

5. Communications, outreach and engagement

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Since 2006, NLWA has delivered a progressively ambitious programme of communications, engagement and outreach in partnership with our boroughs.

In 2022-23 we developed and published [Preserving Resources, Driving Change](#), which sets out our approach to community engagement, communications and policy work to enable a reduction in residual waste in north London from autumn 2022 to mid-2025.

Members advised that a collaborative approach should be taken, and recommended priority themes. The draft plan was presented and approved in October 2022. The plan was finalised and published in January 2023.

The Plan was developed with input from borough officers and was discussed at a series of workshops with stakeholders. The aim is to draw on the collective expert experience of NLWA and constituent boroughs, apply behaviour change methodologies, use existing research and test and evaluate approaches as work is developed and delivered.

The Plan is designed to succeed through collaboration, and priorities have been set that have importance to north London residents and sector stakeholders.

The priorities are to:

- Enable communities to deliver change on the ground by providing residents with prevention, reuse, and repair opportunities
- Campaign for change
- Working in partnership
- Educate and inform residents
- Support our boroughs

- Work with businesses

We ensure our communications, campaigns and engagement activities are based on audience insights and research to ensure we can reach residents as effectively as possible. We reach our audiences through a variety of ways, including:

- Face-to-face at events organised by NLWA and partners
- Information on our websites
- Information on our boroughs' websites
- Social media: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn
- Outdoor advertising
- Local newspaper advertising
- National, regional and trade press



North London Community Fund projects promote repair and upcycling

Summary of engagement in 2022-23

We reached residents through our online, press, social media and advertising offer.

Activity	People reached/engaged
Face-to-face events	845 people
NLWA websites	642,520 visits
Social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn)	6,790,343 views of all posts
Outdoor advertising	3,753,250 potential number of people who saw the adverts
Local newspaper advertising	336,258 number of copies printed and distributed
National, regional and trade press	1,678,098,524 total views of all publications

Table 5: Number of residents reached through our communications and outreach in 2022-23

Project highlights

North London Community Fund

Since its launch in 2017, the North London Community Fund enables change at grassroots level, tapping into existing community networks and creating local advocates.

In 2022-23 the Authority awarded £75,624.50 to seven projects delivering activities at the local community level. Organisations provided a variety of in-person waste prevention focused activities for residents to participate in, also some used the funding to improve infrastructure associated with their operations that directly benefit residents.

The activities included:

- Electrical repair delivered by young trainees
- Woodwork training events using scrap wood
- Mixed events and activities focused on textiles, food and electrical waste prevention
- Infrastructure support for refill and food distribution activities

In recognition of its success, we increased the North London Community Fund to £250,000 from 2023-24.

Timings for the fund were adjusted in 2022-23 to allow a longer lead-in time, and delivery of activities over the summer of the following year. Thirty-eight bids were received, and funding was awarded to 17. They aim to reduce a range of types of waste including bulky waste, waste electricals, food, textiles, compost, paint, and nappies.



One of our North London Community Fund recipients, Octopus Communities in Islington

Waste Prevention Exchange conference

Planning was underway for the annual NLWA sector-focused conference, on 18 May 2023, providing a forum to share good practice on waste prevention initiatives. The programme for the 2023 event focuses on systems thinking which allows us to identify the barriers to and opportunities within moving to a more circular economy. Sector specialists were recruited to speak across a range of topics that bring a focus on opportunities for positive change within the waste sector.

Reusable nappy fund

The scheme operated across all the north London boroughs and provided vouchers of £54.15 per baby to parents/carers to use against reusable nappies or a nappy laundry service. In the year, 863 people signed up to the scheme. There is an assumption that whilst a person has redeemed a voucher their baby will continue to use reusable nappies for at least two years, therefore the benefits of disposable nappy waste is experienced for more than one year. For the period of 2022-23, it is estimated that 994 tonnes were avoided from 3,328 children. In March 2023 we agreed to increase the value of the voucher to £70 from 1 April 2023.

Flats above shop food waste trial

The Authority supported Hackney Council and Islington Council in the launch of innovative trials to provide food waste collection services for flats above shops. NLWA and borough council officers spoke to residents on doorsteps, created communications materials and produced a monitoring approach to measure the service uptake and behaviour change. Those trials continue and learnings are being disseminated across all constituent boroughs in 2023-24.



