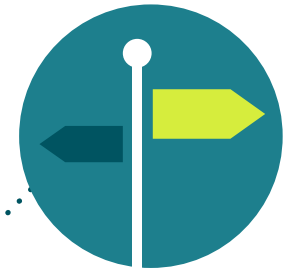
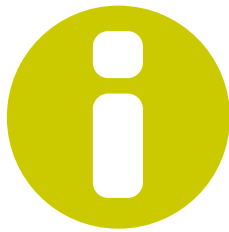


What Consumers Want

7 key research insights on engaging consumers in recycling



Key insights

Understanding what information consumers respond to – and how they behave – is essential to get consumers recycling more often. This document draws on seven major pieces of consumer insight taken from a study with 5,010 consumers in February/March 2023.

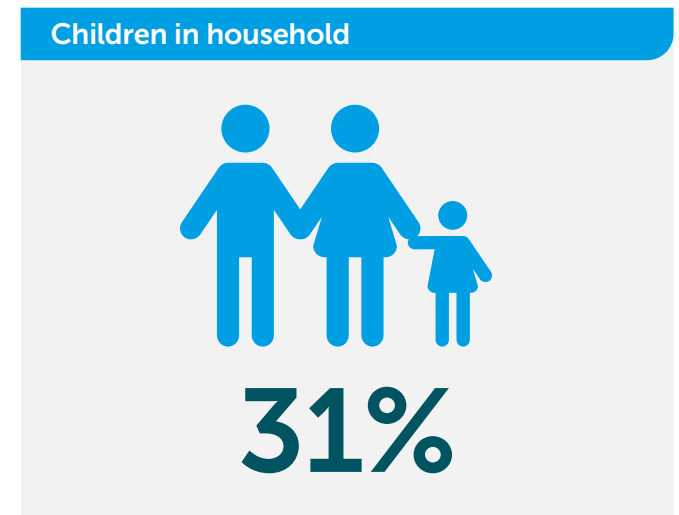
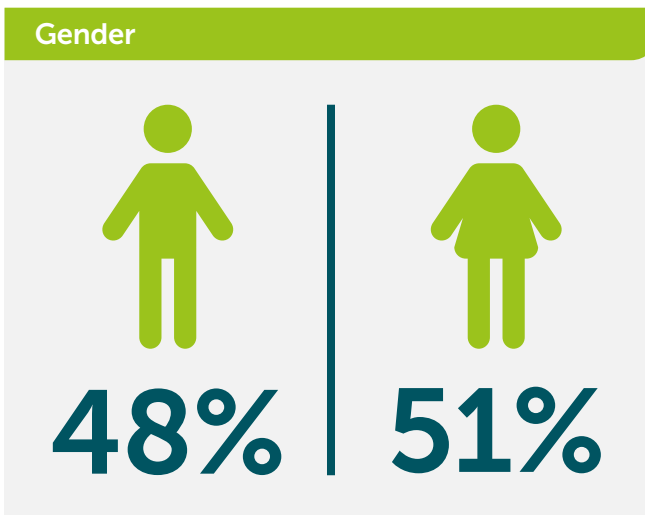
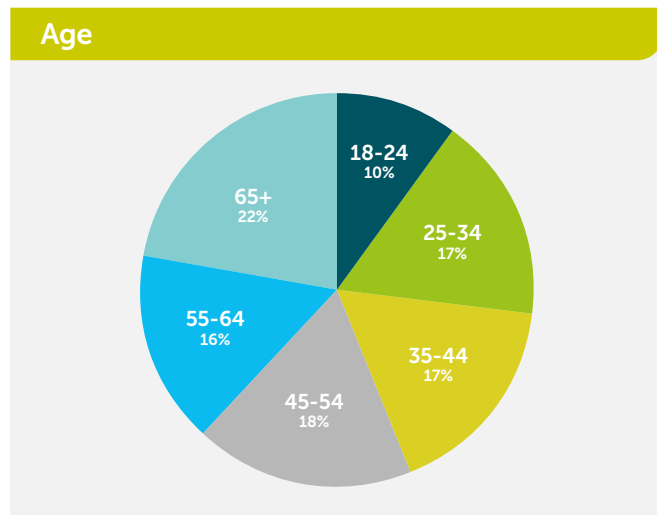
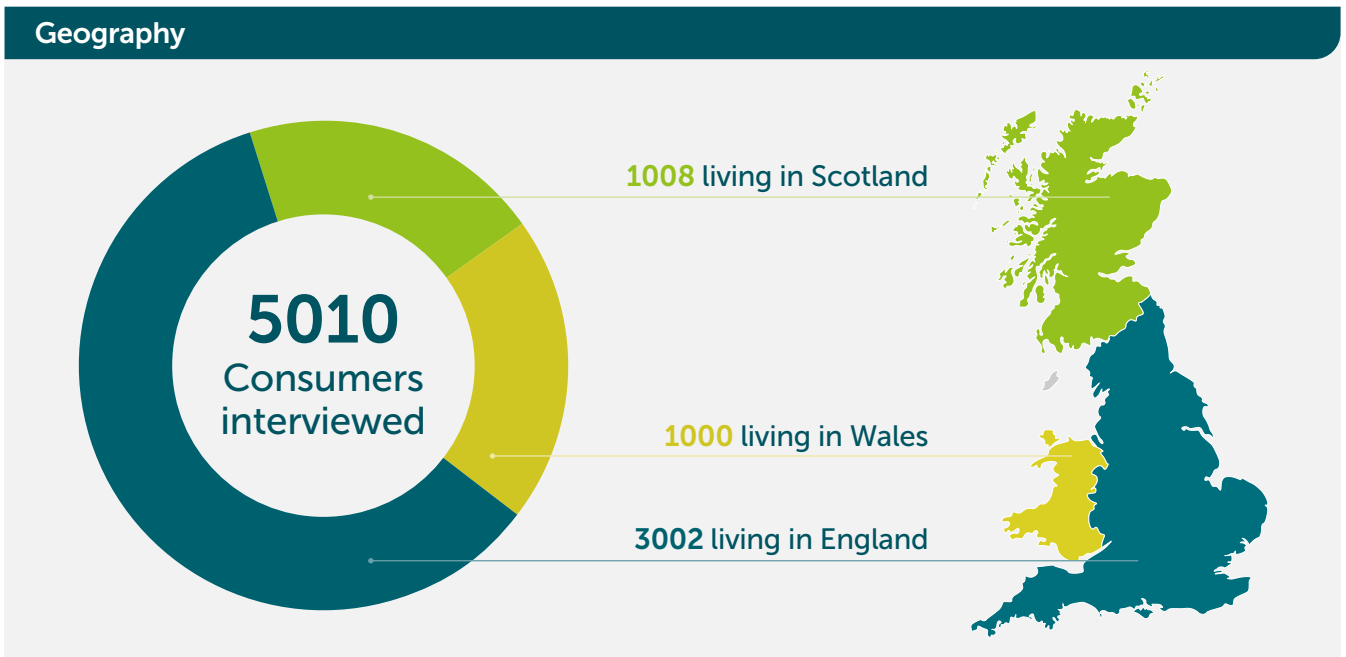
This broad body of research has revealed the following 7 key insights:



Sources

OPRL Ltd commissioned Tangible Branding, a consumer research company, to gather insights into consumer attitudes to recycling, barriers to action and how labelling helps overcome some of these.

In order to ensure representative views and also to gain a depth of understanding not possible in a relatively short questionnaire, Tangible used a mixture of research techniques, repeating contextual questions in order to confirm the consistency of consumer attitudes and understanding.

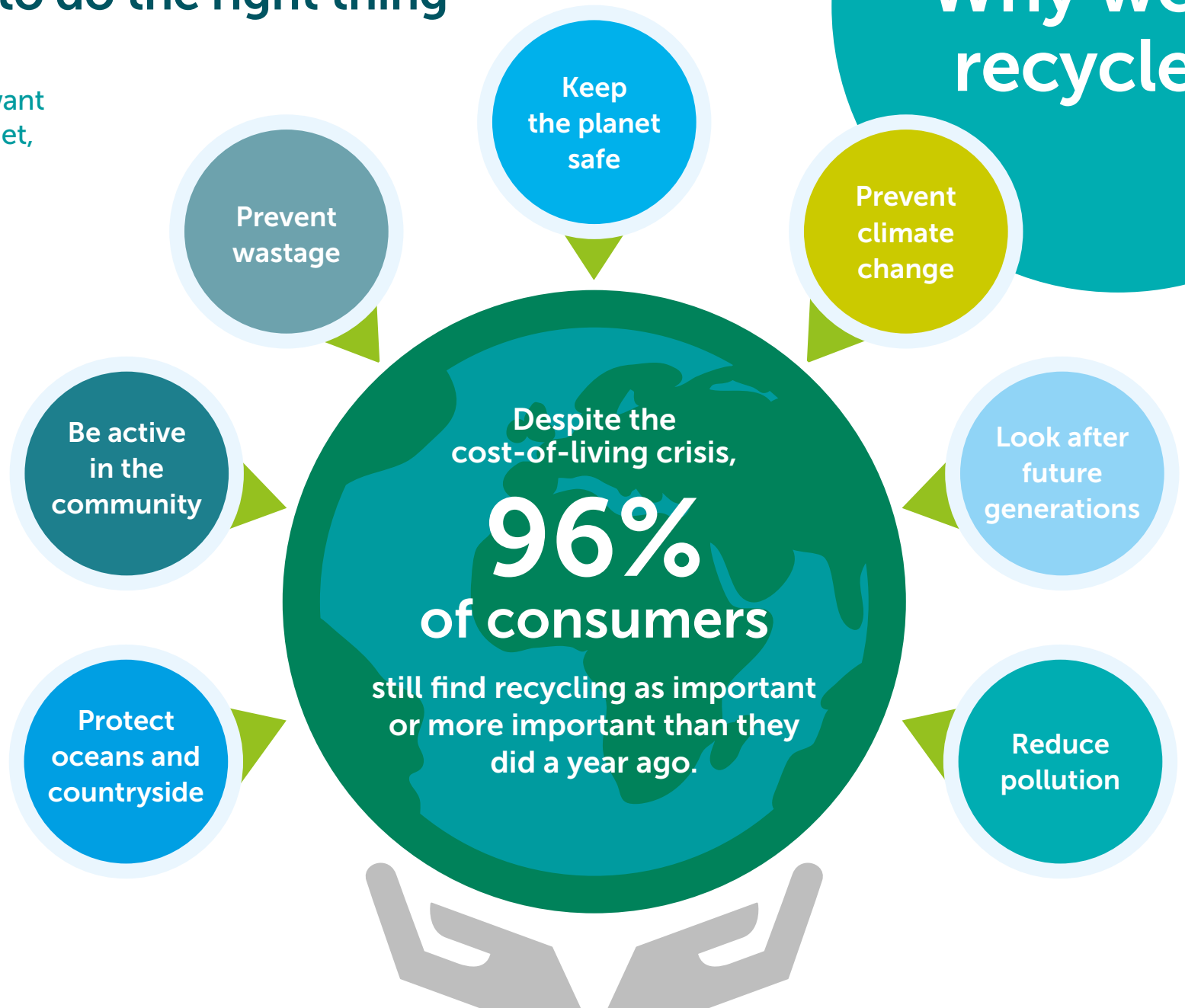


1. People want to do the right thing

Overwhelmingly, people want to 'do their bit' for the planet, their communities and future generations.

But wanting to act responsibly and feeling equipped to make the right decision on every piece of packaging are very different things.

Consumers are taking more responsibility and focusing on the environment but need help turning their good intentions into the right actions.



