



# Communications, outreach and engagement

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Since 2006, NLWA has delivered a progressively ambitious programme of communications, engagement and outreach in partnership with our boroughs.

In January 2023 we published [Preserving Resources, Driving Change](#), which sets out our approach to community engagement, communications and policy work. The aim for this ambitious programme is to draw on the collective expert experience of NLWA and constituent boroughs, apply behaviour change methodologies, use existing research and test and evaluate approaches as work is developed and delivered.

## The priorities are to:

- Enable communities to deliver change on the ground by providing residents with prevention, reuse, and repair opportunities
- Campaign for change
- Work in partnership
- Educate and inform residents
- Support our boroughs
- Work with businesses

We ensure our communications, campaigns and engagement activities are based on audience insights and research to ensure we can reach residents as effectively as possible. We reach our audiences through a variety of ways, including:

- Face-to-face at events organised by NLWA and partners
- Information on our websites
- Information on our boroughs' websites
- Social media: Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn
- Outdoor advertising
- Local newspaper advertising
- National, regional and trade press

## Joint Waste Strategy listening exercise

In 2023/24 NLWA engaged with partners, residents and community groups to better understand their priorities ahead of developing a new Joint Waste Strategy for north London. This listening exercise was conducted through a 12-week campaign from the 6 July 2023 to 27 September 2023 and resulted in:

- Over 1.25 million social media views
- 11,000 visitors to the engagement website
- 2,100 respondents to a survey/attendees at focus groups and pop-up events

The listening exercise explored how residents would like to see waste reduction and sustainability achieved in north London. The consensus is that people are keen to reduce carbon emissions, make environmentally-friendly choices and recycle more, and overall considered these of greater importance than service costs.

Residents were clear that central government needs to take responsibility for driving change. A majority of respondents pointed to legislative action that would increase sustainability, such as banning non-recyclable items and making manufacturers responsible for disposal of their products. There was also a strong consensus among residents about the choices retailers and manufacturers could make to be more sustainable. More than 80% of participants agreed that manufacturers could support better environmental outcomes by minimising the packaging they use on their products.

North Londoners once again showed that they want to make positive environmental choices and want public services that help them do so. More than three quarters of respondents said an important action for local authorities was providing accessible and easy-to-use recycling sites, demonstrating residents' eagerness to do the right thing when it comes to making sure their waste is disposed of properly.

Reducing carbon emissions was a top priority for many, with nearly half of all participants choosing this as a key way to improve north London's environmental outcomes. The importance of developing a circular economy for north London, particularly through more repair and reuse activities, was considered important, supported by initiatives such as funding, signposting, and more outlets to encourage items to remain in circulation.

Phase 2 of the public engagement will be held later in 2024 and will provide and seek feedback on the detailed draft strategy.



## North London Community Fund

Since its launch in 2017, the [North London Community Fund](#) has helped to fund effective waste prevention activity across the north London boroughs. It enables change at grassroots level, tapping into existing community networks and creating local advocates.



*Garden of Earthly Delights, a 2023/24 North London Community Fund project*

For 2023/24, the fund was increased to £250,000 per year. We funded 17 projects delivering local activities on waste prevention, including:

- A network of neighbourhood-based food waste compost hubs
- Electrical repair and education activities
- A network of community champions delivering waste prevention and sustainability events in their local communities
- Teaching carpentry skills using wood that would otherwise have gone to waste

Building on the success of the fund to date, we prepared to launch a [larger strategic fund](#) in 2024/25. Two organisations will be awarded £100,000 to deliver on a strategic behaviour change campaign and reach communities that do not currently engage in waste prevention behaviours.

### Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle

The [Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle](#) campaign launched in January 2024. It was designed through the application of behavioural science, seeking to increase the purchase and use of reusable period products in north London. The project involves a holistic approach of outreach workshops, school assemblies, discount codes and digital and out-of-home communications to improve the knowledge of, and access to, reusable period products.

