# Polytag expands UK recycling network with seventh Plastic Detection Unit at Biffa Edmonton



Polytag has expanded its collaboration with Biffa by installing a Plastic Detection Unit (PDU) at Biffa’s Edmonton Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in North London. This marks the seventh installation as part of Polytag’s Ecotrace Programme, which was launched in July 2024. The initiative aims to deploy 12 Plastic Detection Units across MRFs in the UK, targeting coverage of over 50% of the country’s household recycling stream. The Edmonton facility alone processes approximately 250,000 tonnes of waste annually, primarily from household collections in London and surrounding areas, making it a significant addition to the network providing real-time data on the lifecycle of single-use plastic packaging.

This collaboration builds on previous successful projects, including the "Bottle to Bottle" pilot from 2023, which saw Co-op’s water bottles and Aldi and Ocado Retail's milk bottles marked with UV tags and traced at Biffa’s Teesside MRF in northeast England. Such initiatives highlight a growing industry focus on improving visibility and traceability of packaging throughout the recycling process. Craig Konczak, Business Director for Biffa MRFs & PRFs, emphasises that digital tracking tools like Polytag’s have the potential to revolutionise recycling by offering insights into material flows and consumer recycling behaviour. These insights could inform strategic decision-making and shape future recycling policies in the UK.

Polytag’s efforts are supported by its partnership with French packaging compliance specialist Citeo, where Polytag’s technology achieved a 100% detection rate of UV-tagged single-use plastic bottles in one of Europe’s busiest MRFs. This result underscores the accuracy and reliability of Polytag’s UV tagging system in monitoring the presence of recyclable plastics. According to those involved in the trial, this breakthrough equips brands and retailers with the detailed data necessary to comply with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations and meet increasing sustainability targets.

The growth of Polytag’s Ecotrace Programme extends beyond England. Across Wales, four new Plastic Detection Units have been installed at MRFs in Conwy, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire, and Anglesey. These additions allow brands to track approximately 146,000 tonnes of waste annually, supporting Wales’s commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. The real-time data extraction from these facilities strengthens recycling efficiency and enables a better understanding of packaging waste management across different UK regions.

Alice Rackley, CEO of Polytag, notes that as legislation like EPR and Simpler Recycling comes into effect, businesses face even greater demands for accurate and immediate data on the recycling life cycle of packaging materials. She highlights the significance of gaining barcode-level packaging data from London — the UK’s most populous city — through their collaboration with Biffa. This data provides brand clients deeper understanding of the complex recycling journeys their packaging undergoes, enabling them to anticipate and adapt to evolving regulations.

