

Reuse and Recycling A-Z

An A to Z of items which County Durham residents can reuse or recycle.

It is always best to reuse or recycle items, rather than throwing them in your rubbish bin. Check the list below to see what household items can be reused or recycled.

If there's an item you're wondering about, it's likely someone else is thinking about it too, so get in touch and we can add it to our list, email wasteaware@durham.gov.uk. For further information please visit www.durham.gov.uk/recycling

A

Aerosol Cans

Aerosols such as deodorant, furniture polish, air fresheners and hair spray can be put in your recycling bin. You can also recycle them at the can banks at all of the household waste recycling centres.

Aluminium Foil

Put clean aluminium foil and foil food trays in your recycling bin.

Aluminium Cans

See 'Cans'.

Ash

Cooled wood ash can be added to your home compost bin or heap as it contains valuable minerals which improve soil quality.

Coal ash cannot be composted, due to high levels of tar and impurities. It should be bagged and placed within your rubbish bin or taken to one of the household waste recycling centres for disposal.

B

Bags (Fashion)

Donate bags to local charity shops, sell online, or give to family and friends.

Batteries

You cannot place batteries in your recycling bin or box. You can recycle your household batteries at one of the household waste recycling centres. Selected County Durham schools have battery collection containers for use by their pupils and parents. Also high street retailers that sell batteries accept them for recycling, such as supermarkets.

Bedding

Please don't put bedding in your household bins. Take your bedding to an animal rescue centre (please check with your local centre). You can recycle your old bedding at one of the household waste recycling centres.

Belts

Please don't put them in your household bins. You can donate them to local charity shops, sell online or give to family/friends.

Biscuit Tins

Recycle biscuit and sweet tins in your recycling bin. Alternatively they can be reused for storing homemade cakes and treats.

Blankets

Please don't put them in your household bins. Donate to local charity shops or take to a household waste recycling centre textile bank. Some animal charities may accept blankets. Please contact your local centre.

Books

If in good condition you can take books to your local charity shop or book shop. You could also see if anyone you know would like the book. There are also book banks at some of the recycling bring sites. You cannot recycle books in your recycling bin.

Instead of buying new books why not use your local library or borrow them from a friend.

Bottles

Put glass in your recycling box. Put plastic bottles in your recycling bin. Glass bottles can also be taken to the glass banks at the recycling bring sites or household waste recycling centres to be recycled. Please rinse clean and replace lids before recycling.

Bubble Wrap

You cannot recycle bubble wrap. You can take your bubble wrap to your local charity shop to see if they want it for wrapping any breakable goods. If you cannot find a use for it, you will have to put it in your rubbish bin.

C

Cans

Put aluminium and steel food and drink cans in your recycling bin. You can also take cans to some of the household waste recycling centres. Please rinse before recycling.

Cardboard Boxes

Cardboard boxes can go in your recycling bin. Large cardboard boxes can be flattened and placed next to your recycling bin or you can take them to the household waste recycling centres. Please make sure cardboard is dry.

Cards

Greetings cards can be placed in your recycling bin. Cards can also go in the cardboard skip at most of the household waste recycling centres. Some supermarkets will recycle Christmas cards for a short time after Christmas. Cards with decorative glitter, ribbon/bows, glue or musical attachments cannot be recycled in your blue lidded recycling bin.

Carpets

Please don't put them in your household bins. You can recycle your old carpets at the household waste recycling centres. Get carpets collected from your home. Book and pay for a council bulky waste collection online – www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste

Carrier Bags

Plastic carrier bags cannot be placed in your recycling bin. Please reuse carrier bags as many times as possible and try to remember to take them shopping with you so you don't have to pay for new bags. Look out for plastic bag recycling points in supermarkets. Compostable plastic bags are not recyclable. Put them in your home composting bin.

Cartons

Put soft drinks, fruit juice and soup cartons in your recycling bin. Cartons can also be recycled at the household waste recycling centres. Please wash and squash cartons and replace lids before recycling.

Catalogues

Store catalogues can go in your recycling bin with the rest of your paper. You can opt out of unwanted catalogues and junk mail by signing up to the Mail Preference Service.

