

Sustainability Engagement Strategy

Being sustainable is essential to our success as a university, and this can only be done by understanding the risks, opportunities, and solutions. Our ambition and commitment is set out in our Corporate Strategy: [Strategy 2030](#) and it is expected all staff and students consider their actions and implement positive sustainable change whilst at Greenwich.

This Sustainability Engagement Strategy sets out how we determine who our stakeholders are, what issues are most relevant, and how we will engage to bring about positive change in all activities and processes.

What is Sustainability?

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 it is known to cover three areas, recognised as ‘The Three Pillars of Sustainability’:

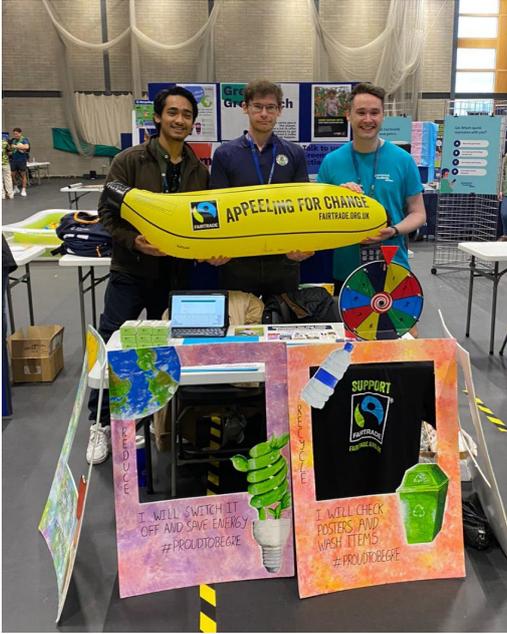
- **Social Sustainability** – includes environmental justice, human health, resource security and education.
- **Economic Sustainability** – includes job creation, profitability and proper accounting of ecosystem services (the wider benefits gained from nature).
- **Environment Sustainability** – focussing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

It is possible, and must be so, for all three pillars to contribute to each other; for one to succeed they all must succeed.

On viewing the three pillars, 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.

“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



Importance of Engagement

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.

To engage with the widest possible audience and to deliver the biggest impact, multiple methods will likely be required both online and in person, bringing resources challenges for any successful programme.

Engagement inclusivity is likewise vital to ensure all members across learning styles are comfortable and aware of aims and how they can be accomplished.

At Greenwich, in our 2022 Sustainability Survey, 97% of respondents stated that the topic was important for them and expected the university to act.

Importance of Transparency & Language

In a World where the impact of the climate and biodiversity crises are being ever realised with the immediate impacts (wildfires, flooding, pollution, health attributes) frequently documented in the news and on social platforms, it is no surprise that there has likewise been a rise in eco-anxiety and climate fatigue over the past few years.

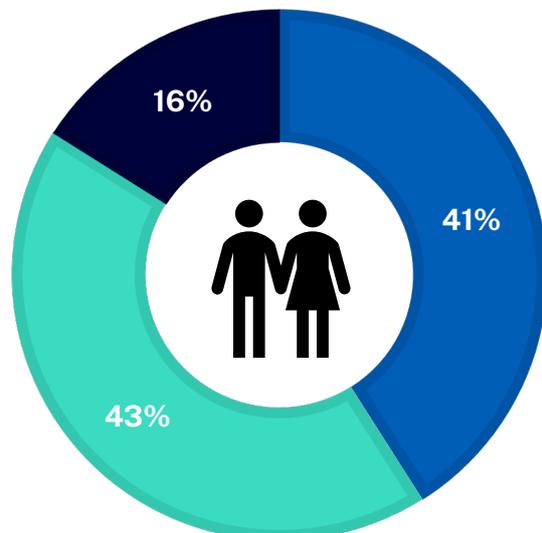
Eco-anxiety is defined as the ‘chronic fear of environmental catastrophe’, with increasingly significant proportions of people, especially in younger age groups concerned about the planet’s future and implications on themselves and loved ones.

