

# Household food waste collections guide



This publication updates the 2009 guide and pulls together the findings from more recent studies and pilots conducted by WRAP and others. Through the various sections, this guide is designed to support local authorities by detailing good practice and evidence which can help inform the design and delivery of high capture, cost-effective food waste collections

## Section 10: Implementation of a successful food recycling scheme

This section explains why the successful implementation of a new household food waste collection service is of paramount importance to its ongoing effectiveness in terms of collection efficiencies and householder participation. It also details the key factors that need to be taken into account to ensure the implementation of a service is successful.

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## 10.0 Introduction

WRAP has provided many local authorities with technical support to review collection options and to introduce or improve household food waste collections. A consistent theme when looking at the difference between high and low performing schemes appears to be around how well the service was introduced at the outset. Many activities need to be considered when introducing or relaunching a food waste collection service. Oversight of just a few of these can often be enough to create or exacerbate problems, which strain available resources and risk delays or collection rounds not being completed by the end of the working day.

Compared with services for dry recyclables, which collect inert and less odorous material streams, residents appear less tolerant of poor service delivery for food waste collections. They are unlikely to give the local authorities many second chances to put things right before stopping participating in the service.

Standard implementation plan templates are provided in Appendix F (food waste collections from flats) and Appendix G (kerbside food waste collections). These have been developed drawing on the experience of large scale roll-outs with a wide range of local authorities. Supporting notes are provided for each of the activities listed. It may be that not all activities are applicable to all local authorities. Using the templates or incorporating the activities into your own planning tools will help ensure that your new or relaunched service has the best chance of success.

### 10.1 General principles from experiences of implementation

The optimum times of the year to implement or relaunch a food waste collection scheme are:

- spring (a few weeks either side of Easter avoiding the Easter break itself); and
- autumn (early October through to November).

This is mainly because, at other times, residents have more chance of being away during a holiday period, there may be changes to collection schedules due to public holidays (Christmas, Easter, Bank Holidays, etc.), or there is a chance that services will be disrupted due to bad weather. Particularly in the run up to Christmas and over the summer holiday period, residents tend to be more focused on personal issues, or may be receiving a range of other communications through their letter boxes, and are generally less receptive to changes in their waste management service.

The following issues/ activities should be considered when planning the implementation of a household food waste collection service.

- Consider a phased roll-out to ensure that any hiccups can be addressed promptly. Resources might not allow for a larger scale 'big bang' implementation.

- Don't under-estimate procurement and delivery timescales for important items such as vehicles, containers and liners. It is often better to delay the launch if key resources are not available rather than starting with reserve or substitute resources.
- Ensure there is a contingency plan with tested scenarios. Given the wide range of activities and permutations in delivery, it is likely that at least a few actions will not go to plan. Scoping out contingency actions under a number of test scenarios can help to assess the flexibility of resources and where more time and investment, financial or staff time, might be needed.
- Check the treatment facility requirements and access times – contingency plans tend to focus on internal resources but treatment facilities have their own operating schedules. Access to alternative outlets or storage facilities may be required, particularly in the early phases when more food waste might be collected or round finishing times might be later in the day, both of which could cause problems at the treatment facility.
- Ensure round sizes are pitched appropriately initially and refine them later. Setting large round sizes from the start to achieve efficiencies may seem sensible, but until the scheme has started, it is not possible to know the extent of participation. If round sizes feel too large they probably are. It may be easier to include additional loaders for the initial collections until the participation levels start to settle down. Conversely, making routes too short may mean it becomes a struggle to extend them once the crews have got used to these rounds.
- Talk to container manufacturers about their views on distribution. There are several approaches to distributing containers which have different cost and timescales.
- Make sure residents don't receive containers more than a week before their first collection date. Early delivery of containers usually means residents start to fill them immediately, despite communications messages clearly stating the first collection date. This can mean that the crews face an exceptionally large tonnage on the first collection day, possibly requiring additional trips that extend the initial collection until very late in the day. An even worse outcome would be that collection rounds are not completed as scheduled resulting in unhappy householders who may be reluctant to continue to participate in the new service.
- When delivering the householder 'starter pack' (i.e. caddies, liners and instruction leaflet), it is advisable to deliver the 'starter pack' to the front door of a property as opposed to the leaving it at the curtilage. This will reduce the likelihood of it going astray.
- Build on the successful results. It's important to communicate early successes through local media to praise residents for their co-operation and to highlight the positive outcomes so as to build momentum for successive phases.
- Ensure that the communications plan is included or synchronised with the implementation plan. Having separate plans for implementation and engagement may be useful for different teams, but there should be clear synergies between the two sets of activities. Having a great communications plan which raises expectations is useless if it doesn't link to the service plan and service delivery activities.
- Identify stakeholders early on and keep them involved throughout. A range of stakeholders can help to flag risks and be ambassadors for the scheme. It's important to keep them updated regularly through various means (email, phone

