

Workplace Recycling case study: leisure centre

Carmarthen Leisure Centre

Background

Carmarthen Leisure Centre is one of 6 public leisure facilities operated by Carmarthenshire County Council. Facilities include a swimming pool, sports hall, fitness studio, squash and badminton courts. It is the only site in the County to have a full-size athletics track and is one of 2 leisure centres in Carmarthenshire with a cafe.



Image: Carmarthen Leisure Centre

Putting workplace recycling into practice

The team on site are keen to improve their environmental performance and have explored a range of ways to reduce resource and energy use.

The leisure centre has waste, recycling and food waste collected by CWM Environmental, a Council-owned company. The workplace recycling law created a catalyst to review practices on site, improving how they separate their waste and recycling through improved infrastructure, communications and staff training.

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Actif Carmarthenshire has been proactively working on ways to reduce our environmental impact in recent years, with waste reduction being central to our ambitions. Having already successfully reversed a 60%-40% split between general and recyclable waste, this new way of working has provided us with the impetus to achieve a further increase to 70% of all waste now being streamed for recycling.”

James Levett

Assistant Manager



Image: Leisure centre foyer

Responding to the workplace recycling law

The main change for the site was the need to replace mixed recycling with separate internal and external containers targeting paper & card; plastic, cartons & metal. New signage was developed, focused on images and colours rather than words and the external waste compound was fenced to prevent the public accessing the bins. Additional guidance on separation requirements was prepared for site contractors, staff and visitors.

Waste production and management

Plastic packaging is the main waste stream produced in public areas within the building, along with drink cans – from vending machines and the cafe. The separate food waste bin is located close to the café staff exit for ease of access.



Image: External food waste bin

Improving separation in the cafe foyer

An existing (Unisan) recycling station that was no longer needed at another Council building was relocated and repurposed to support separate recycling in the leisure centre foyer. The station was reconfigured to target the main materials being produced in this location, along with supporting information and iconography.



Image: Recycling station

Recycling in outdoor spaces

Outdoor spaces are used by visiting groups to athletics meets, dog-walkers etc. Monitoring external containers is a challenge, the main focus being on repurposing mixed recycling litter bins to now target plastic, cartons & metal, alongside general litter bins.



Image: External repurposed recycling bin

Ongoing initiatives

Following the coronavirus pandemic a number of initiatives have been trialled reviewing products and packaging sold in the cafe. A planned next step is to assess the feasibility of bringing back (reusable) crockery, but this has a knock-on (collection / washing) time impact for café staff.

Maintaining communications and nudging staff and the public to use the facilities correctly is an ongoing areas of focus. Further waste prevention initiatives, such as price incentives to customers choosing to use refillable coffee cups, underpin a broader aim to reduce general waste to 10% by 2030.

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