

# The Great Cable Guide

A simple guide to cable decluttering



 recycle  
your  
electricals

# What to do with old cables

We all have old, forgotten cables stashed away at home that we no longer use or need. By recycling them or donating those that still work, we can give the valuable copper in our cables a new lease of life.

Copper is vital in our everyday lives. It's used in our phones, public transport, clean energy and lifesaving medical equipment. But right now, millions of cables are sitting idle with thousands of tonnes of copper going to waste.

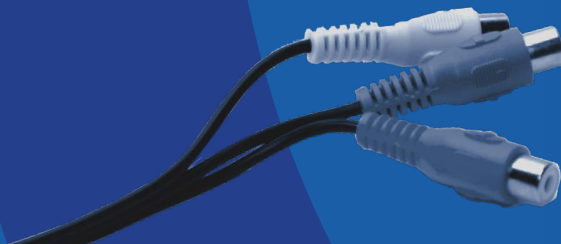
If 1 million of us each recycled one cable, we could save at least 5,000kg of copper to recycle into something new!

## Use this guide to help you clear out your cables

Sorting your cables doesn't have to be a hassle. Our visual guide will help you quickly identify, decide and recycle those cables you no longer need. With top tips and easy-to-read information, you'll clear out clutter and help contribute to a green future, one cable at a time!



**Recycled copper is better than newly mined 'virgin' copper** as it uses much less energy,



# Laptops and computers

**Struggling to let go?**  
If you haven't used it in over a year, you likely don't need it.

## USB-C

Charges most newer laptops and will soon be the standard for all new tech.



## USB-A

Charges PC laptops. With the introduction of USB-C, they are gradually being replaced.



## HDMI

Connects your laptop or computer to a display device (e.g. monitor, projector or TV).



## Ethernet

Connects your laptop or computer to the internet via cable.



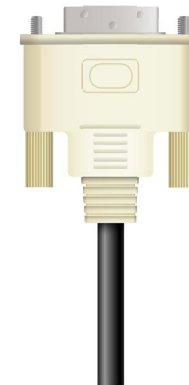
## VGA

Connects older laptops or computers to a display device (e.g. monitor, projector or TV). Mostly replaced by USB-C, DisplayPort and HDMI.



## DVI

Connects older computers to monitors or projectors. Replaced by HDMI and DisplayPort from 2010s.



## DisplayPort

Connects computers to monitors. Similar to HDMI.



# Household cables

**Holding onto multiples of the same cables?** Keep hold of 2 or 3 spares, and recycle the rest!

## Electric toothbrush charger

Charges electric toothbrushes.



## Shaver socket lead

Charges electric shavers.



## Extension cords

Extends the reach from a plug or electrical outlet.



## USB-B

Often used for older printers and hard drives. Being replaced by the newer USB-C connector.



## Universal AC adapter

Powers a range of electricals from laptops, game consoles and radios. And small home appliances like vacuum cleaners and fans.



## Two pin cable

Connects devices like shavers or other household electricals to a power outlet.



## Kettle lead

Connects household electricals like computers, monitors, or kettles to a power outlet.



# Mobile phones and tablets

**New EU law means USB-C will be the standard connector** for all tech by end 2024. Say goodbye to your old cables!

## USB-C

Charges most newer laptops and will soon be the standard for all new tech.



## Lightning cable

Charges Apple devices made between 2012 and 2023. All new Apple devices from 2023 will use USB-C.



## Micro USB

Charges older Android devices and small electricals, particularly those released before 2020.



## Mini USB

Charges older phones and tablets. Replaced by Micro USB from 2010s.



## Apple thunderbolt

Charges Apple devices or connects them to monitors or storage devices (such as hard drives or SSDs). Older thunderbolt cables that use the Mini DisplayPort connector have been replaced by the newer models using the USB-C connector.



