

GATHER
— & —
GATHER

Annual Sustainability Report

UCL 2023/24



Contents

4	Our Strategy
5	Year Summary
6	Carbon Footprint
7	Food Waste
8	Sourcing
10	Plant Based menus and sales
11	Staff Experience
12	Student Experience

Gather and Gather at UCL

2023/24

We are proud to be the campus caterers at UCL, serving students, staff and guests delicious food. For the past three years we have embedded sustainability into everything we do within our operations, sourcing and development to ensure the food we serve focuses on building a brighter future. To do this we work in collaboration with Sustainable UCL to ensure we align with the UCL vision.

'The sustainability collaboration between UCL and Gather & Gather has helped to drive sustainability improvements across many areas this year such as carbon reduction, Fairtrade, and the education of our students, as you will see throughout this report. This was an important year for sustainability at UCL as we are refreshing our sustainability strategy, and we are grateful to have had strong input from Gather & Gather as we continue our efforts to drive the vital issue of sustainable food forwards.' **Evan Landy, Sustainability Manager, Sustainable UCL**



Our strategy

Aligning UCL priorities with Gather and Gather's Goals.

Our strategy ensures a holistic approach is taken to sustainability. With behavior nudges, policy change and education working together to create a more sustainable food environment



Targeted initiatives to reduce the carbon impact of the food we serve.



Making food waste reduction everyone's business.



Sourcing products we can trust and that our customers love.



Prioritising plant-based menu development and sales.



Ensuring we are feeding our customers healthy, nutritious food and treating our staff well.

Year summary

Award Winning

This year Gather and Gather at UCL were recognized for their efforts to reduce the carbon impact of their food by winning the Green Impact award from Sustainable UCL. A combined effort from front and back of house with the Reewild app and menu development changes lead to the recognition. Udine also nominated us in the Plant Based menu award. We retained our Food Made Good accreditation 3 stars and increased our overall score.

Key Achievements

2023/24 has been an action packed year full of achievements for Gather and Gather at UCL.

1. First University to launch the Reewild app helping students track their carbon footprint through their food choices.
2. Transitioned all meals labelled the highest 'E' carbon label leading to menu development changes and swaps to bring them to a 'D' label.
3. Launched the Green Team away days as a learning and development opportunity for staff at UCL
4. Removed all big 5 fish from sale in Gather and Gather outlets at UCL.
5. Helped UCL retain its Fairtrade University status through our sales and student outreach.
6. Over 3,000 meals have been donated since January.





Reducing our Carbon Footprint

Through both menu development changes and student education we have reduced the amount of meat sold at UCL.

Carbon Labelling

We are partnered with **Foodsteps** to calculate the carbon footprint of food made in-house. This year this was extended from just our retail offer to also include food on our hospitality brochure. We also started a partnership with **ReeWild** to educate and empower students to make informed decisions about their food choices. ReeWild shows the carbon labels of food in an easy to understand, science based but actionable way.

Menu Development

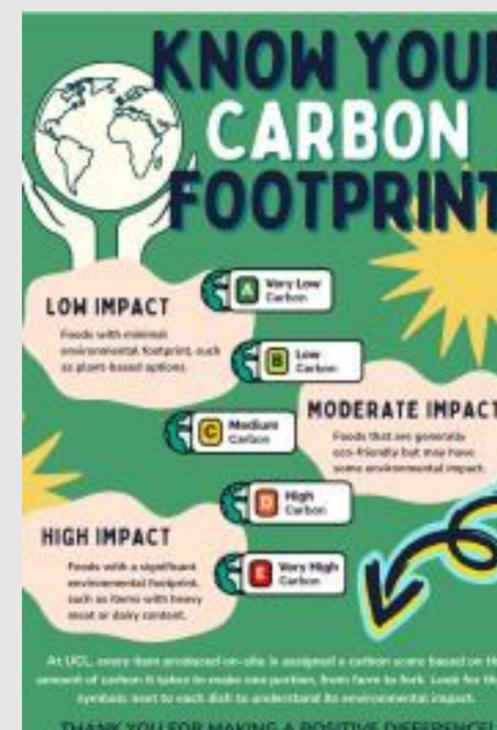
As well as carbon labelling all dishes made on site at UCL this year we have extended this so that chefs are empowered to make changes based on those labels. Through this collaboration we have banned the sale of any menu item rated 'E', the highest carbon label. This has led to chefs re-formulated recipes, doing swaps and actively reducing the carbon impact of the food we serve for example reducing the amount of meat and replacing with an alternative protean such as lentils or swapping beef for pork.

Key Achievements

- Banning 'E' labelled menu items
- Launching ReeWild on campus integrated with our menu items
- New carbon labels and associated marketing campaign.



