



Separate Weekly Food Waste

Collection Service

Residents' Survey Report
from the
Waste Management Team

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

West Berkshire Council are providing a new separate weekly food waste collection service starting in autumn 2022, ahead of the regulatory requirements set out in the UK government's Environment Act 2021, for all local authorities in England to provide free weekly food waste collections from households by 2025.

Currently, residents in West Berkshire (with the exception of those using communal bins) can put their food waste out for collection every two weeks using their green garden waste bin, even without a subscription to our chargeable garden waste collection service.

We undertook the survey to better understand recycling habits of our residents, whether they think it's important to recycle food waste, and if they would use the new service when it starts.

We also wanted to hear from people who don't currently recycle their food waste to find out what, if anything, is stopping them from doing so.

We'll take what we have learnt from your responses and, where possible, use relevant feedback to improve how the new service can be delivered.

The introduction of a separate weekly food waste service was approved by elected Members at the Executive Meeting on 2 September 2021.

SURVEY APPROACH

The survey was open for residents to respond to from 22 March until 3 May 2022. The survey was advertised through various channels including a press release, emails to town and parish councils, e-newsletters, library notice boards and social media.

SURVEY RESULTS

3007

Number of Responses

In total, 3053 responses were received. 3007 responses were analysed once duplicates, incomplete responses and non-residents were removed. This was one of the highest response rates to a Council survey in recent years.

82%

Overview

The majority (82%) of respondents think it is extremely or very important to recycle food waste with the majority (73%) stating they will use the new food waste service when it starts.

73%

More people say they will use the new food waste service than have currently stated they are using it now. Therefore the new service will hopefully overcome some of the main barriers of non-use of the current service. According to respondents, some of the barriers to participation in the existing fortnightly collection service include not having the inside food waste caddy and the bin being smelly and not collected frequently enough.

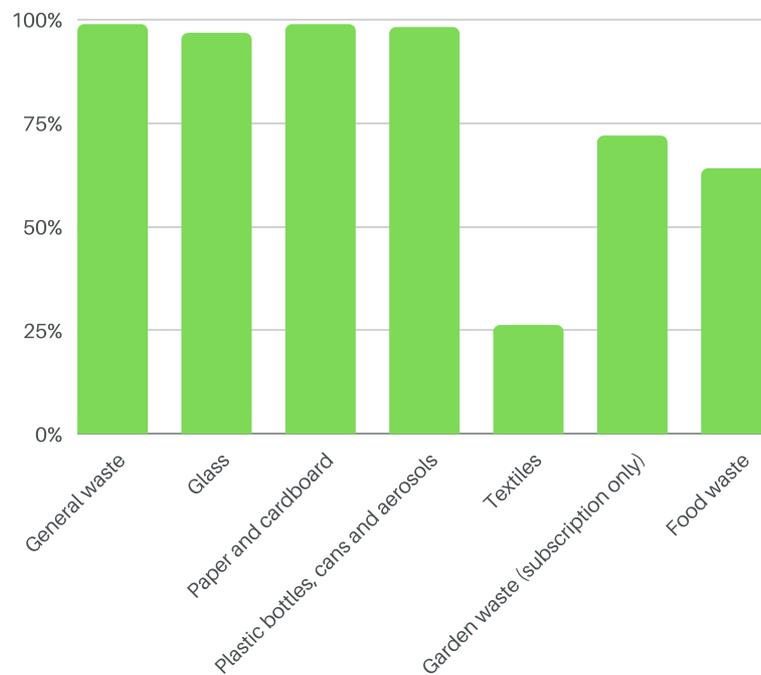
It is important to understand how we can improve the upcoming food waste service to residents who state they will not use it. For example more information about how to use the service and why it is important to recycle food waste. We will make sure this is included in communications about the service. In addition the majority of residents said they heard about waste changes via bin hangers and leaflets therefore we will pursue this option for the roll out of the new service.

The next steps for the new service roll out will be designing and producing communications material.

