



Spotlight

Promoting reuse at Velocity Café & Bicycle Workshop, Inverness.



Velocity Café & Bicycle Workshop in Inverness, a partner of The Highland Waste Partnership, is working to promote reusable takeaway packaging in their café. The aim is to normalise reuse among customers, demonstrate the viability of reusable options and encourage other local businesses to follow suit.

Background

Take-away packaging is generally hard to recycle. Paper and compostable packaging cannot go in Highland blue recycling bins and would therefore require specialised collection. This is both costly and hard to implement, as customers often leave the premises and are unlikely to return with their food and drink packaging.

At the same time, Velocity Café is currently unable to completely move away from single-use items, as a significant proportion of customers are tourists and otherwise transient, one-time customers who require non-returnable take-away packaging.

Although the café keeps single-use items out of sight from customers in order to discourage its use, it recognises that it must also promote viable reusable alternatives.

August 2022:

Retail of reusable cups and incentivising reuse

From 1 August 2022, Velocity started selling branded reusable cups made by 'KeepCup' at cost price to encourage customers to move away from single-use items.

The reusable Velocity cups are available in glass for £15 or plastic for £11. Customers do not need to use the Velocity branded items, any reusable is acceptable.

To coincide with the launch of the Velocity reusables, the café also introduced a 40p charge on all single-use takeaway cups to encourage their customers to choose to reuse and reduce waste.



Velocity did not see an issue with charging 40p per single-use cup on top of the normal hot drink price as it is not uncommon for cafés to charge an extra 40p for plant-based milks or decaffeinated options for drinks, but this is not something that Velocity does. The overall response from customers has been positive and other cafés are potentially interested in introducing a charge for single-use.

The Zero Waste Scotland '[Cups sold separately](#)' report suggests that a charge on single-use cups is the most effective incentive for reuse versus other interventions like discounts on reusables.

December 2022: Accepting, retailing and incentivising reusable lunch boxes

In December 2022, Velocity started selling branded reusable stainless steel lunchboxes made by 'Mintie Lunchboxes' at the cost price of £17.50 to encourage customers to move away from single-use items when ordering food.

From the 1st January 2023, Velocity also started charging for all single-use takeaway packaging including cups and containers at the same rate of 40p per item.



Response and learning

- Velocity have reported a positive reaction from customers on social media with regards to their reusables as well as their new single-use cup design.
- The additional income generated from the 40p charge could help offset the cost of introducing different forms of reusables going forward.
- It was good to have reusables on offer when introducing the single-use charge as this gave customers an alternative, rather than just charging them with no other options.
- As Velocity is a small independent business, they were able to pilot different options and approaches.
- Velocity continue to have informative posters up in the café, as well as clear messaging through social media, so that customers are informed about any changes.



Find out more:

The Highland Community Waste Partnership:
www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/
highland-community-waste-partnership/

Velocity Café Bicycle Workshop:
www.velocitylove.co.uk/climate