

Our approach to managing
single-use plastics on our
Exeter campuses

Foreword



“I am delighted to support the Plastic Free Exeter campaign and the flagship Single-Use Plastics Strategy that has been developed by the University of Exeter. I am Professor of Ecotoxicology in the College

of Life and Environmental Sciences and my research team has been at the forefront in studying the impact of marine plastic debris. We have yet to find a seawater sample from anywhere in the world that doesn't contain microscopic pieces of plastic. Our research has highlighted the harm that these tiny particles cause to marine life and the potential for them to be taken up into the food chain. The best way to tackle this pollution problem is to stop litter reaching the sea in the first place, and this ground breaking campaign from the University's Plastic Free Exeter campaign is a fantastic step in the right direction.”

**Professor Tamara Galloway,
Chair in Ecotoxicology**



“To address the challenge of Plastics in Society we need a fundamental shift in the way we design, use and recover plastics. This requires a profound shift in the material choices we make and

deeper understanding at the outset of where plastics end up. We need to design out waste. The Exeter University campaign is an excellent example of a building block for a new plastics circular economy where nothing leaks into the oceans, air or land. I am delighted to support this initiative and helping to promote and amplify its impact. Congratulations to the team and the University for taking leadership on this topic.”

**Professor Peter Hopkinson, Director,
Exeter Centre for Circular Economy**

An underwater photograph showing a school of small fish swimming in clear blue water. In the foreground, two larger, striped fish are visible. The water is slightly hazy, and there are some small, indistinct objects floating in the background, possibly representing plastic pollution.

Introduction

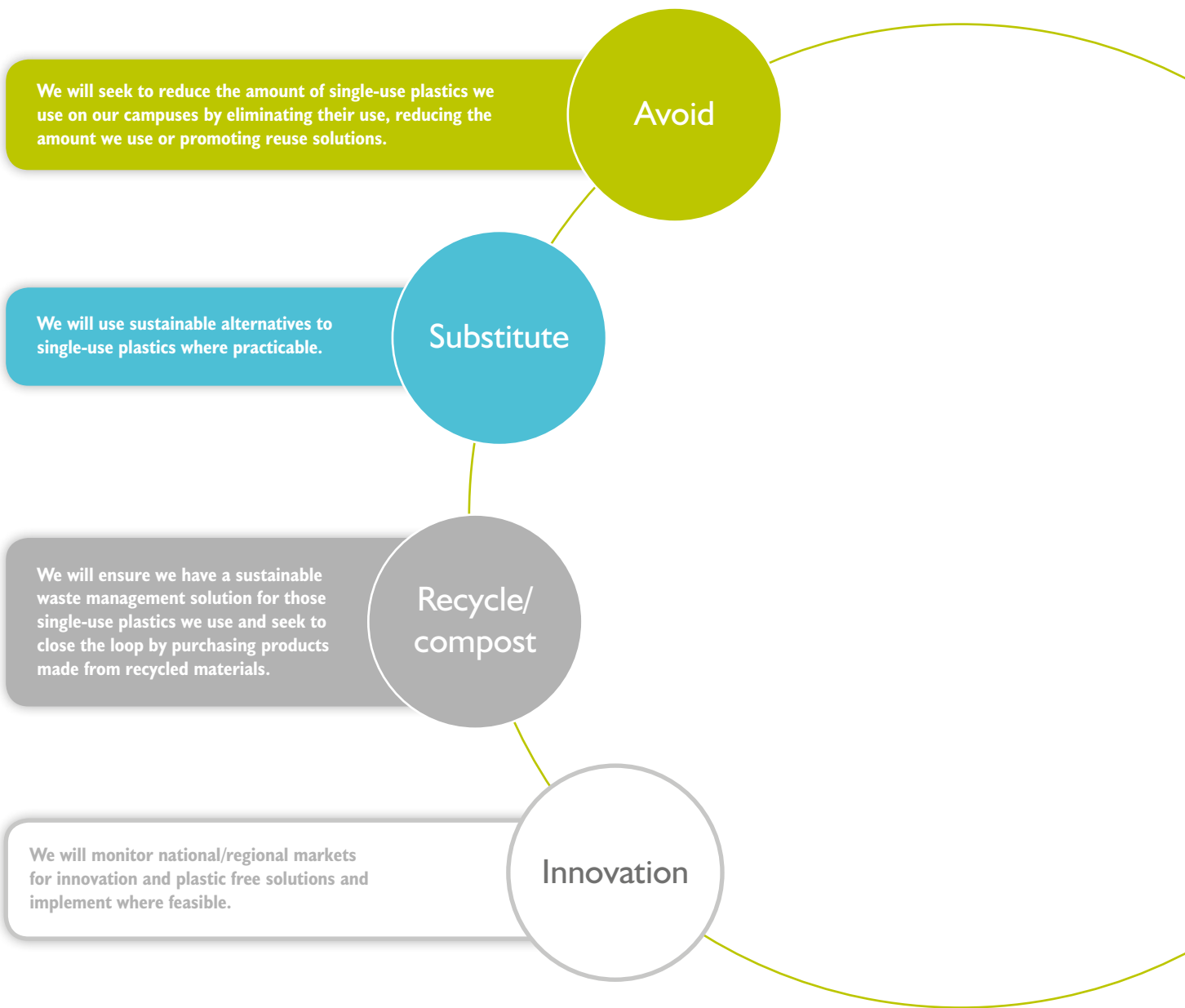
In May 2018, the University of Exeter became the Flagship Employer for the 'Plastic Free Exeter' campaign. As an organisation we are renowned for world leading research in the fields of plastics additives and marine plastic pollution and micro-plastics. This research has influenced and contributed directly to the filming of the Blue Planet 2 series. This presents a tremendous opportunity to showcase our achievements to date in addressing single-use plastics and to outline our plans for delivering our commitment to reduce single-use plastics on our Exeter campuses.