The Reewild app at UCL



Carbon label marketing



Food Waste education and reduction

With a focus on reducing and redistributing

Monitoring

Food waste produced is categorized so we can better understand why it was created. These categories range from 'Prep waste' – Food wasted during cooking such as carrot peelings, to 'Plate Waste' – Food left uneaten on a customer's plate. We monitor and categorize four types of waste and prioritize reduction initiatives over redistribution in line with the WRAP waste hierarchy.

Reduction

This year the focus has been on reducing over-production and out of date waste. These types of waste are created by our team and therefore within our power to control. As shown in Graph 2 since January we have hit our over-production target of 5% sales. Out of Date is still above the 5% target but has shown significant improvements in monitoring accuracy.



Graph 1 – Food waste as a percentage of sales in over production and out of date



Redistribution

Food is redistributed to either Too Good TO Go or the Zero Food Waste society when ever it is safe to do so. Since January we have donated over 3,000 meals through these channels. This allows us to support our community while saving food from the bin.

Key Achievements

- Hitting our target of reducing over production waste to less than 5% of sales.
- Donating over 3,000 meals since January.
- Opening the refectory for an extra half an hour to reduce waste.



Sourcing mindfully

Putting our trust in certifications for high-risk food items

We source certified product where possible to ensure animal welfare and ethical supply chains.

Fish

100% of the fish we have bought and served in 2023/24 has been rated 1-3 by the Marine Conservation Society. This rating is specific to the species, location and catch type of each fish and ratings go from best choice to avoid. 1-3 means all our fish never goes above the Ok level on the scale.



Fairtrade

UCL and Students' Union UCL has been re-awarded its fairtrade university status. At Gather and Gather we support with this by sourcing bananas, chocolate, tea, coffee and sugar from Fairtrade certified suppliers. We are incredibly proud of our commitment to Fairtrade and signpost customers to the fairtrade options.



Meat

We serve meat that has been certified Red Tractor to ensure it hits strict animal welfare standards.



Eggs

All the eggs we serve have been certified free range.



Key Achievements

- Removing all big 5 fish from campus.
- Being re-awarded Fairtrade University status



Sourcing mindfully

Sourcing food that positively impacts biodiversity

Future 50 Foods

25% of meals we serve in our refectories contain a Future 50 ingredient. These are ingredients identified by the WWF as both being better for people and also ensures we eat and grow more diverse plants. Increasing the diversity of our diets is a great way to increasing the biodiversity of our planet. These can be as simple as spinach or more adventurous like the cactus pear. These ingredients are used through out our menus in soups, salads and hot mains to boost the health, diversity and biodiversity of our food offer.

Banning Big 5 Fish

The big 5 are the most eaten fish in the UK. These are Salmon, Tuna, Prawns, Haddock and Cod. The sea offers so much more diversity however and we are recommended to prioritize oily fish for health. We have therefore decided to serve only the fish that are less eaten to protect these species from over fishing.

Seasonal Ingredients

An average of 50% of our ingredients were bought from the UK since January and we prioritize seasonal fruit and vegetables within our menus. This helps to increase fruit and vegetable production in the UK and increase the biodiversity of the UK countryside.



UCL salad bar with Future 50 ingredients





Sourcing mindfully

Sourcing food that creates a link with community

Well Grounded

Our partnership with Well Grounded at the Brew Bar has continued with a total of £9,556 being raised at Brew Bar to date. This is achieved through a 10p donation from each cup sold. We also support with work placements and have completed 460 hours since our collaboration started in 2021.

Across UCL we now hire 18 graduates of the Well Grounded programme helping to support their further career progression.

London Larder

Our London Larder offer, available from hospitality is full of the very best London has to offer from SME's and B-Corps. This both shortens supply chains and supports the local economy around UCL providing income to smaller food companies.

Luminary Bakery

We have partnered with Luminary bakery to bring delicious cakes from a social enterprise to UCL's campus. These cakes are available through our hospitality team and are perfect of any celebration. Luminary is also a social enterprise based in Camden that works with women providing training, employment and community to those most in need.

Our impact this quarter

Funded by UCL Brew Bar donations



86%

learners identify with a minority ethnic background



57%

learners on our programmes identifying as female or non-binary



19-55

age range of learners on our employability programmes

Well Grounded achievements from Q2 2024



Luminary bakery cakes



Plant based menus and sales

Making our plant-based menus the number one option for students

Upholding our 'Powered by Plants' pledge.

Refectories

A maximum of 50% of the options at the refectory everyday are meat. This ensures that our plant-based offer is the main event, and our chefs put a lot of effort and thoughts into our vegetarian and vegan offer. This has translated into this year's sales with sales of plant-based meals being above 50% in January for the first time aligning with our Veganuary campaign.

