doing so we are passionate about minimising our use of:

I. single-use plastics – any plastic item that can only be used one time before it is disposed of or recycled

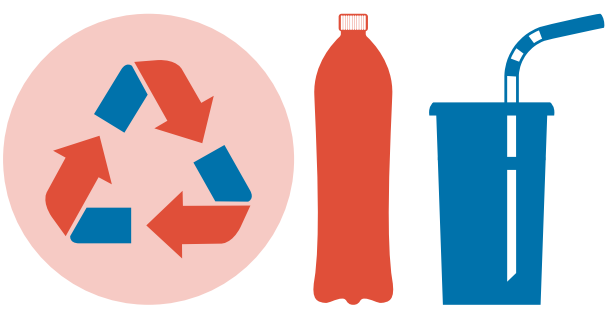
II. plastic materials that cannot be recycled and have the potential to end up in landfill

III. micro, meso or macro plastics that have the potential to harm wildlife, habitats or human life – including aquatic ecosystems.

In doing so we are committed to eliminating avoidable single-use plastics from catering, stationery, laboratories, halls of residence, offices and events by 2025.

Where the use of plastics is unavoidable, the University will encourage the use of recycled plastics, where practicable, and support manufacturers that make products from locally sourced waste plastics.

We will achieve the above by encouraging the creation of localised plastic reduction action plans in our Schools, Professional Service Divisions, halls of residences and laboratories. We will also support knowledge and awareness raising to support the implementation of these plans.



We will also work with key partners in the local community to help prevent the entry of plastic into natural environments – both terrestrial and aquatic. For example, participating in beach, river and hill cleans with **Surfers Against Sewage**.

For all of the above commitments, we will continue to adhere to Government legislation that regulates against the use of single-use plastics to support our efforts where we can.

Finally, we will encourage our supply chain partners to sign up to this pledge wherever feasible and proportionate.

Review/Contacts/References	
Policy title:	Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Policy
Date approved:	November 2021
Approving body:	Vice-Chancellor via the University Executive Group
Last review date:	June 2023
Revision history:	Version 2: June 2023 Version 1: November 2021
Next review date:	June 2025
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	**Sustainability Strategy** **Sustainability Policies** **Sustainability Strategy Action Plan**
Policy owner:	Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services
Lead contact/author:	Sustainability Manager