

Consumer Single-Use Plastic Elimination Scheme - Phase 1 report

23 April 2019

Introduction

1. This report highlights the progress made in the first phase of the Consumer Single-Use Plastic (CSUP)¹ Elimination Scheme, ending 31 January 2019. Whilst Defra remain the overall lead department on plastics elimination, Cabinet Office (CO) and Crown Commercial Service (CCS) are sharing insights and good practice with departments and suppliers to ensure this progress continues.

Summary

2. One year ahead of the deadline to remove all CSUP from the central government estate offices, several government departments and other agencies are working with staff and supply chains to eliminate avoidable plastics. Of the 22 departments and agencies that reported their activity under the scheme at the end of Phase 1:
 - 73% have eliminated/ part-eliminated² plastic cutlery and straws.
 - 55% have eliminated/part-eliminated plastic food containers and plates.
 - 50% decant concentrated cleaning products into reusable pump-spray bottles and dilute them, to reduce waste, transport and storage costs.
 - 50% operate a reusable cup price reduction scheme.
 - 41% provide compostable tableware.
 - 36% sell reusable cups in their canteens.
 - 32% have stopped using disposable plastic wipes for cleaning tasks.
 - 23% have a strategy and governance structure in place to eliminate CSUP.
3. Collaboration between departments and across the supply chain is proving fundamental to progress. At the same time, technical innovation, increasing market engagement and growing public awareness of the underlying problem are helping to normalise the reduction of plastic use, which has had a catalysing effect.
4. Above all, the successful elimination of CSUP comes about when it is treated as a cultural change programme, with consistent leadership from the top and in all parts of the organisation, leading to high levels of employee and supplier engagement. In this instance Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are excellent proof of this.

¹ To fall under Defra's definition of CSUP, items should be made wholly or partly of plastic and typically intended to be used just once and/or for a short period of time before being disposed of. Examples of items commonly recognised as single-use plastics include takeaway boxes, disposable coffee cups, stirrers, plastic wrap, polystyrene packaging and cigarette filters. It includes products which are regularly used as a consumer item, but excludes those relating to a particular applied or industrial process (e.g. toner cartridges and PPE plastic gloves are out of scope). Items should be avoidable or have a viable non-plastic available alternative, and be purchased under a Government contract. Products purchased or brought in by staff members are excluded from scope.

² The nature of the estate is complicated by multiple sites, shared usage, differing management models and variations in the way that FM contracts are broken down and let, making it very difficult at this stage to verify that departments occupying a large number of offices have fully eliminated the use of a given item; hence the use of the phrase 'part-eliminated'.

The Elimination Scheme

5. CO/CCS established the CSUP Elimination Scheme in August 2018. It aims to leverage their commercial expertise and relationships with suppliers to support the commitment in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) to remove all CSUP from central government estate offices.
6. The scheme enables departments and supply chains to phase in alternatives to CSUP before the formal ban comes into force in 2020. It applies on a voluntary basis to all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies, and to the FM suppliers contracting with these central government bodies under the CCS FM Framework.
7. In establishing the scheme, CO/CCS sought information on which CSUP were in use and how FM suppliers could assist in their elimination. Procurement and estates staff in departments were then instructed to work with suppliers to replace existing CSUP items with suitable alternatives in both existing and new contracts from 1 August 2018. Implementation is split over the following 3 phases:
 - Phase 1 (early stage CSUP elimination) - August 2018 to January 2019
 - Phase 2 (intermediate stage CSUP elimination) - February 2019 to July 2019
 - Phase 3 (later stage CSUP elimination) - August 2019 to December 2019
8. CO/CCS oversee supplier performance through regular fora with FM Framework suppliers, when representatives discuss progress with CO/CCS colleagues and share good practice. The latest forum was on 29 January 2019, which provided information for this update.
9. Departments are also asked to submit progress reports to CO/CCS at the end of each phase of the scheme, outlining which CSUP items have been eliminated and providing insights. As the first phase has recently ended, this is the first time this has taken place.

Phase 1 highlights - departmental perspective

10. A total of 22 Government Departments/Executive Agencies/Non Departmental Public Bodies submitted reports showing they have begun removing plastics from use under the CSUP Elimination Scheme during Phase 1.
11. FCO's performance in CSUP removal has been exemplary, and has been supported to full effect by its Tier 1 FM supplier, Interserve. The department had removed 97% of avoidable single-use plastic from its UK estate by the end of November 2018, from a standing start in March of the same year.
12. A significant number of the 22 organisations that reported had made good progress in the elimination of CSUP in the period (see Annex A). The most commonly reported CSUP eliminations/part-eliminations have been as follows (rate shows the percentage of those 22 organisations in which the elimination/part-elimination has taken place):
 - Water cups - 86%
 - Cutlery and straws – 73%
 - Coffee cups (with plastic lining) - 68%
 - Stirrers - 64%
 - Take-away food containers and plates - 55%
 - Disposable cleaning substance bottles - 50%

- Plastic drink bottles - 45%

13. There were also positive indications around governance, initiatives and supporting activity (see Annex B). The most common of these from the 22 organisations that reported have been as follows (rate shows the percentage of those 22 organisations in which the activity has taken place):

