



Bristol Climate &  
Nature Partnership

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME

# TACKLING BUSINESS WASTE



Just about every organisation is producing waste in some form, regardless of their size.

The focus is shifting from a wasteful extractive model towards a circular economy with businesses having responsibility for the items they produce.

# How to calculate emissions generated from waste (scope 3)

Step 1: Collect data on the amount of waste produced

Look for the quantities of waste generated by waste type

- \* Household refuse
- \* Non-hazardous general waste
- \* Mixed recyclable
- \* Plastics

General

- \* Food waste
- \* Garden waste

Organic

- \* Bricks
- \* Concrete
- \* Asphalt
- \* Glass

Construction

- \* Clothes
- \* Books
- \* Hazardous waste

Other

Accurate data equals an accurate carbon footprint. How complex this is will depend on your operations so aim for accuracy, but don't let imperfect data prevent action!

## Step 2: Consider the waste disposal methods

The method of waste disposal used will impact your emissions

Level of emissions

Landfill



- ☰ Allowing waste to slowly degrade produces methane
- ☰ Methane has a global warming potential 28 times higher than carbon dioxide
- ☰ The methane will contribute to global warming for over 100 years

Incineration



- ☰ Incineration is efficient in disposing of waste, but comes with significant health and environmental downsides
- ☰ Some facilities can recapture energy from incinerating waste, known as energy recapture, this is an improvement, but still not a solution
- ☰ Some facilities can produce refuse-derived fuels

Recycling / composting



- ☰ Recycling and composting require much less energy than producing new materials and avoids mining raw resources, however they do still require energy to transport and process
- ☰ It also prevents materials ending up in landfill, further reducing emissions

## Step 3: Calculate the emissions

Emissions activity data  
x relevant emissions factor  
= quantity of CO<sub>2</sub>e  
(carbon dioxide equivalent)

e.g. 100 litres petrol  
x 0.60283  
= 60.283 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e

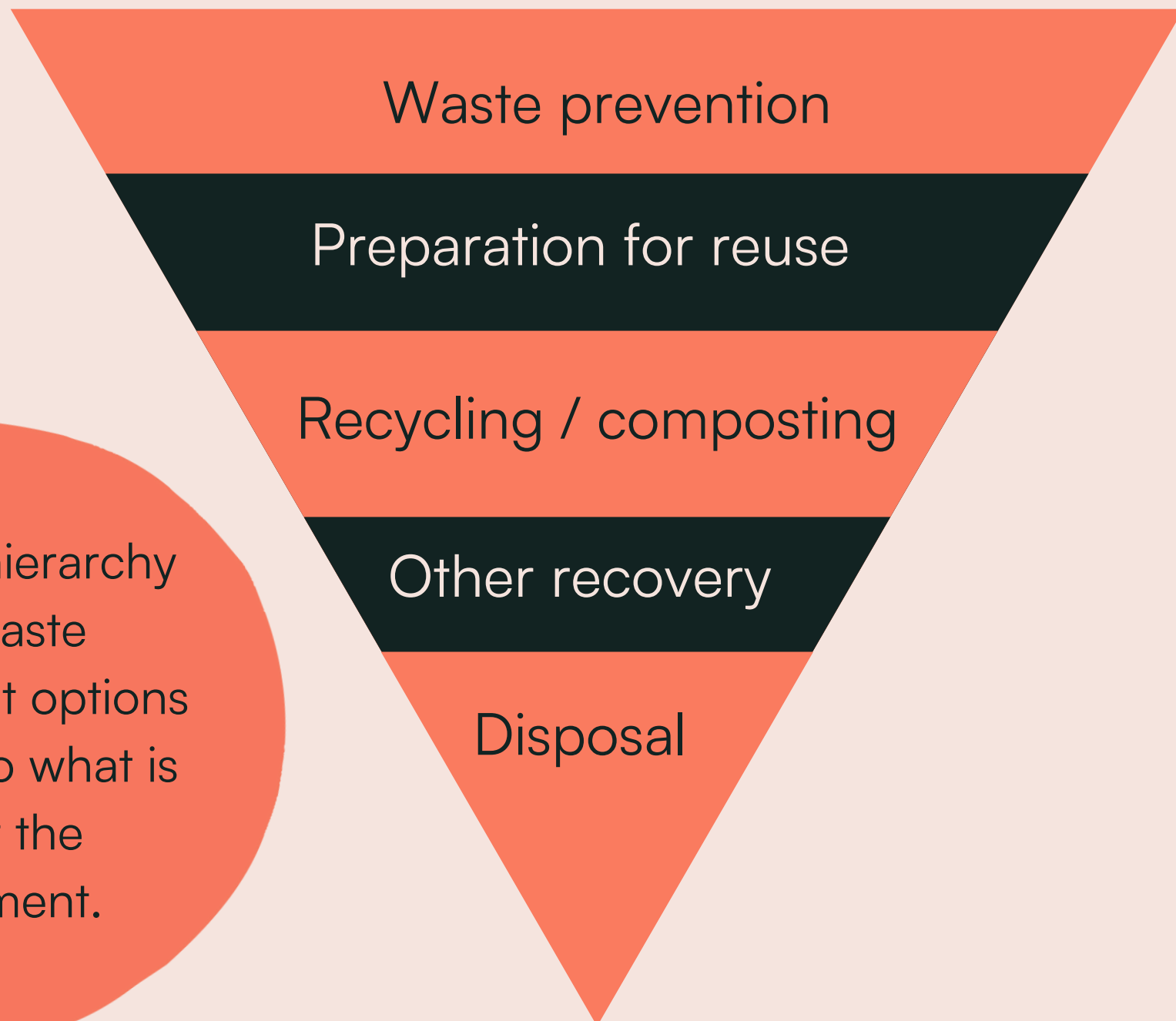
Emissions factors are updated each year.  
Find the latest conversion factors from Defra.

