# The SteriFeed Recycling Charter

***Before implementing a recycling charter, we strongly recommend discussing with your Infection Control Team to ensure any change in process or policy is aligned to:**
*2019 Guidelines for the Preparation and Handling of Expressed and Donor Breast Milk and Specialist Feeds for Infants and Children in Neonatal and Paediatric Health Care Settings*
*BDA-guideline-for-storage-and-handling-of-EBM-and-DBM section 6.6.21*
2019sfuguidelines.pdf

SteriFeed have identified an opportunity to reduce the environmental impact of single-use disposable infant feeding bottles used in maternity and neonatal wards. In most hospitals, disposable bottles are disposed of in general waste, undermining recycling efforts and contributing to environmental harm.

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**Implementation of the SteriFeed Recycling Charter: Optimising the Recycling Process for Disposable Plastic Bottles:**

- **Problem Identified:** Disposable plastic bottles used in maternity and neonatal wards are commonly incorrectly disposed of in general waste, which misses the opportunity to recycle them and negatively contributes to their environmental impact.
- **Solution Developed:** Implementation of the SteriFeed Recycling Charter, requiring the segregation of HDPE and PPE plastic bottles. This targeted segregation system aims to improve recycling efficiency for infant feeding bottles.

**Pre-Intervention Situation:**

- Plastic bottles were being disposed of incorrectly, leading to inefficient recycling and contributing to environmental degradation.

**Post-Intervention Improvements:**

- Plastic bottles segregated into dedicated HDPE and PPE recycling streams, ensuring proper recycling and maximizing resale value.

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**Implementation Process**

- **Dedicated Recycling Bins:** Specific bins can be placed in maternity and neonatal wards to separate HDPE and PPE plastic bottles from general waste. This segregation ensures the bottles do not contaminate mixed recycling, optimizing their recycling potential.
- **Staff Engagement:** The success of the Recycling Charter relies on engaging staff at all levels and both clinical staff and waste management teams working collaboratively to implement the new recycling systems.
- **Signage:** Clear signage is required to communicate the new recycling process to parents, staff, and visitors, reinforcing the Hospitals commitment to sustainability and helping to inform parents about the changes.

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**Results**

- **Improved Recycling Efficiency:**
  - Maternity, neonatal, and paediatric wards can properly segregate HDPE and PPE plastic bottles, significantly improving recycling efficiency.
- **Revenue Generation:**
  - Potential for revenue generation and cost savings. HDPE plastic bottles can be resold for approximately £500 per tonne, along with a £50 per tonne reduction in disposal costs. (Based on UK data)
- **Operational Efficiency:**
  - Mixed recycling collections can be reduced by half, leading to lower transport costs and fewer vehicle journeys contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- **Potential Sustainability Achievements:**
  - Supports hospitals to achieve required recycling rate.
  - Operational changes can result in fewer vehicle journeys, further reducing the Hospitals carbon footprint.

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**Delivery of Net Zero Benefit**

- **Revenue & Cost Savings:** Revenue from the resale of HDPE plastics and cost savings from reduced waste disposal and transport can contribute to sustainability goals.
- **Carbon Emission Reduction:** Reduced transport needs and fewer vehicle journeys result in lower carbon emissions, directly contributing to the Hospitals sustainability objectives.

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**Wider Benefits**

- **Employee & Parent Engagement:** The project can foster strong commitment to sustainability among staff, especially through collaboration across clinical teams, procurement, and waste management. Parents show strong support for the new recycling efforts.

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**Conclusion**

The SteriFeed Recycling Charter demonstrates how healthcare organisations can successfully integrate sustainability into their operations. Through the implementation of the SteriFeed Recycling Charter Hospitals can reduced waste, generated income, and contribute to environmental sustainability.

This initiative serves as a model for hospitals aiming to adopt similar sustainable practices and achieve Net Zero targets.

SteriFeed commit to donating a tree for planting onsite for **UK Hospitals** who implement and demonstrate changes to the way SteriFeed bottles are disposed of.