## Schools and education

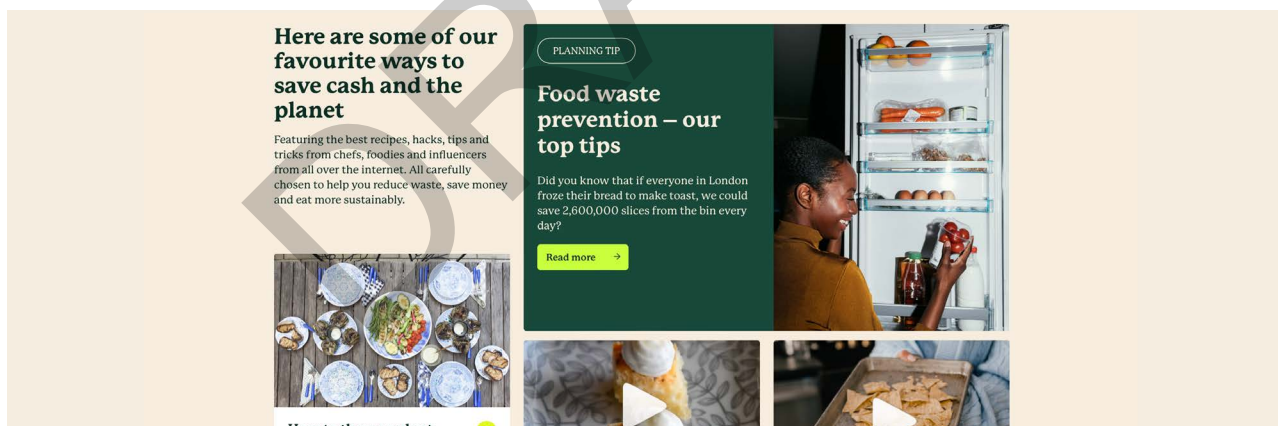
In 2023/24 we launched an online [Education Hub](#), pulling together some of the best teaching resources on waste prevention for teachers and educators. This was one of the key recommendations of the research project conducted with Keep Britain Tidy in 2022. We also launched the School Uniform Exchange Network which provides guidance to schools to set up a uniform exchange or shop. Using a calculator tool shared by East London Waste Authority, we can tell schools how much waste, money, and carbon emissions they saved through their uniform exchange records.



Work started on developing a brand-new outreach programme, consulting with schools and boroughs to identify where the priorities are. The outreach programme called 'In the Know' will launch in September 2024.

We also planned for the education programme at EcoPark House, which is due to open later in 2024. The building will be used for resident and visitor engagement and educate the next generation on waste and recycling.

## Food waste prevention



NLWA is a delivery partner and steering group member for [Eat Like a Londoner](#) - a pan-London communications campaign to encourage and inspire residents to waste less food and eat more sustainably. During 2023-2024, the campaign generated over 17 million impressions and 30,686 click-throughs to the website through online, out of home and social media advertising across north London. The campaign was promoted at events across the seven north London boroughs. To complement the campaign, NLWA ran four behaviour change workshops in February and March 2024 which included a low-waste cooking demonstration and assisting residents to commit to actions to tackle their food waste. Participants weighed their food waste to monitor their progress and help us evaluate how effective the workshops were. Evaluation will take place in 2024/25.

## Reusable nappy fund



In 2023/24, NLWA increased the reusable nappy vouchers available for north London parents/carers to £70 per baby. In the year, 1,131 people signed up to the scheme, which is a 31% increase on the previous year. There is an assumption that whilst a person has redeemed a voucher their baby will continue to use reusable nappies for at least two years, therefore the benefits of

disposable nappy waste is experienced for more than one year. It is estimated that in 2023/24, 813 tonnes of disposable nappy waste was avoided.

## Bring It...



**Bring it, Barnet** launched on 7 January, running for three months across social media and out of home advertising in East Finchley and High Barnet. The behaviour change campaign aimed to encourage Barnet residents to use reusable coffee cups, bottles, bags and containers to reduce single-use plastic. The project focused on social normative messaging, using real residents and businesses to influence peers and included prompts to help residents to remember to bring their reusables with them when they leave home. The campaign reached over 888,000 people, with residents seeing the adverts on average seven times, generating 50,000 visits to the website. The evaluation suggests that the campaign increased reuse behaviour, particularly using reusable coffee cups, bags and water bottles. More needs to be done to make using reusable containers for takeaways and loose food the norm. The campaign will be localised and rolled out across the other constituent boroughs during 2024.

## Together We Recycle

The [Together We Recycle campaign](#) ran from 28 August to 15 October and featured collection crews from our boroughs. By showing the real people who collect recycling every day, the campaign celebrated 'household heroes' and aimed to inspire residents to do their bit, too.

Campaign advertising at bus stops and on social media reached 3.8 million people, and a further 31,000 residents in six target areas also received personalised leaflets from their local collection crew.



The campaign included a dedicated webpage where people could find out more about their local crew and about how to recycle correctly. This webpage received 13,573 page views. Over 200 people also made use of a 'thank you' form, writing a message of thanks that was passed on to their local collection crew. The Together We Recycle campaign saw recycling increase by 2.52 tonnes in four of the areas that received leaflets.

A second phase took place in early 2024 and featured Biffa Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) staff. This included social media advertisements in a similar style to the first phase and short videos that show the sorting processes at the MRF to help residents understand what happens to their recycling. Advertisements for this element reached 1.5 million people, 7,991 of whom visited the NLWA website.

## Small Journey, Big Impact



We ran an outdoor advertising campaign promoting reuse and recycling centres (RRCs) over a four-week period from 24 April. The ['Small Journey, Big Impact' campaign](#) focused on showing north Londoners that RRCs can be visited on foot or by bike and reminding people that there is no longer a pre-booking system in place for cars and pedestrians.

