Food Waste Pilot: Response Summary

# Introduction

In April 2021, we started a food waste recycling pilot at around 4,500 homes in five different wards. This was part of our ongoing commitment to reduce household waste and increase recycling. The pilot area includes a mix of different property types and urban, suburban and rural neighbourhoods.

The pilot is helping us determine the impact food waste recycling collections have on household waste and helping us plan how we might roll out the service across the rest of the borough. The Government wants all councils in England to collect food waste separately from about 2025. We are keeping the pilot running until we know more about potential support from central government. In March 2022, we added about 850 more homes to the food waste pilot area.

# Methodology

**Survey was open from 25 August to 14 September 2021.**

Letters were sent to the 4500 households participating in the trial, and a door knocking exercise was carried out, to invite them to complete the feedback survey.

The survey was also promoted on social media.

# Return Rates

Around 4500 households were invited to participate in the trial. 1059 responses were received, a return rate of 24%.

# Key Findings

## Attitudes to recycling

* There is overwhelming support for the scheme.
* 79% of respondents said that recycling was important to them personally.
* 89% of respondents recycle even if it requires additional effort.
* 41% of respondents have changed the way they buy food.

## Experience of the service

* 89% of respondents used the food waste collection scheme every collection.
* 11% of respondents experienced problems using the service.
* 2% of respondents stated that their caddy, on average, was overflowing waste.
* 1% of respondents used the caddy without liners.
* 9% of respondents experienced a problem with the caddy liners.
* 3% of respondents experienced problems getting new caddy liners.
* 93% of respondents found the food booklet either ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’.

## Reasons given for not using the food waste bins

* 2% of respondents started using the scheme but later stopped
* Concerns around hygiene, smell, flies, maggots and vermin.
* Missed collections have a significant impact on set out rates.
* Some households said they did not receive a bin
* Some respondents said they have very little food waste
* Some said they give leftovers to their pets or use peelings etc to make compost
* Problems with the bins or caddy liners.

# Results:

**Thinking about recycling household waste, how important is recycling to you personally?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Not at all important | 1% | 13 |
| Not very important | 1% | 12 |
| Fairly important | 19% | 196 |
| Very important | 79% | 830 |
| Total | 100% | 1051 |

**Which of these statements best describes how much you recycle?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| I do not recycle | 0% | 5 |
| I recycle if it does not require additional effort | 10% | 108 |
| I recycle even if it requires additional effort | 89% | 938 |
| Total | 100% | 1051 |

**Do you use the food waste collection scheme?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes, I use it every collection | 89% | 940 |
| Yes, but not for everything that can be collected | 2% | 21 |
| Yes, sometimes | 3% | 30 |
| No, I did not know it existed | 0% | 3 |
| No, I home compost food waste | 1% | 6 |
| No, I did use it but not any more | 2% | 21 |
| No, but I intend to start using it | 0% | 1 |
| No, never used it | 3% | 31 |
| Total | 100% | 1053 |

**Why do you use it?**

* Reduce landfill
* help the environment
* recycling
* fresher household waste bin
* more space in household waste bin.

**Why didn’t you participate when the food waste collection pilot started?**

* Maggots and vermin
* Pets eat leftovers
* Enough bins already
* No container delivered
* Little to no food waste

**What would need to change for you to start using the food waste collection?**

* Need to generate more food waste
* Integration into larger bins
* Deliver the container
* Knowing the collection schedule – Missing it is problematic

**Have you experienced any problems when using the food waste collection?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes | 11% | 111 |
| No | 89% | 875 |
| Total | 100% | 986 |

**Have you experienced any problems when using the food waste collection? – YES:**

* Not collected every week/missed collections/not fully emptied
* Loose seal on caddy/flimsy handle/broken handle
* Vermin
* Leaking/split bags
* Smell
* Ran out of bags
* Getting caddy liners
* Wind blows empty caddies down the street
* Heavy
* Too small
* Don’t look nice in kitchen
* Unhappy about stickers left on household waste bin

**How full is your outdoor food waste bin each week?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Less than half full | 18% | 174 |
| About half full | 34% | 335 |
| Over half full | 29% | 289 |
| Full | 17% | 173 |
| Overflowing | 2% | 18 |
| Total | 100% | 989 |