CDs and DVDs

If your CDs and DVDs are in good condition you can take them to your local charity shop, or why not make them into bird scarers for your allotment or garden.

The CD cases can be recycled at the hard plastic container at the household waste recycling centres. The DVD cases and the CD and DVD discs cannot be recycled, so if you cannot find a use for them, they will need to go in your rubbish bin.

Cereal Boxes

Flatten down your cardboard boxes and add them to your recycling bin. You cannot recycle the cereal box inner bag, this will have to go in your rubbish bin.

Ceramics

Do not place ceramic items in your recycling bin. You can recycle ceramic items such as tiles at the household waste recycling centres.

China Plates and Ornaments

If they are unbroken, you can donate them to a charity shop. Otherwise please put these in your rubbish bin as they cannot be recycled.

Cling Film

Put your cling film in your rubbish bin. Reduce the amount of cling film you use by storing sandwiches and food in sealable plastic containers which can be reused.

Clothing

Please don't place clothes in your household bins. You can give unwanted clean clothes and textiles e.g. curtains, towels or bed covers to charity shops. Local cat and dog shelters may accept old bedding and towels. They can also be taken to one of the household waste recycling centres or recycling bring sites. Check which sites accept textiles at www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc and www.recyclenow.com/local-recycling. Visit www.durham.gov.uk/clothesrecycling for more tips on how to revive, reduce, reuse or recycle clothes.

Cooking Oil

You can recycle your cooking oil at all the household waste recycling centres. Please do not pour cooking oil down the sink, toilet or drain.

Corks Synthetics/Plastic

Put plastic and synthetic corks in your rubbish bin.

Crisp Packets

You cannot recycle crisp packets and other foil-like films such as chocolate bar and biscuit wrappers. They need to go in your rubbish bin. Crisp packets are made from a variety of plastics such as polypropylene, foil backed, laminates etc and because of the mixture of different types they are difficult to recycle.

Curtains

Please don't put them in your household bins. Donate to local charity shops, sell online or give to family/friends.

D

Drinks Glasses

Put broken drinks and wine glasses in your rubbish bin as they cannot be recycled. Please wrap first to avoid sharp edges. Undamaged glasses can be taken to a charity shop.

Dusters

Wash and reuse. When unusable, please place in your rubbish bin (not recycling bin).

Duvets

In clean and good condition – donate to local charity shops. Some animal charities may accept duvets in good condition. Please check with your local animal rescue centre. Soiled duvets can be placed in your household rubbish bin as a last resort.

E

Egg Boxes

Cardboard egg boxes can go in your recycling bin. You can also compost them.

Elastic Bands

You cannot recycle elastic bands. Put them in your rubbish bin.

Envelopes

All paper envelopes can be placed in your recycling bin.

Engine oil

You can take small quantities of your used engine oil to the household waste recycling centre to be recycled. When you bring your oil to a site, we advise that it is in the original container and clearly labelled, so that site staff can be sure of the correct way to dispose of it.

F

Fabric

Reuse for dusters/cleaning clothes. Upcycle into clothing/cushion covers etc.

Foil

See 'Aluminium foil'.

Food Packaging

See Plastic pots, tubs and trays, Polystyrene, Polythene, Aluminium Foil, Shrink Wrap, Cling Film and Glass Bottles and Jars

Food Tins

See 'Cans'.

Food Waste

We cannot recycle your food waste so please don't put it in your recycling bin. You can compost most of your kitchen waste (except cooked foods, meat and dairy). Otherwise your food waste goes into your rubbish bin. For advice and tips on how to make the most of your food and how to reduce your food waste, visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Fridges or Freezers

If your fridge or freezer is in good working order you can take it to your local furniture reuse scheme – www.durham.gov.uk/reuse, or the reuse scheme may collect it. Broken fridges and freezers can be collected as part of the bulky waste collection – pay and book online – www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste Alternatively you can take them to your nearest household waste recycling centre www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc

Furniture

Furniture and electrical appliances in good condition can be donated to your local furniture reuse scheme – www.durham.gov.uk/reuse. Furniture which is unsuitable for reuse can be disposed of at one of the household waste recycling centres – www.durham.gov.uk/hwrc or you can book and pay for a bulky waste collection – www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste

G

Garden Waste

Put garden waste in your garden waste bin if you receive and have subscribed to this service. You can check at www.durham.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

You can also take garden waste to the household waste recycling centres or use a compost bin. Alternatively, you can have up to six bags of garden waste removed as a bulky waste collection. There is a charge for the bulky waste collection service. If you live in the Teesdale area you may be eligible for the Rotters collection service.

