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Clear-out collaboration keeps Newcastle clean

Students in Newcastle have helped divert tonnes of waste from landfill and raised thousands of pounds for charity as part of a city-wide campaign.

Leave Newcastle Happy is a city-wide clean-up and recycling initiative to help students moving out of their accommodation to dispose of their unwanted goods and raise funds for charity.

The campaign is funded by Newcastle University Students' Union, Northumbria University Students' Union, Newcastle University and

Northumbria University and is organised annually in collaboration with Newcastle City Council.

Students from both universities were encouraged to plan ahead of their move and dispose of their unwanted items responsibly by organising them into household waste, electronic and electrical recycling.

For items that could not be reused or recycled, household waste skips were placed in 12 student neighbourhoods within Heaton and Jesmond during the first three weeks of June. A total of over 10 tonnes of waste was collected, helping to prevent potential fly tipping and overflow of communal bins.

Newcastle City Council worked with [Recycle Your Electricals](#), both universities and local businesses to install recycling points for electronic and electrical waste (such as mobile phones, batteries, cables and calculators), to divert it from normal recycling bins, where it is often mistakenly placed. The provision of multiple points made it easier for students to access and a total of 250kg worth of electrical items were recycled.

Councillor Jane Byrne, Newcastle City Council Cabinet member for a Connected, Clean City, said:

“It was great to see the skips being used, reducing the pressure on our communal bins and keeping back lanes clean and tidy. It’s incredibly important that we all work together to keep our city green and clean and I would like to thank all the students who supported this brilliant campaign.”

Items that could be reused and were in good condition could be taken to the [British Heart Foundation](#) (BHF) donation banks and shops across the city. These donations have been part of the University’s involvement with BHF’s ‘Pack for Good’ campaign since its launch in 2012, helping to raise funds for research into heart and circulatory diseases.

Nerius Shah, President of Northumbria University Students’ Union said: “I am pleased to see the success of the *Leave Newcastle Happy* campaign. Sustainability is one of our key goals as a union and it’s great to see that we have been able to spread the awareness of the importance of recycling and donating unwanted items.

“I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the campaign a success, especially the students who supported the campaign. I am proud of what we achieved together, and I look forward to making the campaign even bigger and better in 2024.”

Shah Yaseen Ali, President of Newcastle University Students’ Union added: “We are delighted that the campaign has been a great success again this year and that students at both Universities came out in force to use the skips and donation points located throughout Jesmond and Heaton. In doing so, we not only helped keep our communities clean and tidy but also raise much-needed funds for the British Heart Foundation.

“This was also another fantastic opportunity for us to work with our partners at Northumbria University, their Students’ Union and Newcastle City Council and we join with them in thanking all our students for their support and participation. We look forward to collaborating again in 2024.”

In the 2021-2022 academic year, Northumbria students donated well over 2,000 bags of items to BHF; the largest donation of all Newcastle organisations that took part. This equates to 17.6 tonnes being diverted from landfill—the equivalent of 103,642kg CO2 emissions—and nearly £31,000 was raised for the charity!

Along with Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council and private student accommodation providers, donations from around the city diverted 203 tonnes from landfill and raised a total of almost £355,000.

The results of the 2022-2023 academic year’s donations will be announced this autumn, but students interested in reducing waste and sustainability are encouraged to stay up to date with their Students’ Union social media channels to look out for other initiatives they can get involved with.

Leave Newcastle Happy is one of several collaborations between the city’s universities, council, helping to maintain positive relationships with local residents and play a positive role in the local community.

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