

Keen to be green

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Tunstall has long been committed to environmental responsibility and sustainability. Mick Shores, Estates & Site Services Manager tells us more about its latest initiatives.

As Estates & Site Services Manager, my role is pretty broad. I'm responsible for the safe and efficient operation of Tunstall's catering, cleaning and security services, as well as making sure the offices and grounds are well maintained.

Environmental considerations touch every part of this, and it's an area that we continually review and aim to improve. Our philosophy is not simply about recycling, it's looking at whether we actually need to use something in the first place, and then we consider the best means of doing so sustainably, and disposing of it responsibly when the time comes.

With around 600 staff based at our Whitley head office even a small change can have a big impact, and we've introduced a range of measures over the last few years:

- Moved from each office desk having its own bin for all types of rubbish to creating eight recycling stations around the building where staff can segregate metal, paper and general waste ready for recycling.
- Stopped using bulk deliveries of milk in plastic containers and now use milk in reusable glass bottles from a local supplier, reducing our plastic waste, supporting a local business and reducing our carbon emissions as empty bottles are collected as full ones are delivered.
- Maintained simple measures such as reminding staff to switch off appliances when not in use to reduce electric consumption.
- Switched electricity supplier to make sure our power at head office and our monitoring centre came from more sustainable sources; our electricity supply is now classed as Blue, which is defined as zero carbon.
- Changed our forklift trucks from diesel to electric, to reduce our CO² footprint and improve the working environment for colleagues.
- Packaging for Tunstall products kept to a minimum whilst still offering necessary protection, and plain brown cardboard used to ensure they can be recycled through standard routes.
- All single use plastics removed from the inbound supply chains for cables and PSUs, and the design and specification of new parts requires no SUP (single use plastics) as standard.

We're fortunate at Tunstall to have a brilliant canteen, keeping us all well fed and happy with their home cooked food. But its popularity means we use around 80,000 takeaway boxes a year, so our changing to fully recyclable and biodegradable options a couple of years ago was a simple switch that has made a huge difference to our waste levels. The ultimate goal is to encourage colleagues to buy/bring reusable boxes so that overtime we can stop using takeaway boxes altogether. We've also moved from paper coffee cups and plastic water cups to using washable mugs, and we now provide compostable single use cutlery, whilst encouraging the use of washable metal knives and forks.

We are, of course, compliant with the ISO14001 standard, and 79.4% of our total waste streams are either re-used or recycled, in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive. Paper and cardboard waste is collected by an approved recycling contractor. The general waste goes through a segregation process at our contractor site, where recyclable items that have been missed are removed and processed further increasing our recycling targets.

Effective waste management systems flow through the entire product lifecycle at Tunstall from design, development and manufacture, through to end of life and product disposal. We provide products that are designed and built using recyclable materials; 99% of our typical Lifeline dispersed alarm can be broken down into recyclable waste streams, limiting the impact on the environment.

There will always be more we can do to be cleaner and greener, and we continue to make ongoing improvements across all areas of the business, and consider new options such as solar power, EVs and better insulation and windows. What has been really great to see though is the way my Tunstall colleagues have embraced the changes, and many have gone further in reducing their own individual environmental impact, at work and at home. The Tunstall logo may be red, but we're green at heart.