Glass Bottles and Jars

Glass bottles and jars can go in your recycling box. They can also be taken to recycling bring sites or household waste recycling centres. Please rinse and replace lids before recycling.

Glass (Broken)

Please wrap the glass to avoid sharp edges/pieces and place in your rubbish bin.

Glass Panes

Panes of glass cannot be put in your recycling box. It has a different composition from glass bottles and needs to be collected separately. Please take them to a household waste recycling centre.

Greaseproof/Wax Paper

Put greaseproof or wax paper in your rubbish bin.

H

Hangers

Coat hangers cannot be placed in your recycling bin or box. They can be reused over and over again. Ask local charity shops if they need spare hangers for displaying clothes and take metal hangers back to the dry-cleaners to be reused rather than throwing them away. Some local high street retailers collect hangers for recycling.

Hard Plastic

Hard plastic such as garden furniture, buckets, plant pots and childrens' toys cannot be put in your recycling bin. You can take these to a household waste recycling centre for recycling.

I

Ink-Jet Cartridges

Put non-refillable ink-jet cartridges in your rubbish bin. Many charities and organisations will take your used printer cartridges and will recycle or refill them.

J

Juice Cartons

See 'Cartons'

Juice Bottles

See 'Plastic bottles'

Junk Mail

Put unwanted mail such as leaflets and unaddressed letters in your recycling bin. If you don't wish to receive junk mail you can be removed from most direct mailing lists/databases by visiting the Mail Preference Service.

K

Kitchen Roll Tubes

The cardboard inner tube of kitchen rolls can be placed in your recycling bin.

L

Laminated

Laminated paper and cardboard goes in your rubbish bin.

Letters

Put letters in your recycling bin. We recommend you remove and shred any personal details before recycling. Shredded paper can be composted.

Lids (plastic)

Plastic lids can now be recycled. Please wash and squash cartons and plastic bottles and replace the lids. Trigger sprays (like those on cleaning product bottles) can also now be recycled. Wash and squash the bottle and replace the trigger spray. Bottle pumps (like those on soap bottles) cannot be recycled and should go in your rubbish bin.

Lids and caps (metal)

Metal lids and caps can now be recycled. Wash glass bottles and jars and replace the lid/cap.

Light Bulbs

Energy saving light bulbs and fluorescent tubes contain small amounts of mercury, which is hazardous, and should not be put into your rubbish or recycling bin. They should be taken for recycling to your local household waste recycling centre.

Loo Roll Tube

The cardboard inner tube of toilet rolls go in your recycling bin.

M

Magazines

Magazines can be reused. Doctors, dental surgeries and hairdressers are usually grateful for them. Magazines can be put in your recycling bin or in the paper banks at the household waste recycling centres.

Margarine Tubs

Margarine tubs (clean) can be put in your recycling bin but they are also great for storing food, instead of using cling film. Please wash clean before recycling.

Mattresses

You can take your old mattress to the household waste recycling centres for disposal or if you are buying a new one, ask the shop if they have a take back scheme. Also you can have your mattress collected for disposal as part of the bulky waste collection. Book and pay online at www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste

Medicine

Put empty medicine bottles in your rubbish bin. Unfinished bottles of medicines or tablets should be returned to your local chemist.

Microwave Ready Meal Containers

Put the containers from microwave ready meals in your rubbish bin.

Milk Bottles

Put plastic milk bottles in your recycling bin. Please wash and squash and replace lids before recycling.

