

A black mesh wastebasket filled with crumpled white paper. The basket is cylindrical with a wide rim and a fine mesh pattern. The paper is piled high, filling most of the basket. The background is a plain, light gray surface.

WASTE PREVENTION GUIDE FOR  
**BUSINESSES**

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# What is waste prevention?

Waste prevention is the idea of preventing the generation of waste in the first place, rather than waiting until there is a pile of waste to deal with. It is the best environmental option of all - much better than recycling and streets ahead of landfill.

## Our business recycles already...

Recycling can be the beginning of the changes your business can make to save money and be environmentally responsible. While sending waste for recycling is a better and often cheaper option than sending waste to landfill, it still costs businesses money.

*“The cost of your waste is not so much the cost of disposing of it as much as the value of what you are getting rid of.”<sup>1</sup>*

## So what is the alternative?

Preventing waste is the best economic option for any businesses and it is also very easy!

In addition to saving money in waste disposal costs, waste prevention can also save you money in purchasing costs. For example, if a restaurant buys more perishable products than they can use, they not only have to pay to dispose of these materials, they have also wasted the money they spent on the purchase in the first place.



<sup>1</sup>Source: egeneration

## Why should you care about waste?

Waste prevention saves you money, saves the environment and gives you a market advantage.

### Did you know...

"For every tonne of household waste produced, commercial, industrial and construction businesses produce another six tonnes<sup>2</sup>"

### But why should you care?

Because - You are throwing away money every day! Businesses of all sizes can benefit by cutting waste and it only requires low capital spending.

### What is waste disposal costing you?

The true cost of waste disposal to a business is up to 4.5% of its annual turnover!

By taking simple actions to reduce waste disposal costs and raw material usage, businesses can save 1% of their annual

turnover- money which goes straight onto the bottom line.

### Waste disposal is expensive and the cost is set to rise

The majority of waste disposed in North London is sent to landfill, with the remainder sent for incineration. Because landfill space is fast running out, the Government introduced a tax on every tonne of waste sent to landfill. This tax will continue to rise until by 2011 the tax alone will be £48 per tonne- around 8 times the cost to landfill a tonne of waste in 1996.

In addition, since October 2007 there has been a requirement that all waste sent to landfill is pre-treated prior to disposal. This means that the cost of business waste disposal is likely to rise even further in coming years.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Defra

## What else does waste disposal cost you?

The impact of waste disposal on a business isn't just the bill you receive each month to empty the bin. There are lots of other impacts of waste you may not realise, including:

- 1 Lost raw materials;
- 2 Handling and storage costs;
- 3 Energy and utility costs;
- 4 Time;
- 5 Effort;
- 6 Transportation;
- 7 Maintenance; and
- 8 Staff and customer comfort.

These costs, when added to the obvious costs can make managing your waste very expensive and poor waste management even more so.

## Gain a market advantage

As awareness of environmental issues grows, more and more consumers are choosing to

“buy green”. While it is easy for a big company to advertise their green credentials, how does a small shop or restaurant in North London let people know they are making green choices?

Well, some North London councils are running programmes where businesses can commit to simple actions to improve the environment in exchange for receiving recognition in the form of a certificate and/or a shop-window sticker. These can be displayed to inform customers about the good work the business is doing.

## It is a legal requirement

All businesses create waste and all businesses have a legal duty to dispose of their waste responsibly which means that waste materials produced as part of your business or within your workplace are regulated by law. You must make sure that anyone you pass your waste on to, such as a waste contractor, scrap metal merchant, recycler, local council or skip hire company is authorised to take it. If you don't and your waste is illegally disposed of, you could be held responsible and face stiff penalties. [Check with the Environment Agency on 08708 506 506 \(Mon- Fri 8am-6pm\)](#)



# What can a business do? – Our top tips for managing your waste



**Waste fact:** A London wide switch to double-sided printing could save 17.5 billion sheets of A4 paper every year – enough paper to wrap around the earth four times<sup>3</sup>.



## In the office:

### Reduce

- 1 print double sided (saves up to 50% of paper costs)
- 2 sign up to have your business name removed from junk mail lists- you have to pay to dispose of that junk mail!
- 3 change settings so your fax machine and printers doesn't print unwanted header or report sheets
- 4 print only when necessary - send emails rather than printing letters or memos to save paper
- 5 purchase durable equipment
- 6 use energy efficient light bulbs - they last much longer and save money while in use
- 7 switch equipment off completely in the evening and at weekends.

