

**Supplementary Materials-** Blog post that participants were asked to read

### **Collaborative project aiming to reduce packaging waste**

Single-use plastic has become a normal part of life, particularly when it comes to the food we eat. In the UK, 10.7 billion items of packaging waste are generated each year from ‘lunches on the go’, equating to 276 pieces of waste per person.

Recycling has become the norm for addressing packaging waste. But recycling has its problems – not least that it normalises disposal of packaging after use. Instead of focusing on recycling, the Many Happy Returns project explores reusable packaging systems. By keeping packaging material in circulation for as long as possible, reuse systems could reduce the environmental impact of all packaging materials, including plastic.

Many Happy Returns is a University of Sheffield research project funded by the UKRI as part of their Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. For Many Happy Returns, experts from across the University have come together to create a multidisciplinary team. Together they are exploring the challenges and benefits of reuse systems, looking at everything from the way that language influences our choices to the chemistry of the materials involved. This builds on the work of Plastics: Redefining Single-Use, another UKRI funded project at the Grantham Centre.



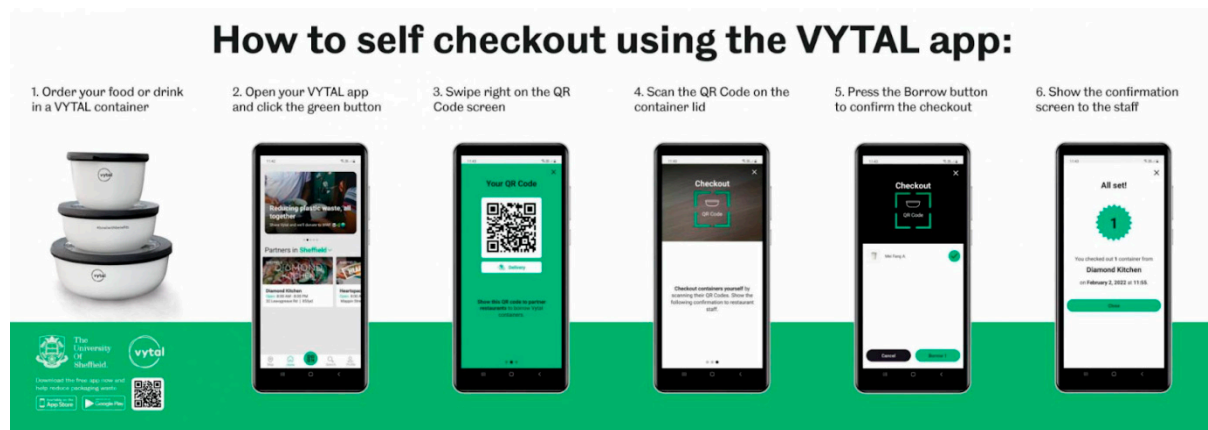
To learn more about the potential of reuse systems for takeaway food and drinks, academics from the project approached ACS to explore a scheme for reusing packaging in University cafes. Reducing waste is a key part of the University’s sustainability strategy.

As a result, from next week we’ll be trialling a system from VYTAL in some TUoS cafes. VYTAL allows people to reuse containers for takeaway food and drinks. It is easy to use, and if successful, we want to extend the scheme outside the University.

Sarah Greenwood, an expert in packaging working on the Many Happy Returns project said: Every time that a container is used again for the same purpose, one less new container is produced and placed on the market. So by reusing containers for our takeaway food and drinks we can reduce our impact on the environment

Thomas Webb, a psychologist working on the Many Happy Returns project added: “People are key to the success of any new initiative. That’s why psychologists are working alongside geographers, linguists, and other scientists and engineers to develop ways to reuse plastics and why we need staff and students to give it a go. Let us know how you get on!” (#ManyHappyReturns or @granthamcsf on Twitter).

Caryn Masters, Director of ACS said: “We are proud to be supporting our academic colleagues with the Many Happy Returns research project and excited to be working with Vytal on this fantastic scheme within our cafes. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact wherever possible and our partnership with Vytal is a great opportunity for us to trial a new and more sustainable solution to waste.”



How it works

The VYTAL scheme is now available at Diamond Kitchen, Heartspace Café, Jessops Café and Café 1828.

To use the scheme:

- Download the VYTAL app from the Apple or Google app store\*
- Let your server know that you would like your food or drink in a reusable VYTAL container
- Scan your individual QR code in the app at the till point
- Enjoy your food and drink!
- Return the container to any of the above outlets

\*A payment method is required to register. This is only used if the container is not returned.