

Flash Recycling

What *works* for flats above shops

11am
10 June





Flats above shops (‘FLASH’) pilot

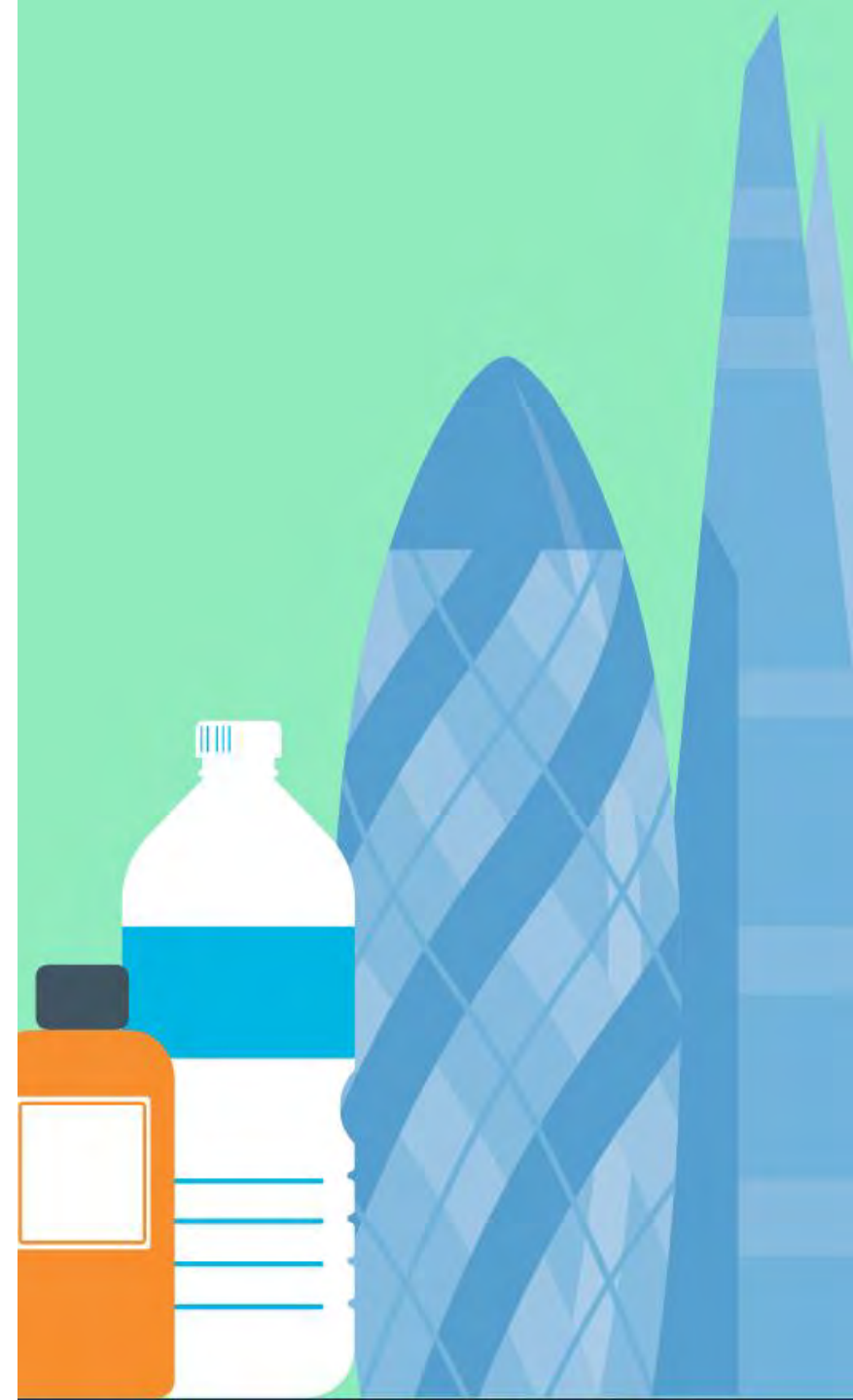
10th June 2025



Who are ReLondon?

ReLondon are a partnership of the Mayor of London and London Boroughs to make our city a leader in the circular economy.

- **Helping local authorities** rethink plans and policies to support recycling improvements and a circular economy through advice and projects.
- **Supporting London's small and medium sized businesses** to adopt or scale circular business models through advice, grants and connections.
- **Empowering & educating Londoners** to revolutionise their relationship with stuff through campaigns.



Purpose of the pilot

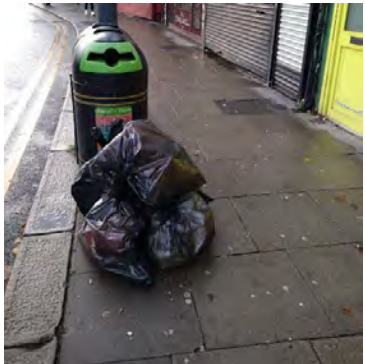
- 2-year project to explore ways to introduce food waste and increase recycling - under the context of the CPR
- Small % housing stock - 3.5% average in London - but arguably the most challenging
- FLASH are flats which are situated above a cafe, a retail unit, a restaurant etc. Sometimes, flats may also be *below* shops, e.g., basement level dwellings.
- FLASH *generally* have:
 - A single door which faces out to the main street which all residents use to enter and exit the property.
 - This main door has a letterbox which post for all the residents is posted through.
 - In many cases, each flat is on a different floor level. There are no lifts.



ReLondon x HF/IsI/WF FLASH project

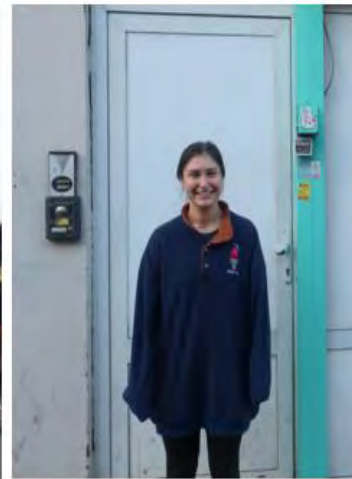
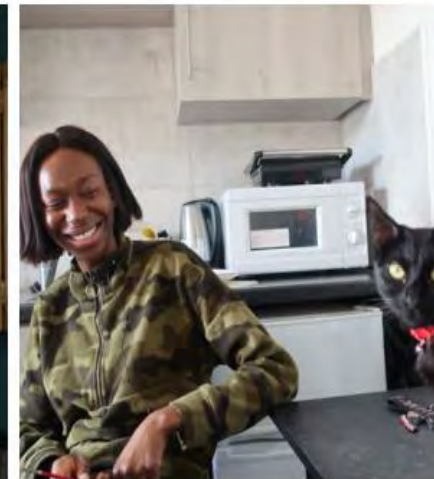
Pilot boroughs

- On street presentation in sacks
- Time banded collections
- All had a dry mixed recycling service
- No food prior to pilot
- ~500hh/1200hh provided food service



Ethnographic research

- Recycling is inherently **more difficult and confusing** because of the nature of the collections
 - timed collections
 - What the businesses below are doing
- Shared post boxes means that **post** - i.e. communications - **goes unnoticed**
- Residents **aren't reading the information on the bags** provided
- Behaviour is **influenced by** what **others** around them are doing because the waste on the street is visible