### Reuse

- 1 reuse envelopes - either for internal circulation or buy sticky labels to cover old addresses and reuse envelopes externally
- 2 use rechargeable batteries
- 3 use refillable printer cartridges
- 4 reuse single-sided paper for printing out draft documents or internal reports
- 5 reuse incoming packaging and boxes for outgoing deliveries
- 6 convert scrap paper into post-it notes
- 7 provide staff with reusable glasses and mugs rather than disposable cups
- 8 repair furniture where possible or donate it to charity
- 9 shred low-quality paper or cardboard and use as protective packaging.

### Be a Champion!

Have you thought of being or appointing a Waste Prevention Champion to coordinate your waste prevention activities? The Champion can implement reduce and reuse practices and also raise awareness and motivate other members of staff.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Brother UK, 2006



**Waste fact:** the UK produces 500,000 tonnes of food waste per year; it is worth £400 million and disposal costs another £50 million<sup>4</sup>.

## In the restaurant and take-away:

### Reduce

- 1 request reusable, recyclable or recycled packaging from your supplier
- 2 sign up to have your business name removed from unwanted mail lists - you have to pay to dispose of that unwanted mail<sup>5</sup>!
- 3 do not over-package take away items
- 4 bulk buy produce to reduce unnecessary packaging
- 5 ask before supplying carrier bags and disposable cutlery – if you use less it costs you less
- 6 encourage customers to reuse containers.

### Reuse

- 1 serve sauces and vinegar in refillable containers
- 2 use washable fabric table cloths, rather than paper
- 3 use washable fabric napkins, rather than disposable ones
- 4 refill glass bottles or jugs for water instead of selling bottled water- saves you waste disposal costs and keeps the customer happy
- 5 use concentrated cleaning agents in refillable containers.

### Spread the news!

Have you thought of informing customers and suppliers of your commitment to preventing waste? Customers and suppliers have a growing interest in environmental issues and the implementation of waste prevention practices will enhance your reputation.

<sup>4</sup>Source: <http://www.reducehuse.co.uk/Page/Waste/Wastefacts.htm>. Accessed 21 July 2008

<sup>5</sup>For more information and how to register visit [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk) or call 0845 703 4599



## In the shop:

### Reduce

- 1 ask your supplier to take-back bulk-packaging for reuse
- 2 sign up to have your business name removed from unwanted mail lists - you have to pay to dispose of that unwanted mail!
- 3 ask before supplying carrier bags, if you use less it costs you less
- 4 stock loose fruit and vegetables - help your customers reduce their packaging waste
- 5 provide reusable glasses and mugs for staff rather than disposable cups

**Waste fact:** Every year in the UK an estimated 17.5 billion plastic bags are given away by supermarkets<sup>6</sup>. This represents over 130,000 tonnes of plastic - enough to cover an area the size of London twice over with a layer of bags.

### Reuse

- 1 encourage customers to bring their carrier bags in for reuse
- 2 reuse incoming packaging and boxes for outgoing deliveries
- 3 shred low-quality paper or cardboard and use as protective packaging
- 4 use concentrated cleaning agents in refillable containers.

### Teach your customers!

Have you thought about informing your customers about the importance of waste prevention at the checkout? You can not only ask them if they need a plastic bag but also encourage them to return unwanted reusable items such as metal hangers to dry cleaners.

<sup>6</sup>Source: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/6044654.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/6044654.stm). Accessed 21 July 08

## Close the Loop: Buy Recycled

Choosing to buy recycled products is an important step in creating a sustainable workplace and helps to stimulate markets for the materials we recycle. If a recycled option is not available you may find there are more sustainable options than that which you currently use. Closed loop recycling is a concept that simply involves buying recycled products as well as recycling, thereby significantly reducing raw material usage. The success of recycling depends on strong markets for recycled goods. Please look at the following websites for some recycled databases.

Buy Recycled: If you would like more information about buying recycled-content products please go to this Defra sponsored recycled content product database:

[www.wastebook.org](http://www.wastebook.org)

The sustainable product directory provides a comprehensive database of sustainable products and suppliers with information on nearly 300 products.

Visit the following website to view the international catalogue of recycled products, sustainable products or sustainable suppliers:

[www.recycledproduct.info](http://www.recycledproduct.info)



# Case Study: The Duke of Cambridge



The Duke of Cambridge is a popular organic pub in the Angel area of Islington. The business, which opened in 1998, has always placed an emphasis on efficient waste management and only uses suppliers who share their efforts to minimise waste. The pub is proof that good environmental practice and a strong reputation as a quality food and drink establishment can go hand in hand. Most importantly, they have a strong customer base that fully supports this.

