

Appendix B – Engagement Plan

Communications and Engagement Plan for Urban Belfast - Better Resource Management and Bin Safety

Objective

To implement a focused communications and engagement campaign in urban Belfast to support the bin safety project. This is aimed at enhancing resident awareness of responsibilities surrounding the health & safety issues regarding bins (liners & closed lids) in conjunction with general awareness of improved waste storage and management practices.

Target Audience

Domestic homes in urban Belfast initially, focusing on areas under contract with Bryson Recycling (circa 58,000 dwellings). This approach will allow us to focus the resource on the more densely populated areas of the city where space for containers tends to be more limited. It is anticipated that the urban areas will feature many of the hot spot/non-compliant areas in terms of the bin safety project which we will begin to communicate to residents from August 2025.

There is also a secondary benefit to this approach in relation to the route balancing project in focusing the resource on Urban Belfast. The engagement will stimulate tonnage and set out for Bryson Recycling primarily which are managed under contract. Alongside this communications and engagement piece, route balancing will be undertaken for our City Council crews and routes. Communications and engagement in blue and brown bin areas will no doubt stimulate demand for bins and increased set out and participation, so it is important that the engagement happens after balancing has been undertaken.

Apartments and those sites with communal collection points will be communicated to through management companies, agents and housing associations as these stakeholders are responsible for collective presentation and storage of containers. Residents in these sites are generally not responsible for presentation of shared containers. The Resource Advisor team will develop a mailing list for communal sites and messaging issued to those stakeholders directly and digitally. This will include communications and FAQs tailored to apartment owners and agents.

Depending on the success of this initiative, there is scope to retain the resource for a longer period to cover suburban areas of the city (circa 95,000 homes) and hotspots therein.

Team Composition

A dedicated team of six agency doorstep Resource Advisors to complement the existing team of 6, responsible for communications and engagement with households directly on issues around waste and recycling. The team will be trained and equipped to deal with most doorstep queries and able to signpost residents as appropriate e.g. regarding assisted lifts, assessed bins and orders for containers.

Teams will be mixed, and Resource Advisors (RAs) will undertake communications and engagement work in pairs in line with risk assessments around doorstep canvassing.

This frontline focus will generate more queries for the team in the form of orders for containers, assessments and signposting the assisted lift service. The team can also provide alternative formats (i.e. translations, braille, audio CDS, large print etc as appropriate), on request. A communications and engagement log will be maintained identifying number of households receiving doorstep information, those canvassed, hit rate at the street and route level, orders placed, and queries handled, and this can form part of the regular waste updates to Members.

Costs expected for the additional resource have been approved and include some metrics around engagement potential and coverage per day.

Productive time - 340 minutes	Number	
No of households @ 3 mins/door/day	113	doors
Team of 6	680	doors
Engagements per week	3400	doors
*16 weeks	54,400	doors
Size of Urban collection area (inc. apartments)	58,000	doors

Campaign Duration/Timeline

Estimated duration of the initial campaign is four months, with potential for extension to suburban areas based on successful outcomes. This tenure may be extended subject to financial approval as required once the bin safety campaign has begun in early August and crews begin collecting to policy from October 2025 onwards.

A key area in the bin safety campaign will be around crew reporting at a street level to allow placement of resources into problematic areas and hotspots as required. The additional 6 x RAs will focus on the structured engagement plan while existing permanent staff continue with day-to-day operations and support those hotspot areas when we begin collecting to policy from October 2025. Permanent staff will be

significantly more familiar with the problem areas from experience and familiar with signposting and supporting from other teams and units in the council.

The RA data will be reviewed daily to ascertain problem areas. RAs can assess the areas physically and the Project Team working with the Resources Officer (RA Line Manager) can highlight, identify, and monitor the hot spot areas and take an appropriate approach for each area. Each area will be different and have different needs so each hot spot will be reviewed in context of the issues reported by crews and observed by staff on the ground.

Timeline

W/C 7 July - Recruit and induct additional Resource Advisors

W/C 16 July - Begin postal comms to urban households. Continue postal comms until all households have been communicated with

W/C 4 August - Beginning of bedding in Phase – Amber tags. RIA data will start to be populated

W/C 11 August -Review data and begin to identify problematic/hot spot areas

W/C 18 August – Profile hot spots and begin to deploy Resource Advisors to engage with households in those areas. Continue this until end of September.