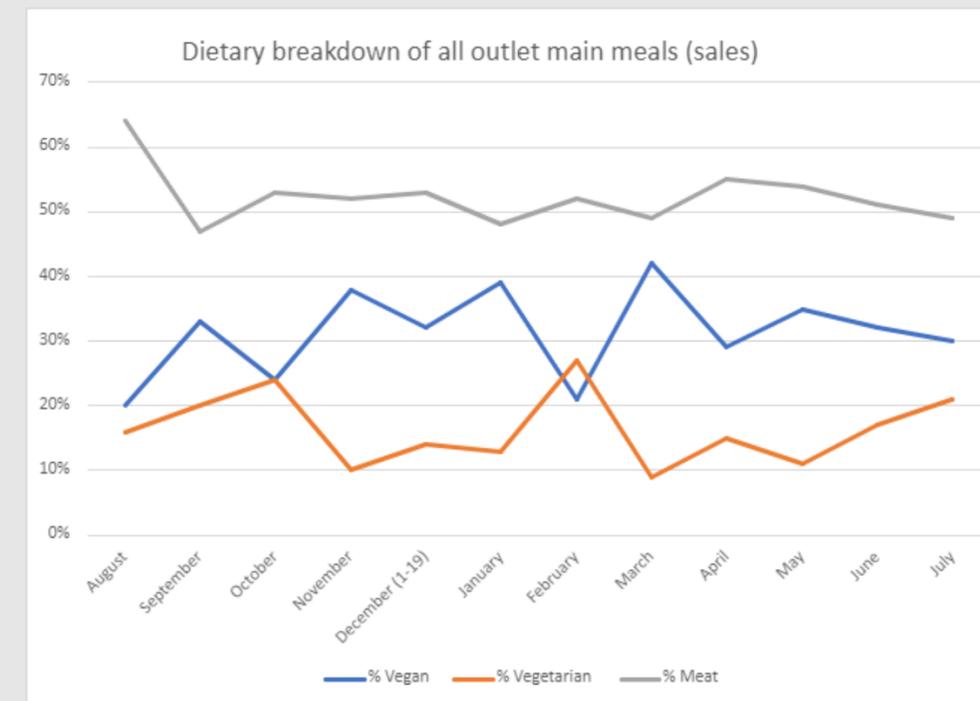
Grab and Go

We follow the same rules for our grab and go range with maximum 50% of the range being meat at each site. Sales have been consistently under 55% since September 2023 with a low of 46% reached in January. This shows a clear shift in student behaviour and is a testament to our staff who are passing on our values and pledges.

Hospitality

Withing hospitality we uphold the powered by plants pledge of the UCL departments offering plant-based menus as standard and default. Sales of plant-based meals have been under 10% of all orders since March 2024.

A new addition in 2023/24 has been carbon labels added to our hospitality brochure to incentivise the sale of our plant-based options.



Graph 2 - Sales of meat-based items in refectories.

Key Achievements

- Meat sales in hospitality have been kept below 11% since January.
- Sales of meat in retail have been below 55% since September with a low of 48% in January (see graph 1)
- Sales of meat grab and go items have been under 55% since January with a low of 46% in January.



A selection of our hospitality plant-based range



Staff experience

Sustainability is a team sport

Learning and Development

All staff at UCL have the opportunity to join our 'Green Team'. Each department and site sends at least one representative to join monthly sustainability meeting to run through what matters to them. Then once a quarter an off site learning and development day is hosted at different locations to bring sustainable food systems to life. So far we have been to Surrey Docks farm to learn about a city working farm, Kew Gardens to see a cup reuse scheme in action and Walthamstow Marshes to forage our lunch and bring us closer to nature.

Our staff newsletter has a sustainability section where these opportunities are advertised and where information and training is displayed. All staff are trained on the UCL specific sustainability standards as part of their induction.

Fair Wages

All staff working for us at UCL receive wages in line with UCL's wage guidelines, meaning staff are now paid, as a minimum, 5% above the London Living Wage.

Volunteering

All employees at CH&CO can take two paid days to volunteer at a charity of their choice. This is communicated to staff during their induction.





Student Experience

Bringing Students into the conversation

Ensuring students are involved in their food, responding to feedback and being part of their education.

Hosting Panels

As part of UCL's Sustainability Leadership Conference we hosted a panel on sustainable food system creation with key industry leaders. Students were invited to attend as part of a two-day conference program on a full range of sustainability topics.

Running Workshops

Supporting Sustainable UCL's 28 days of sustainability and their status as a fairtrade university we ran a food workshop to teach students how to reduce food waste with fairtrade ingredients. Using Fairtrade sugar, chocolate and bananas we saved brown bananas by making a delicious banana bread guided by one of our onsite chefs. This was followed by a discussion on the importance of sourcing fairtrade and global supply chains between students, chefs and our sustainability manager.

Giving Talks

In January Gather and Gather gave a talk to UCL students and Green Ambassadors on 'Unlocking the Future of Sustainable Food Systems'. This was part of the UCL student ambassador programme and gave an introduction into systems thinking.

Unlocking the Future of Sustainable Food Systems

24 January 2024, 3:00 pm–4:00 pm



Find out more about sustainable food and drink at UCL

Sustainable food workshop

22 February 2024, 3:30 pm–5:00 pm





**If you have
any questions
please
contact us**