

ESS and Royal Navy Win Institute for Collaborative Working's Prestigious Chairman's Award

11 hours ago



ESS Defence, specialist provider of foodservice and FM to military establishments across the UK, and the Royal Navy have won this year's Institute for Collaborative Working Chairman's Award. The accolade recognises 'No Single Wets', a joint initiative to remove single-use cups from Navy Command Headquarters at HMS Excellent.

The Institute for Collaborative Working Awards celebrate the positive impact of effective collaboration in action. The prestigious Chairman's Award honours a project or partnership that demonstrates exceptional collaborative working, often under challenging circumstances or delivering significant impact. It was presented during a special event held at the House of Lords.

ESS provides a busy café within the Royal Navy 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, 'No Single Wets' 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.

To date, the initiative has saved 52,649 single-use cups, equating to 0.94 tonnes of waste. As well as preventing waste, the project has delivered well over £13,000 savings for customers through the customer discount. The programme will subsequently be replicated across the Royal Navy estate.

'No Single Wets' was also Highly Commended at the recent Waste2Zero Awards.

Lord John Hannett, Chairman of the Institute for Collaborative Working, who gifts this award, commented: "This is a collaboration that truly stood out to me – a partnership between industry and the public sector that is solving an everyday problem and serious environmental challenge. ESS and the Royal Navy have demonstrated how shared purpose, commitment and collective capability has resulted in an innovative approach that makes them worthy winners of this special award."

Warrant Officer 1 George Reeves, Royal Navy Climate Resilience & Environmental Management, commented: "This is a fantastic achievement! We are incredibly proud of the 'No Single Wets' initiative and delighted that it has been recognised by the Institute for Collaborate Working. Implementing change is always a challenge, not least when it comes to sustainability, but working alongside ESS we've demonstrated what can be achieved by joining forces to build on our shared values. A huge thank you and congratulations to all those involved in making this such a success."

Bob Gray, Managing Director – ESS Defence, Marine & Aerospace, added: "We're thrilled that 'No Single Wets' has been recognised with the Institute for Collaborative Working Chairman's Award! This important sustainability initiative is the result of a positive, committed approach to collaborative working between the ESS and Royal Navy teams. The results speak for themselves and we're looking forward to supporting the Navy with the roll out across the rest of the estate."