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 3 - Which of the following recycling and rubbish collection services do you currently use?

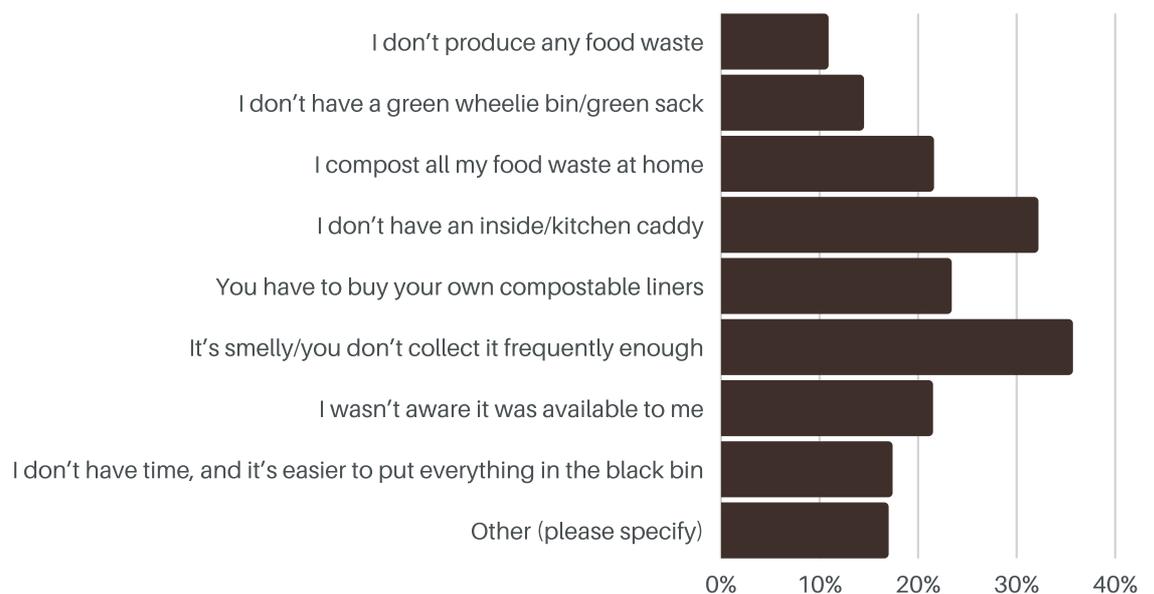
As can be seen in the table below there is a high percentage of usage for general waste and dry recyclables (excluding textiles). Existing food waste uptake is lower at 63.9% and is lower than those using a paid for garden waste service.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 4 - Please tell us why you don't currently use the food waste collection service?

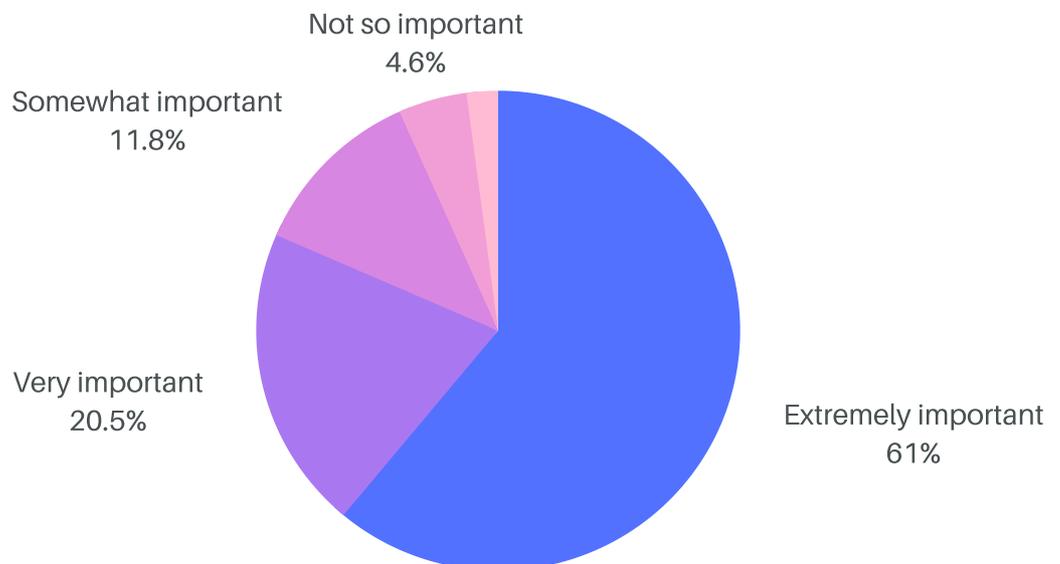
This question was only available to respondents who said they didn't recycle food waste in the previous question. The most frequent response selected was that it is smelly/not collected frequently enough. This concern should be addressed with the lockable lid on the caddies we are providing and the introduction of a weekly collection for food waste resulting in it being the most frequently collected waste stream from households.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 5 - How important do you think it is to recycle food waste?

