

THE UK PLASTICS PACT REPORT

2018/19



wrap

FOREWORD



MARCUS GOVER, CEO, WRAP

Since The UK Plastics Pact's inception in April 2018, members have made positive early progress towards the four targets. As we move forward there are a number of areas beginning to transform and take shape including:

- the redesign of packaging, moving away from unrecyclable formats and towards plastics that have higher value;
- introduction of innovative re-use systems;
- better engagement with citizens to change recycling behaviours;
- investment in UK reprocessing; and
- the introduction of more recycled content into packaging.

Our trailblazing work is set against a backdrop of a global climate emergency and a burgeoning public appetite for change to improve our natural environment and conserve our precious natural resources and importantly, tackle plastic waste. It is imperative that this world-leading initiative remains the vanguard and acts with urgency and in collaboration, keeping plastics out of the natural environment and in the economy.

As expected, the road has been challenging and finding the right solutions is not always straightforward.

The complexities of fixing a broken system of make, use, dispose into one of circularity will take time, investment and a greater understanding across the value chain, from packaging producers through to citizens.

Plastic is woven into the fabric of daily life and plays an important role in protecting goods. The emotive plastics debate is demanding immediate change, but our actions need to avoid unintended consequences. Displacing environmental impact, particularly where it could lead to increased global warming, is not the answer. Environmental costs of using different materials all need to be considered, including any impact on product preservation.

The outcome of our collective efforts will be a reduction in primary plastic production, not just through increasing the levels of recycled content in packaging and products, but also absolute reduction as a result of refill solutions and moving away from problematic or unnecessary use.

The vision of The UK Plastics Pact is a world where plastic is valued and doesn't pollute the environment. It is this vision that is our guiding principle as we navigate the challenging and transformative years ahead.



WHAT'S INSIDE

Interactive:
Rollover & click
to navigate



"A WORLD WHERE PLASTIC IS VALUED AND DOESN'T POLLUTE THE ENVIRONMENT"

Tackling plastic waste requires concerted global and national level action. WRAP is leading this national level action in the UK.

The UK Plastics Pact was developed in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation as the first in a global network of Plastics Pacts, working towards the circular economy for plastics.

In the UK we are demonstrating global leadership in transforming the plastics economy and tackling plastic pollution through The UK Plastics Pact.

The initiative is unique because it unites governments, local authorities, NGOs and businesses involved in producing, selling, collecting and reprocessing plastic, to deliver ambitious targets for change by 2025. And crucially is underpinned by government policy and citizen action.

TARGETS TO 2025:



1 Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models.



2 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.



3 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted.



4 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.

INTRODUCTION



AMBITION BECOMES ACTION

The targets to 2025:

1. Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models.
2. 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
3. 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted.
4. 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.

The UK Plastics Pact is leading a global wave of change in the way we make, use, reuse and dispose of plastic. Since April 2018 the Pact has made meaningful progress working towards the four ambitious targets as set out in our [Roadmap to 2025](#).

What is in the report?

It outlines the work The UK Plastics Pact is undertaking to make the significant changes required to transform an entire value chain into a circular economy for plastics. It also reports on where our collective of members are in relation to the delivery of the targets.

The story so far

We detail the steps taken over the past 18 months to provide clarity, definitions and key guidance to Pact members and highlight the interim targets that have been set to ensure objectives are met by 2025. We provide links to our updated member progress report where you can see in detail the actions our members are taking.

UK Plastics Pact members sharing their plastic packaging data for the first time

In signing up to The UK Plastics Pact, business members who sell products in plastic packaging (either as a product manufacturer or a retailer) committed to sharing their data on plastic packaging usage with WRAP. Data reporting and measurement is central to driving change and this is the first time that data of this level of detail have been collated and analysed. These data are being used to shape the direction of travel of the Pact and determine priorities.

The report provides a summary of the total packaging usage by these members in 2018, which is the starting year of the Pact. For the first time establishing a clear baseline against a measurable set of targets tackling plastic pollution and waste. The baseline will help us better understand the progress made over the coming years.

The future look

This section outlines the priorities for Pact members and the wider value chain for the coming years.

MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

85 BUSINESS MEMBERS...

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Hospitality &
food service

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Resin producers,
packaging converters and
the recycling industry

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Supporting
organisations such as
charities, trade bodies
and data compliance
organisations

**"OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS ACCOUNT
FOR TWO-THIRDS OF CONSUMER
PLASTIC PACKAGING IN THE UK"**

OUR BASELINE

WHAT THE DATA TELL US



For the first time The UK Plastics Pact have established a clear baseline against a measurable set of targets tackling plastic pollution and waste.

The baseline data represent packaging sold by 55 businesses in 2018¹

1.1 BILLION

items classed as problematic or unnecessary were sold by Pact members in the UK

65%

of Pact members' plastic packaging was recyclable²

1 MILLION TONNES

The total weight of plastic packaging placed on the market by UK Plastics Pact members (primary, secondary and tertiary)

44%

The national recycling rate of plastic packaging³

10%

of Pact members' plastic packaging by weight was recycled content

¹This excludes businesses who signed up to The UK Plastics Pact post the 2018 data deadline. Their data will be collected and included in future years' reporting.

²65% is practically (not just technically) recyclable. Therefore PP/PE film has not been counted as recyclable as it is not recycled at scale.

³44% is based on all plastic packaging and not just that sold by business members.

THE STORY SO FAR...

TARGET 1



Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models by 2025.

ELIMINATING PROBLEM PLASTICS

UK Plastics Pact members have taken crucial steps to eliminating single-use problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging for good. Bold steps have been taken which will result in a reduction in the amount of unnecessary plastic on the shelves.

Defined 'Problematic' and 'Unnecessary' single-use packaging

The starting point was to define what is meant by problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic. It was concluded that a single-use plastic packaging item is classed as problematic or unnecessary if:

- its use is avoidable or reusable options are available;
- it's not recyclable or hampers the recycling process; or
- it pollutes our environment.

Identified 'eight to go' by the end of 2020

Using this definition, eight problematic or unnecessary plastic items and materials have been identified for elimination by Pact members before the end of 2020, as published in our '[Eliminating problem plastics report](#)':

- disposable plastic cutlery
- all household polystyrene packaging
- cotton buds with plastic stems
- plastic stirrers
- plastic straws
- oxo-degradable plastics
- PVC packaging
- disposable plastic plates and bowls.

A further 19 items are under investigation

19 further plastic packaging items are being investigated, each requiring carefully considered action to solve the issues associated with their use or disposal while ensuring no unintended environmental consequences. The full list of 19 items is listed in the eliminating problem plastics report. All UK Plastics Pact members are developing action plans to address these items within their packaging portfolio. WRAP will monitor progress.

TARGET 1 ELIMINATING PROBLEM PLASTICS



Eight problematic or unnecessary items to be eliminated by the end of 2020*:

1. Plastic cutlery
2. Plastic plates & bowls
3. Plastic straws
4. Cotton buds with plastic stems
5. Plastic drinks stirrers
6. Household polystyrene packaging
7. Oxo-degradable plastics
8. PVC packaging

Totalling:

22,500 TONNES

The makeup of which is mainly PVC and polystyrene packaging sold by Pact members in 2018 which totals 21,000 tonnes.

The plastic items in our list of eight (numbers 1-5 in the list) total:

1.1 BILLION INDIVIDUAL UNITS

sold in 2018 and will be eliminated by the end of 2020*



* There are some necessary exemptions and for some items it will take longer.

TARGET 1 EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS



Major supermarkets are removing plastic cutlery and plastic straws

Plastic cutlery and plastic straws are some of the plastic items deemed problematic and unnecessary.

- **MAJOR SUPERMARKETS LEAD THE CHANGE** - ASDA, M&S and Waitrose have all removed plastic cutlery and replaced with wooden alternatives in their stores and/or instore cafés and restaurants.

All other major supermarkets have committed to eliminate plastic cutlery by the end of 2020.

All leading retailers have removed multipacks of plastic straws from their shelves.

Morrisons leading the way, offering more plastic-free fruit & veg

- **ROLL OUT OF LOOSE FRESH PRODUCE TRIAL** - Morrisons have rolled out loose fresh produce areas to 60 stores with more to follow next year. This follows a successful ten-month trial in three of their stores.