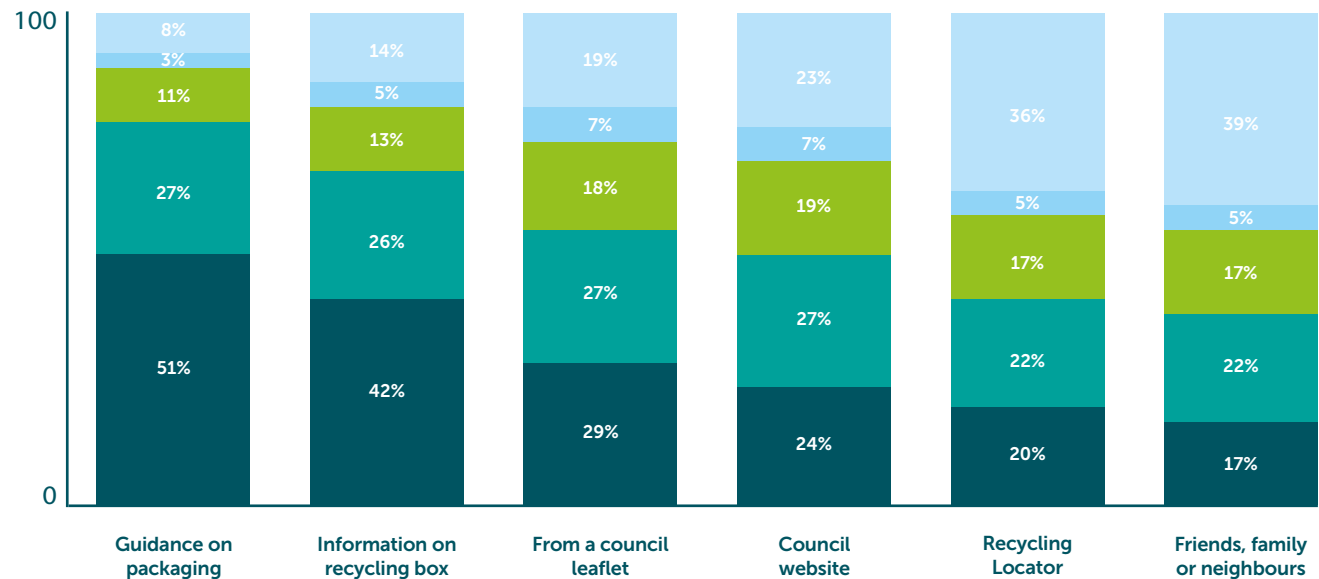
2. People check for on-pack guidance on recycling

Over 4 in 5 of us check for recycling information on unfamiliar packaging whenever we're unsure. After all, we check ingredients, cooking instructions, where products come from and allergens.

We surveyed where consumers get their knowledge about what to recycle and how: our findings are highlighted in the graph on the right.

Labels on packaging are still the **No. 1** source of recycling information.

Where do you get your knowledge about what you can recycle and how?