Advertisements at bus stops were seen 24.7 million times (impressions); newspaper advertisements reached over 200,000

people and social media advertisements reached 1.1 million people. There was a 12% increase (2,565) in people visiting RRC webpages during the month after the campaign, compared with the previous month.

## Not a Minute to Waste videos

To educate about the journey of waste, we commissioned research via YouGov to better understand the existing knowledge of Londoners. Following that, we worked with a video producer to create three distinct videos to show north Londoners what happens to their waste once it's been disposed of. [The three videos](#) focus on general rubbish through the lens of the Energy from Waste facility; recycling, focussing on the Materials Recovery Facility; and lastly large items, focussing on one of our reuse and recycling centres. The videos received almost 50,000 views and will be used in future work on schools and education.

## Waste Prevention Exchange conference

The ninth annual Waste Prevention Exchange was delivered in May 2023, with hundreds of participants joining the virtual conference. The conference focussed on the circular economy and the challenges and opportunities this brings to local authorities. There were expert panellists discussing how a circular economy can be established, and why it's important to understand the whole system in which we're operating. Guest speakers included Eonomia and Behavioural Insights Team.

## Reaching residents through digital channels

Activity	People reached/engaged
NLWA websites	612,699 visits
Social media (Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn) reach	23,053,713 impressions of all posts
Social media (Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn) engagement	172,685 engagements of all posts



*The A-Z waste search, the most popular function on NLWA's website*



During 2023/24, over 600,000 people visited NLWA's website. While reuse and recycling centres remain very popular pages, most of our web traffic now relates to our [A-Z waste search](#) which allows residents to search what to do with different household items. Last year 127,987 searches were carried out on the A-Z and the top searches were paint, carrier bags, suitcases, mattresses and garden waste.

We regularly post on NLWA's social media accounts and across Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn we have over 11,941 followers. We run online advertising campaigns to target specific audiences promoting waste prevention and recycling behaviours, often linked to key cultural events, awareness days or weeks. Examples include:

- Promotion of the Joint Waste Strategy listening exercise
- Recycle Week 2023
- Promotion of new hard plastics recycling at reuse and recycling centres
- Back to school waste prevention tips
- Low waste (New Year) resolutions
- Promotion of the reusable nappy subsidy

In December 2023, we started email marketing for residents interested in receiving regular updates from us. 3,400 emails were sent to over 1,500 residents. 60% of these emails were opened and 12% of recipients clicked on a link to read more on the NLWA website.

## Nature connectedness research

A behavioural science master's research project was completed by a NLWA officer and Dr Caroline Harvey at the University of Derby. The results of a study of 450 north London residents suggest that having a connection to nature and engaging in other pro-environmental behaviours make it more likely that people will engage in waste prevention behaviours. Activities that connect individuals to nature and engage individuals in other pro-environmental behaviours, such as those relating to conservation, environmental citizenship, food and transportation could encourage individuals to reduce their waste. This more holistic approach to waste prevention behaviour change will be explored in partnership with the borough officers.

## Press, media and advertising

In our Waste Prevention Plan we set out our intention to campaign for systemic change. During 2023/24, we campaigned on a variety of issues including:

- In July, NLWA supported recommendations, put forward by the National Audit Office, that [Defra should provide more detailed delivery timelines](#) for waste reforms, particularly for business and local authorities. NLWA then expressed our [disappointment following the announcement of further delays to Extended Producer Responsibility](#) legislation later in the month.

- In September, NLWA called on the government to ban the sale and manufacture of disposable vapes and NLWA's Chair, [Cllr Clyde Loakes, set out his concerns in a letter to the Environment Secretary](#). NLWA then responded to the government's youth vaping consultation and [provided a template response](#) for residents, businesses and organisations wishing to have their say. An accompanying video showed the vape recycling process and highlighted the urgent need for action to prevent precious metals going to waste.
- In November, NLWA called for [greater ambition, following announcement of the government's 'simpler recycling' reforms](#). While NLWA welcomed the plans in principle, such as separate food waste collections, funding arrangements for new services were not clear. There was also concern about market capacity to take additional waste, including plastic film and plastic bags, which will be included in collections by 2027.

Activity	People reached/engaged
Outdoor advertising	75,020,000 impressions of adverts
Local newspaper advertising	208,000 number of copies printed and distributed
National, regional and trade press	1,168,577,580 total reach of all coverage

## Responses to consultations

During 2023/24, we responded to six Government consultations:

- Defra's near elimination of biodegradable waste to landfill
- Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Government's resources and waste reforms for England
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations
- Proposed ban of the manufacture, supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic
- Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping
- Simpler Recycling Exemptions

Full consultation responses are available on [nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/consultation-responses](https://nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/consultation-responses)