

Simpler Recycling Changes

Policy update and support for local authorities

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Press release

Simpler household recycling rules come into force across England

Simpler Recycling to end years of confusion and deliver consistent collections

From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#) and [Mary Creagh CBE MP](#)
Published 31 March 2026



Households across England are set to benefit from clear new rules on sorting their recycling and waste – which come into force today (Tuesday 31 March 2026) – ending years of confusion over what goes in which bin and enabling consistent, streamlined collections.

Household collection changes go live!

Simpler Recycling Collections on a page

What?

- Reforms to recycling collections in England
- Households and workplaces to have by default separate collections of:

Plastic, glass, and metal

Paper and card



Organic recyclable waste streams



Residual waste



Why?

Contribute towards reaching:
65% municipal recycling rate by 2035



Environmental, economic or social benefit

- Reduced landfill and incineration and associated carbon emissions
- Reduced carbon emissions as a result of reduced production from virgin materials
- Support growth of UK recycling industry



Who?

All households in England including flats



Workplaces in England

Number of full-time equivalent employees:

MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
<10	<50	<250	≥250



- Businesses

Relevant non-domestic premises:

- Residential homes
- Educational establishments
- Hospitals or nursing homes
- Places of worship
- Penal institutes
- Charity shops
- Hostels
- Public meeting places



Collectors

- Exemptions allow waste collectors to co-collect plastic, metal and glass, and to co-collect food and garden waste under any circumstances
- Local authorities / other waste collectors can co-collect paper and card with other dry recyclable waste streams where it is technically, economically or environmentally justified – but must produce a written assessment
- Local authorities must provide a weekly food waste collection to all households

When?

31 March

2025

Small, medium, and large workplaces recycle all waste streams, except plastic film and garden



31 March

2026

Households recycle all waste streams, except plastic film (and food where transitional arrangements apply)



31 March

2027

Micro-firms recycle all waste streams except garden
Plastic film collections from all properties



How? (local authorities)

- Funding will be provided to local authorities for the household collection requirements:
 - Local authorities will receive payments from packaging producers under EPR
- Local authorities will receive new burdens funding for providing food waste collections
- Local authorities can charge for garden collections



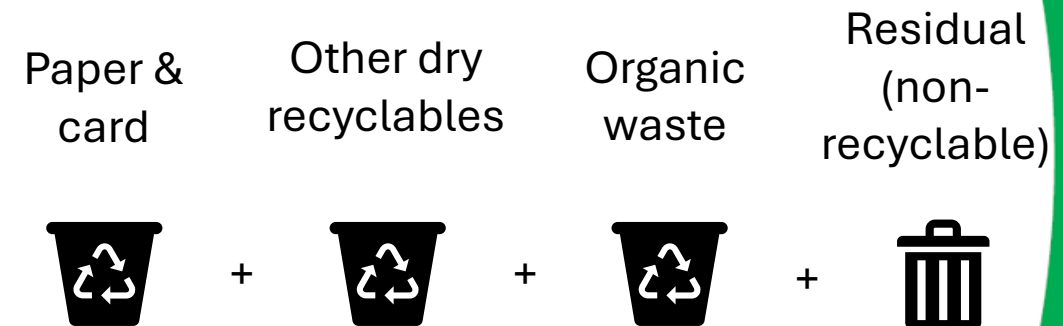
Legal requirements on local authorities




[legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

- Environmental Protection Act 1990 [s45A-s45AZB]
- 'Commencement' Regulations 2024
- Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2024
- Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025

Default for household collections but local flexibility built in:




The support Defra is providing to LAs



We have **provided over £340m transitional funding** to LAs for weekly food waste collections. Ongoing funding will be provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging will secure LA funding **c£1.1bn annually in England** for the improved management of household packaging waste.




Collaborating with WRAP to produce **guidance and support** for local authorities and other waste collectors implementing the required collection services.



Public Communications Campaign

to raise awareness, build trust in recycling, encourage behaviour change and prepare citizens



