

Royal Opera House

Waste Champions

At a glance

Location

Covent Garden,
London

Tags

Waste
Packaging
Staff comms

Written by

Rachael O'Sullivan

Environmental Manager, Royal Opera House

The Royal Opera House is trying to improve the quality of their waste segregation.

They exchanged their takeaway packaging, which is available in the back of house restaurant and café, for compostable Vegware. This packaging is sent for industrial composting and used to create soil improver.



A communication campaign was held following the installation of the extra bins but separation from ordinary recycling was still not reaching targets; high contamination rates resulted in compostable and recyclable waste being treated as general waste.

To improve segregation and prevent contamination a group of 'waste champions' was established. The group of volunteers were made responsible for checking the segregation of one or two sets of bins that they pass-by regularly. They do not sort the waste but make a note of patterns of things that are in the wrong bins.

Each area of the theatre is used in different ways by different groups of people; the waste champions help identify how we can support people to use the bins correctly in each different area. This might mean altering the signage in one location to show where a particular type of waste goes, or providing smaller bins so that all three options are close together and near a sink, or changing the order of the bins so that the first bin people come to is the right one for the majority of the waste produced.

The close observation of the waste champions has helped to make sure each area has its own solution. We coupled this with a campaign during Recycle Week to highlight the amount of waste that was going into the wrong bins, including a pile of incorrectly sorted waste from one week in the canteen. The feedback to these changes has been very positive, with greater understanding and more personal responsibility being taken for using the correct bins.