

Plastics recycling info guide

why can I only recycle my plastic bottles? what about other plastic items?

Plastic bottles are specified as they are made from one of only three polymer types and are easily identifiable by the public. The three polymer types used are PET (e.g. fizzy drink bottles and squash bottles), HDPE (e.g. milk bottles and detergent bottles) and PVC (e.g. large squash bottles), although the use of PVC in such applications is in decline.

Items such as margarine tubs and rigid food containers are made from a very wide range of polymer, many of which are blends. These are much more difficult to identify and separate efficiently. It is also more difficult to secure an outlet for the material as mixed plastics are not in high demand.

Yogurt pots are not accepted in plastic recycling schemes as they are in fact made from polystyrene. This has an entirely different make-up to the polymers used in bottles and there are currently limited outlets for the material. Again, there are fewer clearly identified end markets for the material at this time. The quality of the material is often compromised as a result of food contamination, making it necessary for householders to thoroughly wash the cartons before depositing for recycling.

End markets for plastics are continually developing though, and we will add further grades when we can.

Flower pots are another item about which questions are often asked. The majority of flower pots are made from polypropylene, (PP), although some are made from polystyrene. As in the case of rigid food containers and yogurt pots, there are few outlets for collected material and a higher level of contamination.

Currently Stratford District Council can recycle the following grades of plastic -

HDPE – Opaque bottles

Generally -

Milk bottles

Washing up liquid bottles

Detergent bottles

PVC – Transparent bottles, with a seam running across the base

Generally -

Toiletries

Still mineral water bottles

PET – Transparent bottles, with a hard moulded spot in the centre of the base

Generally -

Fizzy drink bottles

Cooking oil bottles

Cordial bottles

We can not recycle:

Plastic carrier bags

Plastic film

Food trays

Yogurt pots

Margarine tubs

Polystyrene