



## **ENERGY AND RECYCLING: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

The UK produces more than 430 million tonnes of waste a year incredible isn't it? By reducing our waste, reusing things and recycling more, we can help to live more sustainable lives.

By buying goods from local, sustainable sources and by ensuring that transport and packaging costs are low, you are helping reduce the waste you produce. Think about the things that you buy – Do you really need them? Where have they come from? How will you transport them home and will you actually use them? – so that you become a 'conscious shopper'. Even small steps, like reusing carrier bags and taking long life ones with you to the supermarket, help contribute to a more sustainable way of life.

### **Reduce**

Think about how often you use appliances within the home and, where possible, reduce your use. By reducing the amount of household electricity you use, you will save money, but more importantly, help to save energy. See fact sheet **4.2 Energy and Recycling - Conserving Energy** for more tips on how to do this.

It is also important to think about your consumption of other resources, such as food. Some things to remember:

- Do not buy and cook more food than you need. This prevents wasting money and the energy used to cook it too.
- Think about the packaging your food and other products come in, as this contributes to the amount of waste in our landfills.

### **Reuse**

Rather than throwing things away, think about how they can be repaired or reused. Many household objects can be used for something else:

- Keep plastic carrier bags and reuse them next time you go shopping.
- Old jars, bottles or pots can be used for storage.
- Repair or mend things before you throw them away and buy replacements.



Donate things that are in a good condition, but that you no longer use, to local charities rather than throwing them away. Also think about how you can buy second-hand goods from charities, instead of new from shops.

Swapping clothes and goods can also be fun and has grown in popularity over the last few years. There are many online sites dedicated to swapping, as well as events in some areas. What you no longer want others may get benefit by re-using them. Think about the vintage clothes that are now back in fashion. Re-using can be great!

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## ENERGY AND RECYCLING: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle cont'd

### Recycle

Recycling is the process of finding a new use for something that's been used or isn't useful anymore, by converting it into its raw (original) state and then using it to make a new product.

#### What can be recycled?

- Aluminium cans
- Glass
- Plastic bottles and some packaging
- Yoghurt pots
- Paper and card
- Batteries
- TVs and computers
- White goods (fridges, freezers)
- Clothes and shoes
- Printer cartridges
- Garden waste and food scraps

Always check with your local recycling centre what can and cannot be recycled, as this may differ from area to area.

Remember that things that can't be recycled at a recycling centre can still be reused by you, if you can find another use for them instead of throwing them away.

### How recycling works

Recycling works by taking a used item and making something new out of it. This new product might be the same thing, or it might be something different. For example, a recycled aluminium can could be made into another can, or it could even be made into the metal part of an aeroplane! Some high street stores make great quality clothing from recycled products; some even make schoolwear from recycled plastic cups!

When the new product is not as good as the previous one, it is called down-cycling. Eventually the item will not be able to be recycled anymore, as the quality of the raw material will no longer be good enough to make new products, but many goods can be recycled several times.



### Did you know?

In 2008, UK shoppers used almost 10 billion new carrier bags - that's over 350 per household.