



A guide to compostable packaging & waste

Going plastic-free and keen to understand more about waste? Cut the confusion with this handy guide by Vegware, the global specialist in plant-based compostable foodservice packaging.

Recyclable

Everyone likes the word ‘recyclable’ but in reality, conventional foodservice packaging can’t be recycled.

Kept separate, dry card or paper can be recycled. So can plastic water bottles or metal drink cans. But used catering disposables are a mix of card, plastic and food, so food contamination is inevitable. This combination creates massive recycling challenges, so the result is often incineration or landfill.

With compostable disposables, food isn’t contamination, it’s a vital ingredient in the composting process.

Biodegradable

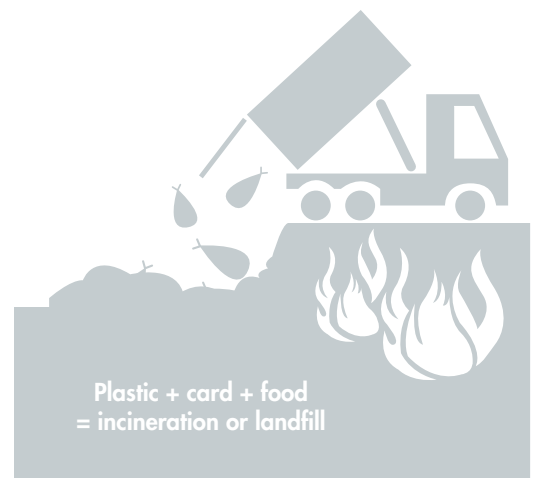
Biodegradable means something breaks down naturally, but it can take years. Biodegradable tells us nothing about timescales – for example, wood is biodegradable, but a log cabin can stand for generations.

When it comes to biodegradable, there is no guarantee it will break down in commercial composting.

Compostable = biodegradable, in under 12 weeks!

Compostable means something can break down in under 12 weeks, and is therefore suitable for commercial composting together with food waste.

Commercial composting creates the perfect balance of microbes, moisture and warmth. So instead of being buried or burnt, your compostable catering ‘waste’ creates nutrient-rich compost that helps plants thrive.

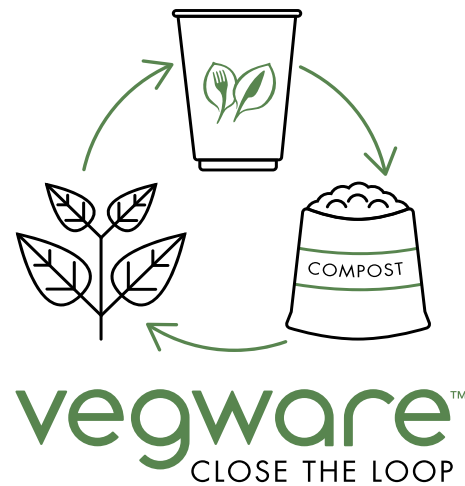


Compostable solutions

Composting simplifies recycling

Vegware's compostable packaging can break down in under 12 weeks in commercial composting. The full Vegware range is designed to be composted with food waste. This means there's no need for sorting, and the compostable cup, lid, burger box, knife and napkin can all go together without removing the ketchup and leftover chips.

An extra bonus is that once food and disposables share one bin, other dry recycling bins are cleaner and easier to recycle.



Vegware's environmental support

Composting collections are still regional rather than UK-wide, but we are proud to be actively driving change. Our Environmental team are the UK's experts on routes to commercial composting - we've been working on this full-time since 2012. Here's an overview of the options:

- Composting regions. Many waste collectors around the UK have an existing collection route taking used Vegware for commercial composting with food waste.
- Vegware's Close the Loop. To help more clients access commercial composting, Vegware has launched its own collections. This service is competitively priced and completely flexible with no contract tie-ins. We also provide a new clean bin with every collection. Close the Loop is already in Scotland, Bristol, Gloucester and Worcester, with further expansion in development.
- On-site composters. If your business has outdoor space, a use for compost, and staff to manage it, investing in an on-site composter can be an exciting and sustainable solution.

What if I can't compost?

Where there is no access to industrial composting facilities, used Vegware should be put in general waste. Vegware's takeaway packaging is made from plants, using lower carbon, renewable, reclaimed or recycled materials, and these sustainability benefits still apply no matter what happens to them after use.

General waste goes to either incineration or landfill. If Vegware is incinerated, energy is produced. [Incineration studies from NatureWorks](#), a key materials supplier of ours, show that their PLA bioplastic produces more heat than newspaper, wood or food waste; also that it produces no volatile gases and leaves little residue. In landfill, studies have shown that compostable packaging is inert and does not give off methane.

Used Vegware should not be placed in standard recycling bins which collect paper, plastics and metals, as those materials go to a different type of sorting facility. Another reason is that food waste harms the quality of mechanical recycling - the same applies to any used foodservice disposables.

Home composting conditions vary with the skill of the householder, so we don't make any claims there, but there have been successful trials using hot compost bins.



By choosing compostables, foodservice businesses can actively drive change in UK recycling. The more compostables there are in use, the more we can work with the waste sector to extend collections UK-wide.

Our Environmental consultancy take foodservice providers on a journey to zero waste, offering expert support and advice every step of the way. Get in touch today!

+372 560 57 537 | info@mixpack.ee | mixpack.ee

[@mixpack.ee](https://www.mixpack.ee)

