

Going above and beyond for the learners: a success story

It's easy saying that organisations should invest in their learners, but how do they go about it and is it actually worthwhile? To find out what success looks like, let's have an in-depth look at WRAP and its training solution that went above and beyond for the learners.



What is WRAP?

A charity which works with governments, businesses and citizens around the globe to generate evidence-based solutions to protect the environment, build stronger economies and support more sustainable societies.

What does it do?

Tackles sustainable product design, waste reduction, re-use, recycling and waste management for food and drink, plastic packaging, clothing and textiles.

What's the training?

The pilot of 'Guardians of Grub: Becoming a Champion' is a program focused on reducing the amount of food being thrown away by the Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) sector.

Who are the learners?

Staff from a wide range of organisations across the HaFS sector who wants to learn how to reduce their food waste.



BECOMING A CHAMPION

As part of its target to reduce food waste across the UK, WRAP wanted to tackle a huge problem the Hospitality and Food Service (HaFS) sector was facing– throwing away over 1 million tonnes of food each year, 75% of which could have been eaten. How could this be dealt with and, more importantly, how could it be reduced?

The HaFS sector is complex, and WRAP knew that the key to reducing wasted food is tracking and measuring it. It knew there was a knowledge gap here and that filling it would be instrumental to tackling the problem and encouraging the sector to take action against food waste.

Its campaign 'Guardians of Grub' had a range of resources and tools which would help fill this knowledge gap, but there was no easy way for learners to discover them or link them together, which made it difficult to fully grasp and understand the topic. To combat this, WRAP decided to develop a program that would not only house this wide range of resources in a way that would make it easy for the learner to navigate and therefore learn, but would also drive the desired behaviour change – to reduce food waste.

WRAP opted to go for an online blended approach. It aimed to take the learners on a competency journey, starting with their intent to rise up against wasted food and leading them to practical, demonstrable 'action'. The program included a vast range of digital elements – everything from e-learning and resources to podcasts and videos – and was underpinned by food waste measurement, with learners inputting daily food waste measures for an 8-week period. This was key to helping the learners and their organisations monitor and fully understand their food waste.

By the end of the program, WRAP wanted the learners to have gained new skills and improved existing ones that would enable them to capture important data on wasted food. It also aimed to create a network of 'Champions' – learners who had completed the learning and made a pledge to 'Become a Champion': to protect food, profits and the planet.

With funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), WRAP carried out a pilot of the project to test the effectiveness of the behaviour change program. It shared the training with a small group to begin with – 25 organisations, which included a total number of 114 learners – with the aim of rolling it out to a wider audience in a wider audience later in the year. It is this pilot that we'll be focusing on.



How WRAP invested in the learners

This project stands out to us as one that has truly invested in its learners because it is an all-rounder. WRAP put effort into every area – from the initial research and building of the program to learner support and gathering feedback – and really took everything into consideration in a way that we don't often see.

Getting the experts on board

The investment started at the beginning. To ensure the training program hit all their objectives, wrap knew they had to get experts on board, recognising that others had the expertise to help truly enhance the training program.

To find To find partners it went through an open tender process, but didn't have a preconceived idea of how it would work. So in order to be flexible and adaptable and be open to the insights it gained, the work was procured in three stages, allowing it to decide exactly which experts they needed to be involved.