W/C 29 Sept – Beginning of collecting to policy period – Red Tags. Continue to monitor RIA data and review engagement approach.

This may also involve additional temporary operational waste collection teams to 'top' bins for short periods whilst resident engagement takes place in persistent problem areas. Continue to monitor approach and number of households/areas that remain problematic.

Communications and Engagement Strategy

1. Preparation Phase

Resource Advisor Recruitment:

- Requisition completed and approved by the Director at end of June. 6 additional staff requested for 16 weeks. The exercise will require this additional resource/funding to augment existing team with their existing day to day workloads. This will be put through the Matrix process with a view to recruiting for induction after 9 July (post call in period). Should fewer than 6 come forward for the temporary work, the Service may need to review the 6 staff for 16 weeks scenario. 4 staff for 24 weeks will cost the same so the requisition may need to be amended depending on availability of agency assignees.

Resource Advisor Training:

- Conduct comprehensive training with all Resource Advisors, focusing on the bin safety project details, resource management education, Training will include scenarios and questions for residents to ask at the doorstep.

Communications and Utilization of Existing Materials:

- Incorporate developed literature (in hand) and social media messaging into the training. Advisors should be well-versed in how to effectively communicate the required messaging around bin safety, recycling, and resident behaviours. A letter will also need to be produced to catch the resident's attention, signpost to support and drive the changes in behaviours required to ensure safe operations for crews. 5 versions required for each weekly collection day (Monday to Friday).

Resource Distribution:

- Equip each advisor with the necessary promotional materials, including leaflet (see appendix A) and letter explaining confirming their recycling/food waste collection schedule, the fair usage policy, recycling information, and contact details for further assistance. Translations are available and can be provided or arranged on request, this will include alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Audio CD etc.

2. Implementation Phase

Zonal Working/Communications and Engagement:

- Urban Belfast will be divided into five zones, aligned with collection days (Monday to Friday). Each advisor team will focus on a specific zone, promoting effective communication and distribution of the message. Three teams will be active initially so will do a day each i.e. Team A focuses on Monday collections, Team B on Tuesday collections etc. Once each team finishes their assigned zone, they will move on to the next available zone. The project team will produce and map these zones in advance of the inductions so that staff are familiar with the areas in which they will be working.

Teams will keep a record of their activity in each zone and street. These records will be maintained by the Resource Officer. Depending on speed of communications and engagement and the hit rates acquired, teams may have time to cover areas where engagement was low or poor a second time using this record to target households not engaged with on the first pass.

Bryson Recycling provide weekly recycling and food waste services for the council under contract in these areas. Their crews will be more directly impacted by any increased set out, participation and tonnage because of changes to resident behaviour. There may be an increased demand for containers (55l boxes, lids, food waste caddies and food waste bins). There may also be an upsurge in requests for black bins for those properties without a bin. Waste Management are aware of the

work being undertaken and will aim to ensure we have the stock to cope with increased requests.

If the campaign is extended into Suburban Belfast, there will be an impact on recycling and brown bin crews and an increased demand for 240l blue bins, 140l/240l brown/food waste bins. Again, the engagement can be managed and planned to ensure additional containers are in stock and available on demand.

3. Engagement Approach

Communications distribution

Distribute informative practical literature that outline:

- Messaging around bin safety campaign.
- Key recycling guidelines.
- Details about one bin per household policy for black bins.
- Common materials accepted for recycling.
- Consequences of overfilled bins to create awareness around the bin safety campaign.

Social Media Promotion/Online

Leverage existing social media messaging and BCC online resources to promote campaign initiatives and encourage community interaction, sharing updates, and resources online.

Face to Face Engagement at the doorstep – tailored to the hotspot areas based on RIA reports

Resource Advisors will visit domestic homes in hot spot areas, engaging those residents in friendly way around waste, recycling and updates around closed lids, use of liners and multiple bins. Staff will encourage discussion about responsible resource management practices and the one bin per household policy, stressing the importance of proper bin usage.

