

Submissions on the draft Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025

Submission from British Glass

Whilst we welcome the separation of paper and card, we see this legislation as a missed opportunity to increase recyclability of all packaging materials. Recently Wales was announced as the 2nd best nation in the world for recycling with this being due to the collection system they have in place, the targets Local Authorities are set, and the support Local Authorities receive from central Government. Local Authorities will soon be receiving monies from the packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (pEPR) scheme and we had hoped this would be invested to develop a collection system similar to the 'Welsh Blueprint' model. This would have been an excellent opportunity to greatly improve the household waste collection system in England with separation collections for all packaging materials and in turn would increase their recyclability, rather than pEPR monies just being used to fund the existing collection system. We call on Government to take measures to ensure Local Authorities will not just take easy options and continue with existing collection system but take bold action to increase the quality of collected packaging waste from households for the creation of a truly circular economy.

9 December 2024

Defra's response

The Simpler Recycling reforms will mean every household and non-household municipal premises (such as businesses, schools, and hospitals) across England will be able to recycle the same materials in the following core groups: metal; glass; plastic: paper and card; food waste; garden waste (household only).

This policy will make recycling easier and ensure there is a comprehensive, consistent service across England, including collection of materials that are not yet widely collected, such as plastic films, and universal food waste collections. This will reduce confusion with recycling and is estimated to increase the municipal recycling rate in England to 55.9% by 2035, according to our Final Impact Assessment, ensuring there is more recycled material in the products we buy, and that the UK recycling industry will grow.

Subject to parliamentary approval, an exemption will be provided in regulations to allow local authorities and other waste collectors to co-collect the plastic, metal and glass recyclable waste streams together, and the food and garden waste streams together, in the same container in all circumstances. This is because the Secretary of State is satisfied based on the evidence that co-collection of these waste streams will not significantly affect the potential for those materials to be recycled or composted.

By default, paper and card must be collected separately from other dry recyclable waste streams, unless separate collection is not technically or economically practicable, or provides no significant environmental benefit.

Local authorities and other waste collectors can choose to collect recyclable waste streams separately if preferred.

This evidence-based pragmatic approach will provide a suitable balance to support environmental outcomes while providing local flexibility and convenience for households. Local authorities and other waste collectors are best placed to determine the effective delivery of local services. Furthermore, in its manifesto, the government committed to reducing waste by moving to a circular economy. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has set this as one of Defra's top five priorities.

The Secretary of State has convened a Small Ministerial Group on Circular Economy and asked his Department to work with experts from industry, academia, civil society, and local Government to develop a Circular Economy Strategy for England and a series of roadmaps detailing the interventions that the Government will make on a sector-by-sector basis; supporting Government's Missions to kickstart economic growth and make Britain a clean energy superpower.

Defra recognises the importance of waste and recycling policies in creating a circular economy. As we develop the strategy, we will consider the evidence for action right across the economy and evaluate what interventions may be needed.

16 December 2024

Submission from Wildlife and Countryside Link and Green Alliance

Under the Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2025, metal, glass and plastic recyclable waste will be able to be collected together by local authorities. Currently, some councils collect these materials separately. This can ensure cleaner waste streams with less contamination, which can increase recycling rates. There is a possibility that some councils will begin collecting these materials together where they did not previously do so, which could reduce recycling rates.

We would therefore be grateful if the committee could ask the department what monitoring it will put in place to measure whether any changes by local authorities from separate to combined collection for these materials reduces recycling rates.

10 December 2024

Defra's response

Simpler Recycling will make recycling easier and ensure there is a comprehensive, consistent service across England, including collection of materials which are not yet widely collected, such as plastic films, and universal food waste collections. This will reduce confusion with recycling and is estimated to increase the municipal recycling rate in England to 55.9% by 2035, according to our Final Impact Assessment, ensuring there is more recycled material in the products we buy, and that the UK recycling industry will grow.

Subject to parliamentary approval, an exemption will be provided in regulations to allow local authorities and other waste collectors to co-collect the plastic, metal and glass recyclable waste streams together, and the food and garden waste streams together, in the same container in all circumstances. This is because the Secretary of State is satisfied based on the evidence that co-collection of these waste streams will not significantly affect the potential for those materials to be recycled or composted. By default, paper and card must be collected separately from other dry recyclable waste streams, unless separate collection is not technically or economically practicable, or provides no significant environmental benefit.

Local authorities and other waste collectors can choose to collect recyclable waste streams separately if preferred.

This evidence-based pragmatic approach will provide a suitable balance to support environmental outcomes while providing local flexibility and convenience for households. Local authorities and other waste collectors are best placed to determine the effective delivery of local services. We are committed to monitoring the success of the Simpler Recycling project. Ipsos, in partnership with Ricardo and Technopolis, has been commissioned to carry out an evaluation of Defra's Resources & Waste policy programme (including Simpler Recycling) over a five-year period from

February 2022. The evaluation will, amongst other things, focus on the primary objectives of the Simpler Recycling policy, which include increasing the quantity of recycled material by increasing the rate of recycling and improving the quality of recycling material in England. Indicators have already been developed, and data sources have been identified to evaluate the policy once it is implemented. These will continue to be monitored and revised as necessary.

16 December 2024