From day one they recycled their glass, paper and cardboard and chose an energy supplier that could provide electricity from renewable sources, namely wind and solar. They used reclaimed building materials and second hand furniture instead of buying new. Buying second hand reduces the demand for new consumable items and extends the life span of items that are otherwise considered to be at the end of their shelf life.

One of their initial aims was to source local, seasonal and organic produce. They bought from small, independent local suppliers to support the community and reduce travelling distance of the produce. They bought goods with little or no packaging. This reduced both the amount of waste produced and subsequent disposal costs to the business.

Today the pub is a huge success with continued support from the local community. They recycle more materials than ever before, including corks, tetra packs, additional plastics, food waste and used vegetable

oil. Even hazardous waste that can be very harmful to the environment, like batteries, light bulbs and computer equipment, is recycled. Placing water-saving devices in the cisterns has also reduced water usage.

They have a strict food policy, supporting organisations such as Fairtrade. They do not buy produce whose industries have harmful effects on the environment, particularly on marine stocks, and follow the Marine Conservation Society's guidelines when buying fish.

In recognition of their long and sustained work to achieve their original goals they are the only organic pub in Britain to be certified by the Soil Association.

"Why do it? I believe business has a duty to act responsibly. Beyond that it makes the smartest marketing sense, saves money and creates fantastic team loyalty."

Geetie Singh Founder & Managing Director

More information about the soil association can be found at [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)  
More information about Marine Stewardship Council can be found at [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org)

# Where can a business find free support?

## Envirowise

Envirowise offer UK businesses free, confidential and independent advice on issues ranging from waste prevention through to energy use. This free support includes:

- 1 Up to 2 hours of free expert advice over the telephone** (call 0800 585794 or email [helpline@envirowise.gov.uk](mailto:helpline@envirowise.gov.uk))
- 2 Free publications and information** on waste prevention issues, methods and successes.
- 3 Free FastTrack visits**-free and confidential on-site waste reviews carried out by independent consultants to help businesses identify areas to save.
- 4 Free tools**- a range of spreadsheet, training and monitoring tools to help businesses plan and track their waste prevention savings.

## BREW

Business resource efficiency and waste programme. Your business can receive advice and support on improving resource efficiency measures, minimising waste production and improving its bottom line through a number of projects funded by the BREW Programme. To find out more visit:

[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/brew](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/brew)

## Centre for Environment and Safety Management for Business (CESMB)

CESMB is a centre of environmental management expertise based within Middlesex University. Established in 1993, its mission is to help businesses and other organisations recognise how environmental management is a key factor in business competitiveness locally, nationally and internationally. To find out more visit:

[www.mdx.ac.uk/www/cesmb](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/www/cesmb)



# Contact your local council

For more information, please contact the Waste and Recycling team in your local council:

## London Borough of Barnet

Waste and Sustainability Team

North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London N11 1NP

T: 020 8359 7400 F: 0870 889 6811 E: [recycling@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@barnet.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Camden

Street Environment Services

Town Hall, Argyle Road, London WC1H 8EQ

T: 020 7974 6914 F: 020 7974 3153 E: [street.environment@camden.gov.uk](mailto:street.environment@camden.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Enfield

Environmental Protection & Regulation

PO Box 57, Civic Centre, Silver Street, London EN1 3XH

T: 020 8379 1000 F: 0208 379 5120 E: [waste.services@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:waste.services@enfield.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Hackney

Commercial Waste

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Directorate

Millfields Road Depot, Millfields Road, London E5 0AR

T: 020 8533 7583 F: 020 8986 7137 E: [commercialwaste@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:commercialwaste@hackney.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Haringey

Waste Management

255 High Road, River Park House, London N22 8HQ

T: 020 8489 3528 F: 020 8489 4500 E: [recycling@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@haringey.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Islington

222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR

T: 020 7527 7556 F: 020 7527 4577 E: [business.waste@islington.gov.uk](mailto:business.waste@islington.gov.uk)

## London Borough of Waltham Forest

Public Realm

Environment and Regeneration

Low Hall, Argyll Avenue, London E10 7AS

T: 020 8496 3000 F: 020 8496 3001 E: [wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk)

# Trash or Treasure?

Business waste can be made up of many items including empty bottles, wood crates and pallets, old computer and electrical items still in working order etc. While businesses must pay to dispose of these items, there might be someone just around the corner who needs them!