Their customers can now choose from up to 127 varieties of fruit and veg, buying them loose or putting them in paper bags. They anticipate that the continued rollout will save at least 150 tonnes of plastic per year.



Awaiting image

M&S make yogurt pots recyclable

RECYCLABLE SNAP PACKS – As part of its commitment to remove polystyrene by the end of 2020, M&S has started replacing its yogurt pots with widely recyclable polypropylene. The 'S perf' development designed by Faerch overcomes the challenge of 'snappability' in the new material allowing their customers to cleanly snap the pack apart whilst delivering recyclability.

THE STORY SO FAR...

TARGET 2



100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

MAKING AMBITION REALITY

Issued best practice 'polymer choice' design guidance – maximising the recyclability of rigid packaging

In July 2019 we published [recyclability guidelines for rigid plastic packaging](#) and expanded on this work to provide guidance on [best practice polymer choices](#). The guidance sets out 'best in class' packaging design including preferred material and colour choices as well as the ambition for recycled content. Implementing what is set out in this guidance will maximise the opportunity for packaging to be recycled back into plastic packaging, as well as increasing its material value.

We have also defined which materials are recyclable and set a deadline for the removal of key non-recyclable materials where possible by the end of 2020.

Issued guidance on the use of compostable plastic packaging

We are issuing guidance to help businesses navigate the complex topic of compostable plastic packaging within the UK's existing infrastructure. This provides decision trees to aid a business's understanding of how compostable packaging travels through the current waste system.

In the guidance there are number of key potential applications for compostable alternatives. They include:

- food caddy liners;
- fruit and veg stickers;
- tea bags;
- coffee pods;
- ready meal trays; and
- closed loop situations like at festivals, within individual buildings or coffee shops.

TARGET 2 100% OF PLASTIC PACKAGING TO BE REUSABLE, RECYCLABLE OR COMPOSTABLE



65%

of plastic packaging placed on the market by Pact members is recyclable

What are the remaining non-recyclable or non-compostable materials?

- **8%** - PE film (currently recyclable through collection points at large supermarkets but not in sufficient enough quantities to be deemed recyclable at scale)
- **7%** - PP film
- **5%** - Multilayer incompatible materials (to be solved through improved design and film recycling infrastructure)
- **3%** - Non-NIR detectable black (either removing it entirely or moving to clear or NIR detectable black plastic)
- **2%** - PVC + PVC components (removal by the end of 2020)
- **1%** - Polystyrene (removal by the end of 2020)
- **1%** - PET film
- **8%** - Unknown
- **<0.1%** - Compostable plastic

DEFINING RECYCLABLE

Using the Ellen MacArthur Foundation definition - a packaging or a packaging component is recyclable if post-consumer collection, sorting, and recycling is proven to work in practice and at scale... A package can be considered recyclable if its main packaging components, together representing more than 95% of the entire packaging weight, are recyclable according to the above definition, and if the remaining minor components are compatible with the recycling process and do not hinder the recyclability of the main components...⁵

⁵The New Plastics Economy: Global Commitment reporting guidelines

TARGET 2 EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS



Waitrose start a refill revolution in their Oxford 'Unpacked' store

- **UNPACKED ROLL OUT** - Waitrose & Partners trialled a new concept called 'Unpacked' in their Oxford store. The concept took more than 200 products out of plastic packaging with the aim of testing how customers might shop differently.

Following positive customer feedback, 'Unpacked' has now been rolled out in a further three stores. Each will sport the new 'Unpacked' branding along with refill zones, dispensers for dried products, frozen pick and mix, coffee, wine and beer refills and Ecover detergent and washing up liquid refillables.

Manufacturers moving to clear plastic to enhance recyclability

- **CLEAR IS THE NEW GREEN** - Sprite bottles have always been recyclable, but they have recently switched the iconic green bottle to a clear bottle to make the recycling process even easier and to help ensure the plastic can be turned into another bottle.
- **MORE GREEN TO CLEAR** - Sainsbury's have also moved all of their sparkling water bottles from green to clear.



