



# Preventing plastic pollution

## Community sports clubs



## Environment Agency

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.



European Regional Development Fund

## Preventing Plastic Pollution

Working in partnership with 18 organisations from across England and France, Preventing Plastic Pollution seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the marine environment.

By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives. The €14m Preventing Plastic Pollution project was approved by the Interreg France (Channel) England Programme, which has committed €9.9m in funding through the European Regional Development Fund.

*To find out more about the Preventing Plastic Pollution project visit [preventingplasticpollution.com](https://preventingplasticpollution.com)*



The project works across river catchments: Poole Harbour, Medway, Tamar, Great Ouse, Test and Itchen, East Hampshire, Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez and Bay of Veys. The information gathered from research in these areas allows the cross-channel partnerships to tackle some of the 12 million tonnes of plastic that enter the environment every year.



Make your pledge!

Join others and make your pledge to reduce avoidable plastic. Click on or scan the QR code.



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# Why be concerned about plastic pollution?

Over the past few years there has been rising concern and awareness of the impacts of plastic pollution. It is estimated that 12 million tonnes of plastic enters our environment each year<sup>1</sup>. That's equivalent to a bin lorry load every minute.

When used correctly plastic can have many useful applications, however, some plastic can be avoided. Of all the plastic produced 50% is for single-use plastic items<sup>2</sup>, things that are used for only a few moments and then thrown away.

Plastic has been found everywhere, from Everest (the highest point on earth) to the Mariana trench (the deepest point on earth). It has even been found in the Arctic and Antarctic.

*"We are at a unique stage in our history. Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that."*  
**Sir David Attenborough**

While the long-term effects of plastic pollution are not yet known, animals of all sizes have been found to eat plastic and get tangled in it<sup>3</sup>.

Ongoing research has also found that humans consume plastic and breathe it in during our day to day lives. The health impacts of this are being studied.

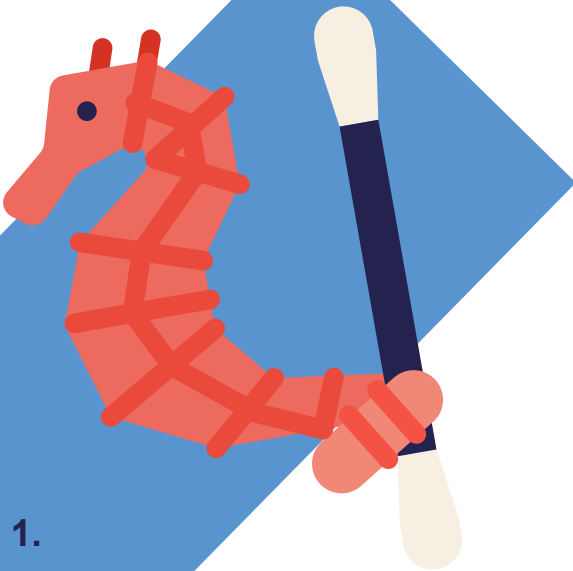
Plastic is linked to the climate emergency. It is made from oil which is a non-renewable resource and has to be drilled for, transported (often across the world) before it is made into plastic.

At the end of its life, the recycling, disposal or incineration of plastic also releases greenhouse gases into our atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

1. Global plastic pollution statistics, Garside, 2019;

2. Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean, Jambeck et al, 2015

3. Impacts of plastic on environmental pollution, Pavani and Rajeswari 2014



# Why sport?

Everyone has a part to play in minimising their avoidable plastic consumption and carbon footprint to help conserve the natural world. Whether you participate in, work at or manage a sports event, you have an impact and the ability to make choices to reduce your impact.

Sport is in the unique position of being able to influence millions of people worldwide. Sport has a huge fan base which can be influenced by what they see at the events they participate in, by the way athletes are perceived by the media and by how other fans behave. By leading the way in sustainability and setting a good example, sporting events can influence others to do the same at home, in their work place, and at other events.

## Benefits of minimising plastic consumption

**Economic:** while the initial investment may cost a little more, in the long term you will save money on waste disposal and by not having to buy single-use products over and over again.

**Social:** helping the environment makes people feel good! By encouraging others to follow your lead and by spending time outside taking part in sport, wellbeing will be improved.

**Environmental:** using less plastic means that less plastic is made and disposed of, reducing the chance it will enter the environment and cause damage. Less plastic production also means less greenhouse gases being produced, reducing the impact on the climate.



# Make a pledge!

Why not join others and make a commitment to reduce your plastic consumption? We're working with the Big Plastic Pledge to encourage everyone to make a commitment to reduce their avoidable plastic consumption. Pledge now on behalf of your club to become part of a global movement to prevent plastic pollution.

**Click on or scan  
the QR code to  
pledge now.**



## BIG PLASTIC PLEDGE

By harnessing and unifying communities by the power and reach of sport, through the athletes, events, fans, volunteers and brands, the lasting impact is almost unimaginable.

We are a movement within sport that will grow into something unstoppable when it comes to achieving our goals. As athletes and fans united, we are a group that are determined, passionate and driven by our nature, and will persist until we achieve.

The Big Plastic Pledge has been founded by Hannah Mills, an Olympic gold and silver medallist, a sailor and an IOC sustainability ambassador.

