

Headline Findings From Doorstep Recycling Survey

August - October 2011

Between the end of August and early October 2011 a targeted recycling survey was carried out across the city. The aim was to engage with residents on the doorstep about their recycling service, ensuring that they understand how to correctly recycle and to motivate them to participate as much as they can in order to increase recycling.

The work was carried out by an experienced team at Enventure Ltd consisting of 9 recycling promoters.

Over the course of 6 weeks we obtained 5,967 responses to the survey (including 228 on-line responses). The areas which were surveyed comprised mainly areas of terraced housing, city centre households (serviced by Friends of St Nicholas Fields), flats and other areas where use of the kerbside recycling collections was lower.

Areas surveyed include: Clifton, Leeman Road, the Groves, Holgate, Acomb, Chapelfields, Heworth, Fishergate, South Bank, Clementhorpe and Tang Hall.

- 94% of respondents spoken to claim to use the kerbside recycling collections
- Almost half of respondents indicated that they also use other methods of recycling e.g. HWRCs and bring sites

What do people recycle using the collections?

- Materials recycled are as expected across the 3 boxes (cardboard/paper, cans/tins/plastic bottles, glass bottles/jars). Fewer people say they recycle other items such as white paper, envelopes, brochures/directories, aerosols.
- Most residents say they only put the correct items into the recycling and know which items not to recycle

What would encourage people to start recycling?

- 33% of respondents said they would recycle *if they received a box*
- 8% said they would recycle *if they received information about the services*

- 7% said they would recycle *if they had more storage space to store the containers*
- 26% said *nothing* would encourage them to start recycling (it was explained that this was because they preferred to take their recycling to a local site)

What would encourage people to recycle more?

- 47% said they already recycle *everything they can*
- 21% of all participants said that *an increase in the range of materials collected* would encourage them to recycle more, 9% said they wanted to recycle more plastics
- 1767 households requested a container/lid/net/dividers or bag (for flats) totalling 4,586 container requests. All requests have been actioned.

Satisfaction with current recycling containers

- 82% respondents satisfied with current recycling containers – see Focus Group for more details of container preferences
- A larger proportion of respondents who received their collection from St Nick's were dissatisfied with their recycling boxes at 23% (compared to 18% overall)
- Of those who were dissatisfied with their container, 35% stated *too small* as the main reason
- Residents living in terraced houses with no forecourt were more likely to indicate that *they don't have anywhere to store them*
- Half of respondents in flats indicated that they didn't have a reusable blue bag, with just 36% saying that they have a bag and use it, 15% do not use the bag

Collection location

- 89% of respondents satisfied with location of collection
- 10% dissatisfaction.... of which 62% said they *don't like carrying boxes/bags through the house*, and 44% *would prefer a rear collection*

Overall levels of satisfaction with recycling collections (CYC and St Nick's)

- Overall 85% of respondents said they were *very or quite satisfied* with their recycling collection which is excellent news

- 8% said they were quite or very dissatisfied with the recycling collections
- Residents in St Nick's area were more likely to be *very satisfied* with their collection
- Satisfaction varied with property type, residents of flats and flats above shops were *less satisfied* than others
- Reasons for lower levels of satisfaction – *boxes not returned correctly after collection, litter after collection, collection frequency and not being able to recycle everything e.g. foil, tetra packs*
- Only residents in CYC collection areas stated that *litter left after collection* was a reason for dissatisfaction, with no residents in St Nick's area suggesting it, which would indicate greater care with collections

How do residents hear about our service?

