



environmental
services
association

SUMMER FIRE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN: SUPPORTER GUIDE

June 2023

BACKGROUND

Fires occurring within waste containers, collection vehicles and processing facilities are a perennial risk for the recycling and waste management sector. Although fires present a risk for local authorities and recycling and waste managers all year round, it is during the summer months that the incidence rate for more significant waste fires increases because fires spread more quickly through drier waste material and there are additional seasonal sources of ignition present in the waste (for example BBQ ashes, camping gas etc).

In addition to efforts by the sector to minimise fire risk within their operations, for example through proper waste handling and storage, as well as fire detection and suppression systems, members of the public also have a crucial role to play to help prevent fires by disposing of flammable items and potential sources of ignition responsibly.

To raise awareness of the risk of recycling and waste fires over the summer months, and to inform consumers about the safe disposal of materials which commonly cause fires, the ESA has produced a small range of graphic social media collateral which is free to use by all stakeholders with an interest in this issue.

The campaign materials will be released in June 2023 and we would urge stakeholders to use and share these graphics on their own channels over the summer months – June, July, August and into September.

To address the most common causes of recycling and waste fires, the campaign will highlight the dangers associated with the following items and signpost their correct disposal routes:

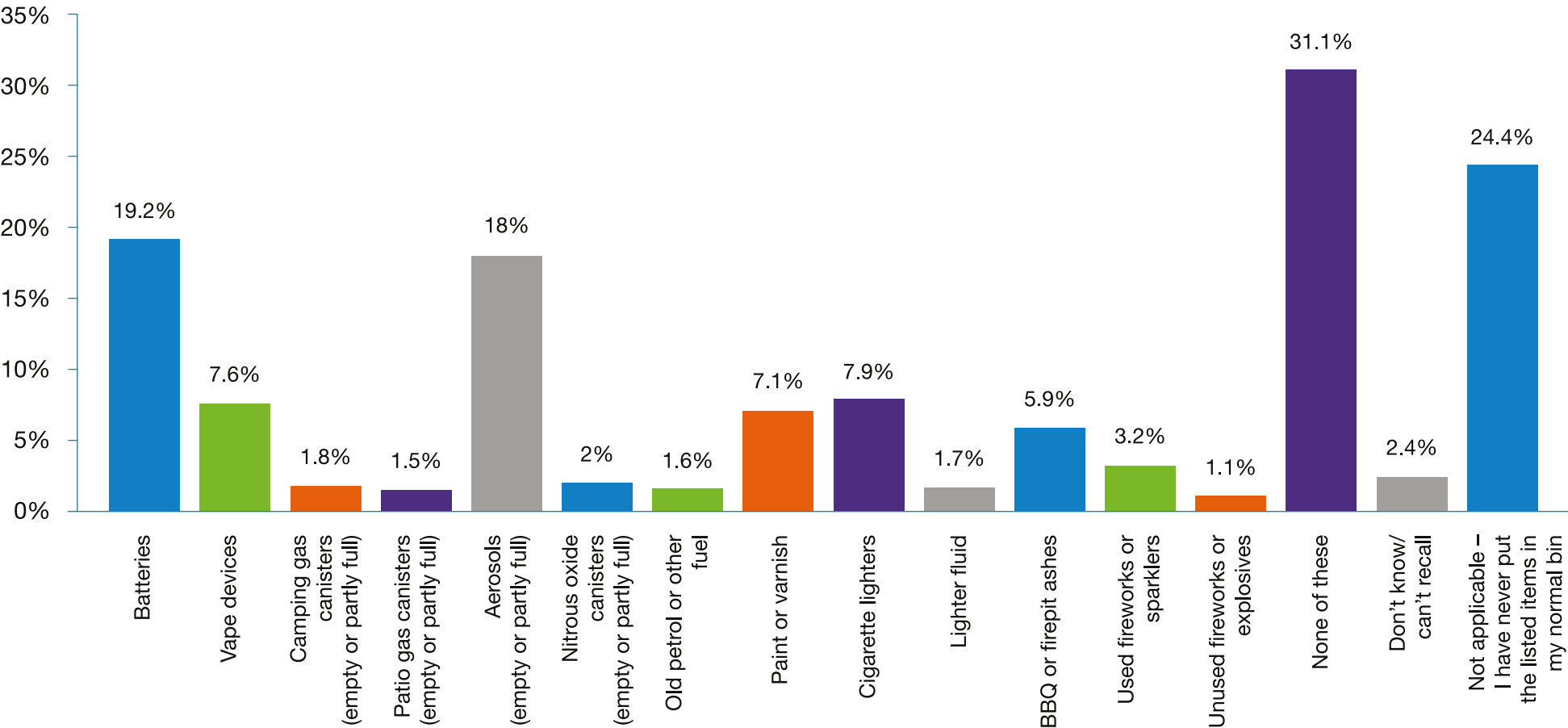
- **Compressed gas** – (ie camping gas, BBQ gas and nitrous oxide)
- **BBQ and firepit ashes**
- **Cigarette lighters and matches**
- **Batteries and electronic devices** (please note that these waste streams are also subject to the ESA's standalone [Take Charge](#) campaign)
- **Flammable liquids** (ie petrol, lighter fluid, alcohol)
- **Vape devices**