81.6% of respondents thought it was ***extremely or very important*** to recycle food waste. This increased to 83.5% when we looked specifically at residents who have communal bins or bin store who currently don't have access to a food waste recycling service. We are hoping if residents consider food waste recycling important then they will use the new service and continue doing so.

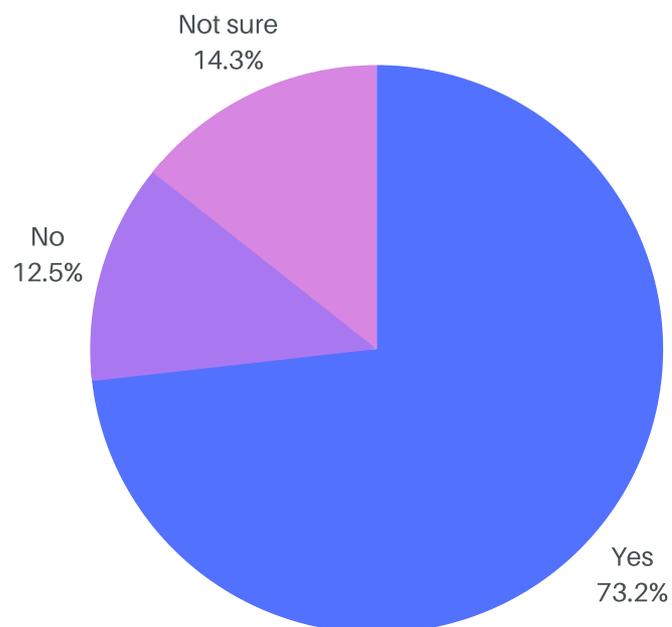


SURVEY RESULTS

Question 6 - Will you use the new separate weekly food waste collection service when it is introduced?

73.2% of respondents stated that they would use the new service. This is a 10% increase in the percentage of residents who stated they currently use the service. 12.5% said they would not use the service with 14.3% unsure if they would use the new service.

When looking at this specifically for residents with communal bins or bin stores 78.8% of residents stated they would use the new service, which is higher than the average.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 7 - Is there anything we could do to encourage you to use the new service?

This question was asked only to respondents who answered *no and not sure* to the above question (806 people). 32% of this smaller subset of respondents said there was something the council could do to encourage them to use the new service. Meanwhile 68% of this subset of respondents said there wasn't anything we could do to encourage them to use the new service.

Question 8 - Of the 257 residents who answered *yes to the above question* we asked what would encourage them to use the new service?

This has been analysed and the most common themes that came out were:

- Providing free liners
- Providing better containers
- To continue with the current service
- More information about the new service
- Make the green wheelie bin subscription service free
- Provide a service with less containers to store.

