

Guardians of Grub reducing waste at IHG Kimpton Clocktower

CASE
STUDY

The initiative was part of WRAP's ongoing collaboration with IHG Hotels & Resorts (IHG), who are pioneering the transformation to a minimal waste hospitality industry

Background

The Kimpton Clocktower in central Manchester is a large IHG hotel operating both private dining and public restaurant and bar services. Food and drink menus are diverse, including breakfast buffets, afternoon teas and a full evening menu.

Executive Chef Paul Beckley took part in a food waste reduction course developed by WRAP through the [Guardians of Grub](#) initiative. Their online learning course '[Becoming a Champion](#)' course is designed to help businesses change their behaviour through a combination of learning about and measuring their wasted food.

Paul is passionate about reducing the carbon footprint of his kitchen and was aware of the vast amount of food that's wasted across the wider hospitality industry. He wanted to identify which specific food categories were most frequently wasted in the hotel's kitchen - to understand what was happening and how this could be prevented.



"Taking part in WRAP's 'Guardians of Grub: Becoming a Champion' initiative has made a tangible difference to our operations."
Paul Beckley, The Kimpton Clocktower

? TIP

Get your staff on board by using the FREE [15-minute Cost Saving Skills course](#)



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Improvements made

The data uncovered a number of areas where improvements could be made. An example of one new practice put in place is:

Unnecessary plate garnishes were reduced or eliminated.

The hotel staff noticed that these were often added to meals just for aesthetic reasons or simply out of habit. Paul explained that his chefs always take pride in the appearance of their dishes so changing this behaviour was particularly difficult for some. However, the team worked hard to provide the same level of quality without the need for elaborate garnishes.

What we learnt

A key challenge was engaging hotel staff outside of the kitchen with the importance of better food management. In addition, employees working more closely with food preparation found it easier to understand the importance of food sustainability than those working less directly with the food streams.

Kimpton recognised the importance of having a high level of awareness among all employees. This not only helped to support the kitchen team in their efforts to reduce waste, but ensured that a clear message was communicated to customers if they enquired.

The data gathered showed that up to 30-40% of breakfast buffet food was being wasted daily. For Paul, the initial process of data collection was an 'eye opener' and despite the catering team's familiarity with the amount of waste that the kitchen produced, they were nonetheless surprised by the findings. This further helped to engage staff in the importance of food sustainability and helped them to get on board with taking action.

The data also revealed the monetary loss associated with wasted food, such as the upfront cost of the food, energy to cook as well as its disposal, which provided a further incentive to make a change in the hotel's operations.

"WRAP's Becoming a Champion program was really helpful, it provided detailed insight on food waste data and where the wastage was coming from. The information was really useful to make decisions on changing menus. Our kitchen teams also found the program and activities relatable and easy to implement."

F&B Operations team at IHG



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KEY LEARNINGS

Reduced portion sizes. This was especially effective for reducing waste at breakfast where items such as baked beans were identified as a large cause of waste.

Meal timings were altered. Staff canteen and breakfast buffet timings were changed to prevent food from being spoiled and ultimately wasted.

Use of pre-prepped items rather than whole. This reduced the kitchen's overall waste as well as reducing labour time

Menu review, resulting in reworked recipes to eliminate commonly wasted ingredients.

Even more positive outcomes

The 8-week pilot was such a success at the IHG Kimpton Clocktower that the hotel has continued measuring daily food waste.

The programme provided valuable education about the environmental harm caused by wasted food, and importantly, how to reduce it. This level of awareness was a critical starting point for implementing more sustainable practices in hotel catering operations.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 and the unexpected disruptions over the Christmas period, many restaurant bookings were cancelled. Despite this, average food waste per cover reduced by 11% between the launch of the pilot in May 2020 and January 2022.

As a result of engaging in the [Becoming a Champion](#) course, the team are / is far more aware of the issue of food waste and have been working hard to stop food from being thrown away.

Additionally, many hotel staff members have felt inspired to become more sustainable in other aspects of their lives, implementing further changes at home. For example, more staff started cycling to work.

Find out how you can similarly reduce costs and wasted food in your business by visiting [Guardians of Grub](#)



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