



CASE STUDY: Yes Recycling – *The National Hard Hat Recycling Scheme*

Yes Recycling is a plastic recycling company based in Buckinghamshire, which works with plastic waste streams arising throughout the UK.

However, unlike many other plastic recyclers, Yes Recycling's speciality is to look at individual, often problematic, plastic waste streams, with a view to designing and building bespoke recycling capability, catering for those non-typical plastic waste streams.

In April 2017, Alice Green from the Sustainability Team at Berkeley Homes, contacted Omer Kutluoglu, a Director at Yes Recycling, and asked about the possibility of recycling hard hats. In response, it was agreed that Yes Recycling would run an initial trial on recycling hard hats to assess the potential operational and commercial viability of a hard hat recycling system.

For the initial trial, a rudimentary process was designed and built. Approximately, 1,000 hard hats were then processed through this makeshift recycling line with effectiveness and efficiency assessments made at every step of the process plan. The results of this initial trial were positive enough to affirm that with a bit more thought, time, and process refinement, a fully optimised commercial-scale processing line could be built and operated successfully.

With the processing know-how solved, the team at Yes Recycling turned to the next big issue: how to collect hard hats for recycling. It was clear that in most cases, out of date or damaged hard hats were being thrown away into general skip waste, where the realistic chances of effective recovery would be low to none. It was evident that what was needed was a new industry wide method for diverting hard hats out of general waste and instead, into a new bespoke recycling scheme.

Initial collection trials with leading construction waste company, Powerday, were run across a number of Berkeley Home sites, using dedicated hard hat collection bins on site. However, as word got out about our scheme, Yes Recycling became inundated with calls and emails from companies, big and small, throughout the UK, asking if they could directly send hard hats in for recycling. At this point, it became clear that there was a substantial demand for a dedicated hard hat recycling service.

In consultation with construction companies, PPE distributors and PPE manufacturers, the '**National Hard Hat Recycling Scheme**' was born in November 2018.

The National Hard Hat Recycling Scheme is a recycling membership scheme, wherein members commit to sending their out of date or damaged hard hats to be recycled.

While there is a small annual membership fee, there is no charge or 'gate-fee' for members sending their hard hats into Yes Recycling's hard hat processing facility.

Members may send in hard hats as many times as they want, and in any quantity, from single hard hats delivered by post, to full truck loads.



Once received at Yes Recycling, the hard hats are broken down in their constituent components and polymer-sorted. The different elements and polymers are shredded, cleaned, screened and fully recycled through an advanced melt-filtration process. Thereby, all plastic is turned back into viable, new plastic raw material, ready to go back into UK manufacturing.

Members who participate in the Scheme are awarded Gold, Silver, or Bronze standard once certain recycling thresholds are achieved. However, all members are awarded use of the scheme's '**We Recycle**' logo.

To find out more about Yes Recycling, please click [here](#) to visit their website.

Alternatively, please contact omer@yesrecycling.org