Climate fatigue is the notion of individuals ‘tuning out’ or starting to avoid climate news because of the negativity surrounding the implications and the feeling that their actions cannot make a difference, or it’s too late so doesn’t matter.

Individual actions do make a difference, both in driving policy and higher change alongside minimising the risk of climate change itself. 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.

ROLE OF BEHAVIOUR IN THE PATH TO NET ZERO

- Low-carbon technologies or fuels (not behavioural/societal changes)
- Combination of low-carbon technologies and societal/behavioural change
- Largely societal/behavioural changes



Transparency and use of language are therefore crucial to sustained support, acknowledging the challenges but recognising and celebrating the successes, and without either overselling progress or heightening levels of anxiety. Our aim is to provide sufficient information to enable positive change through an improvement in a behaviour, action, or way of making decisions.

Sustainability Engagement in Policy & Strategy at Greenwich

Our targets can only be achieved through whole organisational change, from students to staff, and including individual actions or decisions. The governance of sustainability starts at the top with our Sustainability Management Committee (SMC) chaired by Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Andrew Westby. 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.

Engagement references are found in multiple plans and policies surrounding sustainability at Greenwich and focussing into specific action areas. In the University's 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.”

This document therefore acts as the overarching umbrella Strategy 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 Reduction (Net Zero Plan in place)
- Waste & Circular Economy (Strategy in place)
- Sustainable Procurement (Policy in place)
- Sustainable Food & Catering (Policies in place including Fairtrade)
- Green travel & Air Pollution (Green Travel Plan in place)
- Ecosystem Services (Policy & Biodiversity Action Plan in place)
- Social Sustainability (Wellbeing Hub established)
- Sustainability Education & Learning (Living Labs initiated)



Who are our Stakeholders?

Universities as large organisations have a significant and broad connection to individuals, groups, and organisations. Our list includes:

Stakeholders	Number (approximate)	Level of influence 1 low – 10 high
Estates & Facilities Directorate (where Sustainability Team operate)	60	8
IFM Contract (Sodexo – managed by Estates & Facilities)	200	6
Catering Contract (Graysons – managed by Estates & Facilities)	50	6
Other contractors/sub-contractors	Tens	5
Staff (Academic)	750	5
Staff (Non-Academic)	950	5
Students (in UK)	20,000	5
Student's Union	30	5
Green Champions	60-70	8
Goods & services suppliers	Hundreds	3
Research Funding Bodies	Hundreds	3
Commercial Research Partners/Funders	Hundreds	3
Local to International government/non agencies	300	3
Other Universities and HE agencies	200	3
Local community groups	Tens	3
Students (Overseas)	17,000	2
Visitors (Families, Tourists)	Thousands	2

Who is Responsible for Engagement?

Though the Sustainability Team will take a lead, assistance is required across the University to engage the widest stakeholder audience.

Individual/Team	Responsibility & Engagement Support
Vice Chancellor	The institutional responsibility sits ultimately with our governing body and the Vice Chancellors Group, with communication and promotion for the strategy and agenda.
Marketing & Communications	Including internal and external communications, public relations, marketing (design & merchandise). Supporting the coverage of sustainable news and innovation.
Outreach & Events Officers (Faculties)	Responsible for incorporating and considering sustainability into events and outreach activities.
Student's Union	Responsible for incorporating and considering sustainability into events and outreach activities.
Engagement Coordinators	Driving positive change throughout student and staff activities.
Accommodation Services	Supporting, promoting and encouraging positive behaviours in halls, with reminders and warnings for repeat flats/individuals who fail to do so.
Green Champions	Dedicated staff motivating and driving behavioural change throughout their teams and departments.
Sodexo (IFM Contractor)	Engaging on positive behaviours throughout contracted staff, contractors, and communication in sustainable innovations taking place operationally.