- 59% of residents hear about services through *council leaflets*, 22% claim *not to hear* about our services (perhaps we should have asked them how they would like to hear about services?), 10% through *The Press*, 4% through CYC website

Pledges and Heroes

- 331 residents registered their interest in becoming a Recycling Hero. We will be contacting these residents to thank them for their interest and then will develop this scheme further in 2012
- All respondents were asked whether they would pledge a commitment to recycling *recycle as often as possible* and *recycle as much as possible* 97% of respondents said YES. Residents of flats were more likely to say NO

Focus Groups

3 focus groups were held to explore in depth the issues surrounding containers and storage space and to investigate other container options to find out how recycling could be made easier to encourage participation. The focus groups comprised small groups of residents from flats, city centre properties and terraced properties. Each group contained a mixture of genders and age groups to be as representative of the York population as possible.

The main findings are as follows:

- Generally residents are satisfied with CYC recycling collections
- Very positive feedback received about St Nick's collections
- Some dissatisfaction with collection point for recycling (rear collection preferred by some residents) and crews not returning boxes correctly after collection (as reflected in previous questions within the survey)
- Residents of flats who have boxes for recycling would prefer communal wheeled bins
- St Nick's residents focus on range of materials as key barrier to recycling – for example not being able to recycle all mixed plastics, this is echoed by CYC collections
- Residents in the city centre tended to focus more on the range of materials being collected as a barrier to recycling

Feedback from testing alternative container options

- Residents of flats prefer communal recycling bins with a reusable bag
- Terrace and city centre residents focused on a container that could be easily stored, would not take up too much room and would easily transfer to the front kerb for collection

7 different recycling containers were analysed by the focus group attendees

- **Existing** **kerbside** **box**



Terraced and city centre residents were generally pleased with the box due to its size and sturdiness, although some respondents complained that their box had broken or cracked when returned by the crew. Some would prefer something smaller, some commented that they don't stack in a way that makes it easy to add recycling, heavy when full

- **Existing blue bag (for flats)**



Positive feedback from those residents in flats who use the bag for storing recycling and taking to the bins. Need to think of ways of making sure new tenants get a bag.

- **Smaller kerbside boxes**



This could be an option for residents who want to downsize. Most attendees felt the smaller box had all the same benefits as the standard size box

- **Recycling pod**



residents like it and thought it could be useful for single occupancy households or those who don't produce much recycling

- **Recycling bin with handle**



Residents of terraced households liked the handles for easier carrying

through the house, lids that lock in place keep the rainwater out

- **Stackable** **boxes**



Residents liked the ease of putting materials into the boxes without having to unstuck them but thought the quality of the samples was poor. No mention of it being preferred by single occupancy/smaller households and the quality of the sample was flimsy and poor

- **Kerbside** **basket**



Positive feedback for appearance, easier to carry through the house, stackable but could blow over more easily? One St Nick's resident liked it and used one for her weekly collection – too small for fortnightly recycling?

- **Most popular containers** – terraced households liked the box with handle, flats residents liked the blue reusable bag, city centre residents liked the recycling pod and the box with handles
- **Other non-container related comments from the focus group** – how can we encourage students to recycle more?

The full results (data) will be available to us so that we can more fully analyse which responses have come from which areas of the city (and which types of property). This will be available mid November.

Here are some ideas about how we could use the results from the recycling survey to increase recycling and improve our service:

- We need to have a continuous programme of communications for 2012/13 onwards to include promoting how residents can get containers, what to recycle etc
- Need to investigate opportunities to provide supplies of reusable recycling bags to Estate Workers, Housing offices, Resident's associations etc
- Investigate opportunities to recycle mixed plastic (either at kerbside or HWRCs)
- Operation Manager to speak to all recycling crews about correctly returning boxes and tidying up after collections
- Investigate flats that claim to have recycling boxes and see whether they can have communal recycling instead
- Look at investigating further alternative containers for smaller/city centre/single occupancy households. We will need to consider operational issues – how would crews empty containers, could materials be mixed in 1 container, cost of containers, how would we publicise their availability?
- The majority of respondents would prefer a container that is able to allow them to store all their recycling rather than a smaller container that fits better within their property. They are prepared to sacrifice space to recycle
- Discuss results with St Nick's