An Islington resident added to the new flats above shops food waste recycling trial

Repair and upcycling events

A series of repair and upcycling events were delivered providing residents with the opportunity to hear from experts and business owners, see upcycling demonstrations and take part in hands-on repair activities focusing on furniture and soft home furnishings. The events were well received with over 650 residents attending and participating in talks and workshops delivered by 21 different organisations operating within the north London reuse, repair, and upcycling sector.



Residents attending a repair and upcycling event in Islington

Single-use plastic reduction

We started developing an evidence-led behaviour change campaign to get residents to use reusable alternatives to single-use plastics. The intervention based on the Behaviour Change Wheel will be delivered

in 2023-24 and will demonstrate expected behaviours, feature community members, educate on the environmental consequences of single-use plastics, generate commitments to reuse and refill, and ask businesses to display behaviour related messaging and prompts in their premises.

ReUse Shop promotional campaign

NLWA has a reuse shop at Kings Road Reuse and Recycling Centre.

During 2022-23, we ran an advertising campaign to encourage more people to visit the shop. This included local newspaper advertising, digital on-street panels and targeted social media advertising. Outcomes from this promotion include:

- 6,443 people visited the [ReUse Shop webpage](#) on NLWA's website.
- [ReUse Shop Instagram account](#) gained 374 new followers.
- Reached 35,000 people through social media advertising.
- Outdoor advertising was seen 3,753,250 times.
- Newspaper adverts reached 336,258 people.



A newspaper advertisement for the ReUse Shop in Chingford

Reaching residents through digital channels

We use digital channels to make it as easy as possible for residents to find information about local services. However, with 77% of UK residents regularly finding information about services online and 65% regularly using social media ([Office for National Statistics](#)), we can also use digital channels to reach new audiences and try to influence and persuade them.

During 2022-23, around 500,000 people visited NLWA's website. While reuse and recycling centres remain very popular pages, most of our web traffic now relates to our [A-Z waste search](#) which allows residents to search 'what to do with' a whole array of different household items. Last year 431,000 searches were carried out on the A-Z and top searches were furniture, paint, electricals, clothes and carrier bags.

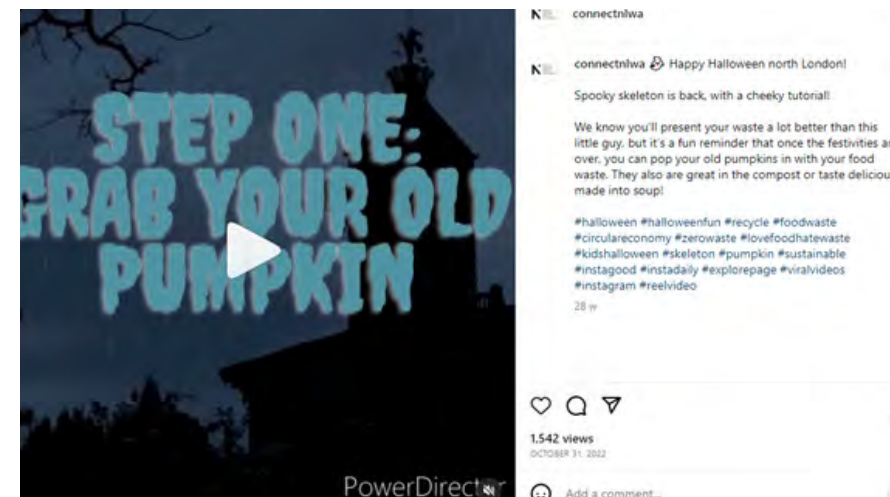


The A-Z waste search, the most popular function on NLWA's website

We regularly post on NLWA's social media accounts, and, across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, we have over 10,000 followers. We also run a series of advertising campaigns designed to target a specific audience. We ran 18 digital campaigns in 2022-23 which promoted waste prevention and recycling behaviours, often linked to key cultural events, awareness days or weeks. Examples include:

- Recycle Week 2022
- Halloween waste prevention and food waste recycling
- Back to school waste prevention tips
- Low waste (New Year) resolutions
- Nature cure – nudging people to connect with nature to encourage sustainable behaviours
- NLWA's guide to running a sustainable textiles event

Collectively, these campaigns generated over 5 million impressions and 105,000 engagements. They also drove 21,884 people to NLWA's website.