Major brands and supermarkets taking action on black plastic

- **MAJOR SUPERMARKETS REMOVE NON-RECYCLABLE BLACK PLASTIC** - Aldi, ASDA, Co-op, Lidl, M&S, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose have made significant steps to remove non-recyclable black plastic. Morrisons has removed black plastic from all of its own brand food and drink packaging.
- **BLACK TO CLEAR** - Leading brands, Mr Kipling & Cadbury have moved their cake trays from black to clear plastic. Removing 500 tonnes of black plastic annually.
- **DETECTABLE BLACK PLASTIC** - In collaboration with the recycling sector, Unilever (owner of the TRESemmé and Lynx brands), have changed their bottles to contain a detectable black pigment making them easier to recycle.

THE STORY SO FAR...

TARGET 3

70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted by 2025.

Plastic packaging recycled in the UK in 2018 was:

**1,034
KILOTONNES**

approximately 650,000 tonnes of additional output material is required to hit our target of 70% by 2025.

THE UK
PLASTICS
PACT



IMPROVING RECYCLING RATES

This target aims to achieve a national recycling rate of 70% for plastic packaging. A systemic approach is required bringing together businesses, government and citizens – all playing key roles in stimulating the system change and behaviour change required to achieve this target.

Retailers & brands – citizen behaviour change

Pact members are communicating with their customers to ensure plastic packaging is disposed of in the right way, including:

- Wide-spread use of the 'On Pack Recycling Labelling Scheme'.
- Using consistent communications through marketing channels, utilising Recycle Now resources and messaging.
- Utilising on-pack messages e.g 'Recycle me' on caps.

Citizen engagement – recycling, a social norm

Businesses are using WRAP's world-leading research and Recycle Now campaigns to stimulate better recycling behaviours across all material types including plastics. The campaigns are wide reaching with local authorities, businesses, schools, and community groups all engaged in delivering Recycle Now's social norming approach. Key to this is our annual Recycle Week which this year had a big focus on plastics.

2019's Recycle Week reached 59 million through PR and media and was supported by over 200 partners including retailers, brands, waste management companies and local authorities. More detail about [Recycle Now's campaigns can be found here](#).

The waste and resources sector and UK Government – increasing capacity and capability to recycle more and boost rates

Investment is being made in the development of new and the expansion of existing recycling facilities. WRAP is working with the recycling and waste management industry to support the effective reprocessing of materials.

Published in December 2018, the government's ambitious Resources and Waste Strategy plans to transform the waste system to enable greater recycling rates in England. Plans include an extended producer responsibility scheme, consistent collections, a national deposit return scheme and taxation on packaging.

This strategy alongside Pact members' commitment in working towards targets two and four will stimulate the investment needed.

TARGET 3 70% OF PLASTIC PACKAGING EFFECTIVELY RECYCLED OR COMPOSTED



44%

The national recycling rate for plastic packaging in the UK in 2018

There is evidence of changing behaviours surrounding recycling:

In the WRAP 2019 Recycling Tracker Survey we found that over the past year, three in five UK households report extra recycling of one or more items⁶

60%

More and more people are seeking information about plastic recycling:

2018 saw the Recycle Now website increase traffic by 80% from the previous year

**2.8
MILLION
USERS**

In 2018 the Recycle Now recycling locator saw an increase of 94% on completed searches from the previous year

**3.8
MILLION
SEARCHES**

⁶Recycling Tracking Survey 2019 - Behaviours, attitudes and awareness around recycling

TARGET 3 EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS



Millions invested in building UK recycling capacity

- **VIRIDOR TO OPEN NEW £65MILLION RECYCLING PLANT** - Their Avonmouth facility will process 81,000 tonnes of PET plastic (commonly used in plastic bottles and plastic trays).
- **VEOLIA INVEST £1MILLION IN DAGENHAM PLANT** - Increasing capacity to meet the growing demand for output material.
- **BIFFA INVEST £27 MILLION IN NEW PROCESSING PLANT** - due to open in January 2020 with a capacity to process 57,000 tonnes of PET.

