



Working document last updated March 2024

Retailer Take-back

An industry briefing

No time to read? Key take-aways

- 1. All electrical retailers are legally obliged to help customers recycle their electricals - and tell your customers you offer this**
 - If you fail to comply with the WEEE regulations **you can be prosecuted and fined**
 - UK Government is exploring new, strengthened take-back obligations on all retailers, including internet sellers [retailers across Europe already mandated to take back all electricals in-store]
 - Material Focus are receiving an increasing number of customer complaints about their local retailers not taking back electricals which we are passing onto OPSS for follow-up
 - Retailers selling over £100k of electricals (vape sellers: equiv to selling over 50 single use vapes/ day) need to [take-back old electricals in store](#) or set up an an [alternative collection point](#) instead
- 2. Consumers are actively seeking out these recycling services**
 - **Over 1m** people a year visit Recycle Your Electricals to find their nearest recycling drop off point
 - The majority of UK public tell us they would use supermarket, charity and electrical retailer drop off points if they were available
- 3. We're here to help!**
 - Download [Comms toolkit](#) from our website, created with **OPSS/Dept for Business and Trade** to ensure your comms are compliant; add your locations to our Recycling Locator to help make it easier for consumers

Who are Material Focus?

We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation on a mission to get the UK fixing, donating and recycling all of their old and unwanted electricals. And stop precious resources from being lost forever. We do this through...

Insights

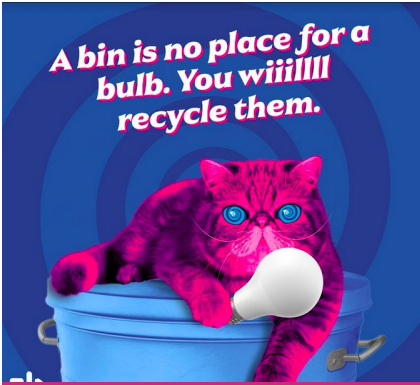
- Identifying, producing and sharing insightful, timely and impactful research to help build a better UK e-waste/ WEEE system.

Investments

- Identifying and funding projects which help make it easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals.

Inspiration

- Creating and delivering communications which help make it feel easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals through our [Recycle Your Electricals](#) campaign.



A bin is no place for a bulb. You wiiiiiiii recycle them.

Earth Hour



Never bin hidden batteries.

Battery fires



Spring cleaners, bag up 'THAT' box of old cables for recycling

Key moments



5 million+
single-use vapes are binned every week



Awareness



Give Back January



Giant toaster bring bank



Waste Week schools campaign



Ben wants to know what to do with his old electric toothbrush?



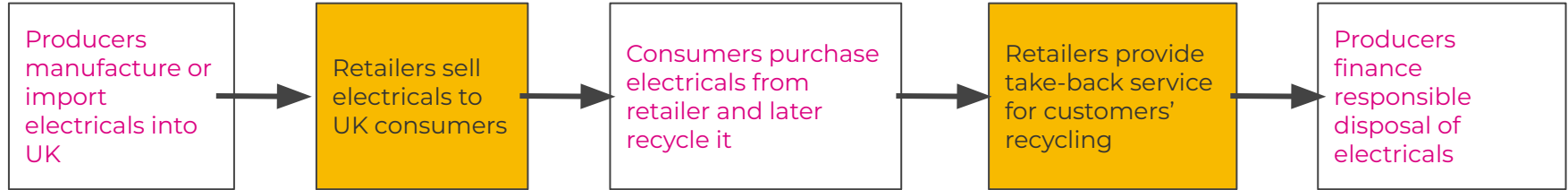
Education

How do I comply with WEEE/e-waste environmental regulations as a *Retailer*?

What is e-waste?

- e-waste is known by the industry as Waste/discarded Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) - or more simply *anything with a plug, battery or cable*
 - Most e-waste contains toxic chemicals and is classed as **hazardous waste**
 - If not handled properly at end-of-life they pose a **major threat to the environment**, human health, society, and costs the UK economy through losing precious resources
 - **Recovering materials** like steel, aluminium, copper, gold, silver, lithium and plastics **protects land and sea environments** by reducing the need to mine for new materials
- e-waste is one of the **fastest-growing sources of waste in the world – and the UK**
 - UK householders bin 155,000 tonnes of e-waste every year
 - We are hoarding 527 million items of unwanted electricals in our UK homes
- **Anything with a plug, battery and cable should always be recycled** as a minimum and should never be binned

Retailers vs Producers' responsibilities



Retailers responsibilities

- Provide take-back service
- Record each electrical item taken-back
- Provide information about the service you offer

