



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2018/19 & 2019/20



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

WELCOME TO A SPECIAL EDITION OF OUR ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



The last two years have been marked by significant change. We have seen a cultural shift with sustainability becoming common language, highlighted by the convergence of global phenomena including the Youth Climate Movement, Black Lives Matter and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have each demonstrated just how interconnected we all are. It is becoming more widely understood that racial and social justice and inclusivity are integral to sustainability and that we cannot discuss sustainability without also addressing these issues. As we continue to adjust to a post-Covid world, we will be bold and ambitious in how we build back better.

Despite this year’s challenges, our commitment towards sustainability has remained strong as ever, bringing with it many successes. During lockdown, the University volunteered its campus and facilities towards supporting the NHS and Leeds City Council, in addition to our academic community developing global solutions to the pandemic. We continue to make great strides in embedding the Leeds Sustainable Curriculum, and in 2019 were awarded the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN) Award for this programme.

We were also delighted to be awarded joint 3rd in the UK and joint 11th globally in the 2020 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings; a league that assesses universities against the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is testament to our whole University community working together to drive sustainability holistically across our operations, outreach, teaching and research. This Annual Sustainability Report will highlight the ways in which we are sector-leading on SDG activity and how they remain fundamental to our commitments and action going forward.

I’m excited about the next chapter for Leeds. Our commitments to a low carbon future have been solidified in our seven principles to tackle the climate crisis, which will be implemented through our forthcoming Climate Plan. We remain focussed on our pledge to remove single-use plastic by 2023 and are collaboratively working to overcome the challenges this brings. We are also in the midst of developing an updated sustainability strategy; a bold and exciting framework for mobilising our University community towards further realising our vision of a more equitable society on a local, national and global scale.

I am incredibly proud of the progress that the whole University has made towards sustainability over the last two years and I look forward to working as a collective on the next step of our journey.

Dr Louise Ellis,
Director of Sustainability, University of Leeds

OUR COMMITMENT TO A SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FUTURE



I am proud of the leadership that the University of Leeds shows in sustainability and how integral it is to our teaching, research, operations and outreach. Now more than ever we must be bold and ambitious in our commitments in order that we strive for equity and justice in society. I look forward to collaborating with our University community as well as our wider local, national and global communities, to achieve sustainable solutions to our global grand challenges.

Professor Simone Buitendijk,
Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds

WHAT’S IN THIS REPORT?

This Annual Sustainability Report is a snapshot of how we are advancing sustainability across our University and beyond. This year we have produced a two-year update in order to bring us in line with our next phase of activity and also to represent the significant progress and change we have seen over this period.

As with previous sustainability reports, we follow the four themes set out in our current Sustainability Strategy: Embedding Sustainability through Collaboration; Building Knowledge and Capacity; Being a Positive Partner in Society; and Making the Most of Resources. Here we present some of our successes, celebrating the many achievements across our University community, whilst also acknowledging the challenges that we continue to work on.

Throughout we highlight how we are contributing towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals – a set of 17 goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. We also provide an update on our Seven Principles to tackle the Climate Crisis and the progress we have made since these were set in 2018.

We can’t include everything in this report – we know there are many staff and students behind these highlights and more, and we would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment to embedding sustainability into everything we do here at Leeds.

MATERIALITY

The themes set out in our Sustainability Strategy, and subsequent Annual Reports, reflect the economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of the University of Leeds. Our targets and commitments reflect the issues and challenges that we know we can have the largest direct and indirect impact upon. Not all sustainability issues and opportunities have the same potential to create lasting and measurable change. That’s why our chosen material topics are those that have, or can create, a real difference, bringing about the most impact across the University and beyond, to local, national and international communities. Our work is also guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and we review our material impact areas regularly to ensure we stay relevant, impactful and able to make a significant difference.



Find out more about this year’s report and sustainability at the University of Leeds and keep track of our progress at sustainability.leeds.ac.uk

THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Over the last two years, the University has continued to realise our sustainability vision and focus on having a local and global impact through the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These global goals are a framework to achieve a sustainable future for all, covering everything from reducing inequalities, responsible consumption and production, enabling safe, sustainable cities and communities, and working in partnership for the goals. The SDGs encapsulate our purpose as an institution, to drive positive impact and change across the holistic spectrum of sustainability issues, ensuring just, fair and equitable solutions for people and the planet, at both our home here in Leeds and globally.

We continue to embed the principles of the SDGs into everything we do. Our award-winning Sustainable Curriculum gives students from all disciplines the opportunity to learn about sustainability. Our ambitious commitments to address the climate crisis demonstrate we take SDG 13 Climate Action very seriously and our strong collaborative research partnerships for the goals both locally, nationally and internationally provide us with an opportunity to advance the SDGs beyond our boundaries, influencing policy and finding solutions to global challenges with equality at our core. Our outreach and widening participation activities actively support SDG 10 Reducing Inequalities and SDG 5 Gender Equality amongst our local communities and beyond, whilst our staff and student volunteering programmes contribute towards SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities. Our breadth of activities across all SDGs is a testament to our commitment to sustainability and the positive contribution from across the institution. We are proud that our whole community are working together for a better future for all, at local, national and global scales.

In the pages that follow we share the SDGs which have been most relevant to some of our activities over the last two years. Whilst we may make more contribution to some SDGs than others, we are committed to contributing across all SDGs.



2020 GLOBAL IMPACT RANKINGS SUCCESS



JOINT 3RD
IN UK OVERALL

JOINT 11TH
IN THE WORLD
OVERALL

Our contribution across all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was recognised in our recent success in the **2020 Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings** where we were delighted to be awarded joint 3rd in the UK and joint 11th globally out of 766 institutions worldwide. We demonstrated significant positive impact across all 17 SDGs, highlighting our holistic approach to embedding sustainability and equity through our teaching, operations, research and outreach.

