

Bracknell Forest Council

Case Study

Bracknell Forest Council have been working to reduce the levels of contamination in their collections – including their garden waste collections. The measures they've taken have included taking some practical steps in the collections and raising awareness through a range of communication approaches. They also run an incentives scheme for householders for their recycling collections.

Practical Steps

Bracknell Forest Council have a policy not to empty any garden waste bins or blue recycling bins which contain the wrong items – this has been written into the waste collection contract with SUEZ.

- They carry out contamination monitoring with the collection crews, this involves going out with the collection crews on their rounds, checking inside bins as they do and putting contamination tags on any bins that contain the incorrect items
- A contamination tag will be left to let the resident know why they couldn't empty the bin
- This is noted down on the crew sheets and recorded by admin staff in the office
- The tag has been redesigned due to crew feedback – originally a sticker was used along with a letter left on the bin, but this was not effective.
- Following this up with door knocking to properties that put the wrong items in the bins, or targeting whole areas which are bad for contamination

Communications

Giving residents information about the service is key to success and Bracknell Forest Council do this through a range of activities:

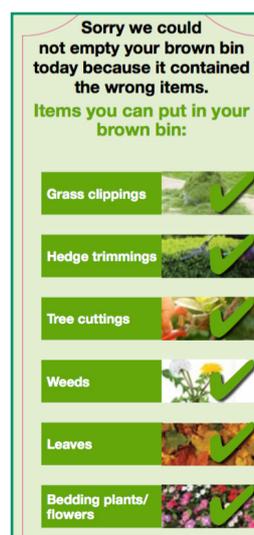
- Talks at environment groups, local groups, local councils
- Any new communications focus on visuals and clear messages
- School visits and talks at assemblies or in classrooms
- Roadshows and events
- Use social media to get messages out – tie into national campaigns and the season e.g. post information on composting fallen leaves in Autumn
- E-newsletter which is sent out to residents signed up to the Recycling Incentive Scheme – recycling updates, events, information



Results

The contamination rate in 2013 was 16%, which has dropped to a 12% contamination rate in 2017.

The majority of the communications work used visual improvements as an indicator. They compared the numbers of properties with incorrect items in the bins in a particularly bad area before and after communication work and observed a reduction from 41 properties with incorrect items in their bins, to only 17 properties with incorrect items in the bins following the communication work.



Incentives

The Council introduced a Recycling Incentive Scheme in April 2013 – residents are rewarded for recycling, with 31% of the borough signed up to it. This scheme focuses on their recycling collections, not the garden waste collections.

- Residents sign up to the scheme and receive an education pack and tag for their bin
- The tag is read by the truck when the bin is emptied
- Each successful lift awards the resident 200 points
- Points are awarded for participation NOT weight
- Residents can access the rewards portal through the council website to review their points and see the available rewards
- Rewards are redeemed directly at source – no vouchers, no printing or postage costs
- Most rewards are for leisure and library facilities
- Points can be donated to a local good cause

Although the incentive scheme does not currently cover garden waste collections, the council could consider extending it to boost participation and reduce contamination further.

