

## 33% Growth for World-first Paper Towel Recycling Service

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[Essity](#), the global hygiene and health company behind brands including Tork, Bodyform, and Cushelle, has scaled its [Tork PaperCircle](#) service – a world-first, closed-loop system that recycles used paper hand towels into new tissue products – as UK demand continues to grow for circular solutions.

In 2025, the service's customer base grew by 33%, while the volume of used paper towels recycled increased by 67% to over 100 million hand towels a year.

Tork PaperCircle provides a circular route for washroom paper hand towels. The used towels are collected from participating sites, returned to Essity's [Stubbins mill](#) in Lancashire, and recycled into new tissue products.

For businesses, the approach is designed to keep fibre in use for longer and reduce the volume of waste sent for disposal. As a result, many organisations are embracing more circular disposal approaches and finding scalable ways to reduce waste, expanding from single-site trials to multi-site rollouts.

Amongst the organisations expanding circular waste initiatives into day-to-day operations is 3 Hardman Square, which introduced Tork PaperCircle as part of its wider sustainability strategy. 3 Hardman Square is a prominent 16-storey office building located in the heart of the Spinningfields district in Manchester.

Since launching the scheme in February 2024, the building has recycled 3,000kg of paper hand towels through the service – equivalent to saving up to 1,000 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The rollout reflects a broader shift among organisations looking to embed measurable circular processes across their operations and reduce waste at scale.

Craig Armstrong, key account manager for Tork PaperCircle, at Essity, said: “We’re seeing more organisations look for practical circular solutions that can be implemented and reported against sustainability targets. The growth of Tork PaperCircle shows that closed-loop systems are moving beyond pilots and into business-as-usual – helping teams reduce waste and support wider carbon ambitions.”

The Stubbins site supplies recycled hand towels, napkins and toilet tissue to businesses across the UK and Ireland. It is the only Essity site in the UK which can recycle both takeaway drink cups and used paper towels into new tissue products.

All tissue products at the site are made from 100% recycled fibre. Wastewater is treated and safely returned, while non-recyclable by-products are repurposed, including use as animal bedding.

Mark Jackson, operations manager at Essity’s Stubbins mill, said: “It’s great to see more customers move beyond treating used material as waste and start using it as a resource. In the past year, what’s really changed is scale – businesses are rolling this out across sites, not just trialling it – which is a great step forward for circular manufacturing.”

The site plays a central role in Essity’s wider sustainability commitments, including achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and recovering all production waste by 2030.

To learn more about Essity, visit: <https://www.essity.com/company/essity-in-the-world/uk-roi/>