calls, scheduled meetings, etc.), so they can help support and communicate the new service in the community.

- Allow enough time for implementation. It's important to get it right first time. Allow enough contingency time for the key activities in the plan. If there are major concerns or delays to actions, it's often better to delay the start rather than deliver a poor service.

## 10.2 Storage and delivery of food waste caddy liners

The procurement, storage and delivery of caddy liners helps to illustrate many of the practical, operational issues involved when introducing a new household food waste collection service.

### 10.2.1 Taking delivery

When ordering liner stocks it is important to check with the supplier to find out how the liners will be delivered.

#### **Vehicle**

- What type of vehicle will they be delivered in and will access to your chosen storage facility be available at the required time?
- If the delivery is being made using an articulated vehicle, ensure that there is sufficient space for the vehicle to turn and reverse if required.

#### **Offloading**

- If liners are to be supplied on pallet, will a forklift truck and trained driver be available to unload?
- Some liner providers use an external logistics company to deliver, so confirm arrangements prior to delivery.

#### **Timing of deliveries**

- If the liners are to be stored within your depot, ensure that the delivery slot is not at the start of the shift when collection vehicles are leaving the depot.
- Also consider whether you will need additional people to help with unloading or unpacking.

#### **Quality and quantity**

- Make sure you check the quality of the delivered load and that it meets the requirements specified before the supplier leaves.
- If you have ordered printing on the liners, make sure that the instructions are printed on individual bags and don't run across two bags.
- Check that the liners tear along perforations properly (if appropriate).
- Check that the size and thickness are correct.
- Check there are no soggy or degraded liners; water ingress can start the degradation process of compostable liners which means that the liners may start to break down before they are delivered to residents.

- Check that you've received the correct quantities.
- Ensure the liners are delivered in time so as to allow for any corrections to be made to the order – this is particularly pertinent if scheme roll-out is imminent.

### **Repeat supplies**

- Ensure that liner supply agreements oblige short turnaround times for repeat deliveries in the event of additional stocks being required urgently.

### **10.2.2 Storage**

How many liners you buy and how often you buy them or have them delivered is dictated by what storage you have available. Ideally, storage should have the following attributes.

#### **Accessible**

- You may need to stock up with liners on weekly, monthly or six monthly depending on your chosen supply model.
- Ensure that you can gain easy access to the store when you need to.

#### **Sufficient**

- Do you have enough room to store all of the liners you're purchasing? Or will you need to take delivery in batches? Ensure that you have space available for the quantity purchased and consider requesting your delivery in batches so that you don't have too much product on site at once.
- Remember that paper liners are a larger volume than the starch liners and will thus take up more space than the starch liners.
- If you don't have enough space consider other storage options but do account for any associated costs. Some suppliers will be able to offer you a call-off service;

#### **Suitable**

- Is the storage space under cover and not in a damp or hot environment which could potentially affect the quality of the liners?
- Liners should be stored off the ground (on pallets if possible) and away from any potential leaks.

#### **Secure**

- How many people have access to the storage space?
- Could liners go missing?
- Could they be easily damaged by collection infrastructure?
- Try to control access to the liners so that the quality and quantity of stock can be maintained.

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