

TACKLING CONTAMINATION: SERVICE REVIEW WORKBOOK



LWARB
London Waste and Recycling Board

Tackling Contamination: service review workbook

Introduction

The questions below are designed to be guide you through a service review, to help ascertain why and where recycling is being contaminated in household recycling in your borough. You can then use this information to implement targeted interventions to help improve the quality of recycle. You may need to involve various colleagues and contractors in gathering all the data. Our evidence indicates that the only effective way to tackle contamination is in a holistic way, for which you will need information on a broad range of topics.

Although this may seem like a lot of information to capture, it will prove extremely helpful in ascertaining where (in the supply chain), and why contamination is occurring, to understand what interventions you need to put in place to reduce it.

Once this workbook has been completed, we advise you meet with the recycling collection contractor (or in-house operations manager) and communications team to discuss the evidence gathered and agree on the appropriate intervention for your authority.

This document complements LWARB's research on reducing contamination in the household recycling stream. Don't forget to look at the [LWARB page](#) for more insights on interventions to decrease contamination, including project case studies.

I Services - this section will help with your discussions with others outside the recycling team on the current service provision and operations.		
Residual waste	Describe your residual waste collection service for the following:	Answer: include number and size of containers; frequency of collection; vehicle type and if you double shift your vehicles
	<i>Kerbside properties – for those that provide wheeled bins, please include policy for bin size per household (HH) and the exceptions</i>	
	<i>Communal collections - are you aware of ratio of the recycling to refuse containers and litre per HH? You may have this from a recent flats inventory</i>	
	Flats above shops	
	Any other – please state	
Recycling service	Describe your dry recycling collection service for the following:	Answer please include number and size of containers; frequency of collection; vehicle type and if you double shift your vehicles
	<i>Kerbside properties for those that provide wheeled bins, please include policy for bin size per household (HH) and the exceptions</i>	
	<i>Communal collections - If not collected on a separate round, please indicate other property types/sites these may be emptied with are you aware of ratio of the recycling to refuse containers and litre per HH? You may have this from a recent flats inventory</i>	
	<i>Flats above shops – if not collected on a separate round, please indicate other property types/sites these may be emptied with</i>	
	Any other – please state	

Food waste collections	Describe your organics waste collection service for the following:	Answer include container sizes, if food is separate or mixed and indicate if you provide liners, internal caddy, external caddy and the size of the communal food waste bins (if appropriate)
	Kerbside properties	
	Communal collections – <i>if not collected on a separate round, please indicate other property types/sites these may be emptied with</i>	
	Flats above shops – <i>if not collected on a separate round, please indicate other property types/sites these may be emptied with</i>	
	Any other – please state	
2. Monitoring this section will help build up a picture of where contamination is more prevalent, what is the most common contaminant and how you currently deal with this.		
Location	Are there particular rounds which have contamination issues? How do you know? Are you able to identify which ones? Suggest name and describe these rounds and rank the worst five to ten.	
	Is contamination an issue in defined geographical area(s)? How do you know? Please describe these areas. Do you have ACORN/MOSAIC data related to these areas?	
	Is contamination an issue at particular property types – which ones and how do you know?	

Frequency	<p>How many contamination incidents occurred per round in the previous six months? The information here will help with deciding where to focus your interventions on. You should be able to find this from contamination reports.</p> <p><i>This answer will depend on your contamination policy. This question links to the question on location.</i></p>	
Contamination type	<p>What are the most common types of contaminants you found in last six months for the following property types? What are the top three contaminants by weight or visual inspection? How bad is the problem? How do you know this?</p>	
	Kerbside properties	
	Communal collections	
	Flats above shops	
	Any other – please state	
Knowledge	<p>What are your most common methods of monitoring contamination in the recycle?</p>	<p>Please complete all that apply and describe how often this is reported back to you and by what method. Please describe what you do with this information.</p>
	Verbal feedback from crews – how do they know i.e. lifting lids? Observing tipping into vehicle?	
	Crew’s paper records logging contamination events (how is this recorded?).	

	Contamination reports – by round	
	Feedback from staff at the waste transfer station (WTS)?	
	Rejected loads from the WTS – please include average number of loads rejected per month.	
	Own observations from rounds/ staff in your team (please describe).	
	Back office/ call centre records.	
	In- cab devices logging contamination events.	
	Caretakers at flats (how is this recorded?).	
	Landlords at flats (how is this recorded?).	
	Enforcement officers (how is this recorded?).	
	Rejected loads from the MRF – please include average number of loads rejected per month.	
	From MRF sampling (please provide details of the sampling regime).	