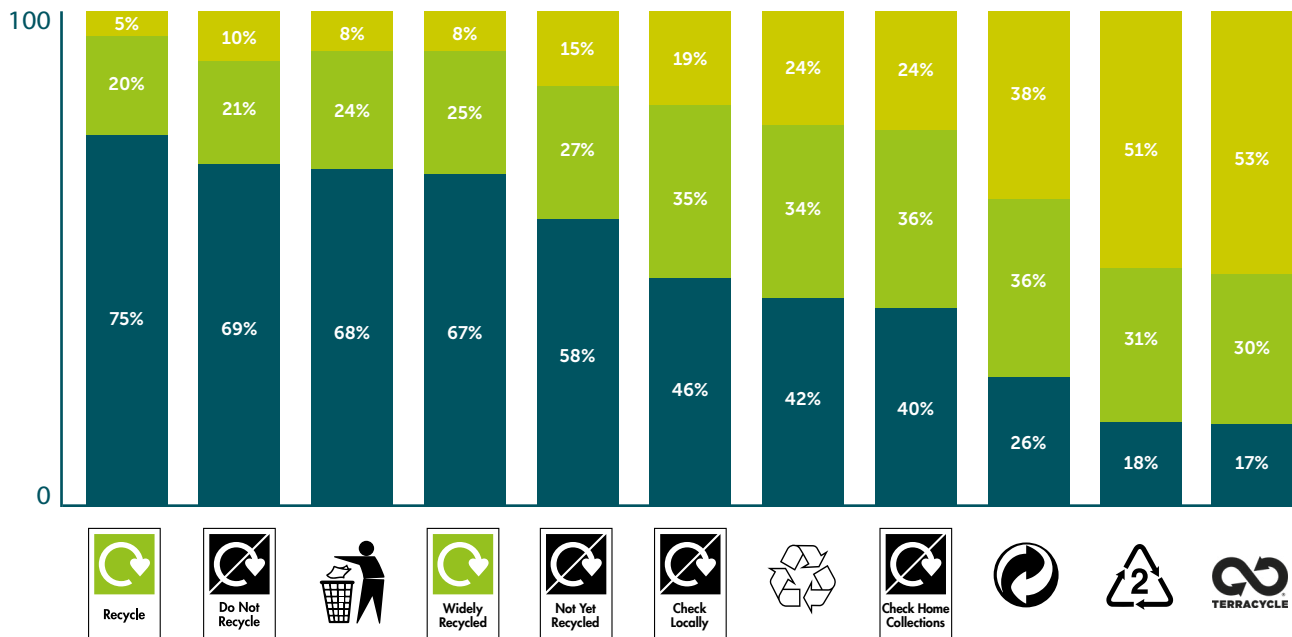
Key finding

95% of consumers believe that packaging should have recycling labels on it.

- Key**
- I rarely/never look for information
 - I used to look but don't anymore
 - I look occasionally in case information has changed
 - I look occasionally when I'm not sure what to do
 - I regularly look for information

3. Clarity and consistency prevent confusion

What are consumers' understanding of recycling labels?



Key

- I'm not sure what this label means
- I think I know what this label means but I'm not certain
- I know what this label means

Surveys repeatedly suggest that people find recycling labels confusing.

Consumers want clear and recognisable information at a glance. In their busy lives most people want a quick prompt as they decide which bin to put packaging in. They don't want to stop to think about it, they're looking for a strong visual cue to **Recycle** or **Do Not Recycle**.



Key finding

OPRL labels continue to be the most widely understood due to them being clear and consistent.

4. Actionable information is essential

People need specific, relevant and actionable information to recycle better, more often.

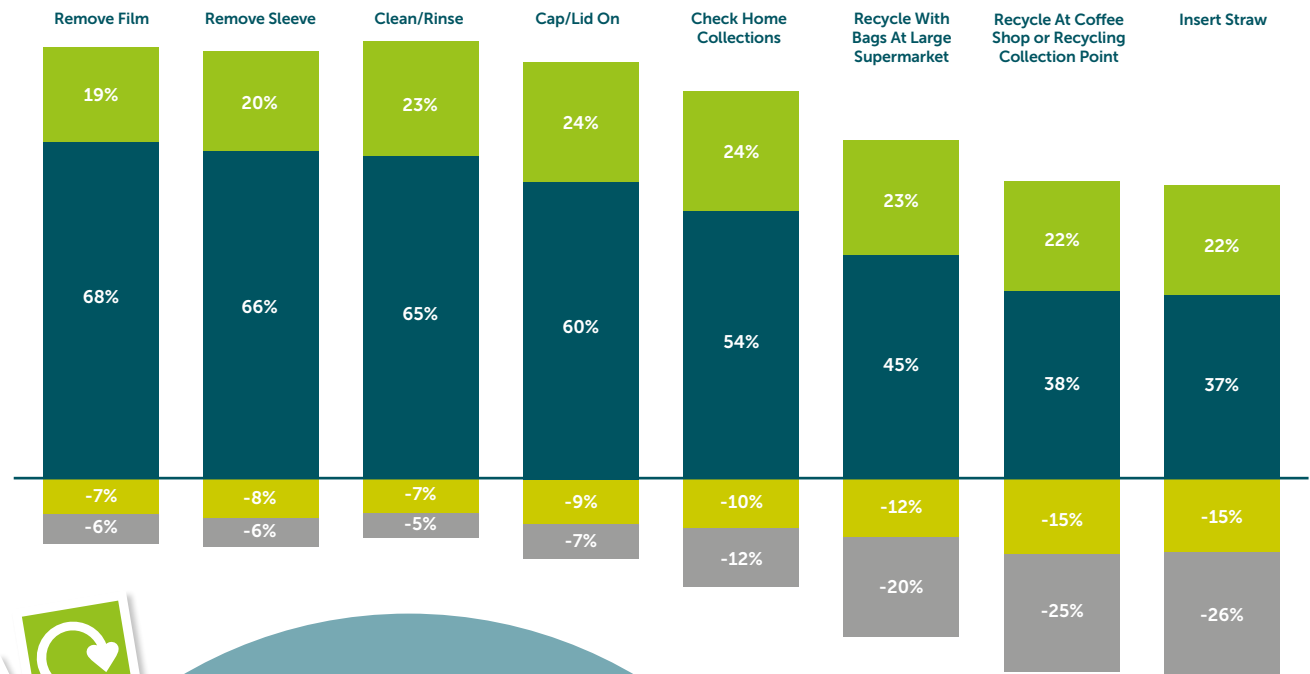
Some recycling symbols don't relate to UK recycling infrastructure. The material might be recycled somewhere internationally, or perhaps the producer funds recycling systems in certain European and Middle Eastern countries.