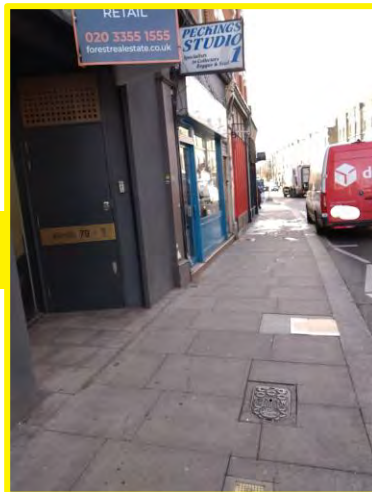


The pilot streets



Dry recycling streets

Food streets



Physical / practical challenges



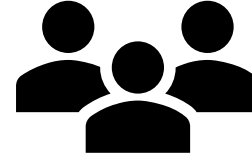
The pilot areas - stakeholders



Transport for London

Highways

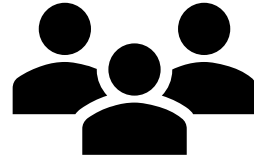
Parking dispensations



Heritage / Conservation

Police / Enforcement

Accessible design



'Waste' teams

'Street' teams

**Waste Disposal
Authority**



Businesses / BIDS

**Libraries / other
collection locations**

Key principles



Find new ways of getting things to people

- Paper mailers
- Delivery services
- Business posters
- Tokens + stickers
- Flat pack sacks



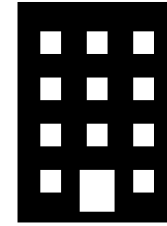
Simplify instructions and information

- 'Plain English' comms
- Stick men figures



Use the pavement to its full potential

- Floor vinyl's
- Grit bins for DMR
- New bins for food
- Bespoke bins for food
- New signage



Take it into people's homes

- Direct deliveries
- Gifts with reminders on them



Bring it together to create a clear moment of change

- Jet wash pavement for vinyl's
- Business posters
- Weekend deliveries

Internal storage and packing it all up



Food caddy with liners +
tea bags + liners + DMR
flat pack sacks



DMR - flat pack recycling
sacks in a branded outer
envelope

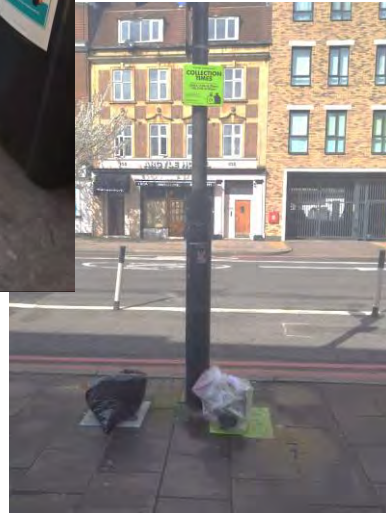
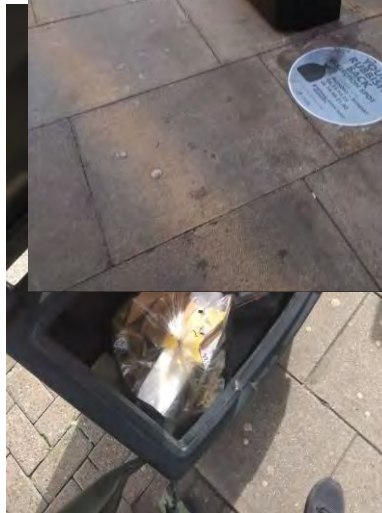
One street - pop up
caddy



External infrastructure food and DMR

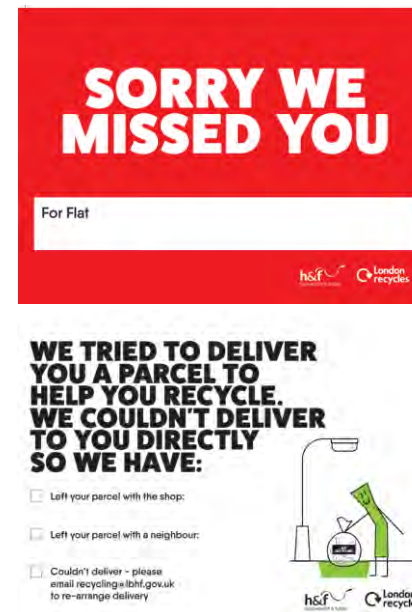
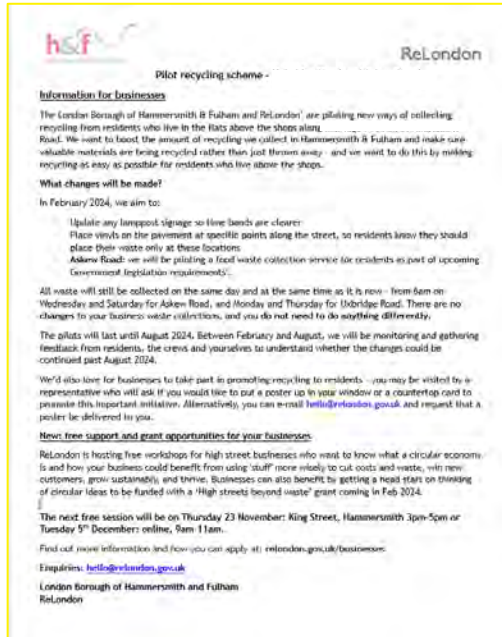


Smaller food bins + floor vinyls + lamppost signage



**Grit bins for DMR + vinyl + lamppost signage
or
Floor vinyls only + lamppost signage**

Other communications



Every business spoken to or/and delivered a letter (includes presenting at business forums / meeting local leaders)

ReLondon

Deliveries undertaken by local e-bike companies. Staged delivery instructions to maximise delivery success.

Strut countertop cards or posters in 'everyday' businesses (cafes/dry cleaners etc)

Results

Monitoring approach

Monitoring in and out of time bands

- Counting the number of rubbish and recycling sacks during the time banding
- Whether in the correct presentation location or not
- If obviously contaminated
- Ad hoc spot checks in and out of time banding

Food

- Weighing where possible
- Number of bins containing food (residential)
- Number and type of contaminants

Quality sampling

- Quality sampling at pre/mid/post stage (c/o NWLA and WRWA)

