

UK to send 800,000 tonnes of toy packaging waste to landfill this Christmas

Submitted by: Aspectus PR

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800,000 TONNES OF TOY PACKAGING DESTINE FOR LANDFILL THIS CHRISTMAS

A new environmental website <http://www.greensword.com> is campaigning for the general public to stop and think before buying toys with excessive packaging this Christmas and put into practice more environmentally friendly alternatives.

UK Statistics:

- Approximately three million tonnes of household rubbish will be created by householders in Britain this Christmas and for every one tonne of rubbish produced by householders, a further 15 tonnes has been created through manufacturing of the goods and extraction of raw materials

- Of this waste, an estimated 800,000 tonnes is created by toy packaging alone

Research into this year's predicted best-selling toys shows that manufacturers are still producing toys in excessive and unnecessary packaging. Unbelievably, the World's current number one selling toy uses a staggering 82% more packaging than is required for the toys dimensions.

Of course, a certain amount of packaging is required to keep the toys from damage and to ensure it meets safety requirements. However, all too often this is an excuse. Manufacturers and retailers use packaging to create stand-out on shelves, make the toy look bigger and ultimately market to children.

Professor Ian Swingland, Director of Science comments; "Over the next few weeks family and friends will spend £181 on toys for the average child. But 41 per cent of them will be broken or lost within three months. Because of the difficulty of recycling heavy plastics, most of these will head for the tip. Few toys biologically degrade and even batteries are not recycled, despite the poisons they contain contaminating the ground water we use. The packaging alone accounts for some 20% of the cost and 35% of the total amount of material, toy and packaging. The UK's lack of legislation outlawing the over packaging of such wasteful and damaging ephemera, that are so difficult to dispose of without harming the environment, is a disgrace when Norway recycles nearly 70% of its waste and the UK still only manages about 20%."

This Christmas, if each UK household bought just one toy which did not require packaging, or minimal packaging, the waste saved would equate to 1,325 double-decker buses.

Doing your bit for the environment this Christmas need not be time consuming or expensive - in fact often cheaper.

Green Sword are asking the public to stop and think and instead of buying yet another overly packaged toy, put just one of the below alternatives into practice this Christmas and help reduce the landfill waste.

How to REDUCE toy packaging this Christmas:

1. When buying toys that have packaging, make sure you only buy those which have the minimum packaging and check that these are recyclable by looking on the back for the Recycle sign
2. Research into your local, environmentally-friendly toy retailers. You can find out your local store by logging onto www.greensword.com or buy online from eco-friendly toy retailers.
3. Buy second hand! This is not only cheaper but often doesn't require any packaging at all
4. Join a Toy Library. Here you rent toys and when you're child inevitably becomes bored or becomes too old for the toy, simply take it back and get another one! Go to www.natll.org.uk for information on your nearest library
5. Get creative! Instead of buying yet another toy, why not donate to a charity such as WWF to help preserve endangered species or make use of a gift voucher scheme donation where the recipient receives confirmation via a gift voucher that they have provided a useful gift for people in the developing world. It's a good idea and it creates no waste!

- Ends -

For further information on how you can play your part Reducing and Recycling, please log on to www.greensword.com

Source for statistics:

- www.wasteonline.org.uk
- Westminster City Council
- Waste Watch
- Friends of the Earth
- Durham County Council

Backgrounder:

Green Sword is a campaigning web site (www.greensword.com) which aims to shape people's understanding, attitude and behaviour in relation to the environment and play a significant role in the fight against climate change.

It provides a forum for people to share their experiences and ideas, however big or small, and encourage government and business to take necessary action.

It has links to a team of world-leading scientists who are at the forefront of technological advancements and scientific research into a range of solutions that could help tackle man's impact on the environment.

For further information, please contact Lisa Murgatroyd at SPARX Communications on 0207 487 8456 / 07740 852 861 or email lisa@sparxgroup.co.uk