Mirrors

If they are intact and reusable take them to your local furniture reuse schemes – www.durham.gov.uk/reuse. Large mirrors can be collected as part of the bulky waste collection service – book and pay online – www.durham.gov.uk/bulkywaste. Don't put them in your recycling bin or box.

Mobile Phone

You can take your mobile phone to most charity shops, or search for a mobile phone recycling website. Mobile phones can also be recycled at the Household Waste Recycling Centres. (HWRCs do not offer secure data removal or confidentiality of data, therefore it is your responsibility to ensure your data is removed before depositing any item for recycling or reuse. Items include electrical and mobile devices as well as paper documents.)

N

Nappies

Put disposable nappies in your rubbish bin. You could consider using real nappies to help reduce the amount of disposal nappies being thrown away.

Newspapers

Newspapers can go in your recycling bin. They can also be taken to household waste recycling centres.

P

Paper

Paper can be placed in your recycling bin. Paper can also be taken to the paper banks at the household waste recycling centres. Shredded paper can be added to your compost bin.

Pet Waste

Waste from vegetarian pets can be safely composted. Waste from meat eating pets should be bagged and placed in your rubbish bin.

Phone Books

See 'Telephone directories'.

Photographs

Put photographs in your rubbish bin.

Pillows

Pillows can be taken to household waste recycling centres or if you have capacity put them in your rubbish bin.

Pizza Boxes (Takeaway)

Takeaway pizza boxes should go in your rubbish bin. This is because they are often contaminated with food and grease.

Pizza Boxes (Supermarket)

The cardboard outer can be recycled in your recycling bin. Put the polystyrene disc and plastic wrap in your rubbish bin.

Plant Pots

Plant pots cannot be recycled in your blue-lidded recycling bin but they can be taken to household waste recycling centres and placed in the skip marked 'Plastics'

Plastic Bags

See 'Carrier bags'.

Plastic Bottles

Plastic bottles such as milk, drinks, washing up, shampoo, cooking oil, laundry liquid bottles etc can be put in your recycling bin. Please wash and squash bottles and replace lids (except pumps – see Lids plastic for more info) before recycling.

Plastic Milk Bottle Tops

See 'Lids (plastic)'.

Plastic Packaging

See Plastic pots, tubs and trays, Polythene, Polystyrene, Cling Film and Shrink Wrap.

Plastic Pots, Tub and Trays

Put clean plastic packaging such as margarine and ice cream tubs, yoghurt pots in your recycling bin. Please rinse before recycling. You cannot recycle black plastic food trays.

Plastics (rigid)

See 'Hard plastic'

Polystyrene

Polystyrene cannot be recycled and needs to go in your rubbish bin.

Polythene (plastic wrapping)

Polythene plastic wrap such as bread bags, fruit and vegetable bags, plastic-wrapped groceries, toilet-roll wrap, multi-pack shrink-wrap are not collected as part of your recycling service, but they can be recycled in the carrier bag collection points at the larger stores of most major supermarkets including Tesco, Asda, Morrisons and Sainsbury's. Check with your local supermarket. Alternatively, place polythene in your rubbish bin along with cellophane such as confectionary box overwrap and CD overwrap.

Postcards

Postcards can be put in your recycling bin.

Pots and Pans

Don't place them in your recycling bin. If you have any old pots and pans you can recycle them at most of the household waste recycling centres. If they are in good condition you can donate them to a local charity shop.

Pringle Crisp Tubes

Pringle tubes cannot be recycled. Please put these in your rubbish bin.

Pyrex

Pyrex cannot be recycled as it is heat treated glass which is different to glass bottles and jars. If you have broken Pyrex glass, wrap it carefully and put it in your rubbish bin. Pyrex dishes in good condition can be donated to a charity shop.

R

Rubbish (household waste)

General household waste should be separated and sorted into items that can be recycled and reused. If you take waste to a household waste recycling centre (www.durham.gov.uk) you will be asked to separate your waste.

S

Scrap Metal

Metal items cannot go in your recycling bin. Take your scrap metal to household waste recycling centres.

Sheets (bedding)

In clean/good condition – donate to local charity shops. Cut and reuse as dusters/cleaning clothes. Some animal rescue charities may accept sheets in good condition. Please check with your local animal rescue centre. Soiled sheets can be placed in your household rubbish bin as a last resort.

