

# 3. Waste Prevention

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- 3.1** The best waste management option for north London residents is to avoid the production of waste in the first place and thereby reduce the environmental impact and cost of collecting and treating it. Since 2006, North London Waste Authority (NLWA) (the Authority) has delivered a progressively more ambitious waste prevention programme in partnership with the seven constituent boroughs to encourage a reduction in collected waste. Despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19 towards the end of the 2019-20 financial year, the Authority was able to further develop some of the existing programmes of behavioural change as well as introducing some new initiatives.
- 3.2** There were three key themes to the work:
- Reducing food waste
  - Encouraging the reuse of furniture
  - Exchanging and mending clothes
- 3.3** The programme also included face-to-face communication with residents to increase recycling, which is reported upon elsewhere in this report.
- 3.4** Additional programmes of activity were delivered to reduce the amount of single-use plastic that is disposed of and encourage a reduction in unwanted mail, as well as to encourage a reduction in the number of disposable nappies that are thrown away. The following sections of the report set out the achievements in each area.



- 3.5** The 2019-20 financial year was the second year of the two-year North London Waste Prevention Plan 2018-20 (the Plan), the overall aim of which was to reduce waste arisings in north London by 20,000 tonnes over the two years.

### Food waste prevention

- 3.6** One of the Authority's strategic priorities is to reduce the amount of food waste that is thrown away in north London. During 2019-20, NLWA officers and contractors delivered an extensive outreach programme, speaking to 10,934 people face to face at roadshows, public events and stalls in supermarkets. The average household can save up to £600 each year by reducing the amount of food waste they throw away.
- 3.7** The food waste prevention outreach programme was supplemented by social media activity, which was used to share practical advice about food waste prevention. Table 1 below shows the breakdown of events and conversations by borough and details of social media activity. Further details of communications activity is included in Section 8 of this report:

Borough	Events delivered	Number of conversations about food waste	Impressions on social media	Engagements on social media
Barnet	17	1,451	4,298	55
Camden	20	1,997	5,070	60
Enfield	17	1,375	2,308	23
Hackney	12	1,390	2,309	33
Haringey	13	1,025	2,847	41
Islington	21	2,295	5,555	60
Waltham Forest	13	1,401	3,233	19
Activity across all seven boroughs			14,298	209
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>10,934</b>	<b>39,918</b>	<b>500</b>
2018/19 comparison	114	13,510	52,821	1,287

**Table 1.** Events, conversations and social media activity about food waste prevention during 2019-20

- (1) Impressions are the number of times adverts or posts are seen by online users  
(2) Engagements mean when someone 'likes', shares or comments on your content

**3.8** The total number of events attended by NLWA included 28 information stalls held in supermarkets, 35 stalls at large outdoor events, nine events in colleges and universities, 14 events in offices during 'Green Office Week', seven outdoor cookery demonstrations (Waste Less, Lunch Free events), 13 parent sessions held as part of a schools waste prevention project, one event as part of the 'Save Your Spuds' project, four events during European Week for Reduction and two events during Zero Waste Week.

**3.9** NLWA officers also delivered 14 food waste prevention presentations and workshops. Groups that benefitted included Grahame Park Community Drop-In and Independent Living Group (Barnet), the Tamil Group (Enfield), Ihsan Children's Centre (Hackney) and Holmcroft House residents (Waltham Forest).

**3.10** The programme of food waste prevention activity also included displays in north London libraries. At the year-end there were 18 food waste prevention displays across all seven north London boroughs.

**3.11** Potatoes and bread are two of the most wasted items of food. Following on from the success of a 2018-19 bread waste prevention project called 'Save A Crust', a new initiative, 'Save Your Spuds', was developed with a focus on potatoes. The project aimed to raise awareness of the amount of potatoes that go to waste and to provide north London residents with tips and advice to make the most of the potatoes they buy. The project included:

- A high-profile event on 29 February 2020 at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre in Enfield, which included a cooking demonstration and distribution of free samples of the recipes prepared.
- Seven free-of-charge cookery workshops which were to be held in north London schools at the end of the school day. Due to school closures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, only three of the seven workshops took place.

## Encouraging furniture reuse

**3.12** Furniture is the second of the priorities in the waste prevention plan. Although furniture is thrown away less frequently than food, it is bulky and heavy and often has a relatively high potential for reuse and upcycling.

**3.13** On 16 November 2019, NLWA delivered the London Upcycling Show and Competition for the fourth consecutive year. Groundwork London was contracted to organise both the competition and show, which are focal points for encouraging furniture reuse in north London. The show took place during the European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR), which ran from 16 to 24 November 2019.



**3.14** The London Upcycling Show and Competition consisted of two elements:

- An **upcycling competition** for north London residents which ran from 23 September to 13 October 2019. The 21 entrants were given a piece of unwanted furniture which they had to upcycle in time for the show. The competition was judged by Tommy Walsh of BBC's 'Groundforce' show and vlogger Georgina Burnett (The Home Genie). Two free workshops were also organised for competition entrants so they could borrow tools and seek expert advice. The workshops took place at one of two Groundwork London reuse hubs in north London - 'the Loop' in Hackney.
- A **one-day exhibition** featuring the judging of the competition, announcement of winners and award of prizes, demonstrations and workshops, as well as exhibits from a range of reuse, repair and upcycling organisations of furniture, textiles, electrical items and home wares.

