
Waste and recycling

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wetherspoon

Reducing, reusing, recycling and waste management

As a business, Wetherspoon aims to minimise general waste and maximise recycling and reuse.

The company looks for opportunities for circularity in its waste-management systems.

The company has set the target for a maximum of 10% of waste to be treated as general waste and for no waste to be sent to landfill.

Whenever possible, waste is segregated into a minimum of eight 'streams' (food waste, glass, tins/cans, cooking oil, paper/cardboard, plastic, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), general waste) and is managed as follows:

Recycling	Reuse	Anaerobic digestion	Waste-to-energy power plants ¹
Glass Paper/cardboard Plastics Tins/cans Cooking oil WEEE (lightbulbs, batteries and all electronic waste)	Tote boxes Equipment Mushroom crates	Food waste Coffee grounds	General waste (non-recyclable)

Wetherspoon's national distribution centre, at Daventry, also includes an in-house 24-hour recycling centre, accounting for approximately 20% of the site, with a large, dedicated workforce and specialist equipment. When making deliveries to pubs, lorries collect mixed recycling, used cooking oil and reusable items for return to the recycling centre – so reducing the company's carbon footprint from reduced road miles.

Cooking oil is managed carefully to maximise life, including regular filtering to remove impurities. Waste oil is converted to biodiesel for agricultural use.

Draught beer and ale are supplied to pubs in barrels which are returned to the brewery for cleaning and reuse.

Some draught cider, wine and soft drinks are supplied in a bag-in-a-box. After the contents have been dispensed, the plastic bag and cardboard box can be separated and sent for separate recycling.

In partnership with Veolia, our waste service provider, 99.8% of waste was diverted from landfill during the financial year 2023/24.

Waste was managed as follows:

		Weight (tonnes)	% of total waste (by weight)
Recycling	Glass	21,687	35.87
	Paper/cardboard	5,069	8.38
	Plastics	234	0.39
	Tins/cans	275	0.45
	Cooking oil	2,006	3.32
	WEEE (lightbulbs, batteries electronic waste)	55	0.09
	Total recycling	29,326	48.50
Anaerobic digestion (food, coffee grounds)		9,039	14.95
Waste-to-energy power plants (non-recyclable waste)	99.8% of non-recyclable waste was diverted from landfill	22,055	36.48
Landfill		44	0.07
TOTAL		60,464	100

¹These plants use general waste as a fuel to generate low-carbon electricity and/or heat, as an alternative to using fossil fuels.

All paper is purchased in partnership with Forest Carbon (www.forestcarbon.co.uk) which invests in new woodland and peatland restoration projects. In partnership with Forest Carbon, over the last four years, more than 3.85 tonnes of additional carbon have been captured from the atmosphere as a result of planting new woodlands and peatland restoration.

Biodiesel conversion

Biodiesel is a renewable fuel created from refining used cooking oil. It is used in transportation and machinery and has lower kg CO₂e than regular diesel. If used cooking oil is not collected, it can harm the environment by polluting rivers, blocking drains and sewers and could lead to flooding. Of the cooking oil purchased during the financial year, approximately 50% was collected by the company's distribution centre and processed at its outsourced recycling plant. This had the potential to generate 370,910kg CO₂e of biodiesel, resulting in 93% less kg CO₂e than regular diesel.

- 29,071 tonnes of cooking oil collected since 2012
- 50% (estimate) of cooking oil purchased sent for conversion to biodiesel in 2024
- 5.2m kg CO₂e potentially saved by using biodiesel, instead of regular diesel, based on 2024 collections

Water conservation

Water usage is monitored across all pubs and head office.

A target has been set to reduce water consumption by both more careful use and the installation of more efficient equipment (where possible), including:

- data management systems which help to pinpoint unexpected changes in water consumption – which may indicate a change in behaviour or a supply leak
- water-efficient dishwashers and glass washers
- low-flow or push-button taps, along with toilets requiring less water to flush
- all pubs to have a smart water meter installed

Food waste

Several initiatives have been implemented to reduce food wastage, including preparation waste and plate waste.

On occasion, portion size may be reduced, following feedback and to reduce plate waste. Some meals are available in a smaller portion size, suiting customers seeking a lighter meal.

Any unwanted, yet fit-for-consumption, food is donated to charities such as FareShare, which distributes it to food banks, community centres and/or others in need.

All pubs and head office segregate food waste, which is then collected and sent for anaerobic digestion.

- Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) 2018 awards 'waste no food'

Take-away packaging

The company does not routinely advertise food to take away, although some customers may request to do so, either as a whole meal or as a 'doggy bag'.

Plastics

The company has set the following targets by 2025:

- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable
- 70% of plastic packaging to be effectively recycled or composted
- 30% average recycled content across plastic packaging
- Action, through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery models, to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic items

Single-use plastics

Plastics can have a place. They can protect products from damage and contamination, increase food shelf life and, since they are usually lightweight, create lower transport emissions than would heavier materials. Our approach focuses on two areas:

- Removing unnecessary single-use plastics which can be avoided
- Waste management of plastics – aim for 100% recyclable, reusable or compostable

To date, the following steps have been taken to reduce single-use plastics' use:

- Plastic straws – removed in December 2017 and replaced with 100% biodegradable and 100% recyclable paper straws and wrappers. Customers can self-select a straw, if required, rather than automatically being given one each time.
- Single-use portion pots have been replaced by reusable versions.
- Cling film is no longer used.
- Plastic water bottles – complimentary water fountains are available in all pubs. Alternatives to the current single-use plastic bottles are being reviewed.
- Plastic packaging – we are working with our major suppliers and with the support of the **Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP)** and the **Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA)** to reduce and, where possible, remove the use of plastic packaging for food.
- Plastic milk cartons – these are segregated and recycled separately. Coloured lids have been replaced with clear recyclable lids.

- Disposable coffee cups – the majority of hot drinks sold in pubs is consumed on the premises, including unlimited complimentary refills, all served in a china mug!

Other waste

Toxic emissions and waste

The company does not knowingly create any toxic emissions or waste.

Electronic waste

Electronic waste items are disposed of safely using specialised contractors.

Where possible, computer equipment is sent to suppliers to refurbish and reuse.

Any disposal is compliant with the EU Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive.

Building development and refurbishment

On construction sites, there is a site waste management plan, managed by the main contractor and covering all site waste disposal.