

28th September 2018

SUEZ

EPR Research

Quantitative and qualitative research findings

britainthinks.com

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Key insights

01 Background and methodology

Background and objectives

Context to the Research:

- Following the publication earlier this year of its 25-year Environment Plan, the Government is now assembling a long-term resources and waste strategy. This strategy will likely consider policies in relation to targets and metrics for environmental performance, waste services and the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- SUEZ is keen to influence the formation of this strategy and in particular, is interested in future EPR policy. SUEZ believes that EPR, done correctly, would have a radical impact on consumer shopping habits, the speed of innovation within the sector and on the collection of packaging and goods at the end of life, in addition to a number of additional impacts

Research Objectives:

- BritainThinks was commissioned by SUEZ to conduct research with the public to understand:
 - Current attitudes to waste disposal
 - Current awareness of EPR
 - The impact of information provision in relation to EPR
 - Reactions to a number of possible approaches to EPR
 - How consumers trade-off a number of issues, including cost, location of recycling and more

Methodology

1. Qualitative research:

BritainThinks conducted four full-day deliberative workshops in 2018:

Guildford: 20th August	Birmingham: 24th August	Newquay: 4th September	Manchester: 7th September
14 participants	14 participants	16 participants	14 participants
Spread of ages, genders, socio-economic status			
Range of attitudes towards the environment and recycling	Range of attitudes towards the environment and recycling	Range of attitudes towards the environment and recycling	Range of attitudes towards the environment and recycling
3x live in rural/semi rural locations	3x live in rural/semi rural locations	3x live in rural/semi rural locations	7x live in rural/semi rural locations
2x disabled participants	3x disabled participants	2x disabled participants	3x disabled participants
2x BAME participants	3x BAME participants		3x BAME participants

Each workshop lasted for 6 hours, and aimed to capture spontaneous and informed views. The sessions were interactive, allowing SUEZ representatives to present information from the front of the room, and answer participants' questions.

2. Quantitative research:

BritainThinks conducted a nationally representative survey of 2,057 UK adults aged 18+ online, between 21st – 23rd September 2017. Data were weighted to be representative by age, gender, region and socio-economic grade.

02 Key insights

Key insights

1

The public claim that recycling and waste disposal is important to them, but this is not borne out in their behaviours

- When shopping, price and quality are far more important considerations than sustainability
- And relatively low barriers (e.g. the need to rinse out tins) can prevent recycling, and just under a quarter of the public surveyed say they often throw away items that could be recycled

2

Information about the current waste system is positively received, but raises questions about why producers don't do more to help consumers reduce waste

- There is a demand for producers to take responsibility for creating more sustainable products/packaging

3

Spontaneous awareness of EPR is very low

- Even where people have engaged with EPR schemes (e.g. battery disposal) they are not recognised as such

Key insights

4

Whilst the principle of EPR is seen as positive, the current system is not felt to be sufficiently comprehensive, and is criticised for allowing packaging producers to ‘shirk’ responsibility by buying PRNs

- In the survey, the public want to see producers bearing a greater percentage of the cost

5

There is a considerable degree of support for Full Cost Recovery EPR

- The most compelling argument for FCR is its environmental impact

6

However, to be supported in practice, it will be important that FCR delivers tangible benefits to consumers through price or tax savings, and that it is easy and convenient for consumers to engage with

7

The public support sustainability labelling, and identify 5 key principles for this: 1) Use existing, familiar symbols; 2) Use colour to attract attention; 3) Ensure scales are simple; 4) Ensure symbols are relevant to the issue and 5) Focus on recyclability over other metrics

- The public surveyed say that they would check products for labels, and consider switching to more sustainable brands

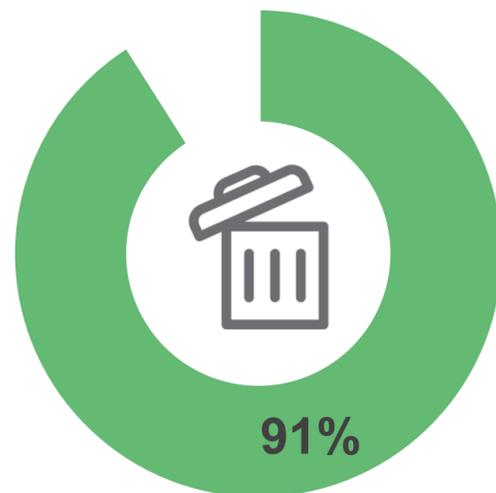
03 Where the public are starting from

Where the public are starting from

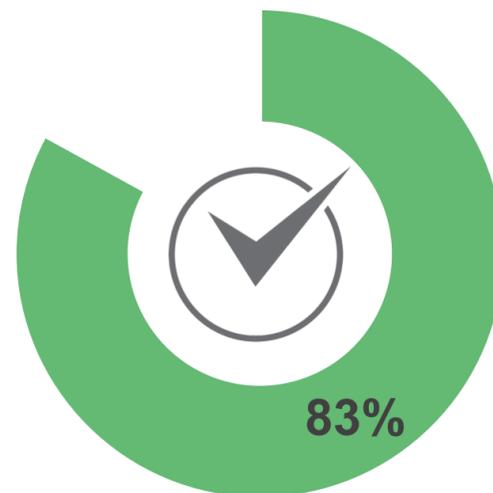
The public say that good waste disposal and recycling is important to them...

- Most report consciously considering good waste disposal habits on a daily basis, and say they do their best to recycle when they can
 - There is a sense that recycling has risen up the agenda significantly in the last 5 to 10 years, and that it is now taboo not to recycle
 - And some are frustrated by organisations that do not prioritise ethical considerations around waste
 - e.g. Amazon using a large amount of packaging for small items

% agreeing that they try to recycle and dispose of items in the correct way as much as they can



% agreeing that they feel confident that they recycle and dispose of their household waste in the correct way



“I’m doing a lot better than I was. Everyone’s a bit more green-thinking now aren’t they?”
 Younger, Birmingham

“We’re trying to do our best with recycling as much as we can.”
 Older, Guildford

