

## Fact Sheet Take away cups Hot Drinks

**7 MILLION  
A DAY!**

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### Why are take away cups a problem?

Coffee culture is huge across Greater Manchester and we're all busier than ever. Put those two facts together, and it adds up to 7 million disposable coffee cups used once and thrown away every single day in the UK. That's 2.5 billion every year.

Most take away hot drink cups are now made of cardboard, but so that they don't absorb the liquid from your coffee (or tea) they usually have a lining on the inside made of plastic making them hard to recycle. This is the same for cold drinks too.

### Coffee cup recycling

As there are different types of materials in your disposable cup they aren't widely recycled. It's really difficult to separate the plastic layer from the cardboard, and that means the whole item ends up in the general waste bin. Below are some options to reduce waste and lower your carbon footprint.



# #PlasticFreeGM

## 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 sell reusable take away cups and offer a discount to our customers who use them.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	As a general rule reusable is always a better option than disposable. Buy in some reusable cups to sell and find ways to encourage your customers to keep using them (see section below).
We offer reusable take away cups to customers on a deposit return scheme.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Could you 'rent' reusable cups to your customers on a deposit return scheme? PlasticFreeGM are looking into how we can make reusable schemes easier across the city-region.

We stock disposable take away cups made from card with a plastic lining (check the box or ask your supplier).



Amber.  
Doing well but room for improvement.

Due to the plastic lining these cups cannot go in the paper and card recycling. There are some companies that will collect these cups and make sure they get recycled, like Simply Cups. They can be a good option if you are in a closed loop environment like festivals or within individual buildings and have this service in place.

Some high street brands like Costa, Greggs and Starbucks offer a recycling service for these cups, so if you stock this type of disposable coffee cup, make sure you tell your customers where they can drop them in for recycling.

We stock disposable take away cups that are compostable. Packaging states they are certified to BS EN13432.



Amber.  
Doing well but room for improvement.

Swapping to a compostable item is not a great option at the moment. Compostable cups still harm the environment if they end up as litter, as they only break down in specific industrial facilities. Compostable coffee cups can't go in paper and card recycling, and very few places can actually compost these items in the UK. In Greater Manchester residents cannot put compostable items in their food and garden bin at home.

We stock disposable take away cups made from plastic, e.g. expanded polystyrene 'foam' cups.



Red.  
Not a good choice for the planet.

One to avoid. If these cups end up as litter, polystyrene like other plastics degrades overtime into smaller and smaller bits called micro-plastics. These get into our water systems, wildlife and our bodies, causing untold harm.

## Moving to reusable options. Hints and tips.

By far the most sustainable thing to do is move towards reusable drink cups. The added bonus is that it will save your business money! So, here's some ideas for helping your customers to go reusable.

Make it easier for customers to use a reusable cup by offering to run it through your pot wash, and don't forget to publicise the fact that this service is available.

Charge for disposables. Research has shown that adding a charge for the use of a disposable cup has more impact than offering a discount for customers who bring a reusable cup. It also flips the view of what is normal. Those who bring a reusable cup aren't exceptional (or weird). It's the people who

don't have their own reusable cup that need to catch up.

Offer a discount to customers who bring their own reusable cup. If you feel that charging extra for the use of disposable cups could alienate your customers, at least make sure you are offering a discount to customers who do bring their own cup. Set it at a rate that makes it attractive. If you offer a bigger discount. You might even gain some extra customers!

## Take away lids

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If you're using a disposable take away hot drinks cup, you'll need a lid to go with it. If we're honest, there aren't any good options

available. This highlights how important it is to move beyond disposables and shift towards reusable in the longer term.

## A note on compostable items and packaging

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In Greater Manchester residents cannot put compostable items in the food and garden recycling bin at home. If you want to know why visit the [Recycle for Greater Manchester website](#).

A lot of commercial composting services cannot accept compostable items and packaging either. Always check with your waste disposal contractor what can go in each of your recycling bins.

## Tell people you have made a change

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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.