Interactive Discussion

Foster open dialogues with residents, addressing their questions and concerns, and collecting their feedback about waste management practices in their area. Staff will signpost or provide support to residents that need support. Residents can discuss the assisted lift service, additional capacity, or messaging in different formats with staff on the doorstep. Issues that cannot be resolved at the doorstep will be escalated appropriately.

4. Follow-Up and Feedback

Engagement Tracking

Monitor communications and engagement efforts by tracking the number of households communicated and interacted with in each zone and street and evaluating resident feedback to provide an assessment of campaign impact.

Ongoing Community Communication

- Use social media platforms and newsletters to share success stories, continued education, and reminders related to waste management responsibilities. Outreach Team activities aligned to support the campaigns and improved resident behaviours.

5. Future Expansion

Evaluation of Campaign Success

At the conclusion of the 4-month urban communications and engagement, analyse feedback, recycling rates, and participation levels to gauge success factors.

Planning for Suburban Engagement

Develop a phased strategy for extending the team and outreach efforts into suburban areas. By this stage, there should be a significant RIA data set to draw from allowing an approach targeted to areas that need additional support or canvassing.

Outcomes and Goals

Short-Term

- ✓ Raise awareness of recycling responsibilities and the one bin policy among urban residents.
- ✓ Foster positive interactions and support community involvement in responsible resource management.
- ✓ Promotion of bin safety campaign messaging – outcomes to residents and areas of lids not being closed.
- ✓ Provide a pathway and processes to resolve an ongoing safety issue for crews.
- ✓ Reduce the prevalence and frequency of hot spot areas identified based on RIA crew feedback during the bedding in phase.

Long-Term

- ✓ Cultivate a culture of proactive resource management and responsible waste disposal within urban Belfast, leading to reduced instances of overfilled bins, pests, litter, and fly tipping/dumping.
- ✓ Prepare for a successful extension of the campaign to suburban domestic properties, ensuring consistent messaging and practice across both urban and suburban communities.
- ✓ Deliver better environmental and cost outcomes for ratepayers.

- ✓ Support compliance with increased recycling rates.
- ✓ Divert more materials from energy recovery and move these materials higher up the waste hierarchy.
- ✓ Support local jobs and the economy.

This communications and engagement plan prioritizes effective education and involvement of the residents of urban Belfast in better resource management and recycling practices. With a structured 4-month campaign as part of the bin safety project to foster better responsibility and community engagement in Urban areas, the campaign should reduce the “noise” associated with a large citywide campaign around bin safety and bin liners. Messaging will include the one bin per household (fair usage policy) message in advance of work being undertaken to communicate this to domestic residents and support our crews in terms of fair and balanced routes. This project will be undertaken later in 2025/26.

Appendix A – Communications leaflet (also available, on request, in other languages, and formats):



Belfast City Council

Leaving bins out for collection

Including new bin tags from May 2025

Follow these tips if you have recycling or wheelie boxes at home too.

On your collection day, make sure your bin:

- Is out by 7am
- Is brought back in by 7pm*
- Has your house number marked on it
- Is not overfilled and the lid is fully closed
- Doesn't have a bin liner
- Has no extra bags or waste beside it

Following these steps will keep our staff safe when emptying bins and support cleaner streets and communities.

From May 2025, if your bin lid isn't closed, or you have used a bin liner, we will add an amber tag to your bin to remind you about these rules.

From June 2025, if you continue to line or overfill your bin, we will add a red tag and will not empty your bin until you remove the liner and make sure the lid is fully closed.

If you get someone to clean your bin remind them **not to use liners!**

Bin too full?

- Sort your waste properly and recycle as much as you can - this will save space in your general waste bin and make sure the lid closes fully
- Flatten down large items and bags
- Use our recycling and civic amenity sites
- Book a free bulky waste collection (for larger household items)

Got a question?
Call 028 9027 0230
Visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins

* This is to avoid other rubbish being placed in your bin. If your bin has not been emptied and we have not added a tag to tell you why, report it online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bins or call 028 9027 0230, and leave your bin out again by 7am the next day.



Belfast
City Council

Sorting your household waste

Make sure you put the right items in each bin/box. If you don't, they will not be emptied. You'll need to remove these items before your next collection.

By using all your recycling bins/boxes as much as you can, you can stop your general waste bin from getting too full and make sure the lid closes fully.

