

WASTE: AVOIDING, REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING



Green
Tourism

About this guide

Humans have always produced waste, from neolithic flint shards found at Grimes Graves in Norfolk, England to the 1950s which saw the start of the modern throwaway plastic age.

Today approximately seven billion of the estimated 9.2 bn tonnes of plastics produced between 1950 and 2017 are now waste.¹ The UK generated 222.2 million tonnes of total waste in 2018 and about 75% of that waste is either deposited in landfills or accumulating in terrestrial and aquatic environments and ecosystems.²

There is growing pressure on businesses to find innovative ways to manage waste and make more sustainable choices that are beneficial to people, places, and our planet.

Why it is important?

- **Managing waste properly** helps to ensure compliance with environmental legislation – avoiding fines and reputational damage.
- There are **business opportunities to reduce waste disposal costs**. WRAP estimates that businesses could save between £400 and £1,000 per employee.³
- **Managing waste helps the more efficient use of resources** - raw materials, packaging, and technology - by extending product life through careful design, repair, and reuse.
- **Environmental reputation improves** – with suppliers, customers, employees, and insurers – as well as other businesses
- **Avoiding or reducing waste reduces greenhouse gas emissions**, associated with the collection, transportation, and incineration of waste.
- **Managing waste through recycling** and repurposing reduces pressure on natural resources.



¹ Plastic Pollution. UN environment program.

² 'In numbers: How much waste is produced in the UK – and how much is recycled?'. Edie.

³ 'Green Office: A Guide to Running a More Cost-effective and Environmentally Sustainable Office'. Wrap.

Nine ways to do more to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle waste

1. Establish a waste prevention team

Waste prevention can be defined as those measures which are taken before a product has become waste. Involve one person from every area of your business to review waste arisings, raise awareness and get staff engaged and motivated to act to prevent waste.

2. Monitor and record your waste stream

Use clear bin bags to see what you're throwing out. Record your findings. Have a 'green champion' in each department who can assess what is being thrown out and explain what can be recycled/reused.

3. Choose recycled or repurposed products

To repurpose is to use something for a different purpose than the one for which it was originally intended. Avoid wasting money, using raw materials, and accumulating waste by repurposing where you can.

4. Go paperless

Going paperless means trading those papers and receipts for digital files and receipts - eliminating paper documents. Set up online billing, say no to paper printing, avoid paper office supplies - sticky notes and notepads - take digital notes instead, digitise pay slips and booking confirmations, and opt for digital options whenever you can.



⁴ 'Completing the picture: How the circular economy tackles climate change'. Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

⁵ 'In numbers: How much waste is produced in the UK – and how much is recycled?'. Edie.

5. Think about how you buy things

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation discovered that 45% of global greenhouse gas emissions are due to the production of consumer goods.⁴ Evaluate your potential purchases - both as a business and individually - by asking "do we really need this?". If you do not buy it, you won't need to dispose of it.

6. Reuse packaging

Any incoming packing can be used again for outgoing packages - it is estimated that a box can be used three or four times, perhaps many more.⁵

7. Avoid unnecessary mail

Keep off mailing lists to avoid junk mail and trade brochures. They are all online if you wish to access them. Eliminate junk mail by registering with the Mailing Preference Service (MPS) - this will stop advertising material that's addressed to you personally.

8. Bulk buy

Items such as condiments, cleaning products, and toiletries can be bought in bulk. This helps avoid single-use containers, cutting down the amount of plastic waste produced.

9. Extend products' working lives

Buy equipment and appliances that can be repaired - this approach is being supported by the UK Government's 'right to repair' regulations. If you no longer have a use for something that still has life in it then, why not donate it to a charity or reuse group as it may be of use to someone?



FIFE COUNCIL: <https://industry.welcometofife.com/>

GREEN TOURISM: <https://www.green-tourism.com/>



**Funded by
UK Government**

The project is fully funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.