

City & Neighbourhood Services Department

Operational Guidelines

Residual Waste Bin Monitoring & Encouragement Scheme Managing Contamination in the Residual Waste Bin

January 2017



Belfast
City Council

Residual Bin Monitoring Protocol

Background

Waste compositional studies show that around **25% of the weight of the residual bin is made up of food waste**. All households within the City have access to food waste collection schemes but despite this, the **Council spends an additional £800,000 per year** sending this material to landfill rather than it being composted and counting towards the recycling rate.

If even half of this material was put in the food waste bin, the city's recycling rate would jump by 6%!

This protocol is aimed at outlining how the Council will tackle this issue in a practical fashion but with fairness and transparency.

Desired Outcome – Environmentally friendly city with improved efficiencies

Outputs – Reduced tonnage of food to landfill and increased tonnage to composting operations

Performance Indicators – Recycling rate and NILAS target

Contamination Policy

One of the primary outcomes of the *Belfast Agenda – Your Future City* is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city.

To meet this aim the Council is engaged in developing a Circular Economy approach, where the make, use, dispose attitude is replaced by one which sees value in waste materials and seeks to ensure that these resources remain in the value chain for as long as possible.

To assist in the creation of this cleaner, greener future it is important that quality materials are provided to end users to make new products. In addition, it is incumbent upon the Council to strive towards the 50% recycling target for 2020 and in doing so support and create jobs in the local economy. This policy will contribute to these goals.

The policy is seeking to reduce contamination levels and maximize recycling and composting rates through the application of a graduated enforcement protocol. Household holders will be supported in complying with the policy through the availability of a comprehensive range of communication materials detailing what items should be placed in which bin.

The policy will be applied to all households excluding exceptional circumstances where there are genuine reasons as to why the policy cannot be complied with.

The Council reserves the right to consider individual cases of non-compliance on the basis of their individual merit. This may include needs such as medical, special assistance or other conditions.

These will be evaluated on an individual case by case basis by the Waste Management Service and appropriate mitigation measures put in place.

Key Elements of Monitoring & Enforcement Protocol

1. Internal training
2. Communications
3. Monitoring
4. Enforcement

1. Internal training

This will be achieved by:

- Introductory training
- Information leaflets
- Intranet
- Refresher training

2. Communications

The Council produces a number of leaflets on the different kerbside collection schemes which clearly identify the acceptable materials in each scheme. These leaflets will be updated, as required, to reflect the acceptance criteria of the various materials.

In Spring 2017, the Council will launch a food waste campaign aimed at capturing the food waste from the residual bin. This will involve a bin sticker placed on all residual bins along with an explanatory letter highlighting the rationale for the exercise and requesting that residents take part in the scheme. This will be supported by multiple communications tools (online and traditional).

Through the usual communications channels, the Council will continue to regularly remind residents of their civic duty and explain why it is important that they put the right stuff in the right bin.

In 2017, the Council will launch the Binovation app which provides a mobile information platform on the Council's various recycling initiatives and in particular the key materials which can be accepted in the kerbside schemes. This will include information on the residual waste bin.

3. Monitoring

Any food waste presented in the residual waste bin will be deemed as 'contamination'.

- Council staff will monitor the residual bins by visual inspection of the contents.
- Staff should never put their hands inside the bin.

4. Enforcement

- a) From the policy's introduction (April 2017), there will be a 6 month transition period in order for those households that do not have the necessary caddies &c. to participate correctly, to acquire these items.
- b) Council staff will conduct visual inspections of bin contents for obvious signs of food waste materials.
- c) On the first occasion, should food waste be found in a residual waste bin, the bin will be emptied but a yellow warning sticker will be placed on the lid of the bin to inform the householder of the prohibition of food waste in black bins. The sticker will contain all the information for the household to help participate in the scheme fully. A note of the household number will be taken.
- d) Should a household be found to have contaminated their bin for a second time, the bin will be emptied and a similar sticker will be placed on the bin. A letter will be sent to the householder outlining the issues and explaining that any further contamination may result in disruption to their residual bin collection service.
- e) In the event of a householder contaminating the residual waste bin with food waste for the third time the bin will have a red notification sticker placed on it and the collection crews will not empty the bin. The notification sticker will clearly state that in order for the bin to be emptied the householder will be required to remove the unsuitable materials and present the bin for collection on the next scheduled collection day.

At each stage the Council will ensure that each household receives the necessary information and supporting materials to ensure that they can participate fully in the food waste collection service.

Notes

In cases where a bin has been left contaminated for a long period of time the crew should inform Cleansing Business Support who will inform the Resource Advisor Supervisor to assess whether the bin should be removed.

If there is no readily identifiable address then the location of the bin will be recorded on an Excel spreadsheet.

In cases of apartments that have contaminated bins, the Waste Officer (Special Projects) should be informed.