

2. Waste Prevention

Highlights

- An extensive outreach programme was delivered to encourage residents to waste less food. This included direct engagement with 13,077 north London residents and participation in 180 public facing events, including stands and stalls at offices, community centres and universities, as well as at festivals and fairs.
- The London Upcycling Show (where attendees refurbish or revamp old furniture) and associated upcycling competition to mark the European Week for Waste Reduction in November 2016.
- A year-end Waste Prevention Exchange event to share information on the role of business and local authorities in the development of a circular economy.
- A piece of evaluation work to assess the medium term impact of the schools' waste education programme, which is delivered as part of the waste prevention programme.

2.1. During 2016/17 the Authority worked in partnership with the seven constituent boroughs to deliver the activities contained in the first year of a two-year Waste Prevention Plan 2016-18 (the Plan). The aim of the Plan is to divert 20,000 tonnes of waste from recycling and disposal; within 2016/17 it is estimated that 10,244 tonnes of waste were either prevented from being produced in the first place, or reused as a result of the activities delivered in the Plan. The effectiveness and value for money of waste prevention activities relies on the best available metrics.

2.2. Three priority waste streams were identified, food waste, furniture and textiles. Work on the priority waste streams was complemented by other activities, including promoting reducing unwanted mail, replacing single use carrier bags with reusable ones and promoting reusable nappies.

Food waste reduction

2.3. During 2016/17 a programme of face to face outreach activity was delivered across north London to encourage residents to reduce the amount of food waste they throw away. The activity included information stands in a range of settings, such as at festivals and fairs, in libraries, community centres and offices, and at universities and leisure centres. Based upon national research and guidance, and previous officer experience, five key messages and actions were encouraged:

- Plan meals in advance to avoid buying food that will go to waste.
- Write a shopping list to avoid buying more than you need.
- Understand the meaning of 'best before' and 'use by' dates so that food is not thrown away before it should be.
- Measure the portions of food that are being cooked so that the amount is correct for the number of people eating.
- Store food well to avoid food spoiling and going to waste.

A key message of the programme is that families can save up to £60 a month just by cutting down on food waste.

2. Waste Prevention

- 2.4.** An updated food waste prevention leaflet was produced, which provides practical tips about reducing food waste. The leaflet, together with free tools to help with food storage and correct measurement of portions, is available from the Authority's information stands. Information is also available online at <http://wiseuptowaste.org.uk/waste-less/food-waste/how-to-reduce-your-food-waste>
- 2.5.** In addition, the Authority also had information stands at events that formed part of specific projects, e.g. at the Pumpkin Rescue festival (to reduce pumpkin waste at Halloween) and the New Leaf project (aimed at reducing salad waste in the summer). All these activities were supported by food waste prevention advertising campaigns and promotion. A two week food waste advertising campaign in March 2017 centred on a free prize draw using social media.
- 2.6.** The target for the Plan is to hold 20,000 conversations about food waste prevention during 2016-18. With 13,077 face to face conversations held within the first year (2016/17), performance for the year was above target. As a result of this activity it is estimated that 7,031 tonnes of food waste were diverted from recycling and disposal.

Furniture reuse

- 2.7.** The Authority delivered two principal activities to encourage furniture reuse, an upcycling competition and the London Upcycling Show, and Give and Take days.
- 2.8.** Each upcycling competition entrant was provided with an item of pre-used furniture that they were invited to upcycle. A total of 18 people entered the competition and were given over two weeks to upcycle an item from one of five categories. The winning entries were chosen by expert judges at the London Upcycling Show organised by the Authority. The show also included an exhibition of reuse organisations and workshops, and demonstrations, so that attendees could try upcycling techniques for themselves and learn more about furniture reuse.
- 2.9.** A total of 188 north London residents attended the London Upcycling Show, which directly diverted 441kg of furniture from disposal via the reuse, repair and upcycling of competition items. Feedback about the event was extremely positive with all 46 attendees who answered a questionnaire saying that they would like to see the event repeated next year.
- 2.10.** The second activity aimed at encouraging furniture reuse was a series of 14 Give and Take days held during January and February 2017. Give and Take days are free community exchange events which provide residents with an opportunity to donate unwanted but reusable items that they no longer want and to take some other items they need for free.

