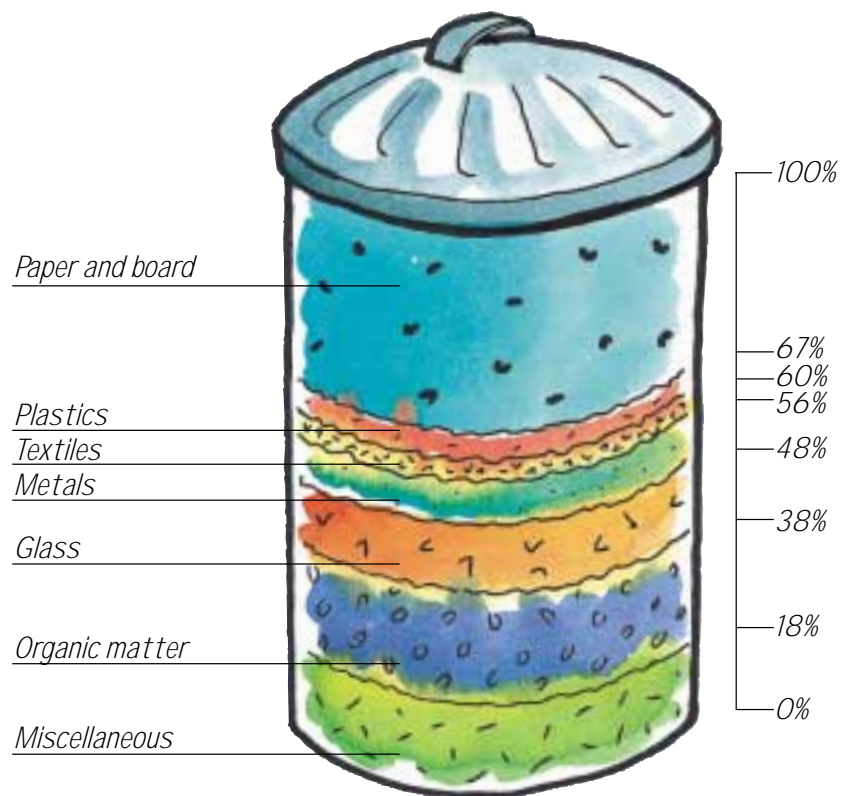


6. Paper and landfill

There is another important reason for recycling paper. It is linked to how we get rid of the waste paper when we can no longer recycle it.



? Look at this picture. What percentage of UK household waste is paper and board? What happens to it after it has been thrown away?

What is landfill?

Although some of our rubbish is burnt, most of it is put into huge holes in the ground. It is tightly packed, and known as **landfill**. The landfill holes are usually old quarries or gravel pits. When the holes are full, they are covered over with soil and grass.

Here are some of the problems with landfill.

Space

Paper does break back down into fibres, but only if air can get to it. Tightly packed landfill blocks air from getting to the paper so it cannot break down. Paper is bulky too, so it takes up a lot of space which could be used for heavier rubbish. In Britain, we are running out of suitable landfill sites.

Poisons

If the landfill site is not looked after properly, poisonous gases can build up. These can catch fire or cause explosions as well as bad smells!

Pollution

Dirt and chemicals washed down by rain through the landfill holes can pollute our drinking water supply.