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Plan A / Business Wide / Waste & Circular Economy



## WASTE & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

### BUSINESS WIDE

## Waste & Circular Economy

Some 200 million tonnes of waste is discarded in the UK each year according to latest Government figures. Of this, half is generated by construction activities, around a quarter is generated by other business activities, and some 28 million tonnes comes from households. The [Waste and Resources Action Programme \(WRAP\)](#) estimates that food and packaging accounts for over 40% of what households throw away each year. Around three-quarters of the UK's waste is already recycled or recovered in some form with just over a quarter going to landfill each year.

Moreover, population growth and increasing consumption (particularly in more affluent communities) are rapidly eroding many of the earth's natural resources. We rely on natural resources to produce our high quality products and run our stores and operations, so this issue affects us directly. Growing pressure on diminishing resources and poor global stewardship could increase our costs, restrict our access to key raw materials and make our global supply chains more volatile.

However, a waste-centric approach to resource efficiency is no longer sufficient and potentially gets in the way of resources being used in the most efficient and effective way. Unlike society's current 'take-make-dispose' business model, we need to transition to a 'circular economy' where the value of the materials and energy used in products are kept for as long as possible. In a sustainable circular economy, waste doesn't exist and resources aren't landfilled. A more circular approach to business can also help global efforts in combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Commitments and targets

We want to lead our sector in sustainable production and consumption, offering our customers the good value, high quality products and services that they expect from us while respecting our planetary boundaries and need for social equity.

We are committed to sending zero waste to landfill from our operations and construction activities in the UK and Republic of Ireland. We also work across our value chain and take action on key areas of waste such as food waste,

used clothing, packaging, and carrier bags. We support the transition to a sustainable circular economy and will prioritise business model innovation and put circular ways of working into practice.

### Approach

Waste has a number of cost implications, not least the fact that we pay for it as materials and we pay again for its disposal. In fact, [WRAP](#) estimates that the true cost of waste could be as much as ten times that of disposal costs. Since Plan A was launched in 2007, we've worked hard to take action on waste across our entire value chain. Working with [WRAP](#), suppliers and trade associations we've estimated that our value chain accounts for around 2.5m tonnes of waste across the world – around 80% of which is in our supply chain.

Our M&S operated stores, offices and warehouses in the UK and Republic of Ireland produce around 83,000 tonnes of waste all of which is valued and retained in the economy in some form. The majority is either transit packaging, such as cardboard and polythene, or unsold food which cannot be donated to charities. The small amount of damaged or impact clothing generated in our stores is donated to [Oxfam](#) or [Newlife](#). We send no operational waste to landfill and have been working hard to reduce the waste we create. We're also continually improving our approach to fitting out our stores by seeking ways to reuse and refurbish equipment.

We estimate that used products and packaging from customers generates over 400,000 tonnes of materials with just over half likely to be reused or recycled. The remainder will be sent to some form of municipal disposal. Based on our market share, our customers will be producing around 250,000 tonnes of food waste with around a third being composted or recovered in some form and 100,000 tonnes of clothing of which around a half will be reused or recycled. We use around 80,000 tonnes of product packaging, mostly on food products (85%) and according to UK Government data the majority of this (over 70%) is recycled or recovered.

We want to help our customers reuse or recycle every product or piece of packaging we sell but we cannot do it alone. For example, in partnership with Oxfam through [Shwopping](#) we're promoting the reuse and recycling of unwanted clothing and we're enabling customers to recycle Christmas cards each year helping the [Woodland Trust](#) to plant new trees throughout the UK. We're also working with our suppliers to reduce supply chain waste and have introduced industry leading programmes covering manufacturing and farming excellence in support of this.

We're now turning our attention towards how we use resources to produce our high quality products and run our stores and operations. By using resources more efficiently we have the potential to reduce our business costs and improve our resilience to global competition for material resources that may become less easily available.

We believe that both voluntary and regulatory actions are important. For example, during the 1990s we seconded a senior manager to help draft the UK's packaging waste regulations. Since the introduction of this legislation the recycling and recovery of packaging materials in the UK has improved from less than 30% to over 70%. Similarly, we have supported the introduction of mandatory carrier bag charging legislation across the UK based on our own voluntary approach which we introduced in May 2008. This enabled us to achieve a 70% reduction in food carrier bag usage which increased to 80% with the additional support of legislation.

Internationally, we operate within a range of different legislative environments and economic frameworks. As a result, there is myriad waste management legislation to which we need to adhere. For example, in the UK major pieces of regulation include legislation on packaging, handling of food waste, waste segregation and in Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland on carrier bags (with England to follow in October 2015).

We are also signatories to [WRAP's Courtauld Commitment](#) which is pushing for improved resource efficiency and reduced waste within the UK grocery sector and [Sustainable Clothing Action Plan \(SCAP\) 2020 Commitment](#) which is attempting to tackle the environmental impacts of clothing. We also support the [British Retail Consortium's \(BRC\) Better Retailing Climate](#) initiative which is pushing for the retail sector to send less than 1% of their waste to landfill by 2020.

