

## Meet a... Sustainability Officer



**Laura Parry, Sustainability Officer at City College Plymouth**

### How would you describe your job in a tweet i.e.140 characters?

A dynamic position which aims to engage, motivate and inspire staff, students and the public with the sustainability agenda in order to make a difference.

### What does an average day look like?

The wonderful element of my job is that it is so diverse with each day throwing up new challenges and welcoming achievements so no day is ever the same! I have been at City College Plymouth since 2008 and was employed to ensure the College stayed legally compliant with waste management, so a large percentage of my time is spent on this area managing, monitoring and analysing the College's waste. In addition to this I also actively run and promote other projects like green travel, Fairtrade, energy management, and biodiversity/conservation. My job is both desk based and practical and efforts are made to work with students and all departments across the College to raise awareness on sustainability. I also endeavour to support Plymouth as a city attending various focus group meetings run by the Council, charities and businesses.

### What are the key skills and qualifications required for your job? *What legal knowledge do you need that's mandatory? If none, what is useful to keep up to date on?*

I have worked in the environmental field for twelve years, graduating from Kingston University with a Masters in Environmental Science in 2002. I am an Associate Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and have an active knowledge on waste legislation and pollution control which ensures the College stays legally compliant.

### What training and continuous professional development do you require?

Apart from mandatory training like risk assessment, manual handling and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), I am currently working towards being a full member and Chartered Environmentalist through IEMA and would also like to do NEBOSH certificate in Environmental Management.

### What are your top three responsibilities?

- Waste – legal compliance, management, analysis and reporting.
- Working with the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Co-ordinator to embed sustainability into the curriculum.
- Co-ordination of other sustainability initiatives (e.g. Fairtrade, green travel, energy management awareness etc.).

### Tell us something surprising about your job that people may not know about?

Being a Sustainability Officer is so varied I think I could tell anyone something surprising that they wouldn't have thought I did!



To help our Members understand more about the roles in further and higher education institutions, we've created a suite of career profiles. These share the main responsibilities and skills and knowledge required of many of the key roles that play a part in embedding sustainability in a tertiary education institution.

View the entire suite at [www.eauc.org.uk/meet\\_a\\_member](http://www.eauc.org.uk/meet_a_member)

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### What are the positives and negatives of the job?

Positive – Continuous learning on new and exciting projects working with enthusiastic people who care and want to make a difference.

Negative – Not having enough hours in the day or a budget.

### Do you manage a budget, and what are your key priorities for this?

When I first started at the College in 2008, I had a budget of £10,000 to set up a waste management system, after the system was set up the budget was removed and I now filter into the Estates main budget.

### What does the path to career progression in this role look like?

The lovely thing about my job is that I am always working on new and exciting projects and therefore my knowledge on sustainability is always improving. In terms of financial career progression, there is no obvious route for me to increase my salary.

### What is the minimum and maximum salary band for this role?

Salary bands for Sustainability Officer roles vary significantly between Further and Higher Education with salaries ranging from £18,000 – £40,000.

### What advice do you have for graduates and other potential candidates who are considering joining?

Having an environmental qualification was an essential requirement for my post, however I also believe that building up your personal portfolio of expertise through industry specific jobs, volunteering and life experiences is as equally important.

### For institutions without a Sustainability Officer – what 3 aspects of your role do you think are the most important for any institution's sustainability journey?

- Securing commitment from everyone (sustainability policy & targets).
- Waste management (legal compliance, monitoring and reporting)
- Education (awareness raising through focused meetings, website, notice boards, events) etc.

### What department do you and your line manager sit in? Which departmental interactions are vital for your role?

My position falls under the directorate of 'Resources' and I work in the Estates and Health/ Safety Department. It is essential to interact with all departments to make my job successful.

### What opportunities and challenges does working in a further education institution bring? *How is this role different in tertiary education compared to another sector?*

Working in FE provides exciting opportunities to engage with young people and educate them on the importance of taking both personal and work related actions to be more sustainable.

The major challenge for Further Education at the moment is funding and being able to compete in a widening market place.

### How do you communicate the outputs of your role to the wider institution, and what does this include?

An annual Sustainability report is produced each year, along with reports for Energy, Waste, Fairtrade and Transport. Reports are published to staff and students to promote the College's achievements. Our Sustainability Working Group

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# EAUC sustainability CPD programme

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meet on a monthly basis to monitor progress against yearly targets set and ensure continual improvement is made. A sustainability update is also sent to the College Management Team monthly.

### What are the unique opportunities to embed sustainability in to this job?

With the College's new STEM Centre there is a fantastic route to engage with students and embed sustainability into the curriculum. The College employed a Procurement Officer a year ago and it has been exciting working with this person to make purchasing more sustainable.

### How has EAUC Membership helped you in your job and within your institution?

One of the best things the EAUC does is the annual conference. This event is fantastic and a great place to meet like-minded people where you can share thoughts, ideas and problems. In 2015 the EAUC/AOC ran the first FE Sustainability summit which provided an excellent selection of focused workshops.

### How can other Members contact you?

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- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8Ni5TLScTY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8Ni5TLScTY) (City College Plymouth Induction)

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