

Simpler Recycling Q&A - 12th December 2024

General Enquiries

Q: Do we need to do anything regarding digital waste tracking?

Simpler Recycling legislation for April 2025 does not include any new digital waste tracking requirements for businesses.

Q: Will offices also have to comply by 1st April?

Yes, offices with 10 or more full time staff must comply by 1st April 2025 with the new recycling rules.

Q: If I have multiple Limited Companies under one Group, each with less than 10 employees, will they need to have food waste bins?

If as a group you have more than 10 full time employees, then all Limited Companies under the group will need to comply with the Simpler Recycling legislation.

Q: To be compliant, do we need to meet specific volume or weight targets, or is having the right bins sufficient even if recycling volumes are minimal?

There are no minimum weights or thresholds. As long as you separate food waste and recyclables (paper, card, glass, metal, plastics) from general waste you'll be compliant.

Enforcement

Q: How will compliance be enforced? Will the Environment Agency or First Mile check bins for correct segregation?

The Environment Agency is responsible for enforcement of the new rules and will initially take a pragmatic approach, prioritising guidance over penalties. Please remember though that non-compliance is a waste crime and could lead to criminal sanctions.

Q: Will enforcement by the Environment Agency be delegated to Local Authorities? What will this look like in practice?

While the Environment Agency will oversee enforcement, Local Authorities may play a role in certain aspects. The exact details of local enforcement are still being finalised.

Q: If in a serviced office, is it the landlord's responsibility to provide recycling services?

As an individual business, you have the responsibility to ensure you're compliant. But landlords can be responsible for arranging the services, so it is good to speak with them about the changes and your shared responsibilities.

Q: Will tenants need documentary evidence of compliance, and will landlords have to provide this?

It's advisable to have evidence of compliance, and all businesses are required to have a Waste Transfer Note to show they are handling their waste responsibly. If landlords are responsible for managing the waste services then they might need to provide to tenants, otherwise it will be the responsibility of the business tenants.

Q: Retail Parks/Shopping Centres: What are their responsibilities to provide services for tenant businesses?

Retail stores and shopping centres will be responsible for ensuring businesses on site are compliant with Simpler Recycling legislation.

Waste Streams and Specific Materials

Q: Can a single laminated A3 sheet be recycled in flexible plastic?

No, this is a composite product so will contaminate the waste. This needs to go in General Waste.

Q: Are soiled food cartons, like pizza boxes, still considered general waste?

If the waste is heavily soiled, for example a pizza box with lots of grease all over it, it is considered contaminated and will need to go into general waste.

Q: Should blue roll, dirty paper, and polyester napkins go in Dry Mixed Recycling or General Waste?

These must go in general waste.

Q: Does "plastic" refer to hard plastic only, or does it include cling film too?

From April 2025, hard plastics such as PET will need to be separated and recycled with dry mixed recyclables.

Q: Is there a material definition for plastic film? We use a large volume of vacuum bags made of polyethylene—does this require a separate stream from 2027?

Plastic film including polyolefin film packaging and plastic bags containing a minimum 90% mono-polyethylene or mono-polypropylene or both will need a separate recycling stream from 2027.

We will provide more guidance on this next year.

Bin and Bag Specific Questions

Q: Will First Mile provide food waste caddies automatically, or do we need to order them?

First Mile will be communicating with customers on setting up food waste caddy collections in the New Year including how we will be rolling these out to customers.

Q: What sizes of food waste bins will be available, and what happens if the food caddy is stolen?

First Mile will provide information on available caddy sizes and replacement procedures in the New Year.

Q: Can 23L caddies be collected from inside stores to prevent theft?

First Mile we be in touch regarding food waste caddy collections in January 2025

Q: Will there be new First Mile bin bags?

No, there are no changes to our current First Mile sacks / bags. There will be new food waste products which we will share more details on in early January 2025.

Q: Are red mixed recycling bags still valid?

Yes, you can continue to collect your dry recyclables in our red mixed recycling sacks.

Q: Can seagull-proof bags be provided for street collections?

Next year food waste will be collected using a caddy service, this will mean individual food sacks are not left on the kerbside.

Q: Is there a minimum or maximum size requirement for bins, particularly for Dry Recyclables?

There is no size requirement for bins.

Operational Questions

Q: First Mile sometimes co-collects DMR and General Waste in the same vehicle. Will this cease under the new regulations from 1st April?

Different waste streams can be collected in the same vehicle if they are put in different sacks so First Mile can continue to collect where necessary. Sacks are separated at our material sorting facility before being sent on to the right waste or recycling partner.

Q: How will food waste collection work in central London without bins?

From 1st April we will be moving from kerbside food sack collections to a caddy service, this will keep waste off the pavement. We are working with local councils to create a solution that is easy for customers while adhering to collection time bands.

Q: Can businesses request specific collection times to prevent waste disturbances?

Contact us to discuss collection times as we often collect multiple times a day in areas.

Q: For businesses generating minimal food waste (e.g., staff lunches), what container options are available?

Our entry level service will be one 23 litre caddy that's collected once a week. The minimum one collection per week is to reduce the risk of food decomposing.

Industry-Specific Questions

Q: How can nurseries with limited space manage food waste collections?

Businesses with limited space will need to find space for three bins, one for food waste, one for mixed recycling and one for residual waste. We work with manufacturers to create bespoke bins of different sizes, so speak to us if this might be of use to your business.

Q: How can customers be encouraged to follow recycling rules in-store?

Businesses will have the responsibility to educate customers on the correct recycling practices through signage, customer emails and apps etc. Once on-packaging recycling instructions become more consistent members of the public should become better informed on what materials go in each stream.

Q: Are cleaners expected to segregate food waste from general waste left by clients?

We recommend a pragmatic approach, taking a banana peel that's been placed into your residual waste stream is okay. But if there are multiple instances of contamination then there's been a breach in legislation and they should speak to those responsible.

Practical Advice

Q: Should businesses with locations across the UK adopt one recycling policy to simplify messaging?

No, because waste and recycling rules in each country across the UK differ. Please refer to each region's specific legislation.

Q: Can businesses trial the caddy system using existing internal bins and food bags?

We will be trialing food waste caddies from the start of January to April to ensure a smooth roll out process. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch.

Q: Will First Mile provide detailed guidance before 1st April?

Yes, we will be in contact with our customers throughout early 2025 to ensure they're kept up to date with the latest guidance to ensure a smooth transition to Simpler Recycling. We are here to support all our customers.

Pricing

Q: Will pricing be based on weight?

First Mile will be communicating with customers on setting up food waste caddy collections in the New Year including how pricing works. For other services the pricing is based on number of collections or number of bin lifts, but overweight charges can apply if bins are overfilled.

Q: What are the expected prices for 23L food caddies?

First Mile will be communicating with customers on setting up food waste caddy collections in the New Year including how pricing works.

Miscellaneous

Q: Can slides from the session be shared?

Yes, please get in touch with marketing@thefirstmile.co.uk and we will share the slides

Q: Was this session recorded for playback?

Yes, the full recording is now available to watch on our website [here](#)

Q: If a business already has services for Food Waste, Dry Recyclables, General Waste, and Glass, is further bin segregation needed?

Having a separate Food Recycling, Mixed Recycling and General Waste stream set up with First Mile will mean your business is compliant for Simpler Recycling

Q: Is First Mile prepared for food waste collections starting 1st April 2025?

Yes, we are trialling Caddy collections from January next year to ensure a smooth roll out for Simpler Recycling from April 2025