

Government response on key proposals

Collection of dry recyclable materials from households and non-household municipal premises

Materials for collection in the dry recyclable waste streams

The following materials must be collected in the dry recyclable waste streams, from both households and non-household municipal premises.

Glass:

- glass packaging including bottles and jars

Metal:

- steel and aluminium tins and cans
- steel and aluminium aerosols
- aluminium foil
- aluminium food trays
- steel and aluminium jars and bottle lids
- aluminium tubes

Plastic:

- plastic bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET, including amorphous, recycled PET), polypropylene (PP) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE)
- pots, tubs and trays made of PET (including amorphous, recycled and crystalline PET), PP (including expanded PP) and polyethylene (PE)
- PE and PP plastic tubes larger than 50mm x 50mm
- cartons for food, drink and other liquids, including aseptic and chilled cartons
- plastic film packaging and plastic bags made of mono-polyethylene (mono-PE), mono-polypropylene (mono-PP) and mixed polyolefins PE and PP, including those metallised through vacuum or vapour deposition (to be included from 31 March 2027)

Paper and card. All paper and card except:

- paper and card that contains glitter or foil
- paper that is laminated
- stickers and sticky paper
- padded lined envelopes
- paperback and hardback books
- wallpaper

Cartons for food, drink and other liquids, including aseptic and chilled cartons, will be included in the plastic recyclable waste stream to be collected from households and non-household municipal premises. Where local authorities and other waste collectors opt to collect plastic separately from other dry materials, collecting cartons in the plastic recyclable waste stream will enable more cartons to be effectively sorted and reprocessed.

Be aware that the recyclable waste stream descriptions may be worded differently in regulations. Additionally, the Secretary of State may add to the materials in each recyclable waste stream set out in the regulations in the future, once there is confidence that the materials are recyclable. To assist waste collection authorities in complying with their duties under the new section 45A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, we will include additional detail in statutory guidance on what should not be included as part of the dry recyclable waste streams.

As outlined in the [2022 government response on EPR for packaging](#) and the [2023 government response on a Deposit Return Scheme \(DRS\) for drinks containers](#), the materials in scope of the DRS for drinks containers in England are:

- steel and aluminium cans
- PET plastic bottles up to 3 litres in size

Once the scheme is operating, these materials can be returned by consumers through the DRS, rather than kerbside recycling. Some materials may continue to be collected at kerbside, although by choosing this method of recycling, the consumer would then be forfeiting their deposit.

Plastic films in scope of collection

Following further engagement with the sector, government intends to include plastic film packaging and plastic bags made of mono-PE, mono-PP and mixed polyolefins PE and PP in the plastic recyclable waste stream, including those metallised through vacuum or vapour deposition.

According to the [Circular Economy for Flexible Packaging \(CEFLEX\) initiative](#), 70% to 80% of consumer flexible packaging placed on the market in Europe is mono-material PE and PP. Mono-material plastic packaging is easier to recycle and more of the material can be recycled effectively, compared to multi-layer flexible packaging. As PE and PP are polyolefins, they are compatible so can be recycled together. While government encourages mono-polyolefin design to improve material quality and film-to-film recycling, mixed polyolefin packaging is within scope for collection.

As set out in the [EPR for packaging consultation response](#), obligated producers will report the tonnage of packaging, including plastic film packaging, that is not commonly collected for recycling by local authorities, and which they have directly facilitated the management of in order for this to be offset against their disposal cost obligations – for example, front-of-store or postal plastic film collections set up by producers.

For more information about the different types of packaging data that producers will need to report for EPR, read [Packaging data: what to collect for extended producer responsibility](#).

To support the implementation of this policy and help address evidence gaps, Defra, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)'s Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge, Zero Waste Scotland, and the Flexible Plastic Fund (FPF) have funded a multimillion-pound pilot project on local authority flexible plastic kerbside collections (the [FPF FlexCollect project](#)). Further in-kind support is being provided from industry stakeholders, including Ecosurety, RECOUP, Suez Recycling and Recovery UK, and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). The FlexCollect project, launched in spring 2022, has been developed and is being delivered by a consortium of organisations. Research will consider collection methods and efficiencies, costs, behaviour change and communications, reprocessing and end markets, and the impact of EPR for packaging measures.

Non-mechanical (chemical) recycling could potentially play a role in increasing the quantity of recyclable material, particularly difficult-to-recycle plastics. Where mechanical recycling is impractical or uneconomic, this could be complemented by non-mechanical recycling. This technology is classed as recycling if resulting oil or syngas is converted into a non-fuel product, such as replacing virgin materials in new plastic products. However, it is considered recovery if used as a fuel or to create energy. In future, we may be able to recycle more complex or heavily contaminated plastics using non-mechanical recycling to support the collection of a broader range of plastics for recycling. Government recently held [a consultation](#) on allowing a mass balance approach for calculating the recycled content in packaging made from non-mechanical or chemically recycled plastic waste for the purposes of the plastic packaging tax.