A Halloween Instagram post which encouraged residents to put used pumpkins in a compost or food waste recycling bin

Research and insight

Education research

We commissioned Keep Britain Tidy to run a study with staff, parents and pupils representing 61 north London primary schools. The aim was to understand the priority areas of interest and gaps relating to waste minimisation education in north London primary schools.

A key theme arising was that having support from an expert regarding waste, and on-going contact for that is important to schools. Also, providing teaching resources and ensuring the correct infrastructure is in place in the schools are essential to help teach on and implement waste prevention. Work commenced on developing an education hub on the NLWA website and creating a strategy to support waste prevention education in north London schools.

Audience insights research

NLWA commissioned Savanta to understand north Londoners' capability, opportunity, and motivations in relation to waste prevention behaviours. The outcome identified four audience profiles, and showed that overall, 76% of north Londoners agree waste reduction is important. Of those, 42% rank environmental reasons as their top motivation. The insights from this work are being used to support the behaviour change activity being developed for the various audiences.

Big Plastic Count

In summer 2022, thousands of people took part in The Big Plastic Count, an initiative led by Greenpeace and Everyday Plastic which asks people to record all the plastic they use in one week. NLWA partnered with Everyday Plastic to provide north London-specific data. Over eight thousand people from more than 3,000 north London households were surveyed in May 2022 revealing that in just one week, these homes threw away a staggering 191,710 pieces of plastic. The insights from that work are being used for joint campaigning and

targeted messaging on the extensive issue of unnecessary plastics and the challenges of dealing with it.

Reuse and recycling centre research

We surveyed north Londoners to understand their out-of-home recycling habits, including awareness of and willingness to use reuse and recycling centres (RRC). Results found that 80% reported recycling unwanted electrical items; 60% took clothes to a charity shop; 40% took batteries to a recycling point and 23% took light bulbs to a recycling point.

In addition, 46% of those surveyed said they had ever visited a north London RRC and 65% said it was 'very important' that as much RRC material as possible was reused or recycled. Of the people who had visited an RRC, 82% travelled by car. Findings from the survey were used to inform campaigning, including a 2023-24 RRC promotional campaign encouraging residents to walk or cycle to sites.

Campaigning

In our Waste Prevention Plan 2022-25, we set out our intention to campaign for systemic change. NLWA and its boroughs welcome reforms set out in the government's Waste and Resources Strategy in 2018. However, the need for legislative action to prevent waste is urgent if we truly want to tackle the Climate Emergency.

As part of our campaigning, we made the following calls to government:

- Reinstate its 2023 start date for proposed Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation and to include difficult-to-recycle products such as mattresses, carpets, nappies, wet wipes, cigarettes, chewing gum and plant pots
- Make a commitment that money raised from EPR – expected to be about £1 billion – all goes to local government.

- Introduce a 50p charge on single-use, plastic-lined coffee cups.
- Extend its ban on plastic plates and cutlery to far more single use plastics.
- Ban unnecessary packaging on loose fruit and vegetables like plastic bags for bananas, net bags for onions and plastic wrap for cucumbers, in line with the [Everyday Plastic](#) campaign.
- Give local authorities the necessary funding and powers to make recycling compulsory.
- Increase the current packaging levy (Packaging Recovery Note) from 10% to 30% in the interim and give funds to local councils for waste prevention initiatives as well as to help councils improve and extend reuse, repair, and recycling services.

In March, the Chair of NLWA [wrote to the Chancellor and the Under Secretary of State](#) at the new Department of Business and Trade, urging them not to delay or water down Extended Producer Responsibility and the newly announced Deposit Return Scheme. We also pointed out the lack of local council involvement in planning for the Deposit Return Scheme. While the scheme is welcomed in principle, local authorities have valuable insights which, if ignored, could impact the scheme's effectiveness.

This letter was sent after the media reported some lobbying by retailers and producers against both schemes.

Responses to consultations

During 2022-23, we responded to four Government consultations:

- Reform of waste carriers-brokers and dealers in England
- Developing the UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS)
- Preventing charges for DIY waste at household waste recycling centres and call for evidence on booking system at household waste recycling centres
- Environmental Targets (waste section)

Full consultation responses are available on nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/consultation-responses



Gateway Road Reuse and Recycling Centre