We have included safe disposal information that is generic at a national level but stakeholders are urged to share additional or alternative disposal instructions specific to their areas.

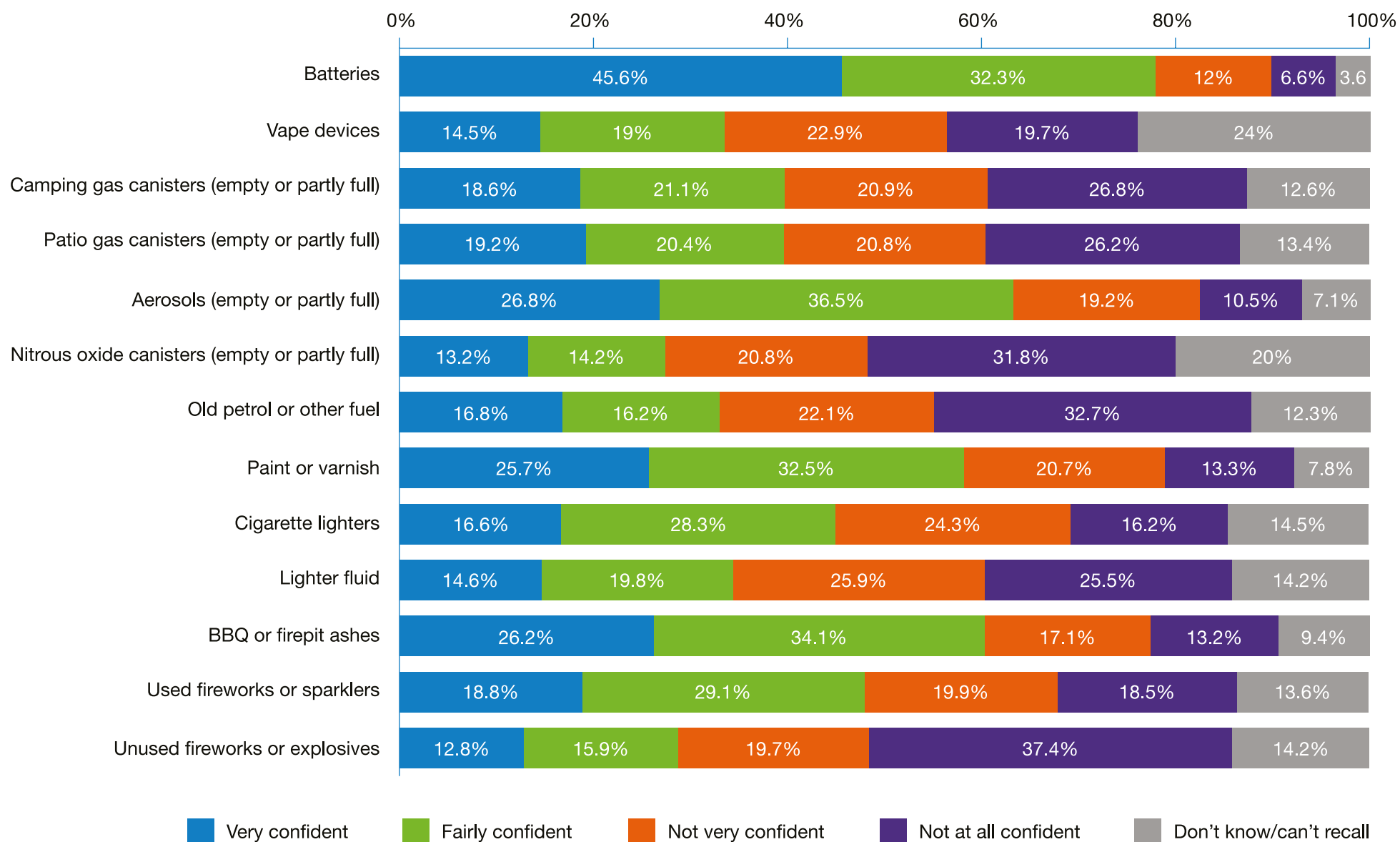
To support this campaign, the ESA commissioned a YouGov poll of UK Adults (sample of 2,056 individuals across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, statistically weighted) and this took place over the 22nd and 23rd May 2023.