<i>TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION: UNIVERSITY IMPACT RANKING 2020, BASED ON CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE SDGS</i>	<i>WORLD RANKING</i>	<i>UK RANKING</i>
OVERALL RANKING	11	3
SDG 17 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	2	1
SDG 1 – NO POVERTY	7	1
SDG 10 – REDUCED INEQUALITIES	7	2
SDG 12 – RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	9	5
SDG 7 – AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	17	1
SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	19	4
SDG 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER	32	4
SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY	33	5
SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	35	6
SDG 15 – LIFE ON LAND	49	9
SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	74	7
SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION	81	11
SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER	84	5
SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	TOP 200	TOP 12
SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING	TOP 200	TOP 20
SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION	TOP 200	TOP 20
SDG 16 – PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	TOP 200	TOP 25

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



2ND IN THE WORLD AND 1ST IN THE UK

1 NO POVERTY



7TH IN THE WORLD AND 1ST IN THE UK

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



7TH IN THE WORLD AND 2ND IN THE UK

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



9TH IN THE WORLD AND 5TH IN THE UK


OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR CLIMATE ACTION

In September 2019, the University of Leeds announced its sector-leading [Seven Principles for Climate Action](#). These bold and holistic principles are the University’s ambitious response to the climate crisis and they depict how we will lead on tackling climate change, through adapting our approach towards research, curriculum, operations and outreach.

Since the launch of our Climate Principles, COVID-19 has presented immediate and longer-term challenges for us all. However, it has also led to significant shifts in the way we work, including the use of new technology and behaviours that may help us to reduce our carbon emissions further. It will be vital to take what we’ve learned from the pandemic, to implement a ‘new normal’ that benefits everyone, especially those that have been most challenged by the events of 2020.

HERE WE SHARE OUR PROGRESS AGAINST EACH OF THE PRINCIPLES.

PRINCIPLE 1: CLIMATE PLAN AND NET-ZERO




We shall prepare our next Climate Plan and sustainability strategy with a view to securing a net-zero carbon footprint by 2030 (twenty years earlier than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommends). Furthermore, although we cannot yet guarantee to achieve it, it is our aim as an institution to have no direct carbon emissions by 2050.

The writing of the University’s [Climate Plan](#) is well underway. This comprehensive document will not only outline our potential pathway to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, but it will also outline how we will realise all seven Climate Principles. This was informed by a detailed consultation in December 2019, where we gave staff and students the opportunity to learn about the Climate Plan, provide feedback, and submit their own ideas. We were delighted that 509 responses fed into the drafting of the Climate Plan, which will be released in early 2021.

Whilst the plan is being drafted, we have also already begun to deliver on it. This includes developing pathways for our transition to net-zero, which concentrate on the changes we will need to make to our estate infrastructure, our vehicles and our catering operations.


PRINCIPLE 2: EMBEDDING INTO DECISION-MAKING



We shall ensure that considerations of sustainability, and specifically our trajectory to a zero carbon future, shape institutional decision-making. In particular, we will ensure that all major decisions are informed by a sustainability value assessment, just as they are now by a risk assessment.

The University Sustainability Steering Group is busy reviewing the University’s governance structure to enable the Climate Plan and Seven Principles to be managed in a consistent approach, ensuring that the Principles are embedded into the heart of Institutional processes. As part of this activity, we are reviewing our policies and standards, and have already published our revised Sustainable Construction and Sustainable Procurement [Standards](#).

PRINCIPLE 3: CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS AND REORIENTING AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS



As we make the transition to a low carbon future, we shall increasingly reorient our research and teaching away from the fossil fuel sector. As we do so, we shall continue to work with (and accept money from) fossil fuel companies when the work in question is to reduce carbon emissions or could help to accelerate the transition to a low carbon future.

We have made good progress towards evaluating and taking steps in reorienting both our research and teaching activities away from the fossil fuel sector. As part of this transition, we will continue to work with the sector to find solutions to progress alternative and renewable technologies that support a low carbon future.

Our successful [Living Lab](#) approach is also speeding up our transition to net-zero, as it enables us to test new innovations on our estate and operations, whilst also supporting us to forge closer partnerships with industry and the city. We are building on a pan-University network of top climate researchers collaborating on climate solutions, including those from the Priestley International Centre for Climate, Energy at Leeds and the School of Politics and International Studies.

PRINCIPLE 4: STUDENT EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

We shall further extend the Leeds Sustainable Discovery Theme programme to integrate sustainability into our teaching provision at all levels, and give opportunities to students to take part in activities to promote sustainability. We shall also further extend the inclusion of sustainability in our educational engagement and outreach activities.

The [Leeds Sustainable Curriculum](#) working group, which feeds into the Sustainability Steering Group, continues to embed sustainability into our curriculum and increase the knowledge and capacity of our academic staff to develop and deliver sustainability and climate teaching across all disciplines. And our work is being recognised – our approach to our Curriculum, won us the 2019 [International Sustainable Campus Network \(ISCN\) award](#) for embedding sustainability through a whole-systems approach.

We also continue to provide students from every discipline opportunities to engage with sustainability outside of formal teaching, whether this is through volunteering opportunities or paid employment. This year the University has employed two full time Sustainability interns and we have recruited eleven part-time [Student Sustainability Architects](#), who will deliver sustainability projects across the University.

Work continues in incorporating sustainability into our Educational Engagement activity, including the design of new residential schools using sustainable cities as the focus. The current revision of the Educational Engagement strategy is being underpinned by our commitment and approach to sustainability.

PRINCIPLE 5: NET-ZERO CARBON CITY

We will continue to work with Leeds City Council and other partners, in particular through the Leeds Climate Commission and by extending our Living Lab Programme, towards the goal of making Leeds a net-zero carbon city by 2030. This is consistent with the City Council’s decision in March 2019 to declare a ‘climate emergency’, to sign up to science-based carbon reduction targets, and to work to make Leeds carbon neutral by 2030. We support the City Council’s call on central government to provide the funding and powers to make this possible.

As an anchor institution in the city, we have a strong partnership with Leeds City Council and continue to collaborate on projects aimed at addressing carbon emissions and improving the city’s wider sustainability. This includes chairing and playing a leadership role on the [Leeds Climate Commission](#) and the development of a co-owned air quality and met data dashboard.

