

Refill Revolution: UK coalition in world's biggest multi-retailer refill trial

UK supermarkets join forces for the first time to tackle single-use plastic packaging

A group of UK retailers has come together in the first-ever Refill Coalition collaborating to co-design an innovative refill solution. If successful, the solution could play a key role in reducing the 56.5 billion units of single-use plastic packaging sold annually in the UK¹.

The Refill Coalition is **M&S, Morrisons, Ocado, Waitrose & Partners** and the supply chain solutions company **CHEP** and was convened in 2020 by **Unpackaged**, the UK's leading refill experts. Members of The Refill Coalition have made significant investments in the scheme to date, with the ambition to test the system live in stores, and online, starting later in the year.

Some retailers have introduced refill stations already, seen as a key component in tackling single-use plastic packaging waste, but an end-to-end solution is needed to achieve scale - which is why industry-wide collaboration is crucial.

The Refill Coalition's solution will reimagine how key food staples (e.g. pasta and grains) and household products (e.g. home and personal care products) are supplied and marks the first step in developing a worldwide standard for plastic-free food distribution from the supplier to the cupboard. Part of the system, being developed through the coalition, is a bulk home delivery refill solution - an industry first.

Subject to a successful trial, Coalition retailers will roll out refill stations across their stores and online. Further announcements, and details of trial store locations and the online offer, will be provided later in the year.

There is strong customer appetite for single-use plastic-free choices when it comes to packaging. Refill stations mean customers can bring their own reusable containers to buy loose products. **Research shows that 67% - 85% of UK adults would try refilling if it was available in a mainstream supermarket², across all demographics, spend profiles and locations and 73% of those who shop online³.**

Whilst supermarkets have done much to reduce plastic packaging, Greenpeace figures estimate that at least 56.5 billion units of single-use plastic packaging go onto the UK grocery market each year⁴. 99% of plastic packaging is also made from fossil fuels which causes CO2 emissions, contributing to climate change at a time when all businesses need to transition to Net Zero.

¹ Greenpeace (2020) *Unpacked: how supermarkets can cut plastic packaging in half by 2025*

² Opinion Research (2020) *Sustainability and the Supermarket*

³ IDG (2021) *How to help consumers adopt reusable packaging*

⁴ Greenpeace (2020) *Unpacked: how supermarkets can cut plastic packaging in half by 2025*

M&S, Morrisons, Ocado, Waitrose & Partners and CHEP have jointly made the following statement: *"We're delighted to be joining forces with the mutual objective of reducing single-use plastic packaging. The universal end-to-end solution being developed by The Refill Coalition presents a landmark opportunity for us to make a step change in the commercialisation of refills which we know can play a significant role in the reduction of single-use plastic packaging."*

Catherine Conway, founder of Unpackaged said: *"It's absolutely brilliant that The Refill Coalition has come together to help create an industry-wide solution. Working together to create a universal system gives us the best chance of scaling refills so they become accessible to every shopper in the UK, as we know consumers want less single-use plastic packaging on the items they purchase. An industry-wide approach will lead to a refill system that works for everyone in the supply chain and will make refilling easier for shoppers."*

Claire Shrewsbury, Director Insights and Innovation at WRAP said: *"WRAP welcomes this initiative which will help make refill and reuse a regular feature of the nation's shopping habits. This will support making serious headway in eliminating single-use plastic packaging; one of the targets of The UK Plastics Pact. We know shoppers are ready to embrace this way of shopping, but lack of availability, in-store and online, has been a major barrier. This initiative could be a game-changer in accelerating refill and reuse in our supermarkets and pave the way for it to become mainstream."*

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Notes to Editors:

M&S is a British value-for-money retailer focused on own label businesses, serving nearly 30 million customers each year. M&S has a long history of leadership on environmental, social and ethical issues through its pioneering 'Plan A'. Encouraging refill is a key part of its ambitious targets to remove 1bn units of plastic by 2027 and reduce packaging use by 25% by 2025; M&S launched a 'Fill Your Own' packaging-free refillable grocery concept in 2019 and working with The Refill Coalition is an important next step on this journey.

Morrisons is a British food retailer with 497 stores and morrisons.com serving millions of customers every week. Over 9,000 trained butchers, bakers, fishmongers, cheesemongers and specialists make food in store and the supermarket owns 20 sites making meat, fruit & veg, fish, bakery and fresh food products. It is British farming's biggest supermarket customer.

Ocado is the world's largest dedicated online supermarket and has the most sustainable grocery proposition with the lowest levels of food waste (0.04%) of any British grocer.

Waitrose is a pioneer of package-less solutions in store and the first supermarket in the UK to introduce dedicated refillables sections in its stores in 2019. Our pledge is to make all our own-brand packaging either widely-recycled, reusable or home compostable by 2023. Through this, we have led the way in reducing plastic packaging across the retail sector and recently were jointly named Britain's most sustainable supermarket by Which? and for two consecutive years have been ranked the number one supermarket in the UK for plastic reduction in Greenpeace's plastic footprint league table.



CHEP moves life essentials across the world on its 345 million reusable pallets, crates and containers. As pioneers of the sharing economy, CHEP created one of the world's most sustainable logistics businesses under a model known as 'pooling'. CHEP employs approximately 11,500 people and operates in more than 750 service centres across 60 countries, with its largest operations in North America and Western Europe. CHEP is part of the Brambles Group.

Unpackaged is the UK's leading consultancy in this field; working with the private and public sector to develop reuse and refill systems, as well as campaign for policy change to support the transition towards a Circular Economy.

Website: www.refillcoalition.com

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