The poll asked the respondents two questions related to their behaviours around disposing of flammable items and their knowledge about safe disposal routes. The overall results and analysis are presented in the charts below.

YouGov: Percentage of UK adults who admit to throwing the following items in their general rubbish bin during period May 2022 to May 2023



YouGov: How confident UK adults feel in their knowledge about how to safely dispose of the following items



POLLING INSIGHTS

The headline data presented in the aforementioned charts provides a breakdown of the responses for the UK as a whole, but the full dataset provides the opportunity to isolate and analyse the responses by a range of demographic factors. Following this analysis, the key findings are presented below.

- Nearly 19% of UK adults admit to throwing away batteries or aerosols in their general rubbish bin at least once in the last year.
- Nearly 8% of adults admit to putting vape devices in their general rubbish bin in the last year. The percentage of people in England who admit to putting vape devices is 7.2%, which aligns with Government figures¹ for the percentage of the population in England which use these devices (6.9 to 7.1%). This suggests that the majority of those who vape have likely disposed of the devices in their general rubbish bin in the past year.
- Nearly 8% of adults admit to throwing away cigarette lighters in their general rubbish bin.
- A smaller proportion of people under the age of 45 admit to binning any of the items listed (with the exception of paint and varnish) – suggesting either the activity, or willingness to admit to the activity, is primarily among those under 45.
- For all of the items listed above, men admit to having thrown each away in the general rubbish bin more than women. This suggests they more commonly engage in this activity, or are more ready to admit to it in the survey – although advice from YouGov suggests that in an anonymised survey, respondents tend to give honest answers.
- Admissions of improper disposal of cigarette lighters are notably higher in Scotland, Wales and NI compared with England, and similarly for paint and varnish in Scotland compared with the other devolved administrations. Incorrect disposal of cigarette lighters in London is also notably higher than in other regions of England.
- Nearly 78% of people say they feel confident about how to dispose of batteries safely, yet they are the most commonly incorrectly discarded dangerous items. This is a similar case for aerosols, paint and varnish too.
- The items where respondents were generally less, rather than more, confident about safe disposal methods are:
 - **Vape devices**
 - **Camping and patio gas canisters**
 - **Lighter fuel**
 - **Nitrous oxide canisters**
 - **Old liquid fuel**

¹ [UK Gov – Nicotine Vaping in England](#)

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS

- Confidence levels are lowest for nitrous oxide, gas canisters, old fuel and lighter fluid (where half, or more than half of respondents said they were not confident) – suggesting that more prominent sign-posting of safe disposal routes is necessary for these materials.
- Broadly speaking – net confidence rates increase consistently with age for nearly all of the products listed in the survey – suggesting people feel more confident about safe disposal of items the older they are.
- Men report higher net confidence levels compared with women for all materials except batteries – where women have slightly higher net confidence levels (79%).
- Confidence in battery disposal is highest in Scotland and lowest in Wales with a 10% variance between the two.
- Confidence in vape disposal is highest in NI and lowest in Wales (at 43 and 27% respectively).
- Confidence in camping gas canisters disposal is highest in NI and lowest in London (at 51% and 34% respectively).
- Other materials have less variance in response by devolved administration.
- Men are more likely to have higher confidence levels about how to safely dispose of flammable items than women, but also admit to engaging in the wrong behaviour more than women. (ie they say they know not to, but do it anyway).
- Confidence about safe disposal methods grows with age for most materials – possibly with practice, experience and greater engagement with civic communications. Those under 45 are more likely to admit to engaging in the wrong behaviour.
- Social media usage is not a useful factor for audience targeting – results are evenly spread across social media usage.

MESSAGING

Context narrative

All of us have a crucial part to play in preventing recycling and waste fires by ensuring that we dispose of flammable items responsibly.

Every year, fire and rescue services have to attend at least 300 significant fires² at recycling and waste management facilities across England. However, the total number of smaller un-reported fire incidents occurring across the sector is estimated to be significantly higher than this, since hundreds of fires are extinguished by operators before the need to call the emergency services.

Each of these fires has the potential to turn into a major incident if not dealt with swiftly and this situation is exacerbated by the hot, dry, summer months when fires spread more quickly.

