

Opportunities and challenges with different types of flats

Generally flats are categorised into the following three building types and each type presents unique opportunities and challenges to planning a recycling service:

1. Purpose built blocks

Many purpose built blocks were constructed at a time when recycling was not a priority so the buildings themselves do not always meet present day recycling needs. For example, refuse storage rooms sometimes allow space for just one bin and there may be only one refuse chute in the building. This means that recycling and food waste collection schemes usually have to be included as an 'extra' rather than as an integral part of the block. Even today, some new build blocks do not provide areas for recycling and food waste storage as developers prefer to use the space more profitably e.g. for housing and commercial tenants.

Some 1960's and 1970's purpose built blocks, often include communal spaces which can be used to highlight recycling messages. For example, events can be run in the community hall or local school. Also there may be caretakers to help with recycling initiatives.

2. Flats in converted properties

As with purpose built blocks, the design of converted properties does not always meet present day recycling needs. The original building will usually not have been designed with the storage of domestic refuse and recycling from multiple properties in mind.

Larger houses that have been converted into multiple flats are probably the most common type of converted property in the UK. These are sometimes referred to

as a "House in Multiple Occupation" or "HMO". [See guidance for a definition of HMO]

Recycling and food waste containers in flats in converted houses (HMO's) may be located or presented for collection close to the street (particularly if there is no driveway or if the driveway is used for parking space). This location:

- Is usually convenient both for residents to present their recycling and for authorities to collect it.
- Can lead to contamination from passers-by.
- May cause problems if overflows from containers block access / fire escape routes.

Converted houses are usually smaller premises than purpose built blocks and may have no regular caretaker or cleaner who can support recycling and food waste collections. However, residents who play an active role in maintaining communal areas may be willing to support recycling initiatives.

In some converted properties there may be a single letter box for multiple households and all leaflets can get swept up by the first person home if they are not addressed to individual households within the building.

3. Flats in commercial buildings

Some flats comprise part of a commercial building such as above a shop, which usually means they are located on a busy street with little external space for recycling and refuse storage. Collections can be

difficult as flats in commercial buildings may be on busy roads and parking spaces can be lacking.

Containers set out on streets in busy shopping areas can be a problem. Some local authorities have 'clear all' policies which mean that any uncontained refuse or recyclables could be cleared away by a refuse crew or street cleaner to avoid littering or further spillage. If it is not clear to the collection crew that the material is recyclables it could be cleared along with any refuse. Also, residents may be unclear about their refuse and recycling collection system and put out recyclables on the trade waste collection day. Recycling and food waste containers left on the streets can easily become contaminated by passers by who use them as litter bins, particularly if there is a take away nearby.

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