

Assessing the Success of the **One Manchester** Waste and Recycling Pilot

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*One Manchester is an organisation which provides both housing and community services, owning over 12,000 homes in Central, South, and East Manchester. Their ethos extends beyond being landlords, regularly looking into issues within the communities their houses are situated in. Within these communities, OM found that the waste and recycling produced by their tenants was often contaminated (incorrect use of bins) and their bin facilities were often obstructed by fly-tipping. Contaminated or obstructed bins will not be collected by Biffa or Manchester City Council. This not only created a huge problem for the OM Mobile Cleaning Team but also was having a negative effect on the appearance of OM owned land. Furthermore, littering and fly-tipping can be linked as major factors contributing to the prolific plastic pollution problem in Manchester. A recent study conducted by Jamie Woodward at Manchester University found that **our rivers had the highest levels of plastic pollution in the world** (Woodward et al., 2018).*

Objectives

The pilot study was conducted on one high rise block and 4 mid-rise streets which were chosen based on their low recycling participation and high contamination rates. The aim was to increase tenant recycling rates and participation, reduce the number of fly-tipping referrals, and reduce contamination and general misuse of bins and bin sheds. In turn, it was hoped this would improve tenant attitudes to both recycling and the appearance of their area.

This would be achieved through the following 4 action themes:

1. Communication and engagement with tenants around recycling education
2. Bin facility access and security improvements
3. Distribution of recycling provisions i.e. split bags and food caddies
4. Enforcement (dummy CCTV and signage to deter fly-tipping)



An example of improvements made to tenant bin rooms to improve both facility access as well as recycling education as part of the pilot.

Method

The success of the pilot was measured through:

1. The recording of blue and brown recycling bin capacity used by residents on pilot streets for 3 weeks before pilot implementation and 3 weeks after to monitor any changes in recycling rates,
2. Contamination of bins was also recorded to monitor whether the quality of recycling increased or decreased,
3. Fly-tipping referral rates between January and July 2017 and 2018 were compared in order to monitor any monthly or annual change in rates,
4. A pre- and post-pilot survey were conducted and compared in order to gauge whether the knowledge and attitudes of tenants towards waste and recycling improved during the pilot.

The recycling bin capacity data, the fly-tipping referral data, and the results of the pre-pilot survey were all collected before or during my internship by other employees at One Manchester. My involvement in the project was the analysis of the bin capacity data using Excel and the mapping of fly-tipping referrals using ArcGIS. I also designed, conducted and analysed the post-pilot survey myself.

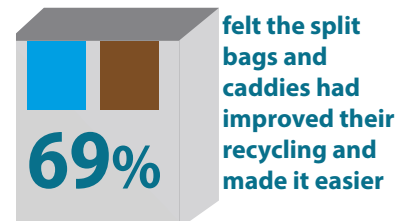
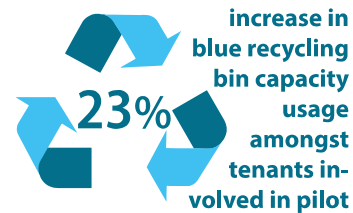
Limitations

Although the sample began with the inclusion of a high rise block, it was omitted from the analysis for the following reasons:

- Inability to place recycling provisions within the building due to new fire-safety restrictions following Grenfell.
- Omitted from bin depth analysis due to variable data for blue and brown recycling bin capacity usage. This was a result of inconsistent measurements.
- Omitted from post-pilot survey sample due to time and resource restrictions.

Key Findings

The positives...



The negatives...

- Although recycling waste levels increased, so did contamination levels, decreasing the quality of tenant waste and recycling.
- There was no decrease in fly-tipping referrals between May and July 2018 for the pilot streets despite dummy CCTV and signage acting as deterrents.

Conclusion

The post-pilot survey showed tenants had responded positively to the facility improvements and distribution of recycling provisions in order to make recycling both easier and more pleasant. However, the negatives suggest that continued guidance is needed in terms of best waste and recycling practice in order to curb rising contamination levels and educate the people of Manchester on the impact that fly-tipping has on their local community.

As part of my report, I made a number of recommendations:

- A post-pilot leaflet to be designed and distributed to tenants involved in the pilot in order to inform them both of the successes of the pilot, but also to reiterate their responsibility to continue practising waste and recycling behaviour correctly. The leaflet should focus on simplifying information about fly-tipping, bulky waste and recycling techniques to achieve higher levels of understanding.
- Fly-tipping signage to be revised. Simpler, more pictorial signage should be considered. In addition, opting for more commonly seen words such as 'dumping' instead of 'fly-tipping', may draw the eye more, but also catch an audience of all languages and abilities.