

# University of Greenwich

## Engagement Action Plan



Our Plan for Sustainability Engagement at Greenwich  
2024-2030

Estates & Facilities



UNIVERSITY OF  
GREENWICH

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## 1. Forward

Engaging with others holds immense significance for shaping a better future. Connected individuals become advocates for causes they believe in and assist in driving agendas to transform actions, policies and snowballing onto others in both a local to national setting. With the effects of climate change intensifying, it is important to recognise those experiencing higher rates of eco-anxiety and how engagement is crucial, both in creating safe spaces for the expression of emotion but to also motivate, illustrate and explain actions to occur on a local to national and global scale.

At Greenwich we provide a variety of educational and social environments for 25,000 students in addition to accommodating 2,000 staff split over three campuses. From digital content creation to physical displays, workshops and lectures we have a diverse array of engagement platforms and opportunities. We must maximise this variety to reach the widest possible audience in their most accessible preference.

I am pleased to endorse this Sustainability Engagement Action Plan, which outlines how we will educate, motivate and listen to our students and staff to bring about positive change. This plan aligns with our institutional values; Inclusive, Collaborative and Impactful and will assist in achieving our Strategic Priority of Connecting and Sustainable Campuses.

Chris Forster  
Director of Estates and Facilities

*“The university will create a green and sustainable university and actively encourage and support sustainable development and principles of sustainable learning and teaching practice in curriculum development and delivery.”*

*This is Our Time Corporate Strategy, Page 20*

## 2. Executive Summary

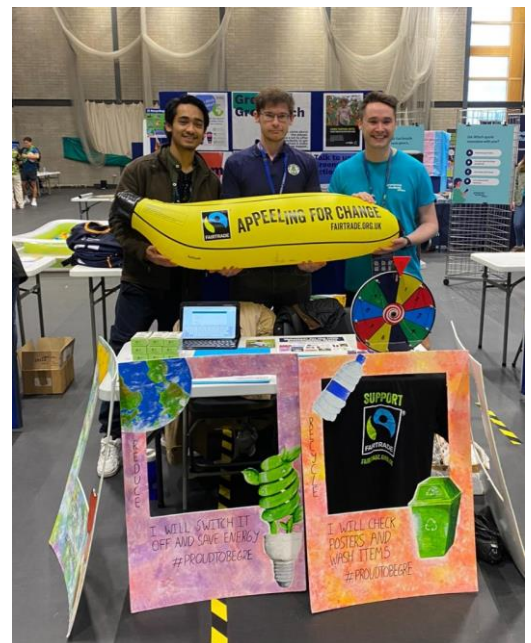
The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) in 2020 calculated that 43% of the cuts to UK net-zero require a combination of low-carbon technologies and behaviour change (installing heat pumps, switching to electric cars etc.) with a further 16% coming solely from societal or behaviour changes.

Over 90% of our students and staff consistently state that sustainability is important to them, and expect our institution to be the issue seriously. We have a responsibility to educate on the global issues of today and providing the opportunity for our students to enhance their skillset to play decisive roles later in life. We have globally recognised experts on our doorstep, that we should recognise and benefit from. A successful approach will maximise the resources we use and reuse. Our overarching ambition is set out in our Corporate Strategy: [Strategy 2030](#) and it calls on everyone to implement positive sustainable change whilst at Greenwich.

## 3. Importance of Engagement

Engaging with others is crucial to bring a sense of belonging, connection, and shared enjoyment. Research suggests that students with higher organisational engagement have a greater sense of belonging, motivation, self-confidence, and experience throughout their studying. Staff are no different, and together connected individuals can become advocates for causes they believe in; assisting in driving agendas to transform actions, policies and snowballing onto others in both a local to national setting.

For it to succeed, engagement needs to be clear, consistent, accurate and relevant to the stakeholder its being communicated too. Technological advances have exponentially increased the methods of engagement, but every stakeholder and individual will respond to these methods differently, with preferred choices that must be understood. Multiple methods are required, whilst inclusivity is vital to ensure everyone across learning styles is comfortable and aware of actions that can be accomplished.



