

A LOAD OF OLD RUBBISH?

Last year the Litter Action Group for Ealing Residents (LAGER Can) removed an estimated 270 tonnes of waste from the borough's open spaces. Sadly, much of the waste they collected could have been reused or recycled.

LAGER Can's 2,000 members share a passion for the environment and, like many who have been influenced by stories in the media, were concerned that the items we take such care to recycle might not be recycled at all – and that they may even end up overseas.

We shared our concerns with Catherina Pack, Waste and Street Services Manager at Ealing Council, and she arranged for eight keen recyclists from LAGER Can to visit N+P, the Council's Materials Reprocessing Facility in Crayford, Kent, to see for themselves what happens to Ealing's recyclables.



LAGER Can Group Leader Cathy Swift said, 'It was such a worthwhile visit, and we all left feeling reassured that we were not wasting our time sorting out our recycling.'

Here are the team's **top recycling tips**.

1. Recycling works! It really is worth taking care to *recycle all the permitted items you can*. Everything recycled correctly, at home or in Ealing Council street and park recycling bins, is reprocessed and reused. Plastics, metals and glass are generally reprocessed in the UK. Aluminium cans are processed in the UK or Germany, based on demand. Paper and cardboard are reprocessed in Kent or at one of the modern pulp-mills in south-east Asia.

2. Check a summary of items accepted by Ealing Council and its recycling processing company here:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201171/recycling_services/280/household_recycling

3. When unacceptable items are found in any batch of recyclables, they have to be manually removed, and the Council (that means we - the residents) have to pay extra for the batch to be processed. In the worst cases of contamination, a whole batch of recyclables can be rejected, meaning it has to be processed as rubbish, which carries a greater cost.

4. Most (95%) of the sorting of recyclables is done by machine; however, at any one time 50 people carry out manual sorting and quality control. We can make their job more pleasant by ensuring our recycling is not soiled.

5. There are many places that will accept for recycling the items that Ealing Council will not accept. Search for this information by postcode here: <https://www.recyclenow.com>. Do let us know if you find any errors or omissions.

The dos and don'ts of recycling - including the most troublesome mistakes

Food

DO	DON'T
Recycle in your food caddy or buy a wormery to convert your food waste to compost; otherwise put food waste in with your rubbish (in your black bin/bags or public rubbish bin).	NEVER put food in with your recycling. This will contaminate the entire batch of recycling and cause it to be rejected.
Rinse food containers before recycling. They do not have to be perfectly clean.	NEVER put heavily soiled food packaging in recycling – put it in with your rubbish.

Nappies; sanitary products

DO	DON'T
Dispose of nappies and sanitary products, whether soiled or not, with your rubbish.	NEVER put nappies and sanitary products in with your recycling. These will contaminate the entire batch of recycling and it will be rejected.

Batteries

DO	DON'T
Return used batteries to a retailer for disposal – most supermarkets accept them.	NEVER put batteries in with your rubbish or recycling as they can cause fires.

Textiles

DO	DON'T
Put any unwanted textiles <i>in a carrier bag</i> for collection alongside your rubbish or recycling. Alternatively, take them to a charity shop or a charity textiles bin, or offer for reuse (see below).	DO NOT mix textiles in with your recycling, because they are unacceptable by the processor and may cause the batch to be rejected. Textiles in carrier bags collected by Ealing Council are sent to the Salvation Army.

Paper and cardboard

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycle DRY paper and cardboard. If items are too large for your recycling bin, tear or cut them into smaller pieces. Store any excess in clear plastic bags and place by your recycling bin on collection day. Newspapers, magazines, envelopes (including window), catalogues, directories, junk mail, shredded paper are all acceptable. There is no need to remove Sellotape or other plastic tape from paper or cardboard packaging, as this comes away during reprocessing. Recycle gift wrapping paper as long as (1) it does not have glitter, and (2) when you scrunch it up it stays scrunched. Recycle pizza and other fast food packaging, provided it is not heavily soiled. Tear any heavily soiled bits off and put them with your rubbish. 	<p>Do not allow cardboard to get wet. The cost of processing is estimated by weight, and wet paper and card weigh much more than dry items. It will therefore be rejected.</p> <p>Do not put food or heavily soiled cardboard food packaging in with your recycling – put it in with your rubbish.</p>