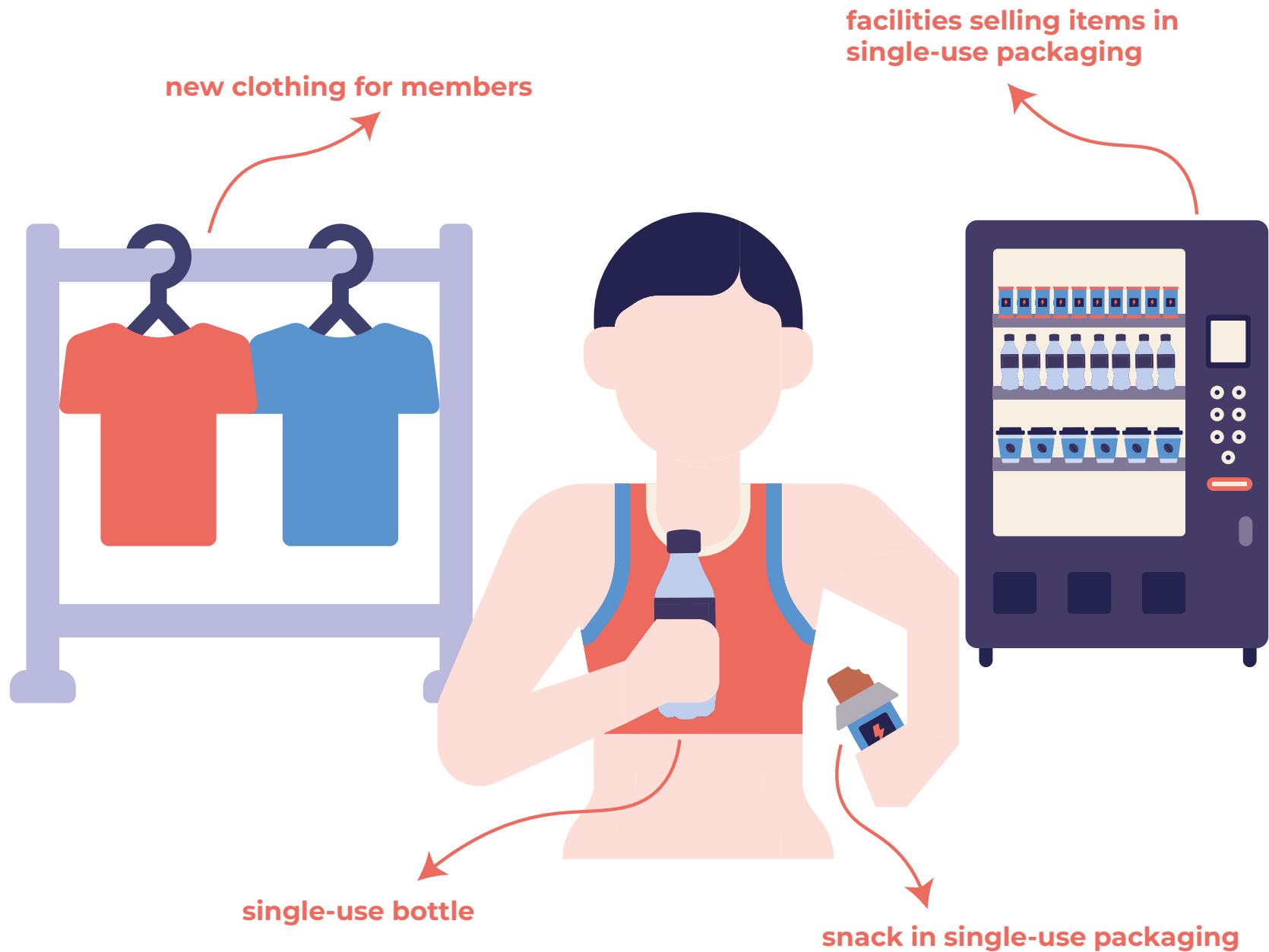
“Sailing has taken me all over the world and for almost 2 decades I have noticed plastic in the oceans, mainly when it gets stuck under our boat and stops us dead in our tracks. But it didn’t resonate with me how bad the problem was getting until the Rio 2016 Olympic cycle.

I witnessed first hand the devastating effects of plastic pollution on our oceans and planet. Every beach, marina and coastal area we visited during that 4 year period was affected and damaged beyond belief.”

Text and quote from [bigplasticpledge.com](http://bigplasticpledge.com)



# Identifying areas for improvement



# Which changes have been implemented?

Use this list to mark what you have done already, and keep track as you make more changes to minimise avoidable plastic and prevent plastic pollution.