As part of the Leeds Climate Commission, we have undertaken analysis to inform the Leeds City Council pathway to net-zero, a number of University staff and students have been involved in the Leeds Climate Change Citizen’s Jury and we are inputting into city-wide projects and strategies. We are currently undertaking a ‘climate action readiness assessment’, which assesses how ready we are as a city to take action across homes, public and commercial buildings and transport. This will identify a pipeline of programmes and projects and highlight opportunities for low carbon investment, building on the launch of a climate emergency bond for the city.

PRINCIPLE 6: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

We shall likewise encourage and support the City Council and other relevant authorities to develop a sustainable transport system for the city region (thereby also helping to reduce the University’s indirect carbon footprint). We are committed to internationalisation, and to securing international excellence; but we shall explore ways of developing sustainable forms of international communication and reducing the impact of our business travel in a way that is consistent with that commitment.

The University continues to discuss with Leeds City Council and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to support travel behaviour and infrastructure change. Most recently this includes playing an active role in the [Connecting Leeds](#) consultation for improved active and public travel opportunities in Leeds, some of which have already been implemented to support our communities with active travel during the pandemic.

The challenges surrounding sustainable global travel have been integrated into the University’s post-2020 planning for Internationalisation and will be key to our post-COVID-19 recovery. The new ways of working and technology that we have utilised during the pandemic will provide further opportunities to support this agenda.

PRINCIPLE 7: RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT



We will continue to invest responsibly. As a minimum, we shall invest only in companies which manage their affairs in a way which is consistent with Paris Climate Accord goals.

We continue to invest responsibly following our Climate Active Strategy and, since announcing the seven Climate Principles, have divested further from fossil fuel associated companies. In addition to this, we are investigating more ways in which we can consider the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) within our investment approach.

A SNAPSHOT OF ACTIVITIES



In 2019 the University Council developed and approved our [Seven Principles for Tackling the Climate Crisis](#), a holistic set of principles guiding our work towards a low carbon future. We continue to develop our wide-reaching [Climate Plan](#) in response to this.



In 2020 the University of Leeds was announced [top three in the UK](#) and 11th worldwide in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, recognising our commitment and contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



In 2019 we were awarded the [International Sustainable Campus Network \(ISCN\) Award](#) for embedding a collaborative approach to sustainability across all aspects of the University curriculum.



We have now run four successful [Student Sustainability Research Conferences](#) since they first began in 2016, with each year bigger and better than the last. This annual event celebrates and highlights the critical role that student research plays in finding innovative interdisciplinary solutions and brings together students from all disciplines and levels of study to showcase sustainability in their research.



In 2018/19 we celebrated 20 years of the [Students into Schools](#) programme. Since 1998, Students into Schools has placed over 6,500 students in 300 local schools and educational organisations to support children and young people achieve. This equates to 227,535 contact hours or 194 years of a full-time classroom assistant contributing the equivalent of £2m worth of free support.



In 2019 the [Priestley Centre Building](#) opened, hosting world-leading experts in all the key strands of climate change research.



In 2018 the University of Leeds and Leeds University Union announced a joint pledge to [become single-use plastic free by 2023](#). During the first year of the pledge over one million pieces of single-use plastic were removed from use across the University and Union. We continue to work towards reducing unnecessary single-use plastics across operations, teaching and research, through the COVID-19 challenges of 2020.



We now have [over 30 Blueprint teams](#) representing Schools and Services across the University, delivering on bespoke sustainability action plans in their areas.



Between 2018 and 2020, over [40 new collaborative Living lab projects](#) have been developed, which use the University as a test-bed to find solutions to the most pressing societal challenges.



We have joined the [International Universities Climate Alliance](#) – this new partnership of 40 leading research institutes aims to accelerate climate action through enhanced global cooperation.



Central Village was awarded the [Green Tourism](#) Gold Award in 2019, with Devonshire Hall, Eilerslie Hall, Lyddon Hall, University House, Dobree House, Henry Price Residences, Storm Jameson Court, The Refectory and Whetton House also successfully retaining their Green Tourism Gold Awards throughout 2019/20.



Bishops Beds designed a new mattress specifically for the University of Leeds, to increase its life cycle, and collected 24.4 tonnes of beds and mattresses for recycling and re-use in 2018/19.



In 2018 a new annual student-led sustainability journal was launched called [Discovering Sustainability](#), showcasing the contribution of students in the Sustainability Research Institute as active producers of education, research and outreach. The journal, written and edited by students, focuses on some of the most serious environmental and social challenges of the present day.



The [Big Clear Out campaign](#), in collaboration with Leeds Beckett University and Leeds City Council, saw over 16 tonnes of student donations collected at the end of June 2020, all being contributed to either local charities, free shops and donated to members of the community in most need. Over 300 local and student volunteers helped collect, sort and distribute these free goods to support inner city communities in Harehills, Beeston, Hunslet, Hyde Park, Woodhouse and Little London.



In 2018/19 we ran the [Colour Hyde Park Murals](#) competition, a project working with local communities to inspire and create community murals in the Hyde Park area. Six murals were co-created between local artists, students and local communities, representing the diverse and vibrant culture of the Hyde Park community, which now have a permanent home brightening up prominent locations within the neighbourhood.



The [University Sensory Garden](#) opened to the public in 2018/19, featuring a stimulating interactive sensory experience. This unique garden has been designed specifically to be accessible and inclusive for all providing an opportunity to explore the environment and learn about senses and nature.



Since 2018, we have collected over 8,200 bags of donated items, mainly from student Residences, for the British Heart Foundation. This has diverted around 65 tonnes from landfill, generating an estimated £ 115,000 for vital heart research.



In 2019 the [Bike Hub celebrated its 10th anniversary](#). Over the last 10 years the Bike Hub has supported our staff and students with their active travel including providing over 5,000 bike hires and repairing over 10,000+ bikes.

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COLLABORATION

Embedding sustainability is key to everything we do here at the University of Leeds. By doing so, it ensures sustainability sits at the heart of the institution and influences every decision and action we make.