Fires at recycling and waste management facilities, or in collection vehicles and containers, not only put lives at risk, but can disrupt vital services and infrastructure; cause millions of pounds of damage to public assets

and damage the environment. But members of the public can help to reduce these risks by disposing of flammable items responsibly.

There are a few items that are commonly misplaced in rubbish and recycling bins that are the main causes of fires. These include:

- **Batteries**
- **Compressed gas containers** – for example camping gas, lighter fluid, and barbeque gas canisters
- **Cigarette lighters**
- **Vape devices**
- **Flammable liquids** – like petrol or alcohol-based chemicals, varnishes and spirits.

To help avoid recycling and waste fires, we must all individually take responsibility for ensuring that any item or substance that could potentially cause a fire is always disposed of using proper disposal channels and never mixed with the general rubbish or other conventional recycling.

Local authority Household Waste Recycling Centres often offer disposal points for gas canisters, batteries of all types, electrical or electronic items and motor oil. In some areas, a local authority might accept other flammable hazardous waste such as small quantities of expired petroleum or diesel. An alternative is to take these fuels to a local garage which often have disposal containers available for a small fee.

BBQ and firepit ashes can be disposed of with general rubbish but must be allowed to cool for at least 48 hours before doing so and should be raked through to ensure there are no remaining embers or heat. The ash from wood fires can also be used as a fertiliser in the garden.

Anyone with any doubt about how to safely dispose of an item should contact their local authority in the first instance.

² <https://www.ukfrs.com/guidance/fires-waste-sites>

Key messages

- Throwing flammable items away in the general rubbish or recycling is dangerous and puts lives at risk – particularly during the summer.
- If something seems dangerous, please don't put it out for collection. Find a proper disposal point for your hazardous or flammable waste instead.
- If you're not sure what to do with something, check with your local authority first or take it to your nearest civic amenity site.

CAMPAIGN ASSETS

- Social media graphics optimised for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
- This “user guide” document, which explains how to use the assets and provides additional information about the issue
- YouGov poll results
- Press release
- Web banner


All assets are downloadable from www.esauk.org/what-we-do/raising-standards/campaigns/summer-fires and **the campaign will go live for sharing from Monday 19th June 2023**

CREATIVE



Since this campaign will be delivered primarily through organic social media sharing, the ESA has created a range of bold, attention-grabbing, and colourful visuals which aim to invoke a “summer vibe” while being immediately legible in respect of the issue/messaging.

The campaign imagery will be consistent across the range of targeted materials with the use of “Bincident” to simplify and describe fires that occur in waste management processes.


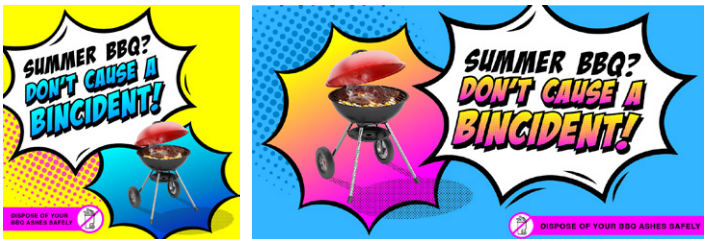
Visual design

Summer fire collateral			
Subject	Asset and dimensions	Suggested messaging	Suggested tags
Camping gas canisters, liquid fuel and camping stove	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Putting flammable substances in your bins can cause a #bincident and puts lives, waste services and the environment at risk. Please dispose of unused camping fuel and gas canisters safely. Check with your local council if you're unsure how to get rid of these items. 2. If you need to dispose of flammable or potentially explosive items like camping fuel or gas canisters, please use your local Household Waste Recycling Centre or check with your council for your nearest hazardous waste container. 3. More than 300 major waste facility fires happen across the UK every year because people put flammable things in their bins. Check with your local council if you're unsure how to get rid of these items. 	#Bincident #Recycling #Recycle