“*Explain the benefits to me and provide reassurance that it won't end up in landfill.*”
-comment from a resident in response to Q8

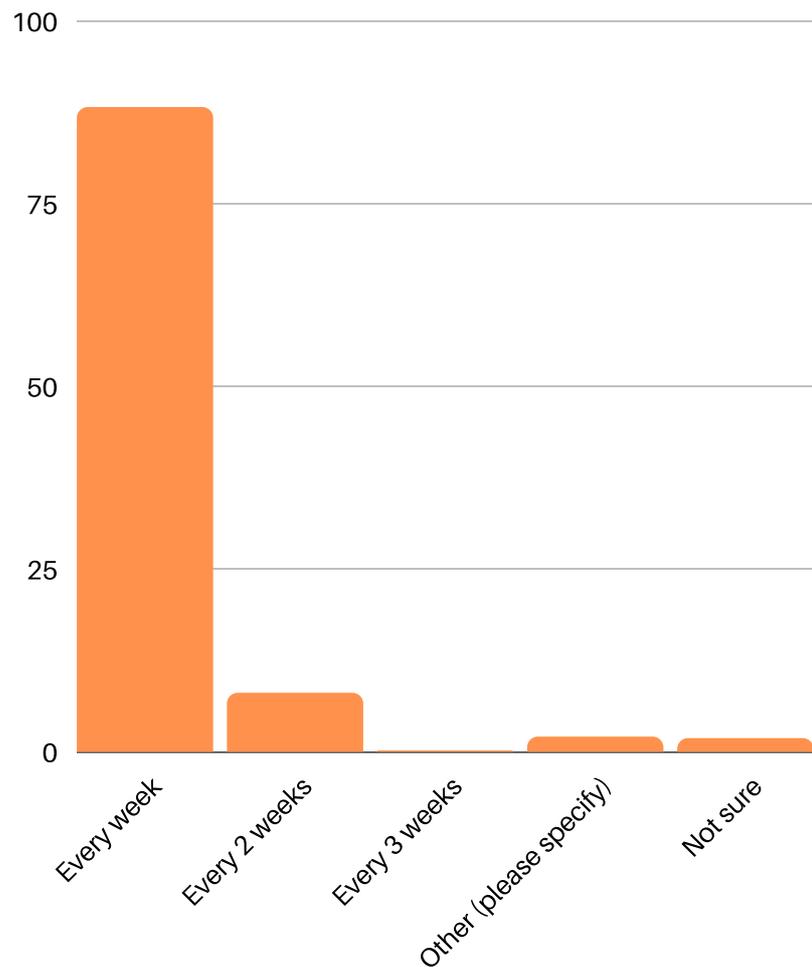
Liners
Free

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 9 - How often do you think you will put your food waste out for collection under the new service?

This was only asked of respondents who said they would be using the new service.

