

Cleaning Product Chemicals Audit: Sustainable Procurement

2025/26

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Overview

This audit evaluates all cleaning and hygiene products utilised by Edge Hill University (EHU) staff across its Ormskirk campus, as of the 2025/26 academic year, to identify the chemical content of these products with the aim to identify their environmental and health impacts and support sustainable procurement decisions.

A significant proportion of products are classified as high-risk due to corrosive, chlorine-based, and environmentally harmful substances. A Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating system has been applied to prioritise action. The audit aligns to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles and includes a KPI framework to support reduction of harmful chemical use in line with the Sustainability Delivery Plan.

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
CLP	Classification, Labelling and Packaging
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
GHS	Global Harmonised System
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

Key to Relevant Documents

Institutional Sustainability Strategy
Institutional Sustainability Delivery Plan
Sustainable Procurement Policy
Sustainability Delivery Plan
Sustainability Delivery Plan Objectives
Sustainability Strategy 2026-31
Waste and Resource Strategy

Purpose

The audit was carried out in house by the Site Services team, who are based in Facilities Management, and are responsible for all housekeeping tasks across the University Ormskirk campus including in residential and non-residential spaces.

This audit was undertaken to identify the chemicals in use across the University in cleaning products with the aim to create COSHH records for each product. This process is important for EHU to identify any products containing hazardous chemicals, assess the environmental and health risks associated with these products, and support responsible and sustainable procurement decisions across campus operations.

Scope

This audit covers all 31 cleaning and hygiene products utilised across the University by Site Services. This includes bathroom cleaners, disinfectants, degreasers, carpet cleaning products, laundry products, and personal care items such as soaps used across campus. Due to the set up at EHUs Ormskirk campus, we are happy that this audit covers all approved cleaning supplies in use across the estate where Site Services undertake cleaning.

Methodology

Products were assessed using COSHH data, hazard classification (CLP/GHS), risk levels, chemical composition and sustainability criteria, and presence of sensitising or hazardous substances.

Summary of Findings

The review identified a reliance on high-risk chemicals in some areas, including corrosive acids and alkalis, chlorine-based disinfectants, and sensitising preservatives. These products are primarily used in descaling, disinfecting, and degreasing products used by EHU. Medium-risk products identified largely contain surfactants and solvents, while low-risk products identified are mostly non-classified or cosmetic grade.

RAG Rating Methodology

The RAG rating methodology used is based on hazard classification, environmental impact, and sustainability factors:

RED (High Risk): Corrosive, toxic, or environmentally hazardous substances such as strong acids, alkalis, chlorine-based products or substances hazardous to aquatic life. These require priority substitution.

AMBER (Medium Risk): Products with moderate hazards such as irritants, sensitizers, or environmentally concerning surfactants and solvents. Suitable for phased improvement.

GREEN (Low Risk): Non-classified or low hazard products that are biodegradable and have minimal environmental and health impact. Preferred for procurement.

















RAG Product Ranking

RAG Rating	Products and Assigned Audit No.	Key Issues
RED (High Risk)	1. Hi-Phos (Concentrate) 2. Descale 3. Evans Toilet Cleaner and Descaler 4. Essentials Chlorine Tablets 5. Oven Cleaner 6. Spray and Wipe with Bleach 7. EC 7 Heavy Duty Cleaner 8. EC 2 Degreaser 18. EC 9 Washroom Cleaner	Corrosive acids/alkalis, chlorine, environmental toxicity.
AMBER (Medium Risk)	9. Brasso Metal Polish 10. Lift RTU 11. Multi Pro Pre Spray 12. Extract Pro 13. Extra Clean Extraction Cleaner 14. Super Professional Carpet & Upholstery Stain Remover H7 15. Stain Pro 16. Citrus Gel Spot Remover 17. EC6 All Purpose 19. Clean Fast 20. Citrus Foam 21. Bio Washing Powder 22. Fibre and Fabric Rinse 23. Liquid Defoamer 24. Essential Lemon Washing Up Liquid	Surfactants, solvents, sensitisers, moderate hazards.
GREEN (Low Risk)	25. Black Pepper and Bergamot (soap) 26. EC 8 Air Freshener 27. Dishwasher Salt 28. Cream Cleaner 29. BioHygiene Urinal & Toilet Cleaner – BH042 30. Thrive – URIZAP 31. Trafficlean	Low hazard on non-classified products.

