Packaging: Which **supermarket categories** have the **biggest opportunity** for action?

Halving the environmental impact of the UK packaging system

Social Impact from **IGD**

Identifying the category hotspots in your business

2021

→

In 2021 we brought together stakeholders from across industry to create a shared ambition – to halve the environmental impact of all packaging systems by 2030. This ambition looks beyond current legislation, covers a range of environmental impacts and addresses all packaging materials.

Achieving this bold ambition will require an equally ambitious, evidence-based focus from industry.

2022

Our 2022 insights report found that meeting the 2030 ambition will require **at least a 20% reduction in the amount of packaging put on the market.** This needs to be combined with significant environmental efficiency gains, including increased recycled content in packaging and increased material recycling rates.

from IGD

We have produced this supermarket heatmap to highlight where the environmental impacts of packaging are most significant within an average UK supermarket.

Review this heatmap against the amount of packaging your organisation puts on the market.

Take action based on the highest impact categories that are most relevant for your business*.

*It is recommended that any decisions around packaging should be made in the context of the overall environmental footprint of the product across its life cycle, including any impact on food waste.

from **IGD**

# Share of packaging impacts in an average UK supermarket

Weighted single score BY CATEGORY

LOWEST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ← → HIGHEST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Store layout (left section)

Bread/Bakery

Frozen Foods	Frozen Foods	Party/Ocasions	Packaging
Cooking/Baking	Frozen Foods		
Tea/Coffee	Beer/Wines/Spirits		
Confectionery	Beer/Wines/Spirits		
Cereals	Beer/Wines/Spirits		
Snacks	Non-Alcoholic Drinks		

Herbs/Spices

Snacks	Non-Alcoholic Drinks	
Pasta/Noodles/Rice	Pet Food	Pet Care
Sauces	Cleaning	
Canned Food	Cleaning	
Dairy	Cleaning	Medical
Dairy	Baby	

Desserts

Dairy	Toiletries	
Ready Meals	Fruit/Vegetables	
Meat/Fish	Fruit/Vegetables	
Meat/Fish	Fruit/Vegetables	
		Tobacco
Meat/Fish	Fruit/Vegetables	

Checkout

Percentages (right panel)

0.0% Baby Accessories	**1.4%** Packaging	**4.4%** Cleaning
0.1% Pet Care	**1.5%** Frozen Foods	**4.6%** Toiletries/Cosmetics
0.2% Tobacco	**1.7%** Tea/Coffee	**5.1%** Meat/Fish
0.2% Party/Occasions	**2.3%** Ready Meals	**5.8%** Canned Food
0.3% Baby Food	**2.6%** Pet Food	**6.3%** Sauces (cooking, condiments, jams)
0.4% Medical	**2.7%** Cereals	**8.7%** Dairy
0.4% Pasta/Noodles/Rice	**2.8%** Confectionery	**13.5%** Non-Alcoholic Drinks
0.7% Herbs/Spices	**3.3%** Desserts	**20.9%** Beer/Wines/Spirits
0.7% Cooking/Baking	**3.6%** Snacks	
1.3% Bread/Bakery	**4.3%** Fruit/Vegetables	

The weighted single score is made up of the total impact of four environmental indicators (climate change, land use, water use and virgin resource use). Each environmental indicator was given a 25% weighting to calculate the weighted single score.
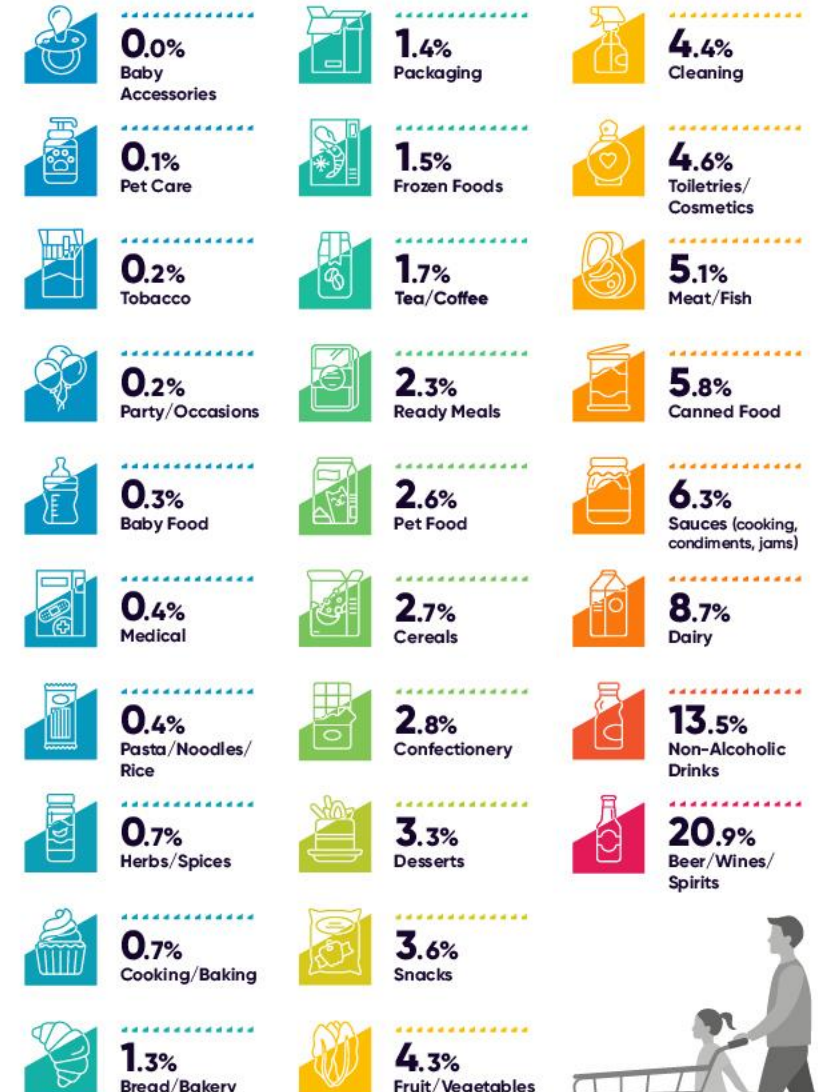
Focusing sustainability efforts on packaging categories that have a high environmental impact is key to meet the industry ambition