The range of single-use plastics on our campuses is diverse and the issue of addressing them is a complex one. As an organisation, we recognise that we won't be able to eliminate all single-use plastics however we will adopt a whole institution approach, apply circular economy principles, develop pragmatic solutions with impact and work in partnership with third parties who provide retail, catering and residential services on our campuses. This will ensure we use less single-use plastics, utilise alternative materials and adopt sustainable disposal solutions wherever possible. This is a joint plan which is supported by the University of Exeter and the Students' Guild.

A separate plan will be developed by FXPlus for the Penryn Campus.

Our commitments

We will ensure that the best environmental outcome is achieved by adopting a hierarchical approach to managing single-use plastics.





Working together

Initiatives will be established and monitored by project leads however the success of the strategy will be dependent on the active participation of all staff and students. We will also work with all relevant partners to encourage them to address single-use plastics on our campuses including:

- Camper
- Costa
- FXPlus
- INTO
- Northcott Theatre
- Pret a Manger
- UPP
- Other third party vendors

Education for sustainability

The University will provide opportunities to learn from the implementation of this strategy as well as provide opportunities for students to inform the direction of the strategy in the future. This will be achieved via the Grand Challenges Programme and Green Consultants initiative.

Our research

We will seek new opportunities and continue our research into the impact of single-use plastics on marine and terrestrial life, the development of alternative materials and new ways to design, use and recover plastics.

Our communication

The University will provide opportunities for staff, students and visitors to learn more about single-use plastics, identify practical action that individuals can take to learn and to share best practice. This will include:

- Cascading learning and highlighting achievements via the Plastic Free Exeter initiatives and relevant sector bodies such EAUC, TUCO, BACHE, etc.

- Seeking opportunities for knowledge exchange with our partners, suppliers and the wider sector.
- Sharing information and/or host workshops at key events such as the staff festival, freshers' fair, sustainable roadshows, etc.
- Hosting seminars showcasing world class research.
- Providing guidance and information on the Sustainability website.
- Working with the Students' Guild to develop single-use plastic behaviour change initiatives.
- Integrating into relevant existing guidance and communications eg, Sustainable Event Guide, terms and conditions, Eco Conference Package.

