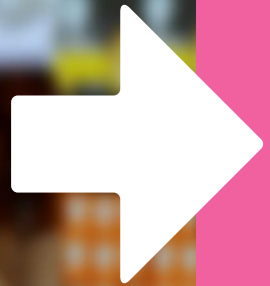


YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

# PACKAGING & LABELLING



# ↓ INTRO- DUCTION

The Youth Advisory Board convened a meeting with a focus on food and drink packaging and labelling. The issue of packaging is one that affects everyone, from supermarket shoppers and coffee shop customers to school tuck shop patrons. Every day, we all make choices about the food and drinks we consume, and the packaging in which they come.



The Board discussed various questions, including their biggest worries and who they believe has the biggest problem concerning packaging, how they think businesses who have the responsibility to fix the problem with packaging and how businesses can label products as more sustainable.

The impact of packaging on the environment is significant, and the consequences are severe. **Packaging waste contributes to litter, air and water pollution, harms wildlife, and degrades biodiversity.** Here are seven ways that packaging may impact the world around us.



Wasteful packaging is a significant component of litter and can cause health hazards, attract vermin, and harm wildlife. Reducing packaging could help lower the cost of combatting litter and encouraging recycling.



Excessive packaging leads to waste incineration, transportation emissions, and landfill decomposition, which can contribute to harmful gases, global warming, and air pollution.



Plastic packaging is a leading cause of death and injury for birds due to ingestion and entanglement. Seabird populations have declined by 67%, and plastic waste has been found in over 90% of seabirds.



The UK generates around 10 million tonnes of packaging waste each year, and many types of packaging take a long time to degrade. The UK is rapidly running out of landfill space. Waste decomposition can leach toxic chemicals, reduce soil quality and fertility, and cause species loss.



Plastic ingestion and entanglement are fatal to marine animals, causing the death of 100,000 marine animals annually. Plastic bags and other waste can cause intestinal blockages and look like jellyfish to unsuspecting turtles.



Packaging production wastes water resources, and plastic pellets used in packaging release toxic chemicals that can leach into the water and increase their concentration a million times higher.



Landfills release toxic chemicals and methane, leading to groundwater pollution and soil quality and fertility reduction. Landfills cause a significant loss of species, impacting biodiversity.



## WHAT WORRIES YOU MOST ABOUT PACKAGING?

“ Mainly the use of single-use packaging especially when there’s lots of something in a pack, for example a plastic bag with sweets, that are individually wrapped in plastic as well. I’ve never confronted anyone in a shop, but my family, don’t buy fruit and vegetables that are plastic wrapped anymore.

PHOEBE



“ When you’re shopping for vegetables in the supermarkets, a lot of the products will be open and loose on the shelves, so you can just pick them up. But you still see it where two or three are unwrapped and causes extra waste.

MAX

“ I think the amount of packaging can be a difficult one, especially during festive seasons.

CINDY



“ There’s excess packaging on many things that don’t need that much packaging. Things like frozen pizza. You want to eat it, but there’s so much packaging around it and I think a lot of it goes into landfill, so it doesn’t contribute to the environment very well.

LUCAS

# PACKAGING

## WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY IN TERMS OF PACKAGING?



“ I think people can do more to recycle. By 2050, there’ll be more plastic in the ocean than fish. So you have to do more, because no one actually wants that to become true, even though it’s heading in that direction.

NAOMI

“ I think the biggest issue is littering. 60% of water pollution is attributed to litter and there’s loads of litter so it’s a massive problem. When I see people littering, I always think, ‘why would you do that?’. There are normally bins somewhere near them, so they should just put rubbish in the bin. In terms of blame, it’s their fault because they are the ones littering, it’s no one else’s fault if they’re not recycling.

