



Ministry
of Justice

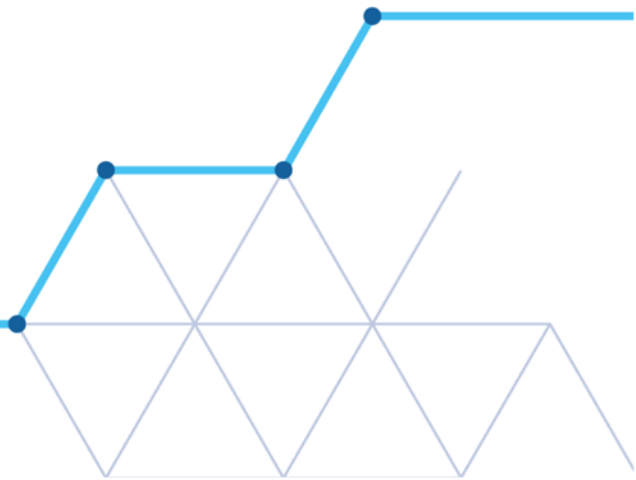
Estates Directorate

Single-Use Plastics Policy

October 2018

Version control

Protecting and advancing the principles of justice



1 Introduction

- 1.1 The government wants to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. Tackling the amount of plastic produced and disposed of within the UK is key to this.
- 1.2 Plastic is cheap, hygienic, secure and used in a vast number of products in modern society. It is durable and can break down into microplastics, without fully degrading. Consequently, when plastic enters our seas and environment, it can have devastating consequences for wildlife and the wider natural world and risks being transferred up the food chain.
- 1.3 It is estimated that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced globally since the 1950s¹. Without urgent action to cut demand, this is likely to be 34 billion tonnes by 2050, the majority of which will end up in landfill or polluting the world's continents and oceans.²
- 1.4 One of the ways to reduce the amount of plastic in circulation is to reduce demand for single-use plastic. Consequently, in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, launched by the Prime Minister in January 2018, the Government committed to remove all single-use plastic from central government estate offices.³
- 1.5 The Ministry of Justice is committed to reducing and removing single-use plastic across our full estate, wherever possible, as stated in our Sustainable Operations Strategy.⁴ We will:
 - Meet the government-wide ban to eliminate consumer single-use plastic from our central office estate by 2020; and
 - go beyond the scope of the ban to address single-use plastics on our operational and custodial estate. Many of these properties have specific contexts and challenges, which mean they will need to use some single-use plastic. However, we will work to reduce and remove avoidable consumer single-use plastic, wherever viable and practical.

¹ 'Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made', Geyer, et al. *Science Advances*. Vol 3, no.7, 2017

² 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment',
www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ministry of Justice Estates Directorate's 'Sustainable Operations Strategy', March 2018
www.gov.uk/guidance/ministry-of-justice-and-the-environment#sustainable-operations

2 Defining single-use plastic

- 2.1 'Single-use plastic' is a wide-ranging term. It includes all products made wholly or partly of plastic, which are typically intended to be used just once and / or for a short period of time before being disposed of.
- 2.2 For the sake of this policy, we are focussed on removing 'consumer single-use plastics' i.e. plastics which are used by consumers as opposed to plastics with applied or industrial uses, such as toner cartridges.
- 2.3 We will focus on removing consumer single-use plastics which are avoidable⁵ and / or which have viable and sustainable market alternatives:

Plastics used for catering:

- Single-use sachets (e.g. coffee pods, sauces, milk)
- Take-away cutlery, boxes and plates
- Cups made wholly or partially from plastic
- Water bottles
- Straws and stirrers

Plastics used for cleaning:

- Single-use containers (e.g. hand soap, cleaning products)
- Wipes containing plastic

Plastics used around the office:

- Envelopes
- Plastic wrapping for brochures

Plastics used in packaging:

- Single-use packaging from deliveries, where avoidable
- Single-use carrier bags

3 Removing and reducing single-use plastic

- 3.1 We will apply this policy to all relevant sourcing of new requirements and suppliers. At the same time, MoJ will create a programme of work to identify which existing contracts contain avoidable single-use plastics and work with the relevant suppliers and facilities managers to source and implement alternative products across our estate.
- 3.2 As a minimum, we will replace single-use plastics with viable alternatives, such as compostable materials, unless there are compelling circumstances in operational and custodial properties that prevent us from doing so. In the long-term, we will aim to reduce and remove avoidable disposable products altogether and instead encourage more sustainable practices.
- 3.3 We will continue to assess whether there are other single-use plastics, beyond the list outlined in 2.3, that are avoidable and / or have viable and sustainable market alternatives. Where we

⁵ "Avoidable", meaning the use of a product made of a certain material is not essential. An example would be plastic cutlery, for which single-use wooden cutlery or re-usable metal cutlery are readily available alternatives.

identify other single-use plastics that do not currently have a suitable alternative available, we will seek to reduce the quantity of plastic used instead.

- 3.4 The goal of removing single-use plastic must not be done in a vacuum; wherever plastic is being removed or replaced with an alternative, we will ensure that an appropriate waste removal procedure (if required) is put in place and adequate signage is provided to educate consumers.
- 3.5 The government ban on single-use plastic does not include plastic brought in by staff. However, we will encourage staff to reduce the amount of plastic brought in by raising awareness, encouraging behaviour change and utilising our network of sustainability champions across the estate.
- 3.6 As members of the cross-Whitehall Sustainability Group, we will collaborate with and learn from the progress of other Government Departments to identify best practice and constantly look for opportunities for improvement in the MoJ estate.

4 Contact details

For any questions on, or suggestions for the improvement of, this policy please contact the Sustainability Team on **SDEnquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk**



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