



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**#2023  
PLASTIC  
FREE**

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OF LEEDS**



## The Pledge Launch – November 2018

Collaborative pledge between University of Leeds and Leeds University Union

Committed to phasing out single-use plastic over the next 5 years:

- Offices and catering by 2020
- Whole University by 2023



The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, a user profile for 'LucyStu', and links for News, Sport, Weather, iPlayer, and Sounds. Below this is a red 'NEWS' header with sub-navigation for Home, UK, World, Business, Politics, Tech, Science, Health, and Family & Education. The current page is 'Leeds & West Yorkshire' under the 'Regions' category. The main headline reads 'University of Leeds plans to stop using plastics by 2023'. Below the headline, it says '© 7 November 2018' and includes social media sharing icons for Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, Email, and a general 'Share' button.



About 300 million tonnes of plastic waste is generated every year, according to UN Environment

## Why did we make the pledge?

All aware of the issue of plastic use and pollution around the globe - the 'Blue Planet effect'

### Impact of University

- 40,000 staff and students have a large amount of plastic use across all our operations; catering, laboratories, construction, procurement...

### Huge opportunity

- To engage and influence behavior change across all our stakeholders; staff, students, supply chain, HEI, Leeds City region



## What does the pledge involve?

### Catering and Offices – 2020

- Huge advances already been made in this area
- Engaged catering department
- Successful KeepCup campaign - sold 2,400 in 2017/2018

### Whole University – 2023

- Understand that laboratories and other research areas need longer to make the change
- Aware that there may be financial implications so given time to incorporate into budgets
- Research and innovation taking place all the time regarding alternative products

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How are we going to achieve this?

2018

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## 1. Operational changes

- Mapping plastic use
- Empowering others
- Communications

# 1. Operational changes

The following departments have taken it upon themselves to make the following changes:

- Alumni & Development team replaced plastic packaging on annual magazine – **920 kg of plastic**
- Leeds University Union bars switched to reusable plastic cups – **9,000 plastic cups per month**
- The Cohen Laboratory replaced pre-racked centrifuge racks with reusable racks – **50,000 centrifuge racks annually**



In keeping with the University of Leeds and Leeds University Union joint pledge to be single-use plastic free by 2023 **we have replaced our plastic packaging with paper envelopes**

## How are we going to achieve this?

1. Operational changes
2. Research and Innovation
3. Create a network

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## 2. Research and Innovation

We currently have over 20 research projects with a value of over £6 million:

- Researching processes to produce the next generation of biodegradable bioplastics - **School of Chemistry**
- Predicting the flow and crystallisation of polymers in plastics to improve processing and recycling - **School of Mathematics**
- Increasing understanding of how after-use plastic is managed within cities to maximise circular economy potential – **Civil Engineering**



## How are we going to achieve this?

1. Operational changes
2. Research and Innovation
3. Create a network

2018

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### 3. Create a network

Our aim is to share knowledge and best practice, bring others along on our journey:

- Staff and students
- Stakeholders
- Higher Education Institutions
- Organisations across Leeds





## Questions?

Lucy Stuart

[Sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/plasticfree](https://sustainability.leeds.ac.uk/plasticfree)

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