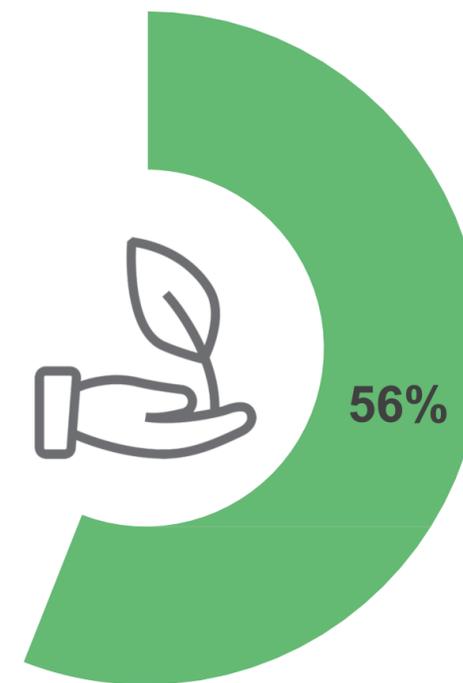
“It’s good that we’re no longer in the 90s with this kind of thing.”
 Younger, Newquay

Where the public are starting from

...But their behaviours suggest this is in fact a low saliency issue

- However, their behaviours suggest that, on a day-to-day basis, this issue is not, in fact, top-of-mind
 - Perceptions of 'good' behaviour tend to be focused on the disposal of waste in the home (and to a limited extent out and about)
 - While people do think about recycling at the point of disposal, there is little consideration of the sustainability of products while shopping, where quality and price considerations are more important
 - Efforts to reduce the amount of waste produced at home are limited
 - And there is very little understanding of how recycling behaviour fits into a wider waste disposal system

% who say that how environmentally friendly the item is is an important factor in their purchasing decision



% who say that how they will dispose of the item or packaging once they have finished with it is an important factor in their purchasing decision



These come after quality (96%), cost (95%), longevity (91%) and personal taste (89%)

Where the public are starting from

Furthermore, a range of barriers significantly impacts recycling behaviour, suggesting that, for most, commitment is shallow

Physical barriers 	Educational barriers 	Personal barriers 	<p>The combination of low saliency and high perceived effort means there is a gap between how important the public say the environment is to them compared to how much it matters to them on a day-to-day basis</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some feel that recycling bins can be too far away, and it's not convenient to access them regularly Those living in HMOs or blocks of flats find that the bins are often too small, and as a result there is insufficient space for them to dispose of their waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a widely held sense that there is insufficient information about what can and cannot be recycled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few have looked for this information. Instead, they avoid recycling certain items for fear of getting it wrong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those living in HMOs and student accommodation are less likely to recycle well, as there is less personal responsibility for the waste that is created The perception that something will be “a faff” gets in the way of good behaviour: e.g. washing out a jar, visiting an HWRC 	<p>23% say that they often throw away items that can be recycled.</p> 
<p><i>“My brown bin isn’t big enough so I end up doing massive tip runs for all my rubbish.”</i> Older, Guildford</p>	<p><i>“When you buy a product, they should tell you how to dispose of it properly.”</i> Younger, Birmingham</p>	<p><i>“We need to put everything in one big seagull proof bin, because I can’t deal with the faff.”</i> Younger, Newquay</p>	

Where the public are starting from

Participants also perceive there to be specific barriers to good behaviour in their local area

Guildford



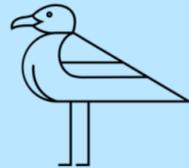
- Some older participants report frustration about **paying extra to the council for green waste disposal** facilities and new restrictions at HWRCs
- They feel that this leads to increased **fly-tipping**

Birmingham



- Some have been frustrated by the city council industrial action, that has led to **waste going uncollected** on the streets

Newquay



- Many are irritated that their council use **rubbish bags rather than bins**
- The current **waste infrastructure is felt to be under strain due to the influx of tourists** in the summer, which **has a detrimental effect on the local wildlife** (e.g. seals)

Manchester



- Those with **small bins** are frustrated that larger bins are only available to those who qualify, on request
- Some complain about **only having collections once every three weeks** (meaning more frequent use of HWRCs, for some)

Where the public are starting from

Despite criticising manufacturers for making products with too much packaging, supermarkets are considered to be leading the way when it comes to minimising waste



04 The current waste disposal system

To obtain their informed feedback, we presented participants with information about the current waste disposal system

The journey of waste

What happens to the things you throw away?



Materials Recycling Facility



Reprocessing to secondary raw materials



What's recyclable, and what's not?

Some things that are easier to recycle:

- ✓ Aluminium cans
- ✓ Clear plastic fizzy drink bottles
- ✓ Milk bottles
- ✓ Glass bottles
- ✓ Un-contaminated paper and card

And some that are more difficult...

- Black plastic food trays
- Single-use coffee cups
- Crisp and confectionary wrappers
- Pouches – like pet food
- Sandwich boxes



Prior to being shown information, just **34%** of the public surveyed said they know a lot about what happens to waste and recycling once it is collected from their home

Workshop participants were pleased to learn about the waste system, and feel it exceeds expectations

- ✓ People are impressed with the different systems and technologies involved with the waste sorting process
 - ✓ In particular, the ability to **automatically filter out stray items** (which some had previously assumed was manual)
- ✓ The decrease in landfill, and **positive UK performance towards EU targets** for recycling and recovering packaging waste is seen to be a **key indication of the success** of these sorting and disposal technologies

“That’s great – I had no idea that all happened! I thought it was all manual.”

Younger, Newquay

“If you don’t recycle we’re all paying for it environmentally.”

Older, Guildford

- x Upon learning more about what can and cannot be recycled, **many feel frustrated** about having **made the effort** to recycle non-recyclable materials (e.g. pizza boxes, black plastic), and feel that it should be possible to recycle them
- x And **some feel guilty** that they might have decreased the value of sorted waste bales as a result

“Some of the non-recyclables really surprised me, like Twirl wrappers.”