Any calculations you are conducting should comply with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol or equivalent standard

# Reduce and reuse


Reducing the amount of waste that your organisation is producing is paramount, as reusing and recycling still produce emissions

## Waste hierarchy:




The waste hierarchy ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment.


# Here are some ideas for reducing and reusing...



Provide infrastructure within your building for staff to reuse and recycle. For example, by having a stock of reusable lunch boxes and coffee cups



Host a clothes swap in your building for colleagues



Switch from paper to digital

Work with suppliers to ensure packaging is kept to a minimum or use those who offer a packaging takeback service

# Upcoming policy changes

Upcoming policies under the government's Resources and Waste Strategy to support a move towards a more circular economy and create consistency in household and business waste and recycling.



Food waste collection

Businesses with 10 or more employees will be required to separate their food waste for collection from April 2025



Separating dry recycling

Dry recycling materials (plastic, glass, paper/card and metal) will be required to be separated to increase quality of recycling, reduce contamination and increase quality of recycled materials. It should be separated by businesses with 10 or more employees unless it is not technically or economically practicable or there is no significant environmental benefit in doing so

Start thinking about how this will work — as you'll need to demonstrate why it is not possible.



## How will this impact businesses?



You will need to train and engage your staff to ensure successful integration



You will need space to increase the number of recycling containers



General waste is most expensive to dispose of. Minimising and diverting residual waste should provide cost savings

## How can your business prepare?

- Conduct a waste audit. [Learn how with this guide from WRAP](#)
- Check with your waste provider if they are planning to make changes and what the impact on your business will be. Identify opportunities for joint procurement with neighbouring businesses
- Create a take-less culture. Focus on your essential needs
- Do you have surplus waste? Is there a home for it, such as sharing with colleagues, food redistribution programmes or charitable donations?
- Nominate a waste champion to embed priorities and celebrate best practice
- Adopt the waste hierarchy

# Sector specific requirements

From October 2025, new requirements are coming in for manufacturers, drinks producers and retailers:

## Extended Producer Responsibility

Under Extended Producer Responsibility, any business that handles over 25 tonnes of packaging per year (either purchasing or producing), has a UK presence, and an annual UK turnover of +£1million will be responsible for the collection, sorting, recycling or disposal of their product packaging.



Get prepared by:

- Thinking about the products that fall into scope
- Recording packaging
- Improving labelling to help households and businesses recycle
- Reducing the use of unnecessary and hard to recycle packaging
- Reviewing and redesigning your packaging

[Find out more](#)

# Sector specific requirements

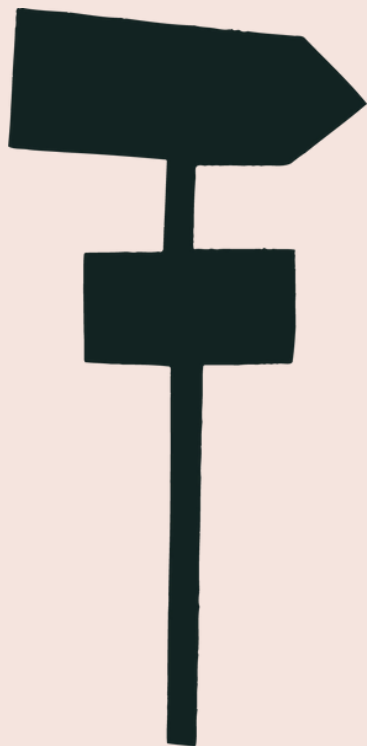
## Deposit Return Scheme

If you are a drink producer or retailer, you will need to prepare for the Deposit Return Scheme designed to tackle discarded beverage containers.



Get prepared by:

- Drinks producers – register with scheme administrators
- Retailers — consider how you will implement charging the deposit and provide clear labelling on the scheme, the deposit value, and how to redeem the deposit in store



[Find out more](#)

For more Climate Action  
Programme events and  
resources visit:  
[bit.ly/CAP-Home](https://bit.ly/CAP-Home)



Bristol Climate &  
Nature Partnership

Produced by Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership, with thanks to:

- Abigail Mason, Senior Consultant at Resource Futures
- Oliver Bolton, Senior System Support Manager at Sustainit