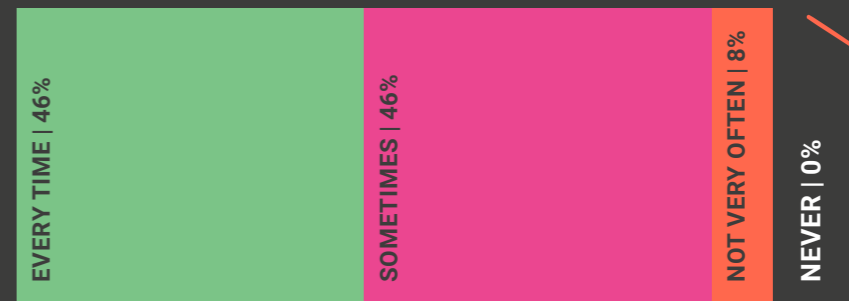
CHLOE



“ I would say we need more recycling, but producing the project itself is the issue. What we do with the packaging after, isn’t going to make as much difference as if we just stop producing plastic.

TABBY

## HOW OFTEN DO YOU RECYCLE PACKAGING CORRECTLY?



## HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET INVOLVED IN RECYCLING?

“ As a household, we’re pretty good at recycling. We have definitely been taught by our dad. What goes into recycling and how to tell what bin it should go into. He’s definitely the bin police. Making sure that everything that needs to be recycled is recycled. So now we’re all pretty good in general, but there was a time when we weren’t good.

PHOEBE



“ In my house, I do quite often have to remind my family members to make sure that they’re putting recyclable things into the recycling. Sometimes they are just being lazy. I know my friend also has to do the same thing with his, so I think it’s quite a big problem. I think you do need someone in every family who’s diligent about things like that and keeps everyone on track.

MILO



## WHO IS TO BLAME FOR THE PROBLEM WITH PACKAGING?

Is it us the consumers, because we want the products on the shelves or is it the manufacturers and brands for putting too much packaging on?

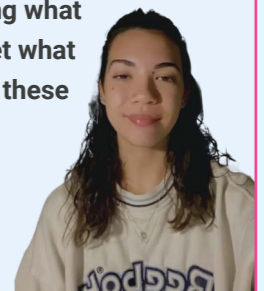
“ Consumers. Because they don’t recycle.

ALINA



“ I don’t necessarily think that it would be the fault of the consumers because we’re just buying what we are buying and we get what we get. We’re not telling these brands how they need to package things.

CINDY



“ I think it’s both the consumer and the producer, but it’s mainly on the producer because they have the ability to have a big impact. The consumer can buy from another company, but it’s definitely a lot more challenging.

TABBY

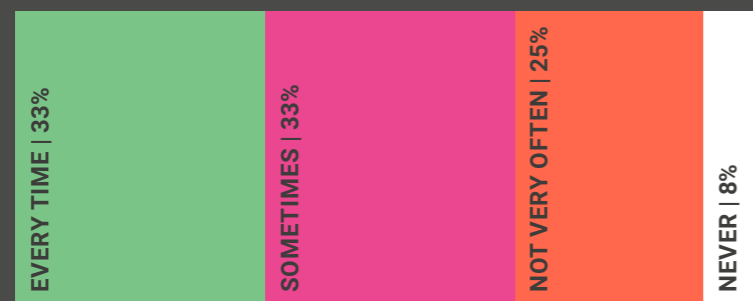


“ We think the blame can lie with producers, manufacturers and consumers. We know what we are buying, and have a choice, but manufacturers aren’t helping. When you look to see whether something is recyclable - it’s really small. Manufacturers should make it in bigger and bolder writing.