OPRL labels are founded on evidence that packaging is collected and successfully sorted in the UK, the materials reprocessed and used in new products or packaging. If just one of those is unlikely to happen, it's labelled accordingly.

Clear and simple instructions on labels help consumers to recycle materials that may not have been recyclable before.

All OPRL call-to-actions have been extensively consumer tested for recognition.

How many consumers follow these recycling instructions on packaging before placing it in the bin?



Key finding

Consumers are more likely to follow simple instructions which require less effort and ignore those they don't understand.

Key

- I occasionally follow this instruction
- I always follow this instruction
- I rarely follow this instruction
- I never follow this instruction



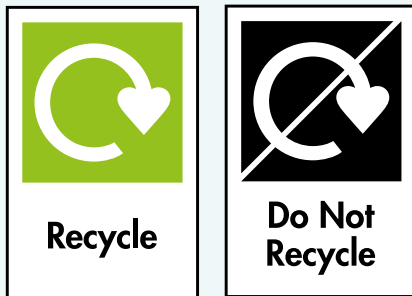
5. Messaging on labels must consider understanding and context

People will recycle if the messaging is clear and easy to understand, and designed for where and when people are recycling. Even quite complex messages are understood if clear, simple language is used. Positive calls to action promote positive actions and reduce confusion.

At home:

Communicating how to recycle at home is straightforward. Consumer testing shows that:

- a) Images and messaging are both important in signalling the correct action to take
- b) Colour coding reinforces messaging: a green logo signalling that packaging is recyclable, a black logo signalling that packaging cannot be recycled



These labels won the majority vote in testing. They were considered functional, clear, tonally neither too authoritarian nor too familiar, and communicate exactly what needs to be done

At collection sites:

Asking people to go the extra distance in recycling at collection sites is more complex because there is less shared language; most people understand what HWRCs (Household Waste and Recycling Centres) are, but don't recognise that terminology. Council terms like 'kerbside' also don't mean much to consumers: 'Check home collections' is preferred by all age groups.



These labels came top for clarity: 'Recycle with bags' is clearer than 'with film'; 'Supermarket' preferred over 'Store' and everyone understands 'recycling point' means local/neighbourhood bring sites

On-the-go:

While on-the-go recycling varies considerably across the UK, retailers are increasingly providing take-back recycling facilities.

Giving clear and simple instructions are just as important for consumption in the street or at the office as they are at home.



Direct, unambiguous terms like 'Recycle' or 'Take' are preferred to 'Check local in-store recycling'. The term 'Shop' scored higher than 'Store' with 'Recycling point' for offices and other non-store sites

6. Consumers want recycling information on packaging now

When consumers were informed about EPR 59% of them believed that 2026 for mandatory labelling on packaging wasn't soon enough.

People want to do their bit for the planet but need help doing this, especially when it comes to recycling packaging and there is a lot of confusion amongst consumers about what can and cannot be recycled.

59%

of consumers don't think EPR is coming soon enough.

