

Single Use Plastic and Disposable Items Policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The University of Northampton is one of the youngest Universities in the UK and one of the first to be named as a Changemaker Campus reflecting on social impact. This means that as an institution we work hard to have a positive impact on the world around us, simply put Changemaking is about *'Spotting a social or environmental problem and having the skills and grit to do something about it'*. The University recognises our activities can have a negative impact on the environment, both locally and globally and we are committed to making sustainable development part of its operations, research and curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed by the Environment & Sustainability Team on a 3-year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

2.0 OWNERSHIP

The Environment & Sustainability Team owns and manages this policy on behalf of The University of Northampton.

3.0 ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This Single-use Plastic and Disposable item policy is a corporate policy and applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of The University of Northampton including any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions.

University activity including teaching, accommodation, research, administrative and operations are under scope of this policy, considering impacts from buildings owned, operated or leased by the University. All staff, students and contractors of the University must adhere to this policy.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENT

Single-use plastic is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution across the globe and causes significant harm to wildlife and ecosystems. This problem can be reduced significantly with the controlled use and disposal of or single-use plastic and other disposable items.

This policy forms part of and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Environment Policy](#).

The University of Northampton is committed to reducing the use of single-use plastic and disposable items throughout the estate and satisfies the UK Government ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds.

Our aim is to provide suitable alternatives where possible and to encourage our staff, students and visitors to choose re-useable options whenever feasible.

This is achieved by:

- Promoting the use of re-usable coffee cups by offering a discount on drinks purchased using re-usable cups.
- Providing water stations across all university buildings to enable free water for re-fillable bottles.
- Reducing the amount of Grab & Go plastic packaging / cutlery in our catering outlets where feasible and hygienic to do so.
- Drinks served without plastic straws
- The use of wooden drinks stirrers in catering outlets

Where the use of disposable items or single-use plastic is unavoidable, emphasis

is placed on the correct disposal. All single-use recyclable items i.e. plastic bottles, containers, cartons, drink cans, etc disposed of on campus is placed in one of the mixed recycling waste bins. Coffee cups are also disposed of responsibly using the coffee cup recycling bins. Recyclable waste is then collected and sorted by our waste management contractor and sent to the recycling facility for processing.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

5.1 'Single-use plastic' is defined as all products made wholly or partly of plastic, which are intended for single use and / or for a short period of time before being disposed of.

5.2 Disposable items are defined as any items other than those made of single-use plastic, intended for single use and / or a short period of time before being disposed of.

Single-use plastic is one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution across the globe and causes significant harm to wildlife and ecosystems. This problem can be reduced significantly with the controlled use and disposal of or single-use plastic and other disposable items.

This policy forms part of and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Environment Policy](#).

The University of Northampton is committed to reducing the use of single-use plastic and disposable items throughout the estate and satisfies the UK Government ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds.

Our aim is to provide suitable alternatives where possible and to encourage our staff, students and visitors to choose re-useable options whenever feasible.

This is achieved by:

- Promoting the use of re-useable coffee cups by offering a discount on

drinks purchased using re-usable cups.

- Providing water stations across all university buildings to enable free water for re-fillable bottles.
- Reducing the amount of Grab & Go plastic packaging / cutlery in our catering outlets where feasible and hygienic to do so.
- Drinks served without plastic straws
- The use of wooden drinks stirrers in catering outlets

Where the use of disposable items or single-use plastic is unavoidable, emphasis is placed on the correct disposal. All single-use recyclable items i.e. plastic bottles, containers, cartons, drink cans, etc disposed of on campus is placed in one of the mixed recycling waste bins. Coffee cups are also disposed of responsibly using the coffee cup recycling bins. Recyclable waste is then collected and sorted by our waste management contractor and sent to the recycling facility for processing.

6.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

The Single-use Plastics Policy focuses on the first four principles of the DEFRA Waste Management Hierarchy (2011) through:

- Encouraging of the use of alternatives (**Prevent, Reduce, Re-use**)
 - Drinking cups
 - Re-fillable water bottles
 - Cutlery
 - Bags
 - PPE
- Educating staff and students in the correct way to dispose of single-use plastic items, i.e. they should be clean and dry and placed in the mixed recycling bin (**Recycle**)

In line with the guidance provided by the government ban on plastic straws our catering outlets are able to provide plastic straws on request, this ensures that in instances where using plastic straws are necessary for medical reasons, supporting the right balance between reducing environmental impact and protecting the rights of people with medical conditions and disabilities.

7.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Environment Policy](#)
- Waste Policy
- [Waste Action Plan](#) (as part of our liE Manual)
- [Carbon Management Plan](#)
- [Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)
- [University Strategic Plan](#)

8.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment must accompany this document.

9.0 VERSION CONTROL

Author: Environment & Sustainability Team, Estates & Campus Services

Author Date: 29/10/2020

Approval Signatures: TU Liaison + Sustainability Board

Approval Date: 17/11/2020 + 23/11/2020

Current Status: APPROVED

Version Control: V1

Amendments: N/A