Our Engagement Activities

Our current and past engagement pathways with examples include:

<p>Digital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student & Staff Portals • Website • Email • Video screens • Newsletters • Social Media Platforms • Online staff & Student Inductions • Student & Staff Surveys • Webinars & online training • Podcasts 	<p>Face to face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Week • Ethical Food & Fairtrade Fortnight • Welcome Week events • Green Champions (staff) • Sustainability Steering groups • Staff Introduction • Student Inductions • Guest lectures • Surveys and research • Training staff & students
<p>Initiatives/Campaigns - Internal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture Reuse • End of Term Halls Reuse • Hedgehog Friendly Campus • Education for Sustainable Development • Living Lab & student projects 	<p>Working with Contractors & Suppliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Supplier questionnaires • Contractor specifications • Contractor inductions
<p>Printed materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters, Fliers & Leaflets • Banners • Information boards 	<p>Initiatives/Campaigns - External</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor of London's Entrepreneurs Prize • Earth Days

Make Your Change

Make Your Change is our overarching engagement campaign encouraging students and staff to take small, personal actions both in work and out, focussed on eight varying areas:

- Saving Energy
- Consider Your Purchases
- Saving Water
- Recycling
- Transport & Travel
- Caring for the Environment
- Getting Involved
- Learning More

Strategic action areas will have their own specific resource with targets and activity as highlighted but can be 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 University community into take action to ensure our students and staff are ready for the future.

Being Sustainable in Halls



We all have the power to make a positive difference no matter how small the action

What will you do?

Make your change



Action Plan

Every year, a planned calendar is created within the Sustainability Team of core projects, national awareness days and key academic periods to prioritise the year and establish timescales of engagement content creation. Through this calendar we will monitor and measure the engagement with events, campaigns, and activities to track progress. All those projects can fit into a strategic action year as highlighted below, including strategic target date and alongside current progress relating to communication and engagement.

Action Area	Target(s)	Date	Progress/activities delivered to date (2023)
Overarching Sustainable Engagement	Achieve a 5% increase of responses in annual survey	Annual	375 in inaugural 2020 sustainability survey. 425 responses 2021 457 responses in 2022 Target achieved
	Maintain Green Week & Fairtrade Fortnight Campaigns	Annual	Target achieved
	Achieve a 5% increase on total social platform followers	Annual	Total 3119 followers during 2021-22 with 3301 followers to date. Highest increase on Instagram with 118 new followers. Target Achieved
	Increase Make Your Change outreach	Annual	New guidance documents and social platform content created. Need to identify progress. Results to Follow In Progress
Energy & Carbon Reduction	Maintaining an annual behavioural change campaign in student halls.	Annual	Student Switch Off Campaign ceased from 2022, with GREen Rewards social app/website implemented. Need to determine data & end of year results. Results to Follow In Progress
Waste & Circular Economy	Achieve a 70% recycling rate (Strategic KPI)	Annual	Posters aligned across campuses and campaigns but recycling rate currently at 34% Target Not Achieved
	Achieve a £150,000 cost avoidance from the furniture reuse scheme internally	End of 2023	Currently on £120,000, with periodic communications In Progress
	Maintain external donations for surplus items to avoid unnecessary wastage	End of 2023	Since November 2019 over £60,000 has been donated making up over 1,000 items. Need to determine the wastage and provide new quantifiable target In Progress
	Implement a lost property donation scheme for items after holding period	Start of 2023	Implemented in late 2022 with communications Target Achieved

