



environmental
services
association

ESA PRESS STATEMENT

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ESA calls for producers to pay the true cost of plastic

LONDON, 01 October 2018: The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice for the UK's resource and waste management industry, today sponsored an event hosted by think tank Bright Blue at the Conservative Party Conference on plastic pollution.

The fringe event entitled '*Plastic Fantastic? Exploring the current debate on plastic waste*' saw Defra Minister Thérèse Coffey, ESA, FCC, WWF and Asda discuss and debate the extent of the problem, what can be done to solve it, and whether the Government is on the right track.

ESA's Executive Director Jacob Hayler said:

"In many ways plastic is an innovative material that provides a cost-effective way to preserve shelf-life and prevent food waste. However, as Blue Planet 2 so powerfully highlighted, it all too often ends up in the ocean, killing and maiming wildlife. At the same time, the UK is only recycling around 45% of plastic packaging. This is because by the time it gets to us, it's often too late; the plastic has not been designed for recycling, or has caused confusion for the consumer about which bin it should go in.

"ESA is therefore calling for producers to pay the true cost of managing their products at the end of life by strengthening producer responsibility. This will not only inject much needed funding in domestic recycling infrastructure, but will incentivise producers to design their products for recyclability. In turn, this will help bring clarity to consumers about what can and cannot be recycled.

"This must be complemented by measures to require producers to use recycled content in their products, without which, there is not point collecting materials for recycling in the first place.

“ESA looks forward to the publication of Defra’s Resources and Waste Strategy which we believe will set out an ambitious vision for producer responsibility.”

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Notes to editors:

1. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK’s waste is managed.
2. We work with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. ESA’s recent Circular Economy report ‘*Going for Growth – A practical route to a circular economy*’, which outlines how a Circular rather than a linear economy can help manage resources sustainably, can be downloaded [here](#).
3. ESA’s Members manage waste on behalf of the whole of society and we are recovering more than ever before. For example, the industry has helped quintuple the UK’s household recycling rates over the last decade.
4. **The sector at a glance**
 - Total turnover: **£11 billion**
 - Direct Employment: **106,000 people** (*including waste collection, treatment and materials recovery*)
 - Municipal waste handled each year: **27 million tonnes**
 - Energy generated (across landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste) each year: **approximately 11,867 GWh**, which is 3.5% of the UK’s electricity
 - **9,083 GWh of that was renewable electricity** (taking out non-biodegradable portion of EfW) which is **11%** of UK’s renewable electricity
 - Greenhouse **gas emissions down by 70% since 1990**.
 - The **top seven companies account for approximately 40% of turnover**. Many hundreds of SMEs provide either localised or more specialised services
 - Waste & recycling is the **most highly rated of all council services** by the public (2016 survey)

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

Press Contact

Toni Waters – Communications and Membership Officer

ESA Press Office - (0207) 591 3219 (DD - (0207) 591 3206)

Mobile - (07841) 572 834

Email - t-waters@esauk.org / press@esauk.org

