

Regulator Approves UK's First Recycling Plant for Household Batteries

Tuesday 19 January, 2021

Specialist waste management firm, WasteCare, has opened the UK's first full-scale household battery recycling facility following approval from the Environment Agency (EA).

The £2 million state-of-the-art facility in Elland, West Yorkshire has processing capacity for 25,000 tonnes of household batteries annually. This means it can recycle all UK's spent alkaline and zinc carbon batteries thereby avoiding the need for them to be shipped to mainland Europe for treatment. Alkaline and zinc carbon batteries account for around 80% of those sold in the UK including common varieties such as AAs, AAAs, Cs and Ds.

The fully automated facility receives mixed consumer batteries from collection points throughout the UK. An innovative sorting process then separates them by size and chemistry. The alkaline and zinc carbon batteries enter a sealed processing unit which boasts specially designed filtration and environmental monitoring systems. The batteries are pulverized before moving on to a multi-staged separation and extraction process. This allows the component materials to be separated so they can be reused by manufacturers as secondary raw materials.

Graeme Parkin, Chief Operating Officer of the WasteCare Group, who has overseen the development of this new facility, said: *"We are proud to have delivered this world class facility which has the capability to treat all of the UK's alkaline batteries. It represents the first phase of our ambitious investment programme - to develop UK-based recycling solutions for other battery chemistries to meet the projected demand in the UK. We are already at an advanced stage in developing a downstream process that will allow raw materials to be reused directly in battery manufacturing and this plant should be operational towards the end of 2021."*

WasteCare has been recycling batteries through a small-scale pilot plant since 2017. This has enabled the company to develop and introduce a number of technological improvements that ensure this full-scale plant delivers recycling and recovery rates greater than any other battery recycling facility around the world. As such, it sets a new benchmark for the best available recovery and treatment techniques.

ENDS

Note to editor:

The initial £2 million investment has been funded by the WasteCare Group. BatteryBack plc, as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Group, has already taken advantage of the lower cost of evidence for its battery producer members. BatteryBack is the largest battery producer compliance scheme in the UK. The company has been at the forefront of educational and awareness campaigns since the Batteries & Accumulators Regulations came into force in 2010 and has played an integral part in increasing the UK's consumer battery collection rate from 3% to 45% over the past decade. WasteCare is now the UK's largest collector of household batteries making over 50,000 collections per annum from major retailers, businesses and schools.

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