

ESS and the Royal Navy Save 43,000 Single Use Cups

2 months ago



ESS Defence, specialist provider of foodservice and FM to military establishments across the UK, has collaborated with the Royal Navy to eliminate single-use cups from Navy Command Headquarters at HMS Excellent. By its first anniversary in April, the initiative had saved 43,000 single-use cups, equating to 0.77 tonnes of waste, and will subsequently be replicated across the Royal Navy estate.

ESS provides a busy café within the Headquarters at HMS Excellent, which serves thousands of hot drinks monthly. Previously, fewer than 5% of these drinks were in reusable cups, with the remainder in single use cups going to waste. Minimising the impact of this significant waste stream was identified as a great opportunity, with the Navy challenging ESS to be bold in tackling it.

Following detailed investigations of different options, including recycling, it was decided that single-use cups would be eliminated from the building and a 100% reusable cups policy introduced. With drinks known as 'wets' to Royal Navy personnel, the 'No Single Wets' initiative was born. From April 2024, the café would no longer stock single-use cups, customers must bring reusable cups for takeaway drinks and customers with reusable cups would enjoy a 25p discount.

ESS and the Navy worked collaboratively to develop a comprehensive communications campaign with simple, joint branding to prepare the site population for the change. This included regular bulletins on establishment channels, information on the intranet, digital signage at the gate and throughout the site, and notifications to surrounding bases.

The Headquarters is home for senior personnel, with numerous, high-profile visitors from MOD, government, partner nations and contractors. Delivering the project in such a busy location demanded

significant behavioural change, however customers were welcoming of the initiative and proactive in communicating it to guests.

As well as preventing waste, the project has delivered c.£10.8k savings for customers through the 25p discount.

Following the campaign, the Royal Navy Climate Change and Sustainability team has driven the inclusion of reusable cups into phase one training kit. With an average 3,500 trainees joining the force annually, this promises to have a substantial impact.

No Single Wets was selected as a finalist at the Let's Recycle Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management and is shortlisted for the Waste Prevention & Waste Management Award at this year's Footprint Awards.

WO1 George Reeves, Royal Navy project lead, commented: "Driving change within any organisation, let alone an organisation as large and diverse as the Royal Navy and wider MOD, has its challenges. The task has been simplified by working with an extremely supportive service provider in ESS. ESS shares our aspirations, and the team have demonstrated their commitment in actions and not simply with words. ESS' proactive, can-do attitude has been a significant factor in achieving success with this challenging and important work."

Lisa Hammock, Head of Royal Navy Climate Change and Sustainability, commented: "The 'No Single Wets' campaign at Navy Command Headquarters, in collaboration with ESS, has been an important project for the Royal Navy Climate Change and Sustainability team. The ESS team were instrumental in planning and executing the campaign: from ensuring contingency measures were in place, through to helping educate customers about the initiative, all whilst maintaining their usual high customer standards. Despite initial concerns, the transition to reusable cups has been smooth and welcomed across the Command. Not only has this project reduced waste, it has also been a pathfinder in cultural change, process change and communicating Sustainability to the wider Navy Command community."

Bob Gray, Managing Director - ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, added: "We were delighted to collaborate with our Royal Navy client at HMS Excellent to deliver this important sustainability initiative. The programme has led from the front and demonstrated what can be achieved in a busy, high-profile location as a result of focus, determination and working together. We've seen great buy-in from our teams and customers who have reported changing awareness and actions in their personal lives too. We're looking forward to supporting the Navy with the roll out across the rest of the estate."