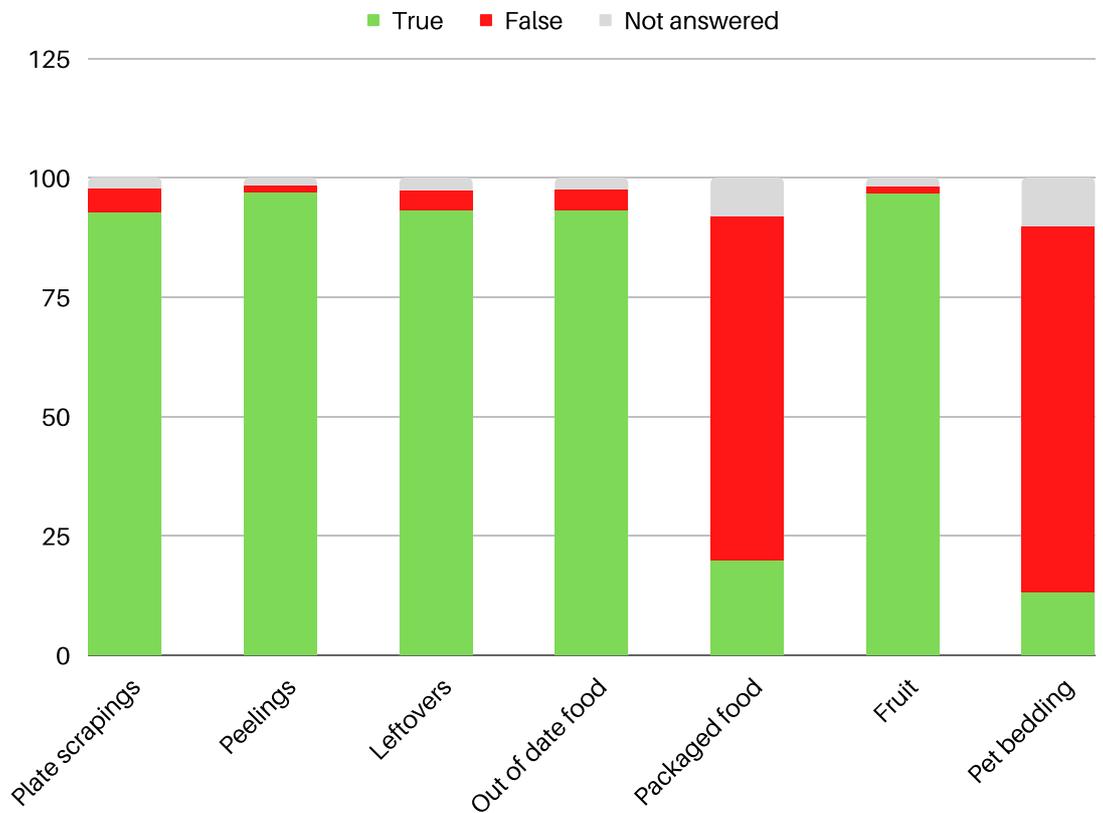
88% of respondents said this would be every week. This is positive as shows there is demand for a weekly food waste collection service.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 10 - The following items can be collected at the kerbside as part of the food waste collection service. True or False?

There seems to be a reasonably good understanding among respondents about the types of food waste types that can be recycled. Pet bedding and packaged food caused the most confusion and was not answered by everyone - presumably because the answer was unknown.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 11 -Do you have any further comments regarding the new separate food waste collection service?

This question was answered by 1,394 (46% of the total) respondents. This has been analysed and the most common themes that came out were:

- Positive comments - respondents thinking this was a good idea, looking forward to it starting and a well overdue service as other councils already do this.
- Liner queries- wondering if the liners need to be used and if the council will supply free liners.
- Caddy design queries - comments relating to the suitability of the caddies being able to keep vermin and pets out of them. Also making sure they are sealed so smells do not escape.
- More recycling options- respondents were keen to see other recycling options introduced from the kerbside mainly plastic pots, tubs and trays but also foil and tetra paks. Some thought this was more important than introducing a new food waste service.
- Less containers to store- some respondents were worried about not having the space to store the food waste caddies. Suggestions were put forward to reduce the boxes needed for dry recycling.
- The green bin works fine- many respondents were happy with the current arrangement of placing food waste in the green wheelie bin and did not see the reason or need for this to change. Suggestions included making the garden waste service free to encourage usage or to collect the garden waste bin weekly.

Liners
Plastic
Space
Why

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 11 continued...

- More information- respondents wanted more information about how the new service will work and what is classed as food waste. This was coupled with increasing education about reducing food waste for households.
- Financial - comments were left regarding how much providing the new service was costing the council, stating that this could be better spent on other services.
- Compost - a section of respondents stated that they already composted food waste at home therefore producing little other food waste therefore would not need the service. Other ideas included providing free home composters or compost to residents.
- Other comments that were provided included - whether the council would collect green wheelie bins from households if they were no longer needed, the environmental impacts of providing the new bins and lorries, whether the council would consider only supplying caddies to residents who need them and concerns around not having enough or too much food waste for the caddies.

