

PaintCare project - recommendations and interim report

Executive summary

In the 12 months since the All Party Parliamentary Sustainable Resource and Manufacturing Group's recommendation to create a Resource Efficiency Action Plan for Decorative Paint, significant progress has been made, bringing together the key stakeholders from paint manufacturers, remanufacturers, retailers, waste companies, local authorities, community reuse organisations and central Government.

Based on the British Coatings Federation (BCF)'s recent consumer research, almost half of the 71,500 tonnes of decorative paint that is leftover every year is entering the general waste stream, and of the other half that gets in some way segregated from general waste, only 2% is reused or remanufactured and the remainder is incinerated, generally without energy recovery.

So why is leftover decorative paint entering the general waste stream, when in theory liquid paint should only be disposed of as hazardous waste (even though 80% of leftover decorative paint is waterborne and does not include hazardous materials)? This is caused by several factors – the majority of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) don't accept liquid paint (only one in three accept it), with cost and space concerns cited anecdotally as reasons why not, and householders are therefore often left with no choice but to dispose of paint in general waste (two thirds of which ends up in landfill) and only 1% follow WRAP guidelines to solidify the paint first.

However, the BCF's PaintCare project's working groups have established that there is an alternative solution, which can both solve the landfill problem, and also reduce costs to local authorities. Sorting paint for remanufacturing, instead of disposing of it as hazardous waste, will allow manufacturers, existing and new, to build new supply streams for potentially valuable recovered raw materials and develop markets for recycled paints. A process to collect waste paint is absolutely vital in developing such markets and local authorities are uniquely placed to make this happen.

Paint manufacturers of all sizes have demonstrated willingness to invest in such solutions, with several million pounds already invested in either commercial ventures or supporting social enterprises, but there needs to be a partnership between industry, local and central Government and the social sector to make paint remanufacturing happen on a national scale.

So why should Government get involved? In essence, managing leftover paint this way will deliver significant savings for local authorities, reduce waste to landfill and create a new circular economy. However, as has been established in several failed paint remanufacturing operations, the key to success is developing a market for leftover paint, and this report calls for Government to act, by insisting on five percent of Government painting contracts to use paint products with a significant percentage of remanufactured content. It will also be important to establish the knowhow to use the waste paint not suitable for remanufacturing as a raw material for other products such as concrete, as opposed to incineration as hazardous waste, if the 40% cost savings foreseen are to be delivered.

The key roadblocks have been identified, outlined in the 15 recommendations below, and the next 12 months will be spent working closely with all involved to try to remove some of the remaining obstacles to creating a new remanufacturing sector which also solves a major household waste issue and at lower cost to all stakeholders.

Peter Jones OBE,
Chair of the BCF
Leftover Paint
Steering Group



PaintCare project recommendations

(numbers after each recommendation relate to occurrence in main report)



General recommendations

- All stakeholders involved in facilitating a national circular economy for leftover paint to sign up to the PaintCare voluntary commitment (13)
- PaintCare signatories should launch a major national education campaign to help raise awareness of paint recycling to the public, once a sustainable business model is in place (7)
- Waste packaging stakeholders should identify the optimum method for disposal/recycling of the annual 14,000 tonnes of waste packaging that is generated every year (8)
- The paint industry, waste industry and academia to work together to find solutions to use leftover paint as a raw material in other products like concrete for leftover paint that can't be reused or remanufactured (6)



Recommendations for the paint industry

- Paint manufacturers and retailers are encouraged to continue to develop tools and advice to consumers to purchase the right amount of paint for the job (1)
- Paint manufacturers and retailers to promote consistent, agreed upon guidelines to consumers for the disposal of leftover paint (2)
- The paint industry should introduce a quality protocol for remanufacturing of leftover paint, to ensure consistent quality and consumer confidence in the product (11)
- Future remanufacturing operations should consider adopting the detailed output and recommendations from the project, especially with regard to collection, storage, labelling, transport and sorting activities (12)



Recommendations for central Government

- Government should exempt reused, recycled or remanufactured paint sales used by social enterprises, charities or community based groups from VAT and such organisations should be exempt from business rates (4)
- Government should stimulate a remanufactured paint market and change Government Procurement Rules to specify five percent of Government painting contracts use paint products with a significant percentage of remanufactured content, helping to create part of the market for 10 million litres of remanufactured paint that could be produced (5)
- Government should ensure that regulations required to transport and use leftover paint (due to classification as waste) do not create burdens on establishing remanufacturing operations (9)
- Government should support the assertion that REACH regulation article 2.7 (d) applies to leftover paint (remanufacturing a product of known composition) (10)
- Government departments should proactively and transparently assist projects such as PaintCare by providing the information and support to help meet programme targets (14)
- Government should work with the paint industry to identify alternative funding mechanisms to help pay for the remanufacturing costs if an economic model cannot be established (15)



Recommendations for local Government

- Local authorities and the waste industry should promote consistent, agreed upon guidelines to consumers for the disposal of leftover paint (2)
- All HWRCs to agree to accept liquid paint, unless there are significant barriers preventing this, to stop the landfilling of leftover paint that enters into the general waste stream (2)
- Industry (paint manufacturers, retailers and waste companies) and Government (local authorities/WRAP) to promote consistent, agreed upon guidelines to consumers for the disposal of leftover paint (2)
- Government should enable the use of landfill taxes to support social enterprises, charities or community based groups committed to establishing paint re-use and recovery to grow from 0.5 million litres to 3 million litres by 2020 (3)