Eliminate single-use bottles

Eliminate single-use cups for hot and cold drinks

Encourage the facilities you use to reduce their waste

Set up a kit swap or secondhand kit shop

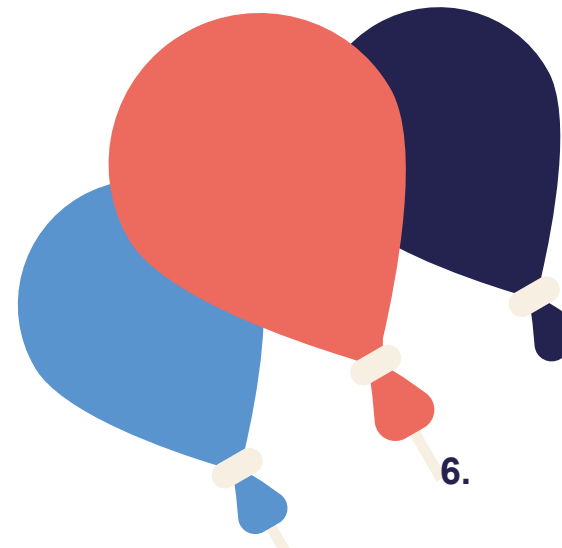
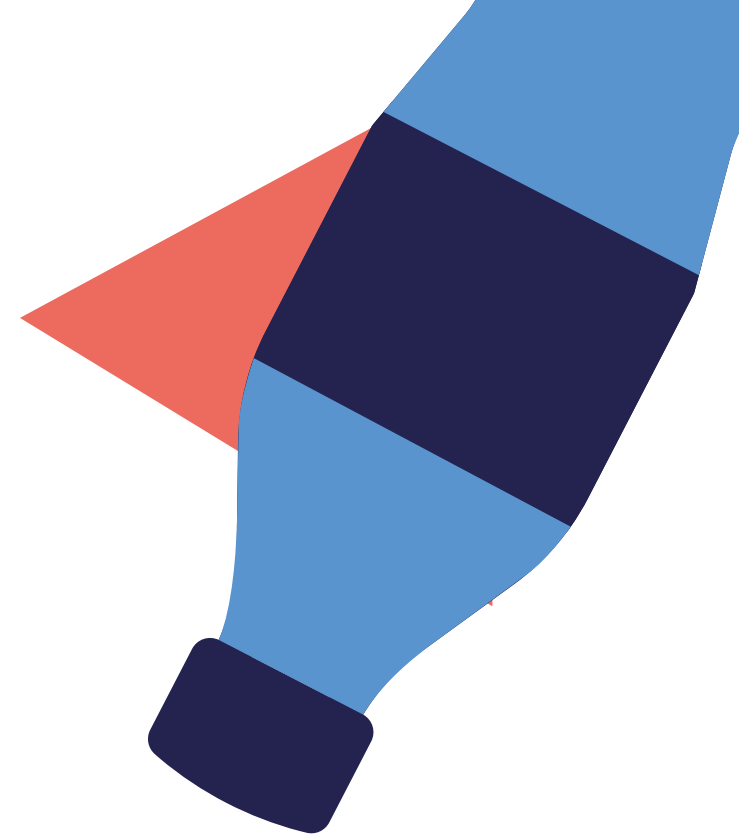
Choose snacks with no or less packaging

Talk to your supplier about reducing delivery packaging

Avoid single-use items at your celebrations

Engage members with the great changes you've made

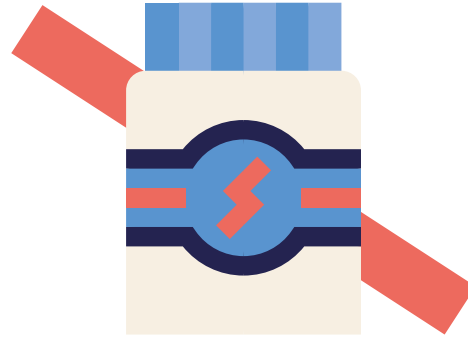
Share your changes on your social media platform to influence others



# Kit and equipment

Within your kit you could include a branded refillable bottle and reusable cup to encourage club members to reduce their avoidable plastic consumption.

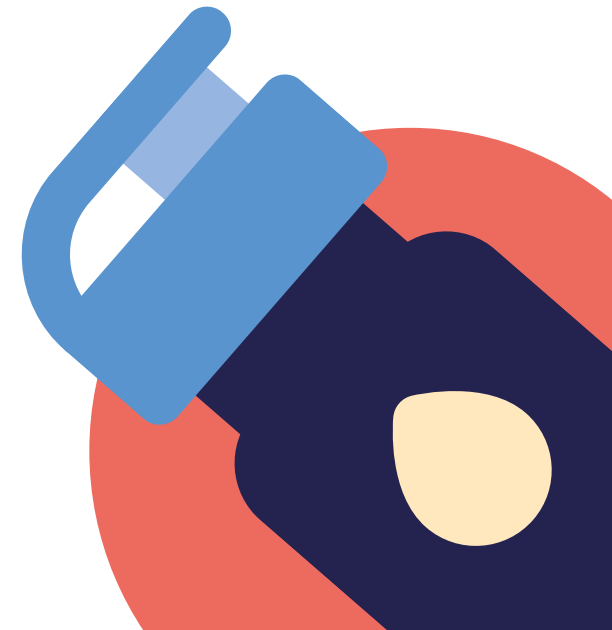
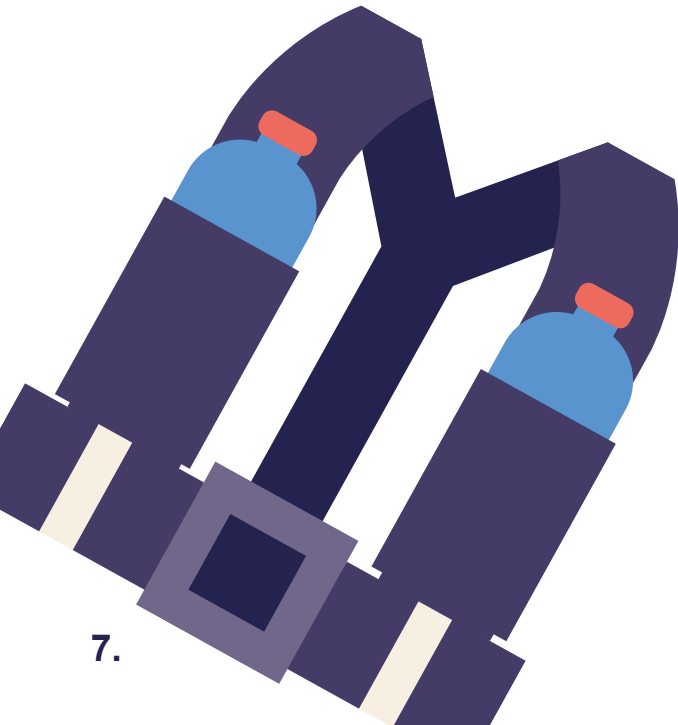
Please see a kit list of potential items which can help individuals reduce their waste when training and taking part in sporting events. This list could be shared with your club members.