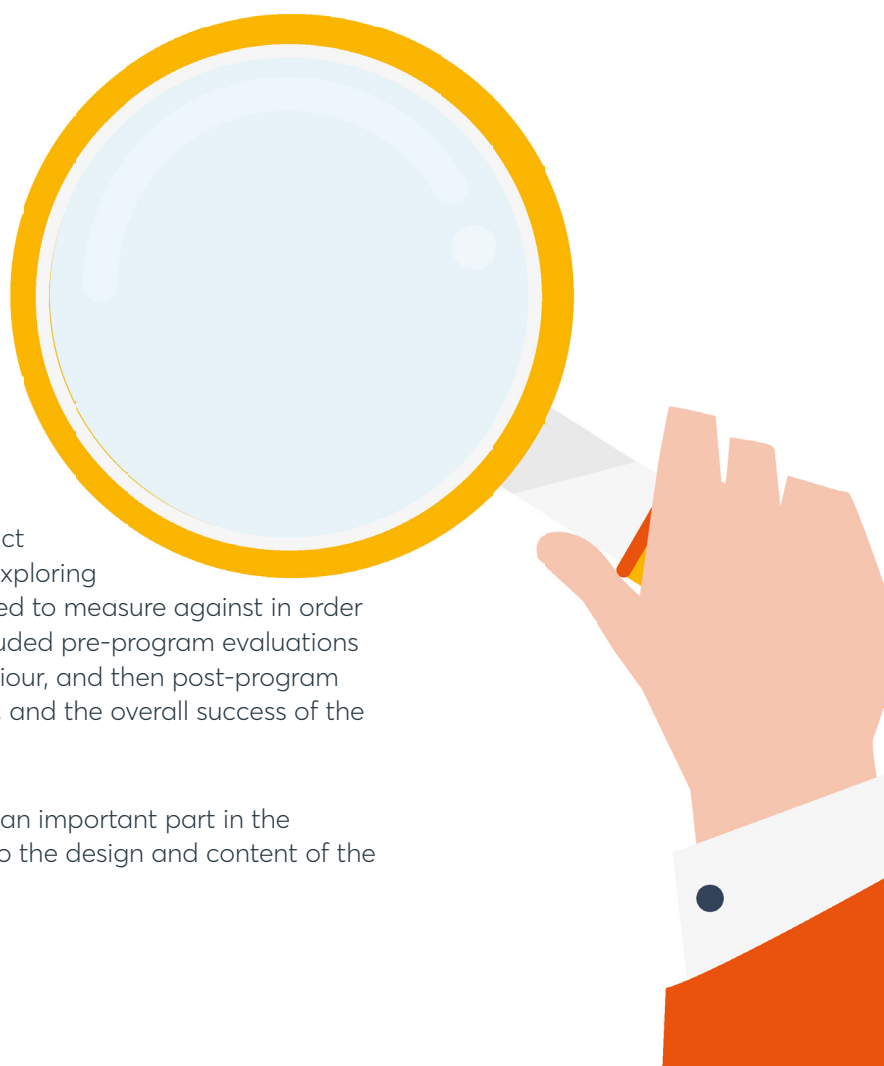
It is decisions such as these that are an important indication of an organisation investing in its learners and the success of the program, as it wants to make sure they have the right people involved to make the training program the best it possibly can be.

WRAP did its research

WRAP did everything it could to make sure the program was designed to meet the needs of the sector. This included making time for an extensive research phase, which was carried out at the very beginning of the project. It included online surveys, interviews, roundtable sessions and the establishment of an Advisory Group made up of HaFS sub sectors to ensure the program would be suitable for all.

WRAP's partners also carried out their own research necessary to their roles in the project. As an example, our consultants at Virtual College ran impact workshops with WRAP and set KPIs for the project, exploring what qualitative and quantitative data we would need to measure against in order to demonstrate the impact of the program. This included pre-program evaluations to enable us to assess current perception and behaviour, and then post-program evaluations to capture the shift in behaviour change, and the overall success of the program.

The insights gained from the research phase played an important part in the development of the program, as they fed directly into the design and content of the program.