Metals

DO	DON'T
Recycle aluminium drinks and food cans . If lids have become detached, place them in the cans and crush them.	Do not separate the lids from food cans or they will fall through the conveyor belt at the recycling plant.
Recycle aluminium foil packaging and wrapping . Rinse first. Collect foil wrapping and squeeze into a roll or clump before putting in with your recycling. This enables it to be pulled out by electromagnet or by hand.	Do not put heavily soiled aluminium foil in with your recycling.
Recycle aerosol cans – remove caps and lids	
Recycle nitrous oxide 'bullets' . These items, usually silver in appearance, about 7cm long, are often found in open spaces, having been used by recreational drug takers. They are made of aluminium and can be recycled.	
Return gas bottles to the retailer or take them to Greenford Household Waste and Recycling Centre.	NEVER put Camping Gaz or any other gas bottles, including large nitrous oxide gas chargers, in with your recycling as they are likely to explode and cause injury.
Take unwanted metal kitchen utensils and pans to a charity shop or offer for reuse (see below).	Do not put saucepans, frying pans etc in with your recycling.

Plastics

DO	DON'T
Recycle plastic bottles . Rinse, squash and replace the lids. Recycle plastic tubs and pots .	Do not put loose lids in with the recycling as they will fall through the conveyor belt during processing. Do not put black plastics in with your recycling.
Save your soft plastics (clean cling film, food bags, crisp packets, carrier bags etc) and take them to a supermarket which accepts these, eg, Tesco, Co-op etc. Soft plastics can be reprocessed into plastic bags, boards (an alternative to plywood) or polymer for reprocessing into other plastic items.	Do not put soft plastic items in with your recycling.
Take hard plastic items such as washing up bowls, buckets, Tupperware, toys etc to a charity shop or offer them for reuse (see below).	Do not put hard plastic items in with your recycling.

Glass

DO	DON'T
Rinse glass jars and bottles and replace the lids before putting in with your recycling.	Do not remove the lids or recycle them separately, as they will fall through the conveyor belt during processing.
Broken glass - wrap up safely and put in with your rubbish.	Do not put broken glass in with your recycling as it could cause injury to a refuse collector or recycling operative.

Other items NOT to put in with your recycling

Before discarding consider if any of these items could be reused, or used for craft projects. For example, corks can be used for drainage in plant pots.

Item	What to do with it
Polystyrene	<u>Not recyclable</u> – put with your rubbish
Jiffy bags	<u>Not recyclable</u> – put with your rubbish
Pringles and similar cartons	<u>Not recyclable</u> – put with your rubbish
Corks	<u>Not recyclable</u> – put with your rubbish
Coffee cups and lids	Costa takes back its own cups and those from other retailers. Otherwise put with your rubbish.
Drinking glasses, Pyrex, window glass	<u>Not recyclable</u> – recycle, or wrap carefully and put with your rubbish

Ideas for disposing of non-recyclables that you no longer want (but someone else might!)

- Offer them to your friends and neighbours. But please do not leave them on the pavement as this is **flytipping**. If you are caught your good intention could lead to a fine.
- Offer them on social media sites. You'd be surprised at the level of interest in your unwanted items, and you can state that items have to be collected. Examples include Facebook group Ealing Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; OLIO; Freecycle; Freegle; Nextdoor; etc.
- Take them to a charity shop. If you can't get to a charity shop when it's open (note that leaving items outside charity shops is **flytipping**), some charities will collect. Examples of organisations that will collect are listed below – check out their websites for details.

Organisation	Website
TRAID	https://www.traid.org.uk/clothes-donations/book-a-collection/
British Heart Foundation	https://www.bhf.org.uk/shop/donating-goods/book-furniture-collection-near-me
Anglo Doorstep Collections	https://anglodoorstepcollections.co.uk/site/about/
Trinity – helping the homeless	https://www.wearetrinity.org.uk/shops/

- Take them to an on-street '**bring site**'. These large bins are operated by charities such as the Salvation Army. Different operators accept different items, including textiles and shoes; small electricals; etc.

- Take them to Ealing Council's **Household Waste and Recycling Centre** at Greenford. You can access the site by car or bicycle, but not on foot. Access is by appointment only, and disposal of some items is chargeable. Full terms and conditions on the website:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201171/recycling_services/292/re-use_and_recycling_centres_and_sites/3

- Use Ealing Council's **Bulky Items Collection Service**. At £40 for up to eight items, this may not be good value. If not, ask your neighbours if they have anything so you can share the cost. Website:

https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/2017/request_a_bulky_items_collection

- Hire a **commercial rubbish collector**. Make sure the collector shows you evidence of having a commercial waste licence. Should a disreputable operator subsequently flytip your rubbish and it is traced back to you, you could receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for **flytipping**. See a register of licensed waste carriers here:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

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