

HOW YOUR BUSINESS CAN HELP FIGHT PLASTIC POLLUTION

Everyone has a part to play in protecting the beautiful Lake District landscape from the effects of plastic pollution.

This guide is intended to help local tourism businesses reduce their consumption of single-use plastic, and to encourage their customers to use and dispose of it with care.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH SINGLE-USE PLASTIC?

Single-use plastic is a major source of pollution in our waterways, and in the UK, most of it comes from litter. Much of this is from food and drink packaging, or from items incorrectly flushed down the loo, such as wipes or cotton buds [\[Ref\]](#).

An estimated 35 million plastic bottles are used each day in the UK alone, only around half of which get recycled [\[Ref\]](#). Thousands are washed up on our beaches, rivers and lakes. Each one can last up to 450 years in a marine environment, before breaking up into smaller pieces that never really go away [\[Ref\]](#).

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation predicts that unless we act now, by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the sea, by weight [\[Ref\]](#). It causes serious harm to wildlife on land and sea [\[Ref\]](#), and is now thought to be entering the top of the food chain—that's us! [\[Ref\]](#) We need to stop this from happening- starting at the source.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

More and more UK businesses are stepping up to the challenge of tackling plastic pollution, and they're getting a great response from their customers, many of whom are now on the look-out for more sustainable alternatives to throw-away plastic.

4 EASY STEPS TO TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION

- 1) Introduce a **water refill point** to encourage thirsty customers to top up with tap water. Sign up as a refill station at refill.org.uk and put yourself on the map. Request a window sticker to let people know you're part of the scheme.

- 2) Consider **alternatives to single-use plastic items** wherever possible. While compostable single-use items can cost more than those made of plastic or Styrofoam, encouraging staff and customers to **reduce, reuse and recycle** may actually save you money in the long run. Begin by swapping or eliminating one or two plastic items, then think where else you might make changes. Reach out to other businesses who have already switched to ask for their advice.

- 3) **Provide or signpost waste disposal and recycling opportunities.** Unlike some parts of the world, we have a well-developed infrastructure for managing our waste. If everyone used it properly, litter wouldn't end up the sea! Help encourage visitors to the Lake District to use the bins and recycling facilities in the area, by knowing where they are and providing them in your premises.

- 4) **Educate your customers.** Explain why you have taken steps to reduce plastic, and why protecting the beauty of the area is important to you as a business.

THE WORST OFFENDERS

Try where you can to reduce the use of these common plastic polluters:

				
Bags	Bottles	Bathroom items	Food & drink containers	Cutlery, straws & napkins
Encourage people to bring their own bag; display a sign, offer incentives, and sell handy reusable bags by the till. Offer paper bags to those who come without.	People will get thirsty! Instead of selling single-use plastic bottles, provide a refill point for people to top up with tap water, and display a sign/window sticker to let them know.	Provide bathroom items on request only, and use refillable soap dispensers. Opt for compostable and recyclable items, and display signs showing what not to flush down the loo!	If you sell food and drink to take-away, provide compostable containers, and give an incentive for customers to bring their own. Provide bins and signpost local recycling points.	Choose compostable items where possible (e.g. wooden forks) and only supply extras (such as straws) on request. Promote the use of reusable items.

Produced for Cumbria Tourism by Zero Waste Kendal, constituent group of registered charity SLACctt, Oct 2018

