



## Product: metroSTOR PBM Bin Stores

### Hounslow's Commitment to Resident Safety

Hounslow have a social housing stock of around 16,000 homes and as part of the development of their fire safety strategy following the Grenfell tragedy and their estate improvement plan, they decided to implement a series of measures on the high-rise blocks which went over and above the minimum standards that were generally being adopted within the sector.

This included the decommissioning of refuse chutes, chute rooms and internal refuse stores, as these were identified as a constant fire hazard, both from keeping the chutes and hoppers compliant as well as maintaining landings free from combustible material such as waste and recycling and ASB within the chute rooms themselves.

#### The metroSTOR solution

Of course, a viable alternative to the chute system had to be found, and the big question in most landlord's minds

in such situations is, however will we be able to persuade the residents to take their waste downstairs when they have been accustomed to taking it just a few steps along the landing for all these years?

Following consultation with residents about what was important to them and positive feedback from previous trials the team at Hounslow chose metroSTOR bin housings located externally to form a waste and recycling hub in accessible locations outside each block and six 22-storey blocks making up what is known as the Brentford Towers were chosen as the starting point.

#### Effective Resident Communication is Key

They knew that they would need the support of residents for the programme to be a success, so Andrea Tidy, Caretaking & Concierge Manager and the local Housing Officers embarked on a comprehensive hearts and minds



programme. The residents were obviously very worried about fire safety and could see that the fire load from rubbish being left on landings and in chute rooms was a serious issue.

By far the majority of the residents were also close to their wits end with the level of ASB occurring within the chute rooms, including drug usage, rough sleeping, inappropriate disposal of bulk refuse, and the fact that they were being continually service-charged for all the clean-up costs associated with this was adding insult to injury.

And many residents were keen to recycle but with the chute hoppers being so conveniently located close by, very few of them were actually making the effort to separate their recycling and take it to the recycling bins outside, particularly as they also had to frequently contend with navigating fly-tipped rubbish and lifting heavy bin lids.

They explained their plans and any residents registered as vulnerable on their housing register were offered an assisted collection of refuse and recycling from their flats, but interestingly only five residents out of all four blocks took this up, and at the end of March 2021, the external waste and recycling hubs were finally installed and the chutes decommissioned.

### Progress so far

The outcome after only three months has been nothing short of astounding; residents are saying how much more pleasant the environment within the blocks has become without the odour and litter, the caretakers work has actually reduced rather than increased, and recycling volume has increased massively.

Children from the local primary school have designed a series of recycling posters which have been printed and mounted on the bin housings, and there is an overwhelming sense of the community pulling together in a way that they've never done before to bring about real and lasting change to the neighbourhood, as well as reducing impact on the wider environment as well.



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