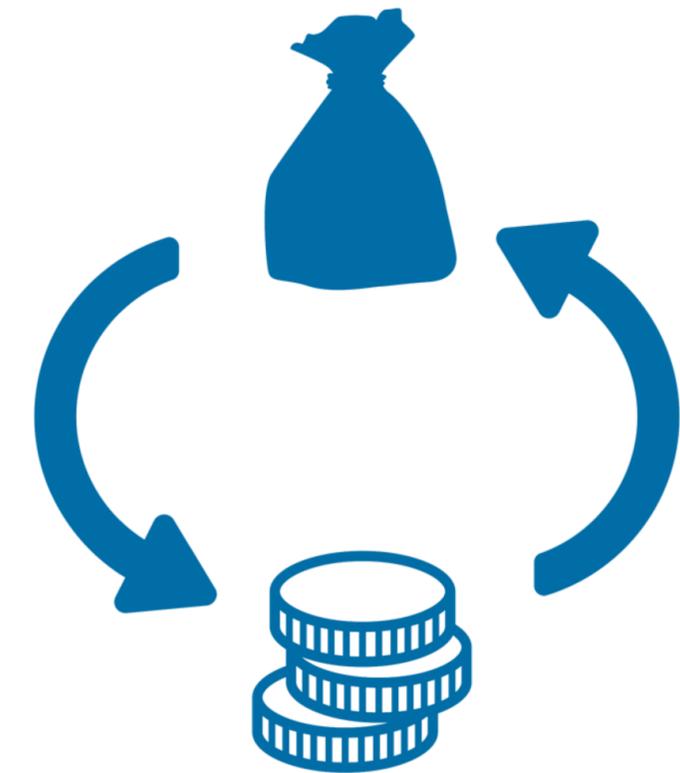
Younger, Birmingham

Awareness of the economic implications of the waste disposal system is very low

- Most people had not previously considered the value of waste as a commodity or as an energy source
 - And in turn had not considered that businesses could deal in waste for a profit
- There are two reactions to this:

- ✓ It is reassuring that there is demand for sorted waste
 - ✓ The fact that organisations can make profit from the waste means they have a vested interest in ensuring the efficiency of a sustainable waste-sorting system
- ✓ Some older participants have a greater level of trust in private companies to deal with their waste, than the local council

- x A minority of younger participants think it is a shame that the industry is driven primarily by financial motivations, as opposed to prioritising ethical considerations

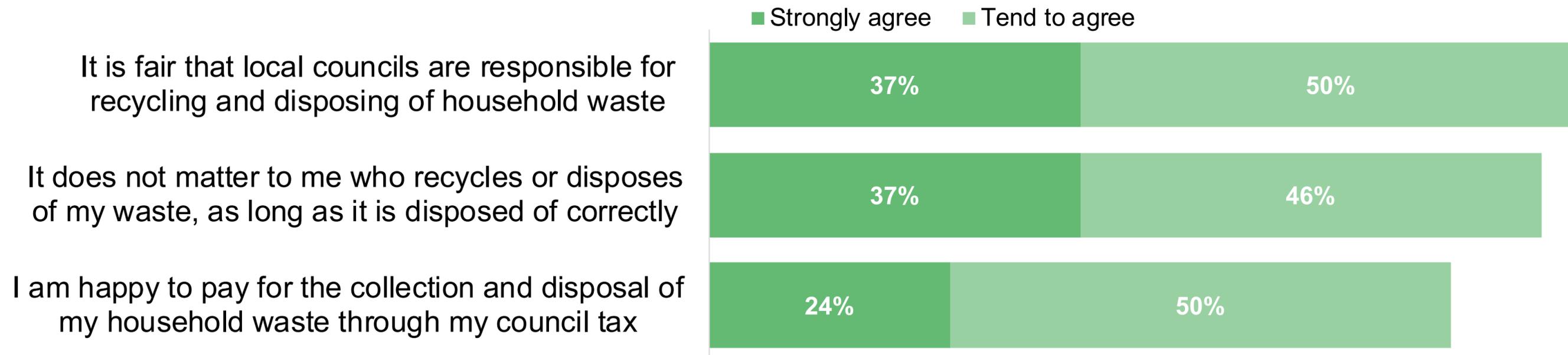


“It was interesting, I had no idea there was a market driving recycling.”

Younger, Newquay

The public surveyed generally think that the current system is fair

Informed attitudes to waste disposal



“The council must be involved with taking your rubbish. If you had a problem you need someone like them who you can call about it.”

Older, Manchester

“I think it works quite well [...] it used to be so much worse, and now you don’t have to think about it that much.”

Younger, Guildford

However, workshop conversations about improving the system led to spontaneous mentions of increased producer responsibility

1

- **Producers should take more responsibility** for the waste that their products create, for instance offering pick-ups of used items
- They should prioritise creating sustainable and recyclable products, and using less packaging

“I reckon if someone makes it, then they have to deal with every part of it.”

Older, Birmingham

2

- **Producers should prioritise making long-lasting, durable products** to combat the perceived “throwaway society”
 - Participants report being more likely to throw away broken items, due to it being more expensive to repair than to replace

“The current system is flawed. For something like a television, often repairing it costs as much as a new one.”

Older, Guildford

3

- **Recycling facilities should be made as efficient as possible**, in order to avoid bales of sorted waste becoming devalued as a result of poor consumer behaviour

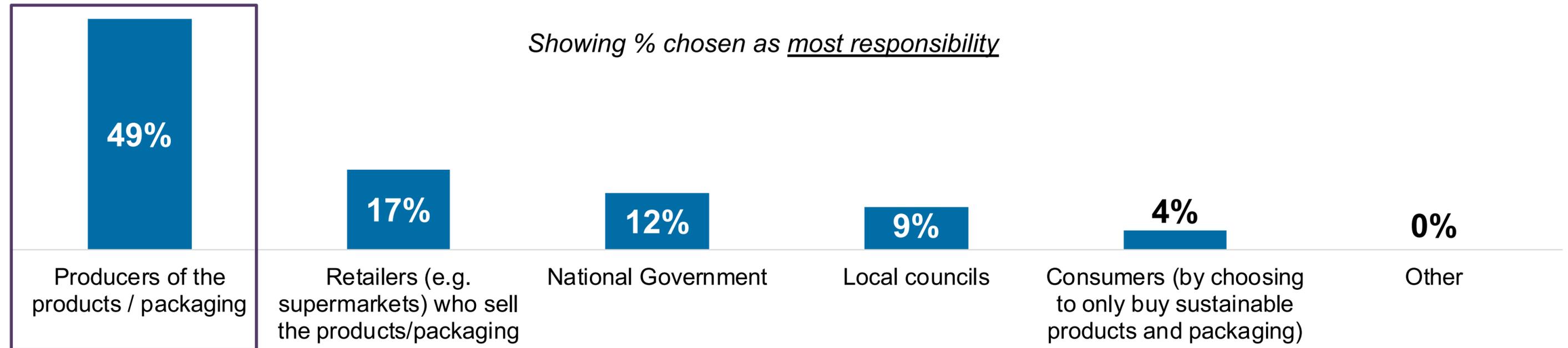
“If the council tells people you can recycle things that waste companies can’t take, then it sounds like the different parts of the system aren’t synced up.”

