

## Greater consistency in household recycling collections in England: the benefits to the waste management industry

Local authorities, supported by the waste management industry, have made great progress in recycling in recent years. However service design and recycling performance vary across England. Through the delivery of greater consistency in recycling, there are opportunities for significant benefits.

Over an 8 year transition period 2018/19 to 2025/26:

- Up to **11.6 million tonnes** of additional material recycled by 2025;
- **13.2 million more households** provided with a food waste collection service;
- **11 million more households** provided with a recycling service for a core set of dry materials;

- Greater **householder engagement** and reduced confusion over what can be recycled locally leading to increased participation, higher yields and **better quality recycle**.

### The Framework for greater consistency

An expert advisory group, brought together by WRAP, has developed a [Framework for greater consistency in household recycling](#) in England. It is underpinned by this vision:

*“By 2025, packaging is designed to be recyclable, where practical and environmentally beneficial, and is labelled clearly to indicate whether it can be recycled or not. Every household in England can recycle a*

*common set of dry recyclable materials and food waste, collected in one of three different ways.”*

The Framework is voluntary and recognises that waste and recycling is a local service that should be based on local circumstances and compliant with the Waste Regulations 2011 (as amended 2012). The Framework provides flexibility, with three core collection methods.



### Multi-stream with separate food

 or  **Residual waste (up to a maximum equivalent of 120 litres weekly)**

Minimum of 120 litres collected weekly

 **Plastics, metals and cartons**

 **Glass and card\***

 **Paper**

 **Food**

 **Plastics, metals, cartons, glass, card, paper and food**

### Two-stream (fibres separate) with separate food

 or  **Residual waste (up to a maximum equivalent of 120 litres weekly)**

Minimum equivalent of 120 litres weekly

 **Plastics, metals, cartons and glass**

 or  **Paper and card**

 **Food**

 **Plastics, metals, cartons, glass, card and paper**

 **Food**

### Co-mingled with separate food

 or  **Residual waste (up to a maximum equivalent of 120 litres weekly)**

Minimum equivalent of 120 litres weekly

 or  **Plastics, metals, cartons, glass, paper and card\*\***

 **Food**

 **Plastics, metals, cartons, glass, card and paper**

 **Food**

\*Glass and card would be presented in the same box but separated into different compartments on the vehicle. In flatted properties card and paper could be collected together. Glass would be collected as a separate stream.

\*\* The advice from reprocessors is that glass and paper are collected separately to maintain material quality.



**The vision applies to all householders, regardless of where they live in England. However it is likely to be implemented in phases with an initial focus on kerbside properties with later roll out to flats starting with dry materials.**

## **What are the business benefits?**

### **Reduced bidding costs.**

Consistent approaches to materials collected and method of collection provides an opportunity for standard contract documentation which will reduce the time (and therefore cost) in bidding.

### **Business opportunities.**

Greater consistency in the materials collected by householders means that greater coverage is needed in the collection of core materials. Up to 13.2 million more householders would have access to a food recycling collection scheme and 11 million more householders would have a collection of the core dry materials.

At a national level, this could result in an additional 11.6 million tonnes being recycled, over 70% of which would be food waste.

### **Reduced contamination.**

Improved communications, including labelling of packaging and consideration of the design of packaging in terms of its recyclability, will help to increase capture of recycle and reduce contamination. This in turn will help to reduce costs.

## **Achieving greater consistency across England**

As outlined in the *Framework*, greater consistency is a long-term goal and can only happen with action across the supply chain.

Already, industry-led groups have been established to:

- Help improve the recyclability and sorting of packaging;
- Improve communications with householders to maximise recycling;

- Consider the implications to recycling infrastructure – what is going to be needed, where and when; and
- Consider standard contract documentation.

WRAP is working with industry to establish clear guidelines on specific items that can and can't be presented for recycling and how to present them e.g. lids on/lids off and rinsed.

In addition, Defra is undertaking a review of policy and regulations that might affect the delivery of greater consistency.

The *Framework* takes account of current waste composition, service provision and technology as well as regulations and will be kept under review in the light of any future changes and innovations.

## Take action

Achieving the vision is a long-term objective and will only be cost effective if implemented gradually as services and contracts are reviewed. The waste management sector can support local authorities in working towards greater consistency in the materials that are collected, the way they are collected and communicating with householders using Recycle Now messages and materials.

## Find out more

**[A Framework for greater consistency in household recycling collections.](#)** An overview of the vision and collection systems.

**[Supporting evidence and analysis.](#)** The business benefits of adopting greater consistency.

**[Recycle Now communications.](#)** Find all the latest Recycle Now communications materials. All Recycle Now materials are rigorously consumer tested so you can be sure they are the best available.



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