If you overfill your general waste bin and the lid doesn't close fully, it will not be emptied. You'll need to remove some items and make sure the lid closes fully for us to empty it.



Recycling bin, boxes or wheeler box

Always empty and rinse items first.

- Aerosol cans
- Aluminium foil (clean)
- Biscuit tins
- Cardboard food boxes
- Cartons (including TetraPak)
- Cardboard (dry and clean)
- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- Envelopes (remove the plastic window)
- Food and drink tins and cans
- Newspapers, magazines and catalogues
- Paper
- Soft back books
- Toilet roll tubes



Compost bin

- Food waste – place in your caddy first and then put in your compost bin
- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings
- Leaves, twigs and small branches
- Plants, flowers and weeds
- Cold ashes
- Paper napkins
- Shredded paper
- Takeaway pizza boxes (torn up)
- Wet paper and wet cardboard
- Bottle corks



Food waste bin

- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Eggshells
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Bones
- Bread, cake and pastries
- Meat, fish and cheese
- Rice, beans and pasta
- Any other leftover food (no liquids)



General waste bin

- Disposable nappies
- Period products
- Medical waste
- Tissues and wipes
- Broken glass
- Bubble wrap
- Chip bags
- Calophane wrapping
- Styrofoam
- Plastic cutlery
- Takeaway drink cups
- Dog poo (bagged)
- Tablet blister packs

No food waste, batteries, vapes or small electrical items in general waste bins please.

Bottle banks

Find your nearest at belfastcity.gov.uk/bottlebanks



Recycling centres

- Batteries
- Vapes
- Small electrical items
- Clothes and other textiles
- Hard plastics
- Tools
- Paint pots
- CDs and books
- Ink cartridges

View the full list at belfastcity.gov.uk/recyclingcentres



Bulky waste collection

For larger household items. Book online at belfastcity.gov.uk/bulkywaste

FREE

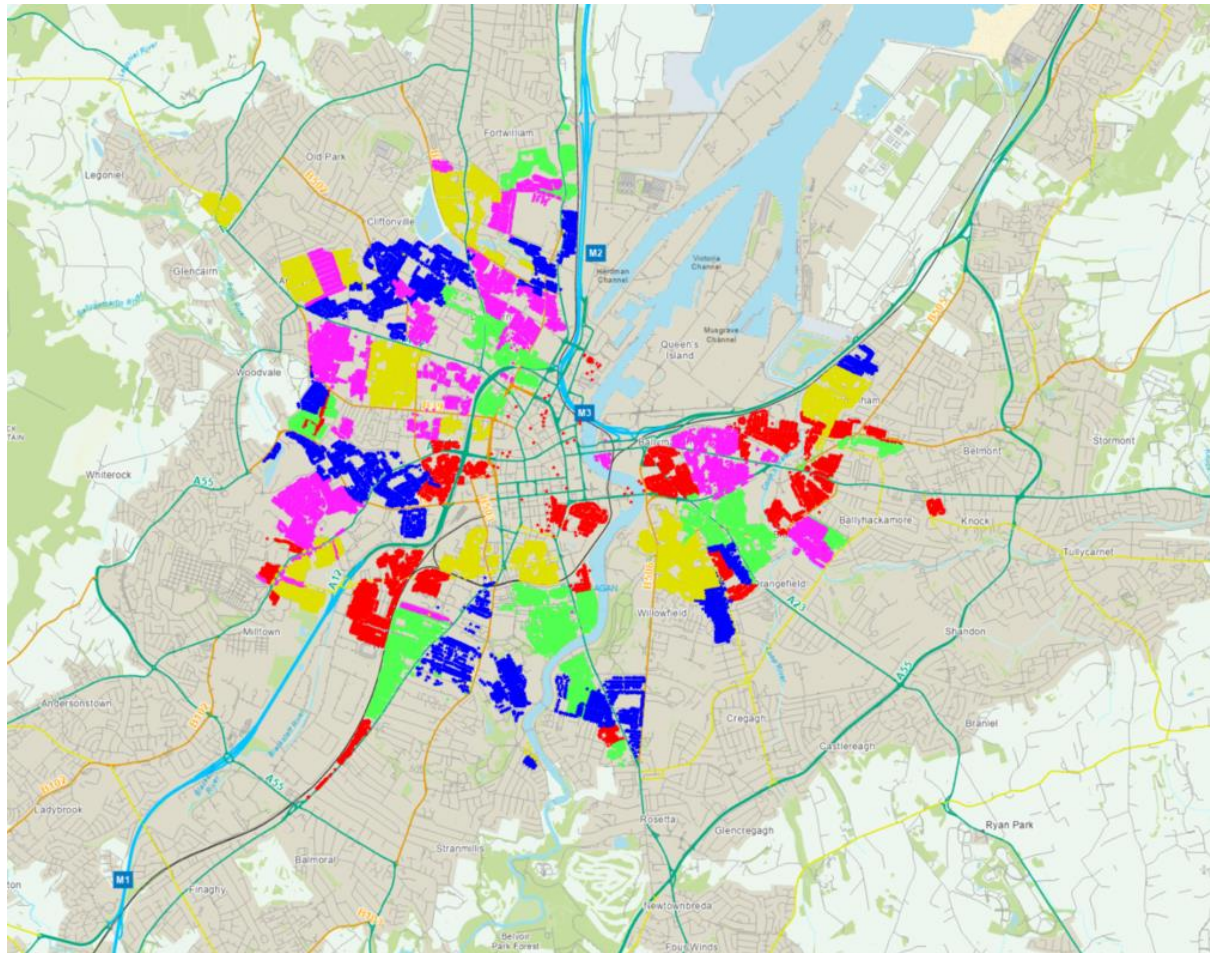
Need help?