**3.15** The exhibition was attended by 366 visitors and included 21 stalls. In 2018-19 there were 341 visitors and 20 stalls. Seven of the stall holders provided information and ran interactive activities and demonstrations on their stalls. Activities ranged from learning to use wood-cutting power tools and making door signs, to children's activities.

**3.16** The Show was supported by Waltham Forest Borough of Culture volunteers who helped make the event a part of the borough's cultural events for 2019. The volunteers made a valuable contribution to the event and in particular engaged many more participants than in previous years in providing feedback about the event.

**3.17** Communications activity to extend the impact of the show and raise the profile of the event is included in Section 8.16.

## Exchanging and mending clothes

- 3.18** Between September 2019 and February 2020, the Authority delivered **21 Repair Café events** (three in each north London borough). This year's Repair Cafés built on some trial events delivered in 2018-19.
- 3.19** Overall, 297 residents participated in the 21 repair cafes. A total of 495 items weighing 1.5 tonnes were brought for repair, out of which 422 items (1.3 tonnes) were fully or partly repaired. Attendance was higher, (297 compared to 240) as was the number of items brought for repair (495 compared to 262), compared to the previous year.
- 3.20** In addition to potentially repairing an item, the repair specialists explained the fixing process so that the owner could repair the items themselves in the future.
- 3.21** NLWA also contracted Olga Agency to deliver 14 clothes swap or **Swish and Style events**, which also included clothing repair and upcycling workshops.
- 3.22** The aim of the events was to attract at least 640 residents and divert a minimum of 1.2 tonnes of textiles via reuse, repair and upcycling. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the final two events were cancelled. However, the project still exceeded its objectives; the 12 events attracted 1,059 attendees and diverted more than 2.5 tonnes of textile waste from disposal.

### IMPACT

More than **2.5 tonnes of textiles diverted from disposal** at 12 swish and style events

## Additional waste prevention activity

- 3.23** Additional activity during the year included a **waste prevention education programme** designed to encourage behavioural change amongst pupils, with supporting activities for parents and school staff. The aim was to increase knowledge of the waste hierarchy and waste prevention practices that could be embedded into everyday life in school and at home. Fourteen schools were involved in the project. Based on waste audit data from start and end of project waste audits, the project was responsible for a total decrease of 41% in waste arisings from participating schools.

### IMPACT

**Waste volumes decreased by 41%** from the 14 schools participating in the NLWA waste education project.

Source: Results of audits in participating schools.

- 3.24** With single-use plastics still high on the public agenda (and highlighted in the Defra Resources and Waste Strategy) in July 2018 NLWA initiated a **new project called Low Plastic Zones**. The aim of the project was to provide a demonstration that retail businesses could successfully be prompted and assisted to reduce single-use plastic, in turn supporting a reduction in the amount of single-use plastics thrown away across north London. Borough officers, in liaison with Authority Members, selected an area in their respective boroughs and visited businesses located within that area to encourage them to sign up to a North London Charter of Commitment to reduce single-use plastic.
- 3.25** To participate in the initiative a business had to commit to eradicate a minimum of one single-use plastic item from a range of options. Once a business achieved the required standard,

it would then be accredited as being ‘low plastic’. For an area to be accredited as a Low Plastic Zone more than 50% of the businesses operating in the area had to be accredited as ‘low plastic’. Farringdon in Islington was the first area to be accredited and the launch event took place on 5 February 2020 at Crowcross Street in Farringdon.

**IMPACT**  
First Low Plastic Zone launched in Farringdon, more than 50% of businesses took action to eradicate single-use plastic items.

- 3.26 The project is still underway and four out of seven north London boroughs (Camden, Enfield, Islington and Waltham Forest) have areas which have been accredited as ‘Low Plastic Zones’. Work in Hackney and Haringey is still in progress whilst Barnet is in the process of selecting a suitable area of focus.
- 3.27 NLWA continues to pay a subsidy of £54.15 per baby to parents in north London who use reusable nappies rather than disposable ones. The level of subsidy reflects the saving to NLWA of not having to dispose of the nappies in the waste stream. There are two schemes offered to the boroughs: a voucher scheme where parents receive a voucher that can be redeemed against the cost of a reusable nappy and a cash-back scheme where parents can claim back the subsidy after they have purchased the nappies. The voucher scheme, administered by Real Nappies for London (RNfL) includes as members: Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest. Barnet is a member of the cash-back scheme.
- 3.28 The uptake of the reusable nappy scheme subsidy more than doubled in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19 (rising from 699 vouchers/cash-back claims in 2018-19 to 1,723 in 2019-20. The estimated tonnage of waste avoided as a result was 823 tonnes.