“ We have very little food waste. What we do have we add to our own compost bin so for us the new service would be unnecessary and an avoidable expense. What little additional food waste we have we put in the green bin. ”
-comment from a respondent on question 11

More

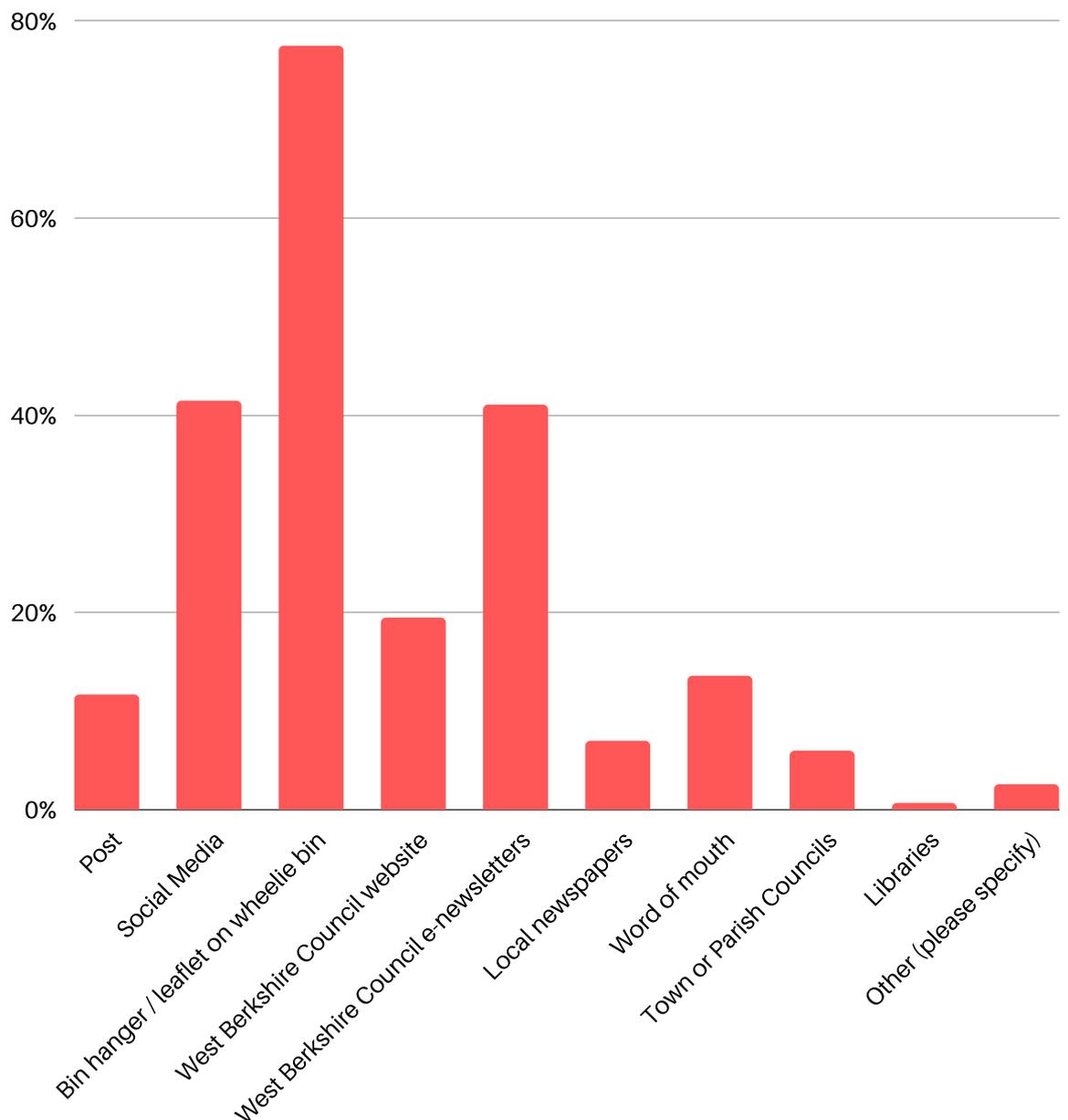
£

Home

SURVEY RESULTS

Question 12 -How do you normally hear about changes to recycling and rubbish collection service?