COSHH Chemical Inventory Summary

Key chemicals and hazard classifications derived from the COSHH process are summarised below:

Audit No.	Product	Key Chemicals	Hazard Classification	RAG Rating
1	Hi-Phos (Concentrate)	Methanesulphonic acid, phosphoric acid, alcohol ethoxylate	Corrosive	●
2	Descale	Phosphoric acid	Corrosive Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	●
3	Evans Toilet Cleaner and Descaler	Methanesulphonic acid, amine oxide surfactants	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	●
4	Essentials Chlorine Tablets	Troclosene sodium	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer Hazardous to the environment	●
5	Oven Cleaner	Sodium hydroxide, surfactants	Corrosive	●
6	Spray and Wipe with Bleach	Sodium hypochlorite, sodium hydroxide	Corrosive	●
7	EC 7 Heavy Duty Cleaner	Surfactants (SLES, CAPB), sodium hydroxide	Corrosive	●
8	EC 2 Degreaser	Surfactants, Sodium hydroxide	Corrosive	●
9	Brasso Metal Polish		Hazardous to the environment	●
10	Lift RTU	Sodium dodecyl benzene sulphonate, 2-butoxyethanol, sodium hydroxide	Hazards Not Classified	●
11	Multi Pro Pre Spray	Glycol ether solvent, surfactants	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	●
12	Extract Pro	Surfactants, preservative (BIT)	Hazards Not Classified	●
13	Extra Clean Extraction Cleaner	Glycol ether, phosphates	Hazards Not Classified	●
14	Super Professional Carpet & Upholstery Stain Remover H7	Surfactants, preservative (bronopol)	Hazards Not Classified	●
15	Stain Pro	Glycol ether solvent	Hazards Not Classified	●

16	Citrus Gel Spot Remover	Hydrocarbons (C11-C12), d-limonene, cyclohexane	Hazards Not Classified	
17	EC6 All Purpose	Surfactants, isothiazolinone preservatives (MIT/CMIT)	Corrosive Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
18	EC 9 Washroom Cleaner	Citric acid, quaternary ammonium compound, alcohol	Corrosive Hazardous to the environment	
19	Clean Fast	Citric acid, surfactants	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
20	Citrus Foam	Cosmetic surfactants	Hazards Not Classified	
21	Bio Washing Powder	Sodium carbonate, sodium perborate, surfactants	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
22	Fibre and Fabric Rinse	Citric acid	Hazards Not Classified	
23	Liquid Defoamer	Not classified	Hazards Not Classified	
24	Essential Lemon Washing Up Liquid	Surfactants, amine oxides	Hazards Not Classified	
25	Black Pepper and Bergamot (soap)	Cosmetic surfactants, fragrance	Hazards Not Classified	
26	EC 8 Air Freshener	Amine oxides, fragrance compounds	Corrosive Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
27	Dishwasher Salt	Sodium chloride	Hazards Not Classified	
28	Cream Cleaner	Alcohol alkoxyates	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
29	BioHygiene Urinal & Toilet Cleaner – BH042	Surfactants, biodegradable agents	Hazards Not Classified	
30	Thrive – URIZAP	Sodium percarbonate, sodium carbonate, citric acid	Corrosive Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	
31	Trafficlean	Glycol ether, surfactants, phosphates	Health Hazard/Hazardous to the ozone layer	

Immediate Actions

As a direct result of this audit the following action was taken:

- Brasso was removed from use across the University, meaning that the number of products now in use by Site Services for cleaning has reduced to 30.

ESG Compliance and Alignment

Environmental: Reduction of hazardous chemical discharge via use of cleaning products across EHU, transition to more sustainable products – linked to EHUs Sustainable Procurement Policy, and reduction in waste – linked to EHUs Waste and Resource Strategy.

Social: Reduced use of harmful substances leading to reduced exposure – improving health & safety across the Institution, improved indoor air quality.

Governance: Stronger procurement controls, transparency of ingredients used in cleaning products across campus, alignment with EHUs Sustainability Strategy.