Younger, Manchester

And in the survey, the public think that producers should have the most responsibility for making sustainability improvements

Attitudes to who should have the most responsibility for making improvements to the sustainability of products and packaging

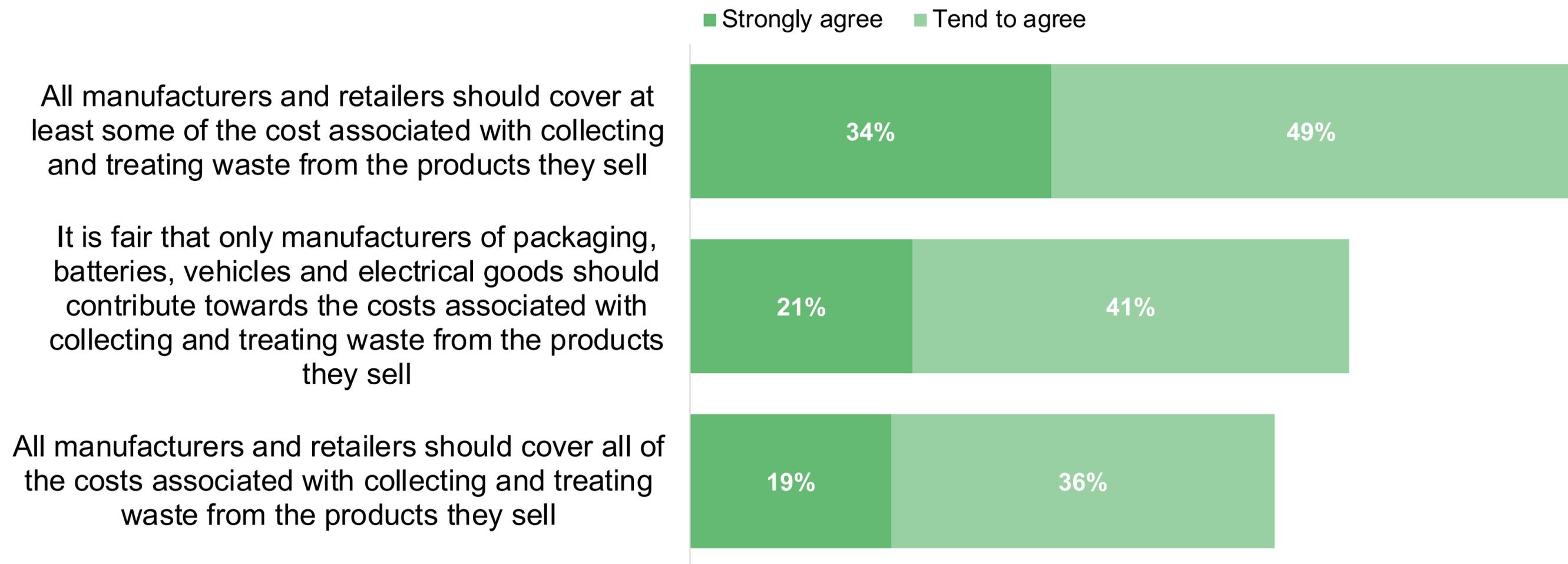
Showing % chosen as most responsibility



Older people are particularly likely to say that producers should be most responsible. More than half (59%) of those aged 65+ say this, compared to just 35% of 18-24 year-olds who say the same

And the survey of the public also shows an appetite for producers to do more

Informed attitudes to waste disposal



05 Reactions to EPR

We presented customers with information about EPR, including...

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – what is it?

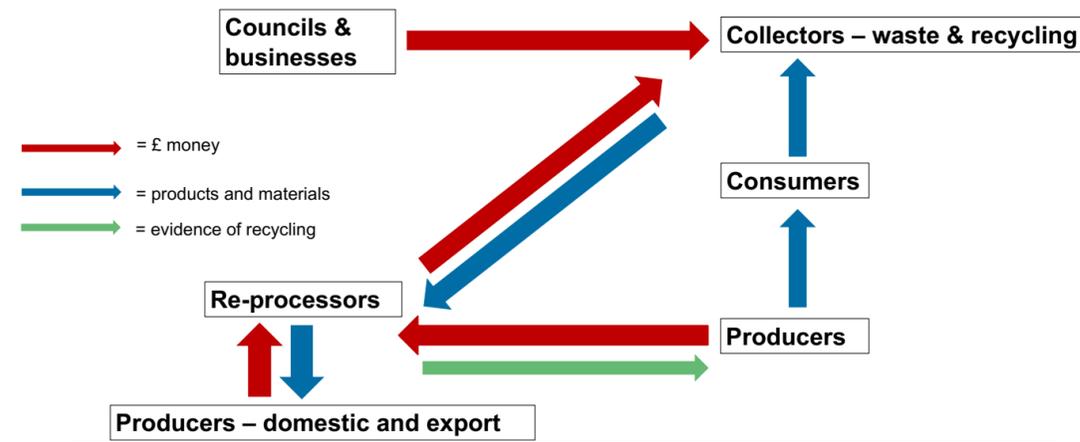
- A system which makes producers of products and packaging responsible for the materials they sell after they have been thrown away by the consumer....in other words, their responsibility is **extended** beyond the point of purchase
- This means that producers need to make sure a solution exists for the sustainable disposal of their products at the end of their lives
- In the UK, only producers of **packaging, electronics, batteries** and **vehicles** are **obligated** by the government to do this. Other companies **volunteer** to take some responsibility.