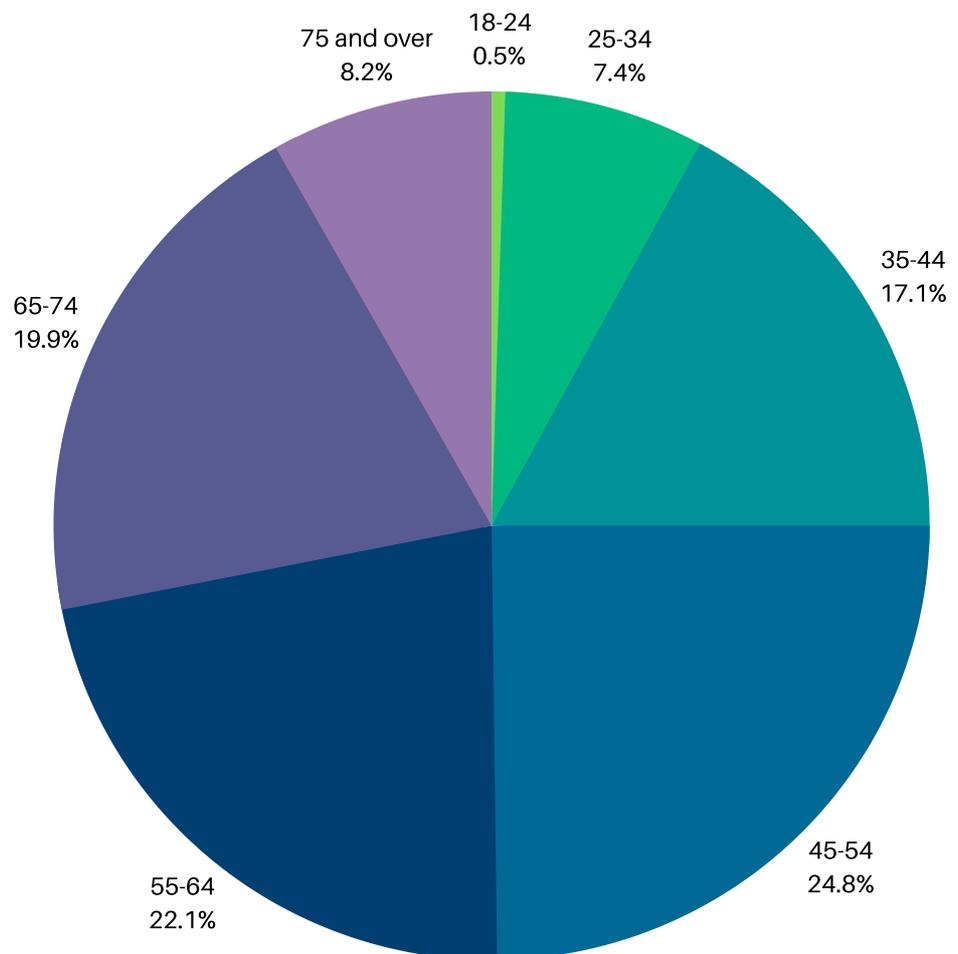
Bin hanger or leaflets was the most common way residents heard about changes to the service, followed by social media and West Berkshire Council e-newsletters.



SURVEY RESULTS

Question 13 -How old are you?

There was a fairly even mix of ages of respondents as below and three quarters of respondents were 45 years or older.