Governance and Reporting

Progress against this audit will be reported on via the Institutional Sustainability Committee as part of the governance and reporting process established in EHUs Sustainability Delivery Plan:

“The main oversight and reporting responsibilities sit with the Head of Sustainability via the Institutional Sustainability Committee (ISC). Each objective has assigned owner(s) who have responsibility for the delivery and day-to-day management of the objective. This Plan will be reviewed at least annually at the ISC.”

KPIs and Next Steps

As a result of this audit the following next steps have been established:

- 1) Brasso: It was established that in light of the hazard it poses to the environment and low requirement for use of the product that it will no longer be used by EHU. As a result, EHU has been able to reduce the number of products in use by Site Services for cleaning to 30.
- 2) Delivery Plan objective: An objective to support the sustainable procurement of cleaning products has been identified for inclusion in the Sustainability Delivery Plan Objectives document.
This objective is outlined below:

Sustainable Procurement of Cleaning Products	Benefit
<p>Implement a sustainable procurement approach for cleaning products across the University estate, reducing reliance on hazardous chemicals. Starting from a baseline of 30 COSHH-reportable substances, the University will eliminate the 10 most harmful chemicals by the end of Year 1 and replace them with safer, lower-impact alternatives. A full review will be undertaken by Year 3 to set further reduction targets, ensuring continuous improvement in environmental performance, regulatory compliance, and staff wellbeing.</p> <p>This objective is supported by the Site Services 2025/26 Chemicals Audit which is available as a summary on our website.</p>	<p>Benefits from this objective can be spilt into the three sub-categories below.</p> <p><u>Environmental:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases risk of release of harmful chemicals into water systems. • Supports biodiversity protection and pollution prevention. • Contributes to Institutional carbon and environmental targets. <p><u>Health and Safety:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowers risk of occupational illnesses and accidents. • Supports safer COSHH compliance and easier risk management. <p><u>Regulatory benefits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens compliance with COSHH, REACH and other chemical regulations • Demonstrates due diligence and good governance.
Owner(s)	Timescales
<p>Head of Customer Services Customer Experience Manager</p>	<p>Year 1 onwards</p>

From this objective the following KPIs have been established to measure its progress:

- Number of high-risk (RED RAG-rated) cleaning-chemicals removed from use across the University.
- Reduction in chlorine and corrosive chemical in cleaning products used across the University.

What This Means for Staff and Students

Small changes help create a healthier environment

The types of cleaning products used across campus can affect both indoor air quality and environmental impact. By gradually moving towards safer, lower-toxicity products,

the University is creating healthier spaces for everyone who studies, works, and visits here.

Safer handling and clearer guidance over time

Some current cleaning products contain strong chemicals such as acids, alkalis, and disinfectants. Work is ongoing to reduce reliance on these where possible and ensure that products in use are safer and easier to handle. Over time, this will be supported by clearer guidance for cleaning staff and consistent product choices across campus.

Improving the spaces you learn and work in

Reducing the use of highly fragranced products and harsh chemicals can help improve indoor air quality, particularly in shared spaces such as lecture theatres, accommodation, and offices. This can make environments more comfortable, especially for people with sensitivities or allergies.

More sustainable choices behind the scenes – embedding sustainable procurement

The University is working with suppliers to shift towards cleaning products that are biodegradable, less harmful to water systems, and lower in environmental impact. This means that even everyday cleaning activities contribute to wider sustainability goals without requiring specialist knowledge from staff or students.

Everyone has a role to play

While most decisions around cleaning products are made centrally, everyday behaviours still make a difference. Staff and students can support this work by:

- Reporting spills or maintenance issues promptly so they can be managed safely.
- Avoiding unnecessary use of cleaning products where possible.
- Respecting cleaning processes and signage in shared spaces.

Supporting long-term sustainability goals

Reducing harmful chemicals is part of a wider commitment to sustainability across campus. By improving the way cleaning products are selected and used, the University is:

- Protecting staff health and wellbeing.
- Reducing environmental pollution.
- Supporting its long-term Sustainability Delivery Plan.
- Committing to embedding the Sustainable Procurement Policy into everyday practices.