

Workplace Recycling case study: hospitality

Mercure Swansea Hotel

Background

Mercure Swansea Hotel is part of the Accor/IHG family of hotels with 120 bedrooms and 9 meeting rooms. The hotel has 'Green Key' certification – a leading standard for excellence in the field of environmental responsibility and sustainable operation within the tourism industry - administered by Keep Wales Tidy. This has driven adoption of various practical measures on site to reduce energy and water use, improve resource efficiency.



Image: Mercure Hotel Swansea

Putting workplace recycling into practice

Working with Veolia as the collection service provider contracted at corporate level, the hotel team has autonomy to develop waste and recycling solutions that work for the site. Recycling solutions continue to evolve over time, including the planned adoption of 4 sets of divider bins for the outside areas.

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“The secret to successfully responding to the workplace recycling law has been the early and ongoing involvement of all staff. Regular team meetings are used to feedback challenges through Department Heads and invite solutions. Changes have been made throughout the site, building on the existing positive work undertaken through the Green Key accreditation.”

Ian Harding-Jones, General Manager



Image: Bin station in kitchen area

Responding to the workplace recycling law

Prior to the change in law the following streams were separately collected: general waste, cardboard, glass and food waste. The hotel now has full separation in line with the law and has placed a greater emphasis on food waste. Grounds and maintenance staff undertake secondary sorting of materials to minimise contamination levels.

Separating recycling at source

The hotel team is continuing to look at options to make it easy for residents to recycle in their bedrooms. However, space constraints limit the number and type of bins it is possible to use. In the meantime, there is an increased reliance on staff to separate at source, using adapted housekeeping trolleys with clear sacks for recycling.



Image: Housekeeping trolley with separately collected materials

Monitoring food waste levels

Food waste is weighed daily by the chef, including all waste coming back from customer plates, spoiled and out of date produce, all peelings / trimmings and tea bags. Once a year's worth of data is available annual improvement targets will be put in place, e.g. targeting a 10% year-on-year reduction.



Image: Signage at breakfast buffet

Reducing customer food waste

A breakfast buffet operates until 10am daily. From 9am (as things get quieter) staff will stop replenishing the buffet and cook to order to reduce waste. Information and guidance is provided to residents as they enter the dining area, providing information and messaging around food waste

Ongoing initiatives

Guest areas pose the greatest challenge. To keep outside areas clean and tidy plenty of bins are provided across the extensive car park area, including separate recycling bins next to the hotel entrance. A bin should always be easily spottable by visitors, i.e. no more than 10m away and never allowed to overflow (through a regular checking / emptying schedule). Visitors may have come a long way and want to readily dispose of items such as coffee cups. A number of external divider bins have been ordered to help nudge visitors to recycle on arrival.

With the biggest ongoing cost to the hotel being labour, initiatives to reduce time spent by staff managing waste represent a top priority, this includes use of customer incentive programmes.

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