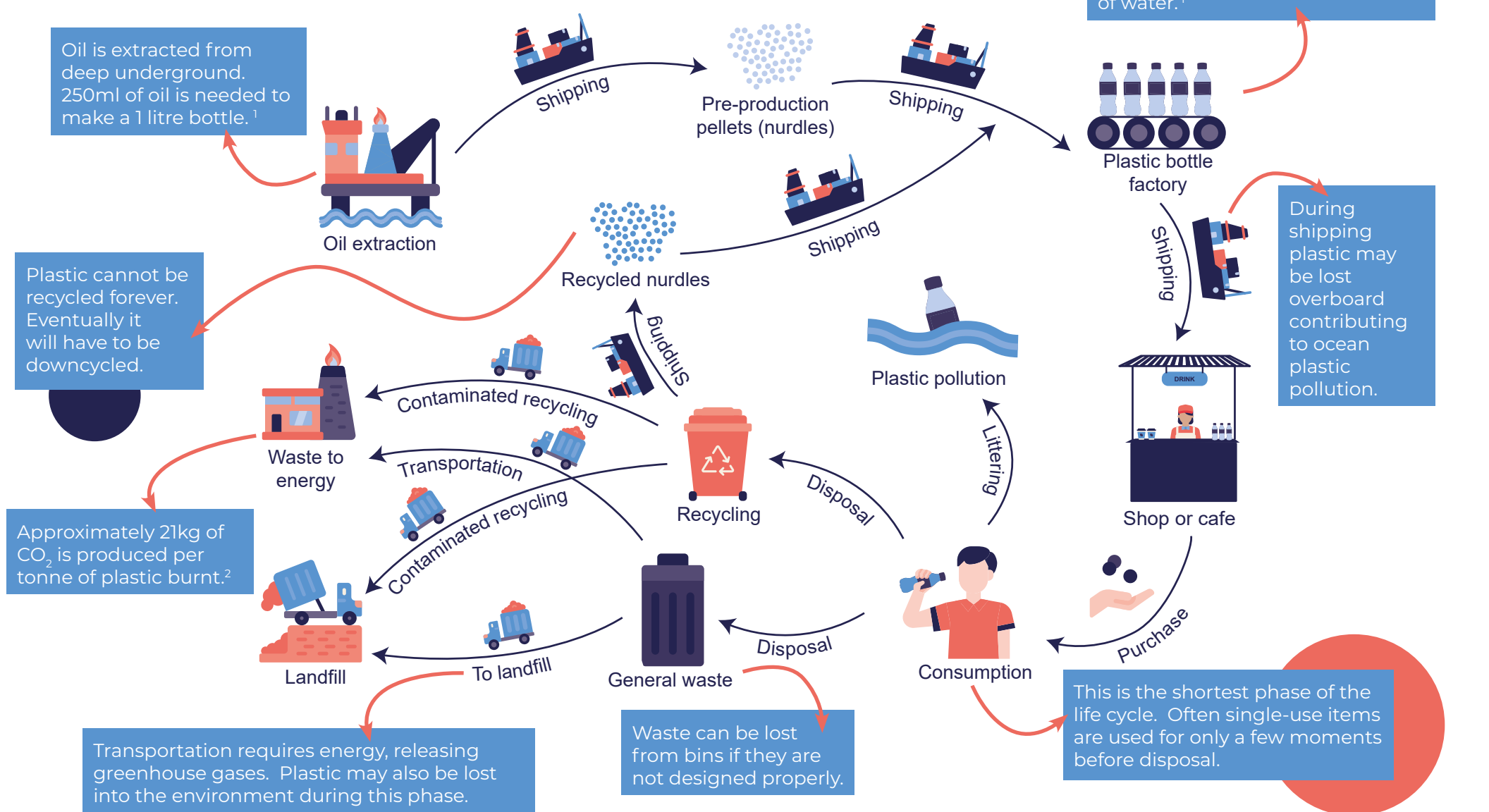
When sourcing your kit and equipment have a discussion with your supplier, you should be able to reach an agreement for them to remove, or at least reduce, the amount of packaging you receive with your order. Consider changing supplier for plastic-free products if necessary. See page 16 for working with your suppliers.

