

Simpler Recycling – preparing for new regulations

The new Simpler Recycling legislation seeks to bring consistency to recycling practices across England. Currently, local councils and waste providers operate with different rules, leading to confusion and inefficiency. The new legislation will enforce a standard set of recyclable materials, delivering consistency to businesses, households, and councils.

For schools and trusts, this means adjusting to new recycling rules that require clear waste segregation and documentation to prove compliance. The government aims to make it easier for everyone to understand what can be recycled and to improve overall recycling rates.

Key points schools need to plan for -

1. Compliance with New Recycling Regulations

- New recycling regulations take effect from **31 March 2025**.
- Schools must ensure that separate recycling and collection measures are in place for recyclable waste.
- A digital waste tracking system will be introduced to monitor waste collection and prevent illegal waste activity.
- Schools must be more diligent in how they manage waste. Failure to comply could lead to penalties and reputational risks. Waste audits will become valuable practices to demonstrate adherence to the legislation.

2. Required Waste Streams for Schools

Schools must have a system for recycling the following materials:

- **Food waste** (must be collected separately and cannot be mixed with other waste)
- **Glass** (bottles, jars)
- **Metal** (aluminium and steel tins, cans, foil)
- **Plastic** (bottles, tubs, trays, containers)
- **Paper** (envelopes, magazines, copier paper, shredded paper)
- **Cardboard** (cardboard boxes, corrugated cardboard)
- **Plastic film collection** will start from **31 March 2027**.

3. Financial Implications

- Schools may need to budget for **new waste containers** and signage to comply with the regulations.
- **Cost savings** may be achieved through increased recycling rates and lower general waste collection expenses.
- Schools should update procurement specifications to include **new recycling requirements** in any waste management contracts.
- Schools should also update procurement of goods specifications to encourage **reduced packaging and recyclable packaging** in any new supply contracts.

4. Effective Waste Management Partnerships

- Schools must work with **licensed waste carriers** that comply with new legislation.
- Choosing reputable waste management partners will help ensure compliance and **avoid unscrupulous waste operators**.

5. Preparation and Awareness

- Schools should conduct a **waste audit** to assess their current processes and identify areas for improvement.
- Implement **clear bin labelling** and provide **staff and student training** on proper waste separation.
- Display **signage, posters, and guidelines** to encourage participation and ensure compliance.

By taking these steps, schools can meet the 2025 recycling deadline, cut costs, and enhance their sustainability efforts.