Transforming Recycling Services for Flatted Properties

Sharing South Lanarkshire's Experience of:
Reducing Contamination and Improving Recycling Performance in Communal Properties

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South Lanarkshire Council

The challenge

Flatted properties faced barriers to accessing effective separate recycling services.

- Residents in flatted properties did not have access to the same separate recycling services as other households.
- The existing mixed recycling stream experienced higher contamination.
- Contaminated loads could be treated as non-recyclable waste.



The Aim

Improve access, increase participation, enhance the quality of collected materials through a service that is simpler to use, easier to manage and more effective to monitor.

A new dual-stream system

Two clearly defined recycling streams, supported by bin design that helps prevent contamination.

BLUE-LIDDED BINS





Paper, card and cardboard — letterbox-style apertures help prevent the wrong materials being deposited.

GREY-LIDDED BINS



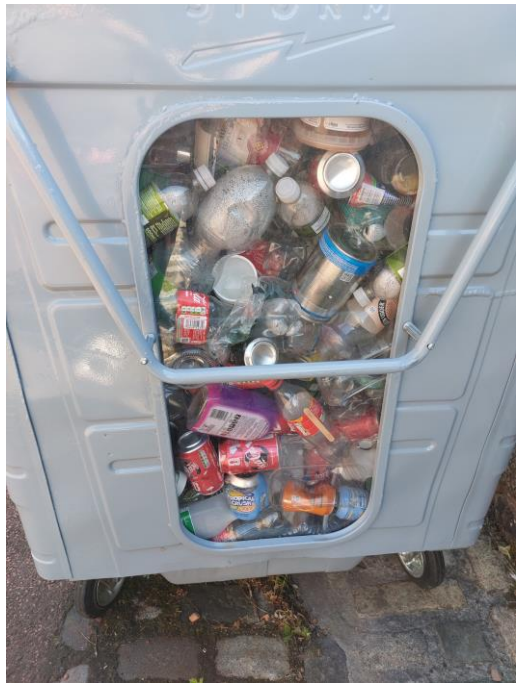


Glass, cans and plastic — restrictor plates help prevent bagged waste entering the recycling stream.

1280L Storm bins | Transparent panels | Lockable lids | Accessible openings

Innovation: making contamination visible

Transparent panels turn the bin itself into a simple monitoring and education tool.



01	**CREW AWARENESS**	Collection crews can identify contamination before emptying a bin.
02	**RESIDENT AWARENESS**	Transparent panels let residents see how full bins are and what is being placed inside.
03	**TARGETED SUPPORT**	Waste Education staff can identify locations that may need further support.

Transparent panels positively supports prevention, education and increases accountability.

Communication made the change work

Residents and crews needed clear, practical information before and after launch.

LETTERS BEFORE LAUNCH

Hand-delivered letters explained the new collection system.

LEAFLETS & BIN CALENDARS

Visual guidance showed residents what went where.

DOORSTEP ENGAGEMENT

Direct conversations helped answer questions and reinforce the change.

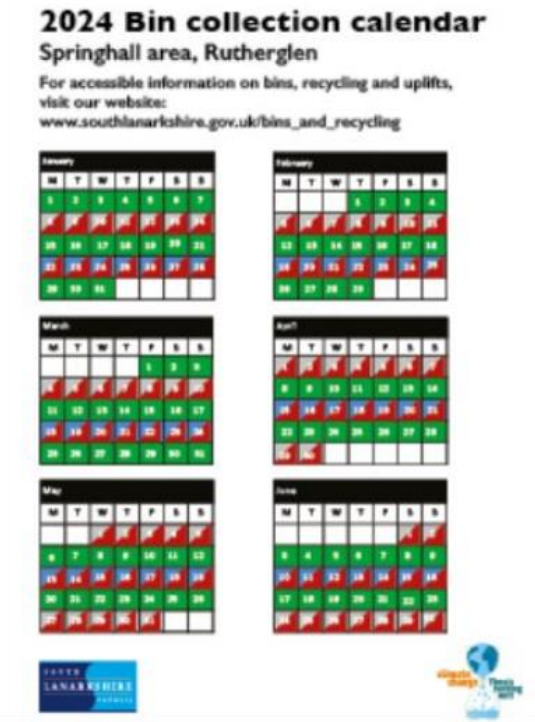
CREW SUPPORT

Toolbox talks and contamination-tag guidance supported collection crews.

RESIDENT INFORMATION



Recycling leaflet



Bin collection calendar

Delivery depended on partnership

Six teams and partners each had a role in delivering the new service.

1

WASTE EDUCATION

Resident communications, doorstep engagement and follow-up support.

2

WASTE OPERATIONS

Bin removals and deliveries, crew guidance and service continuity.

3

WASTE IMPROVEMENT

Project coordination, system updates and monitoring.

4

HOUSING & MEMBERS

Kept informed about progress and changes affecting residents.

5

CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE

Trained to give residents consistent advice.

6

REPROCESSORS

Engaged to manage the separate waste streams.

From pilot to wider rollout

A staged approach tested the practical arrangements before expanding the service.

01	**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUNDING**	Funding secured through the Recycling Improvement Fund for 250 dual-stream 1280L Perspex recycling bins - 125 blue and 125 grey.
02	**SURVEYING & IDENTIFYING HOTSPOTS**	Existing communal bin locations were surveyed and assessed, alongside input from collection crews, drivers and housing colleagues, to identify areas with high contamination and suitable locations for the new perspex bins
03	**PILOT PROJECT LAUNCHED**	A pilot was introduced as a proof of concept in an area of high-density housing, predominantly flats, where existing bulk recycling arrangements showed high levels of contamination, allowing the dual-stream system to be tested in a challenging environment.
04	**WIDER ROLLOUT**	Following the success of the pilot, the dual-stream recycling system was rolled out more widely across South Lanarkshire, improving recycling quality and reducing contamination at communal recycling points.

The results: a positive impact

The project improved recycling performance and diverted material from residual waste.

- 45 tonnes of clean recyclables collected within the first five months of the pilot
- Improved recycling quality across participating locations
- Noticeable reduction in contamination levels
- Increased resident participation



Clearer recycling streams helped divert material from residual waste.

Lessons learned

The project highlighted important principles for delivering service change in flatted properties.

01	**ENGAGE EARLY**	Involve residents, Housing Services, elected members and operational staff from the outset.
02	**ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL**	Every flatted development has different space, access and operational challenges.
03	**LISTEN, ADAPT & DEVELOP**	Use resident feedback to improve the service and support crews with ongoing training and clear guidance.



Success came down to communication, flexibility and continuous improvement.

Thank You

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