Through the [Consumer Goods Forum](#) we are playing our part in tackling the global food waste challenge by [agreeing to halve food waste within our operations by 2025](#) against a 2016 baseline [contributing to associated UN Sustainable Development Goals on sustainable consumption and production by 2030](#).

Our approach focuses on improving our resource efficiency and putting the circular economy into action:

#### **Becoming a zero net waste business by maximising the amount we reduce and recycle and sending no waste to landfill**

Achieving zero waste to landfill in our operations	▼
Taking action on transit packaging	▼
Tackling food waste within our own operations	▼

## Helping our suppliers to reduce and recycle waste and send no waste to landfill

Towards zero net waste in the supply chain



## Creating partnerships to help our customers reuse and recycle our products and packaging

Shwopping



Taking action on product packaging



Engaging consumers to store and use food more efficiently



Carrier bags



## Prioritising business model innovation and putting the circular economy into practice

Circular economy in action



Leading with others to accelerate the transition to a sustainable circular economy



In 2013, we became the first retailer to receive certification to the Carbon Trust Standard for our achievements in waste reduction (in carbon and water too).

We monitor our waste performance on a monthly basis. Annual progress is independently assured and reported in our Plan A Report.

From 1 April 2013, M&S operated and joint-venture stores, offices, warehouses and delivery fleets around the world have been carbon neutral. The recycling and disposal of our waste is included within our reporting boundaries. [Find out more about our approach to climate change.](#)

### Working with others

Listening, learning, responding and working in partnership is an important part of how we do business.

We're working with many specialist organisations to tackle waste issues and help develop our thinking on the circular economy, including [WRAP](#), [EMF](#), and [BSR](#). We're working with a number of charitable organisations ([Company Shop](#), [FoodCycle](#) and [Neighbourly](#)) to redistribute surplus food to a wide range of charities that cook for those in need and are on the frontline of dealing with food poverty. We're also running reuse and recycling programmes with help from [Oxfam](#) and the [Woodland Trust](#).

We're working closely with the Government, the [Institute of Grocery Distribution \(IGD\)](#) and the [British Retail Consortium \(BRC\)](#) on various initiatives and are signatories to two major voluntary agreements overseen by [WRAP](#). Through the [Consumer Goods Forum](#) we are playing our part in tackling the global food waste challenge and have contributed to the work of [The Aldersgate Group](#) and [EMF](#) to help accelerate the transition to a sustainable circular economy.