Measuring success

We will monitor the implementation of the plan internally via the Sustainability Team in liaison with the Advocate Climate Taskforce and Faculty Sustainability committees and report annually to the Environmental Sustainability Dual Assurance Team and University Council.

We will develop clear key performance indicators and targets for the strategy.

Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals

This plan supports the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

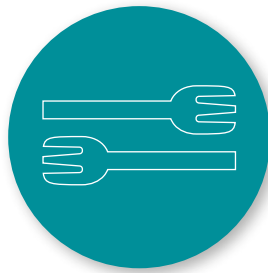


Our commodity groups

We will take action to address single-use plastics in the following commodity groups.



Beverages



Food



Marketing materials,
event consumables
and printing



Toiletries
and hygiene
products



Cleaning
products



Laboratory
consumables



Other

These actions will be delivered by

University of Exeter:

- E&S** Strategic Waste and Resources Manager
- MO** Assistant Director - Marketing Operations
- P&C** Print and Copy Services Manager
- D** Head of Multimedia Design Studio
- EO** Head of Event Operations
- FO** Head of Facilities Operations
- C&R** Director of Catering and Retail Services
- CS** Assistant Director Commercial Services
- O** Operations Manager (Hospitality)
- RS** Retail Shops Manager
- TO** Technical Operations Manager
- E** Director of Engineering and Direct Works
- S** Assistant Director of Sport

Students' Guild

- DCS** Director of Commercial Services
- W&D** Vice-President Welfare and Diversity

