Biffa

Biffa
Simpler Recycling explained
New recycling regulations

Why is change needed?

Early success in recycling growth

90%
of UK citizens regularly recycling.

44%

Recycling rate 2000 – 2012.

11%

Recent challenges in recycling rates

In the past
10 years
recycling rates have stagnated at **44%** in England.

In 2022, the household recycling rate for England dropped to **43.4%**, down from **44.1%** in 2021.

The need for a new approach

65%
recycling target for UK by 2035.

Similar regulations have worked in Wales as the Workplace Recycling scheme has led to an increase of

34%

in recycling volumes when comparing collections year on year.

What is Simpler Recycling?

The Department for Environmental and Rural Affairs has introduced new Simpler Recycling regulations to reform household and business bin collections.

It aims to increase recycling rates by:

- Standardising and simplifying what is collected for recycling across England
- Removing recyclable material from general waste so it can be collected separately for recycling
- Reducing contamination in recycling bins

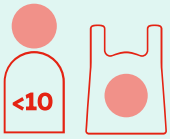
Key dates

31 March **2025**

Businesses and other non-household premises with 10 or more full-time equivalent employees in England to separate recyclable materials from general waste.

31 March **2026**

Local Authorities required to standardise recycling and weekly food waste collections for households.



31 March **2027**

Extended to cover businesses with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees, and to include plastic bags, packaging and film to go in the mixed recycling.

Who is responsible?

Everyone has a part to play in making Simpler Recycling work. If a business is not separating recyclable materials from general waste, or presenting recycling containers contaminated with non-recyclable materials, the waste carrier is unable to compliantly collect.

Business	Waste Carrier	Enforcer	Legislator
• Segregating the waste and recycling correctly. • Ensuring recycled material has not been contaminated. • Storing the materials ready for collection. • Having all waste and recycling collected by a registered waste carrier.	• Provide a compliant solution and collections service to its customers. • Checking the recycling at point of collection to ensure it isn't contaminated. • Ensure the waste is correctly handled and processed at a licensed facility.	• Environment Agency. • Penalties for non-compliance or contamination may include fines for waste producers.	• Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). • The relevant legislation in the Environment Act 2021 has now come into force.

What is changing?

If a business produces any of the listed recyclable materials, regardless of quantity, they will need to be segregated and collected separately from the residual (general) waste.

As part of the regulations, the recycling acceptance list has been standardised across England and expanded to allow for more materials. Below is the current list of items included within the Simpler Recycling regulations.

Download your Simpler Recycling posters

Metal

- Steel and aluminium tins and cans
- Aluminium foil and food trays
- Steel and aluminium jars and bottle lids
- Empty, non-toxic, aerosol cans

Plastic

- Plastic bottles
- Pots, tubs and trays
- PE and PP plastic tubes*
- Empty cartons for food and drink
- Plastic bags, packaging and film (from 31st March 2027)

Paper and Card

- Office Paper
- Newspaper
- Cardboard
- Paperboard
- Magazines

Food

- Plate scrapings
- Tea bags
- Coffee grinds
- Peelings and off-cuts
- Unusable food waste

Glass

- Glass bottles
- Glass jars

*Larger than 40mm x 40mm

Our service offering & how businesses need to prepare

Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR)

- Mixed recycling collections will continue using the same well established container and collection system.
- This includes metal tins and cans, recyclable plastic, and paper and cardboard. See the table on page 5 for details.
- Paper and carboard can be compliantly stored in a DMR bin and collected by Biffa using our existing collection systems.

For businesses who produce high volumes of cardboard we will continue to arrange separate collections.

(May vary geographically)

Food waste

- Unlike Scotland and Wales, Simpler Recycling rules give no minimum quantity of food waste before a business needs to separate and arrange a collection.
- Therefore, businesses will need a food waste service even if they only produce things like tea bags, leftover sandwiches, etc.
- Biffa has adapted our container range to accommodate small quantities of food waste and added a caddy service.

We have also acquired Keenan Recycling, the UK's leading commercial food waste management provider. This will help us offer greater flexibility and coverage for food waste services ahead of Simpler Recycling.

Container sizes

(May vary geographically)

Glass recycling

- Biffa is offering separate collections of glass. Some waste operators will be offering a single collection of mixed recycling including glass.
- This increases the health and safety risks for both the business producing the waste and the waste operator, as it will increase the risk of exposure to sharp objectives for everyone involved.
- Including glass in mixed recycling will decrease the overall yield and quality of glass collected compared to glass as a dedicated waste stream.
- The majority of commercial mechanical recycling facilities in the UK do not support mechanised separation of glass.
- This has the potential to drive up costs of DMR as demand spikes through the new regulations, in addition to adding weight to containers through a heavy material.

What is contamination?

Contamination means that a bin contains materials that don't belong there.

In a recycling bin, this can mean non-recyclable materials or items that haven't been cleaned or emptied properly.

If a general waste bin contains food waste or recyclable materials then, it is considered contaminated.

How can businesses prevent contamination?

- Segregate/separate internal bins.
- Keep bins consistent across all areas and sites.
- Communicate the changes with colleagues.
- Put up clear signage for customers and employees (posters available on our website).
- All recyclable items should be clean, dry and loose.

Learn more about separating recycling, reducing contamination, and avoiding wishcycling with this series of 90 second videos.

What happens if my bins are contaminated?

If a general waste bin contains food waste or recyclable materials then, under the new Simpler Recycling regulations, it is considered contaminated.

Contaminated recycling can lead to the damage of machinery in the sorting process and the loss of valuable materials.

General waste containers

We understand that these changes are new for many businesses, so we will work with you to ensure you have all the right information and support.

What happens if general waste has recycling in it?

1. Biffa drivers will identify the contamination
2. Your business will be notified
3. Biffa will support you in making necessary changes
4. Persistent contamination will result in missed collections.

Recycling containers

There are two types of contamination of recycling. The first is when items that cannot be recycled are placed in a recycling bin. You can avoid this by only putting in the materials specified in this guide.

The second is when recyclable materials still have contents – as in residue – in them. This does not mean trace amounts, but it does mean that items need to be emptied.

What happens if recycling is contaminated?

1. Biffa driver identifies the contamination
2. We are unable to accept the contaminated bin
3. Your business will be notified of the missed collection
4. A new collection will need to be arranged.

Simpler Recycling with Biffa

Biffa is making Simpler Recycling simple. Follow the steps below or click on the step you need to get compliant:

1. **Understand the change required**
   Access Biffa's helpful content
2. **Speak to an expert**
   Book a free Simpler Recycling waste audit to answer your questions
3. **Get your bundle deal**
   Save up to 15% with a multi-bin Biffa deal. Get a quote and buy online today

- A quick and easy phone call to determine what you need
- An efficient, cost-effective, space-saving solution with flexible bin and collection options
- Guidance and support on briefing your employees on how to separate waste
- Guidance on how to avoid contamination and penalties
- Free educational materials on the new regulations