

# Carton Ready Implementation toolkit

## Why do Local Authorities need to be “Carton Ready”?

In October 2023, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published its response to its second Consistency in household and business recycling in England consultation, outlining its proposed reforms for consistent kerbside recycling collections. The proposals, which were previously known as “consistency in recycling,” have been rebranded as “Simpler Recycling.”

As part of these reforms, DEFRA has introduced new statutory duties for local authorities, including the requirement to collect a mandated core list of recyclable materials from businesses starting in 2025 and households starting in 2026. Food, drink and other liquid cartons – alongside glass, paper and card, steel and aluminum cans, and plastics – are included within the core list of materials that must be collected for recycling.

With approximately two-thirds of local councils across England already collecting liquid cartons, ACE UK has prepared its **Carton Ready Implementation toolkit** to help the remaining third of local authorities successfully comply with these changes, efficiently transitioning towards consistent kerbside collections for liquid cartons and other recyclable materials.

## How will Simpler Recycling relate to other recycling policies?

By establishing a common set of materials to be collected for recycling, the Government is aiming to reduce consumer confusion and increase collection and recycling rates across England.

However, to ensure success, Simpler Recycling changes are also being supported by a wider policy framework including:

### Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

From April 2025, all UK packaging producers will be required to pay the full cost of collection, sorting and recycling of materials they place on the market. ACE UK is already working with DEFRA to ensure that liquid carton collection infrastructure is fully funded across England.

### Fibre-Based Composite (FBC) collection target

From 2026, local authorities will be incentivised to increase their collections of fibre-based composites with a binding target set by DEFRA. Liquid cartons are anticipated to form a part of these collections.

Together, these policies will fund and contribute to an enhanced recycling system within England. However, we recognise that local authorities may face various challenges in their attempts to successfully implement these changes ahead of the deadline given by DEFRA.

## How is ACE UK helping Local Authorities become “Carton Ready”?

Cognisant that every local authority will face unique challenges with different barriers to implementing kerbside collections in rural and urban contexts across many differing property types; ACE UK is keen to assist English local authorities to deliver our shared objectives of increasing liquid carton collections and recycling across the country.

To accelerate the successful and effective transition towards Simpler Recycling kerbside collections, ACE UK’s Carton Ready Implementation toolkit is offering three resources for local authorities.

### Expertise

ACE UK Senior Recycling Manager Mandy Kelly and her team have decades of experience delivering innovative recycling infrastructure and implementation projects. She would welcome the opportunity to meet with your officials and cabinet members to:

Brief them on DEFRA’s EPR and Simpler Recycling reforms.

Discuss insights from previous successful recycling system transformation projects.

Develop a bespoke consistent kerbside collection implementation plan for your local authority.



## Guidance

In dialogue with a range of local authorities from across the UK, ACE UK has developed a step-by-step guide on successful implementation of consistent kerbside collections from a range of starting points, including guidance on:

**Waste management contract** – Implementing DEFRA’s consistent kerbside collection requirements through a new contractual arrangement with your waste management provider.

**Mid-contract renegotiation** – Triggering contract clauses that enable renegotiation to reflect new DEFRA requirements.

## Case studies

Finally, to support your transition, ACE UK has example case studies from local authorities who have already implemented these changes, identifying lessons learnt and best practice options.