Call 028 9027 0230

Visit belfastcity.gov.uk/bins for more help with sorting your waste. You can also order new bins/boxes and report damaged or stolen bins/boxes.



Engagement areas in Urban Belfast by collection round/day.



Appendix C - Letter to residents



Your reference: DT/BM

Our reference: Wednesday

Date: As Posted

Dear Resident,

Important changes: Safe bin collection

We're writing to let you know about important changes to bin collections in Belfast, aimed at improving safety for our crews and the community.

What's changing?

To improve safety, all collection vehicles will be fitted with sensors that prevent the emptying of overfilled bins. This follows a tragic incident in the UK last year and is part of a wider effort to protect our staff. Some of our refuse collection vehicles already have these sensors, and all will be upgraded over the next few years. Once installed, crews will not be able to override the system.

Why these changes are needed

Our crews are increasingly encountering two key issues:

1. **Overfilled bins (lid not closed):**
These pose a serious safety risk. Bins can fall during lifting, spill litter onto streets, or cause injury to staff.
2. **Large bin liners:**
Some residents use large liners to keep bins clean. However, these can snag during emptying, causing spills or making bins fall—again putting our crews at risk.

What this means for you

- **From 4 August:**
Bins that are overfilled or lined will receive an **amber warning tag**. Crews will still empty them but will tag them and report the issue to our Customer Hub.
- **From 29 September:**
These bins will **not be collected**. They'll receive a **red tag**, and you'll need to wait until your next scheduled collection after correcting the issue. If you continue to present an overfilled bin without the lid closed from this date, it will not be collected.

It is your responsibility to ensure your bin is not overfilled and does not contain a large liner.

How you can help

Here are some tips to manage your waste more effectively:

- **Recycle right:**
Know what goes where. Check our website or the leaflet included with this letter. Please place your containers at the kerbside by 7am. Your recycling and food waste are collected every week on a **Wednesday**.
- **Reduce and reuse:**
Before throwing something away, consider if it can be reused, donated, or repurposed.
- **Use the right bin:**
Only non-recyclable waste should go in your black bin. **No food waste** is allowed in black bins—use your food caddy instead.
- **Need help?**
Every household is different. If you need support, a Resource Advisor can visit your home. We can also provide information in different languages or formats if requested.

Ordering bins and containers

You can order recycling containers **free of charge** online. If you need a black bin, you can also order one online or through our Customer Hub. Please note, general waste bins have a [charge](#) and every property should have a black bin.

We're committed to making Belfast cleaner, safer, and more sustainable. Your cooperation helps protect our crews and keeps our city looking its best.

For questions or more information, contact our Customer Hub at 02890 270230 or visit www.belfastcity.gov.uk/bins.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,

The Recycling Team

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