## 4. Sustainability & Engagement

Our Sustainability Policy defines it as a driver that delivers our wider corporate strategic goals, whilst enabling societies to flourish and to protect the natural systems upon which the institution and its stakeholders ultimately depend. Internationally sustainability is known to cover '*The Three Principles of Sustainability*':

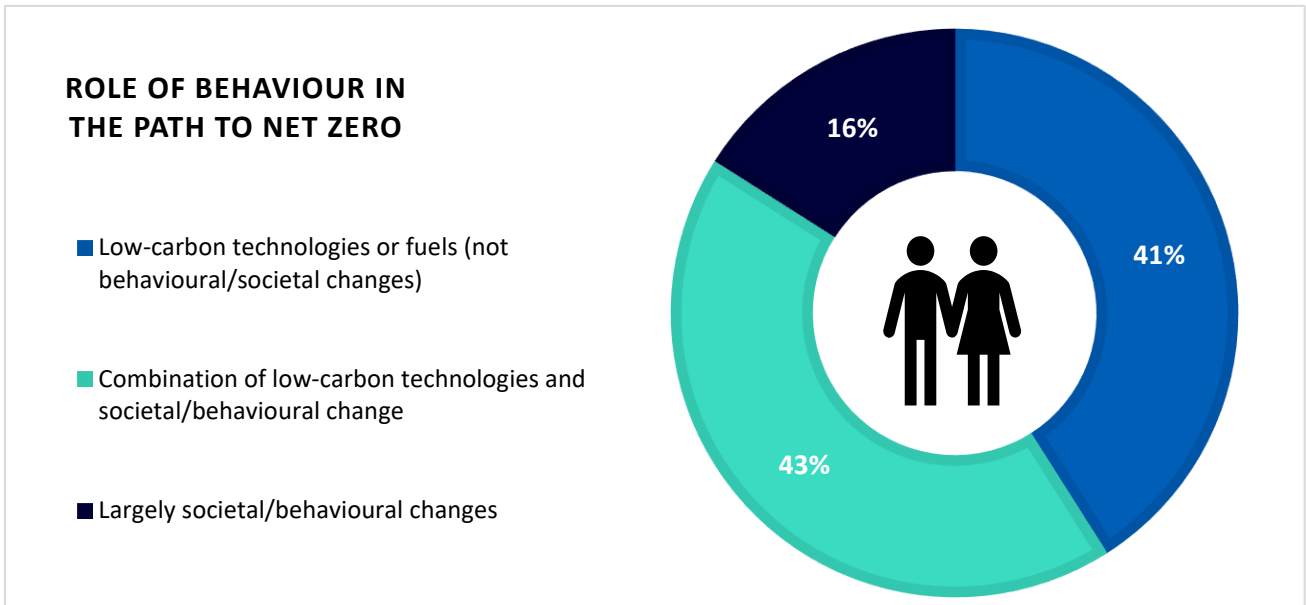
- **Social** – includes environmental justice, human health, resource security and education.
- **Economic** – includes job creation, profitability and proper accounting of ecosystem services (the wider benefits gained from nature).
- **Environment** – focussing on the well-being of the environment; water and air quality, reduction of pollution and environmental stressors.

All three principles contribute to each other; for one to succeed they all must succeed. On viewing the three principles, we must meet the needs of our staff, students and communities whilst reducing our impacts on the overall environment. As a university focusing on teaching and research, our influence is significant, and we have a responsibility to act accordingly. Our annual sustainability surveys consistently have over 90% of respondents stating that the topic of sustainability was important for them and expected the university to act.

Breaking down sustainability into engagement, it is a process that;

- Increases **knowledge** and **awareness** around sustainable development;
- Provides insight into related **challenges** and possible **solutions**;
- Develops **skills** to find the solutions address the challenges;
- **Empowers action**, both on an individualistic and wider scale.

Organisational change is crucial, but motivation towards behavioural change cannot falter. **Individual actions do make a difference**; The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) in 2020 calculated that 43% of the cuts to UK net-zero require a combination of low-carbon technologies and behaviour change (installing heat pumps, switching to electric cars etc.) with a further 16% coming solely from societal or behaviour changes.