Producers responsibilities

- Report on their sales directly or via a Producer Compliance Scheme
- Finance their share of the costs of collecting and recycling waste electricals from public sites
- Provide a drop off option for waste electricals collected by retailers
- Finance the cost of recycling

Retailer take-back responsibilities - for all retailers selling electricals

- Take-back for recycling - accept back customers' items that have the same function when they buy a new electrical item from you, regardless of brand eg -
 - Customer's old kettle when they buy a new one
 - Video player if the customer buys a DVD player
 - Also referred to as *take-back on a like for like basis*
- Clearly communicate to your customers that you offer this - and be able to prove it
- 3 options to deliver this
 - Provide a free, in store, take-back service
 - Join the Distributor Takeback Scheme (DTS) - if you sell electricals worth < £100k, or online only
 - Set up an alternative, free take-back service
- If you fail to comply with the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) regulations, you **can be prosecuted and get an unlimited fine** from a magistrates' court or a Crown Court.

* Source: [Electrical waste: retailer and distributor responsibilities: Take back waste in store - GOV.UK](#)

Retailer take-back - if you **sell electricals online only**

[Sign up to the Distributor Take-back Scheme](#) (DTS) who manage your take-back obligations on your behalf.

- You pay a fee that covers your waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) obligations until 31 December 2023
- This money goes towards supporting the recycling centres run by local authorities
- Keep a record of what information you give to your customers about where they should take their WEEE

Retailer take-back - if you sell <£100k of electricals

[Sign up to the Distributor Take-back Scheme](#) (DTS) who manage your take-back obligations on your behalf.

- You pay a fee that covers your waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) obligations until 31 December 2023
- This money goes towards supporting the recycling centres run by local authorities
- Keep a record of what information you give to your customers about where they should take their WEEE

Retailer take-back - if you sell >£100k of electricals

If your business sells **£100,000 or more of electricals** per year and has physical stores you'll need to take back waste in store, or set up an alternative collection point instead.

- **In-store take-back**

- Must be free (but can charge for collecting items from customers' homes)
 - Be clearly communicated to customers
 - Give customers at least 28 days to bring back their waste item
 - Take back all types of electrical and electronic equipment that you sell - more and more retailers are choosing to extend the service to cover all electrical and electronic waste
- Brands with multi-site stores selling a variety of different products may need to communicate differently in different stores, and should ensure that store staff advise consumers, that larger goods can only be returned to specific stores
- If your **electrical and electronic equipment sales area is > 400m²** including aisle, display and shelf space, you must accept any very small electricals* at any store, regardless of whether someone buys a new electrical item there

*items <25cm on their longest side



TRANSPORT the electricals collected for recycling

- To dispose of the electricals you've collected you can do one of the following:
 - Speak to a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS)
 - [Contact](#) the PCS and agree arrangements and fees
 - PCS will arrange for the waste to be recycled at an Approved Authorised Treatment Facility (AATF)
 - You may be charged for collection and transportation of the waste to the AATF or the PCS collection point
 - Transport the waste yourself
 - Register as a waste carrier
 - Follow the rules on transporting hazardous waste as 'vapes' are considered hazardous
 - Transport, and drop off the waste at an AATF or PCS collection point yourself
- Keep records of all electrical and electronic waste that you collect and dispose of including the number of units you've received through take-back and say how many of these were returned to a PCS. [You can use a template.](#)
 - Include documentation you make, or are given by the PCS or the AATF, when you dispose of electrical and electronic waste
 - Please see the [full list of approved recyclers](#), producer compliance schemes (PCS) and approved authorised treatment facilities (AATFs) in the partner section on our website.
 - You also need to keep records of how you tell customers about your take back scheme.
 - Keep all your records for 4 years.

Note: Vapes are electricals, and should be collected and stored separately from other small electricals and batteries. You can find more information on producer and retailer responsibilities in our [vape industry briefing paper here](#).

- If you sell separate batteries for vapes you must also offer free take-back for batteries

Minimum requirement for Retailer Take-back communications

Retailers must accept consumers' old electricals in store for recycling - and **tell customers about this service**. We worked with OPSS/Dept for Business and Trade (DBT) to help **ensure consistency** across all consumer communications. Our [Retailer Take-Back Comms toolkit](#) contains **ready-made and editable assets** and key messaging to enable you to meet your obligations. There are **like-for-like, recycle all, and recycle vapes** options.

