



# RUSU Staff Sustainability Audit 19/20

Audits completed by departmental Green Ambassadors alongside RUSU President Molli Cleaver and Inclusivity Coordinator Kyle Smith.

External audit completed by Luke Cantellow alongside Kyle Smith.

Collated by Kyle Smith.

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# EXTERNAL AUDIT

Completed by Luke Cantellow ([l.j.cantellow@reading.ac.uk](mailto:l.j.cantellow@reading.ac.uk))

## Waste Observations

In the general building, there are a lot of general waste bins (black bins/black bags). Locations of available recycling bins have not been considered, and signage/colour coding is inconsistent. There is a lot of visual noise which detracts from seeing the bins. In offices, consideration of the removal of local bins to desks for more strategic located recycling facilities.

## Energy Observations

On the walk around while in the plant room PRG83 some missing heat jackets were discovered not on the pipe work (efficiency opportunity) and a job has been raised to have these replace WREN 2053804. Instances of light bulbs not working and left on which if reporting would have saved energy.

In relation to the controls of lighting and heating, it was noted that there was a lighting/heating remote in the night club though all the lighting was on in the middle of the day with no one there (as well as digital notice board on behind the bars). Lighting in Mojos and Monterey – can some be switched off during the day?

Heaters on in areas whilst no one is there, such as within the student media area.

## Other Observations

Came across a leaking urinal wasting water that could have be reported.

There are questions on the obligation of third party suppliers in the building in how (and to what extent) they support RUSU in its Green ambition. These might be contract obligation or not. How they should manage the waste and recycling / what product they have on sale / plus their supply chains.

In the staff room there was no recycling bin, and would it be better to use a tea towel instead of hand towels? Would a kettle be more sustainable than the hot water dispenser?

Plastic cups downstairs in the Representation and Advice office – good for students but can staff use reusable alternatives?

Denoted a lack of printing or flyer policy.

Heating on with windows open in the RUSU boardroom.

# INTERNAL AUDITS

## Activities Office

Completed by Dan Jones ([d.jones2@reading.ac.uk](mailto:d.jones2@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Kyle Smith ([k.smith3@reading.ac.uk](mailto:k.smith3@reading.ac.uk))

### Waste Observations

There are plenty of recycling bins available in the office. Printing is usually done only when necessary, though there is a lot of printing done for invoices. No printing policy exists, with the exception of a policy on society printing. Single-use items are not used in activities.

The office has moved towards using more sustainable and environmentally friendly products for promotional fayres and freebies.

It was noted that the office received a lot of boxed deliveries which results in high levels of cardboard waste.

### Energy Observations

The department makes use of a last one out checklist, and items are switched off overnight, with the exception of some temporary media screens that cannot be turned off from standby mode.

Lights remain on all day due to the fact the office does not have any access to natural light. Future work could consider the possibility of adding natural light through some sort of skylight or similar fitting.

The office is heated but maintained at a standard, normal temperature. Noted previous issues have been observed with the heating being faulty.

### Travel Observations

Staff members generally drive to work though this is necessary for all due to the commuting distance. There is no opportunity for car sharing due to travel routes.

Staff members with long commutes might have the opportunity to work from home, when applicable. Staff within student activities are typically quite student facing, and so working from home is not always practical.

### Progress Tracking

Staff members are aware of the Jump platform, and do not currently set green targets. The department is prioritising ordering from sustainable suppliers.

## Advice Office

Completed by Clare Lowe ([c.lowe@reading.ac.uk](mailto:c.lowe@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Kyle Smith ([k.smith3@reading.ac.uk](mailto:k.smith3@reading.ac.uk))

### Waste Observations

Whilst there is a recycling bin available for paper, the nearest general recycling bin is by Cereal Works in the corridor. A closer recycling bin for cans, plastic bottles etc. would make recycling much more convenient.

There is no printing policy in place, but the team are transitioning away from hard-copy flyers and booklets. Staff make a conscious effort to keep things electronic where possible and restrict usage of paper to only when necessary.

Overall, very little use of single-use items with staff using mugs and/or cups to drink from. A positive, proactive approach is taken by staff towards being more sustainable.