Shoes

Please don't place them in your household bins. Sell shoes in good condition online. Unwanted shoes can either be donated to charity, taken to one of the household waste recycling centres or a recycling bring site. Remember to tie the shoes together and bag them. Check which sites accept them.

Shredded Paper

Shredded paper cannot be recycled in your recycling bin. Shredded paper can be composted in your home compost bin.

Shrink Wrap

Put multi-pack shrink-wrap in your rubbish bin.

Socks

In clean/good condition – donate to local charities. Socks can be taken to household waste recycling centres – placed into the textile banks.

Soft Foam

Foam items cannot be recycled. Put foam such as meat trays, fast food boxes, soft fruit trays and pizza discs in your rubbish bin.

Spectacles

Many opticians collect unwanted spectacles for reuse in developing countries.

Sticking Tape/Sellotape® (on paper/card)

There is no need to remove sticking tape from paper or card before recycling it as these will be sieved out when the material is pulped.

T

Table cloths

In clean/good condition – donate to local charities. Reuse for outdoor picnics.

Takeaway Food Containers

Put plastic and aluminium takeaway food containers in your recycling bin. Please rinse before recycling. Plastic containers can be washed and reused to store food. Polystyrene containers go in the rubbish bin.

Tea towels

In clean/good condition – donate to local charities.

Telephone Directories

Old telephone directories can be placed in your recycling bin.

Televisions

See 'Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)'

Tetra Pak

See 'Cartons'.

Textiles

Don't place them in your recycling bin. You can give unwanted clean clothes and textiles e.g. curtains, towels or bed covers to charity shops. Local cat and dog shelters may accept old bedding and towels. They can also be taken to one of the household waste recycling centres or recycling bring sites. Check which sites accept textiles. You can also sell items online or attend Swishing clothes swap events. For more tips on recycling textiles, visit www.durham.gov.uk/clothesrecycling

Tins

See 'Cans'

Towels

In clean/good condition – donate to local charities. Some animal charities may accept towels. Please check local animal rescue centres.

Toys

Don't place them in your recycling bin. Pass toys onto family and friends for them to enjoy. Charity shops, doctors' surgeries, play groups and hospices may accept toys and games which are in good condition. Alternatively, sell toys online.

Broken toys can be taken to the household waste recycling centres, larger toys made from hard plastic can be recycled e.g. a garden slide.

Remember to remove and recycle the batteries.

U

Unaddressed Mail

See 'Junk mail'.

Underwear

In clean, hygienic and reusable condition – donate bras and tights to local charities.

V

Vending Cups

Put vending cups in your rubbish bin.

Video Tapes

Video tapes cannot be recycled. Working VHS videos can be donated to your local charity shop. Otherwise unusable tapes will have to go into your rubbish bin.

W

Wallpaper

Wallpaper cannot be recycled as it is difficult to pulp and is also often contaminated with paste. If you have new, unused rolls, your local charity shop may take it. Otherwise, please place it in your rubbish bin.

Washing Powder Boxes

Washing powder boxes (empty) can go in your recycling bin. Squash the boxes flat so there is more space in your bin for recycling.

Washing-up Liquid Bottles

Put washing up liquid bottles in your recycling bin. Please wash and squash bottles and replace lids before recycling.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

Don't place them in your recycling or rubbish bins. Electrical household appliances in good working order can be taken to one of the furniture reuse schemes, or they will collect. Broken or damaged electrical appliances can be recycled at one of the household waste recycling centres e.g. hair dryer, toaster, television, iron.

(HWRCs do not offer secure data removal or confidentiality of data, therefore it is your responsibility to ensure your data is removed before depositing any item for recycling or reuse. Items include electrical and mobile devices as well as paper documents.)

Wine Glasses

See 'Drinks glass'

Wrapping Paper

Put gift wrapping paper in your rubbish bin.

Y

Yellow Pages

Put Yellow Pages in your recycling bin.

Yoghurt Pots

See 'Plastic pots tubs and trays'