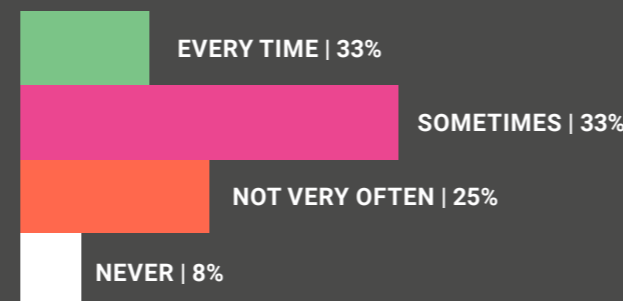
ATTIA & LEIA



### HOW OFTEN DO YOU LOOK AT A PRODUCT’S PACKAGING TO SEE HOW SUSTAINABLE THE MATERIALS ARE?

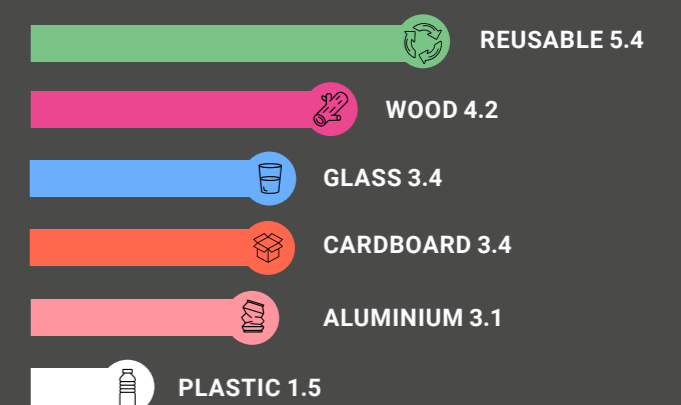


### HOW OFTEN DO YOU LOOK AT A PRODUCT’S INGREDIENT LIST TO SEE HOW SUSTAINABLE THE FOOD OR DRINK’S INGREDIENTS ARE?



### PUT THE FOLLOWING PACKAGING TYPES IN AN ORDER OF HOW ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY YOU THINK THEY ARE.

(1 = most environmentally friendly, 6 = the least environmentally friendly)



Scores are an average of responses with a maximum score of 6 and a minimum of 1



## WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO STOP EATING YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD BECAUSE IT COULDN'T BE PACKAGED IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WAY?

“ I’m not sure how I would feel if I couldn’t get my favourite food because the packaging was bad. I might look to see if I could get something the same, in different packaging. It would really depend on how much I like the food, but if there were other options, then yes, probably.”



PHOEBE

“ I know it’d be quite selfish, but I don’t know if I would stop by choice because I think it’d be such a minor change. I feel that maybe I should stop, but I don’t know. It’d be a hard decision for me to make either way.”



MILO

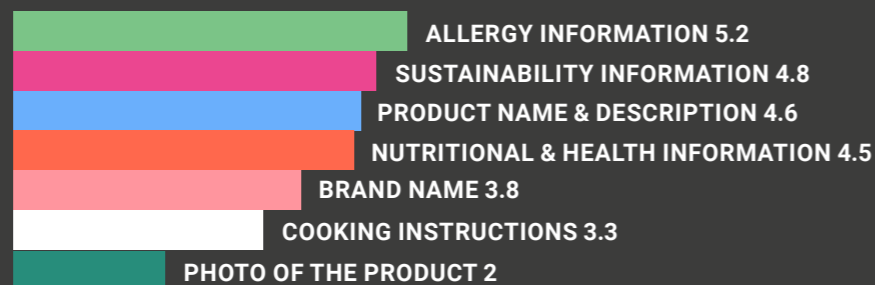


### FFM COMMENT

The Board are aware of the consequences of their own choices, but feel **their actions as a consumer make such a minor impact on the bigger picture they are not motivated to change.** If comparable options were available, they are more likely to switch. Each Board member felt the **power was with those who had the opportunity to make decisions on a bigger scale,** from food manufacturers and shops to those purchasing school snacks for hundreds of pupils.

### ON PACKAGING, WHICH MESSAGES SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY?

Scores are an average of responses with a maximum score of 7 and a minimum of 1



## THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD CAME WITH PACKAGING TO DISCUSS WHETHER THEY THOUGHT THE PACKS WERE GOOD OR BAD.