**Do you use your internal kitchen caddy and liners?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes - I use the caddy and the liners | 98% | 974 |
| No - I just use the caddy | 1% | 8 |
| No - I don't use either | 1% | 8 |
| Total | 100% | 990 |

**Did you have any problems with the caddy liners?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes | 9% | 86 |
| No | 91% | 883 |
| Total | 100% | 969 |

**Did you have any problems with the caddy liners? – YES:**

* Splitting
* Leaking
* Need handles for tying
* Too thin
* Need to fit well with the caddy

**Did you have any problems getting new liners?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes | 3% | 30 |
| No | 97% | 923 |
| Total | 100% | 953 |

**Did you have any problems getting new liners? – YES:**

* Don’t know where to get them from
* Not getting new liners when tied to caddy handle

**How helpful did you find the food waste booklet?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Not helpful at all | 3% | 34 |
| Not very helpful | 3% | 36 |
| Helpful | 58% | 612 |
| Very helpful  | 35% | 366 |
| Total | 100% | 1048 |

**Has the food waste collection changed how you buy food?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Yes, I think more about what food I buy | 11% | 107 |
| Yes, I am now more aware that I should avoid generating food waste | 23% | 218 |
| Yes, I often avoid special offers (e.g, two for one) | 2% | 19 |
| Yes, I think about buying locally now | 3% | 27 |
| No, it has not made any difference | 59% | 549 |
| Other | 1% | 13 |
| Total | 100% | 933 |

OTHER: No – I was already conscious about food waste

**Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the food waste collection pilot scheme?**

Overwhelmingly positive support for the scheme.

Other comments:

* Must be collected weekly
* Makes you conscious of food waste
* Unhygienic
* Sceptical at first
* Keeping the collection day the same helps
* Maggots, flies, and vermin are a problem
* Excellent with kids
* Wish there was less plastic packaging on food
* Can left over dog food go in?
* Didn’t get a food waste booklet
* Didn’t get a caddy delivered
* Difficult to use with a disability
* Not enough food waste

## Demographic questions:

**What type of home do you live in?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Detached house | 19% | 200 |
| Semi-detached house | 50% | 525 |
| Terraced house | 17% | 181 |
| Flat, maisonette or apartment inc. converted or shared house | 2% | 19 |
| Bungalow | 11% | 116 |
| Other | 1% | 10 |
| Total | 100% | 1051 |

**What is your age?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Under 18 | 0% | 3 |
| 18-24 | 2% | 18 |
| 25-34 | 10% | 103 |
| 35-49 | 21% | 226 |
| 50-64 | 35% | 372 |
| 65-79 | 26% | 270 |
| 80+ | 5% | 54 |
| I prefer not to say | 1% | 7 |
| Total | 100% | 1053 |

**Which option best describes your ethnicity?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| White - British | 95% | 953 |
| White - Irish | 0% | 4 |
| White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 0% | 0 |
| White - Any other White background | 1% | 9 |
| White - European | 2% | 16 |
| Mixed - White and Black Caribbean | 0% | 3 |
| Mixed - White and Black African | 0% | 1 |
| Mixed - White and Asian | 0% | 0 |
| Mixed - Any other Mixed background | 0% | 2 |
| Mixed - Asian or Asian British-Indian | 0% | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0% | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi | 0% | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Chinese | 0% | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - And other Asian background | 0% | 1 |
| Black or Black British - Caribbean | 0% | 2 |
| Black or Black British - African | 0% | 2 |
| Black or Black British - Any other Black background | 0% | 0 |
| Arab | 0% | 0 |
| I prefer not to say | 1% | 6 |
| Total | 100% | 999 |

**What is your employment status?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Percentage (%) | Count |
| Employed full time | 33% | 343 |
| Employed part time | 17% | 181 |
| Education or learning | 0% | 3 |
| Unemployed | 6% | 60 |
| Retired | 36% | 374 |
| Self-employed | 3% | 34 |
| Other (please specify) | 5% | 51 |
| Total | 100% | 1046 |