

FCO is first government department to join the #OneLess campaign

- Foreign Office joins network of NGOs, businesses and thinktanks to tackle ocean plastic
- New data shows Foreign Office has achieved a 98% reduction in single-use plastics since launching internal #BeyondPlastic campaign
- Plastic bottles completely removed from the Foreign Office in London and embassies around the world are taking up the challenge to go plastic-free

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has today joined the #OneLess pioneer network which cultivates a fundamental change in the way Londoners drink water by promoting a refill culture and reducing our reliance on single-use plastic water bottles.

The FCO also published new data showing its use of single-use plastics has fallen by 98 per cent since the introduction last year of a drive to eliminate avoidable single-use plastics in its UK operations.

Sir Simon McDonald Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, said:

Thanks to changes we've made since April 2018, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office now uses nearly 2.5 million fewer single-use plastic items every year.

I want us to lead the way on sustainability in Whitehall and beyond. Joining the #OneLess campaign will allow us to share our expertise and consign the single-use plastic water bottle to history.

The #OneLess campaign, hosted by ZSL (Zoological Society of London), works with pioneer network members to trial new solutions, redesign infrastructure and overcome challenges.

Rachel Shairp, Project Coordinator of the #OneLess campaign, said:

Single-use plastic water bottles are unnecessary in a city like London and over the past three years we've seen Londoners, businesses and members of government embrace tap water and rally to transform London into a place where plastic bottled water is a thing of the past.

We're delighted to be working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to help them move from single-use plastic water bottles to more ocean-friendly ways of drinking water.

Dominic Jermy, Director General of international conservation charity ZSL said:

The evidence of the damage plastic is doing to our environment is overwhelming. Since 2016 ZSL through the #OneLess campaign has removed nearly 70,000 single-use plastic bottles from the Thames alone. I am delighted to see the Foreign and Commonwealth Office taking steps to help reduce single-use plastic and I hope other government departments will follow their lead.

The FC0's #BeyondPlastic campaign has focused on eliminating all avoidable single-use plastics by offering staff different alternatives, and initiatives such as giving a discount on drinks purchased with a reusable mug – the so-called 'Latte Levy', the first in Whitehall. As part of this, the Foreign Office has, since August 2018, removed all plastic-bottled water from its restaurants and coffee shops, which accounted for over 54,000 units in the preceding 20 months.

In addition, 14 embassies of our around the world have managed to completely eliminate single-use plastic, and a further 40 have set out plans to do so.

Notes to editors:

FC0 performance on avoidable single-use plastics is as follows:

2014:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	No data available	No data available
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	No data available	No data available
Plastic cutlery	1000	No data available	No data available
Plastic water bottles	Each	No data available	No data available

2015:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	No data available	No data available
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	16	584.61
Plastic cutlery	1000	20	237.94
Plastic water bottles	Each	3339	1,168.04

2016:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	235	1,192.54

Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	114	4,193.02
Plastic cutlery	1000	255	3,082.05
Plastic water bottles	Each	30331	10,624.42

2017:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	357	2,047.03
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	88	3,136.18
Plastic cutlery	1000	288	3,481.49
Plastic water bottles	Each	33080	11,736.60

2018:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	2	9.72
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	8	287.30
Plastic cutlery	1000	14	163.85
Plastic water bottles	Each	21451	8,183.33

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