Avoid

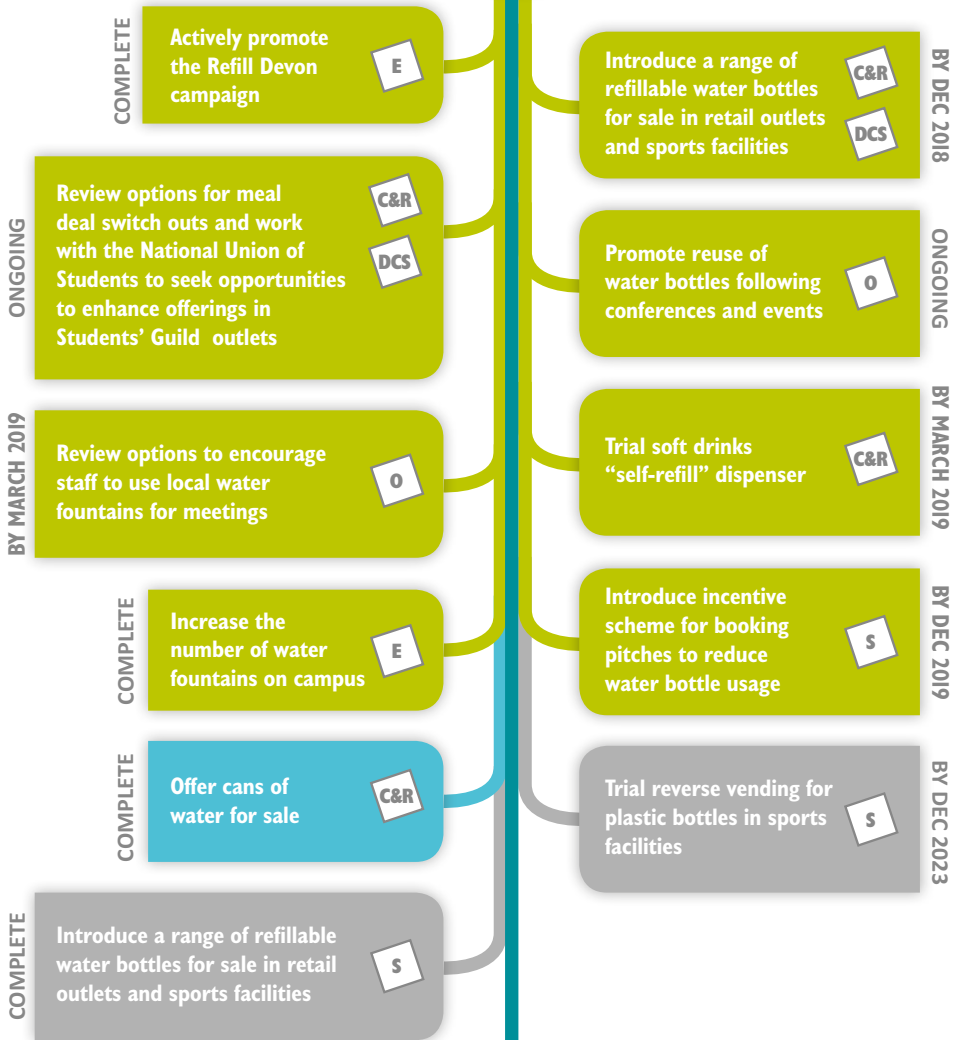
Substitute

Recycle/compost

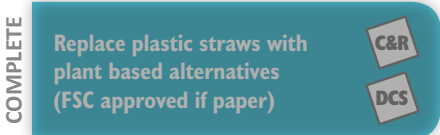
Innovation

Beverages

Beverage bottles



Straws





Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Coffee cups (disposable)

Stirrers

ACHIEVED
Expand our range of reusable coffee cups in all University of Exeter and Students' Guild outlets
C&R
DCS
P&C

COMPLETE
Ensure reusable tea spoons are available in restaurants and cafés
C&R
DCS

ACHIEVED
Maintain the disposable coffee cup charge of 25p in all University of Exeter and Students' Guild outlets
C&R
DCS

COMPLETE
Replace plastic stirrers with FSC wooden stirrers
C&R

COMPLETE
Investigate the feasibility of plant based and recyclable coffee cup solutions and determine University of Exeter and Students' Guild policy for retail, catering and vending
C&R
E&S

Wine/beer glasses

COMPLETE
Trial a coffee cup recycling scheme on our St Luke's Campus
F

COMPLETE
Trial cup deposit scheme at large events
C&R
DCS

Water cooler cups

ONGOING
Review recycling facilities at large events
F

COMPLETE
Replace with plant based or paper alternatives and provide glass options in hubs and restaurants
C&R

Food

Condiment sachets

COMPLETE
Introduce a system of providing sachets 'on request' to reduce number of items taken but not used
C&R
DCS

BY DEC 2023
Introduce pump dispensers for ketchup and mayonnaise in restaurant areas
C&R
DCS

ONGOING
Consider the introduction of bioplastic solutions as the market develops
C&R
DCS

Cutlery

COMPLETE
Replace all plastic cutlery with either plant based or wooden materials. Provide reusable cutlery in restaurants
C&R
DCS

Salad bowls and fruit pots

COMPLETE
Review plant-based alternatives (veg ware or cardboard)
C&R
DCS

Crisps and confectionery

BY DEC 2020
Monitor national/regional retail environment for innovation and plastic free solutions and implement where feasible
C&R
DCS

Sandwiches and wraps

ONGOING
Monitor national/regional marketplace for innovation and plastic free solutions and implement where feasible
C&R
DCS

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Marketing materials, event consumables and printing

Balloons

COMPLETE Cease the use of mylar (foiled) balloons and helium use for balloons on our campuses **EO**

IN PLACE Maintain policy of no external balloon or paper lantern releases **EO**

COMPLETE Promote sustainable alternatives to balloon decorations **EO**

Confetti and table glitter

ONGOING Cease the use of all types of table glitter and non-biodegradable confetti by University of Exeter **EO**

IN PLACE Maintain our policy to use biodegradable confetti at external wedding and events **EO**

