

A Guide to Improving Public Understanding of Waste Prevention

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Waste Prevention Tracker Survey 2024



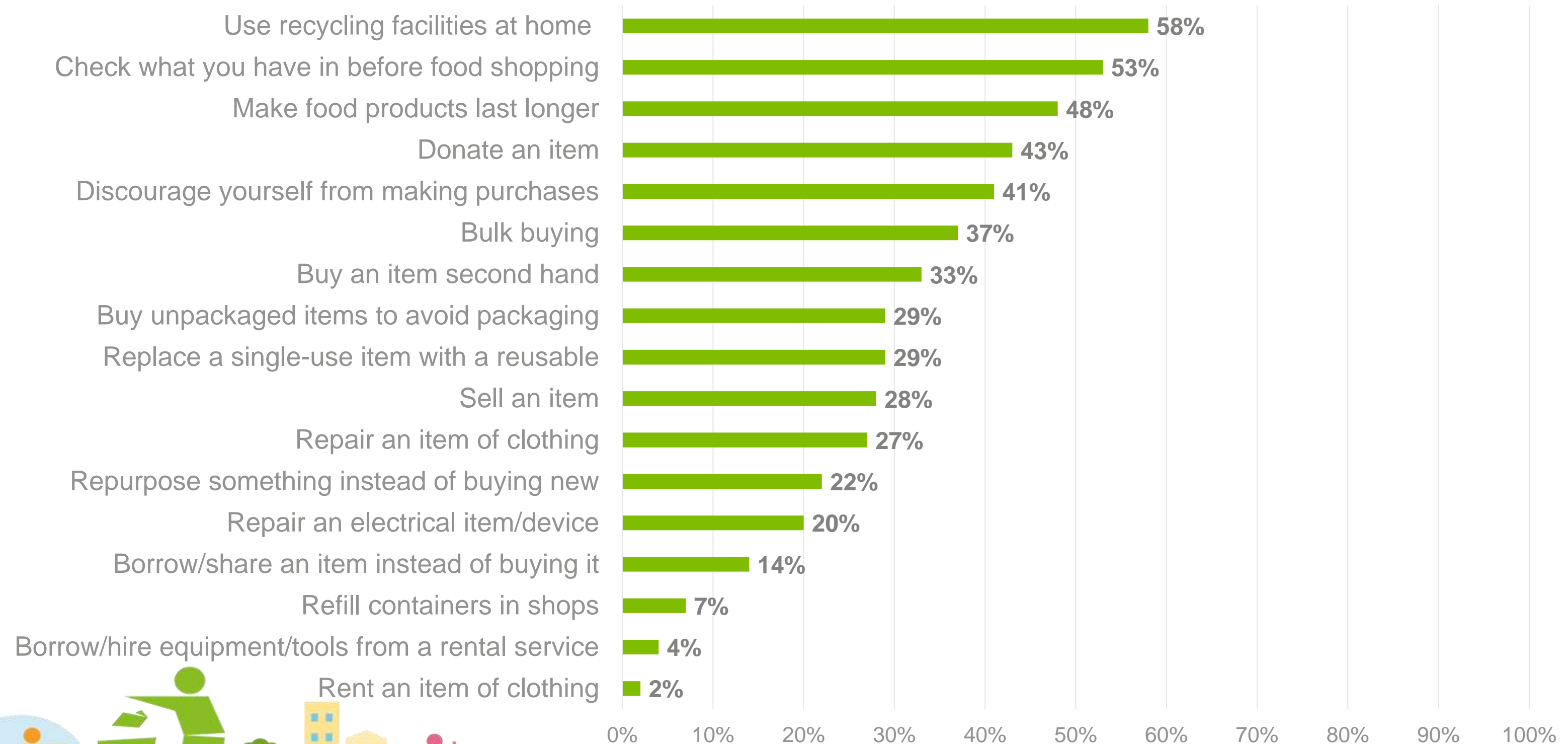
Coming Soon!



Where is the public at with waste prevention?



Which of the following do you do regularly or as much as possible?



Where is the public at with waste prevention?