Resident survey

- Mid point doorstepping survey
- End of project in depth resident surveys

Business survey

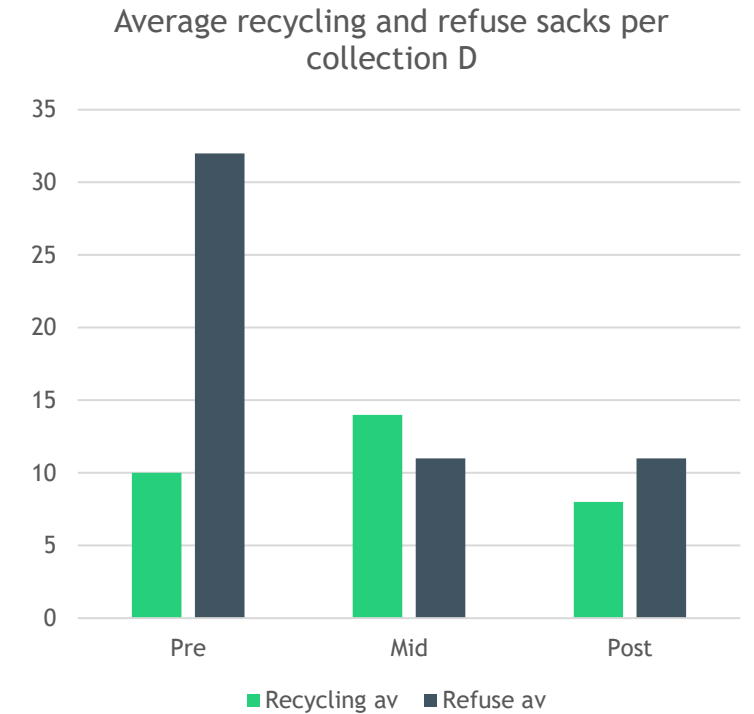
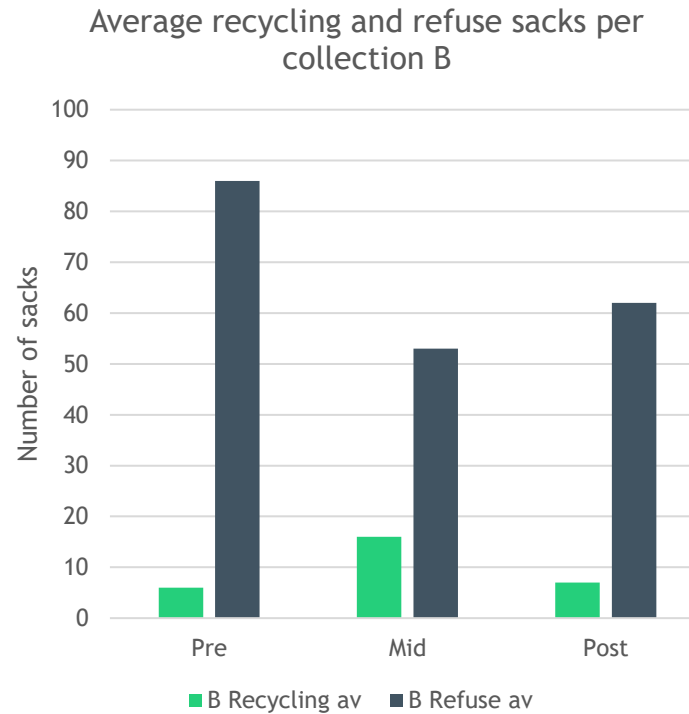
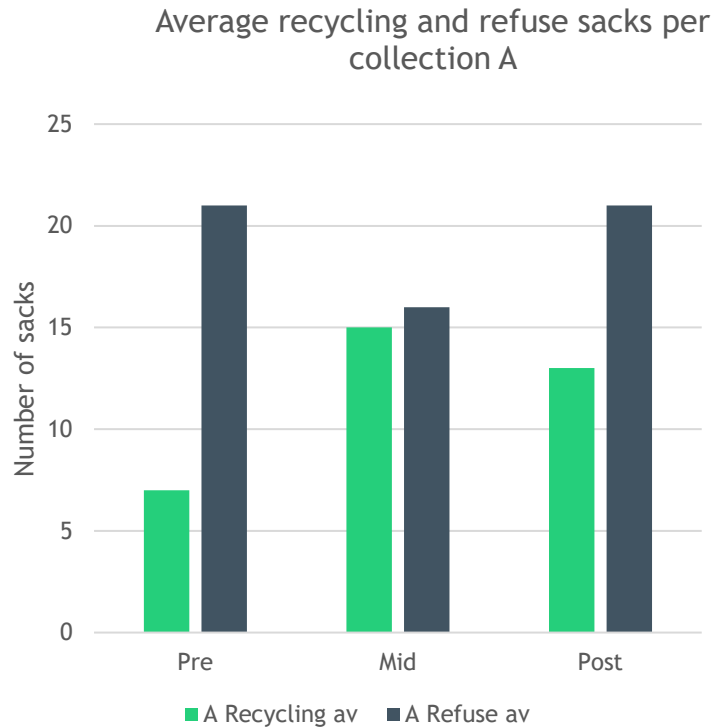
- End of project business survey

Crews

- Providing feedback throughout and at end of project



Example results - refuse & recycling presentation (during time bands)



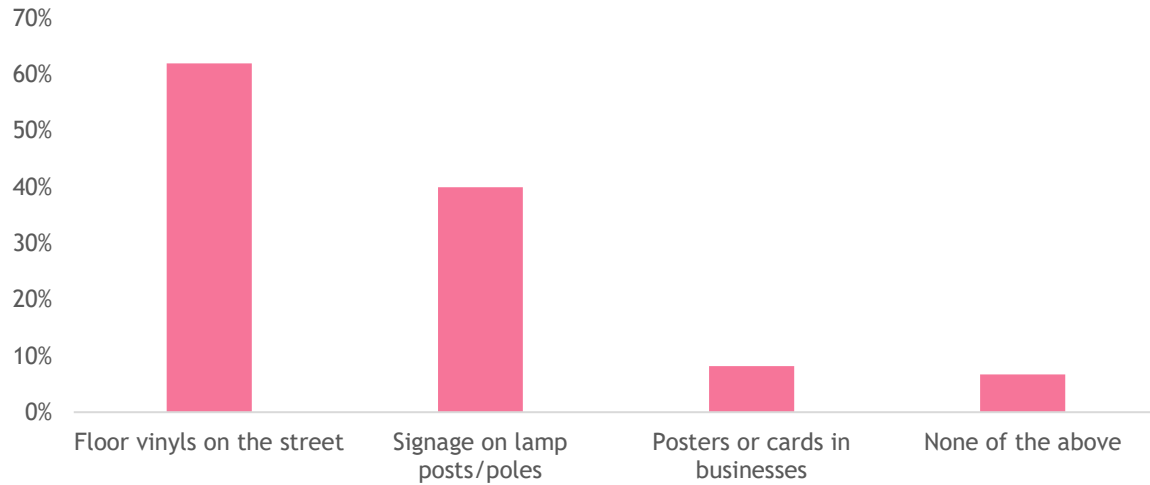
Example results - presentation locations (during time bands)

	% sacks in correct location					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Mid - rubbish sacks	51%	28%	67%	68%	57%	74%
Post - rubbish sacks	60%	48%	84%	43%	45%	86%
Mid - recycling sacks	78%	36%	78%	93%	85%	84%
Post - recycling sacks	96%	58%	69%	67%	65%	83%