**Engagement is not only a means to fight against climate change, but also a way to promote shared values of our vision.** Values such as respect, inclusivity, responsibility, citizenship and caring for people and planet are important to a person’s growth and development, and we hope that engagement through different channels will create a positive impact on their values.

### 5. Engaging Individuals & their Perceptions towards Sustainability

Though the World is experiencing greater impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises, the perception of ‘sustainability’ can still be polarising amongst members of the public. According to a study conducted by [YouGov \(2023\)](#), UK adults can be classified into 6 segments in terms of **priorities, perceptions of responsibility and sense of environmental impact**:

Segment	Characteristics
The Hopeful Worriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about negative impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Urgent for everyone to take action.</li> <li>• Hopeful that living sustainably is something they can achieve.</li> <li>• Higher income, highly educated.</li> </ul>
The Outside-Pointing Worriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned about negative impacts of climate change.</li> <li>• Government &amp; corporations have more responsibility than individuals.</li> <li>• Younger, highly educated.</li> </ul>
The Disempowered Environmentalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disempowered to take personal responsibility.</li> <li>• Government &amp; corporations have more responsibility.</li> <li>• Young &amp; middle-aged, higher income.</li> </ul>

The Accountable Optimists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic: personal action can make a difference.</li> <li>• Older, lower income</li> </ul>
The Externalising Passives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconcerned about climate change. Focus on other issues.</li> <li>• Personal change will make very little difference; Government has more responsibility.</li> <li>• Low-educated</li> </ul>
The Climate Change Agnostics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't believe in climate change.</li> <li>• Businesses &amp; government have more responsibility.</li> <li>• Older, lower income, lower education levels</li> </ul>

With younger cohorts from differing cultures, backgrounds and navigating a multitude of priorities throughout their university experience it is crucial for institutions to develop an engagement plan suitable for the widest possible audience. Engagement should both produce the availability of safe spaces for emotions and anxieties to be heard but to also motivate, illustrate and explain actions to occur on a local to national and global scale. The higher education sector has a responsibility to educate students on the global issues of today and to enhance their skillset to play decisive roles later in life.

## 6. Sustainability Engagement at Greenwich

The governance of sustainability starts with our **Sustainability Management Committee (SMC)** chaired by a member of the Deputy Vice Chancellor team. The group has representatives across our **Faculties and Directorates** at a senior level with one of the elected **Students' Union Officers** to ensure everyone has an equal voice in making strategic decisions regarding sustainability at Greenwich. In the Sustainability Policy it states:

*“Our role in teaching and research means we should educate future decision-makers and apply academic study to help solve many of the sustainability issues society faces ...*

*... Ensure that sustainable development is fully understood by staff and students and is enshrined within all aspects of strategy, planning and activities with resources available to enable such.”*

Our engagement pathways evolve with technological advancements alongside identified trends within new student cohorts. Digital media including social platforms, email, podcasts and webinars partner with face-to-face guest lectures, events, training and volunteer opportunities to cover the widest possible audience with available resources. Long-term projects have been designed alongside short-term standalone campaigns.

This document therefore acts as the overarching umbrella action plan for sustainability engagement in identifying the broader stakeholders, engagement methods and targets and how the specific engagement projects can be formed. The action areas incorporate:

- Energy & Carbon
- Waste & Procurement
- Buildings & Estate
- Food & Catering
- Travel & Transport
- Ecosystem Services
- Education & Learning

## Our Stakeholders & Responsibilities

Though the Sustainability Team will lead this plan collaboration is required across the University to engage the widest audience. Our list of stakeholders and their roles includes:

Stakeholders (internal & external)	Interest & Responsibility (communication specific summary)
<b>Staff</b>	
Vice Chancellor	Overall support of sustainability at senior level
Estates & Facilities (Sustainability Team)	Management & implementation of the Sustainable Engagement Action Plan to the widest audience
Estates & Facilities (wider teams)	Collaboration to ensure innovation is adequately communicated & understood to facilitate further progress
Green Champions	Dedicated staff driving change in their teams & departments
Marketing & Communications	Supporting coverage of sustainable news & innovation through digital & physical communication.
Procurement	Scrutinizing purchases & supply chain to promote circular economy & better sustainable understanding
Outreach & Events (Faculties)	Responsible for incorporating and considering sustainability into events and outreach activities
Staff (Academic & Non-academic)	Understanding the impact of sustainability within research, teaching, work processes & following operational guidance
Accommodation Services	Supporting, promoting and encouraging positive behaviours in halls with escalation processes associated with poor conduct
<b>Students</b>	
Student's Union	Collaboration to adopt sustainable practices into operations & activities & supporting positive behaviour in student cohorts
Societies & Clubs	Incorporating better practices within sport & hobbies to improve environmental performance whilst retaining enjoyment
Students (UK)	Interest for organisational progress in addition to the request for increased teaching & opportunity in the topic
Students (Overseas)	Request for increased teaching & opportunity in the topic
<b>Contractors</b>	
Integrated Facilities Management Contract	Collaboration on positive behaviour in own staff & communicating innovations of contract to facilitate further progress
Catering Contract	Collaboration on positive behaviour in own staff & communicating innovations of contract to facilitate further progress
Other contractors/sub-contractors	Collaboration on positive behaviour in own staff & communicating innovations of contract to facilitate further progress
<b>Others</b>	
Research Funding Bodies	Interest in innovations in demonstrating resilience & responsibility
Local National Agencies & Charities	Compliance, responsibility & collaboration possibilities on environmental performance
Universities & Higher Education agencies	Sharing of knowledge, best practice & collaboration to further sustainable progress throughout the sector
Local community groups	Interest in local issues & how environmental impacts are being reduced
Visitors (Families, Tourists)	Organisational performance when family members are considering & going through the university experience
Awarding Bodies & Accreditations	Demonstration of environmental responsibility for scoring criteria/standards

## 7. Budgets & Resources

It is essential that the Sustainability Engagement Action Plan is supported financially, both within the Sustainability Team and those stakeholders backing its delivery. Steering groups within each action area have been established, which include the elements of engagement to collaborate and to maximise engagement benefits. The available budgets currently include:

### **Sustainability Team financial** allocations:

- A fully funded, permanent Engagements Officer.
- A £1,000 annual budget for engagement activities.
- An annually proportioned amount against the Biodiversity & Small Projects Budget (£15,000) to action communication of projects and the natural landscape.

### **Internal supporting financial** allocations:

- Five £1,000 student grants to deliver sustainable projects; a Living Lab partnership between the University and environmental consultancy RSK.
- £25,000 pilot funding from IFM Contractor (Sodexo) in partnership with the University to deliver the GREen Rewards behavioural change campaign.

## 8. Measuring Progress

Progress towards achieving identified actions will be communicated through the same identified engagement routes as the activities themselves. In addition, progress will be reported to the Estates & Facilities Senior Management Team, with notable achievements reporting to the Sustainable Management Committee to then the Vice-Chancellor Group and Governing Body as necessary.

Our performance will be viewable by the public Times Higher Impact and People & Planet University Green League tables and we will publish an annual report on sustainability, approved by the Vice Chancellor, providing a total summery of all progress.

Progress will also be audited externally as part of the University's Environmental Management System (to ISO14001 standards) each year.

## 9. Action Plan

Action Area	Target Audience	Aim	Progress (to date) & Action	Timeline
Overarching Sustainability Engagement	Students; Hopeful Worriers	Recruit 5 volunteers on the Eco-Volunteer Programme opportunity by the end of 2024, 10 by 2027, 20 per year by 2030	<p><u>Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eco-Volunteers Programme launched in Sep 2023.</li> <li>Opportunities include content creation, edible garden &amp; clothes swaps.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review programme end of 2024 for improvement plans.</li> <li>Enhance comms &amp; periodic promotion.</li> <li>Track participation &amp; finalise rewards.</li> </ul>	2024 leading to 2027 & 2030
	Staff & students; Disempowered Environmentalist & Outside-Pointing Worriers	Achieve 10% increase on GREen Rewards sign-up number annually	<p><u>Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched in Jan 2023. Over 1,500 users (252 staff, 1257 students) to Feb 2024.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review comms &amp; embed into student &amp; staff induction.</li> <li>Design new activities to keep engagement.</li> <li>Review overall success of initiative against cost.</li> </ul>	Annual
	Students	Maintain Green Week	<p><u>Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintained for 10+ years.</li> <li>Collaborated with Employability Team to organise Green Week with Green Careers Theme in Nov 2023.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Green Week to have differing themes.</li> <li>Collaboration with internal &amp; external partners.</li> <li>Record &amp; set targets for engagement.</li> <li>Scheduling to include digital &amp; physical engagement.</li> </ul>	Annual
	External Volunteers	Recruit 5 volunteers for the edible garden opportunity by end of 2024, reaching 10 per year by 2030	<p><u>Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First community volunteer recruited in 2023.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track participation &amp; finalise rewards.</li> <li>Engage local organisations &amp; media for promotion.</li> <li>Provide open &amp; taster days for the community.</li> </ul>	2024 leading to 2030