## Phone adapters

Converts one type of connector into another, allowing different devices to connect. For example, a USB-C to HDMI adapter lets you connect a computer with a USB-C port to an HDMI display.



## Splitters

Divides one input into multiple outputs, allowing you to connect several devices to the same signal source, such as audio, video, or WIFI connections.



# TVs

Label your cables!

## HDMI

Connects your TV to games consoles, laptops and DVD players.



## Ethernet

Connects your TV to the internet.



## Coaxial (TV aerial)

Connects older TVs to the aerial to receive live TV. Most TVs now moving towards HDMI or fiber-optic/wireless internet streaming.



## Coaxial F-Type

Connects your TV to satellite or cable devices. The rise of streaming platforms and digital content means you'll be less likely to need a coaxial F-type cable in future.



## Component Video

Connects older TVs to DVD players; comes as a 3-part cable. Most new DVD players, Blu-ray players and HDTVs use HDMI so unless you still have your old TV or DVD, you probably don't need these any more.



## Composite audio

Connects older TVs to videos and DVD players (to play the picture and sound); comes as a 2-part cable. Mostly replaced by HDMI.



## SCART

Connects TVs to older video and DVD players (to play the picture and sound). Mostly replaced by HDMI cables.



## S-Video

Connects TVs to older video and DVD players, game consoles, projectors and camcorders. Mostly replaced by HDMI. Retrogamers still use these sometimes.



# Cameras

## HDMI Type-C, or Mini HDMI

Connects cameras and camcorders to the TV for video playback. Still widely used, especially in mid-range to high-end models. USB-C will replace these as the new standard.



## HDMI Type-D, or Mini HDMI

Connects action camera (e.g. GoPros), some DSLR and smaller digital cameras to TVs. Still widely used but USB-C will replace these as the new standard.



Try donating your cables using apps like NextDoor, Olio or Freecycle. If not, recycling them still means precious copper can be reused.



# Audio cables

(for speakers, sound systems, etc.)

## 3.5mm mono/ stereo audio jack

Connects headphones to older smartphones, laptops, gaming and audio equipment. Still widely used but is being gradually replaced by USB-C and Lightning cables in newer smartphones. Wireless technology means we'll need less cables in the future.



## 3.5mm 4-pole audio/stereo jack

Connects in-car audio systems or headsets to your phone, gaming equipment, laptop, cameras and audio equipment.



## 6.35mm mono/ stereo jack

Used for high end audio equipment like guitars or professional speakers.



## Gauge speaker wires

Connects to amplifiers and speaker setups.



Use cable ties to store cables to avoid tangling and prolong their life.

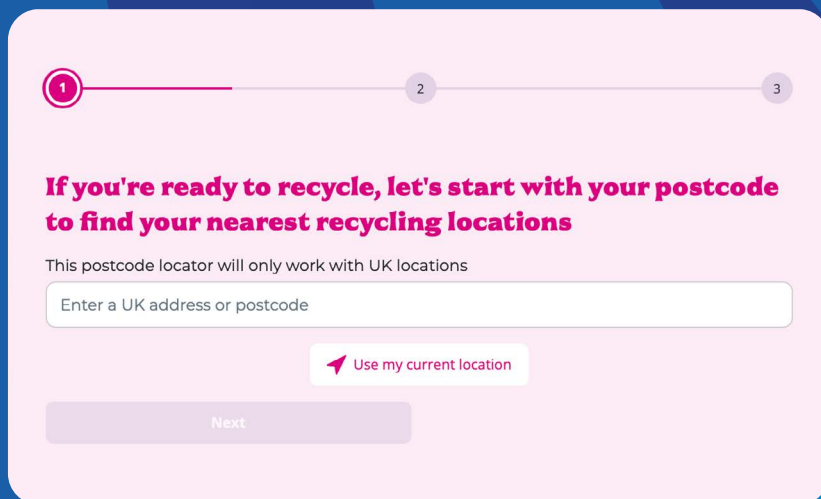




# Time to sort them out!

Now you've identified your cables, time to decide which ones to keep and which ones to recycle or donate if they still work. Next you'll need to find your nearest reuse or recycling point.