## Kit list

- Refillable water bottle
- Reusable (collapsible) cup
- Water belt
- Hydration vest
- Reusable energy gel pack
- Bulk refill energy gel
- Bulk hydration tablets or powder



# Life cycle of a plastic bottle



1. <https://www.kidsagainstplastic.co.uk/environmental-impact-of-a-plastic-bottle/> - accessed 15/02/21

2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021> - accessed 15/02/21

# Microfibre release from kit

Clothes such as sports kit can release microfibrres. Microfibrres can be released during the production and processing of the fabric or when washing them. Fabrics such as acrylic, nylon or polyester are made from plastic meaning the microfibrres released are plastic-based. These microfibrres can end up in the environment.

You can lessen microfibre loss by reducing the number of times you wash an item, washing at 30 degrees, making sure your washing machine is full and hang drying instead of using a tumble dryer.

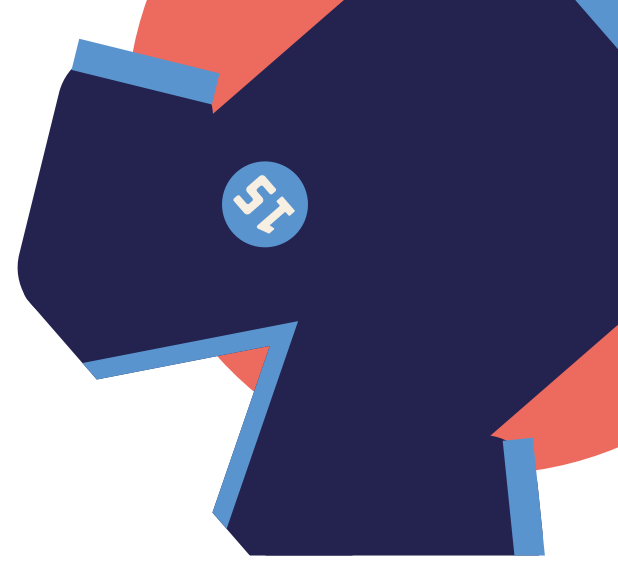
Refilling and reusing your liquid detergent bottle will also reduce avoidable plastic waste.

## Setting up a kit swap or secondhand kit shop

To reduce the environmental impact of your club's kit, why not set up a kit swap or secondhand shop. If your club already has a secondhand kit shop encourage all members to use it. When someone doesn't want an item of kit anymore, they can give or sell it back to the club.

The club can list all items available for all members to see then give it or sell it to a member that needs the item. This avoids an item going to waste and can provide kit at a lower cost, benefitting club members.

Most microfibrres are released in the first wash, so by buying secondhand you will also reduce the amount of microfibrres produced.

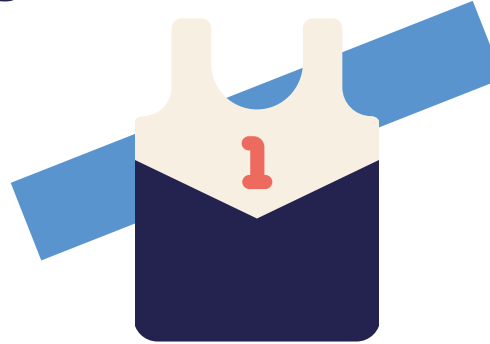


# Rerun - case study

ReRun is a grassroots environmental non-profit company dedicated to reducing textile waste and changing attitudes in the running community.

The most sustainable piece of clothing is the one that already exists! With this in mind ReRun collect and redistribute preloved running clothes and equipment.

Clothing is sorted and selected for different streams.



1. Resale - this helps with the running costs of ReRun but is kept deliberately affordable.
2. Repair - clothing in need of simple repair is fixed and then put on the site for resale.
3. Redonated - clothing is donated to charities.
4. Shoebank - ReRun works with brands and running shops to redistribute returns, seconds and samples to charities working with people wanting to get outdoors but have financial barriers stopping them from doing so.

The fashion industry is responsible for 8% of global greenhouse gases and up to 150 billion items of clothing are produced globally every year<sup>2</sup>. Prolonging the life of clothing by nine months would result in a 20 - 30% reduction of carbon, water and waste footprints<sup>2</sup>.

With this in mind ReRun believes that buying, wearing and looking after pre-loved clothing is a vital action we can all take to reduce our environmental footprint, as individuals and together as a sporting community.



1) Kirchain R., Olivetti E., Miller T. R. & Greene S. Sustainable Apparel Materials (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2015)

2) <https://www.loveyourclothes.org.uk/about/why-love-your-clothes> Accessed 8/11/21

# Influencing others - facilities

Not every club has its own grounds and facilities. If you use other facilities, why not work with the club manager or operator to reduce their avoidable plastic waste.

