



Innovation across the resources sector

NWRF Launch Event

**29 April 2025 | Claire Shrewsbury, Director of Insights
and Innovation**

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What's in this presentation

- Policy reform
 - Simpler Recycling
 - Packaging extended producer responsibility (EPR)
 - Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)
 - Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)
- Not Just Recycling
 - Innovation and a Circular Economy

Introduction

WRAP is a global environmental action NGO transforming our product and food systems to create Circular Living. We examine sustainability challenges through the lens of people's day-to-day lives. We transform the systems that provide the products we consume. We catalyse action from policy makers, businesses, NGOs and citizens to make it happen.

Policy reforms

Targets

Reuse and recycling of municipal waste by 2035

65%

- 55% reuse/recycling by 2025
- 60% reuse/recycling by 2030

The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (England) 2020

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Simpler recycling

Consistency in recycling collections in England.

Businesses, non-household municipal and households all able to recycle a similar range of materials:

- Paper and card
- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs, tubes and trays
- Metal cans, tins, foil and aerosols
- Cartons
- Food
- Garden waste (not applicable to businesses)
- Plastic wrappings and films (from March 2027)



Business of Recycling

Businesses with more than 10 FTE must separate food, paper, card, glass, metals and plastics for recycling from March 2025.

Provides an opportunity for citizens to have a consistent approach to recycling, whether at home or at work.

Visit [Business of Recycling | WRAP](#) for:

- Information
- Waste calculators
- Resources

Image: Screenshot from Business of Recycling website

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Extended producer responsibility for packaging (pEPR)

This policy aims to:

- reduce packaging waste and promote a circular economy
- incentivise packaging recyclability
- introduce a new requirement to collect film - increasing opportunities to recycle



Deposit Return Scheme

England, Scotland and NI

Designed to increase recycling and reduce litter by placing a deposit on in-scope single-use metal and plastic drinks containers.

Wales's has opted not to join the DRS in its current form and is exploring options for a system that will focus on reuse of packaging rather than recycling..



Emissions Trading Scheme

- The UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) will include energy from waste (EfW) facilities starting in 2028
- Aims to incentivise further diversion of fossil-based carbon, mainly plastics, from residual waste to reduce disposal costs and reduce environmental impacts



Recycling new materials – Flexible plastics

- Simpler Recycling requires flexible plastics to be collected at the kerbside from March 2027.
- WRAP is working with SUEZ, RECOUP, EcoSurety and a number of local authorities to deliver the Flexible Packaging Fund (FPF) FlexCollect project, to trial kerbside collections, over the course of 3 years (ending March 2026).
- This doorstepping research looks at how residents in the four pioneer areas (Cheltenham Borough Council, South Gloucester Council, Maldon District Council & Newcastle City Council) have interacted with the new service, their satisfaction with communications and highlights any underlying operational issues.



Image: Bag of plastic wrapping and bags presented for kerbside collection

What are we hoping to learn?

- Understanding the **operational challenges** of collection of flexible plastics
- Looking at potential **infrastructure amendments** that may be needed
- Understanding potential **yields** and **impacts** on recycling rates
- Understanding **costs** of film collections
- Understanding the offtakers and **end markets** available

Innovation

Collaboration

**UK FOOD
AND DRINK
PACT[®]**



**THE UK
PLASTICS
PACT**



**UK
TEXTILES
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Reuse, Repair and Refill

- The UK's Reuse Network processed over 2.5 million household items in 2023.
- Local authority partnerships and social enterprises facilitate bulky waste reuse collections and donation logistics.
- More and more councils are integrating reuse hubs at HWRCs, giving items like furniture, tools, and bikes a second chance.
- 500+ Repair Cafes across the UK.
- Library of Things and other rental schemes.

Image: Person using a refill station

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How AI is supporting the resource sector

Artificial Intelligence:

- Waste composition analysis at MRFs

AI on collection vehicles supports:

- Health and safety
- Contamination monitoring

Insight helps:

- Producers improve design for recyclability.
- Policy makers shape effective EPR schemes.
- Facilities optimise performance and reduce reject rates.

Image: Paper on a belt moving through a picking line at a MRF.

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Increasing material capture and retention

- **Sorting innovation:** UK startups like Recycleye and Sorted are using AI-powered robots to improve material sortation, boosting recovery rates and reducing contamination.
- **Reverse logistics:** take-back schemes, such as in-store flexible plastic collections and cosmetic packaging recycling.

Image: Recycleye image of material identification

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Thank you. Any questions?

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