Mandatory

- Strut card and poster - for use at the checkout/till in-store
- Point of sale comms - for use at the points in the store where you sell electricals
- Website copy - on how customers can reuse and recycle electrical and electronic equipment
- QR code or web address - directing people to your website or Recycle Your Electricals

Optional

- Recycle Your Electricals Recycling Locator link or widget - most comprehensive and accurate locator
- 'Proud supporter'/'recycle here' - available as window decal or stand-alone logo
- Receipt or till prompt
- On-packaging options
- Online point of sale messaging
- 'How to delete data' guide
- Staff training support

Supporting docs

- Recycle Your Electricals brand guidelines

Retailer responsibilities

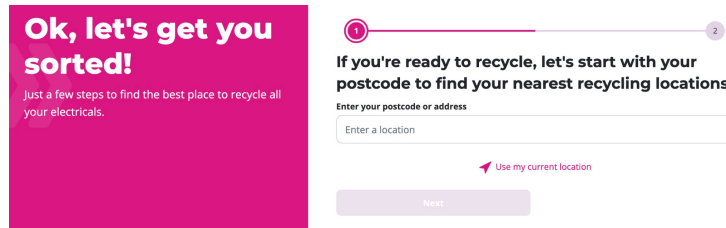
- All *retailers* selling electricals (including vapes) **must offer a take-back service for customers**, whether you sell the products direct, online, mail order or by telephone
- You must separate, store and keep records of the waste. Also you must **use authorised businesses to collect and recycle**
- Some retailers will also be considered as *Producers* of electricals. These are retailers who place more than 5 tonnes of electricals on the market in the UK (as an original manufacturer or as the importer)

RECORD the waste electricals that you take back

- You must keep records of all electrical and electronic waste that you collect and dispose of - you can use a [template](#)
- Include the number of units you've received through take back and say how many of these were returned to a PCS
- You need to keep all documentation you make, or are given by the PCS or the AATF, when you dispose of electrical and electronic waste
- You also need to keep records of how you tell customers about your take back scheme.
- Keep all your records for 4 years

Other ways we can help

- Industry stats, infographics and assets on fixing, donating, selling and recycling electricals electricals to use in your campaigns
- Consumer research on awareness, attitudes and behaviours relating to electrical reuse and recycling
- [‘How to delete data’ guide](#)
- Promote your electrical reuse and recycling services and offers, provide quotes for press releases and amplify your good work in this area
- [List of approved recyclers](#)
- Industry leading Recycling Locator (22,000+ drop off points) and (83,000+ visits/month) + website widget - add your stores to help consumers easily locate their nearest recycling drop off points



Ok, let's get you sorted!
Just a few steps to find the best place to recycle all your electricals.

1 ————— 2

If you're ready to recycle, let's start with your postcode to find your nearest recycling locations
Enter your postcode or address

Enter a location

[Use my current location](#)

Next

Or just drop us an email?

Please email Nick Birch, Brand Partnerships Manager, nick@materialfocus.org.uk, to discuss how we can work together to make it easier for the UK public to recycle all their electricals.



700 TONNES OF COPPER hidden in unwanted cables in UK homes



Unwanted cables stashed away in UK homes could circle the Earth **MORE THAN 5 TIMES**



Erin wants to know what to do with her bag of old electricals?



Our unwanted electricals have a **£160 MILLION DONATION VALUE** that could help those in need



We purchase a massive **53.5 MILLION ELECTRICAL ITEMS** between Black Friday and Christmas



Did you know that even your tiny human ear buds can be recycled?



Every year, the magnetic materials recycled from our old tech could help build **2,661 WIND TURBINES**



10,000 new recycling points Dogs still UK's most favourite pet **LIVE**



A massive **8 in 10** of us have been **DECLUTTERING** in lockdown this year!



MORE DATA FOR KIDS = MORE KIDS LEARNING ABOUT RECYCLING



This New Year we'll throw away or hoard **OVER 5 MILLION UNWANTED ELECTRICALS** as a result of Christmas spending



Reusing a **31 million old laptops** hidden in UK homes could provide enough aluminium to make **159,000 bikes**



Kim from Essex wants to know if her son's remote control car can be recycled?

There are nearly **12 MILLION UNWANTED KETTLES** going spare in UK households



There are over **200 MILLION UNWANTED CABLES, LAPTOPS & SPEAKERS** stashed away across the UK



Rahul from Manchester wants to know what to do with his soaking wet phone?!



There are over **8 MILLION UNWANTED HAIR DRYERS**

in UK households, waiting to blow away the cobwebs



Nearly **1 in 3** of us have **SECRETLY DITCHED** a partner's old kitchen gadgets



44% of us **ADMIT TO CHUCKING** obsolete music equipment



527 million small old electricals, an average of nearly 20 per household

Contact

The *Recycle Your Electricals* campaign is led by Material Focus.

Material Focus is a not-for-profit organisation - our vision is of a world where materials are never wasted.

Please follow us and share our content on social media



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