

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Sustainability Department Drives Single-use Plastics Review



The University of Birmingham is a public research university located in Edgbaston, Birmingham, United Kingdom. It received its royal charter in 1900 as a successor to Queen's College, Birmingham and Mason Science College, making it the first English civic or 'red brick' university to receive its own royal charter.

THE CHALLENGE

The University Estates Department was aware that single-use plastics were an issue across the University. As it engaged in its large scale building and refurbishment projects, they wanted to understand more about the types of plastics being used, and identify potential solutions to either eradicate them or recycle them.

THE SOLUTION

Sitemark's independent review provided the ideal solution. An audit of all construction and refurbishment projects was undertaken. The process included an in-depth evaluation of the single-use plastics, the various uses, identification of alternative solutions and options to recycle the material used in each location.

THE RESULT

- ✓ Sitemark identified all of the single-use plastics entering the facility, via major build projects and large refurbishment projects within the University's building programme.
- ✓ Samples and analysis were undertaken of all materials, to identify each specific type of plastic via an independent testing house.
- ✓ Alternative solutions to Single-use plastics were identified for some of the items.
- ✓ Details of alternative service providers were identified for the University, including basic due diligence research on each supplier.
- ✓ Within the final report a complete overview of all plastic waste streams was provided, to ensure that recycling solutions could be put in place for all of the material produced on each project where alternative solutions were not available.
- ✓ As a result of the report, the University has now started to include a requirement for all prospective contractors to comply with a set of new Single-use plastic protocols, when tendering for major projects within the site.

"Working with Sitemark gave us an insight into how single use plastics are arriving on our facility and what they are being used for. We were then able to put together some basic protocols to reduce their use, identify alternatives, or recycle the resulting material"

Lydia Dutton, Sustainability Manager



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