

Government Review of Waste Policy 2011

– what this means for householders

Why waste matters

We all have an interest in waste, from how our bins are collected to the cost of what we throw away – both to us and the environment.

That's why the government has reviewed its waste policies in England – this factsheet tells you about our plans and how they will affect you.

A zero waste economy

We've already achieved a lot – English households recycle 40% of their waste, up from little more than 10% just a decade ago. However, as a nation we still produce 200 million tonnes every year and we need to do more to reduce this. We want to move towards a "zero waste economy" where we reduce, reuse and recycle all we can, and throw things away only as a last resort.

Better collection services

We want to make it easier for people to reuse and recycle, and easier for people to find out about local waste services. That's why we are encouraging councils to sign up to the new Recycling & Waste Services Commitment. This will tell you what you can expect from your local services and ensure the council listens to you and works with you to help reduce waste.

We understand that householders have a reasonable expectation that waste collection services should

be weekly, particularly for smelly waste. We will be working with local councils to increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections and make it easier to recycle, and to tackle measures which encourage councils specifically to cut the scope of collections.

Recycling on the go

You should be able to recycle when you are out and about as well as at home – we will help businesses and councils who want to work together to put more recycling bins in public places like shopping centres and high streets.

Encouraging re-use

We're working with local authorities, businesses and charities to make it easier for you to donate and buy more reused items, such as electrical goods, furniture and clothes. For example, we are supporting development of 'one-stop shop' repair and reuse facilities.

Reasonable enforcement

We'll also stop councils from criminalising householders for trivial bin offences such as putting their bin out on the wrong day. Instead, we'll have smaller penalties and target enforcement on those who persistently flout the law, such as flytippers.

We will support councils that reward and recognise people who do the right thing.

Sensitive planning

In the coming years, landfill sites will close but we will need more sites for reusing and recycling waste, and recovering energy from some types of waste. We'll make sure that householders have a say in planning where these facilities are placed, so that you are involved in the decision that's made.

Did you know?

- Anaerobic digestion could produce enough electricity for 3m people – the combined populations of Birmingham and Nottingham.
- Waste services cost the average household over £145 per year.

Find out more

There's more information about waste on these websites:

Defra - www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste

WRAP - www.wrap.org.uk

Environment Agency - www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/topics/waste