The rapid development and success of Polytag’s innovative packaging detection technology illustrate a broader trend in the recycling and waste management sector toward digital transformation and transparency. By combining advanced tagging and sensor technology with comprehensive data analytics, these initiatives could usher in a new era where sustainability performance is measurable, optimisable, and accountable at unprecedented levels. The implications extend beyond environmental benefits to influence policy frameworks, corporate responsibility strategies, and consumer awareness around packaging waste.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london), [[2]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london), [[5]](https://www.biffa.co.uk/biffa-insights/biffa-partners-with-polytag-to-gain-packaging-lifecycle-data)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london), [[4]](https://spnews.com/citeo-and-polytag/), [[7]](https://packagingeurope.com/news/french-mrf-detects-100-of-plastic-bottles-recycled-using-polytags-uv-tags/12781.article)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://polytag.io/articles/polytag-to-provide-traceability-of-146000-tonnes-of-waste-in-wales/), [[6]](https://packagingeurope.com/news/plastic-waste-tracked-and-traced-with-polytag-detection-units-at-welsh-mrfs/12673.article)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london), [[4]](https://spnews.com/citeo-and-polytag/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london), [[3]](https://polytag.io/articles/polytag-to-provide-traceability-of-146000-tonnes-of-waste-in-wales/), [[5]](https://www.biffa.co.uk/biffa-insights/biffa-partners-with-polytag-to-gain-packaging-lifecycle-data), [[6]](https://packagingeurope.com/news/plastic-waste-tracked-and-traced-with-polytag-detection-units-at-welsh-mrfs/12673.article), [[7]](https://packagingeurope.com/news/french-mrf-detects-100-of-plastic-bottles-recycled-using-polytags-uv-tags/12781.article)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://retailtechinnovationhub.com/home/2025/6/19/polytag-packaging-detection-technology-installed-at-biffa-edmonton-materials-recovery-facility-in-north-london> - Polytag has expanded its collaboration with Biffa by installing a Plastic Detection Unit at Biffa's Edmonton Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in North London. This installation is part of Polytag's Ecotrace Programme, which aims to provide real-time data on the recycling of single-use plastic packaging. The Edmonton MRF processes 250,000 tonnes of waste annually, primarily from household recycling collections in London and surrounding areas. This partnership enhances Polytag's mission to cover over 50% of the UK's household recycling stream through its network of Plastic Detection Units across various MRFs.
3. <https://polytag.io/articles/polytag-to-provide-traceability-of-146000-tonnes-of-waste-in-wales/> - Polytag has integrated four Plastic Detection Units at Material Recycling Facilities (MRFs) in Wales, including sites in Conwy, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire, and Anglesey. This initiative is part of Polytag's Ecotrace Programme, which aims to provide real-time data on the recycling of single-use plastic packaging. The new installations will enable brands to track 146,000 tonnes of waste entering the recycling and recovery streams across these Welsh facilities each year, enhancing recycling efficiency and supporting Wales's goal to achieve net zero by 2030.
4. <https://spnews.com/citeo-and-polytag/> - Polytag and global packaging compliance leader Citeo have achieved a significant breakthrough in the recycling industry by successfully detecting 100% of UV-tagged single-use plastic bottles entering one of Europe's busiest Materials Recycling Facilities (MRF) in France. This collaboration demonstrates the effectiveness of Polytag's technology in providing insights into the lifecycle of plastic packaging, enabling brands and retailers to meet Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, monitor sustainability initiatives, and increase recycling rates.
5. <https://www.biffa.co.uk/biffa-insights/biffa-partners-with-polytag-to-gain-packaging-lifecycle-data> - Biffa has partnered with Polytag to gain real-time data on the recycling of plastic packaging. As part of RECOUP's 'Bottle to Bottle' project, Co-op's water bottles and Aldi and Ocado's milk bottles were marked with UV 2D tags, with a Polytag UV tag reader installed at Biffa's Hartlepool MRF. This collaboration enables brands to access data on when and where their packaging is recycled, helping to optimise sustainability strategies and inform recycling policy in the UK.
6. <https://packagingeurope.com/news/plastic-waste-tracked-and-traced-with-polytag-detection-units-at-welsh-mrfs/12673.article> - Polytag has installed Plastic Detection Units at Material Recycling Facilities (MRFs) in Wales, including sites in Conwy, Gwynedd, Pembrokeshire, and Anglesey. This initiative is part of Polytag's Ecotrace Programme, which aims to provide real-time data on the recycling of single-use plastic packaging. The new installations will enable brands to track 146,000 tonnes of waste entering the recycling and recovery streams across these Welsh facilities each year, enhancing recycling efficiency and supporting Wales's goal to achieve net zero by 2030.
7. <https://packagingeurope.com/news/french-mrf-detects-100-of-plastic-bottles-recycled-using-polytags-uv-tags/12781.article> - A Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in France has achieved a 100% detection rate of UV-tagged single-use plastic bottles using Polytag's technology. This collaboration with Citeo demonstrates the effectiveness of Polytag's UV tags in providing insights into the lifecycle of plastic packaging, enabling brands and retailers to meet Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, monitor sustainability initiatives, and increase recycling rates.