Supermarkets helping customers recycle soft plastic film

- **M&S SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED THEIR 'PLASTIC TAKE-BACK' SCHEME** - Hard-to-recycle plastics can now be taken back to 12 stores. M&S plan to continue the rollout. The scheme collects the plastics which are not widely collected by local authorities. The plastic will be turned into playground equipment for schools.
- **ASDA TO COLLECT ANY 'STRETCHY FILM'** - Widening their collection at their front of store carrier bag recycling bins.
- **TESCO TRIALS COLLECTION OF ANY SOFT PLASTIC** - in 10 stores customer are able to return any type of soft plastic, from pet food pouches to crisp packets.



Brands improving their on-pack recycling messaging

To encourage citizens to recycle on-the-go and at home many brands have made bold changes to their on-pack messaging.

- **DANONE (OWNER OF THE EVIAN BRAND) COLLABORATION** - In collaboration with The Championships, Wimbledon and to support Recycle Week they put a 'I Recycle' message, replacing their logo on the bottle itself.
- **COCA-COLA ENCOURAGE RECYCLING ON 500 MILLION BOTTLE TOPS** - adding a 'Please Recycle Me' message.
- **PEPSI & TANGO** - The 'recycle me' message has also been rolled out by other leading soft drinks brands.

THE STORY SO FAR...

TARGET 4



BOOSTING RECYCLED CONTENT

30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging by 2025.

Clarifying the target

To achieve an average of 30% recycled content across all Pact members and their total plastic packaging sold (this is not a target per business member or indeed per packaging item).⁷

Developed a recycled content strategy

The strategy identifies key challenges associated with increasing recycled content⁸ by material type and some of the actions needed to address them. It was shared with Pact members in summer 2019.

Published updated interim targets by polymer and format type

We published updated targets, by polymer type and format, on the level of recycled content businesses should be striving for between now and 2025. This features in [The UK Plastics Pact – A roadmap to 2025](#) and also in our [best practice polymer choices guidance](#).

Formed collaborative action groups to address key challenges

We have brought together businesses from across the value chain to address some of the key challenges related to recycled content. [More detail later in the report.](#)

Investors learn of the potential in the recycling sector

In October WRAP worked with partners to host an investment summit to highlight to investors the opportunities within the recycling sector.

Investment will be key to increasing recycling capacity in the UK, improving the availability of recycled material.

⁷ It is important to note that The UK Plastics Pact target is different to the proposed taxation from the Treasury, which is proposed as a tax on any packaging item containing less than 30% recycled content.

⁸ The definition of recycled content is post-consumer recycled material. Reported figures should not include production off-cuts, however, understanding, measuring and auditing is currently inconsistent and challenging and needs to be resolved.

TARGET 4 30% AVERAGE RECYCLED CONTENT ACROSS ALL PLASTIC PACKAGING



10%

Current average recycled content across all UK Plastics Pact business members

Ambition for average recycled content to 2025⁹:

Polymer/item	April 2019	By end 2022	By end 2025
PET bottles	14-18%	22-28%	50%
Milk bottles	25%	30-35%	50%
PE bottles	10-15%	20%	40-45%
PET trays*	70%	50%	35-40%
PP pots/tubs/trays	20%	30%	50%
PE & PP film	5%	7%	10%

⁹The UK Plastics Pact - A roadmap to 2025

*It is assumed that increased bottle to bottle recycling will impact on the availability of material for PET tray recycling. Investment is needed in PET tray to tray recycling.

TARGET 4 EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS



Leading soft drinks brands move to 100% recycled content

- **HIGHLAND SPRING ECO BOTTLE RANGE** - Highland Spring water bottles have expanded their eco bottle™ range made from 100% recycled PET plastic to include the 330ml kids, 500ml still and sparkling and 750ml still ranges. 50% recycled content will be used across all their ranges by 2022 and they will continue to collaborate to increase the availability of rPET.
- **COCA-COLA'S GLACEAU SMARTWATER** - will include 100% recycled PET by the end of 2019 totalling 120 million bottles. For all their other products, 50% of the material they use for their PET bottles will come from recycled plastic by June 2020, saving 23,000 tonnes of virgin PET each year.

