

Simpler Recycling Legislation

What your business needs to know



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Why the change?

In the last decade recycling rates in the UK have plateaued at around 50%.

One of the reasons for this is because rules for recycling across the country vary and are confusing, leading to more materials in residual waste and higher contamination rates in recycling streams.

To address this, the UK government has asked the devolved nations to bring in standard rules for recycling for homes and businesses.

Rules in Wales and Scotland are already in place and a summary can be found here: <https://businessofrecycling.wrap.ngo/>

This guide focuses only on new 'Simpler Recycling' rules which are coming into force in England from April 2025.

What is Simpler Recycling?

Simpler Recycling legislation is a set of new recycling and waste laws in England to improve recycling rates introduced by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

The rules are designed to simplify recycling rules and will ensure a standardized set of materials from any household or non-household organization can be recycled.

Why the change?

- Increase recycling rates by reducing confusion on what can and can't be recycled
- Reduce contamination in recycling streams
- Reduce amount of food waste in landfills

Who does it impact?

All households and **non-household municipal premises in England** including:

- All Businesses*
- Public organisations e/g schools
- Other organisations e/g charities

When does it start?*



*1. Household rules will change in April 2026

2. Micro businesses or firms (under 10 full time equivalent employees) have until April 2027

What are the new recycling rules?

Businesses in England must have specific materials collected **separately** from residual waste to be recycled.

They also must **separate food waste** from residual waste to be anaerobically digested or composted.

This means you at a minimum you must have food waste, dry mixed recycling and general waste collections.



What does it mean for my business?

To be compliant with Simpler Recycling you need to have the following collections services:

1. Food Recycling



Food, tea bags, coffee grounds, shells & bones

2. Dry Mixed Recycling*



Glass, metal, plastic, paper and card

3. General Waste



All none recyclable residual waste

First Mile customers can continue to include paper, card and glass within their dry mixed recycling. If you have an alternative provider, you'll need to check their specific rules.

If you produce a high volume of a particular material e/g glass, you can set up a single stream service for even better recycling

How do I know if my business must comply by April 2025?

All businesses and non-household municipal premises must comply by April 2025 unless they have fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees. This applies to the whole business not a singular site.

Micro firms of fewer than 10 FTE have until April 2027 to comply. See examples below:

For commercial premises

Example 1

A business has 3 sites with 3 full time employees at each site = 9 employees in total
Simpler Recycling comes to effect in **April 2027**



Example 2

A business has 1 site with 10 full time employees = 10 employees in total
Simpler Recycling comes to effect in **April 2025**



Example 3

A business has 12 sites with 1 full time employee at each site = 12 employees in total
Simpler Recycling comes to effect in **April 2025**



How will the rules be enforced?

The Environment Agency will enforce the changes on behalf of Defra from 1st April 2025.

They will initially take a pragmatic approach, prioritizing advice and support over penalties

But it's important to remember that non-compliance is a crime and can lead to **criminal prosecution**.

Local authorities are not authorized to enforce Simpler Recycling rules or issue fines for non-compliance.

First Mile Services – Food Recycling

Service Type	How it works	Sizes and collection
Food caddy collections 	- Collect food waste inside your business in appropriate food waste bin or caddy using food waste liners (liners can be bought from First Mile or use own) - Caddy is collected from outside your premises. Put out on street at time of collection, bring inside once collection completed - Suitable for most businesses – with a minimum of one collection per week. Pay for caddy up front, then get monthly invoice based on number of caddy collections	25L food caddy - Default x1 collection per week - Increase number of caddies or collections for larger volumes of food waste
Wheelie bin collections 	- For customers with large volumes of food waste such as cafés and restaurants - Store bins in accessible area and drivers will collect from this area at times of collection - Monthly invoicing service based on number of bin lifts per week	140L wheelie bin - Increase number of bins or collections for larger volumes of food waste

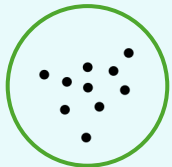
First Mile customers who currently have a pay as you go food sack service can continue on this service or move to a food caddy service.