A cornerstone of this theme is ensuring sustainability is embedded into our policies, processes and decision making, supporting our drive towards SDG 16 to create an effective, accountable and strong institution and underpinning our **Principles for tackling the Climate Crisis**. Over the last two years, we have worked with core University services, including providing sustainability training for the whole purchasing team and setting up a HR sustainability working group. **Equality and Inclusion** remains central to our commitment towards reducing poverty through SDG 1 and ensuring equality for all through SDG 5 and SDG 10. We continue to embed equity programmes, policies, support and initiatives across the whole institution and beyond through our educational outreach activities, to ensure a fair and inclusive community.

Key to this theme is collaboration and through working together, we can make a substantial contribution towards our sustainability goals both locally and globally, addressing our commitment towards working in partnership through SDG 17 and creating sustainable cities and communities through SDG 11.

Over the last two years, we have developed, implemented and grown our staff engagement programme, **Blueprint**, which brings together Schools and Services from across the University to develop sustainability action plans. These plans are bespoke to each team, whilst linking directly to University strategic aims to enable and empower staff to own and deliver sustainability initiatives that are important to their areas. We have exceeded our targets and now have 33 active Blueprint teams working collaboratively on sustainability challenges. Successes have included Residential Services producing an annual sustainability report and sharing their knowledge and expertise with Catering Services to help them to achieve their first Green Tourism award for The Refectory. Catering services have replaced all of campus vending machines with ‘Doozy – The healthy vending people’ machines. Our academic departments, such as the School of Food Sciences, have also embraced the programme and have started to embed sustainability objectives into staff job descriptions and have embedded sustainability accountability across their management hierarchy.

This is further complemented by our **Student** and **Staff Sustainability Architects**, a community of 44 individuals and counting, who each work on sustainability objectives and projects within their areas across the University. Successes to date include the development of site-specific biodiversity action plans for the University’s residential sites, increased education around the carbon footprint of meals in the Refectory and ongoing work to reduce single-use plastics in laboratories.



OUR COMMITMENTS

We will embed sustainability across the whole University.

We will create and support proactive collaborative networks.

We will develop robust management systems.

We will establish governance and accountability structures that drive sustainability and place it at the heart of our Institution.



OUR RESULTS

THE HEADLINES



THE FIGURES

	HOW DID WE DO?								
	RESULTS			18/19			19/20		
	15/16	16/17	17/18	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?
NUMBER OF BLUEPRINT TEAMS				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
In 2018, we fully launched our powerful new programme to embed sustainability across the institution – Blueprint. This supports Schools and Services to develop bespoke sustainability action plans that are relevant to them. We now have over 33 teams working collaboratively on sustainability initiatives.	37	40	33	20	33	✓✓	30	33	✓✓
ACCREDITATION TO ISO:14001				MET TARGET			MET TARGET		
ISO:14001 is our externally certified Environmental Management System that covers all operations.	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAINED	✓	MAINTAIN	MAINTAINED	✓
FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK LEVEL 4 IN PROCUREMENT				MET TARGET			MET TARGET		
This is a Government standard that allows us to measure and monitor progress with our sustainable procurement. We continue to maintain high standards at level 4 (out of 5 levels).	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAIN	MAINTAINED	✓	MAINTAIN	MAINTAINED	✓
NUMBER OF IT SUPPLIERS ENGAGED THROUGH ELECTRONICS WATCH				MET TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
Electronics Watch is a not-for-profit organisation that monitors and seeks improvement to workers’ rights and social impact in electronics supply chains. The reduction in numbers of suppliers engaged in 2019/20 was due to two supplier contracts coming to an end. We will continue to monitor our contracts.	3	4	5	5	5	✓	MAINTAIN	3	✗
NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING SUSTAINABILITY EVENTS				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
Total number of public, staff and student participants and volunteers in sustainability events.	3,099	7,402	9,825	10,000	11,918	✓✓	12,000	12,620	✓✓



FUTURE PRIORITIES

- Continue to grow and develop Blueprint, supporting Schools and Services to progress through their action plans
- Further embed sustainability into university-wide services such as HR, Purchasing and IT
- Develop new governance structures for our beyond 2020 Sustainability Strategy and Climate Principles

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY

Building the knowledge and capacity of our students, staff and wider partners is key to how we develop, share and promote sustainability across our campus, city and beyond. By equipping everyone with an understanding and enthusiasm for sustainability, we can truly create positive change.

Our world-class research builds knowledge through our [Living Lab Programme](#), an approach to problem-solving that brings together research, education and operations, using the University as a test-bed for sustainable solutions. By the end of 2019/20, 26 new Living Lab projects led by staff and students brought sustainable solutions to life, bringing the total number of Living Lab projects since its inception in 2017 to 97. The Living Lab now also extends into the city with city partners collaborating on projects around monitoring air quality and single-use plastics in river systems. Here we extend our reach and build upon our civic responsibility to build knowledge and capacity of our region to address sustainability challenges, contributing towards SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals.

We are advancing our [Principles for tackling the Climate Crisis](#), through our [Leeds Sustainable Curriculum](#) programme, which continues to integrate sustainability into our teaching provision across all levels and disciplines and gives opportunities for all students to take part in activities to promote sustainability. Over 6,600 students each year now take up opportunities to study sustainability as part of their formal curriculum through our [Creating Sustainable Futures modules](#). In 2019, in recognition of our world-leading sustainable curriculum programme, we were delighted to be awarded the [International Sustainable Campus Network \(ISCN\) Award](#) for embedding a collaborative approach to sustainability across all aspects of the University curriculum.

With sustainability ambitions such as our [Principles for tackling the climate crisis](#) and our [Plastics Pledge](#), building the knowledge and capacity of our University community will be vital in achieving our goals. Therefore in 2019/20, following consultation, we developed our Building Knowledge and Capacity Framework. The Framework will underpin the University's approach to sustainability and will allow us to further raise awareness and cross-institutional understanding of sustainability priorities and activities, so that everyone at the University understands how to apply sustainability to their roles. Beyond 2020 we will begin rolling out aspects of the framework, providing opportunities for all staff to further develop their skills and embed sustainability into their activities, to create lasting impact and sustainable change.