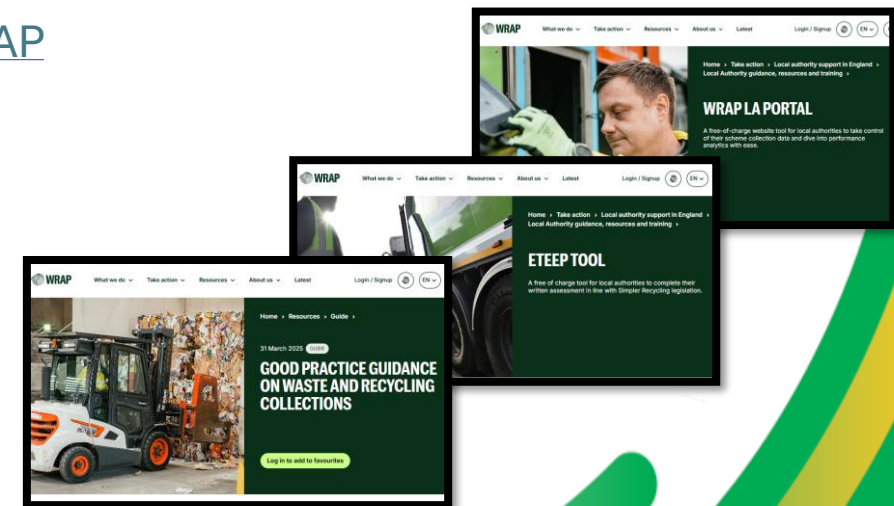
Launched **Change Network** to enable peer to peer learning, sharing of best practice and co-designing solutions. **Engaged** with representatives from across multiple **local authority and waste networks** to explore successes and barriers in implementation.

National guidance positions on .Gov.uk

- [Simpler recycling: workplace recycling in England - GOV.UK](#)
- [Simpler recycling: household recycling in England - GOV.UK](#)
- [Collecting paper and card with other dry recyclable materials: written assessments - GOV.UK](#)
- [Ensuring good waste collection services for households - GOV.UK](#)

Additional guidance and tools for local authorities:

- [Good Practice Guidance on Waste and Recycling Collections | WRAP](#)
- [eTEEP tool | WRAP](#)
- [LA Portal | WRAP](#)



Local authority concerns & challenges



Cost & funding



Delays & compliance



**Household
behaviour
change**



End markets

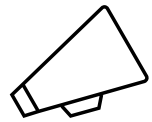


**Wider
challenges**

Change Network

A Change Network is:

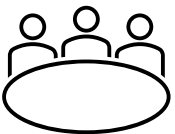
- An extended team of people across impacted business areas, potentially split into different levels of support.
- Change Partners are trusted members of their business area who can influence stakeholders to support the delivery of change
- They have an early understanding of key changes and can drive change readiness and adoption within their respective business areas and through their networks



Amplify existing information



Endorse best practice



Develop solutions

Achievements to date



Terms of Reference
agreed



Reviewed readiness data
for session topics



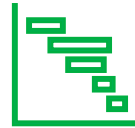
Developed a list to target
local authorities



Designed the sessions
and resourced



Storage hub developed



Project plan delivered to
scope out activities &
timelines



Consulted each WNC
member for views



Pitch and communicated
the sessions



Delivery of the sessions –
both online and in-person

Key topics based on evidence from LA engagement

Topics delivered:

- ✓ Procurement of containers and vehicles
- ✓ Container delivery
- ✓ Re-routing
- ✓ Communal collections
- ✓ Adding missing dry materials
- ✓ Driver and staff recruitment
- ✓ MRF contract renewal
- ✓ Training of staff; senior/operational
- ✓ FLASH

Topics to deliver:

- Bulking and haulage
- MRF site upgrades
- Organics contract renewal
- Enforcement
- TEEP
- Local Govt Re-organisation
- Communications and behaviour change

In-person:

- Residual waste
- AHPs
- Textiles
- Plastics & flexibles
- WEEE
- ETS

Topics should be tiered according to;

- delivery priority
- development priority

Each topic will require:

- selected experienced LA officers
- technical support
- Govt department staff
- consideration of time & commitments
- stress holistic thinking & make links

Storage Hub

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Procurement of containers and vehicles
12th January 2026
defra / local authorities / simpler recycling

Container delivery
12th January 2026
defra / local authorities / simpler recycling

Scheme: Clear as glass, or clear as mud?
January 13, 2026

EU invests C6m in piloting a deposit return scheme for textiles
January 13, 2026

Connect

Storage Hub

www.circularonline.co.uk/defra

- Topic summaries
- Video of session
- FAQs
- Links for further info and support
- Monitoring and feedback form
- Contact details

Change Network in-person events (ETS)

- Midlands 23rd June
 - Wealden 8th July
 - Taunton 14th July
 - London 23rd July
 - East England tbc
-
- Followed by further spin-off sessions on hot topics

Get in touch with your LARAC or APSE regional reps for joining details



Next steps

- Continuing to work with local authorities and representative networks to support full implementation of services
- Targeted support for specific challenges through Change Network and other channels
- Focus on next policy milestones of micro-firms and plastic film collections ahead of March 2027



Carbon savings



Improved recycling performance



Environment Act & Net Zero targets



Create jobs



Promote investment