“ A lot of packages make you think that they’re fairly recyclable but when you look into the details, you find that you can’t recycle at home. On my crisp packaging, it says to recycle on the back, but the problem with this is that it tricks you. You have to actually take it into the store – you can’t recycle it at home. It’s sort of greenwashing and false advertising, tricking consumers to think it’s more recyclable than is.”

MAX

“ I disagree with Max. Personally, I think it’s very clear and it does say not to recycle at home, specifically on the back quite bold writing. I think that’s quite good packaging.”



SEAN

“ I like crisps, but some of the packaging is quite bad. For like sweets, I get Candy Kittens and they use good packaging.”



PHOEBE



“ I’ve brought a paper bag because they’ve cut down on the amount of litter in plants and in the ocean. I think they’re cheaper, but a slight downside is that it’s less popular and less sturdy. There’s more chance of things falling out.”

NAOMI

“ We all got given Frubes at school. I chose not to eat mine because of like the fact that it’s not recyclable and having that little yoghurt in so much plastic. It’s just not really sustainable. I’d ask my school to change the product because when you think about the fact that this was bought for a thousand people it is very unreasonable.”



CALUM



“ I chose a Bounce ball. It’s only a small ball, but it’s also a nice and small bit of packaging. I always remember to go downstairs and put it in the recycling in house, although I know other people don’t do that. It would be better though if maybe they made a bigger pack and put five of each into the pack.”

MILO

“ This pack of cupcakes has plastic packaging, due to how accessible it is. Plastic is more easily produced, lightweight and durable, which probably explains why it’s so desirable to consumers. However, it isn’t sustainable and easily biodegraded, which is an issue long-term. They have labelled it as “recyclable” but this is misleading, isn’t certified, and doesn’t explain exactly how a consumer should sustainably recycle plastic packaging.”



ATTIA

# IS PLASTIC THE ENEMY? HOW DO YOU THINK WE COULD USE PLASTIC BETTER? HOW COULD WE, AS CONSUMERS, DO MORE AROUND PLASTIC?

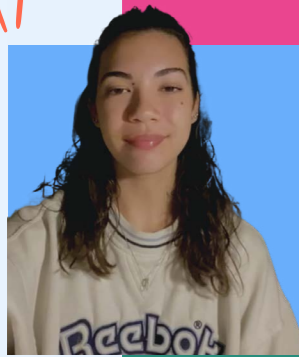
“ Plastic is terrible for the environment and has some terrible effects, but if it’s used in the right way, it has some benefits. It’s cheap, and light and it has some good qualities. It’s just about finding the right way to use it and not in the large quantities that we use at the moment. In smaller quantities, we can find ways to recycle better as well.

MAX



“ With the right information, we can educate ourselves better and put it into practice. I think that we all need to know better how to use plastic, and also to recycle better.

CINDY



“ I agree. I think that plastic has many benefits, but it has many negative impacts as well. There might be a way that we can make plastic work, but it rests on companies to look into ways that they can encourage plastic to be made recyclable and to be able to use plastic in a safe way for the environment.

HOLLIE



# LABELLING

IMAGE 1  **WWF APPROVED**

IMAGE 3  **ECO**

IMAGE 4  **ECO IMPACT A+**

IMAGE 2  **THE EARTH CHARITY CERTIFIED NATURE POSITIVE**

MOST POPULAR LEAST POPULAR

“ I think image three is used too much. I see it everywhere. It’s too generalised and it’s used so much that I would want to know where it’s been approved. I think it’s quite easy for companies just to put that on their packaging. But, I think for something to get accreditation from a charity, or anything like that, it has meaning behind it. So, I chose image two as my top choice because it’s been certified by a charity. Therefore, I’d expect that they’ve done research to be able to say why this is accredited to be, nature positive, as it says in the design.