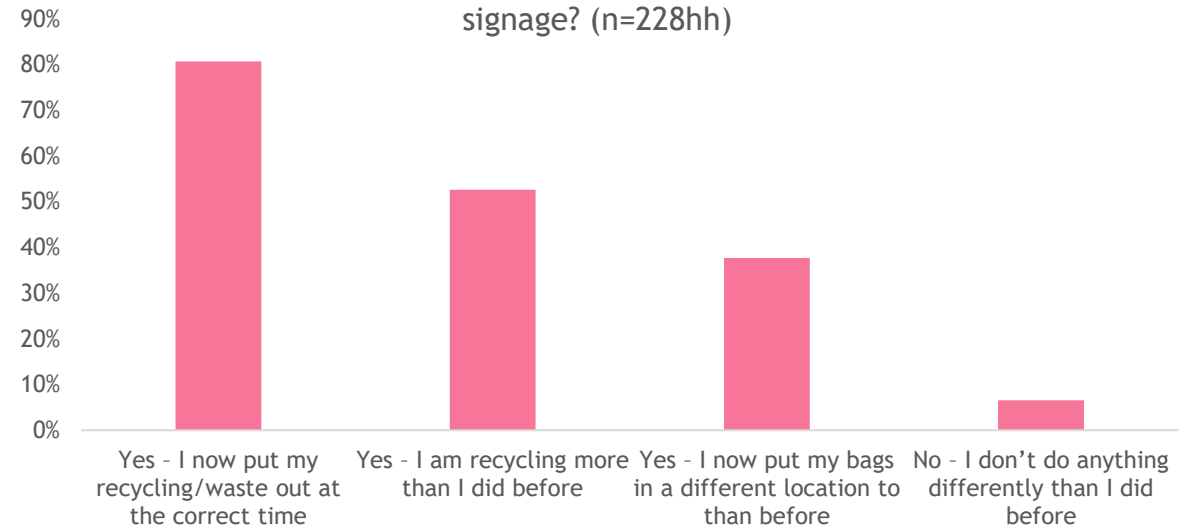


What residents* noticed and did differently

Have you received or seen any of the following about the new recycling trial? (n=268hh)



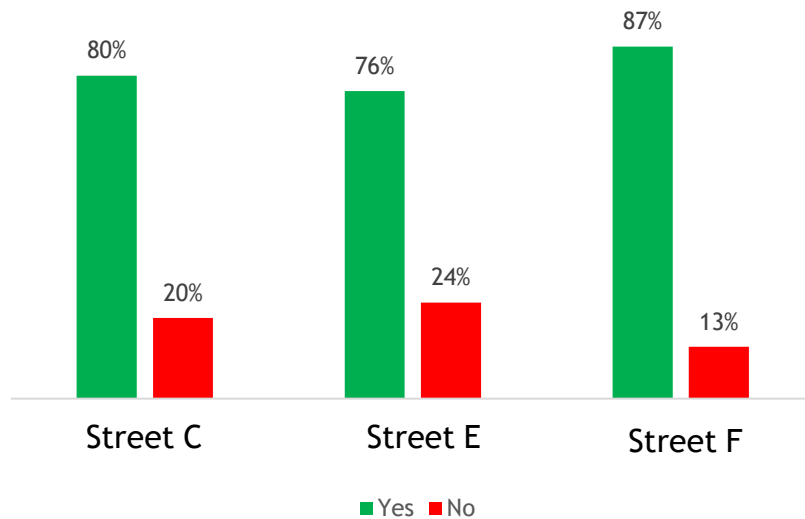
Have you changed when and how you present your recycling based on the information you received and new outside signage? (n=228hh)



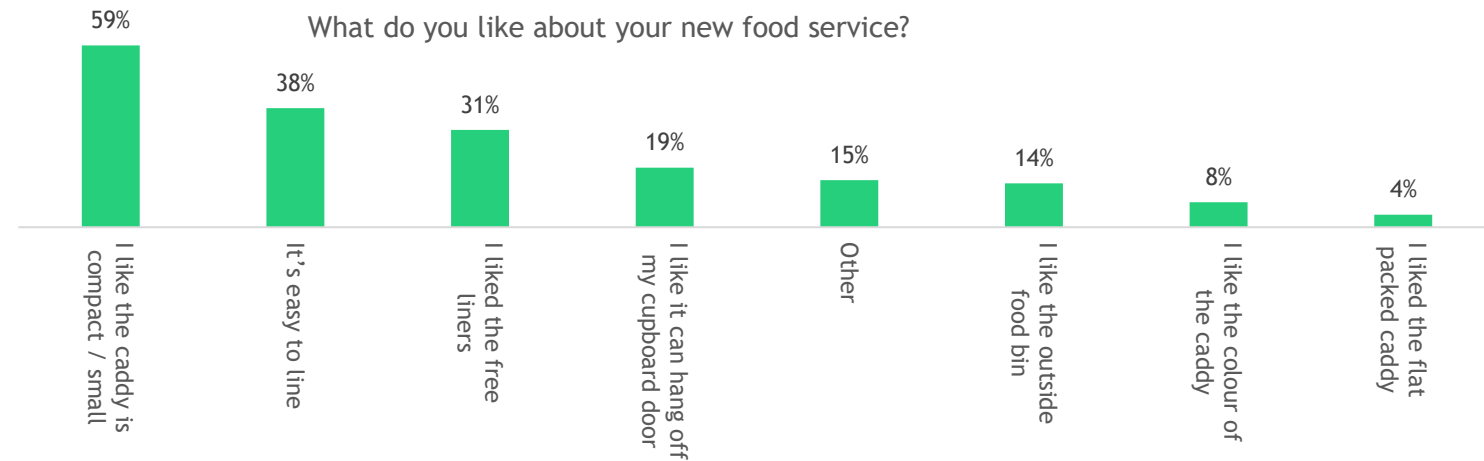
* number of residents surveyed

Food service

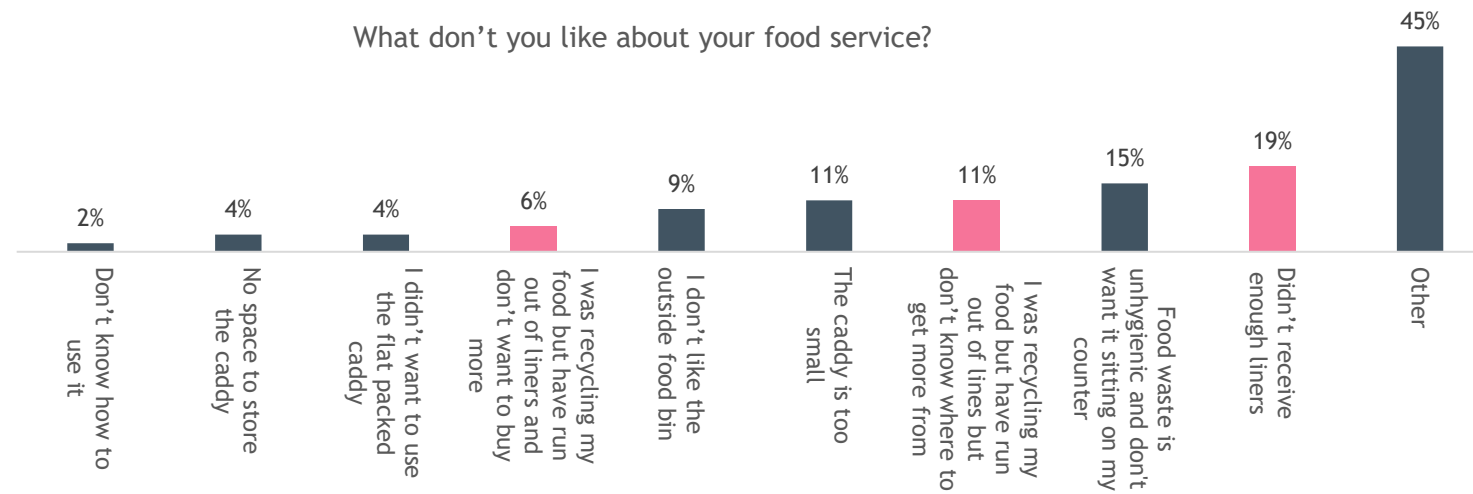
Results by Street (n=100)



What do you like about your new food service?

