



learning skills partnership
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Looking After the Environment

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Looking after our environment

Our impact on the environment

The UK produces more than 100 million tonnes of waste every year, one tonne is about the weight of a small car. In less than two hours, the waste we produce would fill the Albert Hall in London, every eight months it would fill Lake Windermere, the largest and deepest lake in England!



Supporting Positive Change!

On average, each person in the UK throws away their own body weight in rubbish every seven weeks. The average household in the UK produces more than a tonne of waste every year. Put together, this comes to a total of 31 million tonnes per year, equivalent to the weight of three and a half million double-decker buses, a queue of which would go around the world two and a half times.

Every year we produce about 3% more waste than the year before. This might not sound much but, if we carry on at this rate, it means that we will double the amount of waste we produce every 25 years.

The average UK family throws away 6 trees worth of paper in their household bin a year. Paper and card make up about a fifth of the typical household dustbin. About half of this consists of newspapers and magazines. Two-thirds of paper is recycled, making it one of the main materials recycled in the UK. Each Christmas as much as 83 square kilometres

of wrapping paper ends up in UK rubbish bins, enough to cover an area larger than Guernsey, one of the Channel Islands.

It is not known how long glass takes to break down, but it is so long that glass made in the Middle East over 3,000 years ago can still be found today. Glass milk bottles are used an average of 13 times before recycling. In 2003, the recycling of glass saved enough energy to launch ten space shuttle missions! We produce and use twenty times more plastic today than we did 50 years ago. Most plastic shopping bags are used only once, and a plastic bag can take more than 100 years to decompose!

How to take care of the environment

The importance of caring for the environment is absolutely paramount for many reasons. Perhaps most importantly, we need to make sure that we leave this place better than when we came for the next generations whose job(s) it will be to also look after the planet. It wouldn't be fair to hand them something we fouled up that they are responsible for cleaning up. With that in mind, here are a few ways to take care of our environment:

- Turn out the lights when they are not in use – This one is too easy but is actually one of the more commonly overlooked ways to reduce energy consumption.
- Reusable water bottles – Fossil fuels are required to make plastic bottles, so using fewer plastic bottles will help greatly in preserving this precious resource.



- Recycling – Recycling is one of the most popular and most impactful ways that you can help the environment.

- Repurposing – So many things around your home can be repurposed and reused. Plastic bags, for instance, can be reused at the grocery store or used as small wastebasket bags.
- Detergents – There are a number of things we use detergents for. Most of them are bad for the environment. Everything that goes down a drain will eventually find its way back to
- Refuse plastic wherever you can, Say ‘No, thank you’ to any single-use plastic items – from cutlery to straws – in shops and food outlets and explain why.
- Cut coffee-cup waste by carrying your own reusable cup, most coffee shops sell these recycle cups



- When you buy meat and fish take your own airtight food container into shops and supermarkets to cut out the plastic packaging.
- Get tough on grease and oil - Cook with as little as possible, strain when cool, store in a glass jar in the fridge or a dark cupboard. If you can't reuse, never pour it down the sink, even with detergent and hot water. Put in a sealed container and bin with non-recyclable trash. Or make your own landfill and bury it deep in the garden
- Look for organic cotton products - Conventional cotton production accounts for almost 16 per cent of all insecticides used globally so it's a major environmental polluter.

- Use organic cotton face/hand cloths - rather than wet wipes or make-up remover pads and never put wipes down the loo. Most are made of polyester, a plastic that takes years to degrade and then releases millions of tiny fibres into rivers. The Department for Environment now classes wet wipes with plastic bags as serious environmental hazards.
- Plan daily and weekly menu - then make a shopping list of what you need.
- Plant shrubs and trees to combat air pollution and provide homes for wildlife. Grow bee-friendly organic herbs. Wherever possible, remove concrete from urban gardens to reduce flood risk.
- Switch to a green energy supplier such as Green Star Energy, Ecotricity or Green Energy.
- Cut down on car journeys If possible, switch to a hybrid or an electric car to reduce your greenhouse-gas emissions. Or try carpooling, walking, cycling or using public transport. Have your groceries delivered – one van delivering to 30 families is less polluting than 30 separate car trips.