CINDY



“ I think image four was actually quite good because it shows that companies haven’t just tried to achieve the bare minimum to get their certificate. They’ve gone above and beyond, and got an A+ rating.

CALUM



“ I prefer image one. It is better if it’s known globally and most people would recognise it.

LEIA



“ I chose image one as the one that I felt most comfortable with because I knew that one. Whereas, for the other ones, I didn’t really know them. I guess because I felt it had been more publicised felt more comfortable with it. I recognise the WWF and the Panda. I know, just because something’s publicised doesn’t necessarily mean it’s credible, but because it’s more well-known, I felt like it’s a safer bet.



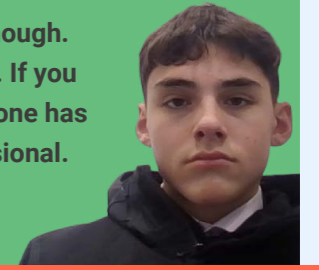
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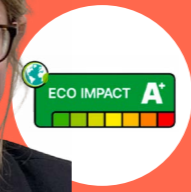
“ I chose image three because I feel like it’s appealing to a consumer when shopping and want to see easily if it’s going to be eco-friendly for the environment. It’s also appealing to the eye so you can just pick it up and look at it. You don’t have to just flip it around and have a read for everything on the back, you can just see this. Eco-friendly.

LUCAS

“ I don’t like image four, because I think it’s not simplistic enough. It looks very tacky and unofficial – I did not like the image. If you look at the other symbols, they are all one colour, the last one has too many colours going on and it doesn’t look very professional.



MILO



“ I like image four the most because it is highly believable. Then I put image one because I have heard of it the most. I put image three, eco-friendly, as third because it sounds believable and image two is last because I haven’t ever heard of the charity and the slogan doesn’t really relate to packaging.

CHLOE



## DO YOU THINK WE NEED LOTS OF DIFFERENT LABELS OR JUST ONE?

“ I think it’s easier if there’s just one label that everybody uses. People aren’t always going to shop in the same shop, so if the label changes between different shops, they might not understand what actually means.

PHOEBE

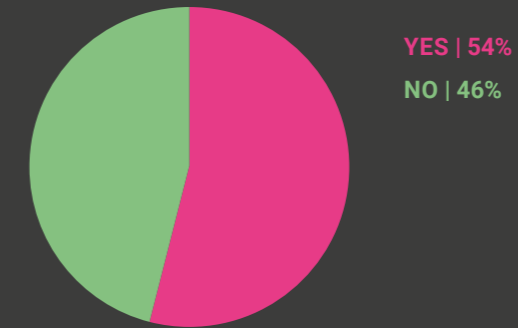


“ I think everyone should use the same label, but maybe there could be differences within it to show how environmentally friendly the product is for different areas of impact.

AMY



## HAVE YOU EVER DECIDED NOT TO PURCHASE A FOOD OR DRINK ITEM BASED ON IT’S PACKAGING?



➔ There is so much to read on a piece of packaging that it almost becomes impossible. There are too many messages.



“I think a strategy companies might use is just to fill products with loads of green images, to convince consumers that it’s an eco-friendly product. Even though the symbols and badges, may not mean anything beneficial and are placed there to trick consumers.”

- MAX



## WHAT COULD A LABEL DISPLAY TO SHOW A PRODUCT WAS SUSTAINABLE?

- Maybe the amount of times the resources used to make it could be reused.
- A product icon such as the eco image leaf
- A picture of a leaf in the shape of an infinity
- GREEN**
- Symbol**
- The word sustainable in bold & big letters
- SUSTAINABILITY**
- The globe/ environmental sign
- WWF**
- Show how much it is recycled
- Green**
- Clear writing explaining
- Put a label on or write it in large bold letters
- Environmentally friendly
- SUSTAINABLE, in bold big writing**
- Image**



# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FOOD BUSINESSES?