ONGOING Promote biodegradable festival glitter **W&D**

Banners

ONGOING Avoid date stamping banners so that they can be reused **MO**

ONGOING Investigate and implement sustainable disposal solution for banners **F**

Delegate badges

COMPLETE Promote the use of plastic free delegate badges **EO**

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Marketing materials, event consumables and printing

Freebies

COMPLETE
Promote the Sustainable Freebie Guide **E&S**

COMPLETE
Exclude single-use plastic freebies from Freshers' Pack and at recruitment events **W&D**

Matt lamination

Monitor national/regional marketplace for plastic free/recyclable alternatives **D**

BY DEC 2023

Laminated sheets

Add a reminder when choosing laminating "Do you really need to laminate this?" **P&C**

BY SEPT 2019

Mailing film (brochures, prospectuses, newsletters)

IN PLACE
Maintain 'digital first' as print philosophy **MO**

BY DEC 2023
Continue to use biodegradable mailing films but also look into alternative materials **MO**

Stickers

Remove vinyl stickers from range and offer paper only solution **P&C**

BY DEC 2023

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Toiletries and hygiene products

Hospitality packs

Cotton buds

BY MARCH 2019

Provide hospitality packs on request only

CS

ONGOING

Monitor the market place for alternatives to plastic bottles/packaging

F

All cotton buds sold in the University of Exeter and Students' Guild outlets will have stems made from paper

RS

DCS

COMPLETE

Personal care products

(toiletries, make-up and suncreams)

Remove all products from the University of Exeter and Students' Guild outlets that contain plastic microbeads

RS

DCS

ACHIEVED

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Cleaning products

Socket mops

IN PLACE
Cease to use single-use socket mops **F**

IN PLACE
Introduce a floor mop system using a washable cloth system **F**

Black bags

Maintain roll out of 'bin free' offices initiative to reduce the amount used **F**

COMPLETE

Cleaning product bottles

Maintain the policy of bulk purchase and decanting into reusable bottles **F**

IN PLACE

Trigger sprays

IN PLACE
Maintain policy to reuse trigger sprays and only replace once damaged **F**

Overshoes

Replace disposal overshoes with new poolside management regime **S**

BY FEB 2019

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Laboratory consumables

Ice boxes

Purchase cold/frozen consumables from suppliers who run a reuse ice box scheme

BY MARCH 2020

Pipette tip boxes

Purchase loose tips and refill boxes where experiments and health and safety requirements allow. When not possible use pipette tip stacks rather than boxes and purchase from supplier who will recycle inserts

BY MARCH 2019

Cool packs

Purchase cold/frozen consumables from suppliers who use non-toxic chemicals in cool packs which can be disposed of in drains and packaging can be recycled

BY MARCH 2020



Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Other

Carrier bags

COMPLETE
Review carrier bag charging structure
C&R
DCS

IN PLACE
Maintain policy of 'on request' only system
C&R
DCS

IN PLACE
Continue to sell branded cotton tote bags
P&C

Printer cartridges

Continue to use multi-functional devices to reduce the number of cartridges
P&C
IN PLACE

Maintain our recycling arrangements for printer cartridges
F
IN PLACE

Packaging materials

Promote reuse of packaging materials
E&S
ONGOING

Review options to specify plastic free packaging such as shredded card and/or brown paper, corn starch chips, etc)
E&S
ONGOING

Monitor market for innovations in packaging
D
ONGOING

Avoid

Substitute

Recycle/compost

Innovation

Our procurement

The Procurement team will fully support the initiative and will work with its clients with support from the Sustainability team to incorporate the reduction of single-use plastics and sustainable waste disposal solutions, where it can, on a case-by-case basis.

We will include single-use plastics in our Procurement Strategy Document within the Sustainability section so that it is considered by both the University and the client when formalising the procurement strategy for each project. We will consider options for addressing single-use plastics within the tender scoring process.

We will work with existing suppliers to reduce the use of plastic packaging and help catalyse innovation in single-use plastic solutions.





www.exeter.ac.uk/sustainability

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