OUR COMMITMENTS

We will work across University departments to build capacity and share best practice on sustainable change.

We will equip all our staff with sustainability skills.

We will develop external links to enhance knowledge and capacity.

We will support and promote research that examines the issues relating to sustainability.

We will integrate sustainability into learning programmes and ensure all our students understand the importance of sustainability.



OUR RESULTS

THE HEADLINES



THE FIGURES

	HOW DID WE DO?								
	RESULTS			18/19			19/20		
	15/16	16/17	17/18	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?
NUMBER OF STUDENTS COMPLETING SUSTAINABILITY MODULES				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
Creating Sustainable Futures discovery modules plus other related sustainability modules.	5,600	5,700	6,163	MAINTAIN	6,535	✓✓	6,438	6,644	✓✓
NUMBER OF MODULES RELATING TO SUSTAINABILITY				EXCEEDED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
All modules across the University that have a sustainability dimension. The reduction in 19/20 is due to module consolidation across the whole University. Sustainability is now part of the Curriculum Enhancement Programme to ensure it is fully embedded.	163	244	249	MAINTAIN	247	✓	MAINTAIN	214	✗
NUMBER OF STUDENT HOURS WORKING ON SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES (HRS WHERE RECORDED)				EXCEEDED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
This is an estimate and, where recorded, includes all student volunteering. There were no volunteers after March 2020 due to COVID-19, which saw numbers fall in 19/20.	1,019	3,985	7,759	9,200	12,179	✓✓	10,000	7,793	✗
STAFF TRAINING HOURS COMPLETED (HRS)				EXCEEDED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
Completion of online sustainability training modules has fallen, however many staff have instead engaged with Blueprint. We are now developing a framework to support and grow staff training.	582	531.5	1,079	500	475.5	✗	500	463.4	✗
RESEARCH INCOME (£)				MET TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
This includes University research income such as live grants, in sustainability related themes. Research income fell slightly in 2019/20 partly due to the impacts of COVID-19.	49.8M	243M	245.5M	MAINTAIN	285M	✓✓	MAINTAIN	261M	✗
WEBPAGE VIEWS (SUSTAINABILITY WEBPAGES)				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
There was a significant increase in 2018/19, partly due to live monitoring of our resident Peregrine Falcons, which have not nested in 2019/20.	77,684	90,459	164,546	125,000	222,828	✓✓	125,000	142,636	✓✓
NUMBER OF LIVING LAB PROJECTS (LAUNCHED 2016/17)				EXCEEDED TARGET			MET TARGET		
Solving operational challenges through staff and student collaboration and research, using the campus as a test bed.	N/A	(LAUNCH – TARGET 25)	31	55	71	✓✓	100	99	✓

FUTURE PRIORITIES



- Launch and roll out Building Knowledge and Capacity Framework for staff
- Continue to expand Living Lab programme into the city
- Further develop and expand curriculum programme to provide even more opportunities for students to learn about sustainability

BEING A POSITIVE PARTNER IN SOCIETY



Being a Positive Partner to Society means we take our responsibility to make a difference beyond our campus seriously. This theme is underpinned by our desire to work through partnership-focused initiatives and embodies our approach to social and civic responsibility.

Whilst the unprecedented events of 2020 have been challenging for many of our engagement activities, our civic relationships and partnerships have strengthened. We have continued to demonstrate our commitment to our civic responsibility and SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing through our collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The University continues to actively support partnership working and SDG 17 by working closely with local partners such as the NHS Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust (LTHT) and Leeds City Council to provide support, facilities, expertise, equipment and resources. The University's 200+ clinical academic staff, jointly-funded with the LTHT, have been prioritising front-line activity over research and academic duties, thus increasing the capacity of local NHS services. More than 130 skilled technical staff have also volunteered to help run local and national COVID-19 diagnostic testing facilities. Our world-leading research community has contributed towards vital research surrounding the pandemic, supporting to tackle this global challenge.

Our **Student Citizenship programme** supports students to be responsible citizens and create positive social change, whilst also helping to contribute towards SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities. In 2019/20 we introduced bespoke training for students where neighbourhood issues have occurred, and so far, have supported 221 students with good citizenship and responsible ways of living in the community through this. We also ran a **Colour Hyde Park murals project** to bring students, permanent residents and artists together to co-create six community murals throughout Hyde Park, helping to clean up the area and provide opportunities for social cohesion. This was further supported by the **2020 Big Clear Out**, a joint project with Leeds City Council and Leeds Beckett University, which collected over 16 tonnes of valuable goods from students to provide to local inner city communities in need.

The **Positive Impact Partners (PIP) Scheme** facilitates partnerships between the University and third sector organisations in order to strengthen and safeguard the sector and create positive social change. Whilst there has been less focus on promoting PIP in 2019/20, in part due to changing staff and third sector commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic, since the scheme began, staff have contributed over £164,000 in time to the third sector. Our **School Governors programme**, launched in 2017/18, highlights our commitment to SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities. This now includes 212 governors from across the University and the Alumni community, who in 2019/20 volunteered their time to assist local schools providing over 16,850 hours (equal to over £311,000 in financial support).

Our students have also been actively supporting our local communities. Between 2018 and 2020, 982 students volunteered through the **Students into Schools programme**, providing vital additional educational support for local school children. Students in the School of Law also continue to provide a range of **free legal advice and support for our local communities**, such as working alongside Chapeltown Citizens Advice as part of their Welfare Appeals and Tribunal Clinic, in addition to supporting the Migrant Support drop-in service and supporting the Cerebra children's charity concerned with improving the lives of children with neurological conditions and their families.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We will build external engagement to further develop internal and external capacity and knowledge, and influence wider policies.

We will lead by example, share best practice, learn from others and ensure our research is accessible.

We will take our civic responsibilities seriously, as an employer, a good neighbour and in creating opportunities.

We will support our students to be responsible citizens and to play an active part of society, both locally and globally.

We will create a welcoming campus that is both culturally and environmentally vibrant.