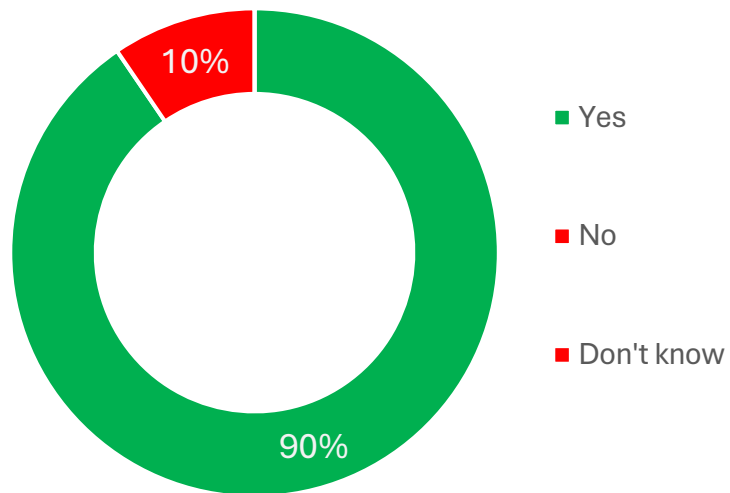


What don't you like about your food service?

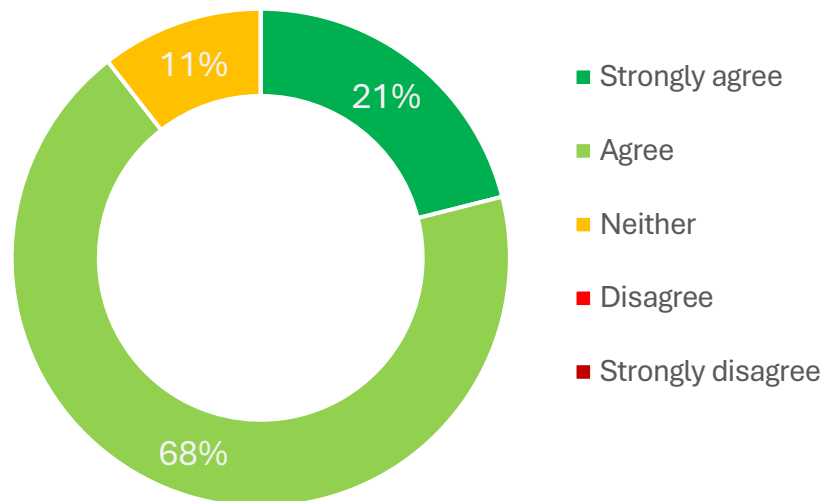


Pop up caddy

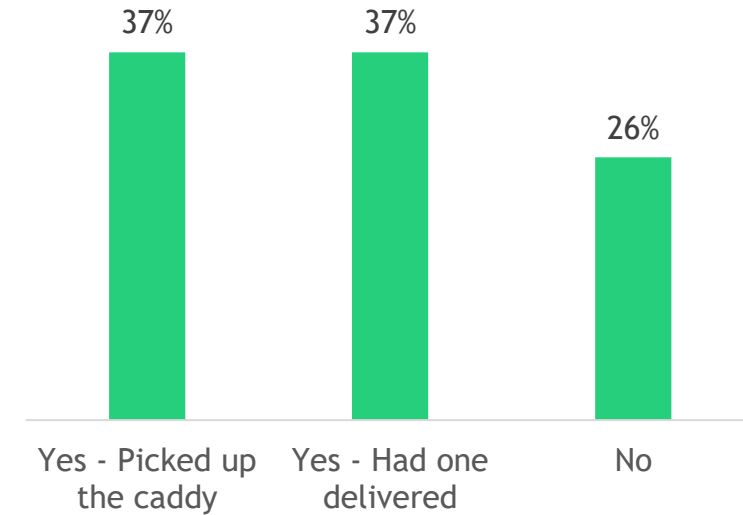
Have you received the pop up (flat pack) food caddy? (n=21)



To what extent to you agree or disagree the pop up food caddy is a good idea? (n=19)



Did you order a full, plastic caddy? n=19



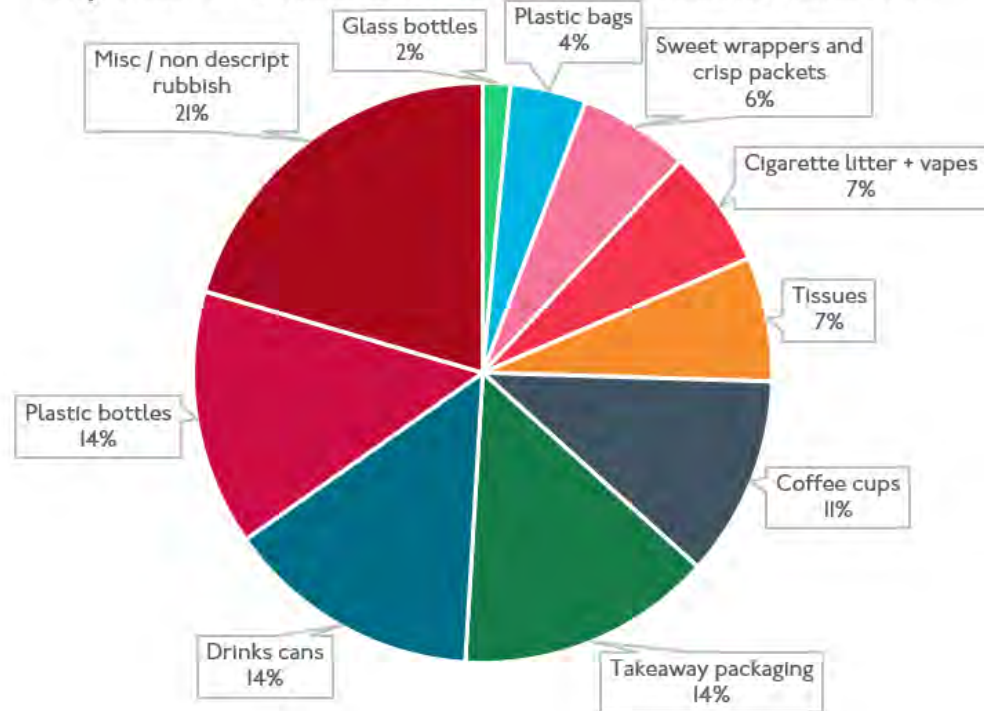
Common findings - food capture & usage

- **Expected diversion** @ 30%: 134kg/wk
- **Actual diversion**: 104kg/wk - 22% capture rate
- **Kg/hh/wk**: 0.65kg
- **Average bin weight**: 7kgs
- Between **48 - 93%** bins had food in them (street and collection method dependent)