	Maintain the End of Term Reuse Scheme	Annual	2021-22 had the highest number of donations (666 bags, £19,000 raised) from students leaving halls. 2022-23 scheme has now ended, awaiting results. Target Achieved
Sustainable Procurement	Liaise with merchandise supplier and engagement internally over better purchasing,	Summer 2023	Procuring of merchandise has occurred with better items, however need to determine overall success and understand processes for departments to share merchandise/resources. In progress
	Implement a supporting platform for furniture reuse	Summer 2023	Discussions ongoing but slow progress and no alternative resource available commercially within budget. Target Not Achieved
Sustainable Food & Catering	10% increase of reusable cup drink sales from outlets by 2025 (20% in 2020).	Summer 2023	Target dropped to 16% despite new communications and physical sculptures illustrating issue of disposables. Senior approval however was granted on moving to a disposable tax for 2023/24 which is aimed to increase and achieve further targets. Target Not Achieved
	All outlets to Fairtrade products as part of accreditation & to highlight the importance of choice to customers.	Annual	Fairtrade accreditation was passed, with all outlets providing information. Need to do annually to ensure above and beyond is occurring to accreditation. Target Achieved
	All outlets to highlight positive procuring of products (MSC, Organic etc certified).	Annual	Audits need to take place to understand current communication methods. In Progress
Green travel & Air Pollution	Annual travel surveys for students and staff.	Annual	Surveys have taken place. Target Achieved
Ecosystems services	Overarching Biodiversity Action Plan Target of embedding a wildlife monitoring scheme		Monitoring platform on iRecord has been implemented, however limited use has to date occurred with further engagement required. In Progress
	Overarching Biodiversity Action Plan Target of engage students, staff and external communities		See below In Progress

	Relaunch the Edible Garden volunteering group	Start 2023	Group relaunched, however with limited signups and regular volunteers. Need to set a volunteer recruitment target and comms plan to further progress Target Achieved
	Implement a wildlife trail at Avery Hill	End of 2023	Past trail route is out of date and requires a redesign with communication. In Progress
	Communicate new habitat creations and regimes	Annual	Signage on mini-meadows at Avery Hill implemented. Signage for reduced mowing regime being created. In Progress
Sustainability Education & Learning	Maintaining opportunities within the Sustainability Team (students)	Annual	One Jobshop position filled, with students volunteering throughout the year. Target Achieved
	Relaunch a Green Champions initiative (staff)	Summer 2023	First four meet-up sessions successfully occurred by July 2023 with a total of 58 signups initiating from April 2023. Target Achieved
	Deliver training to student resident assistants and ambassadors	End of 2023	2022 training occurred with 2023 dates awaiting from relevant teams. In Progress
	Create resources available to academics on how sustainability can be incorporated into programmes and support available	Summer 2023	Resource created and available on portal. Emails sent and first few academic support workshops occurred. Target Achieved.
Social Sustainability	Embed sustainability into wellbeing	Annual	Limited knowledge currently and activities during Mental Health Wellbeing Day were not attended by any staff Target Not Achieved

Budgets & Resources

It is essential that the Sustainability Engagement Strategy is supported financially through the allocation of an annual budgets, both within the Sustainability Team and those stakeholders supporting its delivery. Additionally, steering groups from within each action area are set which include the elements of engagement to collaborate and to maximise engagement benefits.

Sustainability Team financial allocations currently include:

- A fully funded, permanent Engagement Officer.
- A set aside £1,000 annual budget for general engagement activities.
- An annually proportioned amount from the Biodiversity Budget (£15,000) to action communication of new habitats and trails.

Internal supporting financial allocations currently include:

- Five £1,000 grants for students to deliver practical projects and concepts that could deliver sustainability outcomes for the university, a partnership between the University and consultancy RSK.
- £25,000 pilot funding from IFM Contractor Sodexo in partnership with the University to deliver the GREen Rewards behavioural change campaign.

Progress towards achieving identified targets will be communicated to all staff and students 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.

The University of Greenwich's sustainability performance can also be reviewed by the public especially through the HESA and People & Planet University League table. The University will also publish an annual report on sustainability, approved by the Vice Chancellor, providing a total summary of all progress and action points for the future.

This strategy will be reviewed annually.

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Produced and shared by The Sustainability Team

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