Features of current system

- Producer responsibility applies to batteries, packaging, vehicles and electrical goods
- Payments by producers to obtain evidence of recycling covers between 10-15% of the collection and sorting costs
- The recycled material does not have to be used by the obligated company, as long as someone is using it
- Producers often subscribe to third-party organisations to ensure they meet their obligations
- Producer responsibility organisations often responsible for consumer information obligations

What it is

How Extended Producer Responsibility works



Current features

How it works

Prior to the presentation, only one participant had heard of EPR

- Some are familiar with examples of EPR when prompted, but few realise that these have been put in place due to legal obligations:
 - **Batteries:** those who have seen collection points in supermarkets thought these were voluntarily implemented by the retailer
 - **Electronics:** though some are aware of some collection schemes for old electronics (e.g. BT, PC World), participants tend to think they are a self-serving eco-scheme for that specific company, or a way to make money (e.g. charging to remove old washing machine)
- Older participants are more likely to recognise EPR in practice in the form of deposit return schemes. Many cited an example of the Corona bottle deposit return scheme
 - They feel that this means 'going backwards' (in terms of materials/technology) 'to go forwards' (in terms of sustainability)
 - But also note that at the time this was effective at helping people to dispose of waste appropriately

“Sainsbury’s and M&S have started recycling old batteries that people bring in.”
Younger, Birmingham

“PC World do something I think, for you to return old items, I think it makes them look good.”
Older, Birmingham

“I remember when we used to return old empty bottles, you had to do it and it was easy.”
Older, Manchester

When provided with some further information, participants are initially positive about EPR

- EPR is seen to address the problem of environmentally poor manufacturing practices and too much packaging, at source
 - For those who already have frustrations with producers' packaging, EPR addresses what they think of as a weak point in the current waste system
 - For others, it feels intuitive that producers should contribute more to disposing of waste effectively
- EPR is seen to lessen the financial burden on local government, by funding part of the waste disposal system
- Many feel that since producers are profit-driven, using financial means to encourage greater environmentally-friendly behaviour is necessary to get results

“To make single use items out of non-recyclable materials is insanity.”

Older, Newquay

“In theory, EPR is good, in that it monitors waste, which is a valuable commodity.”

Older, Guildford

“I’m surprised, I didn’t realise that was the responsibility they had.”

Younger, Birmingham

However, the current EPR system has significant limitations, which are seen to allow producers to ‘shirk’ their responsibilities

- There is a desire for the system to go further, and a feeling that the range of products currently being covered is limited
 - In the case of packaging, it is not clear how EPR is helping (to reduce packaging or make it more recyclable), indicating that the system might need to change to hold producers to account
 - And the other products currently covered are seen as being more occasional purchases
- There are serious concerns that the ‘outsourcing’ of responsibility to specialist organisations allows producers to ‘shirk’ any real responsibility
 - This leads many to assume that producers are simply paying lip service, rather than being committed to the idea of EPR
 - The idea that PRNs are a commodity is shocking to some, as it means that compliance can be ‘bought’ by whichever producer can afford it the most, rather than earned by producers following the spirit of their obligations

“I still don’t think producers have enough responsibility. The fact they still use black plastic is a prime example.”

Older, Newquay

“I don’t like this whole third party involvement, it’s because they don’t really care about recycling properly.”

Younger, Manchester

Having weighed up the pros and cons, the public feel that it is necessary to take EPR further

We asked: *'What are the pros & cons of giving producers greater responsibility in making easily recyclable products?'*

- ✓ **Environmental improvements: should lead to more recyclable items, less landfill, and a more innovative, long-term producer approach to product and packaging design**
- ✓ Greater accountability for producers, and less strain on local government and the taxpayer
- ✓ Creates a need for more recycling facilities and more research into recyclable material, with potential knock-on improvements to employment and the economy
- ✓ Clearer guidance on what products are more/less EPR-compliant, should make it easier for public to recycle, and may increase awareness about sustainability more generally
- ✓ Could give compliant producers a halo effect on their brand, and make their products more appealing

- x **Risk that increased costs to the producer may be passed on to the consumer**
- x Over-regulation could have a bad impact on the economy, and enforcing new rules too quickly might make compliance difficult
- x Might lead to consumer complacency, and does not specifically address their behaviour
- x Some companies may be unfairly disadvantaged: e.g. smaller businesses, specialised industries relying on specific materials in their products
 - x The latter could lead to a decrease in quality for some products
- x EPR already feels complex and so taking it further risks making this worse

And they spontaneously call for changes to the current EPR system

These suggestions include:

- Increasing the obligation so that it contributes more money to the system:
 - Some suggested increasing this from 10-15% to around 25%
- Expanding the range of products that EPR is applicable to, for a greater impact on sustainability
- Altering the measurement of compliance and (for some) removing third parties from the equation, to make producers more genuinely accountable
- Helping the public identify which companies are/are not compliant

“It shouldn’t be for just those types of items, it should be for anything where they could do a better job at making it easy to recycle.”

Older, Manchester

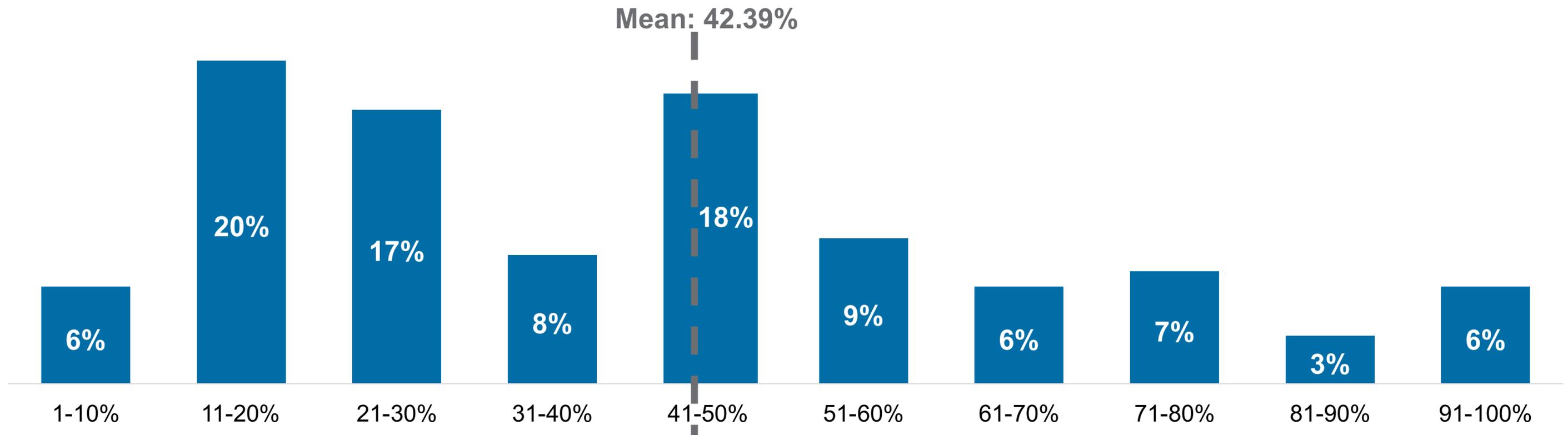
“You would need some kind of label to tell you know whether or not you can actually recycle that product [...] you would know whether or not the company’s doing the right thing.”

