

# Reducing food waste at Swansea University

## Introduction

Swansea university was founded in 1920 and has 16,000 students and 2,500 staff. Campus catering operate a variety of restaurants and coffee shops on the university campus in addition to providing event and hospitality catering.

The campus has three restaurants:

- The Venue offers a varied daily menu including pasta, fish, salads and jacket potatoes.
- Fusion Café serves traditional cooked breakfast, authentic Asian cuisine and speciality coffee; and
- Taliesin Theatre offers a daily menu of sushi, pasta, speciality wraps and traditional locally made cakes.

There is also a variety of vending machines throughout the campus.

The University produced its first Sustainable Food Policy in 2010, and holds a number of awards including the Soil Association's Food For Life Bronze Catering Mark.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement a wide range of waste reduction activities have been undertaken realising cost **savings of over £9,500 per year** in food procurement costs alone.



"We have introduced a food waste audit procedure which monitors our operations and identifies any major waste issues. Consequently our food offering is becoming more sustainable leading to cost savings which in turn enables us to maintain prices when raw material costs are rising."

**Les Carmichael, Catering Manager, Swansea University**

## Waste Reduction in Campus Catering

Following a review of catering activities on campus, and the introduction of waste audit procedures, a number of simple, zero cost or low cost measures were implemented to reduce food waste. Savings figures are procurement costs only and exclude other savings such as labour involved in preparation. The measures implemented included:

### Ordering and the Supply Chain

- Rationalisation and reduction of supplier deliveries, using local suppliers where possible, reducing carbon emissions.
- Use of reusable and returnable packaging is encouraged.
- Monday's stock check frequently identified a large number of bananas past their best being left over from the weekend. Halving the quantity of the banana order on a Friday resulted in a 5kg per week reduction in waste and **savings of around £250 per year.**

### Menus

- The introduction of carvery lunches in the outlets (as opposed to a wide range of cafeteria service plated meals) has reduced food waste by 100 portions per week with end of joints being used for cold meats the following day **saving around £5,000 per year.**
- Rationalisation of the evening menu at the Fusion Cafe has reduced the number of main courses from 6 to 4. This has helped to cut food waste by 30%, primarily due to reduced end of service surplus.

### Processes

- Whereas 10 portions of tuna used to be sent each day to satellite units, this has been reviewed and reduced to 3 or 4, with further portions supplied on-demand as required. This approach has led to the reduction in the waste of 40 portions per week of tuna, cheese and beans, **saving around £800 per year.**

- Improvement of communication between the various unit supervisors helped minimise waste on items through the sharing of short shelf life stock and minimising over ordering.

### Production

- Production methods have been reviewed and improved to include greater use of batch cooking leading to greater efficiencies in labour and heating.
- Food is now cooked closer to service times, allowing for variables such as weather and events on site to be taken into account. This in turn has led to less food waste at the end of service.
- Gravy is now made 'from scratch' using meat stock, which was previously thrown away, enabling the purchase of gravy mix and its packaging to be eliminated.
- A new curry recipe incorporating fresh herbs and spices rather than bought in curry sauces has led to 150 less curry sauce bottles being procured, providing an overall **saving of around £600 per year.**
- Production of freshly prepared stuffing has allowed the use of herbs from the on-site garden and breadcrumbs from crusts and loaf ends which would have previously been wasted.



## Service

- Following a review of plate waste, it was identified that salad garnish was not being eaten by 75% of customers. Garnish has been removed from plates, speeding up service and delivering **savings of £3,000 per year** on the procurement of salad items.
- The same review identified that food was also being wasted by over filling of plates. The size of the serving plates have been reduced to 10" to counter this practice.
- Staff receive training in portion control and are given periodic refresher training which helps to reduce plate waste.

## Overall impact of actions

Undertaking a review of catering operations at Swansea University, combined with waste monitoring procedures, has highlighted the key areas of food and packaging waste. As a result a number of very practical and low cost measures have been implemented. These measures have led to an overall reduction in food waste of over 20% from the baseline. This in turn has delivered **costs savings of over £9,500 per year** in food procurement costs alone.

Next steps for the team include: working towards the Silver Catering Mark; sharing their good practice through a webinar for the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and looking into opportunities for the redistribution of surplus food through local charities.



**The Campus Catering Team**

## The Hospitality and Food Service Agreement

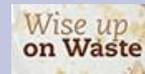
In 2012, WRAP launched the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement. This is a voluntary agreement which aims to provide support to the sector to reduce waste and increase recycling rates. The agreement is flexible, enabling any size or type of organisation to sign up.

For more information, as well as tools and guidance, on WRAP's work with the Hospitality and Food Service Sector, visit [www.wrap.org.uk/hospitality](http://www.wrap.org.uk/hospitality) or email us at [hafs@wrap.org.uk](mailto:hafs@wrap.org.uk)

For more food waste reduction resources see (click on logo for link):



WRAP's Online Resource Centre, which includes downloadable tracking sheets



Unilever's free to access guidance, toolkit and 'wise up on waste' app

WRAP's vision is a world where resources are used sustainably. It works in partnership with businesses, individuals and communities to improve resource efficiency. Established as a not-for-profit company in 2000, WRAP is backed by Government funding from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

While we have tried to make sure this case study is accurate, we cannot accept responsibility or be held legally responsible for any loss or damage arising out of or in connection with this information being inaccurate, incomplete or misleading. This material is copyrighted. You can copy it free of charge as long as the material is accurate and not used in a misleading context. You must identify the source of the material and acknowledge our copyright. You must not use material to endorse or suggest we have endorsed a commercial product or service. For more details please see our terms and conditions on our website at [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)

## Overall impact of actions

Introduction

Waste Reduction in Campus Catering