- **Women and over 55s** are more likely to engage in most waste prevention behaviours
- The biggest differences between engagement in behaviour regularly and at least once in the past 12 months are in **hiring items from a rental service** (↑ 50%) and **borrowing items from someone else** (↑ 46%)
- The smallest differences are in **taking reusable containers to the shop to refill** (22%) and **checking what food you have already before buying more** (25%)
- Perceived **accessibility of services** (e.g. to refill and rent) is much higher than engagement



Negative feelings about consumption are on the rise



69% are concerned about living in a consumer society – up from 60%

82% agree that as a society, we are always being pressured to buy new things – up from 75%

30% think they personally buy too much stuff – up from 25%

33% feel overwhelmed by the amount of stuff they have – up from 27%

57% are concerned about having space to store everything they/their household owns – up from 47%



Misunderstanding of waste prevention and the impacts of consumption



- 68% still think that **recycling is the best thing they can do** to reduce the environmental impacts of the things they buy
- People are more concerned by the **amount of packaging** their purchases come in (78%), than **the impacts that the items have on the environment** (59%)
- 42% say that **as long as an item or it's packaging is recyclable, I don't feel bad about buying it**



Misunderstanding of waste prevention and the impacts of consumption



What does waste mean to you?

70% Stuff you throw away in the bin

70% Throwing stuff out that could still be used

65% Items with too much packaging

54% Buying more than I really need

47% When items aren't built to last

26% Stuff you throw away in your recycling



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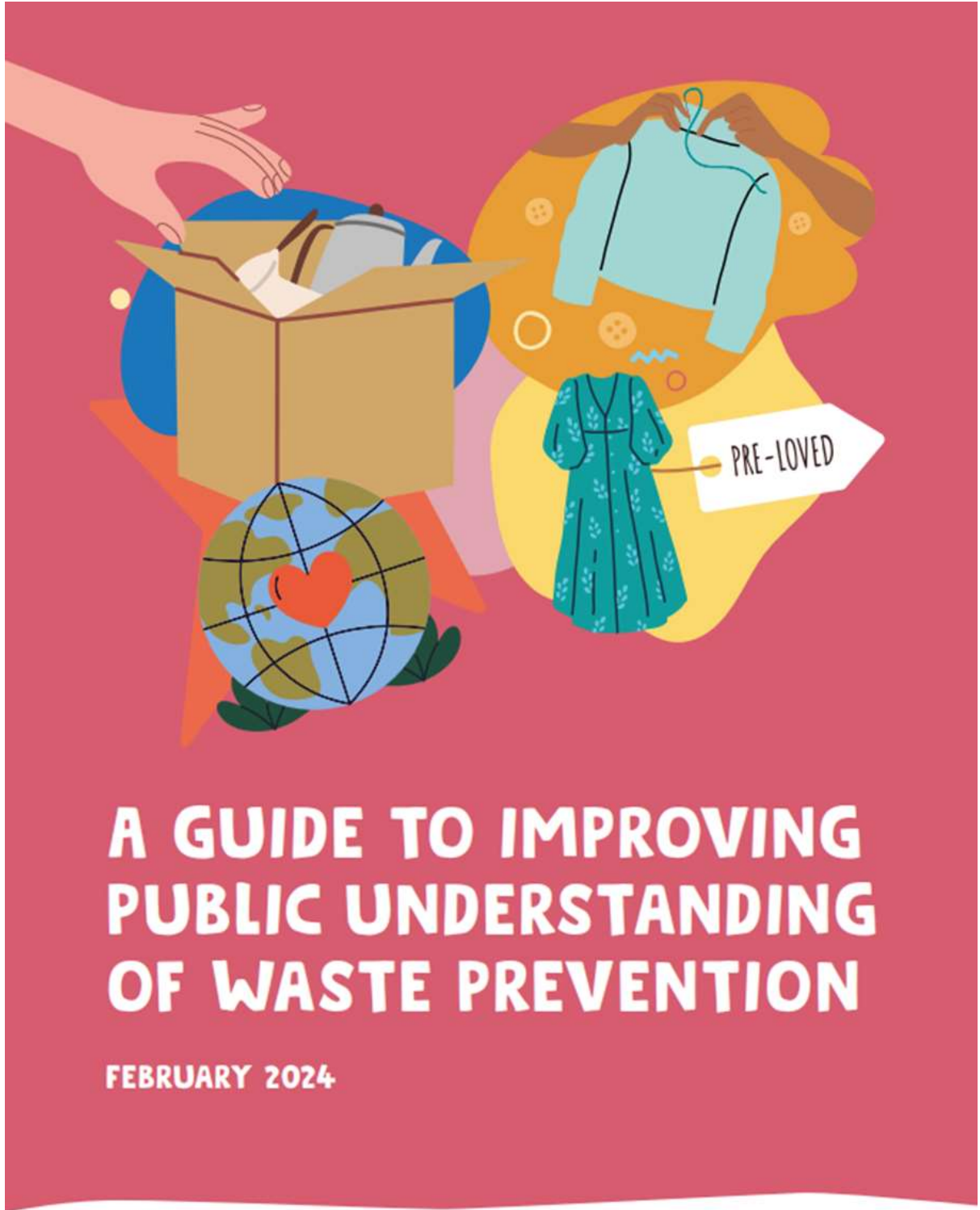
The full report and digital communication tools are free to access at <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/understanding-waste-prevention>