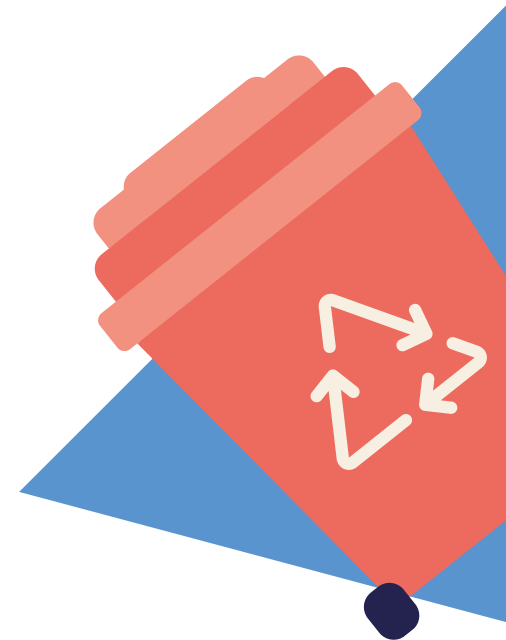


For more information, please see our Preventing Plastic Pollution catering outlets in sporting venues guidance by scanning or clicking on the QR code.

You may find it useful to share the guidance with the managers of the facility your club uses.

Here are the five things you could suggest to your facilities manager to reduce plastic consumption and waste.

1. Install water refill points
2. Install well signposted bins including segregated recycling bins
3. Avoid selling drinks in single-use packaging
4. Reduce the packaging food is served in
5. Communicate the changes made to customers and staff



# Hosting tournaments or events

If you are organising an event please refer to our Preventing Plastic Pollution running, cycling and triathlon events guidance to reduce your avoidable plastic waste. Click on or scan the QR code.

You may want to share the guidance with event organisers.



You may also want to share the Preventing Plastic Pollution participant leaflet with your members. You can find this using the events guidance QR code.



If you or members of your club are entering events why not encourage them to reduce their avoidable plastic waste.

Here are the five things you could ask event organisers to do.

1. Use water bowlers at water hydration stations for refills
2. Encourage participants to carry their own refillable water bottle or cup
3. Set up a take-back packaging scheme for energy gel sachets
4. Make finisher bags and event t-shirts optional
5. Engage participants with the changes you've made

You can influence your members to adopt more sustainable habits.

Here are the five things you could ask your members to do when training and at events.

1. Carry a refillable water bottle, cup or hydration belt or pack
2. Refuse finisher t-shirts and items to reduce waste
3. Re-wear old sports clothes or buy secondhand
4. Carry rubbish, recycle or use bins provided
5. Use energy boosting snacks that are packaging free

# Compostables

If avoiding or reusable packaging isn't an option, single-use compostables may be appropriate where the material will be contaminated with food residue.

Compostable items can be made from natural fibres such as paper and/or bagasse (sugar cane fibre). Once used, if collected and processed correctly, the item will break down into the compounds it is made from.

Compostables require separate collection to oil-based plastics and food waste, and need to be disposed of separately for them to breakdown correctly.

Some events and festivals have successfully implemented a closed-loop system. Compostable plastics are collected separately and returned to the manufacturer where they are composted under the required conditions.

## Definitions and standards<sup>1</sup>

**Bio-based plastic:** is made from, or partly from, a plant-based source rather than fossil fuel. Not all bio-based plastics are compostable or biodegradable.

**Biodegradable:** the term is often misused and applied to a broad range of different materials. Without a specified environment and timeframe, the term is extremely vague because a biodegradable product may biodegrade in some environments and not (in any reasonable timeframe) in others. All compostable plastics are biodegradable, but not all biodegradable plastics are compostable.

**Compostable:** for a product to be certified as compostable it must either be certified to BS EN13432 (industrial composting standard) or meet the requirements for home compostable specification.

**Industrially compostable:** a blanket term which includes all forms of organic waste treatment that is characterised by high levels of control. There is a clear standard in place to test products, which sets the criteria for the acceptance at processing sites. In reality much of the UK organics recycling infrastructure is not set up to fully treat the compostable.

**Home compostable:** refers to any product that has been certified as such (either through an independent scheme or via self assessment and compliance ISO 14021). Whilst there are no UK or international standards for home composting, in general home compostable plastics would meet industrial compostable standards. However, those materials which meet EN13432 do not necessarily compost under home composting conditions.

1. WRAP, considerations for compostable packaging <https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/compostable-plastic-packaging-guidance#> - accessed 15/02/21

# Compostables

## Logos and symbols<sup>2</sup>

**Industrially compostable:** all of these symbols indicate that a product has an industrially compostable certification in association with EN13432.



**The green dot:** this means that the manufacturers have made a financial contribution to recycling services in Europe. It does not mean the product itself is recyclable.



**Mobius loop:** this shows some is capable of being recycled. Not that it will be recycled.



**Widely recycled:** this symbol means widely recycled (by 75% or more of local authorities across the UK).



## What happens to compostables?<sup>1</sup>

**Recycling:** whilst it is technically possible to recycle certain rigid compostable plastics, this does not happen in practice. Currently, it is viewed as a source of potential contamination. The risk of compostable plastics entering the recycling stream is a concern for UK plastics recyclers.