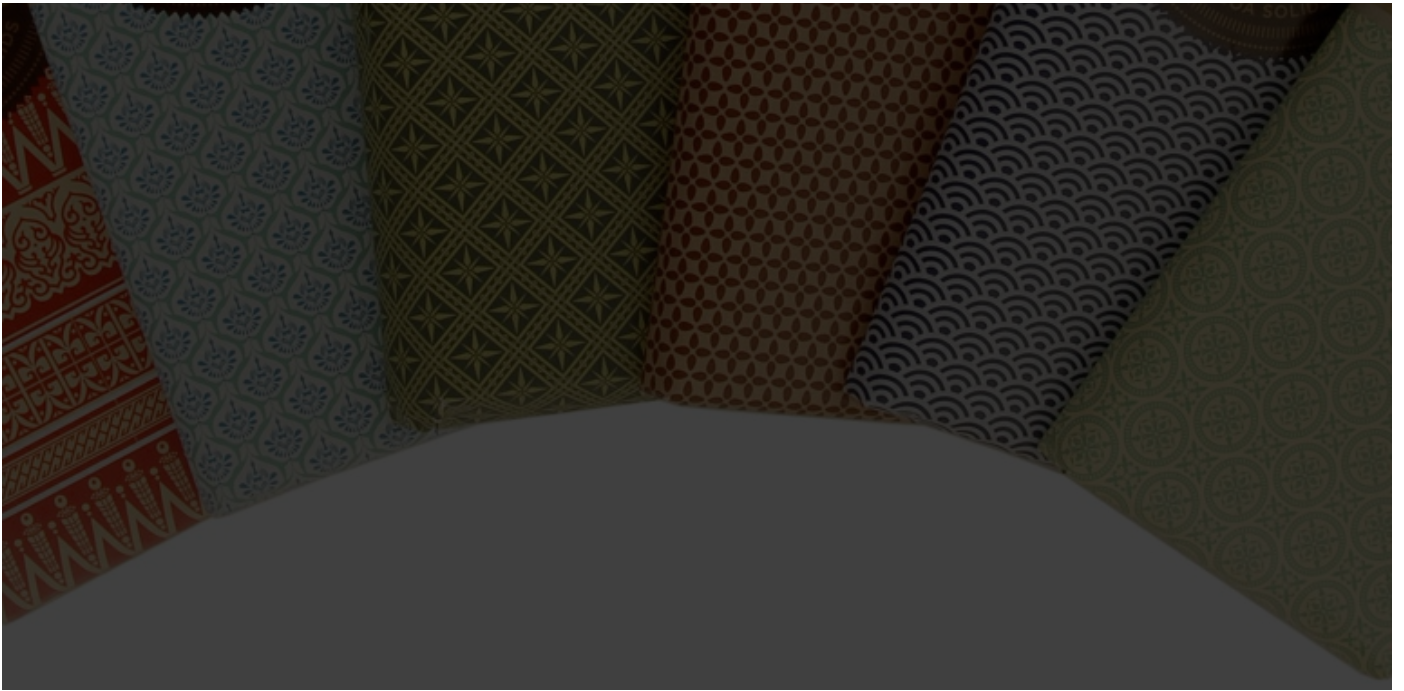
## Food Packaging & Hardware

Find out more about our approach to packaging and hardware

[View](#)





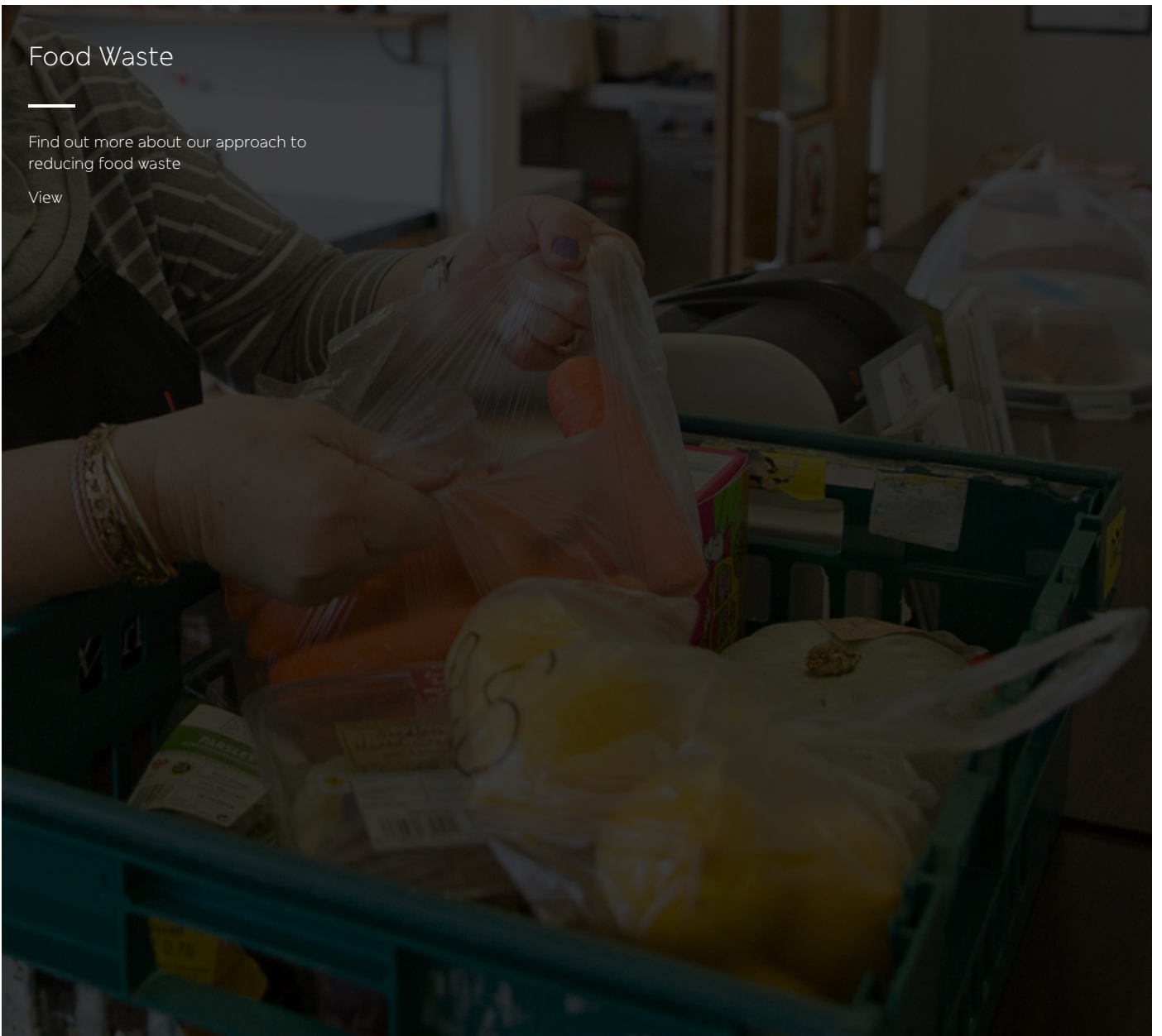


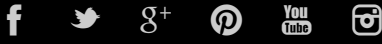
## Food Waste

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Find out more about our approach to reducing food waste

[View](#)





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