**Evaluating Alternatives to Single Use Plastics Workshop**

This workshop was about finding alternatives to single use plastics purchased through Local Authorities. The room was split into groups and each group focused on the following alternatives:

Groups 1-4 discuss the following alternatives to plastic packaging:

1: Recyclable

2: Compostable

3: Wooden/other natural biodegradable

4: Reusable

Groups 5-8 discuss the following alternatives to a single use plastic item such as cutlery:

5: Recyclable

6: Compostable

7: Wooden/other natural biodegradable

8: Reusable

**1.Plastic Packaging: Recyclable Alternatives**

A) Advantages

* Keeps food fresh
* Light for transport
* Easily accessible
* Protects product in transport
* Cheap
* Multi-purpose
* Re usable in certain situations

B) Disadvantages /Challenges

* Alternatives are not robust enough
* Higher food waste if packaging is not used/ changed
* Need for enough opportunity and choice for both
* Cost of alternatives could be vast

C) Are there any purchases you are making currently where you could effectively switch to this material?

* Bring your own coffee/water cups and bottles
* Alternative wrapping that can be washed and reused

D) Simple take-home messages

* Bring your own

**2. Plastic Packaging: Compostable Alternatives**

* Seaweed – Cling film alternative
* Potato starch – e.g. magazine wrapper
* Loose – no packaging at all “Nae Bag Ataw”
* Cardboard or paper instead of plastic
* Company taking packaging back once delivered
* Re-fill glass bottles
* Stretchy lid instead of foil/cling film

**3. Plastic Packaging: Biodegradable Natural Alternatives**

A) Advantages

* Lightweight
* Easier to recycle

B) Challenge

* Package sign posting and clarity

C) Are there any purchases you are making currently where you could effectively switch to this material?

* Salads are often in plastic containers and could be stored in this type

D) Simple take-home messages

* Lack of education/guidance on packaging “pro’s/con’s” symbol meaning etc
* What can be cleaned and reused

**4.Plastic Packaging: Reusable Alternatives**

Plastic reusable cup

* Upfront cost – more expensive
* Challenge – spend to save
* Deposit scheme – incentive
* Councils removing all plastic drinking cups
* Replacing with reusable cups
* Segregation of waste (households)
* Compostable food packaging/ domestically

**5. Single Use Items: Recyclable Alternative**

Reusable

Advantages

* Reduced landfill
* Financial benefit
* Reduced production costs and associated energy use

Disadvantages

* Costs associated with reuse
* Cleaning (chemical usage)
* Upfront costs
* Lack of knowledge/understanding in terms of what can be recycled and whole life costings

Recyclable

Advantages

* Existing infrastructure
* Established practice

Disadvantages

* Energy Use
* Not everything can be recycled

Compostable

Disadvantages

* Costs (bags)
* Objections to smell it’s with household food waste

**6. Single Use Items: Compostable Alternatives**

Carrier Bags

* Alternative that disintegrates in x days

Advantages

* Degrades itself
* Can be reused (time-bound)

Disadvantages

* Time taken to breakdown into something useable
* Original can’t be reused
* How are they made?

Paper Straws

* Cost
* Go mushy

Cutlery

* Wooden alternative
* Are they fit for purpose? (blunt)

Take home message

* Education required for everyone
* Can think you are doing something positive but are not
* Strong, trusting, collaborative relationships required to design in suitable materials to products to ensure eco-friendly, affordable and fit for purpose

**7. Single use items: Natural Biodegradable Alternatives**

A) Lower Cost Items

* Organic cotton bag/bin
* Banana leaf
* Paper straws
* Wooden forks

B) Impact on Natural Resources

* Cost
* ii) Lack of knowledge
* Lack of availability
* Lack of budget
* Knowledge/habits

**8. Single Use Items: Reusable Alternatives**

Examples Positive (SUI)

* Hospital/ Surgery (saving lives)

Negatives (SUI)

* Blanket approach to non-recycle
* Waste disposal costs

Alternative

* Single use product approach to consider
* Alternative raw material
* Requires – direction/ manufacture
* Joint Collaboration

Metal

Energy

* Barrier – clinic/sterile
* Fatality risk disease
* Equipment required