

## **CASE STUDY: Wates – Reducing Plastic Waste**

Wates is one of the largest privately owned construction, development, and property service companies in the UK. As one of the UK's biggest construction companies, Wates is committed to protecting the environment, improving sustainability, and eliminating the production of waste. Proving its dedication to preserving the environment, Wates has devised a comprehensive environment strategy to achieve by 2020.

The environment strategy includes:

- Protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of sites.
- Improving carbon neutrality and educating the industry on energy efficient targets.
- Procuring materials which meet the construction industry's responsible sourcing standards.
- Reducing the waste produced on site through seeking new and innovative ways of working and introducing principles of circular economy.

Alongside the environment strategy, Wates is working towards abolishing single-use plastics across all of its construction sites.

### **Reducing Single-Use Plastics**

The pilot scheme for reducing plastic waste took place at the Abbey Area Phase One construction site in Camden, where Wates Residential is building 141 homes alongside additional retail and commercial spaces.

On this site, Wates Residential has introduced reusable water bottles and distributed them to site operatives who can use the free water stations on site to fill them up. Denise Southard, the Community Champion and Document Controller for Wates, thought by providing reusable bottles, the site would not only reduce plastic waste to landfill, but also make a significant cost saving.



Prior to the scheme, the site used approximately 10,000 plastic cups every month. Annually, this totalled around 120,000 cups and cost the site over £1,300 each year. Over a ten year period, Wates should save almost £4,250 per site, as well as reducing plastic waste to landfill by over 4,500kg. This will have a substantial impact on preserving the environment and reducing plastic pollution.

Paul Nicholls, Managing Director at Wates Residential South said:

*“Reducing our single-use plastic waste is something we feel very passionate about at Wates Residential. We hope this commitment will not only drive change across our sites, but will also lead new ambitions in the wider industry. We believe cutting down on avoidable plastic waste is the right thing to do, and we are proud to be doing our bit to protect the planet.”*

### **Green Teams**

Over the past few months, Wates has been encouraging the creation of ‘Green Teams’ across its construction sites. Green Teams are responsible for looking out for waste and where cost savings can be made while protecting the planet.

The Green team at the Abbey Area Regeneration Phase One site took the lead in improving sustainability and protecting the environment. The Green Team participated in environmental awareness talks and attended courses and workshops to learn more about waste management. In addition, the Green Team hosted environmental toolbox talks and daily briefings with the workforce, communicating the need to preserve the environment and the need to avoid waste being disposed of to landfill.

The Green Team spotted some ‘quick wins’ on site to reduce its plastics and packaging. With the help of the Green Team, the workforce upcycled wood, plastic, old safety helmets, and used boots to prevent waste being disposed of to landfill. While the Green Team undertook a waste management survey to assess the waste on site and encouraged the workforce to take responsibility for reducing the volume of plastics and packaging consumed on site. At present, the current recycling rate on site is 98%.

### **The Supply Chain**

To protect the environment and to eliminate the unnecessary generation of waste, Wates is working in collaboration with its supply chain to ensure all aspects of the supply chain is taking responsibility for protecting the environment.

We encourage the supply chain to register with the [Supply Chain Sustainability School](#), an online resource which helps to educate individuals working in the construction industry about topics such as waste management, packaging waste, material use, resource efficiency, sustainable solutions, and other important environmental issues.

84% of our supply chain are now registered with the Supply Chain Sustainability School and are actively working towards reducing the consumption of plastics and packaging.

To find out more about Wates, please click [here](#) to visit their website.