



## CASE STUDY:

# 5 STEPS TO COMPOSTING WITH CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

City of York Council started working with and composting their Vegware back in 2019. It has a partnership that has stood the test of time, as well as a global pandemic. Having successfully navigated these challenges, and with the council building back operating at full capacity, we went to visit to find out how they have made their Vegware composting collections a success.



## The challenges of foodservice recycling: **IS IT RECYCLABLE?**

Café West is at the heart of the council's west offices. It is a hub: serving breakfast and lunch for around 400 people every day and even hosting meetings for council employees and visitors. Run by national disability charity, [United Response](#). A team of 6 assists up to 9 people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health needs in building confidence and gaining employability skills in a safe café environment.

Like many large-scale foodservice operations, Café West produced a lot of waste. Led by Total Facilities Manager, Jane Armstrong and Service Manager, Simon Copper, the council sought ways to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. When it comes to foodservice, dry mixed recycling can prove complicated – something that Simon, with his background in managing a pizza restaurant knew only too well.

**What we find a lot of time  
is you think something is  
recyclable and then you get so  
far down the line and find that  
it's actually not or it has to be  
recycled in a very specific way  
which just isn't available**

Simon Copper  
Service Manager, Café West

## The answer? **COMPOSTING**

Café West switched out traditional packaging for Vegware's plant-based compostables and began to implement a composting collection.







## SEEING THE SIGNS

York Council worked with a local waste collector and Vegware's Environmental team to organise the collections and design bespoke bin signage. Having bin signage specific to Café West helped visitors and council employees choose the right bin and minimise contamination in the waste streams. Having swapped all their packaging to Vegware in stage one, this marked stage two in the Environmental team's process.

**From an internal bins perspective, we can provide support and advice in signage and to make things as clear as possible for the diner**

David Dyce  
Senior Waste Management Consultant,  
Vegware

## SPREAD THE WORD

With the collection, bins and signage set up, the next step was to ensure that everyone understood the process and their role. Vegware's Waste Management Consultants worked with York Council to create posters, stickers and other displays. These materials helped everyone understand the system, why Vegware was being used and what happened once it was disposed of correctly. Simon explains:

**"The Vegware team came in and explained what the process was and how the cycle works. From there, it was a mixture of having the bins clearly labelled and having information on our noticeboards to say how the process works. We included some point-of-sale items which catch people's eye, as well as having information on each table"**

**It was really easy to get that buy in because there was just so much communication, it was all consistent and it all stood out as well."**





## TRAINING TO COMPOST

Operating a foodservice as busy as Café West requires significant amounts of staff training. From the prep, to operating the equipment even to managing the waste streams.

Vegware's Environmental team worked with Café West to ensure that catering staff understood how the composting stream worked. This meant that, in turn, they could assist council employees and visitors in composting their Vegware. Café manager, Sarah Dixon explained the impact of the composting waste stream:

**We are quite lucky because we are in the council, so we don't pay the costs for bins to be picked up as a normal business would. But our general waste, when we take it out to the bins, is half what it would be normally."**

Sarah Dixon,  
Café Manager, Café West

## SHOUT ABOUT IT

Running a successful composting collection is something to shout about. The process diverts waste from landfill and instead returns organic matter to the soil. As Vegware's Senior Waste Management Consultant, David Dyce puts it:

**"I think composting Vegware on site is a fantastic message to share with your customers. It shows that you're really thinking about what you're doing with your waste. It's often the case that by diverting Vegware to composting is going to clean up your dry mixed recycling streams. It makes everyone think about what to do with their waste. And it's also going to vastly reduce the amount of general waste that you're producing on site, which can only be a good thing."**

## WANT A COMPOSTING STORY TO SHOUT ABOUT?

Speak to our Environmental team  
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