

Understanding what information to collect during a flats inventory

Deciding what information to capture is one of the most important aspects of a flats inventory. There is no standard data capture form because flats inventories are undertaken to meet different aims and objectives and requirements vary between authorities (e.g. processes for risk assessments and recycling collection methods).

About information capture

This section outlines some general information that could be gathered when a flats inventory is undertaken as well as some information that can be considered when assessing the feasibility of different types of collection schemes for a particular block. The information is usually gathered through a mixture of desk based research, consultation with stakeholders and site visits (surveys).

These lists of information are not intended to be exhaustive and need to be amended to best suit the need of different local authorities.

General information

Building features

The features of a building will affect how recycling and food waste collection schemes are provided and communicated. For example if a block has very narrow corridors, door to door collections may not be suitable as recycling containers set out for collection at the doorstep could restrict access for push chairs and wheel chair users.

The managing organisation is responsible for the management of risk within a block of flats. Therefore they should be consulted on particular building features they feel should be assessed during an inventory. The managing organisation could be invited to visit the site along with the local authority to discuss particular opportunities and challenges associated with

each site. They will need to visit the site themselves and assess the risks of the proposed recycling or food waste collection scheme so they can update their risk assessments.

Information gathered on building features could include:

- Address of the block
- Location of the block (e.g. on a main road)
- Type of block (e.g. converted household, flats above a shop)
- Number of households
- Number of lifts and stairwells
- Type of corridors (e.g. whether they are balcony style or enclosed and their width)
- Concierge desks or notice boards which could be used for communications

Current and potential refuse and recycling schemes

To understand how waste is currently managed on site, information should be gathered on the refuse and recycling facilities. Opportunities to improve recycling and waste facilities should also be assessed. This might include:

- Type, number and location of refuse and recycling containers
- Potential location for new containers
- How waste and recycling is / could be transported to the containers by residents or collection crews
- Vehicle servicing points
- Issues with the current refuse and recycling schemes and those proposed e.g. lack of dropped kerbs or hard standing for recycling banks
- How bulky waste is / could be managed
- Feasibility of different options for recycling e.g. door to door collections, collection points on each storey, chute schemes or bring sites (for detailed information about information to collect for each of these please see below)

Management structures of flats

Information can be gathered from the caretaker on site and via consultation with other stakeholders and could include:

- Contact details of the managing organisation
- Contact details of the caretaker
- The caretakers duties related to waste management and recycling and their availability on site
- Whether there are regular management meetings

Communication channels

Existing communications channels could be used to communicate information about the recycling and food waste collection scheme. Information gathered may include:

- Notice boards or communal areas where posters can be put up
- Newsletters sent to residents
- Regular events
- Communal space to hold events

Other issues

Social issues and other local influences can affect how well a recycling or food waste collection scheme will perform and the risks associated with introducing the scheme. Information can be gathered from caretakers or from other stakeholders on:

- Planned refurbishment work
- Number of people per household
- If there are clusters of resident types such as students or non-English speakers
- Incidents of arson and antisocial behaviour

Specific considerations for different schemes

Outlined below are some basic criteria that could be taken into account when assessing the feasibility of different collection schemes in a particular block. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The information can be gathered through a mixture of desk based research, consultation with stakeholders and site visits.

Door to door recycling schemes

- Width of corridors and access for wheelchairs and pushchairs
- Whether corridors are enclosed or open balconies. This can affect risk of fire and of materials being thrown from balconies
- Risk of liquid spillages which could pose slip hazards
- Internal steps, raised door frames, doors and any other uneven surfaces which collection operatives would have to negotiate whilst undertaking collections
- Size and location of lifts, for example whether space is adequate for a collection trolley
- Suitability of the stairs for moving materials if there are no lifts or if the lift is out of service
- Suitability of the proposed collection container for safe handling and the fire risk associated with it

- The location and type of fire equipment such as fire doors and smoke alarms
- How the system may affect the fire plan for the building (e.g. blocking fire evacuation routes)
- Caretakers general working hours and availability (this can inform the length of time containers might be left out in corridors before collection and the contingency plan for removing them if the usual collection operatives are unable to work)

targeted for arson or fly-tipping.

Consider previous incidents of antisocial behaviour on the site

- Space available for containers and whether this is sufficient for the needs of the block (i.e. the recycling capacity per household)
- Additional effort may be required to communicate the scheme to residents and raise the profile of recycling in the area
- Responsibility for dealing with overflows, flytipping and contamination

Bring schemes

- Proximity of recycling containers to building or windows (for fire risk, noise and visual nuisance to residents and ease of use)
- Risks associated with the location of containers e.g. in an area with moving vehicles, blocking fire access routes, or where the containers could be used to assist crime
- Ease with which containers can be used by residents. Locating them close to refuse bins may reduce contamination and installing them in areas of high footfall can make them more convenient for residents to use. Assess the distance residents would have to carry materials
- Ease at which containers can be moved on collection (e.g. assessing for gravel, grass, uneven surfaces or kerbs that the containers may have to be moved across)
- Distance which the containers need to be moved for emptying (check with your service contractor / operator what the maximum drag distance is)
- Whether residents are likely to be at risk or feel at risk of crime e.g. if the site is well lit or if the containers would be in a secluded area
- Whether the containers are likely to be abused by traders, vandalised or

Chute schemes

- The number and location of chutes and whether they are in use or not
- Size of chute chamber (for mechanical additions and recycling container)
- The amount of space available at the base of the chute (for a recycling container or mechanical addition to the chute)
- Risk of injury to residents, caretakers, crews and others from moving parts of the chute and how this might be avoided e.g. by installing locks on the doors
- Risks of falling material when using/ servicing recycling and refuse containers underneath chutes
- The potential for the mechanical chute system to be vandalised (considering previous incidents of anti-social behaviour)
- Lighting in chute chamber for visibility during collections / maintenance work

Collections on each floor

- The location and type of fire equipment such as fire doors and smoke alarms

- How the system may affect the fire plan for the building (e.g. blocking fire evacuation routes)
- The suitability of the proposed collection container for safe handling and the fire risk associated with it
- How secure the containers will be when installed e.g. whether they could be moved or lifted
- How easy the location of the containers will be for residents to access and whether sufficient capacity for recycling can be provided within the available space
- Risk of spillages of liquids which could pose slip hazards or attract vermin
- Size and location of lifts, for example whether space is adequate for the collection trolley
- Suitability of the stairs for moving materials if there are no lifts or if the lift is out of service
- Procedures for ensuring that containers are emptied as needed e.g. whether there is a caretaker on site who could report overflows
- Internal steps, raised door frames, doors and any other uneven surfaces which operatives will have to negotiate whilst undertaking collections
- Whether corridors are enclosed or open balconies. This can affect risk of fire and of materials being thrown from balconies

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