**Anaerobic Digestion (AD):** is used to treat food waste. It is not set up to process compostable plastics and most facilities remove all types of plastic at the front end. Because AD excludes oxygen, compostable plastic is unlikely to break down in this process. Unless the facility has a composting phase (not currently common in the UK), this route is problematic.

**In-Vessel Composting (IVC):** this is currently used for the treatment of garden waste and food waste. Some local authorities collect these mixed together to go to IVC, others offer separate collection of food waste which is treated via AD. Technically, IVC is currently the best composting option for compostable materials

**Landfill:** when landfilling compostable plastics, the best case is it stays inert, but if it biodegrades then it will release greenhouse gases.

**Energy from waste:** where the compostable material is biobased and is an alternative to conventional 'non-recyclable' plastics, this is the best residual waste option.

2. Recycle Now <https://www.recyclenow.com/recycling-knowledge/packaging-symbols-explained> - accessed 15/02/21

# Celebrations

Whether you have regular socials or host end-of-season celebrations you can reduce plastic waste at your events. When planning an event think about what plastic you would normally use and work to reduce that by following a similar format to the waste audit on page 19. Below are some suggestions to help you reduce avoidable plastic at your events.

It is likely your celebration will still produce some waste therefore it is important to ensure you have a range of suitable clearly labelled bins available.

Avoid glitter – most is made from plastic

Avoid balloons which can end up in the environment

Use reusable plates, cups and cutlery

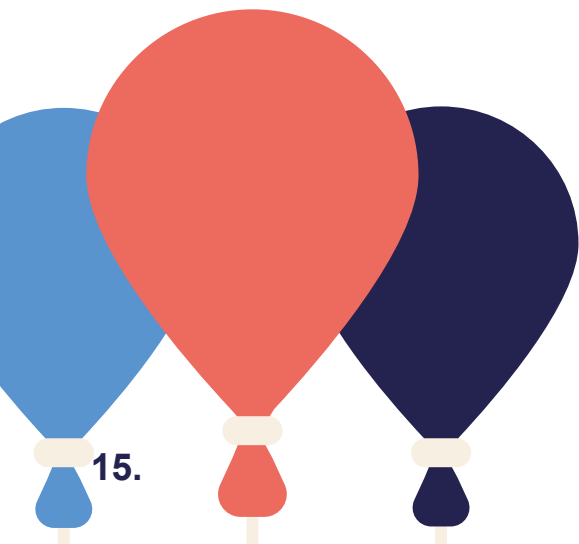
Reuse decorations you already have or borrow/hire them

For fancy dress, hire costumes, reuse or buy secondhand

Use one cup/trophy and engrave names, instead of buying a new one each year

Avoid lamination of certificates

If giving prizes, gift experiences or reusable items (e.g. water bottles)



# Communicate and inspire

Take members and spectators on the journey with you by communicating messages clearly so they are aware and comfortable with any changes that are being made. This is also a great opportunity to lead the way, be proud, and showcase your sustainability values and achievements.

This will encourage others to reduce their impact on the environment too. Setting sustainability targets, on avoidable plastic reduction for example, and communicating this, can help engage people and lead to positive behaviour change.

Integrate sustainability communication into every communication channel you use, such as club newsletters, emails, your website, social media, club house signage and notice boards.

As well as influencing others to reduce their impact on the natural world, this will engage existing and potential new members, and help you reach your goal to reduce plastic waste.

## Try plogging

Plogging is a combination of jogging with picking up litter. To arrange your own plogging challenge, simply gather your club together, get some reusable sacks or bin bags and protective gloves and set out on a run, picking up rubbish as you go. It is a fantastic way your club can spend more active social time as a team and enhance your local environment for future generations.