Headlines

33% of all supermarket packaging impacts are from beer/wine/spirits and non-alcoholic beverages
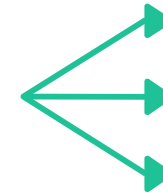
50% of all supermarket packaging impacts are from beer/wine/spirits, non-alcoholic drinks, dairy and sauces

Actions

TAKE ACTION based on the highest impact categories that are most relevant for your business

REMOVE
- **REMOVE** unnecessary packaging
- Use **LEAST** material required
- Adopt **REUSE** systems

RECYCLE
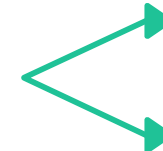- Increase **RECYCLED CONTENT**
- Maximise **RECYCLABILITY**
- Increase **RECYCLING RATES**
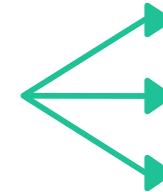
DECARBONISE
- **DECARBONISE** existing supply chains
- Move production to regions with **LOWER CARBON INTENSITY**

from **IGD**

Methodology

To produce the supermarket heatmap, industry data for packaging tonnage across key product categories from January to December 2019 was sourced from Valpak.

The four material-specific lifecycle assessment impacts generated from the IGD 2030 ambition baseline analysis (climate change, water use, land use and virgin resource use) per tonne of a given material were applied to the Valpak data. These impacts reflect supply-chain sourcing, recycled content and end-of-life outcomes.

A list of the top ranking product categories, by packaging mass and each of the four environmental impacts, can be viewed in the Appendix.

1. The 'party' category includes items such as gift cards, balloons, banners, paper plates and cups.
2. The 'packaging' category includes items such as bags for life, plastic bags that loose fruit/vegetables are placed into and bags available at the bakery section.
3. The 'snacks' category mainly consists of savoury snacks; sweet snacks are in the 'confectionary' category.
4. The 'toiletries' category includes health and beauty products, as well as others such as toilet roll and toothpaste.
5. The 'sauces' category includes jams, condiments and cooking sauces.
6. Food-to-go products are mainly split between the 'ready meals' and 'snacks' categories. Items such as sandwiches are within 'snacks' and other larger food items such as pre-made pasta pots are within 'ready meals'.

from IGD

IGD is here to support industry

We will mobilise industry across the following workstreams

Ambition	Projects	Collaboration

Create insights that encourage and mobilise industry to take action.

- [Halving the environmental impacts of the UK packaging system](#)

- [Secondary and tertiary packaging in the food and consumer goods industry](#)

Deliver projects that help industry to work towards the ambition:

1. Reuse: Consumer insights and trials that support making reusable packaging mainstream

    - [How to help consumers adopt reusable packaging](#)

2. Decision-making Lifecycle Assessment (LCA): Develop tools to help industry make more robust and consistent decisions between packaging solutions.

    - [Packaging Choices Tool](#)
    - [LCA best practice guide](#)
    - [LCA best practice summary](#)
    - [LCA best practice webinar](#)

Continue to convene stakeholders across the whole value chain focused on collective action, innovation and positive systemic change.

Get in touch at **sustainability@igd.com**

Find out more about our Sustainability Programmes: **www.igd.com/Social-impact/Sustainability**

from IGD

Appendix

The below table shows the top-ranking product categories, by packaging mass and each of the four environmental impacts (climate change, water usage, land use and virgin resource use). The 'Weighted Total Environmental Impact' column represents the data shown in the supermarket heatmap infographic on page 4.

	Top Ranking Product Categories by					
		Environmental Impact				
	Packaging Mass	Climate Change	Water Use	Land Use	Virgin Resource Use	Weighted Total Environmental Impact
Beer/Wines/Spirits	1	1	2	1	1	1
Sauces (jams, condiments, cooking)	2	6	9	9	3	4
Non-Alcoholic Drinks	3	2	1	2	2	2
Dairy	4	3	3	3	4	3
Canned Food	5	5	5	16	5	6
Meat/Fish	6	4	4	4	6	5
Cleaning	7	9	8	7	8	9
Toiletries/Cosmetics	8	8	6	6	9	8
Fruit/Vegetables	9	7	7	11	7	7
Snacks	10	10	10	10	10	10
Desserts*	11	11	11	8	11	11
Cereals*	14	15	15	5	17	14

Impact Scale

1 = Highest
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10 = Lowest

   *Desserts and Cereals categories are only in the top 10 packaging impacts for land-use because they use a relatively high amount of paper and card packaging.

from **IGD**