IMPROVING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF WASTE PREVENTION

Recycling is only the third best option when it comes to reducing the environmental impact of what we buy, use and dispose of. Much bigger gains come from buying less

LEARN MORE



Collaborative research to identify...



CIWM



MERSEYSIDE RECYCLING & WASTE AUTHORITY

GMCA
GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY

- ✓ How the waste hierarchy can best be used as a communications tool
- ✓ What terminology and messages should be used to communicate waste prevention
- ✓ How to frame recycling as being the least preferable option behind reduce and reuse, without discouraging people from doing it
- ✓ How to strengthen the link people make between the climate emergency and their consumption
- ✓ What messengers should such waste prevention communications come from

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Research methodology

Desk-based review

6 x in-depth focus groups

50 participants in total, representing varied demographics

Screening for 'regular recyclers'

Conducted in Manchester, Liverpool and Somerset

3 x co-design workshops

Retaining some participants from previous stage

One workshop in each area

To co-design effective communications

Nationally representative survey and qualitative interviews

National omnibus provider, 2,190 UK adults + 50 on-street interviews

Quantifying insights and additional feedback

To test versions of the waste hierarchy



Results: the context of your communications



71% of people think there should be more information about how to make changes to the things they buy to reduce their impact on the environment – and less advertising asking them to buy things.

22% say that if they're not hearing waste prevention messages from lots of different places, it can't be that important.

32% often buy things they want but don't really need. The same proportion say they don't like buying second hand.



Results: Language & Terminology



The 3 Rs

RECYCLING

LANDFILL

mend
rehome share
donate Pre-loved
repair borrow
rethink

Waste



Results: framing the message



Our waste prevention messages should:

Be framed positively.

Celebrate and normalise that people are beginning to address their waste and consumption already.

Acknowledge progress.

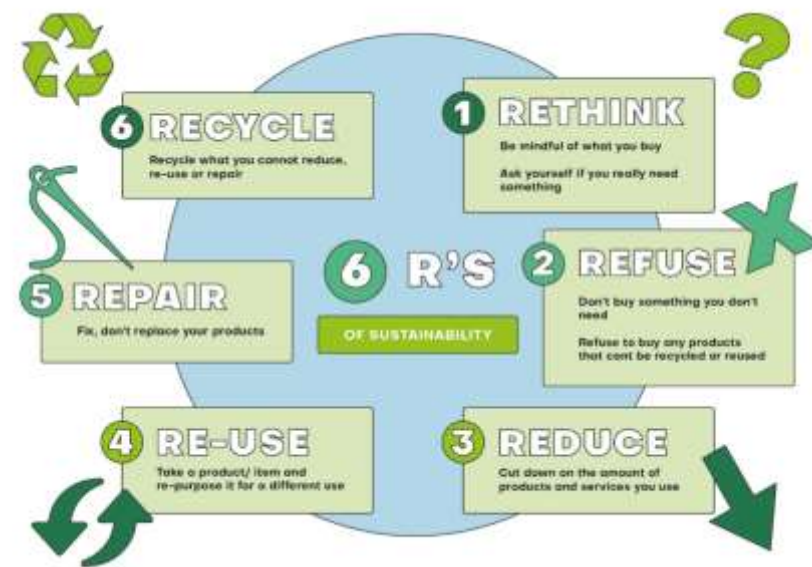
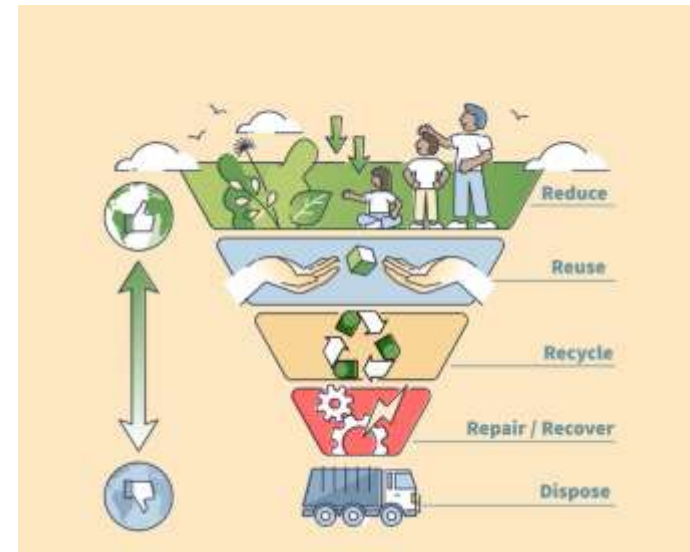
Recognise that people may already be going to efforts to prevent waste (and recycle).