Boosting recycled content in personal care & laundry products

- **P&G INCREASE RECYCLED CONTENT LEVELS** – They now include an average 50% recycled plastic in their Lenor and Lenor Unstoppables bottles, 25% in their Ariel liquid bottles and 35% in their Ariel Purclean bottles. By 2020, P&G will increase post-consumer recycle (PCR) by up to 50% in Ariel liquid detergent bottles and up to 100% PCR PET in Lenor transparent fabric conditioner bottles.
- **UNILEVER BRAND, DOVE MOVES TO 100% RECYCLED PLASTIC BOTTLES** - They have made the move (where technically feasible), in North America and Europe – across all their ranges (Dove, Dove Men+Care, and Baby Dove).



Increasing recycled content in food trays

- **LEADING RETAILERS EMBRACE CIRCULAR DESIGN IN READY MEAL TRAYS** - Waitrose and ASDA have adopted ready meal trays containing 80% recycled PET which fluctuate in colour reflecting the blend of recycled bottles and trays they are made from.
- **ASDA BOOST RECYCLED CONTENT LEVELS** - By the end of 2019 ASDA will have introduced a minimum of 50% recycled content into all their produce trays (excluding mushrooms).



**WHAT'S
NEXT**

FUTURE PRIORITIES

COLLABORATIVE ACTION TO FIND

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS



Meeting the ambitious targets of The UK Plastics Pact will involve solving complex technical challenges. Members representing all parts of the value chain are working collaboratively to find solutions. Some of the action groups and projects include:

- Developing and accelerating alternatives to high impact polystyrene for yoghurt pots.
- Increasing the use of coloured (jazz) HDPE back into packaging.
- Removing PVC packaging from the waste stream (which impacts the quality of PET material).

Developing a recycling system for film and flexible packaging

Film and flexible packaging (like frozen food bags and bread bags) is a resource efficient material and often plays an important role in protecting food from becoming waste. It accounts for approximately a quarter of consumer plastic packaging, yet recycling is limited; estimated at around 4%. It is therefore one of the top priorities for action under The UK Plastics Pact.

A strategy that spans design, collection, engagement with citizens, sorting, reprocessing and end markets has been developed. We are very much at the start of the journey to developing a recycling system for film and flexible packaging. There are significant challenges that lie ahead.

Work is underway with key stakeholders from across the value chain including CEFLEX (Circular Economy for Flexible Plastics) to address the challenges. WRAP has also convened working groups including:

- **Film roadmap** - Based on the film recycling strategy - development of a roadmap for film packaging which will be added to The UK Plastics Pact Roadmap to 2025.
- **Film collections** - Focussing initially on supermarket front of store film collection points with the aim of achieving consistency in materials collected which are then sent for onward processing.
- **Non-mechanical recycling** - Consideration of the role for non-mechanical recycling including: collection, sorting, pre-treatment, outputs, environmental impacts and classification in terms of recyclability.

25%

Film and flexible packaging accounts for approximately a quarter of consumer plastic packaging, yet recycling is limited; estimated at around 4%

Getting Britain to recycle more

2019 was the year we took recycling into our own hands. Recycle Week 2019's hard hitting campaign reinforced that we must all take individual responsibility to recycle and improve the natural environment around us. There are a series of campaigns and behaviour change interventions over the coming months that Pact members are encouraged to support, aimed at simple behaviour changes around plastic recycling. The next 12 months and beyond will see us supercharge plastics recycling in the UK in pursuit of our 70% plastics recycling target.

Plastics specific engagement and activity:

- **A bathroom recycling campaign** – Our research suggests that recycling of bathroom items is low compared to items from other areas in the home. Campaign running through November/December 2019.
- **A 'bring back your bottle'** behaviour change pilot project encouraging a 'hang on until you can recycle it' behaviour, bringing bottles you buy on-the-go back home to recycle.
- **A back to basics recycling campaign** - to remind citizens of the recyclability of the most commonly used packaging items - such as milk bottles and drinks bottles.