Younger, Guildford

These findings align with the survey, where the public think that producers' obligation should be increased to a mean of 42.39%

Views on what percentage of the cost of collecting, sorting and disposing of waste manufacturers should pay

Showing % who chose within each range



06 Reactions to Full Cost Recovery EPR

We then presented the public with a summary of Full Cost Recovery:

Features of Full Cost Recovery

- Producers become responsible for the full cost of collecting, sorting and/or disposing of their products
- They would pay a fee or deposit to a central body – which may be higher or lower depending on the environmental impact of the product
- Producers would have to evidence a higher rate of recycling in order to get their deposit back or pay lower fees
- Companies which place less sustainable products on the market would pay more
- Companies which place more sustainable products on the market would pay less
- It might change the way we dispose of things...

FCR is seen as both complicated and fairly radical, which initially makes some reluctant to support it



- Suggesting a jump from the current rate of 10-15% producer contribution to 80-100% is more **radical** than participants anticipated
 - It can therefore bring out fairly strong reactions e.g. fears of dire economic impact



- It is **complex** and difficult to understand, and so some instinctively maintain their **status quo bias**, and come up with post-rationalised risks
 - However some of these associated risks are seen as being fairly tangible – e.g. increased bureaucracy



- It is based on an **economic** hypothesis: it therefore requires ordinary members of the public to trust that the market will behave in the way EPR suggests, which for some is too big a leap of faith



- The above factors can lead some participants to express preference for more specific, one-off interventions (e.g. banning or taxing all unrecyclable plastics) which are easier for them to comprehend

The workshops suggest that a number of demographic factors affect reactions to FCR, including age

- Across our sample, **older participants are slightly more resistant**: while more familiar with having used deposit return schemes in their youth, they tend to be less sensitive to environmental concerns around recycling and waste disposal, and have more ingrained behaviours
 - Some may also experience more practical barriers; those with more limited mobility, or who are not able to drive say they would struggle to visit multiple deposit return scheme locations, if these were to become more prevalent under an FCR model
- Those with **lower incomes** and who are **time-poor** (e.g. working parents) are also particularly concerned about the risk of increased costs and changes to their own methods of waste disposal that may cause them inconvenience

“We didn’t have the same sort of education about how important this is.”
Older, Birmingham

“I’m a product man, if it has 1 for recycling, it won’t make a difference to me.”*
Older, Manchester

“For me, a more important concern is if there is a difference in price.”
Older, Manchester

Despite their initial concerns, Full Cost Recovery EPR receives strong support from a majority of participants

46 / 57

workshop participants agreed that **all manufacturers and retailers should be obliged to recover the materials they place on the market**

“It’s complicated but it should work, these companies have to be made to do more about the waste they’re generating.”

Older, Manchester

“It worked when they banned smoking and started charging for plastic bags, and we’re all used to it now – we’ll get used to this too.”

Younger, Guildford

38 / 52

workshop participants agreed that **manufacturers should pay a deposit for all materials placed on the market, and only have the deposit returned for the % that has been shown to be turned into new items**

Post-workshop questionnaire: How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (1-5) *‘All manufacturers and retailers should be obliged to recover the materials they place on the market’*

Worksheet 3: How far do you agree or disagree with the following statement? (1-5) *‘Manufacturers should have to pay a deposit for 100% of the material they place on the market. They should get their deposit back for the percentage they can demonstrate has been made into new things’*

After some consideration, the most significant potential benefit of FCR EPR is its positive environmental impact



Environmental benefits are enhanced:

- ✓ FCR seems focused on long-term change to what happens to waste
- ✓ Greater recyclability should make it easier for the public to engage in good behaviour
- ✓ Greater product longevity may lead to improved product quality, and discourage wasteful consumerism (e.g. replacing, rather than repairing)

Shifting cost burden to producers relieves local government and council tax payers:

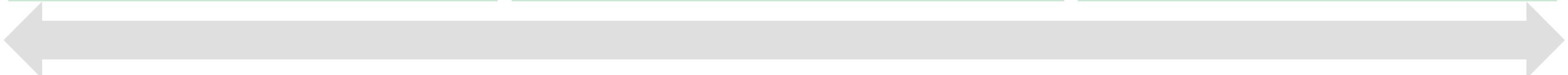
- ✓ Frees up government money to be spent elsewhere
- ✓ May lead to short-term financial gain by rewarding those who are willing to take care of other people's discarded waste
- ✓ Some compared FCR positively to reverse schemes such as sugar tax, as ethical goods would be made cheaper

Expanding the recycling system may lead to job creation:

- ✓ Bringing benefits to local people and economies

More important benefit

Less important benefit



However, there are a number of risks of FCR identified by the public, that would need to be addressed

That there would be no benefit to the public

- Some are **sceptical that their council tax bill would go down or do not believe that producers would pass on any cost saving to consumers**, relative to the rest of the market
- The idea of greater complexity for waste disposal (i.e. different bins/multiple collection points) is felt to require **greater customer effort**, when the onus should be shifting to producers

"I've never seen council tax go down."
Older, Birmingham

That the system would not be effective

- People's commitment to favoured brands is such that **behaviour change may not be achieved** even if prices of non-compliant products increase
- And that there may end up being **logistical/capacity issues**, due to the complexity of the system
 - A minority also felt that if the council has less involvement in waste, then there may be less accountability

"At the end of the day, there aren't any boxers that are as comfy as Calvin Klein."
Younger, Newquay

That FCR would not be a fair system

- The inability to track individual producers' products leads some to worry that **non-compliant (likely big) business will take credit for others' good efforts**
- There is a fear that FCR would increase the risk of unreasonable rules, and have an **unfair impact on smaller/specialist producers**
- Some are cynical about whether the government would spend funds generated from deposits on the right things

"With the economy of scale larger companies can absorb more cost."
Younger, Newquay

More concerning

Less concerning

Principles suggested for government implementation: Focus on protecting the public and helping them with EPR's complexity



“I’m not driving miles around just to throw things away, no way.”