Communicate the 'why'.

Tell them why they should to it – and remind them that their individual efforts are making a difference.



Results: a public-facing waste hierarchy



Results: a public-facing waste hierarchy



To be impactful and resonate with the public, it should:

- ✓ Be much more than reduce, reuse, recycle, and dispose
- ✓ Levels are grouped in a way that feels logical and relevant to them and the things they buy
- ✓ Be highly visual, using images and symbols
- ✓ Not be referred to as the waste hierarchy



Results: a public-facing waste hierarchy

- **58%** now realise there are much better ways to reduce the environmental impact of the things they buy, than using their recycling bin
- **73%** think they could do what it's asking them to do
- **51%** say it motivates them to protect the planet
- **36%** say they are going to make changes to what they buy, use and throw away



Results: a public-facing waste hierarchy



RECYCLING IS GOOD. BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

A diagram showing a flow from left to right. On the left, a hand holds gold coins above a blue circle containing the text 'HAVE A 'BUY LESS' MINDSET'. An arrow points to a green circle containing a sweater and the text 'USE STUFF AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN'. A second arrow points to a pink circle containing a globe with a heart and the text 'PROTECT THE PLANET'. The 'KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.' logo is in the bottom right corner.

RECYCLING IS GOOD. BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

Two hands are shown holding several small cards with icons of a hand, a sofa, a shopping bag, and a pair of shoes. Below the hands, the text 'HAVE A 'BUY LESS' MINDSET' is written in white. The 'KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.' logo is in the bottom right corner.

RECYCLING IS GOOD. BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

Illustrations of a green dress, a water bottle, a red power drill, and a pair of scissors are shown with white tags that say 'RENTED', 'PRE-LOVED', 'REUSABLE', and 'BORROWED'. Below the items, the text 'SWAP THE WAY YOU SHOP' is written in white. The 'KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.' logo is in the bottom right corner.

RECYCLING IS GOOD. BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

Illustrations of a light blue sweater, a jar of jam, and a screwdriver are shown. Below the items, the text 'USE IT AGAIN, AND AGAIN... AND AGAIN' is written in white. The 'KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.' logo is in the bottom right corner.

RECYCLING IS GOOD. BUT WE CAN DO BETTER...

Two hands are shown holding a cardboard box filled with various household items. A white tag with the text 'REHOME IT' is attached to the box. Below the box, the 'KEEP BRITAIN TIDY.' logo is in the bottom right corner.



What's next?



- Coming soon....
- An animated video which communicates the 'Recycling is good. But we can do better...' message to the public
- A version of the hierarchy which is more neurodivergent-friendly
- Full report on our Waste Prevention Tracker 2024 survey
- Webinar on Wednesday 16 October 11am – please sign up!
- Buy Nothing New Month November 2024

- Testing the effectiveness of the hierarchy in changing people's behaviour towards waste prevention

- We welcome your feedback!



Thank you



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