The Food Waste Audit

The FoodSave team monitored kitchen waste using the Winnow Waste Monitor System for four weeks. During the audit all food waste was measured including inventory spoilage, preparation waste, and plate waste. The system required minimal time and caused no disruption to service. The FoodSave team met with Vinyl Canteen weekly to review the results and identify actions for waste reduction. Simply having the system in place heightened awareness of food waste amongst all staff, and breaking waste down into its component groups allowed the team to target key areas effectively.

Reaping the Benefits

The team at Vinyl Canteen were already meticulous in separating their food waste for recycling, so using the Winnow Waste Monitor System quickly became a daily part of the kitchen working life. Logging the waste helped to heighten awareness further about what was being thrown out. Inventory waste at the end of the week was targeted as a focus area. To make sure that any ingredients left over from the previous week were used up, the team built these into menu planning for the next week. The audit also identified that buffet waste from meetings was a top offender. As a result the volume of food provided on platters was reduced by up to a third. These changes really added up, when adjusted for changes in sales, the estimated annualised savings of reduced food waste totalled £2,320, with an estimated weight reduction of 1.23 tonnes.

Top Tips for Reducing Food Waste

✔ Introduce weekly menu planning to utilise all the fresh stock items and any leftover ingredients from the week before
✔ If quieter days are difficult to predict, track covers weekly to identify trends so that batch sizes can be better planned
✔ Buffet waste should be reviewed regularly. Make a note of items that come back frequently and don’t be scared to reduce the sizes of fruit and veg platters to ensure everything gets eaten
✔ Be inventive with trimmings. For example, use cauliflower stalks for soups or grate raw and use to create coleslaw-type salads (this makes a great dish when added to mayonnaise, crème fraîche, and Dijon mustard)
✔ Advertise that people can take leftovers away in take-out boxes.

A FoodSave Case Study

Vinyl Canteen is at the heart of The Old Vinyl Factory in Uxbridge, promoting community cohesion, and relationship building amongst its tenants. The canteen was designed with waste and recycling in mind, using reclaimed wood to form its bench and table tops. FoodSave was a great opportunity to shift focus onto waste to the kitchen.