Social Media	Staff & students	Achieve 15% increase on Sustainability Instagram annually. A 15% per year brings a target of 1836 followers by 2030.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Followers increased from 800 to 966 between Sep-Mar.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create programme for scheduled content.</li> <li>Enhance content produced by students – for students.</li> <li>Track trends &amp; monitor success of posts to tailor.</li> </ul>	Annual leading to 2030
	Staff & students	Achieve 5% increase on Sustainability X annually. A 5% year increase at a target of 2800 followers by 2030.	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh X following months of inactivity.</li> <li>Create programme for scheduled content.</li> <li>Enhance content produced by students – for students.</li> <li>Track trends &amp; monitor success of posts to tailor.</li> </ul>	Annual
	Staff & students	Set up of a new Sustainability platform - LinkedIn	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refresh X following months of inactivity.</li> <li>Create programme for scheduled content.</li> <li>Focus platform on educational content such as case studies, seminars, workshops &amp; volunteering.</li> </ul>	2024/25
Energy & Carbon	Students in halls	Develop energy-saving campaign with Sodexo.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy-saving activities on GREen Rewards &amp; content created in form of videos &amp; tip guides.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore further GREen Rewards links with Sodexo.</li> </ul>	2024/25
	Staff	Maintain regular communication about saving energy.	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue communication plan through internal news, digital screens &amp; Green Champions</li> </ul>	Annual
Waste & Circular Economy	Students in halls	Support the Waste Action Plan target is improving the recycling rate in halls to 50% by 2025. Helping to achieve the overall target of 70% recycling rate (strategic KPI).	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligned waste posters in halls, but issues remain.</li> <li>Trialled food waste collection in Devonport Hall.</li> <li>Escalation process on waste contamination developed.</li> <li>Despite progress, recycling rates are below 40%.</li> </ul> <u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install correct oil disposal route posters in kitchens.</li> <li>To develop waste campaign in halls with Sodexo.</li> <li>To explore ways to improve food waste recycling through engagement with Sodexo.</li> </ul>	Annual

	Student in halls	Support the Waste Action Plan target of maintaining the End of Term Reuse Scheme with 1,000 bags donation and reducing end of term waste arising by 5%.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration with British Heart Foundation (BHF) maintained for 5+ years with highest figures achieved during 2023 campaign; 1,200 bags &amp; £22,000 raised.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve BHF communication for emptying of boxes.</li> <li>• Establish permanent locations of boxes.</li> <li>• Continue promotion &amp; enhance awareness across site.</li> </ul>	Annual
	Staff & students; The Externalising Passives & Climate Change Antagonists	Support the Waste Action Plan target of investigating the reasons behind waste contamination of bins in academic buildings	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the implementation of cleaner reporting &amp; escalation development in academic areas.</li> </ul>	By the end of 2024/25
Sustainable Procurement	Staff	Support the Waste Action Plan to achieve a consistent £50k furniture reuse scheme avoidance & add in a reuse sub-category into the recycling KPI.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scheme currently at £170,000 cost avoidance with over 1,000 items relocated.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement periodic promotions to staff across media.</li> <li>• Increase engagement with Capital Projects &amp; FM.</li> <li>• Increase engagement with Portering teams.</li> </ul>	Annual
Food & Catering	Staff & students,	Support Waste Action Plan target of a 50% rate of reusable cup drink sales from outlets by 2025 (20% in 2020).	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented 20p disposable cup fee in all outlets.</li> <li>• Trialled a reusable container loan scheme at Greenwich.</li> <li>• Reuse rate rose from 16% to 49.9% after fee, but sales decreased after loan scheme.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To explore further ways to increase positive behaviour.</li> </ul>	2024/25
	Staff & students	All outlets to Fairtrade products as part of accreditation & to highlight the importance of choice to customers.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairtrade accreditation was achieved in 2022-24.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness throughout the year &amp; monitor sales to understand any shift in behaviours.</li> </ul>	Annual
Travel & Transport	Staff & students	Support Green Travel Plan to increase uptake of alternative transport	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with Transport Team on promoting &amp; enhancing awareness &amp; benefit of alternative transport.</li> </ul>	Annual

