

Nestlé Confectionery commits to leadership position and announces major packaging innovations



In a category first, Quality Street will move twist-wrapped sweets to paper packaging

Nestlé Confectionery has announced industry-leading packaging innovations for two of its brands: Quality Street and KitKat.

In a category first, Quality Street will move to recyclable paper packaging for its twist-wrapped sweets. By replacing the double layer of foil and cellulose with a paper wrap, Quality Street will remove more than two billion pieces of packaging material from the brand's supply chain.

At the same time, KitKat will introduce wrappers made with 80% recycled plastic, supported by the ISCC (International Sustainability & Carbon Certification) mass balance approach. These wrappers can be recycled at more than 5,000 supermarkets across the UK and placed in household recycling in the Republic of Ireland. The rollout will begin this month on the brand's flagship two-finger products, before being extended across the entire range by 2024.

Purchased by more than 6 in 10 households in the UK, KitKat will use the highest proportion of recycled food-grade plastic of any major UK & Ireland confectionery brand. The launch is part of Nestlé's ongoing commitment toward reducing its environmental impact and supporting a circular

economy.

This commitment is further demonstrated by the new Quality Street wrappers, which were developed by packaging experts at Nestlé's research and development center in York. One innovation is the development of a special vegetable-based coating for the paper, which does not hinder the recycling process.

Nine of the 11 Quality Street sweets will move to paper-based packaging. The Orange Crunch and the Green Triangle will remain in their simple foil wrappers as, traditionally, they have not had cellulose wrappers. The transition to paper, which is now underway, will take several months to complete. This means that during Christmas 2022, consumers will find a mix of both the old and new wrappers in their Quality Street cartons, pouches, tubs and tins.

“These major packaging innovations have been pioneered by our teams here in the UK. The new KitKat packaging is enabled by a significant upgrade to Nestlé's York Factory, while the category-leading Quality Street paper twist-wraps have been designed at our Confectionery Product Technology Centre in York, and implemented in Halifax, the home of Quality Street for 87 years.

“Nestlé Confectionery is taking a leadership position on packaging sustainability as we work toward reducing our use of virgin plastic by one third and making all our packaging recyclable or reusable within the next three years. The changes we are announcing have been informed by detailed lifecycle assessments that have enabled us to identify solutions with a lower environmental impact than our current packaging,” says Richard Watson, Business Executive Officer, Nestlé Confectionery.

The new KitKat packs will feature the Recyclable At Store On-Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) – a UK labelling scheme established by the British Retail Consortium to help consumers correctly reuse and recycle more material. The wrappers will also provide information about the Recycling Locator Tool, a platform launched by the national WRAP recycling campaign Recycle Now, which guides consumers to their nearest recycling point.

Supermarkets including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Co-op, Aldi and Waitrose now offer soft plastic recycling facilities in stores, while most consumers in Ireland can put soft plastics into household recycling.

“Plastic waste is a key concern for most citizens, and for many this is centred on whether it is easy to recycle. Recyclability is complex since it requires the culmination of good design, collection, recycling infrastructure, and importantly, market demand for recycled material into new products and packaging – manufacture is after all, the whole point of recycling.

Plastic wrappers are not yet collected by local authorities, but this is set to change in the coming years. In the meantime, leading supermarkets are providing 5,000 collection points for all types of plastic bags and wrappers. We welcome these new initiatives from Nestlé, founding members of The UK Plastics Pact, to improve the recyclability of Quality Street and using advanced recycling technology to include recycled plastic into its KitKat packaging – something we need to significantly ramp up in the UK, and across the world. We look forward to further roll out,” adds Helen Bird, Head of Business Collaboration, WRAP.

Nestlé UK & Ireland has been working to improve the sustainability of its confectionery operations and supply chain for well over a decade. The business has sourced 100% certified sustainable cocoa for all its chocolate and biscuits since the end of 2015 and is aiming to halve the carbon footprint of its local fresh milk supply by 2026. This involves helping farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices that will protect and restore natural resources such as soil, water, and biodiversity around their farms over the years to come, while producing the best quality milk for Nestlé products.

Quality Street is the second Nestlé confectionery brand to introduce paper, following Smarties, which rolled out recyclable paper packaging for all its confectionery products globally in 2021.