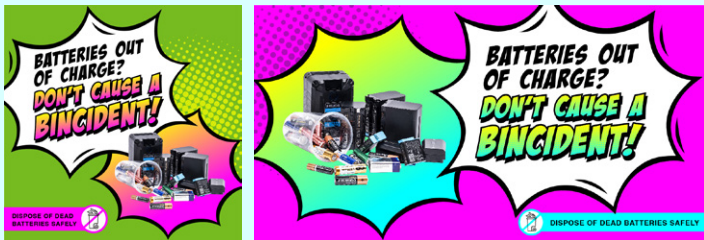
Summer fire collateral

Subject	Asset and dimensions	Suggested messaging	Suggested tags
Petrol can, white spirits	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please dispose of old fuel and other flammable liquids safely. These substances can cause a #bincident if they're not disposed of responsibly – putting lives at risk. 2. If you need to dispose of flammable liquids like petrol, diesel or spirits, please check with your council for your nearest hazardous waste container. 3. More than 300 major waste facility fires occur across the UK every year because people put flammable items in their bins. Check with your council for your nearest hazardous waste container. 	#Bincident #Recycling #Recycle
Matches, Lighter Fluid, Cigarette lighters	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please dispose of cigarette lighters, lighter fluid and matches safely. These substances can cause a #bincident if they're not disposed of responsibly – putting lives at risk. 2. If you need to dispose of flammable liquid or items that might be dangerous in your bin, please check with your local council to find out where to put them. 3. More than 300 major waste facility fires occur across the UK every year because people put flammable items in their bins – and it only takes a single spark to start a big waste fire. Check with your local council to find out where to put them 	#Bincident #Recycling #Recycle

Summer fire collateral


Subject	Asset and dimensions	Suggested messaging	Suggested tags
Nitrous oxide canisters	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nitrous oxide canisters are no laughing matter when they're put in the wrong bin. They explode and put lives at risk. Don't cause a #bincident. Please only dispose of these by taking them to your local household waste recycling centre or other hazardous waste collection point. No questions asked... 	#Bincident #Recycling #Recycle
Disposable BBQ	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't cause a #bincident this summer. Make sure your BBQ or firepit ashes are completely cool before putting them in a bin. 2. Make sure fire ashes are completely cool before putting them in your rubbish – allowing at least 48 hours after the fire has gone out and raking them through to check first. Alternatively, you can put them on your garden as fertiliser. 3. Fire and Rescue services have to attend more than 300 major fire incidents at recycling and waste facilities across the UK each year because people put flammable items in their bins or recycling. Don't cause a #bincident this summer. 	#Bincident #Recycling #Recycle

Summer fire collateral

Subject	Asset and dimensions	Suggested messaging	Suggested tags
Batteries	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Even seemingly dead batteries can cause serious fires if they're put in the wrong bin. Don't cause a #bincident this summer. 2. Dispose of batteries and waste electrical items containing batteries safely by using dedicated battery and small electrical recycling services. These are found at your local household waste recycling centre or many larger stores around the country. 3. More than 300 major waste facility fires occur across the UK every year because people put flammable items in their bins – and it only takes a single spark to start a big waste fire. 4. According to a recent national YouGov poll, batteries are the most commonly binned dangerous item, despite the fact that people say they know how to get rid of them safely. If in doubt, check with your local council. Don't cause a #bincident this summer. 	<p>#Bincident #Recycling #Batteries #Recycle #TakeCharge</p>

continued overleaf

Summer fire collateral

Subject	Asset and dimensions	Suggested messaging	Suggested tags
Vape devices	 <p>Static png graphic: 1080x1080px (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) Static png graphic: 1200x627px (Facebook, LinkedIn) Static png graphic: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Static png graphic: 1200x675px (Twitter) Carousel png images: 1080x1080px, 3 frames (Instagram, Facebook) Animated MP4: 1080x1920px (Facebook Story, LinkedIn Story) Rotating gif: 1080x1080px, 3 frames, 3 rotations (Instagram, Facebook) Web banner gif: 729x90px, 3 frames</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vape devices contain powerful batteries that can cause serious fires if they're put in the rubbish bin or mixed with other recycling. 2. Dispose of vape devices only by using dedicated recycling services for small electrical items. These are found at your local household waste recycling centre or many larger retail stores around the country. 3. More than 300 major waste facility fires occur across the UK every year because people put flammable items in their bins – and it only takes a single spark to start a big fire. 4. According to a recent national YouGov poll, batteries and vape devices are the most frequently binned among a list of dangerous items known to cause waste fires. Don't cause a #bincident this summer. 	<p>Suggested tags:</p> <p>#Bincident #Recycling #Batteries #Recycle #TakeCharge</p>

TERMS OF USE

We encourage all of our supporters and stakeholders to use and share the graphics free of charge as they see fit. The information and messaging provided in this document is designed to be generic to all areas, but more specific information or alternative disposal channels may apply to your region or audience. Please feel free to augment this as necessary.

Please do tag the ESA in the campaign on Twitter using **@ESA_Tweets**

if you have any concerns or questions about the use of the campaign assets or messaging, please contact Ben Johnson by email to **b-johnson@esauk.org**

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
PARTICIPATION**