Common findings - contamination

Proportion of visible contaminants in the external food bins



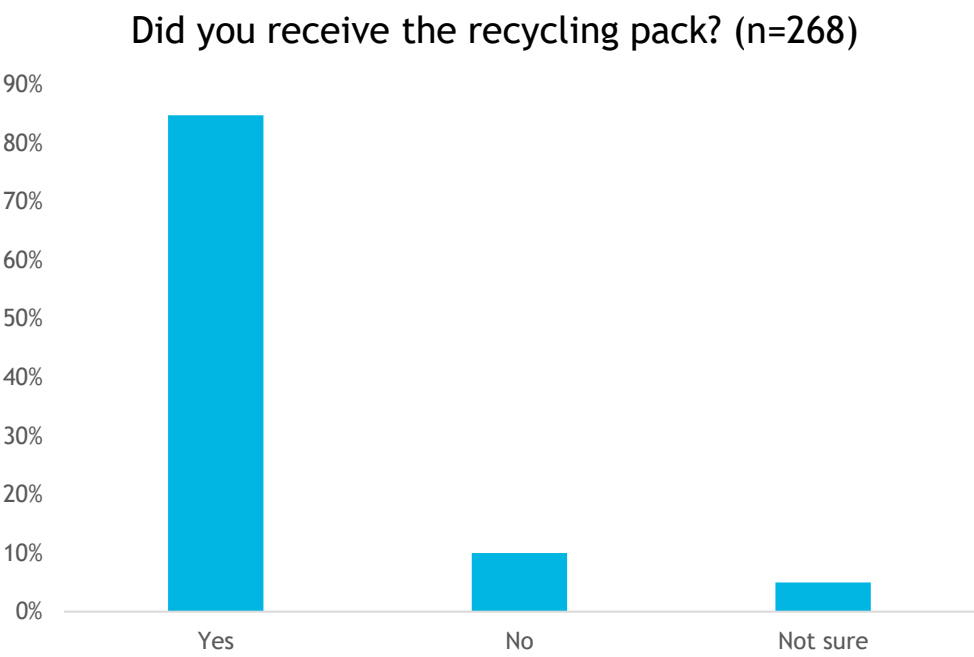
Over 50% bins visibly contaminated on every monitoring occasion

ReLondon



Other metrics

Street reference	% delivered
A	98%
B	100%
C (caddy)	72%
D	84%
E	100%
F (caddy)	78%



Final resident research

What worked well

- Encouraging some to start recycling their food
- Food can be taken down at their convenience
- Door knocking to explain changes
- 'Pack' addressed and delivered to them
- Street is tidier because waste is more 'organised'
- Noticed the floor vinyl's

What didn't work as well

- Engaging less motivated recyclers
- Floor vinyls being removed (by weather) - confusion where to place waste
- Confusion how to access more sacks

*"I think I am kind of enjoying recycling more, love the idea of dropping sacks of recyclable material and food waste just opposite my flat. It's so **much easier** than before."*

*"Good initiative and has made it **easier** for us to do."*

*"It is **easy** and everything is provided. Our flat is on top of the shop, and it is always an effort to recycle when you live in this kind of flat."*

"I never used to do any recycling because the type of flat I live. Now I can do recycling and I want to do it."

"I never used to do any recycling before. I only started doing recycling since they started this trial."

"...the trash was all over the place and it was a bit of a maze, but now its all in one place. So in that way it has made it better."

"The dry recycling bags are way too small - we recycle as much as we can, but the small bags have made us not recycle some things we could if washed and dried because the recycling bag fills up way too quickly."

"Bring back the large recycling bags."

"Go back to the larger bags."

"Please make the bags.....as large as they were before!!"

"I don't like the new black [grit] bins for recycling. Every time I recycle I see loose bottles or trash or random items in there."

"I found the new recycling sacks to be too small. Makes recycling less convenient. More time consuming filling more sacks."

Considerations and challenges

Initial engagement

- Face to face engagement with residents was challenging

Stakeholders

- There are more stakeholders to consider for FLASH

Operations and maintenance

- Communication between street teams and waste teams took time to bed in
- Securing bins - not always allowed
- Placing bins next to litter bins - not always available
- Maintenance of bins e.g., spillages / general hygiene

Collections before or in the time bands

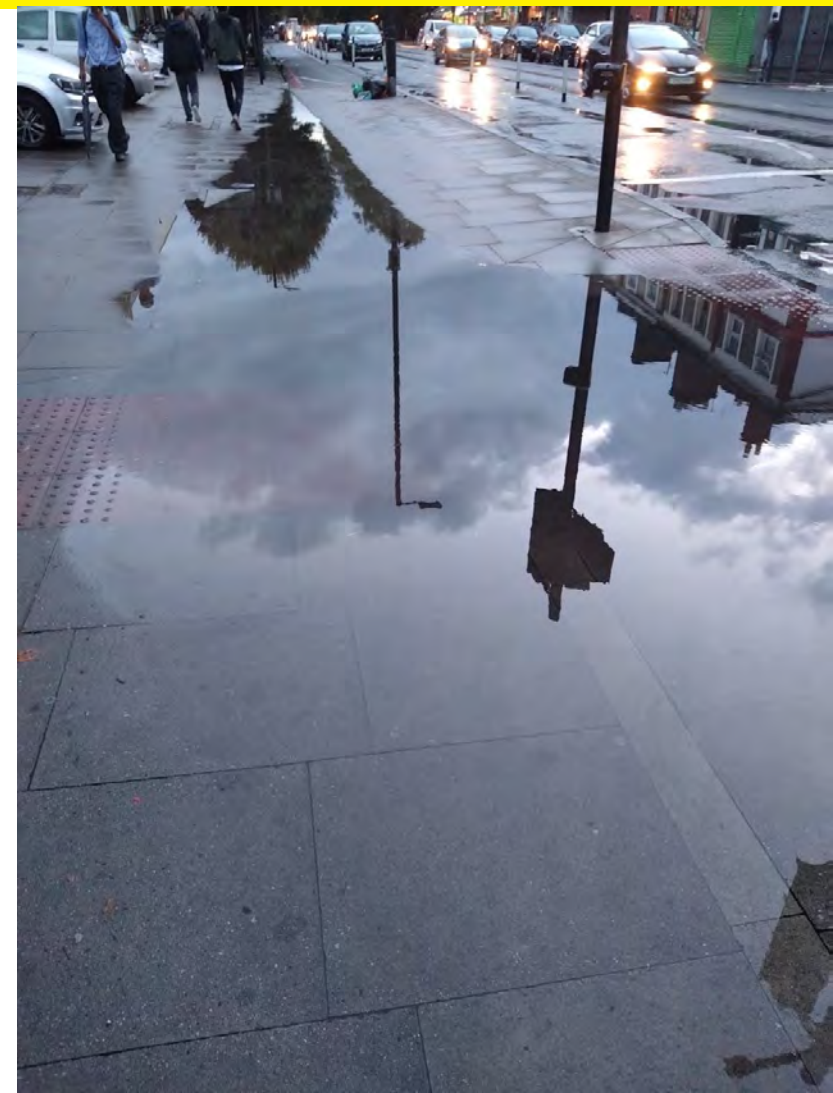
- Clear all policies or waste being collected before the time bands impacting ability to record all data

