

Final version - January 2011

End of Life Plasterboard Waste Agreement

A Voluntary Plasterboard Agreement by recyclers and waste management contractors

Summary

Plasterboard and other high sulphate wastes are now banned from general landfill. New approaches are being adopted by industry to ensure a suitable infrastructure for collecting and processing waste plasterboard exists.

This voluntary agreement has been conceived to give responsible waste contractors and plasterboard recyclers a means of demonstrating their commitment towards improving recycling rates and reducing the amount of plasterboard waste sent to landfill.

Waste companies and recyclers who sign this voluntary agreement help to provide assurance to waste producers that they are striving to improve their environmental performance and meet 'Duty of Care' obligations.

The agreement has been developed in collaboration with the Plasterboard Sustainability Partnership (PSP).

Headline targets

1.	<p>Engaging with all stakeholders to undertake activities which reduce the amount of plasterboard waste disposed of to landfill and increase recovery of all plasterboard waste with a long term view to achieving the objective of zero plasterboard waste sent to landfill by 2025.</p> <p><i>This relates to plasterboard wastage on site and potential recovery strategies and options where contractors have limited influence at present. This will work towards the government's Waste Strategy to halve construction waste to landfill by 2012 and reflects the wider aspiration to reduce plasterboard waste to landfill to zero by 2025. This target is inline with the Ashdown Agreement -.Target 4.</i></p>
2.	<p>By 2012: Waste management contractors to reduce the amount of plasterboard waste going to landfill from construction and refurbishment sites by diverting 25% more plasterboard waste to recycling and recovery facilities.</p> <p><i>This relates to the collection and management of plasterboard waste to divert more from landfill, and will be measured through amounts of plasterboard waste being landfilled.</i></p>
3.	<p>By 2012: Resource management and recycling contractors to increase recycling of plasterboard waste into new plasterboard and recovery via alternative end uses. Plasterboard recycling sector will jointly increase throughput by 100% compared with 2007 levels.</p> <p><i>This relates to increasing the throughput of the recycling and recovery facilities, along with end markets to make use of the resources being generated, either into new plasterboard or other end use applications.</i></p> <p><i>Measuring progress towards this target is complex due to the difficulty in quantifying the total amount of plasterboard waste arising from construction activities. Recent estimates quoted 300,000 tonnes annually. However it is commonly acknowledged by industry that this is an estimate with a wide margin of error and that the assumptions used to derive it are somewhat historic.</i></p> <p><i>For this reason, the GPDA and WRAP have agreed (as detailed in the Ashdown Agreement Annual report to 31 March 2009) that this figure should be adjusted to reflect the recent economic downturn. Achievements against the above target are therefore to be expressed against a revised total amount of plasterboard waste arising from construction activities of 210,000 tonnes per annum.</i></p>

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In order to achieve successful outcomes, the following actions will be undertaken:

Target 1 actions

- The waste management and plasterboard recycling sectors will continue to work within the Plasterboard Sustainability Partnership to establish how the supply chain can collectively maximise the diversion of plasterboard waste from landfill.
- The waste management and plasterboard recycling sectors will explore, with other stakeholders, solutions for future plasterboard waste recyclable / recoverable from new construction, refurbishment and demolition activities where it is technically and economically feasible to do so.
- Waste management contractors will work to ensure they are involved from an early phase in construction, demolition and refurbishment projects to assist in planning and selecting the most appropriate solution to enable segregation of plasterboard waste.
- Whilst the long-term objective is to eliminate plasterboard waste from landfill, the process of transition will require sufficient landfill void to be available to accommodate the flows which will continue to exist in the short term as solutions become effective for progressively more difficult streams.
- The target will be delivered taking account of the best environmental option. As such, revisions may be required over time as new evidence becomes available.

Target 2 actions

- Waste management contractors will make efforts to encourage good or best practice plasterboard waste management on construction, demolition and refurbishment sites to maximise the diversion of this waste from landfill.
- The proportion of hard to retrieve (e.g. small amounts of plasterboard waste) waste being collected and sent to recycling/recovery facilities should increase to achieve this target. Therefore, a system of measuring inputs from these sources is needed.
- The Environment Agency waste returns data should be used to help provide an annual estimate on gypsum based products being landfilled*. These are coded as 17 08 gypsum-based construction material (17 08 01* = gypsum-based construction materials contaminated with dangerous substances, or 17 08 02 = gypsum-based construction materials other than those mentioned in 17 08 01).

*It should be noted that these EWC codes cover all gypsum waste products and not only plasterboard waste disposed. This includes plasters, ceramics, gypsum bricks, Artex, and ceiling roses. This must be taken into account when developing an annual estimate for landfilling of plasterboard waste based on these EWC codes.

Target 3 actions

- Define a baseline for plasterboard waste reprocessed which will be used to measure future improvements realised through implementation of this Agreement.
- The proportion of hard to recycle (e.g. plasterboard waste arising from demolition) waste being recycled or recovered should increase to achieve this target. Therefore, a system of measuring inputs from these sources, compared to outputs to landfill would flag up where further reprocessing capacity and/or end use options are needed.
- Existing tools and approaches should be identified that could assist the group in the identification and measurement of hard to recycle sources. Agreement should be reached on an appropriate solution that can then be adopted and used by recyclers and waste management contractors group.
- The plasterboard recycling sector will develop and implement an auditable means of measuring actual throughput of waste plasterboard processed. This could entail a simple questionnaire sent to individual recyclers at a set time every year with questions covering tonnages recycled, sources of waste plasterboard and percentage breakdown of the sources taken in. The group would also need to identify appropriate resource and an organisation/body who is willing and well suited to collate this information into a final report.
- The Quality Protocol for Recycled Gypsum and the PAS 109 standard should be widely communicated and adopted by those involved with the recycling and recovery of plasterboard waste. Misuse of the Quality Protocol should be minimised through enforcement activities of the Environment Agency.
- WRAP will support the development of solutions for collection of small and medium sized quantities arising (e.g. localised waste collection and logistic solutions)

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Annual review of progress

A review of progress made against the targets and actions set out in this Agreement should take place no later than 12 months after the signing of this Agreement, and annually thereafter.

This review should involve a joint meeting of the plasterboard recyclers and waste management contractors group, and Plasterboard Sustainability Partnership (PSP) on the progress made.