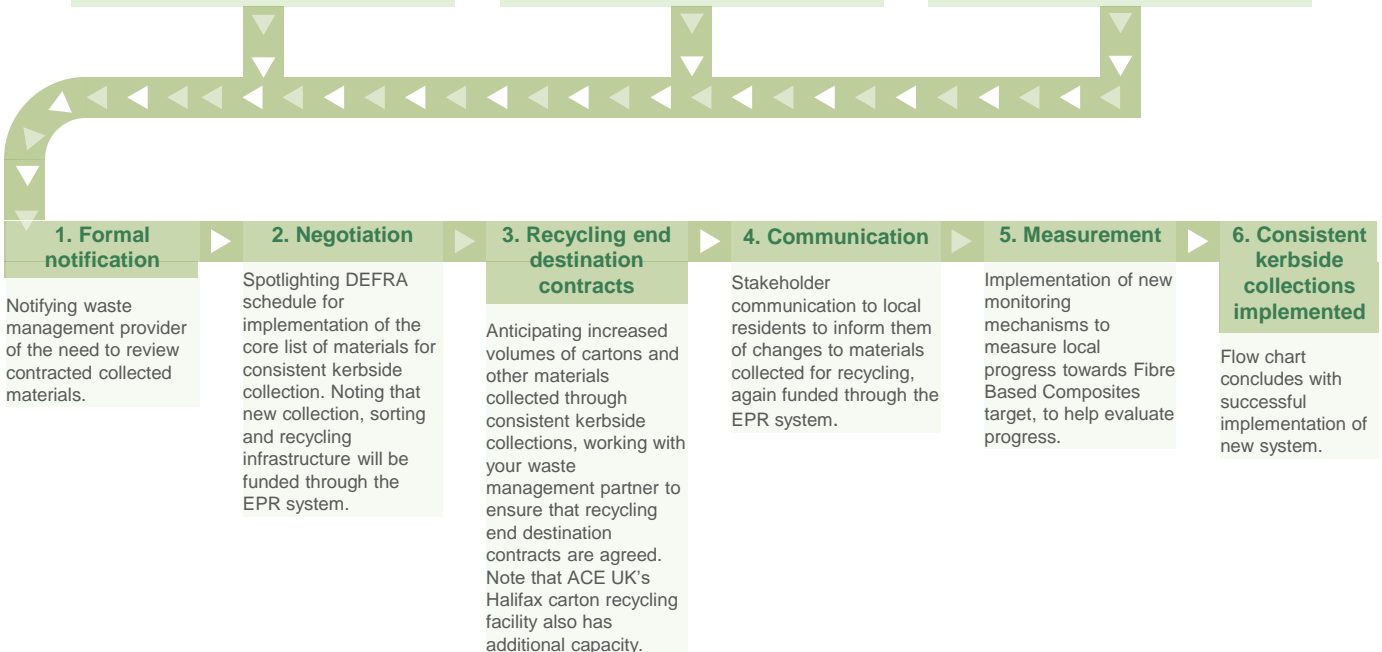
## Simpler Recycling kerbside collection flow chart

Following consultations with a range of English local authorities, ACE UK has prepared a detailed step-by-step flowchart for the implementation of kerbside collections from three different start points:

**1. Waste management contract review** – where the kerbside contract has naturally concluded, enabling new consistent kerbside collection provisions required by DEFRA to be easily implemented.

**2. Contract extension** – the kerbside contract has been extended in anticipation of reforms, providing a natural point to review and implement DEFRA requirements.

**3. Mid-waste management contract renegotiation** – kerbside contract is ongoing, increasing the difficulty of adjustment. Trigger contract clauses that enable renegotiation to reflect new DEFRA requirements.





## Checklist for successful implementation of Simpler Recycling collections

When finalising your Simpler Recycling kerbside collections implementation plan, it may be useful to consider the following checklist questions:

- When do you plan to formally notify your waste management partner of the need to review your contract to comply with DEFRA recycling reforms? How will this align with your waste management contract lifecycle?
- Are contracts in-place to recycle the increased volumes of liquid cartons and other core list materials?
- Does your waste management partner have a plan in place for collecting and sorting increased recycling volumes?
- Is your stakeholder communication plan in place to ensure local residents understand the changes to their recycling collection services?
- How will you measure and report progress towards the fibre-based composites collection target?

## Simpler Recycling kerbside collection case studies

ACE UK has worked closely with local authorities across England to improve the collection rates of liquid cartons.