27%

of people have a place to recycle in the bathroom vs 80% in the kitchen¹⁰

41%

of soft drink bottles on-the-go are not recycled. And only 50% of Local Authorities have on-the-go recycling facilities¹¹

51%

Just over half of UK households dispose of one or more items in the general rubbish bin that are collected for recycling in their area¹⁰

Changing perceptions about plastic packaging

Citizen pressure to make swift change has been the catalyst for The UK Plastics Pact; however, in a world where citizens are bombarded by information on plastics in the media, online, by friends and family, there is confusion around plastics and their role. Communicating credible, evidence-based and solutions-oriented information on plastics with citizens is the first step in creating positive behaviours around plastic and recycling. Whilst it is likely that the use of plastic packaging will reduce as a consequence of work towards the Pact targets, a wholesale and rapid move away from plastic is not always the answer.

In the coming months we will be working together to support citizens to 'change the conversation' on plastics; giving people clear information about the complex world of plastics, waste and recycling – for instance, explaining the role of plastics, and demonstrating the balance between the benefits and drawbacks of alternatives. Led by WRAP and supported by The UK Plastics Pact, this is the precursor to better behaviours surrounding plastics.

¹⁰ Recycling Tracking Survey 2019 - Behaviours, attitudes and awareness around recycling

¹¹ Plastic Packaging Waste - Understanding existing and future citizen behaviours - WRAP, 2018, unpublished

INVESTING IN REUSE

Investing in reuse and refill delivery models

We are encouraging businesses to adopt new business models and reusable packaging in order to displace the use of virgin materials and reduce environmental impact.

A collaborative action group has been formed in order to investigate reusable packaging and refill delivery models. It will review existing reuse models and identify opportunities for the future.

An event with speakers from leading organisations actively implementing reuse solutions took place in late 2019. Learnings from the event will be shared so businesses exploring reuse can be inspired to adopt new ways of working.

Reuse models will only be successful if they are widely adopted by citizens. WRAP's work will look at ways to engage consumers in these delivery systems, focussing effort where we can have the greatest impact.

Appetite for change

52%

of people who drink water outside the home can see themselves using reusable drinks bottles¹²

44%

of people who buy liquid laundry detergent can see themselves taking it back to store to refill¹²

¹²Plastic Packaging Waste - Understanding existing and future citizen behaviours - WRAP, 2018, unpublished

MAKING THE RIGHT DECISIONS

Avoiding unintended consequences

Whilst change must happen urgently it is crucial that solutions are well considered and avoid unintended environmental consequences, including any increased carbon emissions from alternative material production and supply, as well as negative implications to product preservation, particularly food. Decisions are complex and there is always a trade-off.

To help make these business critical decisions, WRAP is working on:

A report on material alternatives which will act as a gateway for decision makers considering life cycle assessments for alternative materials for packaging design.

And WRAP has produced:

Guidance for retailers of fresh produce:

Providing decision-making tools and advice to help retailers:

1. Determine whether a product is suitable for selling loose.
2. Decide if a Best Before date should be applied.
3. Implement these changes.

”

We are determined to avoid piecemeal solutions but bring the whole supply chain together to bring about systemic change.

We think the only answer is to shift away from the make, use, dispose system we are paying the price for, to one which is truly circular. And that's a significant undertaking.

Plastic packaging plays an important role in protecting goods as they move through the economy. And importantly in reducing food waste and its climate impact.

It would be irresponsible if we were tempted to trade more food waste as part of the 'deal' in tackling plastic pollution. This would be a gamble too far.

”

PETER MADDOX, DIRECTOR, WRAP



THANK YOU

To get in touch with WRAP about The UK Plastics Pact you can contact us in a variety of ways:

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[@WRAP_UK](https://twitter.com/WRAP_UK)

WRAP's vision is a world in which resources are used sustainably.

Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products; re-thinking how we use and consume products; and re-defining what is possible through re-use and recycling.

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The UK Plastics Pact is led by WRAP with the support of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. The UK Plastics Pact was co-created by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WRAP to accelerate the transition to a circular economy for plastics in the UK and is one of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's national and regional implementation initiatives around the world. The opinions expressed, and materials made available, by WRAP or the Ellen MacArthur Foundation or The UK Plastics Pact signatories do not necessarily reflect the views of the other parties who are not responsible for the same.

The UK Plastics Pact report 2018/19- December 2019