### Energy Observations

The department does not utilise a formal 'last one out' checklist, but as a general rule unnecessary electronic items are not left on overnight. Exceptions to this rule include telephones, the fridge, and computer monitors, which themselves could be turned off to reduce energy usage.

The office is heated via a wall radiator, and the team have also acquired oil radiators. The central heating system is described as faulty and the advice team do not control the heating in the room. No policy exists regarding office temperature.

Lights are on throughout the day in the advice department as there is very little natural light available, with one small window at the back of the room. Lights in the interview rooms are now controlled automatically, to help reduce energy consumption.

### Travel Observations

Staff within the department commute to work via a mix of public transport, walking, and driving. At present no opportunity exists for car sharing due to the differences in commuting methods and routes.

Staff are able to work from home when applicable, which reduces travel necessity. This is dependent on individual circumstances within advice as the role often involves dealing with students directly.

A flexible approach to work would be beneficial in working hours changing slightly during periods of consistently heavy traffic (due to roadworks etc.). This would allow for a reduction in fuel consumption, which is more sustainable.

### **Progress tracking**

Staff do not currently set green targets, but all are aware of and use the Jump platform.

### **Other observations:**

Staff in general are well attuned towards environmental issues, and are happy to have discussions about it. There is a good level of pre-existing knowledge from the advice team regarding sustainability, and staff are sensible with filling the kettle, interview room lights, and heaters/windows.

One suggested change is to put a larger fridge downstairs as there are currently two small ones used (one in advice, one within representation). Having one larger, energy efficient fridge would be more beneficial.

Noted the potential to work alongside Citizens Advice to educate students on managing a household sustainably, making student housing more energy efficient and reducing waste.

## Bars

Completed by Jon Szreider ([j.szreider@reading.ac.uk](mailto:j.szreider@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Molli Cleaver ([president@rusu.co.uk](mailto:president@rusu.co.uk))

### Waste Observations

A number of recycling bins are available for both staff and students, as well as a bottle bank. Bars are transitioning away from using paper where possible by implementing online electronic tickets and guest lists.

Glasses are used during the day instead of plastic to reduce waste of single-use items. Single-use items are further reduced by charging 5p for plastic straws, which deters from their use. Plastic cups are recyclable.

More reusable cloths are used to encourage more sustainable practice.

### Energy Observations

There are a number of fridges, screens, and similar items across the bars facilities. Screens are turned off throughout the day to reduce power consumption, and power is switched off during holiday periods. Lights are controlled via touchpad screens across the various bars venues.

Lights in toilets in upper 3sixty are on automatic switches to reduce power consumption.

### Other Observations

Bar staff receive training that includes information on sustainability and sustainable practice.

## Catering/Kitchens

Completed by Christine Whitburn ([c.whitburn@reading.ac.uk](mailto:c.whitburn@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Molli Cleaver ([president@rusu.co.uk](mailto:president@rusu.co.uk))

### Waste Observations

There are a number of available recycling bins for different types of items, such as cardboard recycling, food recycling, oil recycling, and plastic recycling. There is a conscious effort amongst staff to minimise waste and recycling is a high priority. Food waste levels are low - the team make use of the Olio service to minimise food waste.

Sauce pots used are biodegradable, and take away boxes are compostable, which has a positive environmental impact. Vegware cutlery is biodegradable and is a sustainable cutlery option. Biodegradable straws are used as an alternative to plastic straws. Cup holders in Mondial are recyclable.

Coffee cup lids aren't recyclable, but the cups are – customers are also encouraged to bring reusable mugs which can also be purchased in Mondial. A number of recycling bins are available to customers to promote recycling of coffee cups, with recycling bins also available for staff use.

### Energy Observations

A large number of energy intensive items exist within catering, though items and machines are necessary for the kitchens. A conscious effort is made to turn items off overnight.

### Other Observations

Catering team actively reduce their carbon footprint by reducing delivery numbers, sourcing deliveries from two main suppliers and ordering items in bulk. This is a much more sustainable alternative to facilitating numerous small deliveries.

