

# KEELE, WITH SUPPORT FROM RCP, ACHIEVES A HIGH DEGREE OF SUSTAINABILITY



One of the key aims of Keele University is to develop students with an education that resonates beyond the boundaries of their chosen discipline, reflecting the university's position as a leader in sustainability and environmental education. Educating students for a more sustainable future is key to the university's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and response to the climate emergency, with a target to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.

Rubbermaid Commercial Products (RCP), alongside its expertise in manufacturing high quality, durable waste management solutions, is also focused on working with facilities to help achieve a truly sustainable future through implementing effective commercial recycling.

RCP is helping Keele with its environmental and recycling deployment, enabling the university to become more sustainable and optimise savings by implementing an efficient and cost-effective recycling policy. In common with the process of addressing the waste creation of all its customers' businesses, RCP supported the university with changes to the first three

steps of the waste management flow at the university, recognising that the most impactful changes can be made there.

## AN AMBITIOUS STATEMENT OF INTENT

The university is spread over 600 acres, with in excess of 10,000 working and studying on site, comprising three main groups of students, teaching and research staff. Three thousand students live on the campus, with 1500 staff directly employed by the university. This results in a £3million energy bill for the institution each year.

A Carbon Management plan has been in existence since 2010 and the university surpassed its target of 34% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2020 even though the campus estate has grown significantly with investment in refurbishment and new buildings. These achievements have led to a placement in the Top 35 Europe universities for social and economic impact and in the Top 75 globally (2020 Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings).



Keele has made a bold statement of intent to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. The partnership with RCP is a key part in achieving the aims of this ambitious objective. At the core of RCP's solution for Keele's waste systems and recycling, is the adoption of its Slim Jim® Recycling Stations. These are a series of modular waste units that bolt easily together to create an organised recycling station. The unit's minimal footprint increases their deployment potential, while changeable lids provide waste appropriate openings. Up to seven colour-coded lids for collecting and recycling multiple waste streams, are available to match and achieve the aims of the university's recycling scheme.

### UP TO THE CHALLENGE

Front of house recycling at Keele requires a fine balance between functionality and aesthetics. Successfully splitting streams of waste requires clear and consistent signage to aid the end user. Units also need to fit their environment, blending in to become part of the furniture and the solutions provided to Keele exhibit these key concepts at their core.

It is a challenge for any organisation to find a range of bins that meet their requirements in terms of clear signage, ease of use, quick and easy installation,

and also in delivering efficient ongoing usage and operational life. Twenty banks of Slim Jim® Recycling Stations were sited strategically throughout the campus, embodying RCP's commitment to making products as durable as possible so they can meet the long-term demands of the university, or any other organisation.

### OVER THE MOON AND SAVING THE EARTH

Clear signage guides waste into the right container to prevent the mixing of streams. This highly-efficient system of recycling waste is a cheaper, and more sustainable, alternative for the university. Unmixed waste is expensive in comparison - being routinely sent to landfills or to plants for energy recapture – in addition to the negative environmental impact involved.

Huw Evans – Environmental Manager, Keele University – professes himself: “Over the moon with the improvement in internal waste and recycling. The segregation signage for clear direction and ease of use on the Slim Jims were crucial in making RCP our preferred supplier.”

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**“The units were very easy to put together and practical, whereas others on the market were complicated in their self-assembly requirements. We were also able to comfortably decide on the number of waste streams we were going to recycle. These factors, combined with support from the RCP Team helped us in making our choice.”**

Huw describes how RCP: “Came to talk with us, brief our team and allowed us to trial the units for a few months. It was important that our cleaning staff were happy with the solutions we were proposing to put in place.” Evidently, from the subsequent rollout, they were very happy, with Huw reporting on the benefits identified: “The cleaning services team staff reported that the bags are easy to remove from the container due to the vented channels, the units are easy to clean and, in addition, it is particularly easy for us to remove stains off the surface.”

## **STRONG AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

Strong durable products that are designed to work together and reduce waste stream cross-contamination occurring is essential to the university’s waste operations and ambitions. Huw concludes: “In terms of general and mixed recycling, we deal with about 1200 tonnes a year. With RCP’s Slim Jim bins throughout the campus, it means we are able to achieve much better segregation and streaming than before.”

The Slim Jim® – in common with all other RCP waste collection and movement products – are crucial elements in giving the customer essential control over this cost-saving final step before their waste is collected for processing.



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