Vinyl longevity

- 2024 was the 17th wettest record on year since 1836 - challenging to maintain vinyls
- Pavement type affected vinyl/stencil suitability and longevity

Bin misuse

- Some bins stolen (!) or moved to other locations, or impeded preventing use



Summary

- The street is a very complex and challenging environment with physical barriers
- There are many stakeholders that need to be consulted
- Food bins will be contaminated - plan for this
- Residents are positive about changes and are those engaged are willing to use the services

Recommendations

- Engage stakeholders early (particularly Highways and Enforcement)
- Tailor pilots and follow the key behavioural principles outlined today
- Monitor to ensure processes are implemented (e.g., contaminated food bins)
- Provide regular communications
- Design visible infrastructure



Planning for FLASH rollouts

FLASH Resources - ReLondon website

relondon.gov.uk/resources/toolkit-flats-above-shops-recycling

- FLASH policy/operations tick-sheet
- On street tick-sheet
- Food ready reckoner
- Communications templates
- (report - *likely* end of June)



Campaigns (behaviour change) Contamination (of recycling) Flats Food Projects
Recycling Local authority Campaign assets Toolkit

Toolkit – Rethinking recycling for flats above shops

23 April 2025

This toolkit provides communications, project planning and implementation materials for local authorities exploring ways to boost recycling for residents living in flats above shops.

The toolkit was developed as part of a two-year pilot delivered by ReLondon in response to the need for many London boroughs to boost recycling from flats above shops and the impending requirement under Simpler Recycling regulations to collect food waste and dry mixed

Search our topics

Building materials

Procurement

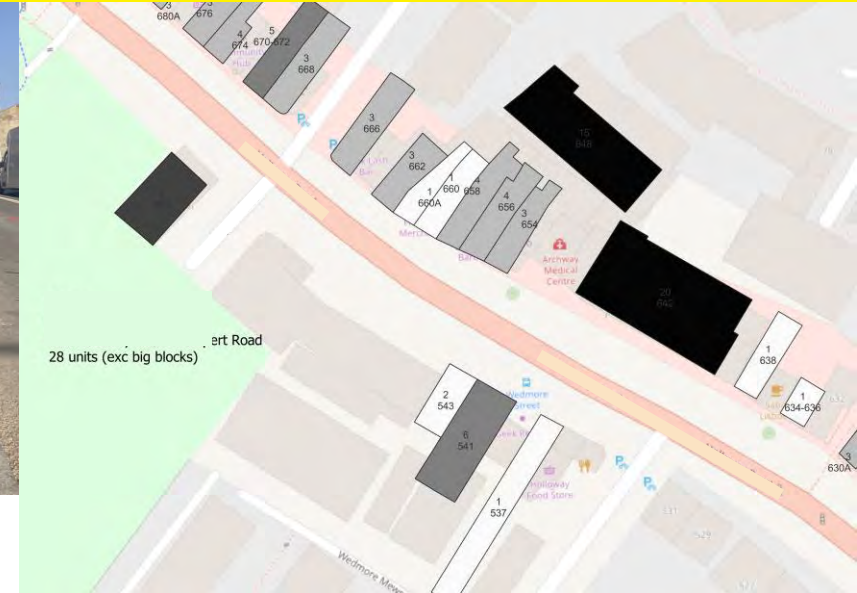
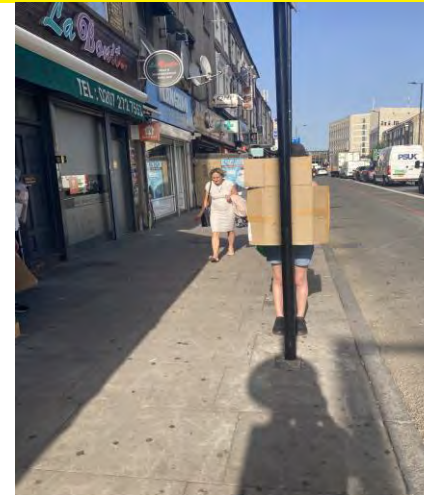
Rent

Reuse

Refill

Practical tips

- Ask GIS / responsible teams to provide you with a map containing:
 - Number of FLASH per property (and colour code)
 - Property numbers / addresses
- Tape measure
- Photos - label as you go
- Make use of digital Forms
- Cut out of bin/vinyl/item you intend to use



FLASH site visits

Collections

- Are there natural presentation points already you can use?
- How do collections work in practice (not theory!)
- Are street sweepings co-collected with FLASH waste?
- Is there a 'clear all' policy in place? How will you 'safeguard' the recycling?
- Are there cycle lanes/bollards/bus stops/pedestrian crossings/zig-zags/parking which might prevent the crews from collecting there?
- What is the street cleaning schedule?

On street signage

- Where and what signage is present?
- What is the condition - is it up to date?
- Is there already a lot of signage? Are any out of date/can be removed?
- Are there additional advertising locations like community noticeboards, hubs, bollards for bollard wraps or sides of existing litter bins?

Practical placements

- What substrate is the pavement?
- Are there access hatches which prohibit placement?
- How wide is the pavement? Is there a min. 1.5m clearance?
- Are there trees/ signs of planned works which might prevent the location from being suitable?
- Is there evidence of external seating or markets?

Access for/to residents

- Is there a rear alleyway? Do residents present or have bins already?
- Is there evidence of new FLASH being built you'll need to include?
- Is the proposed collection location within 30m from doors?
- Any unusual access points e.g., through a business?
- Any potential issues with posting e.g., no letterboxes or via business?

Further support

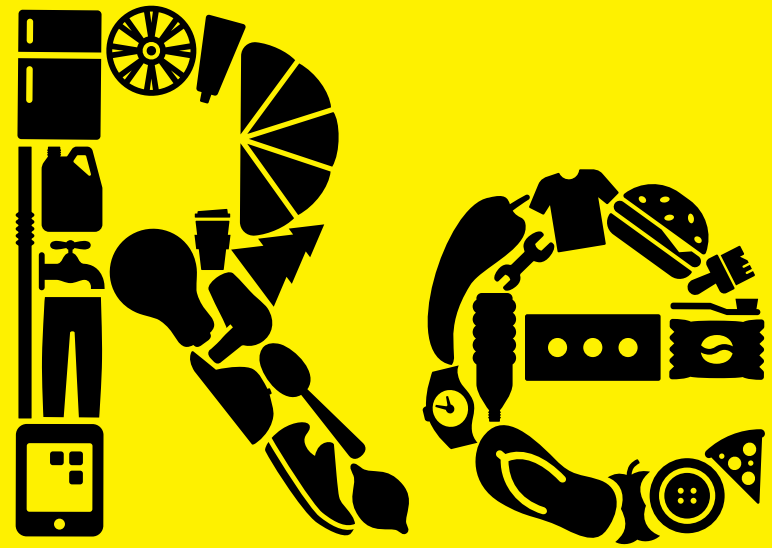
We realise that boroughs might want additional, more focused support when implementing service changes and improvement projects.