➔ It's human nature to embrace absolutes. Littering is a problem, plastic is the enemy, and there's not enough recycling. These statements provide consumers with some comfort when faced with micro-decisions on multiple daily purchases. Yet the conversation with the Board allowed space for nuance. The Board appreciate that there is a need for plastic and that its properties make it necessary for some products. But, **they expect to see the use of unnecessary plastic stop** – notably on fruit and

vegetables, individual items like sweets and cakes in multipacks and on smaller, pre-portioned items such as yoghurt.

The Board felt conflicted about their individual responsibility to make decisions and expected companies to make their favourite products in a way that they didn't have to feel guilty for enjoying. Why shouldn't shoppers be able to enjoy their favourite products, without shame or expectation? **Food companies should make every effort to remove, reduce and design responsible packaging.**

But, the Board did agree that consumers also had responsibility in the packaging debate. Every household needs someone who takes charge of responsibly disposing of waste. Not recycling or even worse, littering, is lazy, especially when there are bins to be able to get rid of packaging properly.

## WHAT THE BOARD WANTS TO KNOW FROM CEOs



Do you think it is okay to have such unsustainable packaging in the current state of the environment?

How could you help people realise how bad packaging is, and how they can help do something about it?

Have you made plans to use a label on your packaging and will it be the same as everyone else uses?

What is stopping your business from making the progress that we need?

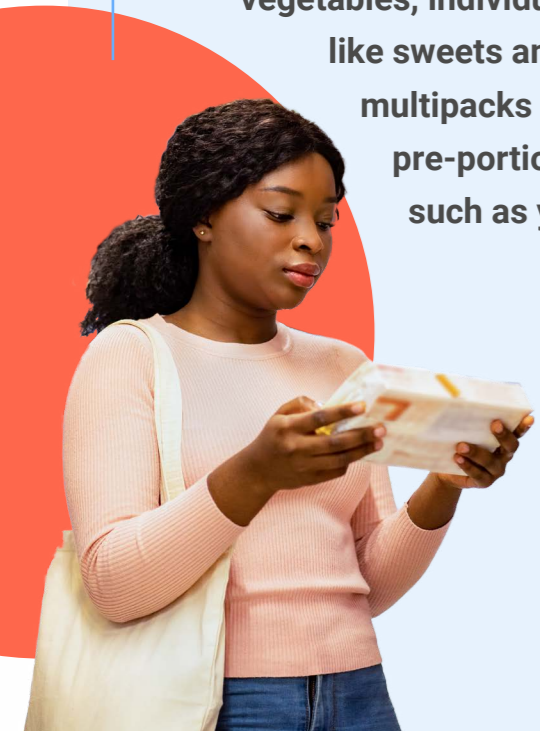
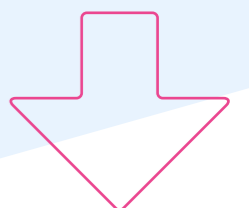
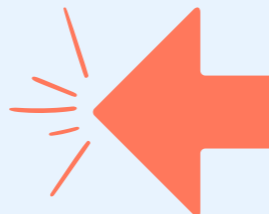
We know that there is sustainable packaging out there. It's available, so why haven't we switched yet?

How could you use other types of packaging in your business instead of plastic?

Are you able to remove packaging or create reusable packaging?

Are there ways in your business to reduce the packaging on your products, such as stopping to wrap each item individually?

The Board also agreed that it is better to have a central consolidated eco-label that companies use universally, so we can all recognise that that's the image to look out for, but they appreciate that with many different opinions on 'what good looks like', it's very hard for the industry to come up with the right type of kind of image to reassure us. A blend of recognised charities and a provable rating metric would give the Board the most confidence in making decisions. Any label would need to be clear, simple, and easily recognisable – especially with so much other messaging on packs.





THE FUTURE FOOD MOVEMENT

**youTh**   
ADVISORY BOARD  
AMPLIFYING YOUNG VOICES