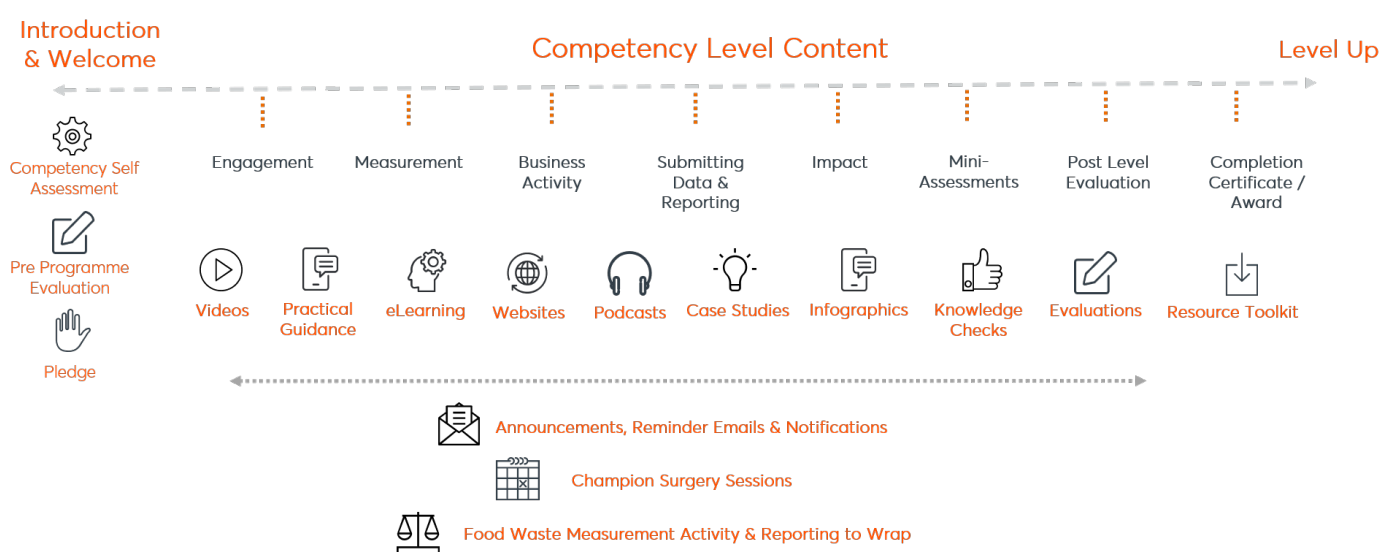


There is no 'one size fits all'

It thought outside the box. It could have gone down a standard route, but it recognised the different ways people learnt and understood that for the learners to truly embed the learning, take it on board and make those behaviour changes, the program had to use the different formats and present the learning in different ways. It went above and beyond to create a truly engaging learner journey.

WRAP didn't rely completely on one style; it used a blended approach making sure to take the best of digital and face-to-face (though, in these Covid times, that was done over video conference software) and using them in the most meaningful way.

Becoming a Champion: Behaviour Change Journey



The Behaviour Change Journey shows just how they did this. The range of digital formats is incredible, with ten different formats being used, making sure to tap into the different needs of the learners and keep them engaged. You can see how considered WRAP was, carefully thinking about what would work best for what type of information.

This huge range of different media types will have been new to the learners, as digital training is often just an e-learning module with some extra media types. But this extra level of detail signals so much to the learner. It signals that it is no usual, standard training program, but something they can truly benefit from and enjoy. It signals how their organisation feels about it – that it is not a tick-box exercise; it is something it takes serious, and it doesn't just want the learners to go through the learning, it wants the learning to really make a difference and for that behaviour change to happen. It wanted the learner to care.

But WRAP knew it couldn't all be digital, and face-to-face would be needed. This is why it incorporated one-to-one support through the use of 'surgery sessions'. These were fortnightly and delivered via web conference, and Champions were invited to join to share their experiences of working through the program, both their successes and challenges, and WRAP and Virtual College were also there to provide support and motivation, with occasional guest speakers from the HaFS sector joining to showcase their own food waste reduction journeys and the successes and the impacts these have had.

Engagement from the start

WRAP reached out to the audience and learners before they began the training program. It had a number of different channels – the Guardians of Grub newsletter and materials, webinars, a Pilot pack, it held different surgeries for the participants and for the organisations, and it had contact with signatories, such as Courtauld Commitment 2025, who also acted as influencers. This early engagement with the audience is a great way to get the learners excited, curious and invested in the training before they begin, and again, is an indication to the learner that the training is something worthwhile.

The importance of motivation and praise

Though learners like to learn at their own pace, time and location – some of the main attractions of digital learning – they don't want to be left to their own devices completely, and often need some motivation and praise. It's a fine balance to achieve, but WRAP had an engagement plan to help motivate learners to embrace the learning, take it in and embed it. This plan ran alongside the program, providing weekly motivational messaging to learners as they progressed through the program, as well as reminders to input their food waste measurement data into the system. The surgery sessions, as mentioned previously, were also an important part of the plan, and organisations were also motivated by monthly infographic reports, which were sent to help them monitor their progress.

