



Press Release

22 October 2020

Results of updated PackFlow materials reports announced

Packaging compliance specialist Valpak (a Reconomy Group Company), together with its key partners WRAP and the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (INCPEN), has published [updated PackFlow reports](#) which estimate the impact of Covid-19 on UK packaging compliance for 2020 and through to 2022.

Despite concerns relating to the potential impact of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions, the report finds that overall compliance with targets proposed in the 2019 packaging consultations will be challenging yet broadly achievable.

Some of the key findings from the updated PackFlow reports are as follows:

- There has been some change to where packing materials are arising coupled with an accompanied change in format type, but broadly this has had less of an impact on the recycling position than may have been feared
- The waste management sector has proved highly resilient and material has continued to move through the recycling process to end markets
- Businesses deregistering due to insolvency as a result of lockdown restrictions could result in an oversupply of Packaging Waste Recovery Notes (PRN's) due to decreased demand
- Plastics and glass have seen the biggest impact. A decrease in the amount of packaging placed on the market means a potential shortfall in PRNs in the short-term. For plastics, this is compounded by a higher proportion entering households which typically have a lower capture and recycling rate. However, for plastics a higher participation in local authority recycling schemes has outweighed any loss of collections in the commercial sector.

The PackFlow reports cover glass, metals, paper, plastic and wood and are designed to quantify how much packaging is placed on the UK market and subsequently recycled. They are also used by UK governments to inform the setting of business recycling targets. Key findings by packaging material are:

Paper - will continue to deliver surplus PRNs to offset general recycling obligations. A small decline in the material placed on the market and a shift away from the higher participation commercial and industrial sectors towards household consumption is projected.

Glass – volumes of material recycled are likely to be very close to the 2020 obligation. Increased targets mean that compliance in 2021/2022 is likely to require an increased yield from existing systems or improved participation rates. Capture of non-accredited recycling would also help in meeting targets.



Aluminium – faces similar challenges to glass although there are some factors that may help to mitigate the situation including signs of improved participation in collection schemes and the increased capture of non-accredited recycling. New accredited energy from waste capacity will also have a positive impact.

Steel – the compliance position remains well balanced with a small surplus projected. As recycling rates remain extremely high, it is essential that a high proportion of reprocessors are accredited. The projected decrease in POM means surpluses may be eroded and 2022 may see a small shortfall.

Plastic – proposed increased targets may not be achievable. When the participation in recycling systems is kept constant, a small shortfall of PRNs is projected. If a small improvement in participation is modelled, a small surplus is projected. Much of this is not Covid-19 related but associated with broader changes in corporate and consumer behaviour.

Wood – Across all scenarios, the surplus of wood packaging relative to its target narrows in 2020 and then widens in 2021 and 2022.

Claire Shrewsbury, Head of Government and Communities WRAP, said: *“Having accurate, up-to-date information on the movement of materials in the economy is vital to inform packaging recycling targets and discussions around Extended Producer Responsibility, and the Packflow reports remain a key tool for both business, and Governments. We would like to thank those who took part in producing these insights at such an extraordinary time for the sector. What these reports highlight perhaps most clearly is the robustness of the recycling sector in responding to Covid-19. The sector has faced challenges but responded to them by adapting and finding end markets.”*

Paul Vanston, INCPEN CEO said: *“Robust policy and national targets need to be well-informed, and the purpose of this project is to ensure the Government has full benefit of up-to-date packaging information. The teamwork across the materials sectors working on this project has been extraordinarily high quality. Particular thanks go to the Valpak team who have worked wonders to deliver the project reports in such short timescales.”*

James Skidmore - Head of Consulting at Valpak - also commented, saying: *“I would like to take this opportunity to thank our co-sponsors WRAP and INCPEN together with all project stakeholders from across government and industry. We are extremely grateful for all the input we have received in such difficult conditions. We hope that the report’s findings will be helpful for all those involved in the process as well as the wider business community.”*

The updated reports assimilated input from the full spectrum of stakeholders with involvement and support from Defra. Valpak also consulted with the Governments of the devolved administrations and their associated bodies, the Advisory Committee on Packaging (ACP), materials sector bodies, representatives of the waste management sector recycling industry and other Compliance Schemes.

To view the updated Packflow reports – [click here](#).

ENDS



Editors' Notes

WRAP is a not for profit organisation founded in 2000 which works with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world in which we source and use resources sustainably. Its impact spans the entire lifecycle of the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the products we buy, from production to consumption and beyond. **More information:** Carolyn.Smith@wrap.org.uk – www.wrap.org.uk – [@WRAP_UK](https://twitter.com/WRAP_UK)

INCPEN is the Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment. Its membership comprises UK, European and global manufacturers, brands, retailers, recyclers and reprocessors. In the UK alone, our members support over 600,000 jobs and £6 billion of economic value. INCPEN's focus is to work with governments and the packaging value chain to improve and optimise systems so that packaging and the environment work in harmony and sustainably.

Valpak's consultancy division, a Reconomy Group company, helps public and private sector clients with all aspects of environmental strategy, packaging design, legislation and EPR. The highly experienced team provide unique insight into packaging choices, recycling and recyclability, environmental impact, waste minimisation and efficiency, waste management, energy and carbon reporting.

A list of key stakeholders can be seen below:

Project Sponsors:

- o Industry Council for Packaging and the Environment (Incpen)
- o Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
- o Valpak

Government

- o Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- o Environment Agency (EA)
- o Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- o NI Assembly
- o Scottish Government
- o Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- o Welsh Assembly Government

Industry

- o Advisory Committee on Packaging (ACP)
- o Nipak
- o The Packaging Federation
- o The Recycling Association
- o Wastepack Ltd
- o Zero Waste Scotland

Paper and Card

- o ACE UK
- o BPIF Cartons
- o CPI
- o The Paper and Board Association

Glass

- o British Beer and Pub Association
- o British Glass
- o Scotch Whisky Association
- o UK Hospitality
- o Viridor

Metals

- o Alupro
- o Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association
- o Tata Steel

Plastics

- o The British Plastic Federation (BPF)
- o The Foodservice Packaging Association (FPA)
- o Plastics Europe
- o Recycling of Used Plastics Ltd (RECOUP)
- o RPC BPI (Berry)

Wood

- o TIMCON
- o Wood Panel Industries Federation
- o Wood Recyclers Association

For further information, please contact:

Austen Lees

Sirius Communications

00 44 (0)7773 813 210

austen@siriuscomms.co.uk