ReLondon can support the implementation of your projects, such as:

- **Recycling implementation at purpose-built flats or flats above shops**
- **Stakeholder engagement workshops** to encourage buy-in from senior leaders, colleagues and external partners (such as Managing Agents)
- **Circular neighbourhood pilots**
- **Ongoing strategic ‘critical friend’ support**, where we can work with you on a call-off basis for any service or project required

Please let us know if you’re interested in indicative costings, or contact us at hello@relondon.gov.uk





ReLondon

Thank you

Shelley Holmes - Advisor

 @relondon_UK

 /company/relondon

relondon.gov.uk

Flats above shops (FLASH) Food Waste Trial

Lucy Simler,
Recycling Officer,
London Borough of
Hackney

June 2025



What will be covered

- Original FLASH waste and recycling service
- Trial (including locations and units installed)
- Communications
- Monitoring and the outcomes
- Lesson learned and next steps



The original FLASH service

6,500 Flats above shops in Hackney (~6% housing stock)



Waste and dry recycling gets collected in sacks during time bands



No separate food waste collection service

Who does have a Food Waste service?

- All street level and **90%** of estate properties
- ~**160** FLASH properties use a communal food waste bin on a Council managed estate
- Some FLASH are using the street level service

Waste and recycling must only be placed out for collection at these times:

6.30am – 7.30am
5pm – 6pm

You may be prosecuted if you put rubbish on the street outside of these times.

Residents

Use green sacks for recycling and black sacks for non-recyclable waste.



Businesses

You must have a waste contract in place and use identifiable sacks from your waste carrier.



 Hackney

 Hackney

FLASH food waste trial

When: February to April 2023 (3 months), additional site July to September (2023)

Who: 511 FLASH properties had the option to recycle food waste using 6 on-street communal bins (240L)

Where: 6 high streets across the borough



Service options

Method	Positives	Challenges
Daily doorstep caddy collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No significant infrastructure required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caddies causing obstruction• Caddies lost/stolen• Contamination
Communal housing unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoids spillages• Eliminates caddy obstruction• Monitor bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial abuse/ contamination• Cost for infrastructure• Placement considerations
Communal housing unit with lock	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminates commercial abuse/ contamination• Avoids spillages• Eliminates caddy obstruction• Monitor bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited lockable bin options• More expensive infrastructure costs• Replacement of keycards (keycard access bins)• Placement considerations

Housing bin options

- Ranging from around £500-£800 for non-lockable unit
- £1,540 for lockable unit (Key card access)
- Most can fit 140 or 240 litre bin
- Some have slam lock feature and foot pedal



MetroSTOR
(non-lockable)



Taylors



Wybone



Storm



MetroSTOR (lockable)

Trial locations

High Street Locations	Number of properties served
Wilton Way	53
Kingsland Road	130
Stoke Newington Church Street	78
Amhurst Parade	23
Chatsworth Road	124
Old Street	103



Considerations

- Road markings (red routes, bus stops, cycle paths)
- Narrow pavements
- TfL
- Proximity to commercial businesses (food markets)
- Walking distance from the unit (30m guidance)
- Next to existing bins (Recycle on the go and public bring sites)

Units in situation



Storm bin next to
KH bus stop on
Kingsland Road



Wybone bin next
to textile banks
outside fire
station on Stoke
Newington
Church Street



Taylors bin
outside Boscobel
House Estate,
Wilton Way



MetroSTOR bin at
the bring site on
Chatsworth Road



MetroSTOR bin
opposite 8
Amhurst
Parade



MetroSTOR
lockable bin at
Old Street

Communications

- Partnership with NLWA
- Bin stickers for the units
- Initial letter (via post)

Door-knocking

- Door knocked each property twice
- Provided caddies, liners, a leaflet, key card (Old Street only) to residents who opted in
- Survey to gauge baseline attitudes - prize incentive funded by NLWA
- Revisit letters posted when there was unsuccessful engagement during initial visits
- Recorded engagement
- Follow up door knocking and survey



Communication results

	Number of properties	Percentage
Successful contact rate	175	34%
Unsuccessful contact rate	336	66%
Wanted to participate	160	31% (91% of door-knocked properties)
Received equipment and leaflet	262	51%
Filled out the survey	11	6% (of door-knocked properties)

Key Performance Indicators

- 40% Door knocking contact rate
- 20% (Minimum) sign up

Reasons why the 15 properties did not want to participate

- 5 are using other facilities
- 5 would not use the service
- 2 found time as a barrier
- 1 said no space and smelly
- 1 was moving out soon
- 1 was not the owner

Survey results

Initial survey findings (start of trial)

Out of the 11 residents:

- 100% were confident about using service
- 100% had the time
- 100% believed that recycling food waste is positive
- 100% agreed it would help tackle climate change
- 89% agreed it is something they care about

Follow up survey findings (3 months on)

Out of the 16 residents:

- 53% always use the service, 6% never do
- most still confident using the service, that they have the time/space and that it is easy for them
- some find separating their food waste and using the communal bin unpleasant
- 38% admitted to forgetting to separate their food waste
- unaware of their neighbours recycling habits

Outcomes

- **Ensure bins are clean**
- **Prompts to remind residents to recycle**
- **Highlight social norms**

Results of the 3 month trial

Location	Overall FW Tonnage (kg based on fill rate)	Tonnage (kg) per property served	Weekly dumping (number of collections where flytipping found around bins)	Weekly contamination, below threshold levels (collections went ahead)	Rejected due to contamination past thresholds
Amhurst Parade	107	11.9	1	10	0
SNCS	270	3.5	2	3	0
Kingsland Road	1020	7.8	1	11	0
Wilton Way	390	7.4	4	9 (2 rejected loads)	2
Chatsworth Road	270	2.2	5	9	0
Old Street	280	2.7	0	0	0
Total	2337		13	33	2

- **2.3 tonnes (0.2 tonnes per week)** has been collected
- Equates to an annual tonnage of **11.09 tonnes (21.7kg per household)**
- This compares to **23.9kg** per household for estates properties and **57.2kg** for street properties
- Wilton Way bin was positioned away from high street and had the highest contamination and dumping

Contamination



Amhurst
Parade (plastic
bags)



Kingsland
Road (plastic
bags)



Wilton Way
(rejected load)



Chatsworth
Road (coffee
cup and plastic
bag)



Old Street (no
contamination)

1 month monitoring in September 2023

- Total food waste diverted from residual to recycling is 685 KG
- A drop in 160 KG from the monthly average
- No rejected loads
- Only 1 record of dumping around the units
- Contamination levels the same
- Residents using their own compostable / plastic bags (not ordering free Council provided liners)



Conclusions and lessons learned

- Well received by the residents using the service
- Limited space for the installation of units
- Difficult to provide caddies and liners
- Door knocking is an important step for engagement and delivery of equipment
- Continuous engagement needed as residents move in and out of these properties
- No contamination recorded with lockable bin only
- Trial was very resource intensive (door-knocking) - costly for boroughwide
- Uptake across the borough may vary

Next Steps

- Extending borough wide - assessments started
- Preference for lockable bins (keypad or fob)
- **Funding limitations**
 - Reduced number of on-street housing units
 - Considering utilising food waste bins on nearby Council managed estates
 - Considering extending distance to bins from properties to within 250m (5 minutes walk)
 - Boroughwide communication (no door-knocking)
 - Plans to provide food waste caddies and liners upon request only
- Increase number of on-street units subject to future budget/funding



Contact: lucy.simler@hackney.gov.uk

