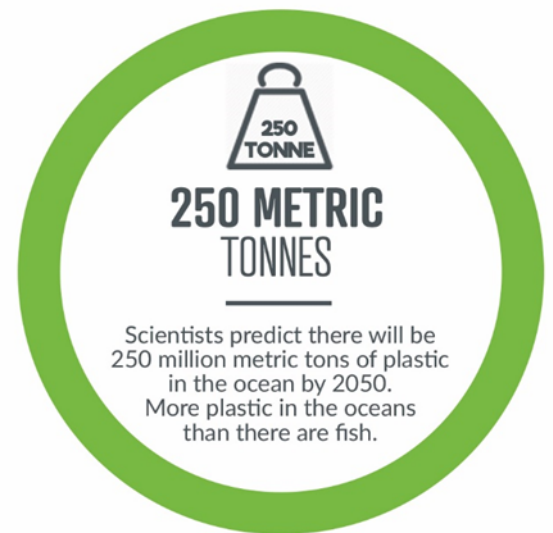


Fact Sheet Take-away food containers

“It is estimated that we use 4.7 billion plastic straws in the UK every year.”



Food, glorious food.

Greater Manchester has a thriving street food scene, not to mention more than a few take-aways. So it's no surprise that as a city-region we go through a serious number of take-away food containers each year. While the huge diversity and quality of food on offer around Greater Manchester is certainly something to be celebrated.

The mountain of packaging that comes with it, including a whole load of single-use plastic, including a whole load of single-use plastic, is something we need to act on. Below is a run-down of some of the options available for take-away food containers and how they rank in terms of planet friendliness.

Making the right choices

All our factsheets follow the waste hierarchy to reduce our impact on the planet. Always reduce first and go with reusable options where possible. For take-away containers, could you encourage customers to bring their own, like Tupperware. And offer a discount to those who do.



Sustainability rating

Red, amber, green

Green:

A great sustainable choice.
Good work.



Amber:

Doing well but room for improvement.
Move towards a green choice.



Red:

Not a good choice for the planet.
Move to an amber choice.
Or even better a green choice.



Making sustainable choices

Your choice	Our rating	Things to consider
We encourage our customers to bring their own reusable take-away food containers and offer a discount to those who do.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Reducing the amount of single-use packaging your businesses uses, and helping customers to switch from disposable to reusable, is a really sustainable choice. Keep up the good work.
We sell reusable take-away food containers and offer a discount to customers who use them.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Could you rent reusable take-away containers to your customers on a deposit return scheme? PlasticFreeGM are looking into how we can make reusable schemes easier across the city-region.

We use 100% compostable card and paperboard take-away food containers.

The packaging must state EN13432 to be recognised as 100% compostable.



Amber.
Doing well but room for improvement.

There are no great alternatives when it comes to disposables. There's still a lot of energy and embedded carbon in constantly producing, delivering, and disposing of single-use items. If you choose compostable items for any of your take-away packaging always check with your waste contractor what can go in your food waste recycling or composting service. Some composting services can't accept packaging, even if the packaging states it's 100% compostable. In Greater Manchester, compostable packaging cannot be put in residents' food and garden bins at home.

We use aluminium foil take-away food containers with a cardboard lid.



Amber.
Doing well but room for improvement.

Foil is more easily and widely recycled than a lot of other materials. It can go in residents' recycling bin at home, or a dry mixed recycling service operated for businesses.

The cardboard lid is very likely to have a plastic film lining. This means it cannot go in the paper and card recycling in residents' homes, or in the card and paper recycling service for businesses.

It is also not suitable for the compost food waste bin. Unfortunately, the card lid still has to go in general waste.

We use 'Bagasse' - sugar cane based 100% compostable take-away food packaging.



Amber.
Doing well but room for improvement.

A new product made from sugar cane material. The product does have a fairly high carbon footprint but will completely degrade in the open environment.

Always check with your waste contractor what can go in your food waste and compost service. As many still can't take compostable packaging.

In Greater Manchester, compostable packaging cannot be put in residents' food and garden bins at home.

We use cardboard take-away food containers but the packaging does **NOT** state 100% compostable or EN13432.



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

It's important to pick your product carefully.

Take-away containers that are made of card, but don't meet the standard for compostability (European Standard EN13432) are very likely to have a plastic film lining.

This means they cannot be composted and cannot be put in the card and paper recycling. So, they'll have to go to general waste.

We use mixed material take-away food containers and packaging. For example, a standard sandwich packet. This is a cardboard container with a plastic film window.



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

Whenever a disposable packet or container is made of more than one material, it instantly gets trickier to recycle.

For your business or your customers to recycle this packaging, they need to separate the plastic film from the cardboard part. Because these products aren't made with sustainability in mind. It's also very likely that the card part will be coated with a plastic film.

We use single-use plastic take-away food containers. Usually clear or black plastic, sturdy & sometimes labelled as microwave safe. Made of polypropylene (PP), non-expanded polystyrene (PS), or polyethylene triphosphate (PET).



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

Plastic take-away food containers of any sort cannot currently be recycled in residents' home recycling bins. While some customers do keep sturdier containers to use for storing leftovers, as a business you won't know whether they are kept and reused or go straight in the bin.

Try switching to an amber or green choice soon.

We use expanded polystyrene foam take-away food containers.



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

This is an option to avoid at all costs. If it ends up as litter, polystyrene (like other plastics) degrades over time into smaller and smaller bits called micro-plastics. These get into soil, water systems, wildlife, and our bodies, causing untold harm.

How to coax your customers towards reusable options?

By far the most sustainable thing to do is move towards reusable take-away food containers and reduce the number of single-use containers you use. The bonus is that it will save your business money! So, here's some ideas for helping your customers to go reusable.

Charge for disposables. Research has shown that adding a charge for the use of a disposable container has more impact than offering a discount for customers who bring their own reusable container. It also flips the view of what is normal. Those who bring a reusable food container aren't exceptional or weird. It's the people who don't have their own Tupperware that need to catch up.

Offer a discount to customers who bring their own reusable food container. If you feel that charging extra for the use of disposable take-away container could alienate your customers, at least make sure you are

offering a discount to customers who do bring their own. Set the discount at a rate that makes it attractive. If you offer a bigger discount, you might even gain some extra customers!

Shout about it! Bringing your own reusable container to the take-away is still quite a new thing, and customers are still a bit nervous. Put a sign in your window and put some posts on your social media to let customers know that they are welcome to bring their own container. And that they'll be rewarded with a discount or not charged for a disposable container.

Tell people you have made a change

Scientists predict that there will be 250 million metric tonnes of plastic in the ocean by 2050. That's more plastic in the ocean than fish!

Now is the time to make a change and switch to some of the sustainable behaviours we have listed in this factsheet. Make sure you put up a sign or tweet about it. Tell your customer what change you have made and why. This will let your customers know that you are making a positive shift to help the environment in Greater Manchester. Remember to include #PlasticFreeGM and @GMGreenCity in your tweets so we can retweet you.