

Common performance issues that may limit recycling

By monitoring flats recycling and food waste collection schemes it is possible to identify the factors that are limiting its performance. Once these factors are known methods of improving performance can be planned, which may involve altering how the scheme is delivered, the communications or both.

Below are some common issues with recycling and food waste collection schemes for flats with suggestions for how they might be addressed.

High contamination levels

- Ensure that the containers are clearly and correctly signed
 - Review container design e.g. whether lids of recycling banks are unlocked or have a large aperture allowing refuse and bulky waste to be more easily put inside
 - Remove or relocate containers to areas where they are less likely to become contaminated e.g. next to refuse bins or away from public highways. Talk to the caretakers for ideas.
 - Try to increase ownership of containers by residents e.g. by putting addresses, floor numbers or block names on containers
 - Check there is sufficient refuse capacity and residents are not using recycling bins to cope with an overflow of refuse
 - Check method statements and what training the crews have received, if necessary train crews to reject containers that are heavily contaminated
 - Look for specific issues at sites that may cause problems e.g. abuse of the containers by traders
 - Implement a targeted communication campaign for specific blocks or at particular areas i.e. chute areas
- Check residents perceptions of what can be recycled e.g. do they believe that all plastics can be recycled because a collection scheme accepts bottles? Review communication materials and check they are clear
 - Try and identify what the most common contaminants are and focus communication materials on the fact that these should not be placed in the recycling containers

Low participation or capture rates

- Ensure the scheme is well run with the container not being left overflowing and contaminated bins being swiftly removed. Schemes that are not well run can dissuade even the most committed recycler from participating
- Ensure there are method statements in place for crews/caretakers etc so they are clear on whose responsibility it is to clear litter, flytipping, report overflowing containers etc. This will ensure that any problems are dealt with quickly
- Ensure there are regular checks on how quickly containers are filling so emptying frequencies can be modified or extra capacity provided

- Inspect containers to check they look clean and appealing to use and replace worn signage where necessary
 - Make it clear to residents who they should contact if they see overflow/problems
 - Ensure the recycling bin location is signposted using internal posters and external signage.
 - Identify ways to make recycling easier e.g. provide a reusable bag for residents to store recycling in their home and transport it to a bring site, increase the frequency of door to door collections or relocate containers to more convenient locations
 - Address local issues that may be affecting participation or capture and target communications accordingly e.g. high turnover of residents, high concentrations of residents that do not speak English as a first language
 - Evaluate whether target capture and participation rates are realistic e.g. flats with one bedroom will naturally generate less recycling than flats with three bedrooms or there may be a number of uninhabited flats within a building affecting participation rates
 - Undertake a targeted communication campaign to increase participation or capture of certain materials. Use outreach activities and links to local groups and events
- recycling site on how to use the service with contact details.
- Identify and manage the risks associated with incorrect use of the scheme and update stakeholders as needed e.g. the management organisation may need to update their risk assessments
 - Monitor the waste and recycling collection operatives to ensure that the contractor is collecting on schedule, removing all side waste if necessary and reporting issues

General misuse of a scheme (*i.e. recycling sacks used for waste, containers put out on wrong day*)

- Design a series of communications to address the issue, e.g. a letter thanking residents for recycling but outlining that there are some issues, follow up door to door canvassing
- Work closely with the caretaker, and managing agents to monitor and resolve issues
- Ensure signage on the recycling bins is clear. Consider using a large sign at each

While steps have been taken to ensure its accuracy, WRAP cannot accept responsibility or help liable to any person for any loss or damage arising out of or in connection with this information being inaccurate, incomplete or misleading. For more detail, please refer to our Terms & Conditions on our website: www.wrap.org.uk.

**Waste & Resources
Action Programme**

The Old Academy
21 Horse Fair
Banbury, Oxon
OX16 0AH

Tel: 01295 819 900
Fax: 01295 819 911
E-mail: info@wrap.org.uk

Helpline freephone
0808 100 2040

www.wrap.org.uk/la

Printed on xx% recycled
content paper

