

PLASTIC FREEDOM!

Thinking of reducing your use of single use and other plastics?

This e-booklet looks at some of the ecological and health reasons to consider for you and your Centre. We also provide some suggestions for alternatives to plastic containers, bags and water bottles that many centres are already using.

Why Reduce?

Environmental Reasons

It is estimated that about 10 million tonnes of new plastic enters our oceans every year.

See [this from the National Oceanography Centre](#)

You can also check out what was taken from the oceans around the UK in 2023 [here](#) and other plastic facts [here](#).



Health Reasons

Do You Know...

...what is in a plastic water drinking bottle?

See [this from the Environmental Working Group](#).

...that microplastics are in our drinking water and us? Their impact on human health is starting to be researched in more detail. See [this 2023 review article](#). See [here](#) for more information on microplastics and 13 ways to reduce your exposure to them.

... that some plastics contain harmful chemicals such as BPA. These can be leached into water and food as found by [this 2021 study](#).

... that colour in plastic is a chemical too so safest to stick with clear plastic for storage purposes.

... you should avoid storing some oils in certain types of plastic according to [this plastic manufacturer](#), or [something more science-based](#).



DO YOU KNOW.....

... that heat can increase the speed of leaching of chemicals. See [Harvard Health](#) Also, beware of plastic water bottles left standing in the sun. The Guardian was on the case in 2020, see [here](#) for an informative article about plastic containers and dangers of BPA generally.

ECO ALTERNATIVE CONTAINERS:

As BKs we are always sharing food which can mean we use a lot of containers! So here are some eco alternatives for providing 'take-away' food:

- Reuse glass jars
- Ask students to bring their own containers
- Biodegradable plant-based or cardboard take-away boxes
- Paper or plant-based bags



If you are ready to switch then here are some examples of suppliers who stock biodegradable containers and bags. You can check out local sources too as some of the big supermarkets are also now starting to sell biodegradable items.

[Vegware](#) [Biopak](#) [Enviropack : Hot food](#) [Enviropack : Cold Food](#)
[Packing Environmental](#) [Single Use Alternatives](#)

Biodegradable bags: [Polybags](#) [Solutions 4 Plastic](#) [Eco-craft](#)

Paper bags: [Vegware](#) [BioPak](#)

These can be found in many supermarkets. Brown is best (unbleached)

These companies are already being used by Global Cooperation House (London)

[Enviropak](#) [Vegware](#) [CupsDirect \(for miscellaneous items\)](#)

ECO WATER ALTERNATIVES:

Many centres like to provide water for people at talks and workshops, especially in the summer. So here are some eco alternatives to plastic bottles:



- a) Encourage people to bring their own reusable water bottles
- b) A filtered water tap for filling-up
- c) A glass/ceramic water dispenser (fill from tap)

Consider:

- Size
 - How to refill? Will you need a jug for example?
 - will people bring their own bottles or will biodegradable cups (that go into general waste if no paper recycling system available) be provided?
- d) A few glass water bottles to take to events for speaker
 - e) Plant based bottles : now arriving in the marketplace



Examples of Glass Water Dispensers:

- Kilner Dispensers and Bottles: [Kilner Products](http://kilnerproducts.com) | [Kilner® \(kilner.co.uk\)](http://kilner.co.uk)
- Wares of Knutsford
 - a) Water Dispensers: [Drinking Jars and Drinks Dispensers & Jam Jars \(waresofknutsford.co.uk\)](http://waresofknutsford.co.uk)
 - b) Glass Bottles: [Glass Bottles with Lids - Retail, Wholesale & Bulk | Wares of Knutsford](http://waresofknutsford.co.uk)
- Marks & Spencer Water Dispenser: [5L Round Drinks Dispenser | Kilner | M&S \(marksandspencer.com\)](http://marksandspencer.com)

PLANT BASED BOTTLES

[Eco For Life](#)

[Plantbottle](#)

Intermediate options

100% Recycled Bottle and 100% Recyclable (rPET)

Note: the plastic used to make recycled bottles may contain other contaminants. See here.

[Highland Spring](#)

Boxed Water: [Tetra Paks]

Note: these are made of cardboard, plastic and aluminium (less plastic than plastic bottles)

[Water In A Box](#) [Drink Water Works](#)

Water Filter Carafe

Note: a reusable hard plastic water carafe with a water filter [Britta](#)

Other Information

Tetra Pak Recycling: [Tetra Pak United Kingdom](#)

Materials Examples: [Vegware - Our materials](#)

Bottle Types: [Shepley Spring](#)

Note: The companies listed are to provide examples. We are not endorsing any particular supplier, it would be for centres to see what they individually need and the best source for them.

