



**CHARPAK LTD**

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Innovative Designs for  
Inspiring Packaging

# Statement from Charpak Ltd

Whilst the media is dominated by headlines surrounding plastic packaging waste we must be careful not to demonise all plastic packaging. Across the supply chain, businesses need to respond with actions that do not shift the environmental and recycling problem from one type of packaging material, to other less reusable or less recyclable alternatives.

There is no doubt unrecyclable single-use plastics are a bad thing. Everyone has a responsibility to actively seek out alternatives to these.

## Why use Plastics?

- Without doubt, plastics extend the shelf life of food products, and reduce food waste
- Plastics offer the consumer convenience and support consumer modern-day, busy lifestyles
- **Almost all** Rigid Plastics containing food items on supermarket shelves contain PCW\* recycle content and **are** reusable or recyclable \*(post-consumer waste)

## Charpak's Current Supply of Plastics

The products Charpak supply to you are produced from;

- **Clear rPET**
  - Contains a minimum of 50% PCW (post consumer waste) and up to 25% in-process waste
  - Charpak reprocesses its scrap back into material we purchase from our supply chain
  - Clear rPET is widely recycled
- **Black rPET**
  - Contains 50% PCW and up to 25% in-process waste
  - Charpak has a closed-loop system to ensure our waste goes back into our products
  - Black rPET, whilst recyclable, is not widely recycled due to UK infrastructure issues, widely reported in the media
  - As an industry (alongside retailers) we are actively devising a solution to this issue
- **Coloured PET** (excluding black)
  - Widely recycled and will nearly always be the basis of the PCW in black rPET
- **CPET**
  - The industry is actively working to ensure that more CPET is recycled back into our products
- **PP**
  - Our product contains around 10% in process recycle
  - PP is recyclable, however, the UK does not currently have a way of recycling PP into formings for food contact – the common reuse is commercial and industrial

## Environmentally Friendly Plastics

- There **are** viable alternatives to fossil fuel based plastics, which are currently more expensive to produce. Recent tests have shown that consumers will not pay more for this packaging
- Bio-degradable plastics **are** available. However, they are expensive and there is no household

waste stream infrastructure to process them. Bio-degradable plastics present a risk of contaminating the current waste stream

- Bio-degradable plastics manufactured from PLA can only be commercially recycled. PLA is primarily used for food products that contain moisture
- Bio-degradable plastics manufactured from Plantic are home compostable. Households in high density areas are less likely to have these facilities, and could compromise the waste stream. Plantic can only be used for dry goods
- An alternative long term solution is PEF, a non fossil fuel based plastic. This is in development, with potentially a 10-year NPD lead time before it can be commercially viable

## **What Charpak are Doing**

- Charpak target zero waste for landfill. Charpak recycle or reuse 95% of all our waste
- 99.88% of products Charpak manufacture contain recycle, and are recyclable
- Charpak mark all manufactured products with the correct recycle / material code to aid recycling
- Charpak are developing a local closed-loop recycling scheme, working with local schools to educate and engage pupils in a recycling scheme
- Product recycled through this programme will be locally processed and reused in formings we supply. These will be designated as part of the closed-loop recycling scheme, and could potentially be a good PR story for our customers. Watch this space as more details will be coming out over the coming months

## **Plastics and the Environment: Reduce – Reuse – Recycle**

The reported environmental issues are primarily around what happens to discarded plastic. Whilst the UK collects a good percentage of plastic it does not recycle anywhere near enough. Waste infrastructure suffers from insufficient investment in Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for plastics sorting, meaning some materials are not recycled back into the value chain. Improved legislation and commitment by the Government to invest in MRFs is required, to enable modern society to recycle more.

Ultimately consumers and society must bear some responsibility for packaging waste, after all plastics do not walk into the streets, rivers, seas and trees. We must educate consumers about reuse and recycling, and how to best recycle all materials, not only plastics.

The current alternatives to Rigid Plastic Packaging bring their own challenges. The consideration must be if choosing to switch to a perceived better packaging material that we do not create other environmental problems. For example, if companies switch to cardboard based alternatives it is highly likely the board will have to be laminated in order to be food contact approved, to meet stringent food standards – and where will that be recycled? The UK has very few facilities to process this type of packaging.

There needs to be a sensible debate on the type of packaging used. Charpak are firm believers in choosing the correct packaging for each product. Businesses and industries must design products and packaging for recyclability, assessing the full packaging lifecycle, which includes its overall environmental impact.

It is very easy to jump on the anti-plastic bandwagon because of impactful negative headlines - but let's ensure we switch for the right reasons and not just for the positive PR that it generates in the short term.

**Paul Smith, Managing Director**