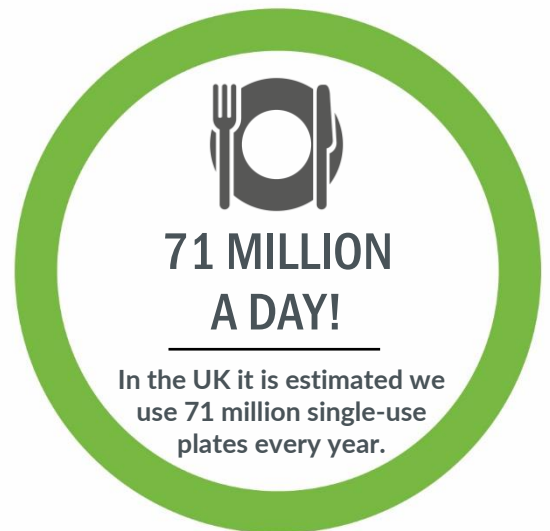


Fact Sheet Single-use plastic plates, trays and bowls



"It is estimated that we use 71 million single-use plates in the UK every year."

The law is changing

From 1st October 2023, new laws come into force in England on single-use plastics.

From this date, if you use single-use plastic plates, trays, and bowls you will not be able to provide these items to your customers either on your premises or online (unless an exemption applies).

The ban on these items will include:

- Online and over-the-counter sales and supply.
- Items from new and existing stock.
- All types of single-use plastic, including biodegradable, compostable and recycled.
- Items wholly or partly made from plastic, including coating or lining.

Use up your old stock!

Make sure you use up old stock and swap to one of the more sustainable alternatives below. By far the most sustainable thing you can do is move to reusable plates, trays, and bowls.



What are the exemptions to the ban?

You can still supply single-use plastic plates, bowls and trays if either of the following apply:

- You are supplying them to another business; or
- The items are classed as packaging (pre-filled or filled at the point of sale). Examples of this type of packaging include: a pre-filled salad bowl or ready meal packaged in a tray; a plate filled at the counter of a takeaway; a tray used to deliver food.

However, we strongly recommended that you look to **reduce the use of these single-use items** and move to reusable alternatives instead especially in eat-in settings.

How to coax your customers towards reusable options?

Here's some ideas for helping your customers to go reusable.

Charge for disposables	Offer a discount
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!

Don't forget to 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!

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 have banned disposables for eating in and use plates, trays and bowls that can be washed, and stored for another day.	 Green. A great sustainable choice.	Great job. Keep up the good work! Reducing the amount of single-use items your businesses uses, and swapping to reusable, is a really sustainable choice.
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.	Helping customers to switch from disposable to reusable, is a really sustainable choice. Could you also sell reusable take-away food containers and charge extra for disposables? Or rent reusable containers to your customers on a deposit return scheme?

We use Kraft card and paperboard takeaway trays/bowls with a removable greaseproof paper liner.

Look for products that are FSC or PEFC certified.



Amber.
Doing well but room for improvement.

Where single-use is unavoidable, these products tend to have a lower carbon footprint than many of the alternatives and can generally be recycled in the paper and card stream as long as they are not heavily contaminated with food residue (just remove the liner first!) Always check with your waste contractor what can go in your recycling service.

We use aluminium foil takeaway food trays/bowls.



Amber.
Doing well but room for improvement.

Foil is widely recycled as long as it is not heavily contaminated with food residue. It can go in residents' mixed recycling bin at home, or a dry mixed recycling service operated for businesses (just give it a rinse first!) If you use a cardboard lid, it is very likely to have a plastic film lining and must go in the general waste.

We use 'Bagasse' sugar cane based plates, trays and bowls from a renewable and sustainable resource.

The carbon footprint of Bagasse can vary greatly. Try to look for products that use renewable energy in the manufacturing process like Vegware.



Amber.
Room for improvement.
Could you move to one of the more sustainable options above?

Bagasse products require commercial composting, so even if it the product states it can be recycled or composted, in reality, this is often not the case. Always check with your waste contractor what can go in your recycling. In Greater Manchester, compostable packaging cannot be put in residents' food and garden bins at home.

We use Kraft card and paperboard plates/trays/bowls with a non-film grease/moisture barrier.

Look for products that are FSC or PEFC certified.



Amber.
Room for improvement.
Could you move to one of the more sustainable options above?

It's important to pick your product carefully. Plates, trays and bowls that are coated with a non-film grease/moisture barrier or aqueous (water based) food grade barrier are not easily recycled, especially as they are likely to be heavily contaminated with food residue. They will just end up contaminating the recycling stream and should be placed in the general waste bin. Always check with your waste contractor what can go in your recycling service.

We use Kraft cardboard plates, trays and bowls with a plastic PE/PET/PLA lining that are classed as packaging.

Look for products that are FSC or PEFC certified.



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

Plates, trays and bowls that are made of card for use with food are very likely to have a plastic film lining and a higher carbon footprint than other alternatives. Plates, trays and bowls that are wholly or partly made from plastic, are included in the ban from October 2023 (unless you are using them as packaging). These items cannot be put in the paper and card recycling or composted. So, they'll have to go to general waste.

We use single-use plastic plates/trays/bowls that are classed as packaging. Usually clear or black plastic, sturdy and sometimes labelled as microwave safe. Made of polypropylene (PP), nonexpanded polystyrene (PS), or polyethylene triphosphate (PET).



Red.
Not a good choice for the planet.

One to avoid. These items will be banned in England from Oct 2023 (unless you are using them as packaging). If these items end up as litter, they degrade into smaller and smaller bits called micro-plastics causing untold harm. Single-use plastic plates, trays and bowls cannot be recycled at home. So, they'll have to go to general waste. Switch to a green or amber choice.

And what about lids?

There are no great choices when it comes to lids. The lower carbon footprint option is cardboard, however cardboard lids are very likely to have a plastic film lining and will still have to go in general waste. If you choose plastic lids, make sure these are made from recycled materials like a recycled PET clear lid (rPET).

A note on expanded polystyrene foam food containers.

From 1st October 2023, new laws come into force in England. This means you **must not** supply ready-to-consume food and drink in polystyrene containers. The ban includes polystyrene cups. Please see our factsheet on take-away food containers for more information.

Tell people you have made a change

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. Remember to include [#PlasticFreeGM](#) and [@GMGreenCity](#) in your tweets so we can retweet you.

