

The what, why, how of EPR for bulky wastes

by Dr Nia Bell

Contents

- What do we mean by bulky waste?
- Why is EPR being considered for tackling bulky waste?
- How is industry responding to the 'threat' of EPR?
- Final thoughts

Why am I talking to you about this?

- 5+ years consulting experience in the furniture sector
- Worked on an evidence base on bulky waste for use in
policy evaluation

Anything that is too big for usual household bin collections...

...minus items covered by existing EPR schemes...

...minus C&D type waste, including from DIY projects...

...equals bulky waste.

Textile products

Mattresses

Pillows and duvets

Divan bases

Upholstered furniture

Carpet and underlay

Furniture products

Solid wood, freestanding indoor-furniture

Wood-based panel, freestanding indoor-furniture

Mostly metal furniture

Mostly hard plastic furniture

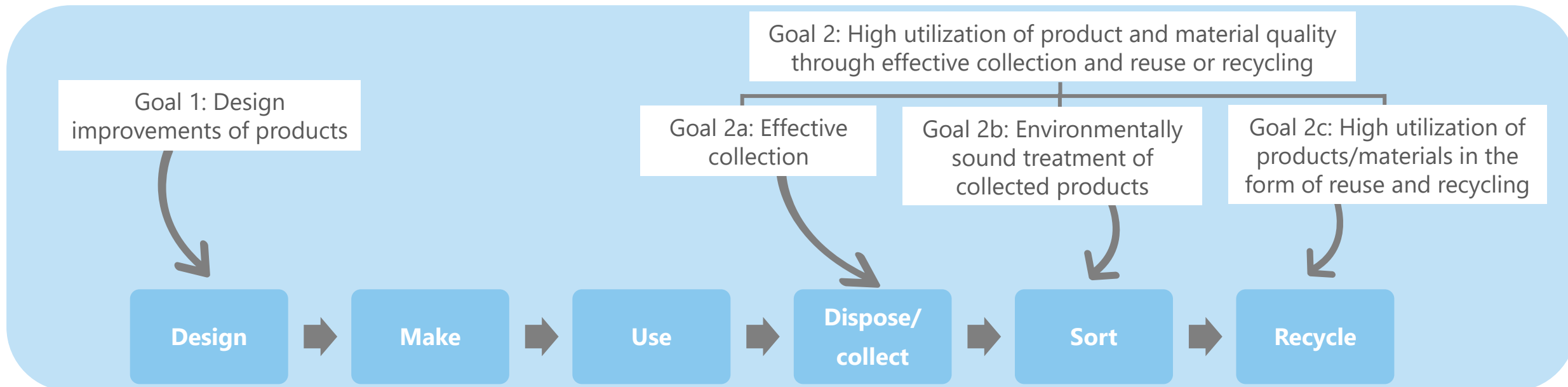
Wood-based products

Outdoor treated wood

Bulky waste is a **problematic waste stream** that incurs a net cost to Local Authorities because:

- End-markets for recoverable materials and products can be poor
- Waste products may contain legacy chemical, including POPs
- Storage and transport costs are high

EPR is a policy that seeks to tackle environmental hotspots across the **whole value chain**



Different bulky waste products have different market factors and environmental hotspots...

- No EoL issues with wooden and metal furniture
- Textile products could benefit from design for recyclability
- All products could have higher recycled and/or renewable content

...that might be best addressed by different policy and other instruments...



...though EPR is, in principle, still a promising instrument for tackling issues with bulky textile products.



Trade association representing UK manufacturers of beds and their suppliers.

- Built the evidence base on mattress recycling
- Developed a policy on the sale of used and reconditioned mattresses
- Produced an eco design guide for their members
- Teamed up with ZWS as part of a research partnership to design an EPR scheme for mattresses in Scotland



Non-profit membership association representing businesses along the carpet value chain working on diverting carpets from landfill.

- Built and maintains the evidence base on carpet reuse and recycling in the UK
- Showcases good practice including cross value chain collaborations and design for recyclability
- Conduit for Government interaction with the sector

In both cases, activity predates any discussion of an EPR for bulky waste products.

- Use the running start: Leverage existing voluntary industry initiatives
- Avoid unexpected consequences: Get a handle on market conditions, and learn from existing schemes
- Use the right tool: Consider all policy instruments at hand
- Build in fairness: Consider ways of making any consumption-based fee as progressive as possible

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