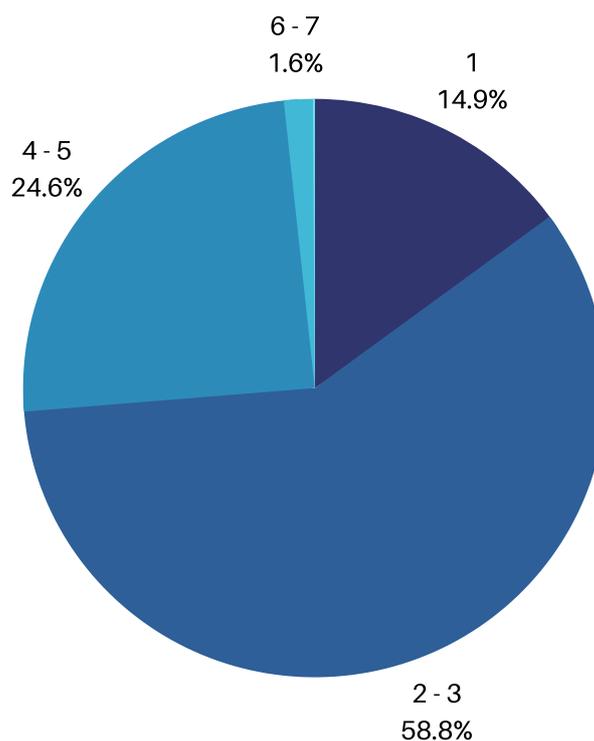
SURVEY RESULTS

Question 14 -Please tell us your postcode?

This was asked to ensure the survey was targeted appropriately at residents across the district. We got respondents from 14 different postcode regions.

Question 15 -How many people including yourself live in your household?

Two- three person households were the most common.



POSITIVE FEEDBACK

“ We think it's a wonderful idea. We receive a very good service already and all the refuse workers deserve 10/10. Exceptional thank you ”
-comment from a respondent on question 11

“ An excellent idea, long overdue. Wish it was starting earlier than the Autumn though. ”
-comment from a respondent on question 11

It is positive that the majority of respondents state they will use the new service and we were left with lots of positive comments on this. There was some constructive feedback left for us too.

Although not related to the new food waste collection some residents were keen to see other recycling options offered at the kerbside as soon as possible.

There were concerns raised about the cost of liners once the original supply had run out. Residents want to recycle food waste but worried the cost of liners may mean they cannot continue to do so.

In the comments section a proportion of residents had money related concerns of the cost that the new service was costing the council. Many reported that the current system of recycling food waste in with the garden waste was working fine for their household and there was no need for any change. This response was often coupled with concerns around storage of new containers.

Some respondents expressed concern about the amount of food waste produced by households and therefore more information should be provided to householders on reducing food waste which is more environmentally friendly.

KEY OBSERVATIONS:

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

“ Explain what is the point when I already put it in my green bin along with the garden waste - another recycling container to store is not welcome! ”

-comment from a respondent on question 8

Although the response to the new service is considerably positive there are some key challenges we need to overcome via our communication channels.

- Many residents already recycle food waste in the garden waste bin and therefore it is important we don't disengage these recyclers by making the system more complicated, we need to promote the benefits of a separate weekly collection service.
- Another key concern expressed by selected respondents was about a lack of storage space for even more recycling containers.
- Not having an ongoing provision of free biodegradable liners for the food waste caddy may cause a barrier of use of the service.

NEXT STEPS

We have taken what we learnt from your responses and, where possible, will use the relevant feedback to improve how the new service can be delivered. For example frequently asked questions produced for the website will be tailored to the queries raised.

Communication methods will be tailored to the most frequent method that residents hear about changed to our service e.g bin hangers and leaflets coupled with information being sent out on social media and the West Berkshire Council e-newsletters.

The key messages we will be promoting are:

- What types of food waste you can recycle
- How to use the service including liner queries
- What the benefits are of food waste recycling
- How to reduce food waste

Hopefully this will address concerns and encourage a high uptake of the service when it is rolled out.

If you have any queries related to this report, please send them to: recycle@westberks.gov.uk