Across the UK, 66% of local authorities currently collect liquid cartons at kerbside, with 31% of collections occurring through bring banks. Successful implementation of Simpler Recycling kerbside collections of liquid cartons across England will provide a significant step towards achieving ACE UK's 90% kerbside collection target for liquid cartons by 2030.

ACE UK has previously supported a number of councils to transition towards kerbside collection of liquid cartons, including:

### Chelmsford

ACE UK has worked with Chelmsford Borough Council since 2007. From 2009, Chelmsford introduced a new recycling strategy that included liquid cartons into kerbside collections alongside plastics. Universal kerbside collection was implemented in 2011. Within a year the volume of plastic and liquid cartons collected by the council doubled from 4.58 tonnes to 10.14 tonnes.

### East Cambridgeshire

In September 2013, East Cambridgeshire District Council changed its recycling service from a limited, fortnightly, separate collection of paper, glass and cans to a fortnightly commingled collection, adding cartons, cardboard, plastic bottles, tubs and trays to the materials collected. Two years later the Council's recycling rates increased by 23% to 56.4%. Residents became more engaged with recycling and litter has also been reduced in the district.

These case studies are enclosed alongside this toolkit, underlining ACE UK's strong track record of supporting local authorities to successfully implement kerbside collection changes.

We would welcome the opportunity to partner with your area to expedite implementation of the reforms.



## Expert support is available

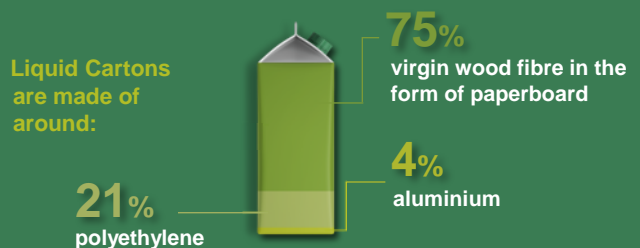
The ACE UK recycling team has decades of experience supporting the implementation of recycling reforms. We would welcome the opportunity to:

- Brief senior office holders and officials responsible for waste and recycling on DEFRA's reforms.
- Schedule a teach-in with councillors and officers.
- Invite you to a consistent kerbside collections roundtable we plan to host at upcoming LARAC and LGA conferences.
- Support your team to develop a bespoke consistent kerbside collections implementation plan for your area, reflecting specific local circumstances and challenges.

If you would like to learn more, please contact the ACE UK team at [enquiries@ace-uk.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ace-uk.co.uk).

## What is a liquid carton?

Liquid cartons are a fully recyclable, lightweight, space-efficient, and aseptic packaging solution used to store and transport everything from fresh milk and fruit juices to soups and chopped tomatoes.



## Introducing the Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) UK

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment (ACE) UK represents the UK's leading liquid carton producers: Tetra Pak, Elopak, and SIG Combibloc.

Over the last two decades, ACE has voluntarily undertaken a range of measures to develop liquid carton collection infrastructure and increase liquid carton collection rates across the UK, including:

### Infrastructure

ACE UK opened the UK's first dedicated liquid carton recycling facility near Halifax, West Yorkshire in 2013, in partnership with paper and packaging producer, Sonoco Alcore. ACE UK has also created fully funded bring bank collection infrastructure in areas that do not currently collect liquid cartons.

### Producer responsibility

ACE UK has established its own voluntary producer responsibility scheme, providing expert support for local authorities, waste managers, and community recycling networks to promote liquid carton collection and recycling. ACE UK also offers additional financial support for liquid carton supplies to the specialist liquid carton recycling facility.

### Policy

An active recycling thought leader and partner of Government, ACE UK strongly supports the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' waste and recycling reforms.

ACE UK will continue to collaborate with local authorities and waste management companies to increase the collection of liquid cartons for recycling and prepare for the Government's waste and recycling reforms. Our objective is to achieve a 90% collection rate and 70% recycling rate for liquid cartons across the UK by 2030, in line with our [2030 carton roadmap](#).