OUR RESULTS

THE HEADLINES

OVER 16 TONNES OF GOODS DONATED AS PART OF BIG CLEAR OUT

221 STUDENTS HAVE UNDERGONE CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

982 STUDENTS VOLUNTEERED IN STUDENTS INTO SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

OVER 200 CLINICAL ACADEMIC STAFF DIRECTLY SUPPORTING NHS DURING COVID PANDEMIC

THE FIGURES

	RESULTS			HOW DID WE DO?					
	15/16	16/17	17/18	TARGET	RESULT	HIT OR MISS?	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?
MENTORING HOURS (THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS)				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
Number of hours contributed through the Positive Impact Partner (PIP) programme and from 18/19 this also includes hours contributed through our School Governors (SG) programme (launched in 2018). Declines in PIP hours in 19/20 will be addressed through a relaunch and revision of the programme in 20/21.	364	504	810	750	14,083	✓✓	750	17,325	✓✓
					(PIP = 868 HRS) (SG = 13,215 HRS)			(PIP = 471 HRS) (SG = 16,854 HRS)	
NUMBER OF STUDENTS VOLUNTEERING (WHERE RECORDED)				EXCEEDED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
Students volunteering in a range of activities across campus as well as Living Lab projects and through student opportunities. The closure of campus due to COVID-19 in March has meant 19/20 numbers are down.	3,848	3,704	4,126	MAINTAIN	4,459	✓✓	MAINTAIN	4,148	✗
ATTENDEES AT PUBLIC EVENTS ON CAMPUS				MISSED TARGET			HIT TARGET		
This includes public attendees at both free and chargeable events on campus. Data for 19/20 includes public attendees at equivalent online events throughout the covid pandemic.	61,299	64,472	63,220 PREVIOUS ERROR HAS BEEN CORRECTED HERE	MAINTAIN	60,114	✗	MAINTAIN	60,538	✓
BENEFICIARIES OF UNIVERSITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME				MISSED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
Number of school/college pupils and wider community who have benefited from educational engagement activities. More targeted activity and a fall in UCAS in 2018/19, plus the covid pandemic has led to reduced engagement levels.	119,785	129,364	130,871	MAINTAIN	96,403	✗	MAINTAIN	53,754	✗
THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS WORKED WITH				MISSED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
We missed our target in 2018/19 as a number of contracts came to an end. We are currently working with the third sector to understand the impact of COVID-19 and exploring how the University can support further.	180	264	341	MAINTAIN	284	✗	MAINTAIN	283	✗
HOUSEHOLD ENGAGEMENTS THROUGH CITIZENSHIP PROJECT				EXCEEDED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
Student and permanent resident households visited as part of the Welcome to Leeds initiative and student households engaged with throughout the year	1,800	1,908	2,903	MAINTAIN	2,962	✓	3,000	3,160	✓✓



FUTURE PRIORITIES

- Collaborate with city partners on tackling student behaviour in our wider communities
- Improve community cohesion and positive impact through our Student Citizenship programme
- Expand our reach and impact as a Civic Institution, working with city partners on key programmes
- Widen and adapt our approach to PIP to increase participation and engagement

MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES

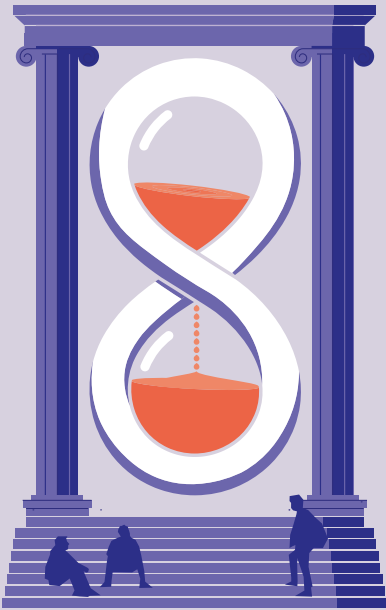
At the University of Leeds, we take our environmental responsibilities seriously and continue to manage our resources based on the principles of circular economy through SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production. Our approach to making the most of resources also supports SDG 13 Climate Action and positively enhances biodiversity through SDG 15 Life on Land.

As in previous years, the growth of our estate and the creation of new spaces for research and teaching has had a direct impact on the commitments of this theme. This continues to create challenges for our ambitious carbon and water reduction targets. However, we recognise the importance of reducing carbon in tackling the climate crisis and throughout 2020, in line with SDG 13 Climate Action, we have been working on an ambitious and comprehensive **Climate plan** to tackle our carbon impacts and more. This is in direct response to the University Council setting out our **Seven Principles for tackling the Climate Crisis** in 2019, which reflect the University’s commitment to mobilise its combined knowledge, influence, assets and community to help the world transition to a low carbon future.

In 2018, to support SDG 14 Life Below Water, SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, we launched our **Plastics Pledge**, a commitment to remove single-use plastics from our operations, teaching and research by 2023. In 2019/20 we celebrated removing over one million pieces of single-use plastic from our waste stream, including 80,000 disposable coffee cups from GFAL outlets, 230,000 plastic wrappers from the Alumni magazine, and Devonshire Hall staff removed over 86,000 items of single-use plastics from circulation when they switched from using sauce sachets, water bottles, and plastic cups.

In 2019/20 we also re-used over £195k of items through our **reuse@leeds** programme (or over 140 tonnes CO₂e savings) and donated over £290k of items to local charities. Over the last year, given the global pandemic, we have seen changes in our waste volumes and understandably an increase in unavoidable single-use items associated with keeping our University community safe. In future, we will be doing everything we can to minimise our consumption through working with partners and suppliers, implementing circular approaches and solutions, along with addressing challenges in our waste streams and developing new solutions through our **Living Lab**. Through working together, we are confident we can tackle these challenges, creating long term sustainable change.

The University Bike Hub also celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2019, and over the last 10 years has hired 5,000 bikes and repaired over 10,000 more, not to mention the numbers of people who now ride bikes who didn’t before. The Bike Hub provides a vital lifeline to staff and students wishing to actively travel, supporting our University community to reduce their reliance on vehicles and take up a healthy and fun pastime.