## NISP

The National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) helps match companies so they can trade waste materials, share assets, logistics and expertise. For more information, please contact:

NISP - London  
Buchanan House,  
24-30 Holborn,  
London, EC1N 2HS  
T: 0207 314 4616  
E: london@nisp.org.uk

## Freecycle

Freecycle is a free, volunteer online exchange where people can swap unwanted goods, which may still be useful to others. There is a Freecycle group operating in every North London borough.

For links to all North London Freecycle groups, please visit: [www.nlwa.gov.uk/html/links.asp](http://www.nlwa.gov.uk/html/links.asp)

## ReStore Community Projects

ReStore Community Projects is a registered charity based in North London which recycles and reuses domestic furniture and appliances for the benefit of people in need and they collect furniture and appliances from households and businesses.

For more information or to book a collection, please visit [www.restorecommunityprojects.org](http://www.restorecommunityprojects.org)

T: 020 8493 0900  
E: info@restorecommunityprojects.org



# References

Waste minimisation for managers, Envirowise, Publication GG367  
How to manage your business waste, Islington Council, October 2007  
Finding hidden profit- 200 tips for reducing waste, Envirowise, Publication EN30  
Green Efficiency: running a cost-effective, environmentally aware office, Envirowise, Publication GG256  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmenvaud/227/7012308.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmenvaud/227/7012308.htm)

# Watch Your Waste Week

We are pleased to inform you that from 4th to 12th October 2008 we will be running our first Watch Your Waste Week. The week, which forms part of the overall waste prevention strategy for North London, is the first week of its kind to be run in London and one of very few to be run across the UK. This is an ideal opportunity for your business to get involved!



## What do you mean by 'Watch Your Waste'?

During Watch Your Waste Week we ran the Watch Your Waste Challenge and we are hoping to get people that live, work or study in North London thinking about the amount of waste they produce, with the aim of getting them to create less waste and ideally no waste at all.

## How does Watch Your Waste Challenge work?

The Watch Your Waste Challenge runs from Saturday 4th October through to Sunday 12th October. (However, if you would rather start on Sunday 5th October or Monday 6th October and go on until Saturday 11th October or Sunday 12th October, that is fine, but you should finish no later than Sunday 12th October). Throughout this period the aim is to reuse, recycle or compost as much as you can and minimise the amount of waste you throw away. In addition, we've asked if you could complete the record form to help us measure the success of the week.

## How can my business take part?

Taking part in the challenge is simple! Read this guide carefully and start implementing the tips we gave you from 4th October onwards to see what difference this would make in the amount of waste your business throws away.

## How should I record the information on the record sheet?

Completing and returning your record sheet will allow us to assess the success of the scheme and help us to find ways to tackle waste prevention in the future. If possible, we would like you to record the amount of waste you throw away the week before the Watch Your Waste Challenge and compare it with the amount you throw away during the Watch Your Waste Challenge itself. You can do this by estimating the proportion you throw away (e.g. 3 and ¼ black bins, 5 rubbish sacks) or any other method that suits you. The rest of the sheet is for you to note down any observations over the course of the week, in particular any specific changes you made or any problems you encountered as well as any other comments you may have. As with all business activity, it is important to track and measure progress. Be sure to estimate the cost of disposing of your waste the week before and during the Watch Your Waste Challenge.

## For more information

If you have any further questions, please contact Dimitra Rappou on 020 8489 5366 or email: [Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk](mailto:Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk)

We have provided you with a daily diary below which we would be grateful if you could complete for each day of the challenge. Please note that this record sheet is also available as a Word document for ease of completion.

Please note, we will only use your details for the purposes of this project and will not pass them on to a third party.

## Watch Your Waste Challenge Record Sheet

Name of business		Postcode	
Please complete this table if possible as it will help us to make an estimate of the potential waste reduced by this project.			
Amount thrown away (please, choose one of the following options):			
<b>Normal week</b> (ideally the week before the Watch Your Waste Week)	Number of rubbish sacks		
	Number of full black bins		
Total estimated cost of disposal during a normal week before Watch Your Waste Week			
<b>Watch Your Waste Challenge Week</b>	Number of rubbish sacks		
	Number of full black bins		
Total estimated cost of disposal during Watch Your Waste Week			
<b>Day</b>	Please make a note below of any particular actions you took each day to minimise your waste, listing any specific problems you had, and any other observations you wish to make		
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Once complete, please send it back to us before Friday 24th October.

Email: [Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk](mailto:Dimitra.rappou@nlwa.gov.uk) Fax: 020 8365 0254

Post: North London Waste Authority, Lee Valley Technopark, Unit 169, Ashley Road, Tottenham N17 9LN

**Thank you for your participation in the Watch Your Waste Challenge!**