	Other – please describe:	
3. Policies this section will help you understand what current council policies exist; if they are fit for use; are they being delivered correctly and if any new ones need to be created.		
Container policies	Does your council have a policy to not collect excess refuse? i.e. no side waste and lid closed policies?	
	Does your council have a policy to collect excess recyclables?	
	Does your council charge managing agents for the provision of communal containers at flats?	
Contamination policy - kerbside	Does the council have a contamination policy for kerbside properties? If yes, please describe it. Do you think this is impactful? Are all parties signed up to using it correctly?	
	What should happen when a crew member finds a contaminated bin/sack? Describe the process.	
	How is the policy currently implemented?	
	If/ when a contaminated bin/sack is left un-emptied, who is responsible for emptying a contaminated bin/sack? Householder or the missed bin crews? Or other?	

	If relevant, how many bins have you removed from residents in kerbside properties who repeatedly contaminated in the last 12 months? For those on sacks, are there properties you no longer collect from due to constant contamination? if so, how many?	
Contamination policy - flats	Does your council have a contamination policy for flats? If yes, please describe it. Do you think this is impactful? Are all parties signed up to using it correctly?	
	What should happen when a crew member finds a contaminated bin? Describe the process	
	How is the policy currently implemented?	
	If bins are left un-emptied, who is responsible for emptying a contaminated bin at flats? Residents? Landlords? Agents? Missed bin crews? Or other?	
	Does your council pass on a charge for emptying a contaminated communal recycling container – i.e. to the landlord? If so, please provide details (e.g. the policy document).	
	If relevant, how many communal bins have you removed from residents in flats who repeatedly contaminated in the last 12 months? Please give as a number of bins and as a percentage of flats' sites.	
4. Communications – you can use the communications benchmarking matrix on Resource London's website for reviewing the content and quality of your own communications		
Residents	By what method and how regularly do you communicate with your residents on how to use the collections service (kerbside and/or flats)? e.g. service leaflet/resident magazine, social media	

	etc. Do you have a regular communications plan?	
	Have you carried out any specific communications to tackle contamination? If so where in the borough and when? How many households did you cover? How did you measure the impact of door knocking on quality of recyclate?	
	Are you alerted to new residents moving into the borough? If so, how are you alerted and when? Do you then send new residents a service leaflet?	
	How do you communicate to residents how they can obtain kit (boxes/bins/sacks/liners) for the waste and/or recycling service?	
	Do you hold or attend community events to speak about the service?	
	Do you use audience segmentation (e.g. ACORN or MOSAIC) to tailor your communications to a specific group of residents?	
Corporate communications team	Do you receive any support from your corporate communications team? How easy is it to get their buy-in and time?	
Contact centre	Do you hold briefing sessions with contact centre staff on your services?	
	Who is responsible for updating the call centre script?	
	Are new contact centre staff briefed on the recycling services?	
Members	How aware are your Members of the contamination issue? (Very/ Moderate/ Not at all)	

	How often do you liaise with Members on the issue – and how do you do this?	
	How supportive are they of your efforts to tackle contamination? Do they support enforcement to tackle contamination? Have they provided ear-marked budget for this?	
5. Collection crew – this section is helpful to review your current contamination-related training and operations.		
Crews	Please describe your crew training on tackling contamination.	
	How often do you train your crew regarding contamination and who runs this?	
	Do you ensure new staff receive training related to contamination in the recycle?	
	What processes do you use to incentivise crews to tackle contamination?	
	Do the crews pull out recycling bags/ recycling containers ahead of collections?	
	Are the crews on task and finish?	
	What is your crew turnover rate?	
	What additional training have you run with crews, e.g. visits to the MRF, job swapping, videos of MRF processes?	
	What percentage of agency staff do you use? How are they deployed on rounds? i.e. are agency staff accompanied by permanent staff? Do some rounds regularly have agency staff? Are agency staff more commonly used on some rounds than others?	

	What training do you provide to agency staff on contamination?	
	What is the level of supervision of crews?	
	How often do you go out on the rounds with crews?	
	Do you have in-cab technology? If so, how well do crews use technology?	
	If your service is contracted out, does the service provider and crews have contractual responsibility for reducing contamination?	
	If you collect glass co-mingled with other materials, what is the compaction ratio used on the vehicles collecting dry recycling? We ask this because if glass is crushed heavily it will not “count” as recycling but instead be classified as fines.	
6. Interventions		
	Please detail any interventions you have carried out to tackle the issue of contamination at kerbside properties in the past two years. Include monitoring and evaluation results.	
	Please detail any interventions you have carried out to tackle the issue of contamination at flats in the past two years. Include monitoring and evaluation results.	