Search '**recycle your electricals**' to visit our recycling locator. With over 26,000 locations, your nearest drop-off point may be closer than you think! Simply pop in your postcode and the item you want to recycle, and you will be able to find all your local drop-off points.



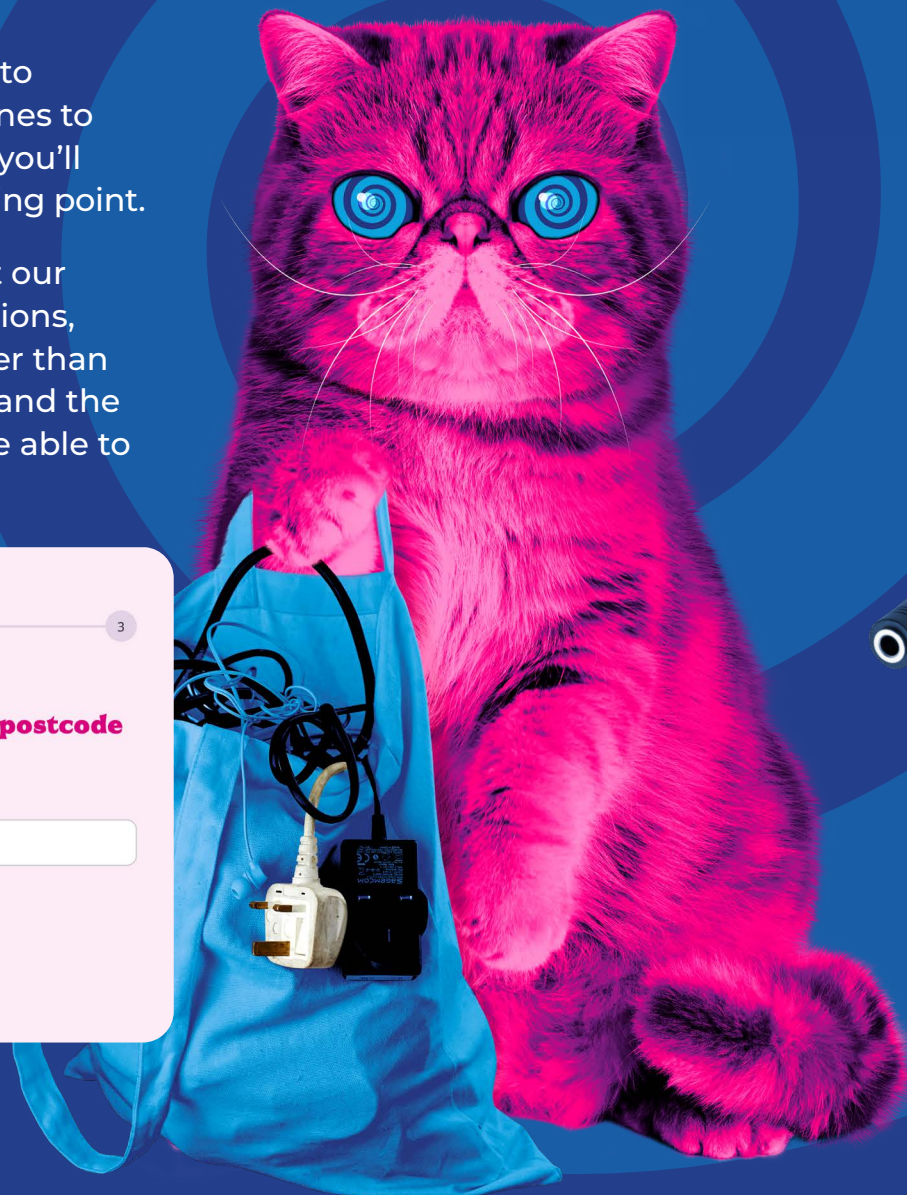
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**If you're ready to recycle, let's start with your postcode to find your nearest recycling locations**

This postcode locator will only work with UK locations

 Use my current location

Next



## Who are Recycle Your Electricals?

Recycle Your Electricals is a UK-wide campaign, led by not-for-profit Material Focus, motivating and making it easier for everyone to reuse and recycle unwanted electricals.

