



Collecting compostables in London, Brighton & Sussex

Webinar Q+A | 27 May

We were asked lots of great questions during our webinar but were unable to answer all of them live. We have merged several of the questions asked with similar themes. You can also find more answers to frequently asked questions by heading to Vegware's [FAQs page](#). Please contact sales@paper-round.co.uk or environmental@vegware.co.uk for more information.

1. Consumers don't always follow the rules at the recycling point, what % of Vegware in the paper / cardboard recycling bin prevents it from being recycled?

There is no specific threshold for contaminated Vegware or food in paper and card bins that means that the card and paper in them can not be recovered. Also it is not just a question of recovery, there is a quality issue - material from bins contaminated with food may be recovered but can only be used for lower quality applications. Also the type of food makes a difference - wetter foods cause more problems. The aim should be as little food as possible. Contractually we generally state that any recyclable material with more than 5% contamination may have to be treated as waste.

2. Do Vegware have their own waste collection service?

Vegware operates 'Close the Loop', its own waste collection service in the central belt of Scotland. Waste is collected from clients in Glasgow and Edinburgh five days a week. The waste can be collected at a frequency to suit the site ie: once a fortnight, once a week, three times a week. This often depends on the size of the site and quantities of Vegware used.



3. How can a small business outside of your service area, that only serves takeaway, benefit from compostable products and how can we encourage our customers to get on board?

Vegware products are made from plants using renewable, lower carbon, recycled or reclaimed materials. Takeaway outlets could consider a 'bring-back scheme' where customers bring back their Vegware to be composted with a collection from the site. Vegware have poster designs available to help such takeaway businesses communicate this with customers. We encourage clients to operate a loyalty programme, rewarding customers who bring back their used Vegware while tackling the issue of on-the-go recycling. Many clients offer their own loyalty card where, for each used Vegware product returned, a customer earns a point or stamp towards a free hot drink or other treat. This helps increase footfall while capturing used Vegware takeaways, helping to get the packaging into the correct waste stream, so it can fulfil its potential to become compost, while also boosting clients' recycling rates and green credentials.

4. A lot of my canteen sites have the issue of not being able to prevent people bringing in their own coffee cups, so the vegware and recycling cups end up in the wrong bins

It is inevitable that some people will bring in outside materials e.g. regular paper coffee cups that people may think can go into compostable bins. This is why having one type of well labelled compostables on site is important, this way the messaging to staff can be consistent and that only specific items can be composted and nothing else. If there is a specific, reoccurring problem, please contact us to discuss, as Paper Round may have a suitable alternative service such as Paper Cup Recycling.

5. With PLA (Polylactic Acid) being a contaminant, should it get into the normal plastic recycling stream, how are you hoping to mitigate this happening?

PLA in the regular plastic stream does not cause a problem for plastic recycling per se. The specialist plastic recycling facility that Paper Round works with sorts polymer types automatically with equipment that positively pick out the desired polymers. No plastic recovery facilities today pick for PLA which therefore ends up in the residue of unselected material. This is burnt for energy, but it will not interfere with other polymer type processing.

6. How do you sort the PLA from conventional plastics?

PLA will break down as part of the composting process, and any other plastics will remain solid and need to be sorted out by the post composting screening technology at the composting site. However, the key is to keep regular plastics out from the outset. In the pre-composting phases, plastic items such as bottles are picked out as much as possible.

7. How do you identify/differentiate between a flexible plastic film and a flexible compostable film at the compost site?

See answer above, differentiation is via the composting process.

8. On the process diagram what happens to the 20% non compostable?

In the quality control processes that Paper Round has in place, some clearly identifiable items will be selected out (plastic bottles, drinks cans and other metals) and put into the correct recycling streams. However most non-target material will be treated as waste and sent for incineration.

9. Running large scale events like festivals, we are always looking for the most environmentally friendly waste management options that fit into relevant budgets. Does leftover beer and other liquids in the cups prove a big issue to recycling them?

One off events and markets need to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. The key tests are a) is the environment controlled so that the waste generated is compostable and not a mixture of material types, and b) is there a good plan to educate consumers. If there is confidence on these issues, a compostable waste service may be worth introducing. Large amounts of liquids will be an issue, but this was not found to be a problem in the trials we have run.

10. What's the difference in terms of pricing of vegware products with conventional plastic products?

Vegware is comparable in price to quality conventional disposables. We have a wide range of over 350 different products and offer premium or economic options depending on the client's needs. Email sales@vegware.co.uk for further information.

11. Where is the PLA sourced from and is there a way to minimise its impacts?

The world's largest producers of PLA are NatureWorks and Corbion, both of whom have further information on land use and sustainability [here](#) and [here](#), respectively.

12. What % of food is allowable in Vegware bins?

There is no specific threshold for the food % that can be placed in Vegware bins, but significant quantities of food should be collected separately and sent for anaerobic digestion because it is cheaper per kg and best environmental practice. We set bin weight limits for the service and

large quantities of food will likely result in overweight bins and surcharges, so this is mainly a cost issue, not a technical one.

13. Are Vegware considering supplying further PPE products?

Vegware does not currently supply PPE, but are considering options.

14. How does RPS 225 apply to storage of compostables that may contain food residues?

RPS 225 may require locations where multiple organisations are aggregating compostable waste for collections to have maximum 1 week time limit between collections. Single waste generators will not be impacted.

15. Was there any data on any cost savings to the customer from reducing the amount of waste going to landfill by having their food waste and compostables taken to be composted?

Customers introducing a composting stream should reduce their general waste tonnages and improve the quality of their other recycling streams, both of which can result in cost reductions. Against this is the cost of the compostable service itself. The impact will vary on a site-to-site basis. The service, though, is primarily designed to get the best environmental outcome for compostable packaging, not to drive down the cost point.

16. What size containers do you offer?

Today we offer 240l bins for bin store collection. We plan to offer a sack service in the near future. Where very large volumes of compostables are collected (2+ tonnes per collection) we can look at a compactor based solution. We provide a variety of in-office bins for front-of-house compostable collections.