We can also support your business with food waste reduction services working with our food redistribution partner ; The Felix Project

Waste Scope

Food Recycling

Yes



Coffee grounds



Shells & bones



Tea bags



Fruit & Veg peels



Plant waste



Food waste

No



Liquids



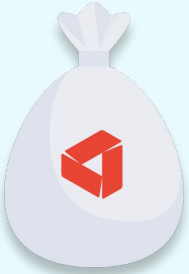
Food packaging



Biodegradable & compostables



First Mile Services – Dry Mixed Recycling

Service Type	How it works	Sizes and collection
Pay as you go sacks 	• Pay as you go sacks collection on a schedule of your choosing • Place your sacks outside your premises for collection on the right day and time and we'll collect • Price of sacks includes delivery, collection and recycling costs. Simply re-order more sacks through your First Mile customer portal when you need more.	• Medium sacks • Large sacks • Flexible schedule collections up to x3 a day, 7 days a week
Wheelie bin collections 	• For customers with large volumes of dry recyclables • Store bins in accessible area and drivers will collect from this area at times of collection • Monthly invoicing service based on number of bin lifts per week	• 240L, 360L, 660L and 1100L bins available • Flexible schedule collections up to x3 a day, 7 days a week

Waste Scope

Dry Mixed Recycling

Yes



Paper*



Plastics*



Tins & cans



Cardboard



Cartons



Glass bottles
& jars

No



Food



Plastic bags
& film



Coffee cups



Biodegradables
& compostables

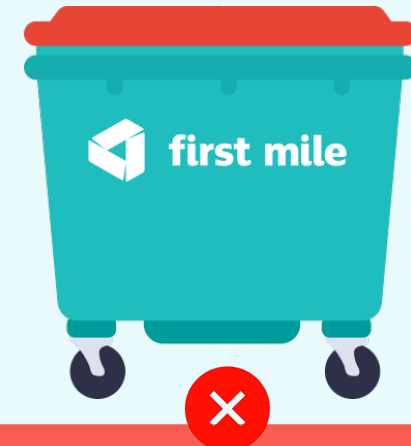


Tissues &
kitchen roll



Crisp packets &
sweet wrappers

First Mile offer over 30 different recycling streams for items that can't go into mixed recycling



*These paper and plastics types also need a separate recycling stream:

- Paper and card that contains glitter or foil, or that is laminated
- Stickers and sticky paper
- Padded lined envelopes
- Paperback and hardback books
- Wallpaper
- Flexible plastics

Do I need to change the way I recycle paper, card and glass?

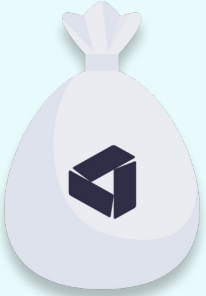
Defra policy is that businesses are required to separate paper and card from other dry recyclables (glass, metal and plastics) unless their waste collector has completed an assessment to collect them together.

First Mile has completed this assessment so customers can continue to include paper and card in their mixed recycling.

Some waste providers may also suggest that glass must be collected separately. The guidance from Defra is that smaller volumes of glass should be collected as part of mixed recycling so First Mile customers can continue to include glass in their mixed recycling service.

Optional: If you produce a high volume of paper, card or glass we recommend setting up a dedicated single-stream service for even better recycling.

First Mile Services – General Waste

Service	How it works	Sizes and collection
General Waste Sack collections 	• Pay as you go sacks collection on a schedule of your choosing • Place your sacks outside your premises for collection on the right day and time and we'll collect • Price of sacks includes delivery, collection and recycling costs. Simply re-order more sacks through your First Mile customer portal when you need more.	• Medium sacks • Large sacks • Flexible schedule collections up to x3 a day, 7 days a week
General Waste Wheelie bin collections 	• For customers with large volumes of residual waste • Store bins in accessible area and drivers will collect from this area at times of collection • Monthly invoicing service based on number of bin lifts per week	• 240L, 360L, 660L and 1100L bins available • Flexible schedule collections up to x3 a day, 7 days a week

Waste Scope

General Waste

Yes



Blue roll



Tissues



Expanded
polystyrene



Contaminated
packaging

No



Batteries



Clinical
waste



WEEE
(electronics)



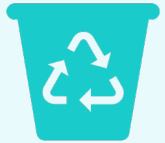
Toner & printer
cartridges



What should I do next?



Talk to your waste provider to keep up-to-date. First Mile customers will be contacted ahead of the changes, and we will ensure you are fully compliant with the changes



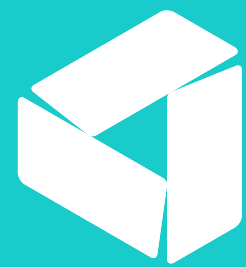
Review your internal and external bins, posters and signage to ensure you get the right material in the right bin.



Engage employees – recycling involves everyone.



Ask us anything - we are here to help. You can contact us at customers@thefirstmile.co.uk or call us on 0333 300 3448.



first mile