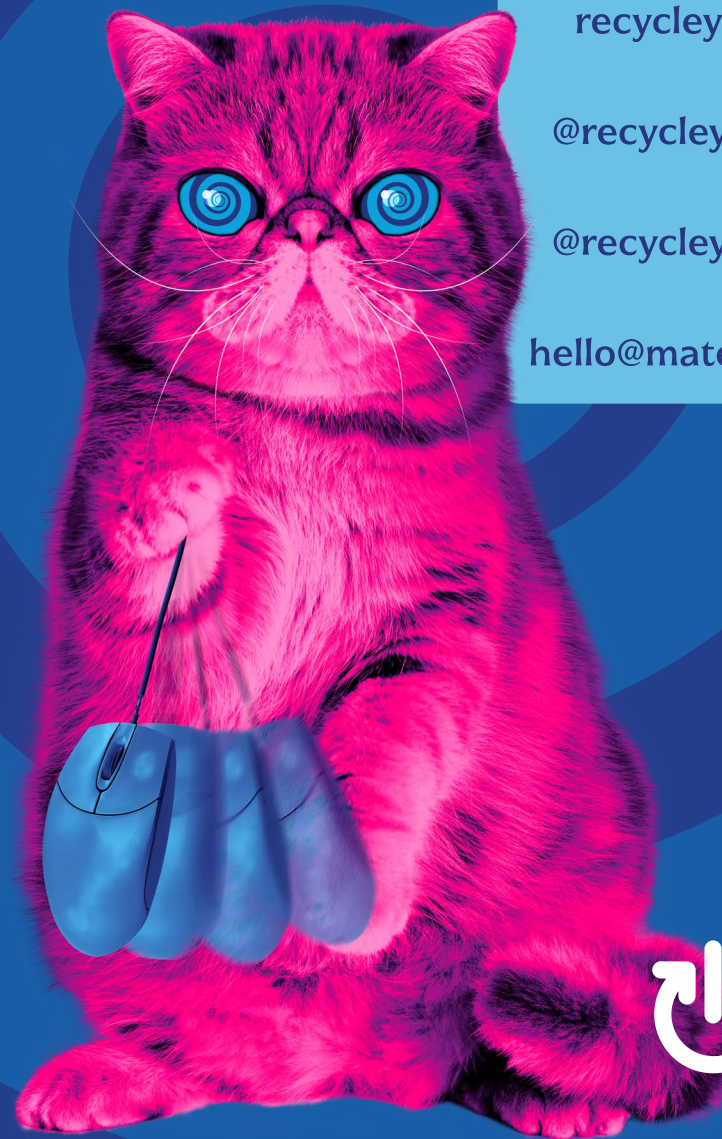
Our recycling locator makes it easy to find all your local drop-off points. With over 26,000 location, you can repair, donate or recycle anything with a plug, battery or cable at a local recycling centre, electrical retailer, charity shop or community drop-off points.

## What is e-waste?

Our electricals contain lots of precious materials, including copper and even gold! If we throw our old electricals away when they break, these materials are lost forever and they become e-waste — which is a huge problem for the environment.

## The Great Cable Challenge

In 2024, we launched “The Great Cable Challenge” — a nationwide campaign aimed at tackling the millions of cables sitting idle across UK households to put the copper inside them to better use. For International E-Waste Day, we are calling on the UK to join The Great Cable Challenge to recycle at least one cable. If 1 million of us all recycled one cable, we could save at least 5,000kg of copper from going to waste.



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