

## What is Bath Spa University doing about Single Use Plastics?

We are updating our action plan under the guidance of the 'Disposables Action Group' which is part of the 'Sustainable Food & Fairtrade Working Group (SFFWG)' ultimately reporting to the University's 'Environmental Steering Group' (ESG). [Update for December 2018](#). You can find out more on ESG on our [Green Focus Webpage](#).

We are phasing our approach to ensure we come up with the most environmentally sustainable outcomes. In doing so we hope, where practicable, to follow the waste hierarchy, with those at the top of the list being most environmentally beneficial:

Priority in waste hierarchy	Measures to be introduced	Practical implications at Bath Spa University
1. Prevent	<p>Stop the sale or availability of single use cups</p> <p>Summer 2018: Water Cups</p> <p>September 2019: Coffee Cups - this has been delayed, date TBC</p>	<p>To date (August 2018) one coffee shop chain (Boston Tea Party) and one University (University of Gloucestershire) have declared they are ditching disposable cups (1 June &amp; 9 July 2018 respectively).</p> <p>As of end March 2019 the availability of disposable cutlery will be restricted (kept behind the till), a charge of 5p for those not buying food from our catering outlets will be levied.</p> <p>Summer 2018: All water machines across the Bath Spa estate where upgraded so water dispenses quicker (with the option of cold/ambient) so more suitable for bottle refilling and plastic cups where removed from machines in the process. Saving around 135,000 cups per year.</p> <p>Bath Spa Venues have switched to glass in two venues, in the third venue where glass can't be used they've invested in reusable plastic glasses .</p> <p>September 2019: Our aim is to stop providing disposable coffee cups at University catering outlets - we are reviewing disposable cups used in vending machines.</p>
2. Reduce	<p>Provide a discount for bringing reusable cup (up until summer 2018)</p> <p>September 2018: Levy a charge for having a drink in a disposable cup - a charge of 30p if you choose to buy your drink in a disposable cup, in University Run catering outlets</p>	<p>There has been a 10p discount for bringing your own cup at Bath Spa for a number of years, a study by Poortinga 2017 showed that a discount on reusable coffee cups has no impact on their usage.</p> <p>Implementing a charge on a reusable cup has a modest impact on driving down use from between 3-33% producing behaviour change similar to that seen by the plastic bag tax.</p> <p>Communications to go out to non-regular users of the outlets.*</p>

	including East Wing Coffee.	
3. Reuse	<p>Bring your own reusable cup</p> <p>Drink in</p> <p>Cup amnesty scheme</p>	<p>Bring along own reusable cup - washing dirty cups (new cup washing stations installed at the refectory next to water machines, Commons near Cafe/disabled loos) you are <a href="#">best washing your cup straight after being used</a> - unwanted liquid can be disposed of in the food waste bins. We are retailing Rice Husk cups - made from a waste product of the rice industry and biodegradable at end of life</p> <p>The majority of our catering outlets have the option to drink in (apart from Cafe Commons &amp; East Wing)</p> <p>The SU are establishing a 'cup amnesty scheme' - asking people to donated any unwanted mugs/cups/reusable cups/travel cups etc and they will then be available for people to use and return - this is now in operation (Sept 18) cups available in a basket at the bar.</p> <p>Nutrition Workshops - plastic cups used in product sampling - these are washed and reused where possible and recycled when come to end of their life.</p>
4. Recycle	Cup Recycling scheme	<p>We do not support a move to recyclable single-use coffee cups. Although there is a burgeoning number of cup recycling companies entering the market, there are a number of limiting issues. Take-away cups from their very nature could end up anywhere on (or off) campus.</p> <p>Our current provision means we've worked hard to provide the same recycling and waste service at every location so to install new bins would be cost prohibitive. Operationally it appears that there are a number of issues with contamination, from the experience of other institutions. Ultimately, the aim is to move away from single-use items where possible.</p>
5. Recover	Compostable Cups	<p>We do not support a move to compostable single-use coffee cups or food packaging. Bath Spa's food waste currently goes to anaerobic digestion therefore our waste provider won't accept compostable cups for processing.</p> <p>There are very few commercial in-vessel composting facilities in the country and none in the immediate area.</p> <p>We have previously had an onsite in-vessel composting unit (over 10 years ago) and the operation of it was unsuccessful. We now collect a much greater volume of food waste and coupled with the upfront investment/day-to-day running costs wouldn't be a viable option. Ultimately, the aim is to move away from single-use items where possible.</p>

6. Dispose	The aim of this procedure is to reduce the amount of material for disposal. All materials that have come to the end of life should be disposed of through the appropriate method according to the recyclability of the materials.
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\*We also need to consider those occasions when we have an influx onto site or guests visiting campus i.e. Open Days, Applicant Visit Days, Student Move in, attendees of concerts and performances, special events, school trips, summer schools and conferencing.

