

## The Plastic Challenge: Single use plastics

Go for a walk and you will encounter things like plastic bottles, coffee cups and straws. These often aren't or cannot be recycled and sometimes end up in our rivers and oceans. Here they can enter the food chain so if you like fish you may well be eating plastic too. There are alternatives.

	Plastic straws	Coffee cups and lids	Plastic bottles	Cling film	Disposable wipes	Plastic vegetable & fruit bags
						
The issue	<p>Plastic straws are used on average for 20 minutes &amp; can take hundreds of years to break down. Millions of straws are used each week in the UK.</p> <p><b>Straws suck!</b></p>	<p><b>2.5 billion disposable coffee cup and lids</b> used each year in the UK – very few are or can be recycled. This results in <b>25,000 tonnes</b> of waste and lots of litter in our countryside, on our streets and beaches and in our oceans</p>	<p>Plastic bottles take at least 400 years to break down. <b>In our Borough as many as 10 million bottles a year are not recycled.</b></p> <p><b>Bottled water sales are growing year on year</b></p>	<p><b>Cling film is a single use plastic which will end up in landfill.</b> There are some concerns around chemicals used in its production and what happens when it comes into contact with hot foods in particular.</p>	<p><b>Disposable wipes cost a lot of money</b>, especially for parents of babies and young children.</p> <p>They cause problems when <b>discarded on beaches or flushed down toilets.</b></p>	<p>We use huge quantities of these and most are discarded on returning home from the shop.</p> <p><b>They end up in landfill or causing litter problems on land and in the oceans</b></p>
The alternatives	<p><b>Use your lips;</b> most of us do not use straws at home.</p> <p><b>Get reusable straws.</b></p> <p>As a last resort, ask your local café if they would consider using paper straws.</p>	<p><b>Bring a reusable cup,</b> some cafes offer discount.</p> <p><b>Ask for a proper cup</b> don't accept disposable</p> <p>Encourage cafés to <b>use compostable single use cups.</b></p>	<p><b>Use a refillable bottle;</b> it's cheaper and better for the planet.</p> <p>Keep an eye out for the <b>H<sub>2</sub>O on the go</b> stickers in local businesses. They will be happy to <b>refill your bottle.</b></p>	<p><b>Use reusable containers</b> with lids to store food.</p> <p><b>Use glass or ceramic containers to reheat food,</b> cover with a plate if necessary.</p> <p><b>Use sandwich wraps or lunch boxes</b></p>	<p><b>Use cloth alternatives,</b> either home-made or purchased.</p> <p><b>Cloth alternatives</b> can be less damaging to sensitive skin and <b>can save a lot of money.</b></p>	<p><b>Buy loose items,</b> not everything needs to be in a bag.</p> <p><b>Make your own produce bags from net curtains.</b></p> <p><b>Purchase ready-made produce bags.</b></p>