

TITLE:

Implementing a Recycling Scheme at Orkney College

DATE:

March 2008

INSTITUTION PROFILE

FE & HE

450 FTE students

68 FTE staff

Rural

3 buildings on one site

SUMMARY

Recycling and sustainability within rural further and higher education institutions can be difficult without the support and advice that is more readily available to those institutions on mainland Scotland. One of the most rural colleges in Scotland, Orkney College, was given support through EAUC CaSPr to help kick start a staff and student Recycling Scheme utilising existing support through other organisations such as SEPA, Envirowise, SWAG and the Local Authority (Orkney Islands Council).

EAUC COMMENT

This case study shows how enthusiastic staff members have set up a staff and student recycling scheme and gained support from senior management by using the resources available through government funded organisations.



PROJECT PARTNERS

EAUC-S (CaSPr)

Envirowise

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) North

Scottish Waste Awareness Group (SWAG)

Orkney Islands Council (OIC)

THE PROBLEM

Staff at Orkney College found it difficult to access the help available from many of the core support organisations, due to a lack of time and the cost of travelling to events held mostly in the central belt of Scotland. As the Local Authority in Orkney transports waste to Shetland for a Community Waste to Energy Plant, recycling collections for domestic and commercial customers only started in 2005/06. With greater public awareness of recycling and opportunities being made available to recycle staff at the College were keen to set up a recycling scheme for staff and students with minimum resources and minimum budget.

THE APPROACH

An initial meeting was held and staff proposals were put to the Senior Management Team (SMT) requesting their support. It was proposed that the overall aim of the project would be to do as much as possible at minimum cost. Envirowise undertook a free audit and identified a number of cost saving opportunities by reducing resource use. Meetings were held with the Local Authority and uplifts were provided for paper, glass and cans at a cost of £250. Two workshops were held through CaSPr for staff members to discuss the proposals and overall sustainability of the college. SWAG helped develop posters and with agreement of the SMT the scheme was implemented.

GOALS

The key aim is to reduce the number of Eurobins collected from 4 to 3 saving a sum of money which will make the project self financing. The main goals of Orkney College are to:

- Reduce the amount of waste being disposed of to landfill/going to Shetland Waste to Energy Plant;
- Implement recycling for staff and students (paper, glass, aluminium);
- Implement the scheme with no capital cost by making the most of free support through organisations such as EAUC, SEPA, Envirowise and SWAG;
- Raise awareness of environmental issues across the college from senior management through to students; and
- Identify other ways in which the college could improve its sustainability performance.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

- The main problem was getting people to use the right bins for the right waste categories.
- Lack of time to set the scheme up
- Lack of money to realise many of the ideas generated by staff and students
- Different departments produce differing amounts of waste
- Changes to waste collection procedures were out - with existing cleaning contractual requirements (e.g. cleaning contract referred to collection of general waste not collecting recycled material!)
- With the use of posters and e-mails this has sorted itself out.
- No members of staff are paid or designated. However with an adjustment of priorities time has been made available for some key members of staff to get the project up and running. The ownership is put on staff and students to take materials to central collection points.
- Unsolved so far
- Once the recycling scheme was implemented the location of some bins were changed to suit departmental needs. buildings. The Local Authority empties glass bins located outside buildings.
- Have notified appropriate individuals within the College and the Local Authority who are responsible for cleaning contracts and highlighted that it is essential that the renewal or re-tendering of any future contracts includes appropriate wording to ensure that the cleaning contract meets the needs of the College. This will include requirements to collect recycled material and comply with other environmental /sustainability procedures as committed to by the College.it would not be emptied until the material was removed.

PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

In summary Orkney College:

- Is likely to be able to reduce the number of general waste bins being collected by the Local Authority from 4 to 3 per week;
- Has implemented a recycling scheme for paper, glass, aluminium and have moved on to batteries and cardboard;
- Will saved £350 per year with no capital cost to set up the scheme apart from staff time;
- Has established working partnership with Local Authority;
- Has utilised the help from EAUC, SEPA, ENVIROWISE and SWAG;
- Has set up a group to deal with Sustainability issues; and
- Has identified a list of other opportunities to take forward.

LESSONS LEARNT

Important to engage with all staff as early as possible.

People have been more supportive than anticipated particularly as staff and students have to take their paper to central locations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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