Stage two of the project are to identify other single-use plastics used within the University, firstly within catering operations and see how these can be either reduced or eliminated.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

- Why don't you just swap to compostable plastic/packaging? See point 5. above
- Why don't you bring in recycable coffee cups? See point 4. above
- What happens to the 30 pence charge? All money made from the University run catering outlets gets re-invested back into the University, for academic year 2018/19 there has been no increase in the price of a cup of coffee/hot drinks.
- Where can I get drinking water? We have over 30 publicly accessible 'refill' stations across the Bath Spa estate - these machines have a fast flow so you can top up your bottle (with either chilled or ambient water) - download the refill app to find where they all are. Our catering outlets including the Student Union Bar have cups that you can use to drink in, please don't take them away.
- Where can I find out what I can recycle?  
Back in 2014 we introduced a new simplified recycling system across the entire Bath Spa University estate. For details on what can go in the Mixed Recycling, Non-Recycling and Food Waste bins visit our [intranet](#) - we also have [further details](#) for staff who may encounter more specialist waste as part of their work.
- What else are you doing? What can I do?
  - For the start of the academic year - Cafe Commons has switched from purchasing milk in 4pt containers to buying in bulk 25 pint boxes to reduce the amount on plastic used.
  - Our redesigned waste and recycling system in 2014 - was based on going bagless across the Bath Spa estate. This has led to the reduction of around 6,000 plastic bags per year being used by our domestic services and portorage staff.
  - We stopped supplying plastic straws in early 2018 after students' requests.
  - We encourage students to not flush items down the loo (apart from the 3-p's pee, poo & paper) to reduce the amount of plastic from menstrual hygiene and other products finding their way into the aqua-environment
  - We ran a reusable menstrual product stall during academic year 2018/19 and look to do more this coming year 2019/20.

- Please take a few moments to familiarise yourself with what goes in each bin - this could be different from where you've recently moved from (as each local authority/country has its own scheme in place).
- Think about any actions you might take in terms of the waste hierarchy - so prevention is better than recycling!
- If you do use a disposable cup, the lid and sleeve can go in the mixed recycling bin, any coffee/hot drink dregs to go into the food waste bin and the cup goes into the non-recyclables - where it is processed at an energy from waste plant.
- Please dispose of [cigarette butts](#) responsibly - we've installed a large number of 'Drop-its' and cigarette bins across the Bath Spa Estate

## References:

- Poortinga, W. (2017) <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/687689-curbing-coffee-cup-usage>  
<http://www.wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Understanding%20plastic%20packaging%20FINAL.pdf>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/mar/06/rubbish-landfill-biodegradable-consumables-rubber>  
<https://www.raconteur.net/sustainability/tackling-single-use-plastic>  
[Responses to the Government call for evidence on plastics](#) (2018)  
<https://www.resourcefutures.co.uk/the-lifetime-of-plastic/>  
 Lerpiniere, D. (2018) <https://www.resourcefutures.co.uk/the-lifetime-of-plastic/> last accessed 14.08.2019

Other Universities introducing a charge or levy on disposable cups to drive down usage:

Aston University (Sept 17) 15p charge on disposables (via EAUC email list)

[University of Brighton](#) (Aug 2018) -25p charge (previously - 10p charge Sept 17-Aug18)

[University College London](#) (Sept 2018) - 15p charge

De Montfort University (from Oct 2018) - 25p charge (via EAUC email list)

[University of Edinburgh](#) (Aug 2018) - 25p charge

[University of Exeter](#) (Sept 2017) - 25p charge

[University of Gloucestershire](#) (Jul 2018) - stopped the sale of disposable coffee cups

Keele University (from Oct 2018) - 25p charge (via EAUC email list)

King's College London - soon swapping to a charge (via EAUC email list)

University of Lincoln - 15p charge (via EAUC email list)

University of Nottingham - 20p charge and 20p discount (via EAUC email list) (i.e you'll be charged 20p for a disposable, a set amount for drinking-in and 20p discount if you have a reusable cup)

Royal Agricultural University - 10p charge (via EAUC email list)

[University of Reading](#) (Apr 2018) - 20p charge

[University of Winchester](#) (Nov 2016) - 25p charge

Other retailers (this is not an exhaustive list):

Boston Tea Party (June 2018) - stopped the sale of disposable cups

Pret (Jan 2018) - 50p discount

Waitrose (Autumn 2018) - stopped serving drinks in disposable cups

Windmill Hill City Farm - 1st Oct 2018 will stop the sale of single use disposable cups