## Finance Office

Completed by Asi Brosh ([a.brosh@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.brosh@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Molli Cleaver ([president@rusu.co.uk](mailto:president@rusu.co.uk))

### Waste Observations

Paper waste noticeable due to a tendency to print hard copy invoices, as this is more convenient/quicker than cross-referencing online. Easy access to waste bins with a large recycling bin and small general waste bins. Measures could likely be taken to reduce printing.

### Energy Observations

A large number of necessary electronics within the office – no last one out checklist at present to ensure items are switched off overnight. The office is very well lit with large windows at the back, which often negates the need for lights being on in the day. The office is heated, with air conditioning available. The large windows are advantageous in helping to keep the office cool during warm times of the year.

## Marketing Office

Completed by Sian Lake ([s.lake@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.lake@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Molli Cleaver ([president@rusu.co.uk](mailto:president@rusu.co.uk))

### Waste Observations

A recycling bin, a cardboard bin, and two general waste bins are available to the office, with a conscious effort made to reduce printing. The team are actively trying to move away from the production of flyers and physical promotional materials and instead moving towards using electronic methods of promotion, such as boosted social media posts and more emphasis on the digital screens around the building.

### Energy Observations

The team make use of multiple screens though these are necessary for their work. Lighting in the office can be split in to two halves, allowing one side to be lit if necessary. There is potential for a larger window space which would allow for more natural light in to the office.

Whilst no formal last one out checklist exists, the team work together to ensure lights and electronics are switched off overnight.

### Other Observations

The marketing team actively prioritise sustainability and work towards it, often attempting to steer other departments towards more sustainable forms of promotion.

There is a level of commitment from the team to prioritise working with sustainable companies going forward.

## Representation Office

Completed by Bethany Brown ([bethany.brown@reading.ac.uk](mailto:bethany.brown@reading.ac.uk)) alongside Kyle Smith ([k.smith3@reading.ac.uk](mailto:k.smith3@reading.ac.uk))

### Waste Observations

There are two recycling bins available to the office, but both are only for paper/card. Similarly to advice, the closest general recycling bin is located within the corridor. A closer bin would be more convenient for plastic recycling.

The department uses a multifunctional printer, which is more sustainable than using a separate printer and scanner/photocopier. No printing policy exists, and printing is often completed to excess within the office. This is particularly noticeable for printed signage, flyers, trainings, and postering.

Members of rep team frequently sit on committees, and more work could be done to promote paperless meetings with electronic provision of agendas and committee papers.

Single-use items are used for the water dispenser in the form of plastic cups. There is potential to replace this with surplus glasses from the bars team. The water dispenser itself is particularly inconvenient for filling the kettle.

Merchandise and promotional material is often wasteful and unsustainable. This includes clothing merchandise for student reps.

### Energy Observations

The department makes use of a 'last one out' checklist to ensure monitors, lights, and unnecessary electronics are not left on overnight. There is an active and conscious effort from staff to turn electronics off before leaving in the evening.

The printer and fridge are left on overnight, though it is unclear how necessary this is. Replacing the advice fridge with a larger unit would eliminate the need for one within the rep department.

Lights are now controlled automatically to reduce energy consumption and are more sustainable bulbs. A fair amount of natural light is available from large windows towards the back of the office and lights at the back of the room could likely be turned off during the day (especially during bright summer months).

The office is regularly heated with no existing rule or policy regarding temperature. It can often be heated to excess, reaching temperatures above 25°C. A standard office temperature should be within the range of 19°C - 22°C, which promotes comfort, reduces energy consumption, and allows for strong productivity.

## **Travel Observations**

The office is split roughly halfway between staff who drive and staff who walk or cycle. Generally, staff drive out of necessity and not convenience. There is potential for car sharing depending on working hours.

Staff with long commutes are able to work from home when necessary, though it is worth noting that the department managers have the longest commutes, and so it is at their discretion.

There is currently no real incentive for sustainable travel, and creating an incentive may help to encourage staff who drive to commute more sustainably more often.

## **Progress Tracking**

Staff are aware of the Jump platform, and use it, as well as the Giki platform. The department does not currently set targets, but may aim to in the future.