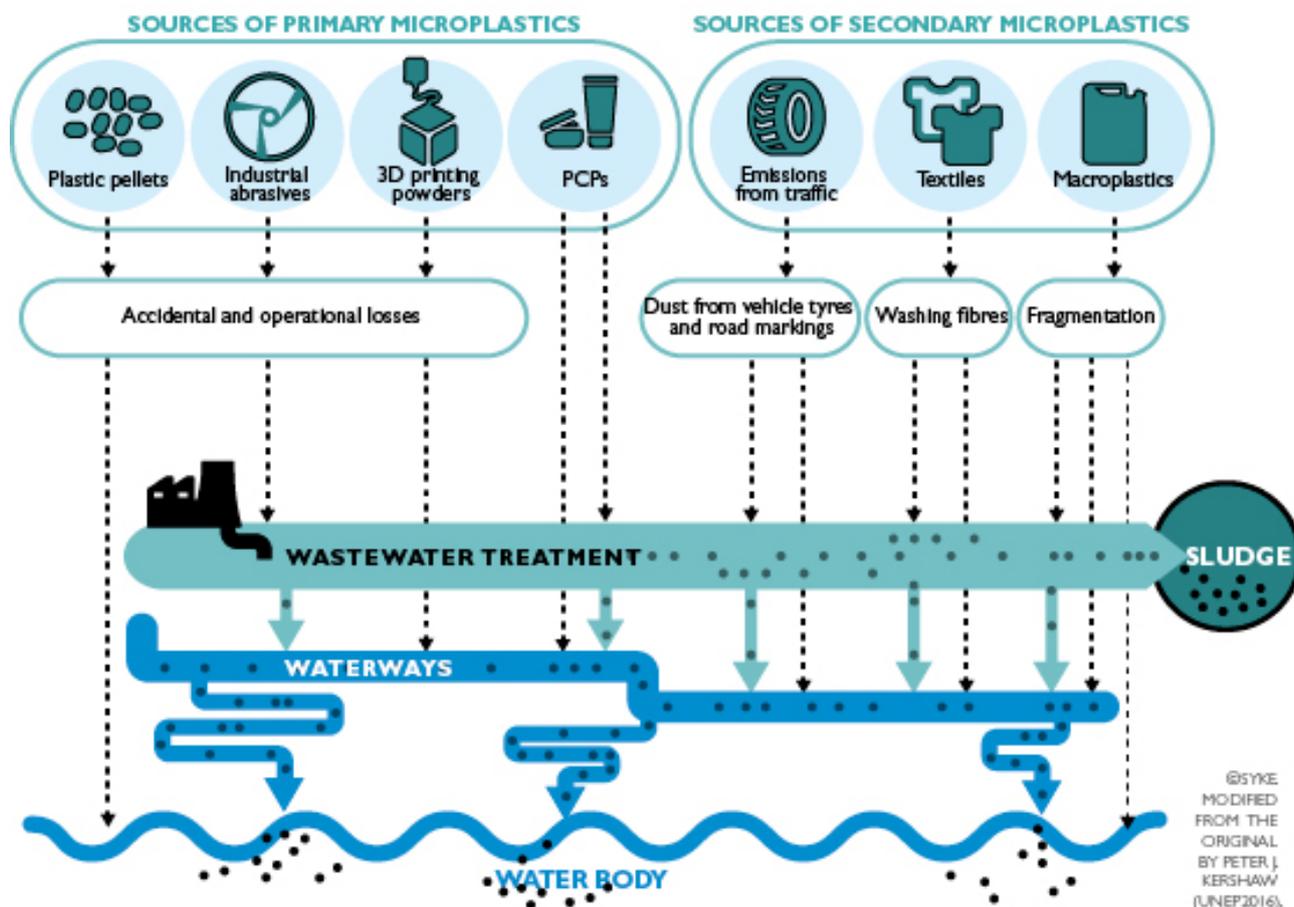


Microplastic Pollution - what can be done about it?



Pollution of the aquatic environment by plastic waste, and the environmental and ecological consequences, is an extremely hot topic at the moment, both from a research focus and public concern. Microplastics in particular are demanding of serious attention, based on evidence that they are ingested by aquatic organisms. While focus has initially been on marine pollution by plastics, promoted by campaigners such as Surfers Against Sewage and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, increasing attention is now also being given to pollution of freshwaters, which makes this an issue of wider concern. There are moves by manufacturers to remove microplastics from personal care products, but the more significant quantities result from abrasion of larger pieces of polymer. This includes microfibres generated during the domestic laundering of manmade (notably acrylic) fabrics. There is also concern that microplastics are capable of concentrating persistent organic pollutants, thereby enhancing their toxicity to aquatic species, with possible implications for human health (although there is a dearth of published research in this area). WSF is holding a workshop on 16th October entitled 'Microplastic Pollution: Everyone's problem - but what is being done about it?' to address knowledge gaps, future plans and policy needs with a group of invited experts on marine and freshwater pollution. For details see <http://www.rsc.org/events/detail/27745/microplastic-pollution-everyone-s-problem-but-what-is-being-done-about-it> or EventBrite to register.

See also <https://eic.rsc.org/feature/the-massive-problem-of-microplastics/2000127.article>