Useful Environmental Websites

If the environment is something that is important to you or you would like to find out more information about the laws, policies or statistics in the UK, we have put together a collection of some of the most useful websites you will find online.

These websites and organisations all share a common goal and that is improving the health of our planet. They strive for a better environment, push for more action to fight against climate change and aim to educate as many people as possible on the current environmental plights that face the planet.

The list is in no particular order but each and every website is worth checking out.

Legislation.gov.uk

To learn all about the current legislation regarding the environmental laws in the UK, [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) is the website you should be going to. This is the government's official website and will provide you with all of the information you need.

Green Alliance

Formed in 1979, [Green Alliance](https://www.greenalliance.org.uk) is both a charity and a leading independent think-tank that strives to continually push for improved environmental laws and policies in the UK. The website also likes to keep people right up to date with the latest environmental news.

National Association for Environmental Education

The [National Association for Environmental Education](https://www.naee.org.uk) has spent the last 50 years supporting the education given across the board with regards to the environment. The NAEE is also an Incorporated Charitable Organisation that pushes for children to be educated about the environment as early as possible.

Energy Saving Trust

The [Energy Saving Trust](https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) is an NPG advocates green energy solutions in the UK. Primarily focused on educating people on how to reduce the energy they are using, this leading organisation is a great place to learn what you can do to help the fight against climate change.

Friends of the Earth

Through various campaigns such as reducing air pollution, saving the British bee and other important environmental issues, the [Friends of the Earth](https://www.foe.org.uk) organisation hopes to play its part in helping the environment.

British Ecological Society

As the world's oldest ecological society, the [British Ecological Society](#) aims to ensure that as many people as possible are educated on all types of ecological matters. They have more than 6,400 members around the world which all work hard to advance ecological science.

Ethical Consumer

[Ethical Consumer](#) strives to promote sustainability in business practices by having a greener approach for their products. The website gives a rating to more than 40,000 products which give consumers the ability to see how green they are before buying.

The Wildlife Trusts

With more than 800,000 members spread across close to 50 different groups across the UK, [the Wildlife Trusts](#) are responsible for protecting various natural environments. Whether parks, woods or nature reserves, these trusts will fight to keep them protected.

Keep Britain Tidy

Littering on our streets is another contributor to the damage being done to our environment and since 1955, [Keep Britain Tidy](#) has worked hard to reduce it. Through education and campaigning they continuously spread the word that littering and waste is something that needs to be dealt with more efficiently and at reduced risks to the environment.

Recycle Now

Recycle Now is a government-funded campaign that was first launched in 2004. More than 90% of local authorities in England use [Recycle Now](#) which aims to educate people on how to effectively recycle their waste.

Renewable UK

The sole aim of [Renewable UK](#), a renewable energy trade association, is to increase the number of homes that are using green energy. This is energy that is created via renewable sources such as the wind and sun that do not have a negative effect on the environment.

Committee on Climate Change

As a public body that advises the UK government on issues such as climate change and building a low-carbon economy, the [Committee on Climate Change](#) is another excellent website to look at.

Institution of Environmental Sciences

Founded back in 1971, the [Institution of Environmental Sciences](#) has a strong focus on promoting sustainable development in order to help protect nature in the UK. While the UK is its main focal point, this charity now works on an international basis as well.

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Focusing mainly on waste management, transport and energy, [Campaign to Protect Rural England](#) is a charity that works to protect the UK's countryside.

Environmental Law Foundation

This charity has the Prince of Wales as its president and the core mission of the [Environmental Law Foundation](#) is to help educate people on lesser-known environmental matters that might not make the biggest of headlines in the media.

Useful YouTube clips

Environmental Protection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKSGKFUvBrGc>

Top 15 Easy ways to Save the Environment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2WulaWqcJMo>

Sustainability explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r4loXPyx8>

What happens to our recycling and why is it important?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8lCsYSE8V8>

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