**IMPACT**  
An estimated 823 tonnes of nappy waste avoided as a result of the reusable nappy scheme

- 3.29 On 28 February 2020 the Authority held its sixth **North London Waste Prevention Exchange** one-day conference at the Inmarsat Conference Centre in Islington. Environment Media Group was commissioned to assist with promoting and delivering the event. The theme of the event was ‘embedding reuse and repair into everyday life’ with a focus on reuse and repair of items such as furniture and textiles. The free conference was attended by 110 delegates, including officers from central government, regional authorities, local authorities and the third and private sectors.



- 3.30 For the third year, the Authority established and distributed funding through an annual **Waste Prevention Community Fund**. The Fund provides local community organisations with financial support to develop new approaches and initiatives for tackling waste prevention and to extend the reach and impact of waste prevention activity in north London. Five projects were funded in 2019-20:

**3.30.1 Bread n Butter’s Waste Warriors schools’ workshops** – a five-week programme about wasting less food and increasing recycling and reuse of certain materials (in particular plastic).

**3.30.2 Life After Hummus’ Cooking Club Socials** project - 30 cooking events and clothing swaps in Camden.

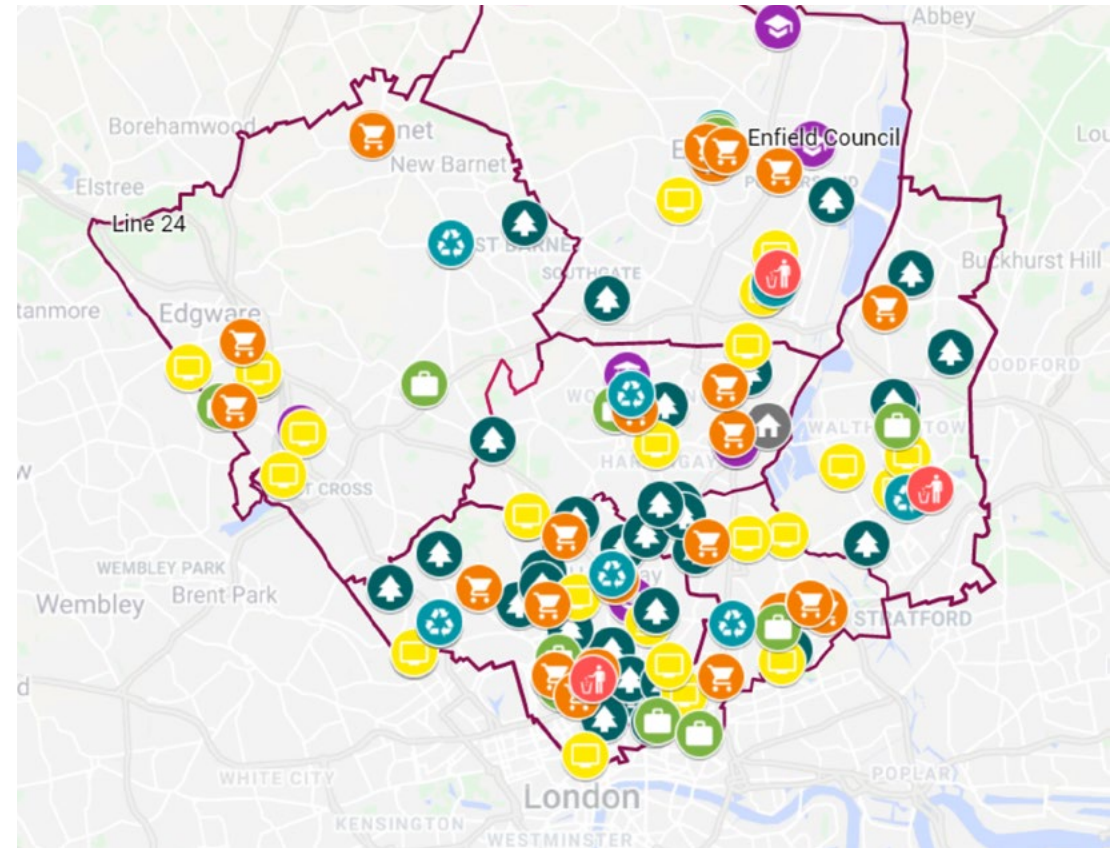
**3.30.3 Groundwork London’s CIRCLE (Communities Increasing Reuse Confidence, Levels & Expertise) project** - 20 upskilling workshops to educate and empower residents to repair and reuse household furniture and textiles. The workshops took place at two well-established furniture reuse workshops, ‘the Loop’, on the Grahame Park estate in Barnet and the Pembury estate in Hackney.



**3.30.4 London Community Resource Network (LCRN)** received funding to promote sustainable fashion and reuse through a large **festival of sustainable fashion**, held on 24 November during EWWR. Six organisations took part and 450 people attended.

**3.30.5 Frengle** (an online exchange platform) hosted four themed **Give and Take events** (free exchange events) across north London to enable residents to share unwanted goods.

**3.31** The map below shows the distribution of waste prevention activity in 2019-20.



	Presentations		Supermarket Stalls/Weekdays
	University and College Stalls		Recycle Week Stalls
	Weekend Events/Festival Stalls		Zero Waste Week Stalls
	Green Office		Refill Stall for National Refill Day