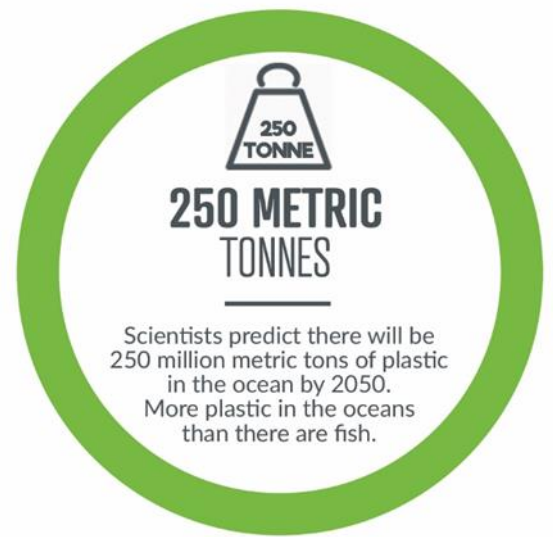


## Fact Sheet Take away cutlery

“Scientists predict there will be 250 million metric tons of plastic in the ocean by 2050.”



### Helping you make the right choices

Food on the go is now a standard part of city life. But even if you eat in at some food and drink establishments you can find yourself with a single-use plastic fork and knife in your hands. It's hard to work out exactly how many sets of plastic or disposable cutlery are used every day, but we estimate it to be over 100,000 in Greater Manchester alone!

Plastic single-use cutlery doesn't tend to get recycled. So, it's essential for food and drink businesses to shift to more sustainable choices. While there are compostable versions on the market, a lot of them require specialist composting services that are not widely available. Our advice is to follow the principles of the waste hierarchy.

#### Making the right choices

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.



# #PlasticFree<sup>GM</sup>

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.



**5 TRILLION  
PIECES!**

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**It is estimated that there are  
currently more than 5  
trillion pieces of plastic  
floating in the  
world's oceans.**

## Making sustainable choices

Your choice	Our rating	Things to consider
We have replaced disposable cutlery with reusable items that we wash and reuse again and again.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Switching from any kind of disposable to a reusable option is generally always more sustainable. It'll also save your business money on your waste and recycling bill.
We encourage customers to bring their own reusable cutlery, and we offer a discount to those who do.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	It's still unusual for customers to bring their own reusable take-away food containers, cutlery and even drinking straws, but it's becoming less so. Food businesses should actively encourage customers to bring their own reusable versions, and reward customers who do with a discount.

We stock wooden disposable cutlery, and it is FSC certified.



Amber.  
Doing well but room for improvement.

If you are swapping to wooden cutlery you need to consider how it will be disposed of as it is likely that these will not be recycled and will end up in the general waste bin.

This really highlights the fact that we should reduce first before turning to another disposable substitute which could have unintended consequences of forest clearance or creating ocean microplastics.

We stock disposable cutlery that is 100% compostable, usually made from PLA, a plant-based bioplastic. The packaging should state 100% compostable and state the British Standard EN13432.



Red.  
Not a good choice for the planet.

PLA has been shown to only biodegrade in very specific conditions like certain types of commercial composting facilities.

It is not accepted by most composting services and does not break down properly in a marine environment, meaning it can cause harm to wildlife if it becomes litter.

PLA cannot be recycled like plastic and must go to an appropriate composting facility in order to biodegrade and break down at a chemical level rather than just become smaller and smaller bits.

We stock single-use plastic disposable cutlery.



Red.  
Not a good choice for the planet.

Plastic cutlery doesn't get recycled, even if you put it in the plastic recycling bin.

Cutlery is also more likely to become litter, which means it can break down and release micro-plastics that can harm wildlife, soil quality, and human health. If you're still using disposable plastic, it's time to change now.

## When and how to offer to customers.

When it comes to cutlery and other disposables you need to consider how you can reduce the amount of disposable cutlery you are using every day.

### Unsustainable behaviour

We give out disposable cutlery with every meal as a matter of course.

We keep our disposable cutlery on the front of the service counter so customers can help themselves.

### Sustainable behaviour

We ask the customer if they need cutlery rather than if they want cutlery. You could even train staff to ask something like, "do you need disposable cutlery with your food, or are you headed back to the office where there might be some reusable cutlery?"

We keep our disposable cutlery behind the service counter, so that customers must ask for cutlery if they need it. This prevents customers from picking up disposable cutlery out of habit, when they don't really need it.

## Tell people you have made a change

If you decide to switch to some of the more sustainable behaviours above, put up a sign or tweet about it. Tell your customers 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.