

University of
South Wales
Prifysgol
De Cymru

Sustainability Engagement Strategy 2025/26 – 2026/27

Estates and Facilities

Version	Date	Author of document	Review
V 1.0	April 2023	N Bradley	April 2025
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Introduction

To embed a culture of sustainable behaviour across our estate, The University of South Wales recognises the need to support staff and student engagement in achieving our longer-term sustainability targets and to deliver positive outcomes.

Our work is not carried out in isolation, and we rely on the support and action of all our stakeholders as we work towards our goal of achieving Net Zero by 2040.

The aim of this document is to formalise our engagement plan to empower our students, staff, visitors, and stakeholders to take positive steps to reduce their environmental impact and enable change.

Objectives

- To embed a culture of sustainable behaviour across our Estate that supports the delivery of positive outcomes.
- To integrate sustainability as a core component of student and staff inductions.
- To increase staff and student engagement in sustainability initiatives, campaigns, and events through various engagement channels.
- To increase the membership and active users of the Turn USW Green App to support sustainable behaviours.
- To collaborate with the Students' Union in a joint effort to improve sustainability on campus.
- To review opportunities for integrating education for sustainable development into the curriculum.
- To engage with Sustainability Champions and Action Groups to improve sustainability on campus.

Existing activities

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee provides governance, direction and scrutiny of our sustainability activities and periodically reviews and monitors progress against the objectives of the University's Sustainability strategy to ensure continued delivery of carbon reduction. It is also central to promoting a culture of continuous improvement in sustainability through identification and sharing of actions and initiatives that embed sustainability principles and deliver positive outcomes across the University. The group meets quarterly and is open to staff, students, as well as trade union and student union representatives.

Sustainability Champions

The Sustainability Champions represent a university wide network of enthusiastic staff and students who proactively suggest ideas, undertake discussion, and collaborate on initiatives across USW throughout the year. They proactively lead positive change for sustainability across the University and are supported to make a positive impact in a variety of ways that can make a real difference.

Sustainability Action Groups

To meet our ambitious goals, it is essential that the whole USW community is engaged in the broader objectives of the 2040 net zero strategy. To support this, we have set up dedicated Focus Groups tasked with identifying and implementing projects in particular areas that will deliver necessary carbon reductions.

Each Action Group consists of representatives from across USW including academics, research and professional services staff and the student body. Progress against key objectives is presented to the Sustainability Committee for onward reporting to the Executive Board and the groups are facilitated by the Sustainability team who help to initiate actions and provide support as required. The currently active Action Groups are as follows:

- Campuses and Energy
- Education and Research
- Food and Biodiversity
- Procurement and Supply Chain
- Travel, Recycling and Re-Use

WelcomeFest

WelcomeFest focuses on engaging with new and returning students to the University. The first term provides a key opportunity to engage with students on our sustainability goals and promote the use of the Turn USW Green app. This engagement will be carried out through the form of pop-up stalls where the Sustainability Team will be present to welcome students, promote engagement and answer any questions.

Volunteering opportunities

We have developed a programme of volunteering opportunities within the local areas that are provided on our website for students and staff to get involved in these activities. Examples include the British Heart Foundation, Meadow Street Community Gardens and Cardiff Rivers group. The University is working hard to increase the list of opportunities available, and the website will be regularly updated where possible to include new additions.

Social media usage

The University aims to use social media effectively through its communications department to engage stakeholders, including students and staff. Posts are used to raise awareness of the activities undertaken by USW on sustainability and upcoming events which promotes collective action and involvement. Communications are separated with targeted posts for students (through Student Life) and staff through a weekly online newsletter that provides updates on key news stories.

Website

The Sustainability Team's webpages are part of the wider University website presence. The website provides a central hub of content and includes information on policies, performance, ways to get involved, and resources to support our main target audiences. A redesign of the website is underway that will help support simpler navigation, greater impact, and an improvement of the content available to view based on collaboration with staff and students.

Annual Sustainability Report

The Sustainability Team leads on the delivery of the Net Zero 2040 strategy and the annual reporting against this Strategy. This report provides an overview of our progress against our targets alongside the wide variety of actions and initiatives we have completed to support the wider agenda. The report is published internally and externally on the website for people to view. We are committed to tracking progress at the University and providing updates on this annually.

Collaboration

The Sustainability Team will work with a variety of internal teams and external partners across different projects and initiatives to achieve a wider level of engagement and reach various engagement objectives. Internal collaboration will include, but not be limited to Resident Life, Waste Management, Wellbeing and Early Intervention and assorted academic teams. External collaboration will focus on small and local businesses to support local and regional economic growth and deliver on aspects of the engagement agenda that are better delivered by external experts. These are to include, but not be limited to, Cardiff Cycle Workshop, Meadow Street Community Gardens and Plant + Pot Plant Store.

Events

The Sustainability Team will work with internal and external partners to deliver a range of events throughout the academic year aimed at both staff and students. This will include a schedule of biodiversity and wellbeing events in collaboration with Plant + Pot, volunteering opportunities such as litter-picking, tree-planting and assistance at Meadow Street Community Gardens. Furthermore, training opportunities will be offered for staff and students such as Carbon Literacy Training to be delivered in collaboration with academic staff. Further events will be organised and advertised throughout the academic year(s) as further partnerships are established and students and staff engagement trends are reviewed.

Inductions

All staff and students will receive a sustainability induction either prior to arrival at the university or within the first four weeks of arrival/commencement of employment.

Staff will receive the Sustainability induction as part of their onboarding materials once an offer of employment has been accepted. This induction includes a brief video detailing the role of Sustainability in the universities operations as well as detailing the ways to get involved be it via Action Groups, volunteering opportunities or presenting ideas for improvement to the Sustainability team. Staff will also be encouraged to sign up for the Turn USW Green platform via this induction.