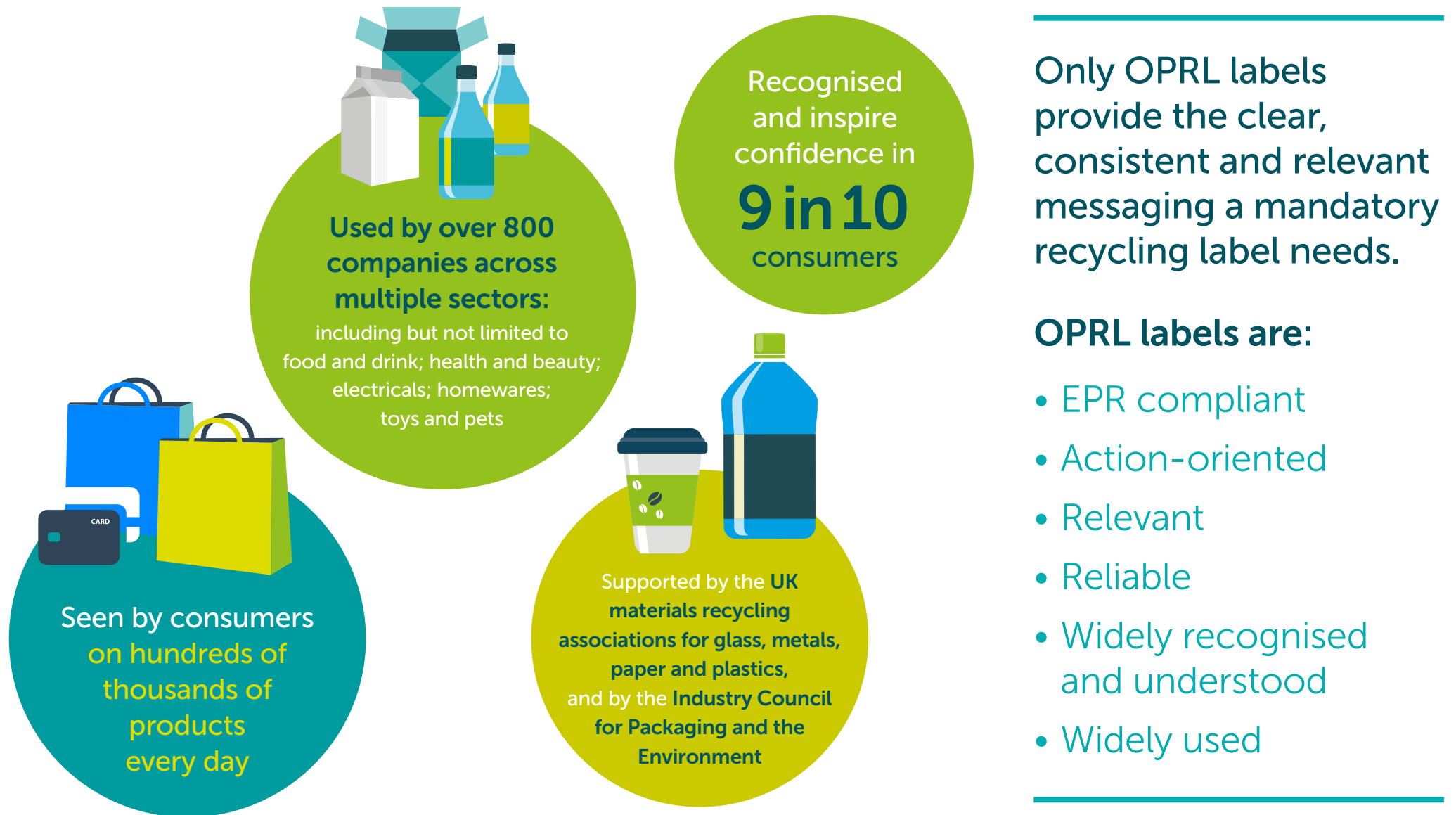
"I recycle because it's important to try to live as sustainably as possible to assist in safeguarding the planet for future generations. Some items are straight forward whilst others are frustrating as I am unsure whether or not I can recycle"

Key finding

Consumers want recycling information on packaging now and are asking businesses to help them recycle better, more often.



7. OPRL is the only UK recycling label meeting consumer needs





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