OUR COMMITMENTS

We will reduce our consumption of goods and services.

We will embed sustainability into the procurement process.

We will reduce the amount of waste we produce.

We will enhance biodiversity on campus.

We will use water efficiently and reduce, reuse and recycle where possible.

We will become a low carbon University, through energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions.

We will foster a staff and student body where sustainable travel is the norm.



OUR RESULTS

THE HEADLINES

COUNCIL SET OUT AND LAUNCHED OUR SEVEN PRINCIPLES TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

HOLISTIC AND COMPREHENSIVE CLIMATE PLAN IN DEVELOPMENT

2023 SINGLE-USE PLASTICS PLEDGE ANNOUNCED, OVER 1 MILLION ITEMS REDUCED SO FAR

THE UNIVERSITY SENSORY GARDEN OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN 2018/19

THE FIGURES

THE FIGURES				HOW DID WE DO?					
	RESULTS			TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?	TARGET	RESULTS	HIT OR MISS?
	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	18/19	18/19	19/20	19/20	19/20
CAMPUS WASTE GENERATED (TONNES)				MISSED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
This includes waste generated on campus through standard operations, but excludes residential, hazardous and construction waste. Reductions in 19/20 likely due to campus closure due to COVID-19.	1,618	1,544	1,435	MAINTAIN	1,491	✗	MAINTAIN	1,090.69	✓
RESOURCES THROUGH THE REUSE SYSTEM (TONNES)				MISSED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
Tonnes of resources reused locally and on campus, excluding reuse through charities. 19/20 results are lower, partly due to campus closure in March. We will further promote and look at new an innovative ways to use the system in 2021.	102	60.72	60	60	56	✗	60	18.9	✗
TOTAL CARBON: REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS (TONNES CO ₂ EQUIVALENT)				EXCEEDED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
This includes scope 1 (direct emissions from University controlled energy sources) and scope 2 (indirect emissions from purchased energy). The rise in our emissions, along with future energy related emissions will be addressed through our Climate Plan and net-zero pathway.	45,524	48,479	45,889	42,975	42,411	✓✓	42,344	43,662	✗
SCOPE 3 EMISSION BASELINE ESTABLISHED (TONNES CO ₂ EQUIVALENT)				MISSED TARGET			EXCEEDED TARGET		
Scope 3 are indirect emissions (e.g. travel, waste, but excluding our supply chain). A rise in 2018/19 is due to CO2 emissions from water consumption in the Generating Station Complex, (previously not included). Decrease in 19/20 due to reduced travel due to Covid pandemic.	19,110	18,615	17,889	19,110	20,851	✗	19,110	11,722	✓
TOTAL WATER CONSUMPTION (M ³)				MISSED TARGET			MISSED TARGET		
This excludes water used for the Generating Station Complex on campus. We will look to further understand our consumption patterns and will look for new and innovative ways to improve.	697,754	697,232	653,494 PREVIOUS ERROR CORRECTED	612,723	649,006	✗	578,723	599,844	✗
PERCENTAGE OF STAFF SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL				MISSED TARGET					
This relates to staff sustainable commuter travel to campus. Data is not available for 2019/20 as due to most staff working remotely, a detailed survey was not carried out.	73	75	75	78	74	✗	78	DATA NOT AVAILABLE	
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL				MET TARGET					
The percentage of students who travel via sustainable means to and from the campus. Survey not carried out in 2019/20 due to Covid pandemic.	95	96	95	95	95	✓	95	DATA NOT AVAILABLE	



FUTURE PRIORITIES

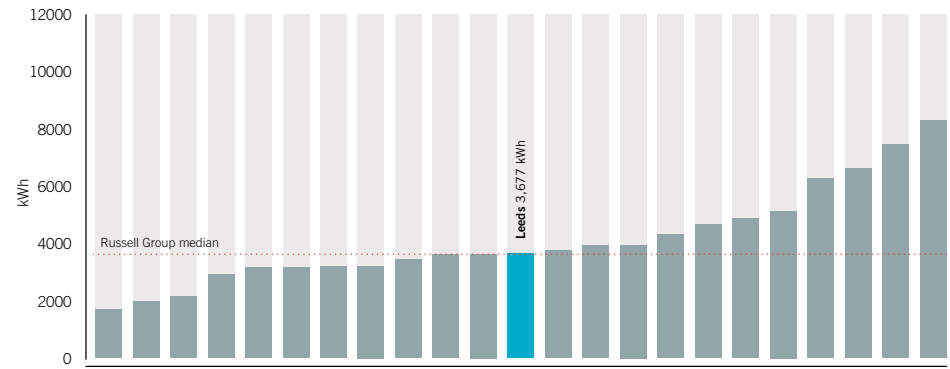
- Launch and implement our Climate Plan, a holistic response to the climate crisis
- Continue to focus on reducing single-use plastics from University operations, research and teaching
- Continue to embed circular economy approach into procurement and waste processes
- Support staff with sustainable commuting, active and business travel following the global pandemic

OUR PERFORMANCE AGAINST OTHER RUSSELL GROUP INSTITUTIONS

Benchmark data is for 2018/19 only. Benchmark data for 2019/20 is not yet available.

CAMPUS ENERGY CONSUMPTION PER STAFF AND STUDENT (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT) 2018/19

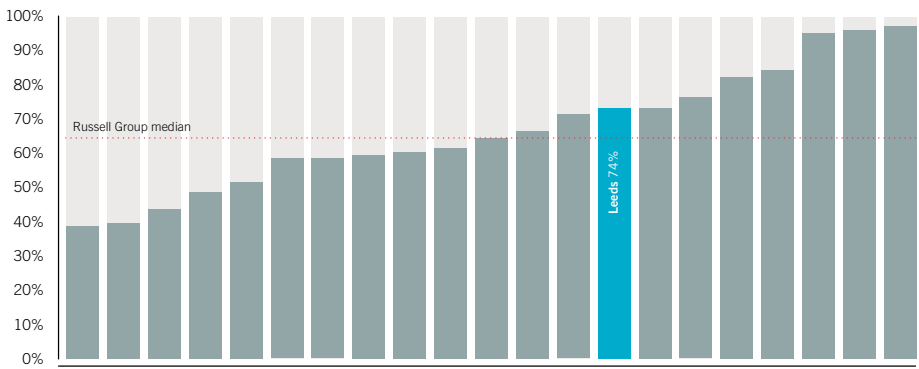
Our position has gone down slightly this year from 10th to 12th although we still represent the Russell Group median, which we are pleased to see has lowered from 2017/18 as a result of everyone’s efforts across the sector to reduce energy consumption. With the launch of our Climate Plan and commitments towards reducing our carbon emissions to net zero, we are hoping to improve upon this position.