Students will receive a Sustainability induction via two avenues. The first is for students living in on-campus accommodation. These students will receive a Welcome Pack with information around saving energy in their rooms/flats, proper waste disposal practices, sustainability engagement opportunities throughout the academic year and Turn USW Green. All students will then receive Sustainability inductions via lectures in their first weeks following enrolment. These will be delivered by academic staff and course leaders using materials and with support from the Sustainability team. Topics covered will be the same as for the students living in on-campus accommodation but will also include

information such as waste management when living off-campus, be it in private managed student accommodation, family homes, or other forms of housing.

All staff and students will be encouraged to engage with the Sustainability team as part of their induction.

Any new or updated policies, strategies or sustainability-focussed reports will be published on the publicly accessible webpages and will be announced via the internal staff and student networks.

Budget

A portion of the annual Sustainability budget will be dedicated to Sustainability Engagement each year. This budget will cover activities and initiatives including, but not limited to, Turn USW Green, Plant + Pot events and Welcome Fest activities.

Action Plan

Area	Action Plan	Date	Responsibility
Campaigns	Social media campaigns: Deliver campaigns that reach both staff and students to encourage and promote sustainable activities. Examples – Programme of sustainability, Turn USW Green promotion, “Be Mighty. Recycle” campaigns.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team
Events	Welcome Fest stalls – Welcome week will be used to inform students on the opportunities and sustainability initiatives that exist at the University. To be supported by representatives of the Turn USW Green platform operators.	September 2025 September 2026	Sustainability Team Team Jump
	Scheduled events with engagement activities. This includes volunteering opportunities such as litter picks, biodiversity groups.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team Academic Staff Wellbeing & Early Intervention Resident Life
	Schedule of plant-based workshops focusing on well-being, biodiversity and upskilling in collaboration with local small businesses.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team

Turn USW Green	Green Rewards App used to promote green actions and sustainable behaviour. Prizes awarded for highest scoring participants each month. Targeted newsletters to users to raise awareness of wider events. Increase publicity on Turn USW Green, include achievements & case studies. Explore opportunities for competitions between halls of residence (via GI, energy monitoring, Green Flats)	Ongoing	Jump business partner Sustainability Team
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Partners	Dr Bike sessions – Students and staff can take advantage of a free bike MOT on campus to encourage sustainable travel. This supports the wider USW Travel Plan objectives. Plant + Pot – A local small business in Cardiff providing plantcare workshops for staff and students with a focus on biodiversity and welfare Meadow Street Community Gardens – a local council-funded garden in Treforest providing the opportunity to contribute to the local community, assist community members with educational or physical needs.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team
Training	Carbon literacy – Coordinate promotion of free Carbon Literacy training offered through UN prime to staff and students. This is offered several times a year. Sustainability inductions – Incorporate sustainability into staff and student inductions and keep these up to date. Where resources allow, support, and facilitate placements for student interns to work in sustainability. Promote and encourage opportunities for students and staff to engage in volunteering and wellbeing programme of activities.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team
ESD	Incorporate ESD considerations into course curriculum design principles. Incorporating ESD into the curriculum is currently under review to assess how to integrate into study materials.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Schools and Faculties Support from Sustainability Team

Sustainability Fund	Continue to offer a funding for small scale staff and student sustainability projects. Potential recipients to submit cases to sustainability team email address for review.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Sustainability Team
Procurement	Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy to inform wider purchasing strategies. Develop a 'buyers guides' for sustainable IT equipment.	2025/26, 2026/27 academic years	Procurement Team/Sustainability Team
Sustainability Awareness	Continue to maintain website pages and ensure content is up to date. Launch of dashboards and sharing of carbon performance data by faculty/building (as data allows). Include sustainability information in accommodation induction and promotion in welcome pack eg Welsh soaps and local produce. Review opportunities to submit entries for a range of sustainability awards and ensure continual improvement in national league rankings for sustainability e.g. People and Planet.	Ongoing	Sustainability Team

Responsibilities

This strategy is implemented, monitored, and coordinated by the Sustainability team in USW with collaboration and support from other departments, schools and faculties and the SU and Accommodation teams as required.

Individuals within the Estates Department are responsible for providing content and supporting the delivery of campaigns in their specific specialist areas.

Sustainability Champions, Focus Groups and other University representatives are invited to suggest ideas and discuss engagement suggestions and campaigns with the Sustainability team (email sustainability@southwales.ac.uk).

Engagement activities and Sustainability Project Fund are resourced via the Sustainability Teams existing revenue budget.

Review Process

This strategy will be subject to annual review by the Sustainability Committee, considering the Environment and Sustainability Policy and action plan, and in light of changing priorities and actions.

Progress on communications and engagement will also be reported through USW's Annual Sustainability Report, which is discussed and approved by the Sustainability Committee. This will outline progress against the targets contained in the Net Zero strategy and the supporting action plan.

Appendix

Methods of communication and engagement – internal stakeholders

This list describes the channels of communication and engagement with our internal stakeholders (students and staff).

- Sustainability webpages
- Staff and Student inductions (to be developed)
- Internal communications: pop-ups, internal news bulletins, Connect, iTrent
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, SU twitter and Resident Life
- Posters and signage
- Internal Audit programme
- Focus groups and meetings
- Accommodation emails and Accommodation handbook
- Through events and activities such as Welcome Fest and campaigns
- Written case studies and evidence
- Teaching and learning within the curriculum
- Online learning platforms for presentations and training – e.g. Microsoft Teams

Methods of communication and engagement – external stakeholders

- Prospectuses
- Social Media
- Website
- News stories
- Procurement tenders
- USW Awards events
- External speaking engagements
- Email
- Case-studies