

Waste Reduction Action Plan

Introduction

As stated in the Environment & Sustainability Policy, Aston is committed to disposing of waste responsibly as well as reducing the amount of waste it produces. The following action plan states the waste and recycling targets that have been put in place and the actions that will be implemented to help us achieve these targets.

Targets

There are two targets that have been set relating to waste and recycling as part of Aston's ISO 14001 certified environmental management system:

- To reduce our total waste production to 45kg per FTE staff and student by 2020/21
- To achieve on site recycling rates of 50% in our main waste yard for 2020/21

Table 1 shows our progress towards achieving our first target. Due to the increasing size of the University, a key performance indicator of kg/FTE has been used.

Table 2 shows our recycling rates in our main waste yard (East yard). East yard has been the focus of this target due to it being the primary waste yard at the University, with most waste being transported to this disposal area. The percentage figures are based on what has been segregated on site, as opposed to the recycling figures provided by our waste contractor. This ensures we are responsible for any changes in these figures rather than the percentages being subject to alterations in our waste contractor's disposal methods.

The waste streams included in this data do not include metals, paint tins or any clinical or hazardous waste collected in East yard. This is because we want the recycling percentages to reflect what staff and students are disposing of in their classrooms and offices, rather than the wastes which are produced by ad hoc projects and maintenance jobs.

Table 1. Total waste produced per staff and student FTE (excluding construction waste)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total Waste (T)	749.82	570.79	623.76
Staff and Student FTE	10520	11910	12625
kg of total waste per FTE	71.28	47.93	49.41

Table 2. Recycling % for East Yard waste (includes general, DMR, paper & card, glass and food)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	Total (Tonnes)	Total (Tonnes)	Total (Tonnes)
% sent as general	61.13	57.38	52.44
% sent as recycling	38.87	42.62	47.56

Waste Reduction Actions

Warp It

Aston signed up to the 'Warp It' reuse tool in February 2018. This online tool enables staff members to share items across the University and also helps with the reuse of furniture during office moves and refurbishments. Items that may otherwise have been disposed of can be used elsewhere within the University. This saves on disposal costs as well as procurement costs as it prevents staff members from buying new products if there is already something available elsewhere.

This system was initially rolled out during the summer of 2018. Moving forwards, the plan is to embed the use of Warp It effectively into current working practices and raise awareness of the tool with staff members to make the sharing of resources across the University more efficient.

This will involve:

- Working with the porters to establish the most efficient process for moving items
- Raising awareness of Warp It through the Go Green Champions, staff newsletters and magazines and promotional campaigns

Removal of Disposable Items

Reducing the number of single-use disposable items will in turn reduce the amount of waste Aston produces. These types of items are used for various purposes across departments. There are two main methods for reducing these items:

- Raising awareness through the Go Green Champion network, in particular through tasks listed in the waste & recycling workbook
- Working with specific teams and departments to find out what opportunities exist for reducing disposables and helping them to implement the necessary changes

Packaging

A significant proportion of the waste disposed of at Aston is likely to come from packaging that staff receive from suppliers. Working with suppliers to reduce this packaging or arrange for it to be taken back, would result in a decrease in the amount of waste Aston produces.

The two main barriers that need to be overcome are firstly that the supplier is unable to offer a take-back scheme and secondly, that there is no space to store the packaging until it can be collected.

These barriers can be overcome through the following actions:

- Where possible, selecting suppliers through the tendering process that are able to offer take back of their packaging
- The creation of a larger waste yard that has space for the storage of packaging awaiting collection

Recycling Actions

Raising Awareness

One of the main barriers to good levels of recycling is an awareness of what can and cannot be recycled. This can be done through:

- Raising awareness with the Go Green Champions through tasks in the workbook, workshops, e-mail reminders and information and quizzes given via Blackboard. Go Green Champions can in turn raise awareness with their colleagues and monitor recycling efforts in their offices.

Identifying and improving areas with poor segregation

- Meet with the recycling porter on a regular basis to understand areas where segregation is poor and what the main problems are
- Meet with people (e.g. the Go Green Champion) in these areas to communicate these problems and investigate opportunities for improving recycling. Changes could include waste signage, location of bins and general awareness raising.
- Monitor the bins moving forwards to establish if improvements have been made

Identify recycling opportunities

- Investigate opportunities for recycling more waste streams such as cups, polystyrene and paint tins

Food segregation

- Encourage the use of food caddies in staff kitchens, primarily through the Go Green Champion network