

Recycling Cups On-the-Go





Our love for the bean was highlighted in a recent report by the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC).

It detailed how the number of coffee shops in the UK is projected to increase from 20,000 to 30,000 by 2025.

However, the report also highlighted the need for urgent action. Based on the current annual usage estimates sitting at around 2.5 billion disposable cups, the increase in coffee shops would equate to an additional 1 billion disposable cups used per year!

Due to how we consume drinks in disposable cups on-the-go, it is estimated that only 1 in every 400 are actually being recycled.

The EAC has called on the Government to introduce a specific target that would see all single-use cups that are disposed of in recycling bins, recycled by 2023.

So, what can we as consumers do to help the situation?

And how are coffee chains and businesses supporting the drive for on-the-go recycling?

There are actions you can take today...

Choose Your Vessel

The choices we all make are undoubtedly critical to reducing the sheer volume of disposable cups we send to landfill.

According to YouGov Plc 84% of hot drink buyers are still using disposable paper cups.

Takeaway Drinks Vendors

The sourcing of recyclable or compostable takeaway cups is a top priority for many vendors and retailers now.

Polystyrene plastic and foam cups are being replaced with recyclable PP and PET or compostable PLA plastic cups for cold drinks.

While for hot drinks, the favoured replacements are paper hot cups with a PE lining which can be recycled or with a PLA lining which can be commercially composted.

Retailers are improving their green credentials further by offering reusable cups.

**Then what?
Refer to Part 3 for our Practical Guide to Cup Recycling.**

Consumers

If you're not sitting in with your drink, look out for takeaway vendors who are working hard to consider the environment.

Ask questions about the cup you are about to receive. Can it be re-used, recycled or composted? What do they need you to do to help?

#MySocialSpirit





Cup Recycling in Action



The latest industry developments and the consumer initiatives available to you right now.

Manufacturers

Re-design of disposable cups to improve ease of recycling

Packaging companies such as Frugalpak are leading the charge in the manufacture of recyclable paper cups, specifically designing cups made from recycled cardboard and featuring an easy to separate liner.

It is suggested that with separate cup disposal and collection methods available, these cups could also be recycled in general paper mills as well as the existing specialist recycling plants.

Increase use of 100% recyclable or compostable materials

Alternatively, food service packaging manufacturers Vegware are producing cups made entirely from plant-based materials which can biodegrade in under 12 weeks in commercial composting facilities.

Cup Recycling Bins and Cup Collection Containers

Working in partnership with supply chain and waste collection companies, UK bin manufacturers such as Glasdon now offer purposely designed cup bins with individual compartments for liquid waste, plastic lids and collection tubes to collect the disposable cups separately.





Supply Chain and Consumer Initiatives

Sourcing Cup Stocks

Many coffee chains and smaller independents are sourcing their cups more responsibly, which in turn reduces the volume of virgin resources required to produce the cups. Starbucks and McDonald's are investing in the development of a sustainable cup made from materials that are recyclable, compostable or both. While Starbucks currently only offer single-walled cups with a 100% recycled and recyclable cup sleeve.

In-store Return and Cup Recycling Schemes

Coffee chain Costa have launched a cup recycling scheme throughout all of their stores with the target of recycling 500 million disposable cups a year by 2020.

And the best bit is that you can take a disposable paper cup of any size and any brand back into their stores and they will take care of the rest.

Even with an evolving infrastructure, in-store return and recycle schemes are a simple solution with the miniscule inconvenience of holding on to your cup for a little longer.

Latte Levy

In the same way the charge for plastic carrier bags was introduced to make us stop, think and re-use – the proposed extra charge for paper cups is considered to be the catalyst that will also nudge on-the-go consumer behaviour.

Reusable Rewards Schemes

The big coffee chains including Costa, Starbucks, Pret and Café Nero also offer discounts and other reward cards with stamps when you use a reusable cup.

Workplace Drives

More and more organisations are introducing cup recycling bins and collection stations in the workplace, which makes total sense when you think about how many of us pick up a coffee on the way to work.

Does your workplace offer this facility now? We look at workplace cup recycling initiatives and how to introduce one in Part 3.



Collection Services

Improvements to the Binfastructure

There are now 12 waste management companies signed up to the official cup recycling scheme. This scheme is helping waste management companies offer cup recycling collection services to local authorities and businesses.

Find out who they are in Part 3.

Reprocessing Plants



Fibre Recovery and Polymerisation

During the process of fibre recovery, the paper and the polymer lining are separated, the cups are pulped and the floating polyethylene is skimmed off and separated from the denser paper fibre.

Through the process of polymerisation, new polymers derived from used paper cups are also being developed which can then be used in the manufacture of other products.

The Cup Recycling Takeaways

There is action we can all take right now.

Top Tips to Boost On-the-Go Cup Recycling



by Glasdon



Tip 1: Choose to Refuse

Avoid polystyrene foam cups which can't be easily recycled and take hundreds of years to breakdown.

Tip 2: Ask More Questions

If 'recycle your cups here' signs aren't loud and clear, ask more questions about the cup you are about to receive



Tip 3: Switch to a Reusable Alternative



Tip 4: Hold on to Your Cup!

Or place it in your bag... until you pass one of the coffee chains who already offer in-store recycling schemes



Tip 5: Start a Workplace Scheme

Wherever you work, capture cups at the end of their on-the-go journey



Turn to Part 3 for a practical guide to introducing cup recycling programmes.

