

Get your recycling right

Environmental awareness about waste is at an all-time high, with Blue Planet II highlighting the issue of plastics ending up in the ocean. We can all do our bit to give the planet a helping hand, by recycling as best we can at home. To help you be confident you're getting it right, we've compiled the following based on questions from residents.



How clean does recycling need to be?

It's important there's no food or liquids left in recyclables, as this makes it more difficult and expensive to recycle, and can spoil other materials in the bin too. A quick rinse in your washing-up water is usually enough.



Why do some packaging labels say 'not currently recycled' but the council says they can be?

These labels have been developed nationally to help more packaging end up in the right place. They're based on the percentage of councils which can accept the item for recycling. Plastic film can't be recycled by 80% of councils, so it is marked 'not yet recycled' but we're in the 20% that can accept it.



Can you recycle black plastics?

No. Plastics are sorted optically by machine and black plastics do not reflect any light, so cannot be identified and correctly sorted. This is a problem which is being addressed nationally.



Can I recycle hard plastics like washing up bowls?

Not in your blue bin. Hard plastics are made from even more different types and combinations of plastic than packaging, and the sorting systems aren't set up to deal with them. Donate if in good condition or take to a Household Recycling Centre.



Can I put biodegradable plastic bags, cutlery and cups in my green bin?

No. None of these break down fast enough for the rapid composting process. Put food waste in loose, wrap in newspaper or use paper caddy liners. Paper liners are available to buy at our Cambourne offices at £3 for a pack of 50, or online via our website at £4.49 for a pack of ten (including postage).

This can be recycled
- even the trigger
mechanism



Do I need to peel off labels?

No. Labels can easily be removed during the recycling process.



Can trigger sprays from cleaning product bottles and hand soap pumps be recycled?

Yes and no! Yes to trigger sprays, but no to soap pumps. This is because they usually contain a metal spring. Work is being done with manufacturers to make these recyclable.



What should I do with bottle tops?

Once you've rinsed your bottle or jar, squash (if plastic) and replace the top or trigger spray. This helps keep it squashed, and helps the small cap make it through the recycling plant. It doesn't matter if the cap is a different type of plastic (or even a totally different material) as this can be dealt with at a later stage of processing.



The pump from hand soaps
can't be recycled, but the plastic
bottle itself can



To help you get your recycling right we've listed the best way to recycle or dispose of hundreds of items in our recycling A-Z at www.scams.gov.uk/what-goes-which-bin