Ecosystems services	Staff & students;	Support the Biodiversity Action Plan target of establishing a biodiversity monitoring scheme.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Living Lab project establishing a monitoring scheme April- June 2024.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore ways of continuing the project after June 2024.</li> <li>Establish the scheme across all campuses.</li> </ul>	2024
Sustainability Education & Learning	Green Champions (GC)	Achieve 85% satisfaction of meetings & trainings. 15 action plans developed by champions.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 70 joined up to Mar 2024.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To evaluate the network by feedback from GCs.</li> <li>To develop new plans &amp; framework of GC network.</li> </ul>	2024/25
	Academics	Continue to support academics in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted 19 guest lectures/ workshops/ induction with students across 10 departments up to March 2024.</li> <li>Online session recordings uploaded to UoG website.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue academic support &amp; explore new engagement.</li> </ul>	Annual
	Staff	Continue to support staff development.	<u>Progress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three staff-away sessions in Edible Garden completed.</li> <li>Biodiversity monitoring programme launched 2024.</li> </ul> <u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance opportunity for staff away days.</li> <li>Evaluate alternative possibilities for staff development.</li> </ul>	Annual
	Staff & students	Embed sustainability into wellbeing	<u>Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To lead garden sessions in staff mental health day.</li> </ul>	Annual

## 10. Appendix (specific projects at improving behaviours)

These are examples of the initiatives, innovations and collaborations taken by our students and staff to push towards a zero waste and circular economy approach in all activities.

### a. Make Your Change

Make Your Change is our overarching engagement campaign encouraging students and staff to take small, personal actions both inside of the university and out, focussed on eight areas: Saving Energy, Consider Your Purchases, Saving Water, Recycling, Transport & Travel, Caring for the Environment, Getting Involved, Learning More. All areas are underpinned by this core message of **making a change** both at the university but also on a personal level. By challenging ourselves to review their impacts and areas of influence, Make Your Change aims to inspire the whole community into take action to ensure we are prepared for the future.

### b. Green Champions

In 2023, we relaunched the Green Champions Network; staff volunteers who are passionate about learning more about sustainability and promoting behavioural change in their teams. Staff attend regular trainings to boost their knowledge and skills, join an enthusiastic network of staff to share ideas, and drive the change they want to see with support from Sustainability Team. As of spring 2024 there are over 70 Green Champions spanning all Faculties.

### c. Green Rewards

GREen Rewards is an app and online platform where students and staff can record their sustainable actions – like alternative transport, recycling correctly and buying better in the shops – and earn Green Points. Each month, the top three point-earning staff and students can win a £75 voucher (1st place), a £50 voucher (2nd place) and a £35 voucher (3rd place). Each term, GREen Rewards also awards a split of £1,200 to the top three performing teams to donate to their top-voted charity. By providing incentives and gamified features, GREen Rewards aims to motivate staff and students to start changing their behaviours and hopefully developing new sustainable habits. Over 1,200 sign ups have been logged.

### d. Social Media

Social media is the biggest boom of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, though choosing the right platforms to engage is crucial for the message to be heard. The Sustainability Team have X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram accounts, with our Jobshop students taking a lead in implementing a scheduled post programme. In three months from 2024, Instagram reached 6,154 accounts more than the previous months and obtained a 6.9% increase in followers.

Approval Date: 21/06/2024

Approved By: Chris Forster (Director of Estates & Facilities)

Re-Approval Timeframe: Updates within Annual Reports

