

## Fact Sheet Drinking Straws

“It is estimated that we use 4.7 billion plastic straws in the UK every year.” (Pre-ban)

4.7 BILLION  
PLASTIC STRAWS

That's the estimated  
amount of plastic straws  
we use in England every  
year.

### Helping you to make sustainable choices

Because of their small size, single use drinking straws are more likely to end up as litter, polluting our streets and rivers. Every time waste is moved from one place to another, small items can escape. Straws can fall out of holes in bin bags or from the top of bags that are too full.

The most sustainable thing you can do is not use any type of straw. Single-use plastic straws are now banned in the UK, but you can keep a small stock for anyone that needs one. This could be someone with a disability who would struggle to pick up a drink.

#### Manchester Paper Bee Straw

The Manchester paper bee straw is made from 100% paper, a teeny bit of water-based glue, and printed with water-based inks. You can purchase these straws exclusively from local catering supplier Stephenson's. Before you place an order sign the Plastic Free GM pledge. To order visit [Stephenson's website](#).



# #PlasticFreeGM

Red, amber, green sustainability rating.

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	And things to consider
We don't use drinking straws in any of our drinks. But we have a small stock under the bar for anyone who might need one, like someone with a disability who might struggle to pick up their drink.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	The most sustainable thing you can do, is not use any straws. That way there is nothing to throw away or recycle in the first place! It will save you money on your waste and recycling bill too.
We have replaced disposable drinking straws with reusable straws that we wash and re-use again and again.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Switching from any kind of disposable item to a reusable option is generally always more sustainable. It will save you money on your waste and recycling bill too.

We stock paper straws that are FSC or PEFC certified. May state they are compostable.



Amber.  
Doing well but room for improvement.

There's no great choice when it comes to disposables, but these tend to have a relatively low carbon footprint. Make sure you keep them behind the bar and only to give to customers on request.

Always check with your waste disposal contractor what can go in your recycling bins. Many recycling companies only want dry clean paper and card in the recycling.

Most compostable packaging requires specialist commercial composting facilities, and you will need to have a dedicated service in place for this type of compostable waste.

We stock PLA Drinking straws that look and feel like plastic. They are made from plant-based material.



Red.  
Not a good choice for the planet.

Single-use plastic straws\* have been banned in England since October 2020. This includes those made from bioplastic. PLA causes more problems than it solves, and it is not the eco choice it's been advertised as. PLA straws aren't widely recycled and can only break down under certain conditions in a commercial composting facility.

\*Exemptions apply. You can keep a small stock for anyone that needs one. This could be someone with a disability who would struggle to pick up a drink.

## A note on compostable items and packaging

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.

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## When and how to offer straws to customers

Plastic disposable straws have been banned in England since October 2020. There are some exemptions to the ban. This is so that people with a disability or accessibility need can still use them. If you still use disposable straws like paper, below are simple changes you can make to reduce the of straws you use.

Your choice	And things to consider
We put a straw in every drink.	Don't put a straw in any drink. Wait for the customer to ask. Or ask the customer if they want a straw.
We keep our drinking straws on the front of the bar or counter so customers can help themselves.	Keep drinking straws out of sight. Wait for a customer to ask for a straw if they want one.

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## Tell people you have made a change

Now is the time to make a change and switch to some of the sustainable drinking straw 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.