



environmental  
services  
association

## PRESS COMMENT

# ESA RESPONDS TO DEFRA STRAWS, COTTON BUDS & STIRRERS BAN

**LONDON, 28 October 2019:** The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice for the UK's resource and waste management industry, has called on Government to focus on delivering systemic change to tackle plastic waste by incentivising durable, reusable and widely recycled products – instead of piecemeal bans on certain product types, which may have unintended or undesirable consequences.

This follows the publication today of legislation drawn up by Defra announcing a ban on single-use plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers, which is due to come into force from April 2020. Further details about this legislation can be found [here](#)

### **Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association, Jacob Hayler, said:**

*“While on the face of it, banning the sale of these single-use plastic items seems a sensible step, the reality is that straws, stirrers and cotton buds represent only a drop in the ocean when it comes to tackling the sustainability challenges associated with poorly-designed, wasteful, products and packaging. Responding to consumer and media pressure, these particular items are already being replaced with single-use paper and wood equivalents, which typically are not recycled anyway. Far better would be to incentivise the use of more durable, re-usable products, or new formats for which a mainstream recycling solution already exists.*

*A properly considered extended producer responsibility regime, which imposes modulated fees on the sale of goods based on how sustainable a product is, which in part would be determined by how easily re-used or recycled an item is, will remove the need for piecemeal legislation like this. This form of producer responsibility is already part of Defra's holistic resources and waste strategy, and getting the appropriate legislation through Parliament to make this strategy a reality should be the Government's focus.”*

ENDS

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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. All of our reports and publications are available to view and download from our website.
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](http://www.esauk.org)

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