
END DESTINATIONS OF RECYCLING CHARTER



A voluntary commitment to transparency through the publication
of Registers of the End Destination of Recyclates.

Initiated by the Resource Association and supported by the
Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) Executive.

June 2012

Introducing the End Destinations of Recycling Charter

A common question raised by members of the public participating in household recycling schemes provided by local councils is “Where does our recycling go?”

Councils are dependent on the private sector to make sure that what is collected actually does get recycled. However, the means by which councils provide information on relationships they have with companies can be varied. Some local authorities provide web-based information on the end destination of all materials collected for recycling, which includes the names and location details of reprocessors. Others provide information when asked, and many are in a spectrum between. Even the very best councils in terms of availability of information are reliant on what they are told by the private sector companies they work with to answer these questions fully.

There is scope to improve the range and level of information on recycling end destination made available to the public. In a survey¹ of web-based information for 351 English and Northern Irish local authorities, 17% of local authority websites had information available on end destination.

The public indicate a desire for more information and also indicate that this would motivate some of them to recycle more. In a YouGov poll² commissioned by the Resource Association, 73% say they don't know where materials they put out for recycling go (in terms of plants or geography) and 65% say they don't know what happens to the products they put out for recycling (in terms of what they are made into). In the same survey, 68% of UK adults sampled say more information should be available on what happens to recycled materials (i.e., where they go geographically and how they are processed/used) and 32% say they are much more likely or more likely to recycle if more information was available.

The End Destinations of Recycling Charter therefore starts from the position that there is value in providing comprehensive information to the public on the end destination of their recycling. In turn, this seeks to improve public confidence in the recycling process and increase public knowledge of the global nature of much recycling as well as the value of reprocessing materials in the UK green economy, as well as increase participation in recycling schemes.

The End Destinations of Recycling Charter recognises that transparency around the end destinations of recyclates will only succeed with the co-operation of all reprocessors, local authorities and others involved in handling items the public puts out for collection. This also includes actors in the recycling supply chain such as collection companies and export brokers.

The End Destinations of Recycling Charter believes that, in a consumer society where there are increasing demands for information about the content and the means by which products are made and consumed, there is also an increasing demand for information about what happens to the materials the public faithfully put out for recycling. Meeting these needs can be done with the provision of accurate information whilst ensuring the costs of so doing are proportionate, represent value for money to local taxpayers, and need not compromise commercial confidentialities of private companies.

Founding advocates of the End Destinations of Recycling Charter

The **End Destinations of Recycling Charter** has been initiated by the Resource Association, representing major reprocessors of recovered material and the supply chain that supports them. It is supported by the LARAC (Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee) Executive. Member reprocessors in the Resource Association have committed to support local authorities with the audit and verification needed in relation to materials supplied to them for reprocessing. Member local authorities in the Resource Association are founder signatories to the Charter.

Support the Charter

The **End Destinations of Recycling Charter** is open for supporting signature to local authorities in England and Northern Ireland³ wishing to indicate their voluntary commitment to providing comprehensive information to their council tax payers about the end destination of recycling collected from them.

As expressed earlier, achievement of the aims of this Charter are dependent in very large part on the active co-operation of private sector companies involved in the recycling industry. To that end, this Charter is also open for signature by all those who wish to voluntarily commit to supporting local councils in the production of registers of end destinations of recyclates. Such signatories include, for example, organisations from local and national government and their agencies; the reprocessing industry; the waste and resources management industry; collection companies; export merchants and other actors in the recycling supply chain that support its aims.

End Destinations of Recycling Charter

We, the undersigned local authorities, commit voluntarily to maintain or extend our commitment to providing the public with comprehensive information about the end destination of materials collected for recycling⁴.

We commit to publishing, at least annually, a Register of End Destinations of Recyclates that covers the materials⁵ collected by us, or on our behalf, from the public. Details will be published by June 2013 in respect to the 2012/13 financial year.

Our Register of End Destinations of Recyclates will state the names and locations⁶ of the final reprocessing of our recycling back into product, whether these are in the UK or abroad.

Where there are any gaps in our information due to onward supply by recipients of our material, we will state this and seek to secure information⁷ from those parties and publish details in the next Register.

Name

Signed

Local Authority

Date

Contact

For more information or to return a signed Charter:

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Notes

1. Resource Association in-house study of all English and Northern Irish local authority websites, fieldwork completed April/May 2012 – 61 of 351 websites surveyed carried any information at all about end destination of recyclates.
2. YouGov online survey of 2078 adults, UK representative sample, fieldwork conducted 11-14 May 2012 – report titled ‘Where Does Our Recycling Go?’ published by the Resource Association
3. In Scotland and Wales the devolved Governments are making arrangements with all local authorities collectively to publish information on the end destination of recyclates and so they have not been included. Any councils in Scotland and Wales that wish to indicate their support however are still very welcome to do so.
4. Materials collected for recycling being managed before reprocessing are described as recyclates.
5. Materials means all recyclables and compostables, so will specifically include all dry recyclables, green and food waste, and materials collected at Household Waste Recycling Centres, including electronic waste, batteries, bulky goods and textiles.
6. We define this as meaning the name and location of the manufacturing plant, reprocessor, mill or similar – for the avoidance of doubt, this means paper, steel and aluminium mills, plastics reprocessors and AD plants – for example. Please note there is no requirement to disclose any commercial arrangements related to any end destination (e.g., contract length, price).
7. We recognise that for many local authorities that rely on collection contractors to market recyclables on their behalf, the provision of information on the end destination of recyclates requires co-operation from contractors. Where contractors process materials from several councils at transfer stations and MRFs, we encourage councils to have their contractors provide them with generic information on the end destinations of material (beyond the intermediary processing at a MRF) handled on their behalf.