Older, Birmingham

The **benefit to the public must be tangible:**

- Either in the form of council tax reductions or in meaningful cost reductions for sustainable products
 - Linked to this, some suggested monitoring or capping price increases
- Some provision should be put in place to prevent excessive numbers of new waste collection points, to avoid having to drive to multiple locations
- To avoid a decrease in product quality, some suggested that the deposit/fee could be determined on whether the product is being designed with a view to longevity

EPR needs to be **clearly communicated to the public:**

- Some spontaneously suggest that a label or rating on different products would help people understand it
- But this should be coupled with a media campaign to explain the changes

Other principles focus on ensuring that the FCR model truly works effectively and fairly



It should be **fair towards businesses**:

- The rules should be **transparent** and the system should **avoid bias** towards any particular company
- But smaller businesses should receive some protection by the fees or deposits involved being **proportionate** to the scale of the company's production
- Younger participants highlight the need for a **transitional period**, to allow producers to adjust

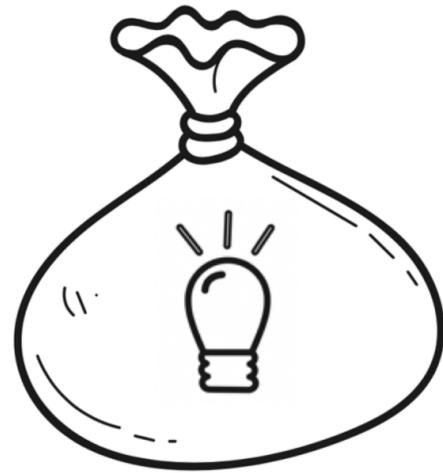
But **enforcement also needs to be effective**:

- Some feel that EPR should be **realistic** about its goals, and that a sufficient amount of staff should be employed to handle added bureaucracy and complexity
- Some suggest compliance 'auditing' could be undertaken by an **independent** body, and there are calls to ensure the government has no hidden financial stake in the process

"Imagine if they start taking business overseas, because they don't want to work here?"

Younger, Guildford

When suggesting what to do with funding generated from fees/ unclaimed deposits, people prioritise addressing personal waste gripes



The public's suggestions fall into three categories:

- **Improving waste services:**

- Ensuring weekly collections and not having to pay extra for green bins, and for some, increasing number of segregated bins at home or in collection vans
- Improving HWRCs/collection points, and increasing recycling facilities in public spaces

- **Education:**

- Improving messaging and education about recycling and waste disposal
- Incentivising people to recycle, seen as effective in the age of loyalty schemes

- **Environmental projects:**

- Funding research into the creation of sustainable materials, and more effective waste disposal systems
- Funding schemes across the country to improve the environment (e.g. cleaning plastic from beaches)

“I’m not sure what we get out of all of this, but if they can come get my bins more often, then great.”

Younger, Manchester

When prompted with options on how to use EPR funding, participants would most like to see this invested to develop the domestic market

Most Important	EPR funding should be used to develop domestic recycling and manufacturing in the UK	Ranked 1 st by 34/49
2nd most important	EPR funding should be used to create new jobs for the long-term unemployed	Ranked 2 nd by 33/49
3rd most important	EPR should support charitable organisations to make the most of materials, both home and abroad	Ranked 3 rd by 23/49
Least Important	EPR funding should be spent helping other manufacturing nations make best use of our recyclable material	Ranked 4 th by 25/49

Post-workshop questionnaire: Please rank the following statements on EPR funding with 1 being the most important use and 4 being the least important use
 Base: 49 [Not all participants completed the exercise in full]

07 Sustainability labelling

We asked the public their perceptions of sustainability labelling, and gave some examples of other labels...

Sustainability labelling

- SUEZ believes that mandatory sustainability labelling for products and packaging would help consumers make informed choices about the things they buy
- This would help consumers choose more sustainable products and support a producer-responsibility led system
- *For example*, products that are easily recycled might get a better performance “rating” than those that don’t
- There are lots of different ways we could define sustainability though – For example, Recyclability? Carbon footprint? Material-efficiency?
- There are also lots of different ways the performance of a product could be shown...

Rating and grading systems

The image displays a grid of various rating and grading systems:

- Nutritional value:** A table showing nutrient levels (Energy, Sugar, Fat, Saturates, Salt) with color-coded bars indicating their percentage of daily intake.
- Food hygiene:** A Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Hygiene Rating scale from 0 to 5, with 5 being 'VERY GOOD'.
- Energy efficiency:** A house-shaped graphic with a vertical bar showing energy efficiency ratings from A+++ (top) to G (bottom).
- Environmental impact:** A house-shaped graphic with a vertical bar showing environmental impact ratings from A (top) to G (bottom).
- Hotel:** A row of five yellow stars representing a hotel rating.
- Film classification:** Various symbols including 'U', 'PG', '12A', '12', '15', and '18'.
- Academic:** A table comparing different academic qualification systems:

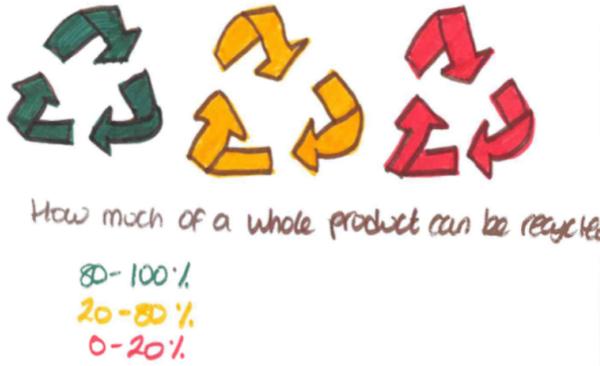
A*	7	1st
A	6	2:1
B	5	2:2
C	4	3rd
D	3	fail
E	2	
F	1	
- Sports:** Three medals (silver, gold, bronze) hanging from ribbons.

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... And asked them to design their own sustainability labels for products and packaging they purchase

Worksheet 4 Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Design your own eco-label for sustainable products under EPR



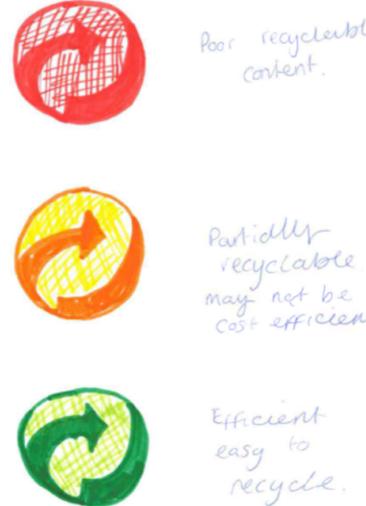
How much of a whole product can be recycled:-
 80-100%
 20-80%
 0-20%

Packaging to tell consumer as it already does, which parts are recyclable.

