

Biffa's billion bottle milestone at £7m flagship Sunderland plant

3 years ago



More than a billion plastic bottles and tubs have been recycled at Biffa's £7 million flagship polymer plant in Sunderland in its first six months.

Detergent and shampoo bottles, and ice cream and margarine tubs are among the 70 tonnes of post-consumer plastic packaging now recycled every day at the facility in Washington.

The new plant opened last year and employs 35 people.

The plastic is first processed at Biffa's advanced sorting facilities across the UK, before being taken to Washington where it is cleaned and ground into flakes and sold to manufacturers across the UK and EU who turn it into everything from garden furniture and paint trays to drainpipes and guttering.

Other types of plastic, including milk and fizzy drinks bottles, which can be recycled back into food-grade plastic, are handled at Biffa's other polymer plants in Redcar and Seaham, also in the north-east, which employ a total of over 300 people.

Since 2016, Biffa has invested more than £54.5million in plastics recycling infrastructure and now recycles 155,000 tonnes of plastic each year, with plans to increase this to 240,000 tonnes by 2030.

Chris Hanlon, Biffa Polymers commercial director, said: "We're on a mission to change the way people think about waste, and our new facility at Washington is the latest in a series of significant investments to build a 'circular economy', where materials are re-used, repaired, refurbished or recycled for as long as possible.

“It’s amazing to think that a shampoo bottle thrown away in Sunderland could be turned into part of a new garden chair in Gateshead.”

Last year, Biffa announced plans to invest a further £13 million to increase the annual output of its food-grade HDPE production by 50%. That was initially due to take place at Washington, but that development is now taking place at the company’s Redcar site instead.

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