

SUSTAINABILITY IN FOOD CODE OF PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

Keele University is committed to promoting environmental and social sustainability in all that we do.

Keele University’s Catering and Events teams support this ethos and recognise the importance of sustainable food practices, by promoting health, reducing environmental impact, and fostering social responsibility.

1.1 Purpose

This Code of Practice outlines our commitment to sourcing, providing, and promoting sustainable food options and practice within the University’s community of students, staff and external visitors.

1.2 Scope

This Code of Practice relates to Keele University’s Catering and Events operations, including Keele University Events and Conferencing, The Kitchen Table, CENTRAL Café, CENTRAL To Go, Chapter’s Café, David Weatherall Café and SIH Café.

2. POLICY

In its Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy, Keele University commits to activities and operations that contribute to achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs relevant to the Sustainability in Food Code of Practice include:



2.1. Sourcing our suppliers



When sourcing our suppliers, we will:

- Procure food supplies through independent and local suppliers wherever possible.
- Work closely with The University Caterers Organisation (TUCO), who will support with the embedding of sustainable procurement into our supply chain to promote responsible sourcing and traceability.
- Embed sustainability into our suppliers' contracts, ensuring suppliers meet commitments regarding carbon emissions and packaging.
- Source all of our meat from Red Tractor assured farms, which ensures we get high welfare meat, dairy products and free-range eggs, to help combat animal cruelty and environmental damage.
- Ensure that a minimum of 80% of our fruit and vegetables are delivered by local suppliers, prioritising British and seasonal products and promoting locally sourced produce.
- Never use palm oil in food produced in-house and we ensure products in our supply chain only contain responsibly sourced and certified palm oil.
- Only serve sustainably caught fish from the UK, where we seek suppliers that are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Chain of Custody Standard.
- Continue to grow our own herbs and produce on-campus to use across our menus within our catering portfolio.

2.2. Food waste



To minimise food waste, we will:

- Continue to segregate any food waste for recycling via an anaerobic digester to generate green electricity. Currently this is around 30 tonnes annually. All our waste cooking oil is reprocessed into biofuel.

- Continue to follow quantity and portion control specifications to ensure that food waste is kept to a minimum, both during the preparation of food, and when it is served in our restaurants and outlets.
- Regularly scrutinise sales trends to ensure that realistic numbers of dishes are produced.
- Always drastically reduce the price of any remaining food from the hot counters at 2.30pm daily at our flagship campus food and drink outlet, The Kitchen Table, to reduce waste.
- Reduce in price any sandwiches at near end dates across our campus outlets, to reduce waste.
- Where food safety allows, provide delegates attending conferences the option to take leftover food away with them, where we also provide appropriate instructions on how to store items and when to consume by.

2.2. Packaging & disposable waste



To reduce packaging and disposable waste, we will:

- Only serve hot drinks in reusable mugs by default, unless otherwise requested by the customer.
- Continue to only use crockery across our entire Conference and delivered catering services.
- Ensure that our delivered catering packaging is 100% recyclable and compostable, and that milk, water and juice is sent in glass jugs and bottles we reuse.
- Charge a 20p levy on disposable cups, no longer use plastic straws, and we will work closely with suppliers to reduce packaging even further.

2.3. Carbon



To actively reduce our carbon footprint, we will:

- Continue to expand the range of plant-based options available in our flagship catering outlet, The Kitchen Table, which has already increased by 40% over the past 2 years, with multiple options available daily.
- Continue to enhance our conference lunch menus, which are already 80% plant based. They are healthy, low in allergens, inclusive and sustainable, resulting in a reduction of food waste.
- Ensure our conference lunch menus can be carbon calculated, where we often work closely with event bookers to help reach their own objectives of carbon footprint reduction to run their event.
- Ensure The Kitchen Table continues to operate a fully electric kitchen with no gas-fuelled equipment.
- Continue to update and enhance the central production unit based at Keele Hall, so that in time it will operate from a fully electric kitchen.
- Always offer a range of plant-based milks, including Soya and Oat, to our customers and clients at no extra cost.

2.4. Education



To educate our entire university community and external stakeholders, we will:

- Actively participate in sustainability discussion groups both internally, including student groups and externally through industry associations.
- Educate our employees across Catering and Events and actively encourage team members to complete relevant sustainability training.
- Educate our Events and Conferencing clients and delegates, as our menus can display carbon calculations if the organiser wishes to do so.
- Charge a 20p levy on disposable cups, no longer use plastic straws, and we will work closely with suppliers to reduce packaging even further.
- Market and promote our offer responsibly, by clearly communicating our ethical stance and provenance of ingredients wherever possible.
- Work closely with suppliers who often visit the University to hand-out food samples and provide their sustainability messaging to the University community.
- Ensure this Code of Practice will be made publicly available to employees, students and other University stakeholders via the Keele University and Keele University Events and Conferencing websites.

2.5. Society



To support our society of stakeholders, we will:

- Provide a range of 'Value Meals' across our campus outlets, primarily targeted at our student community. On average, our Vegan and Vegetarian meals are £1.00 cheaper than other menu items in our flagship catering outlet.
- Ensure our food offer is broad, always providing a range of options for those with dietary needs and lifestyle choices.
- Engage with the local community and charities to redistribute unsold, edible food.
- Work closely with a number of local charities, supporting them with guidance on preparing healthy, nutritious, inclusive and sustainable meals for their communities.
- Be committed to providing an inclusive offer, including providing Halal chicken options in our freshly-prepared dishes, along with a range of good quality plant-based and Vegan options.
- Work in partnership with student groups and grounds maintenance colleagues to utilise crops grown on-campus in our menus.

2.6. Health

Events and Conferencing:

- Our conference and banquet menus have been adapted for inclusive dining, with plant-based, dairy free and gluten free options as standard. They are healthy, low in allergens, inclusive and sustainable, along with being bright and colourful. Our conference lunches are made with fresh, locally sourced ingredients and served as a salad buffet, allowing delegates to build their own plate to suit their tastes and dietary requirements.

Campus Outlets:

- We provide healthy and nutritional food options in all our campus outlets, with a range of Vegetarian, Vegan and Gluten Free choices.

3. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Environmental & Social Sustainability Policy: [Click here to view](#)

Green Meetings Action Plan: [Click here to view](#)

4. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

This code of practice will be reviewed every 3 years by the Head of Catering and Events (or nominee). Minor amendments will be approved by the Director of Estates and Campus Services. Major amendments will be approved by the Professional Services Group.

Updates to the document will be published in the University's Policy Zone.

5. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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