Guildford

Worksheet 4 Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Design your own eco-label for sustainable products under EPR



Poor recyclable content.

Partially recyclable may not be cost efficient

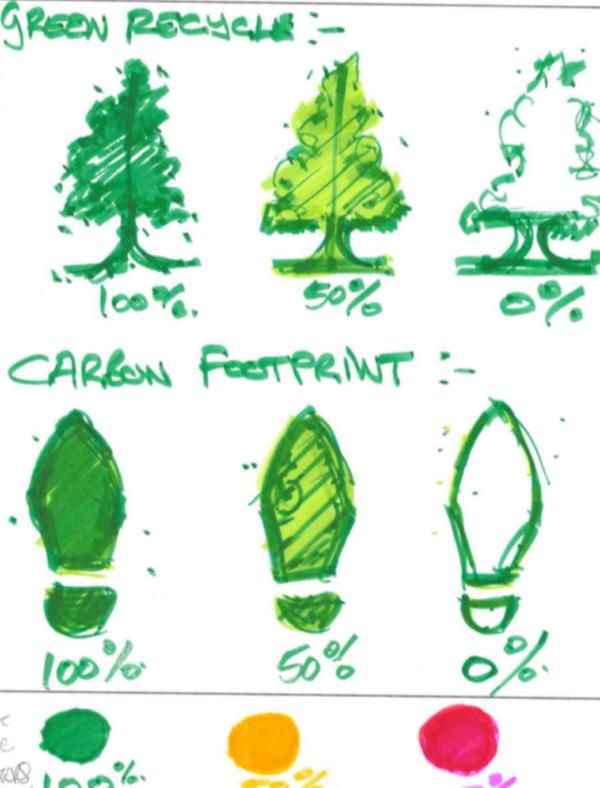
Efficient easy to recycle.

Birmingham

Worksheet 4 Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Design your own eco-label for sustainable products under EPR

GREEN RECYCLE :-



100% 50% 0%

CARBON FOOTPRINT :-

100% 50% 0%

BLACK PLASTIC STICKERS

Newquay

Worksheet 4 Britainthinks
Insight & Strategy

Design your own eco-label for sustainable products under EPR



Warbies Bread - Paper Package

Hovis - Thicker Plastic Package

ECO Bread - Plastic Package

Manchester

There are clear principles that the public would like sustainability labels to follow, so that they are clear and easy to understand

1 Use existing symbols that the public are familiar with to ensure comprehension (e.g. recycling symbol)

2 Colourful to attract attention. Traffic light colours are particularly popular

3 Simple scale such as a three point or five point scale, which is easy to read

4 Relevant symbol e.g. an environmental image such as a tree

5 Measures recyclability rather than any other metric, to help the public practice better behaviour. Second to this is the carbon footprint, but the public have limited understanding of this

“Everyone understands what red, amber, yellow means.”

Younger, Guildford

“When you see something has a 5 star review or 1 star, you know exactly what that means.”

Older, Manchester

“You need to stick to an existing icon, don’t try to put something new into people’s heads.”

Younger, Newquay

“People don’t really understand how things like carbon footprint or sustainability work.”

Older, Birmingham

Across both strands of research, the majority claim to be open to switching to different, more sustainable brands, under EPR



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workshop participants said that they would **consider switching to different brands than their usual household favourites**, if they were cheaper and in more sustainable packaging



67%

of the public surveyed agree that they would be **more likely to purchase brands that are more sustainable, than those that are less sustainable**

57%

of the public surveyed would **consider buying an alternative brand of product if they found out their favourite brand was less sustainable**

There are a range of reasons cited for being willing to switch:

- ✓ The cost increase, particularly for people on low incomes
- ✓ 'Doing my bit' for the environment – both for society and to reduce their own household waste
- ✓ Having 'little brand loyalty', and a willingness to switch

And say that sustainability labelling would impact on perceptions of brands, and encourage them to switch from poor performers



57%

of the public surveyed would **regularly check the eco-label on products they buy before purchasing them**

65%

of the public surveyed agree that they would **feel less positive about a brand if they found out it's products were less sustainable**

"If every time I bought meat it had a negative eco-label I might think about it a bit differently."
Older, Manchester

"I look at labels all the time when I'm in the supermarket, so definitely, I would notice something like this as well."
Older, Birmingham

"You would feel bad if you were buying it and knew the company were being wasteful."
Younger, Birmingham

However, unless accompanied by significant price rises, sustainability labelling alone will not result in consumers making different choices



60%

of the public surveyed would **only switch to an alternative, more sustainable brand, if it was also cheaper**

“I mostly buy my shoes from one place [...] they’re great quality and are more comfortable than anyone else. It would be really hard to change.”

Younger, Guildford

“I don’t think I could switch from [Diet Coke] to Pepsi, even if it was double in price.”

Older, Manchester

“My husband’s a good man. He doesn’t drink, or gamble and there’s one thing he likes and that’s his San Pellegrino. I’m not going to say, oh you can’t have that.”

Older, Manchester

08 Key insights

Key insights

1

The public claim that recycling and waste disposal is important to them, but this is not borne out in their behaviours

- When shopping, price and quality are far more important considerations than sustainability
- And relatively low barriers (e.g. the need to rinse out tins) can prevent recycling, and just under a quarter of the public surveyed say they often throw away items that could be recycled

2

Information about the current waste system is positively received, but raises questions about why producers don't do more to help consumers reduce waste

- There is a demand for producers to take responsibility for creating more sustainable products/packaging

3

Spontaneous awareness of EPR is very low

- Even where people have engaged with EPR schemes (e.g. battery disposal) they are not recognised as such

Key insights

4

Whilst the principle of EPR is seen as positive, the current system is not felt to be sufficiently comprehensive, and is criticised for allowing packaging producers to ‘shirk’ responsibility by buying PRNs

- In the survey, the public want to see producers bearing a greater percentage of the cost

5

There is a considerable degree of support for Full Cost Recovery EPR

- The most compelling argument for FCR is its environmental impact

6

However, to be supported in practice, it will be important that FCR delivers tangible benefits to consumers through price or tax savings, and that it is easy and convenient for consumers to engage with

7

The public support sustainability labelling, and identify 5 key principles for this: 1) Use existing, familiar symbols; 2) Use colour to attract attention; 3) Ensure scales are simple; 4) Ensure symbols are relevant to the issue and 5) Focus on recyclability over other metrics

- The public surveyed say that they would check products for labels, and consider switching to more sustainable brands

Thank you

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