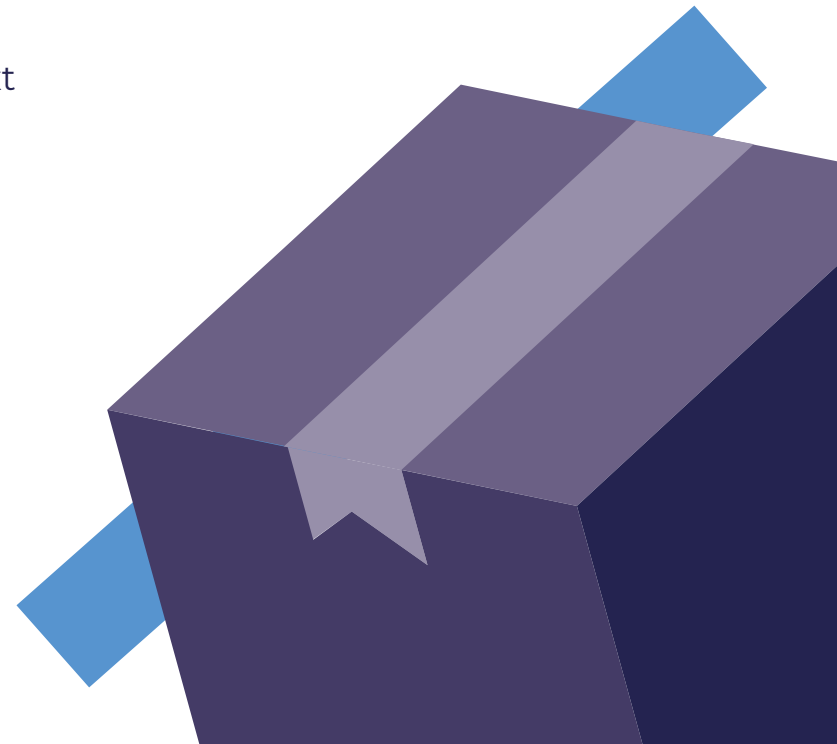
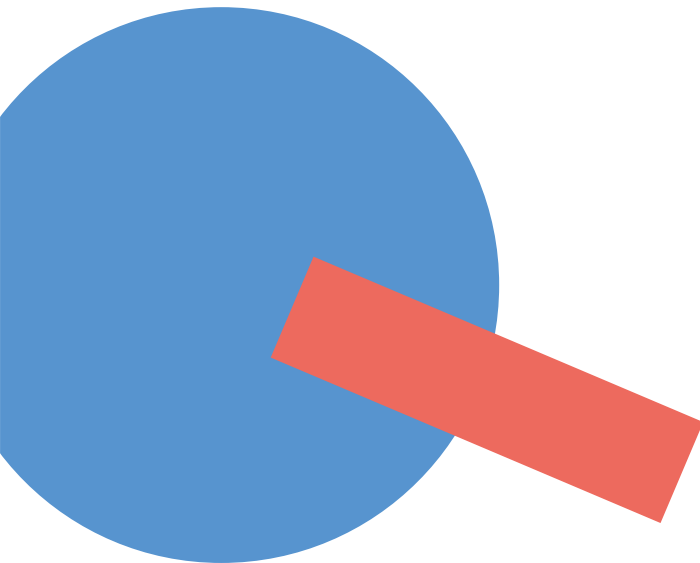
# Working with your suppliers

You may find that despite your best efforts to reduce avoidable plastic that it still occurs through packaging from suppliers. Through discussion with your supplier, you should be able to reach an agreement for them to remove, or at least reduce, the amount of packaging you receive with your order.



This may seem like a large task, but by beginning with one supplier and working with them you can then move on to the next supplier when you have had success. In future, when reviewing suppliers, you can consider if they use any single-use packaging.

As a short-term solution you may be able to send any excess packaging back to the supplier, perhaps when they deliver your next order, for them to reuse for future deliveries or recycle. You can work with your suppliers for catering, merchandise, equipment and kit.



# Carrying out a waste audit

Recording how much waste your club produces over a time period is a great way to understand where your avoidable plastic is coming from and help you prioritise which items you could avoid.

Either fill in table 1 below as you dispose of items or go through your bin and recycling at the end of your chosen time period. Perhaps start with one week.

Once you have recorded your waste for a week find a solution to reducing that item. This could be as simple as avoiding the item.



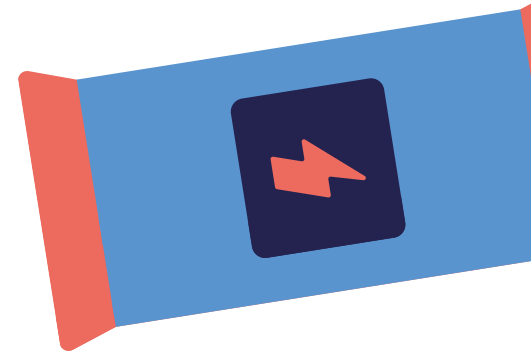
If you can't avoid the item, buy in bulk and decant to a smaller reusable container. Remember, the waste hierarchy avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle.

There are different types of plastic. Table 2 illustrates the plastic type, the associated symbol and an example application.








Some types of plastic are more widely recycled than others. You may have items made from composite materials meaning the item is made from more than one material. Examples single-use coffee cups or Tetra Pak cartons.

Recycling differs between local authorities and waste carriers, some items may not be widely recycled. Check with your waste carrier or on the Reyclenow website to see what you can recycle in your local area.

Please see the following pages for table 1 & 2.



| Item              | Number of items | Material | Type of plastic (1-7) | Recycling/general waste |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| e.g. water bottle | 20              | Plastics | 1 (PET)               | Recycling               |
|                   |                 |          |                       |                         |
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| Polymer type                          | Symbol  | Potential applications                                     |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| PET:<br>Polyethylene<br>Terephthalate |    | Drink bottles, salad trays                                 |
| HDPE:<br>High-density<br>Polyethylene |    | Milk bottles, cleaning<br>bottles                          |
| PVC:<br>Polyvinyl Chloride            |    | Pipe, window frames  |
| LDPE:<br>Low-density<br>Polyethylene  |    | Plastic bags, bin liners                                   |
| PP:<br>Polypropylene                  |  | Food containers,<br>microwaveable plastics                 |
| PS:<br>Polystyrene                    |  | Yoghurt pots, delivery<br>packaging                        |
| OTHER or O:<br>Other Plastics         |  | Items made of more<br>than one plastic e.g.<br>coffee cups |