MODAL SPLIT FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUTING BY STAFF 2018/19

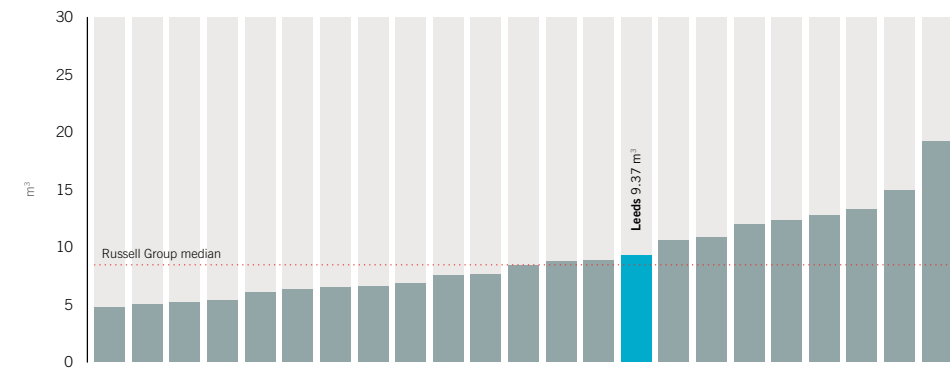
This year 74% of our staff travelled to University by sustainable means and we ranked 14th.

This is slightly down from 75% last year and may be attributed to a change to our staff car-share provider and changes in the discounts available on annual public transport passes. Staff travel will be an increased focus in future as part of our Climate Plan commitments.



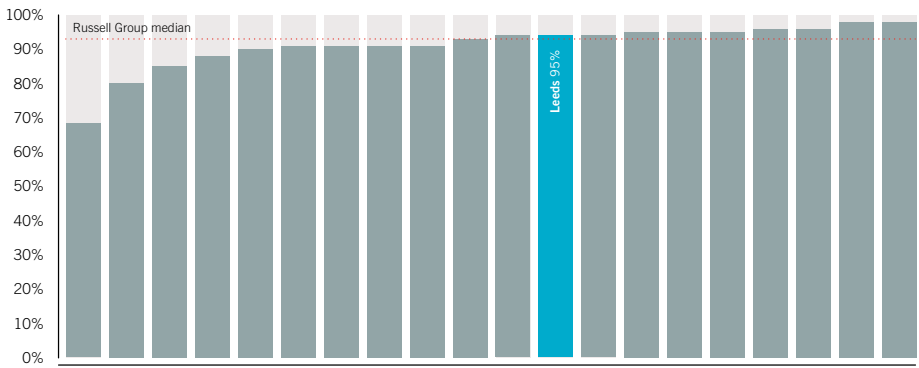
CAMPUS WATER CONSUMPTION PER STAFF AND STUDENT (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT) 2018/19

We are pleased that we have retained our position at 15th this year and have reduced our consumption per staff and student (FTE) from 9.53m³ to 9.37m³. However, as with last year, we are still above the Russell Group median and therefore consumption continues to be a concern.



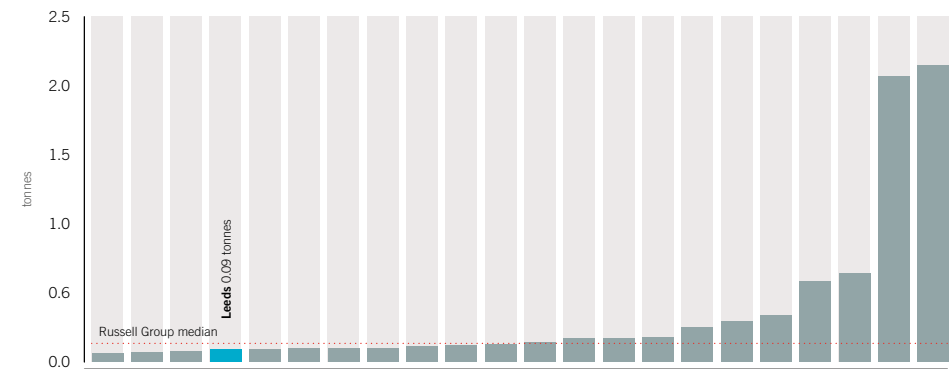
MODAL SPLIT FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUTING BY STUDENTS 2018/19

This year 95% of our students travelled to University by sustainable means and we ranked 12th. Of these, 79% walked, ran or cycled, indicating that many students choose to actively travel to campus, improving their physical and mental wellbeing.



WASTE MASS PER STAFF AND STUDENT (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT) 2018/19

We have improved our position from 14th to 4th this year. Waste figures increased throughout 2017/18 due to increased construction activity on campus, seeing our position move to 14th last year. However, we are pleased to see figures in 2018/19 returning to a previous level and our ranking returning to below the Russell Group median.



PEOPLE AND PLANET GREEN LEAGUE TABLE

The People and Planet University league wasn’t performed in 2019 and due to the impacts of COVID-19, was also not performed in 2020. In 2018 we were classed as a 1st class University and were ranked 22nd. It is expected that the league will be performed again in 2021.





GET INVOLVED

EVERYONE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS. WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR FEEDBACK AND IDEAS TO HELP US CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS OUR VISION OF A SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS YEAR'S REPORT? DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A SUSTAINABLE RESEARCH PROJECT, ACTIVITY OR EVENT? IS THERE SOMETHING WE'RE NOT DOING THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE? GET IN TOUCH WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY SERVICE, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.



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