2. Waste Prevention

- 2.11.** The events were attended by 696 people who brought 13.9 tonnes of items and took away 13.8 tonnes of items for reuse. Although the Authority has delivered Give and Take days for several years, the tonnage of material diverted on average at each event has increased in the past two years since the introduction of a free collection and delivery service (for bulky items that residents want taken to the events and free delivery of bulky items from the events). Any electrical items are also 'Portable Appliance Test' tested for safety on arrival which increases the scope of material that can be accepted.
- 2.12.** In total it is estimated that 1,151 tonnes of furniture was reused in 2016/17 as a result of the activities delivered in the Waste Prevention Plan. This is in addition to the reuse tonnage reported in sections 3.12 to 3.15 of this report.

Clothing reuse and upcycling events

- 2.13.** The Authority had a contract with Keep Britain Tidy to deliver seven 'Swish and Style' events in March, one in each north London borough, on the Authority's behalf. The events aimed to encourage clothing reuse through clothes swapping (also known as 'swishing') and clothing repair and upcycling, i.e. altering old items of clothing to make them more attractive and desirable ('styling'). A number of sub-contractors to Keep Britain Tidy offered sewing courses and workshops about upcycling and mending clothes at the events.
- 2.14.** Swishing event attendees were given time to donate clothes they no longer wanted and then a separate time to take other items donated by other people. Attendees have to bring clothes in order to take other clothes away and the amount each person can take is restricted to a number equivalent to the number of items they brought.
- 2.15.** The 'Swish and Style' events were supported by a leaflet containing tips on textiles reuse, repair and recycling, and an advertising campaign promoting an online textiles quiz which 728 people took part in. During the campaign period the clothes and shoes web page of the Authority's Wise Up To Waste website was viewed by 6,775 people, while Facebook, mobile phone application and Twitter advertising reached just over 800,000 people. All the clothing reuse and repair activity that took place in the year is estimated to have diverted 667 tonnes of textiles from recycling and disposal.

Other activities

- 2.16.** As noted at the outset, the Authority worked in partnership with the seven constituent boroughs to deliver a range of additional activities in the year, including:
- the Waste Prevention Exchange event;
 - outreach activity at 59 events to encourage improved recycling by speaking to 2,760 residents;
 - a Bag It Up and Reuse project with local retailers to encourage carrier bag reuse;
 - an unwanted mail advertising campaign to encourage residents to opt out of receiving unaddressed mail; and
 - a reusable nappies subsidy, paid to help parents or guardians buy reusable nappies.

2. Waste Prevention

- 2.17.** In addition, the Authority commissioned ecoActive to assess the impact of the schools' waste education programme, which is delivered as part of the waste prevention programme, and which had involved 28 schools in north London between 2014 and 2016.
- 2.18.** The aim of the evaluation was to revisit schools that had previously taken part in the programme and to assess how waste prevention and recycling behaviour had changed since the intensive education project had taken place. Of the 28 schools which had taken part in the intensive waste education project, 21 also participated in the research.
- 2.19.** Results from waste audits in participating schools demonstrated that waste prevention behaviours were retained. At the start of the Intensive Education Project in 2014/15, the average amount of waste produced in classrooms was 2.5kg/day. At the end of the project the average classroom was throwing away 0.7 kg/day, on average, which represented a 72% reduction. A year later, further reduction was achieved with the average amount of waste produced in classrooms identified as 0.15kg/day, which represented a 94% reduction compared to the amount produced in 2014/15.
- 2.20.** The research also showed that pupil knowledge of the waste hierarchy was not only retained, but was increased by an average of 17.5% between the end of the Intensive Education Project and the follow-up research. Additionally, pupils' knowledge of recycling increased by 31% in comparison to the levels of knowledge reported at the end of the Intensive Education Project in 2016.
- 2.21.** Overall, the evaluation of the Intensive Education Project identified long term benefits of the engagement activity that took place between 2014 and 2016. The amount of waste produced by participating schools remained low and pupils' knowledge of waste reduction (and the waste hierarchy) was sustained. There was also evidence that waste prevention measures that the schools had implemented continued to have an impact.

Awards

- 2.22.** The Authority only entered one award for waste prevention in 2016/17, Recycling Officer of the Year in the 2017 Awards for Excellence in Recycling and Waste Management, which was awarded to Dimitra Rappou, the Authority's Waste Prevention Manager.