- Reusable cup price reduction scheme - 50%
- Compostable tableware (e.g. 'Vegware') in use - 41%
- Reusable coffee cups and water bottles on sale in canteens - 36%
- Use of communications, including blogs, articles, bulletins, talks, tweets - 27%
- Having a CSUP strategy and governance structure - 23%

14. The following critical success factors can be identified across departmental reports:

- The need to treat the elimination of CSUP as an enduring cultural change programme, with a strong focus on engagement and ownership at all levels in both the organisation itself and in the supply chain.
- Consistent, demonstrable leadership from the top, and among local champions, with opportunities for staff to get involved at all levels.
- Effective supplier engagement and contract management.
- Awareness of the market, especially around technical innovation, alternative materials, methods, products, opportunities, barriers to entry, etc.
- Collaboration and the willingness to share good practice.
- The fact that virtually all staff are supportive of the aims of the scheme, and, therefore, that there is an opportunity to change behaviour beyond the workplace with minimal additional effort.

Phase 1 highlights - FM supplier perspective

15. 18 companies took part in the latest CSUP forum for FM suppliers, held on 29 January 2019, representing 38% of those on the CCS FM framework. These were operating as prime contractors in some instances, and further down the supply chain in others. They highlighted a number of successes, which largely correlate with the reports from departments, as follows:

- There has been a strong and positive response from clients in both the public and private sectors to the need to act to eliminate CSUP usage.
- Suppliers/subcontractors are becoming increasingly engaged in finding solutions to the CSUP problem. Volume buying helps provide leverage, and some commonly used items, such as security products bought by G4S, are now routinely packed in paper and cardboard instead of plastic.
- A growing selection of items are made from recycled plastic, from bin bags to 1000-litre integrated bulk liquid containers.
- Skanska reported considerable success in pilots recycling contaminated plastics used in the NHS, such as theatre wrap, surgical gowns and sharps containers, and in finding solutions to items traditionally made of SUP, such as oxygen masks.
- Examples of best practice include suppliers who:
 - are open to a collaborative approach, including offering to share training materials on CSUP removal with other suppliers.

- are running workshops on CSUP removal for clients, staff and suppliers.
- are self-auditing to reduce their own CSUP usage.
- are working closely with clients such as Office for National Statistics, who have a clearly defined strategy to fully remove CSUP in advance of the ban.
- Notwithstanding a lack of anaerobic digester capacity for composting, the use of 'Vegware' and similar eco-friendly catering disposables is increasing.

Next steps

16. The next reporting requirement for departments will be at the end of Phase 2 (31 July 2019). A reporting format will be circulated in early to guide further activity through Phases 2 (Feb – Jul 19) and 3 (Aug – Dec 19) of the scheme.
17. Cabinet Office and CCS will hold the next CSUP forum with the CCS FM suppliers on 21 June 2019, which will feed into the next 6-monthly update.

Annex A - Removal of CSUP in Phase 1

Table showing how many of the 22 organisations which reported had eliminated, or partially eliminated, the following CSUP items during Phase 1 of the Elimination Scheme.

CSUP Item	Organisations
Water cups	19
Cutlery	16
Straws (except for those with medical needs)	16
Coffee cups (with plastic lining)	15
Stirrers	14
Take-away food containers and plates	12
Drinks bottles (for sale in on-site vending outlets or machines)	10
Condiment sachets and milk jiggers	9
Milk bottles (replaced with either glass bottles or plastic pergals)	5
Enveloped tea bags, hot drink sachets, sugar sachets	4
Toast and sandwich wrappers	4
Tea bags containing plastic	4
Water bottles (for hospitality)	2
Tetra Pak cartons (for sale in on-site vending outlets or machines)	2
Plastic film in sandwich containers	2
Individually wrapped biscuits	1
Disposable cleaning bottles	11
Disposable cleaning wipes	7
Bags	5
Polylopes/despatch packaging	2
Furniture packaging	2
Plastic wallets	1
Stationery items wrapped in plastic	1

Annex B - Governance, initiatives and supporting activity in Phase 1

This table shows how many of the 22 organisations which reported had put CSUP-removal governance measures, supporting activity and related initiatives during Phase 1 of the CSUP Elimination Scheme.

Activity	Organisations
Governance	
Ministers and Permanent Secretary fully engaged	2
ExCo engaged	1
SCS Champion	2
CSUP strategy and governance structure	5
Centre of Excellence	1
Supporting activity	
Communications, including blogs, articles, bulletins, signage and tweets	6
Events and staff talks	4
Champions network	3
Toolkit	1
Leaderboard	1
Kickstarter fund for staff local initiatives/staff suggestions	1
Press releases in national and trade press	1
NGO engagement	1
Initiatives	
Reusable cup price reduction scheme	11
Reusable food container price reduction scheme	1
Compostable tableware (e.g. 'Vegware') in use	9
Reusable coffee cups and water bottles on sale in canteens	8
Reusable ceramic mug loan scheme	2
Removal of litter bins from desk areas to drive a reusable culture	2
Liquid soap dispensers changed to foamer soaps	1