A way to praise the learners was certificates of success. These were accessed by the learners at the end of successful level completion, and successes were celebrated at the surgery sessions, which helped the learners feel appreciated as well as being made to feel part of something bigger. WRAP is also showcasing Champions who have completed the program through its new Champion 'Wall of Fame'. It clearly knows this is an important part of the learner experience!

How the training impacted the learners and the organisations

WRAP may have put all this effort in, but what are the results? Was it worth it? This is something it was always adamant to find out, as the impact the training has on the learners and the organisations is imperative to getting that desired behaviour change – reduction in food waste. Assessing the impact was built into the program journey, and it set out to capture data – both qualitative and quantitative.

The impact is clear – it's been a powerful training program, and here we share some of the impressive findings taken from the pilot.

Savings	4 week	8 week
No. Covers	15,796	76,679
Weight per cover	38% reduction	23% reduction
£ per cover	37% reduction	26% reduction

These positive statistics are just one of the signs that the behaviour change has begun, as it is unlikely that these reductions would have happened without the training.

Pre- and post-training evaluations

WRAP carried out a number of pre- and post-training evaluations to properly measure how behaviours had changed, focusing on numerous different behaviours from positive application to communication regarding food waste.

Positive Application:

34% increase in measuring food waste **5-7 times a week** after the program, compared with before.

30% increase in recording food waste daily through program involvement.

Increased Knowledge & Awareness:

9% increase in understanding of the different food waste categories.

12% increase in understanding of the impact of food waste on the business.

Motivation:

Environmental impact motivation was a key personal driver (**81% pre and 76% post-program engagement**).

5% reduction in environmental motivation, but an **8% increase in financial motivation**.

Communications

19% increase in food waste reduction being formally communicated across the business through leadership updates, newsletters and emails.

16% reduction in ad hoc, inconsistent communication.

Awareness of food waste target **increased by 26%**.

22% increase in organisations setting a target.



Were the different learning styles met?

WRAP put a lot of effort into trying to meet different learning styles by ensuring that different formats were used throughout. But did this pay off? Here are some great statistics which reflect the champions' thoughts.



Qualitative champion feedback

WRAP also made sure to get qualitative evaluation feedback too, so it could discover more in-depth insights about what the champions felt worked best and what they gained. Here are a few examples.

"The Participant Surgery sessions have been so useful. The first one really got me going on my journey."

"I liked the mini assessment spread out throughout the levels, as they kept me engaged and felt like mini wins."

Great! Great!

"The podcasts and case studies were really interesting! I loved the story about the children at the school, and how teaching children about food waste early on can make a difference."

"The program definitely makes you think and encourages more food waste conversations around the business. I've brought lots of ideas and knowledge home too."

Qualitative sponsor feedback

The sponsors of the program signed up to the organisation, recognising that they needed to address their food waste problem. Here are some of their glowing reports.

"Our nominated Guardians of Grub Champions did an excellent job of raising awareness within the teams and inspiring them to reduce food waste. Our teams found that just talking about wasted food influenced change and many of our sites put initiatives in place such as zero-waste dishes, utilising excess stock through menu innovations and donating surplus to the community, all of which were achieved through engagement on the Guardians of Grub: Becoming a Champion pilot."

"You were very helpful and if I reached out, there was immediate help at hand."

"I think it's a very thought through program. It is a great idea to have different levels of learning. Each level offers a different learning opportunity."

"The basic premise of a remote e-learning and data logging system for Guardians of Grub was a good one. It ensured that there was an accessible way to train and engage with the program across multiple locations during a difficult period where face-to-face contact was very limited."

Overall, the success of the program – the learners' appreciation for the training and the desired behaviour changes coming about – only emphasises the point we keep coming back to: you must invest in your learners. WRAP went above and beyond to make a learning program that learners would enjoy, gain some crucial knowledge and insights and take those forward in a positive way – these changes just wouldn't have been possible without the time and investment that it made.