



September 2024

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Analysis of public consultation on recycling

Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot | Neath Port Talbot Council



About Data Orchard and Neath Port Talbot Council

Data Orchard combines specialist skills in research, statistics, and data with a passion for making the world a better place socially, economically, and environmentally. Our mission is to enable every nonprofit organisation to use data effectively to achieve their goals.

Neath Port Talbot Council is the local authority for the county borough of Neath Port Talbot, one of the 22 principal areas in Wales.

In this document, we report on our analysis of data from a public consultation on potential service changes to help increase recycling performance in Neath Port Talbot.

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Introduction

The Welsh Government has set recycling targets for all councils in Wales in order to make progress towards zero waste by 2050 and promote a circular economy.

For the past four years, the target has been to recycle 64% of all waste. This year the target has increased to 70%.

Each year, for every 1% that the recycling target is missed by, Neath Port Talbot Council faces fines of around £130,000.

Neath Port Talbot achieved recycling rates of around 67.7% for 2023/24.

Neath Port Talbot needs to consider further action to improve recycling rates in order to meet its targets.

In 2024, the council ran a public consultation to seek the views and input of residents to help understand the best ways in which to support people to recycle more of their domestic waste.

Methodology

The public consultation survey consisted of 27 questions with a mixture of closed and open response types. These were centred around the following themes:

- 🔍 Current recycling habits

- 🔍 Current food waste habits
- 🔍 Opinions on potential measures to increase recycling rates
- 🔍 Potential impacts on protected characteristics
- 🔍 Potential impacts on Welsh language
- 🔍 Demographic information

3,740 people responded to the consultation. These were primarily residents of Neath Port Talbot (90%) or worked for Neath Port Talbot Council (8%). Most responses were in English (99.6%), with only a small number in Welsh (0.4%). More information about respondent demographics can be found in the following section.

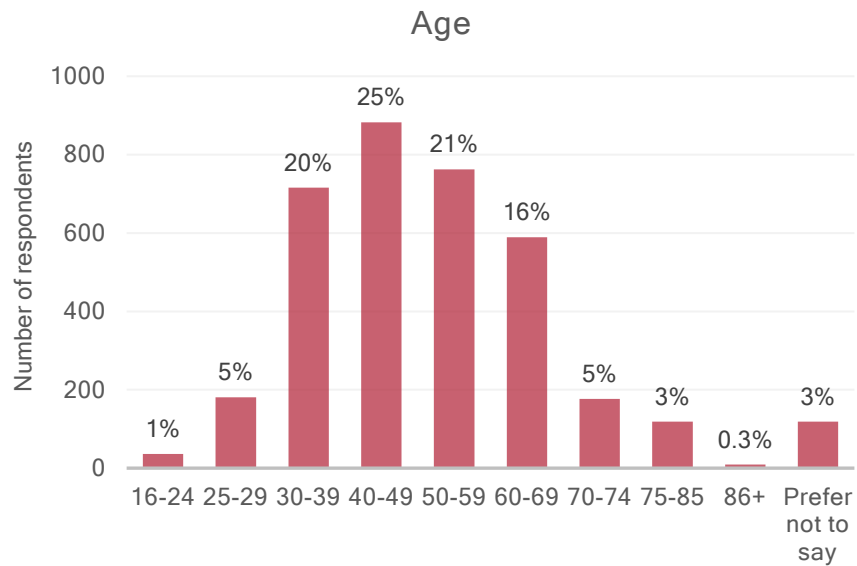
Common themes were extracted from qualitative responses and answers manually categorised for most free-text questions. Due to the volume of responses from those who disagreed with changes to the black bin and garden waste collections, themes were generated using Microsoft Copilot (providing anonymised comments only under enterprise security protection), then sense-checked and amended as needed by Data Orchard.

Findings

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Respondent demographics

Most respondents were between the ages of 30 and 69 (83%), with 40-49 being the most represented age bracket (25%).

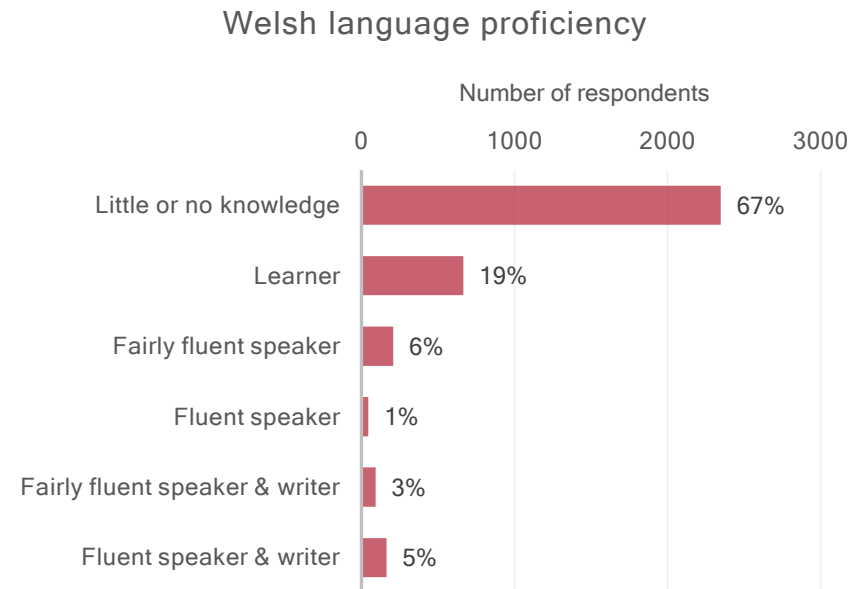


Two thirds (66%) of respondents identified as being female, with 27% identifying as male (27%), 0.4% non-binary and 0.3% another gender. 7% preferred not to say. The majority (93%) said that this was the gender they were assigned at birth. 0.3% said that it was different and 6% preferred not to say.

Most respondents (83%) identified their sexual orientation as being heterosexual, with 2% reporting being bisexual, 1% lesbian, 1% gay and 1% other. 13% of respondents preferred not to say.

Most respondents had little or no knowledge of the Welsh language (67%) or were learning (19%). 7% said that they were fluent or fairly

fluent Welsh speakers, and 8% that they were fluent or fairly fluent speakers and writers.



3% of respondents said they were pregnant or on maternity leave, while 92% said they were not and 5% preferred not to say.

21% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability, while 69% said they did not and 10% preferred not to say.

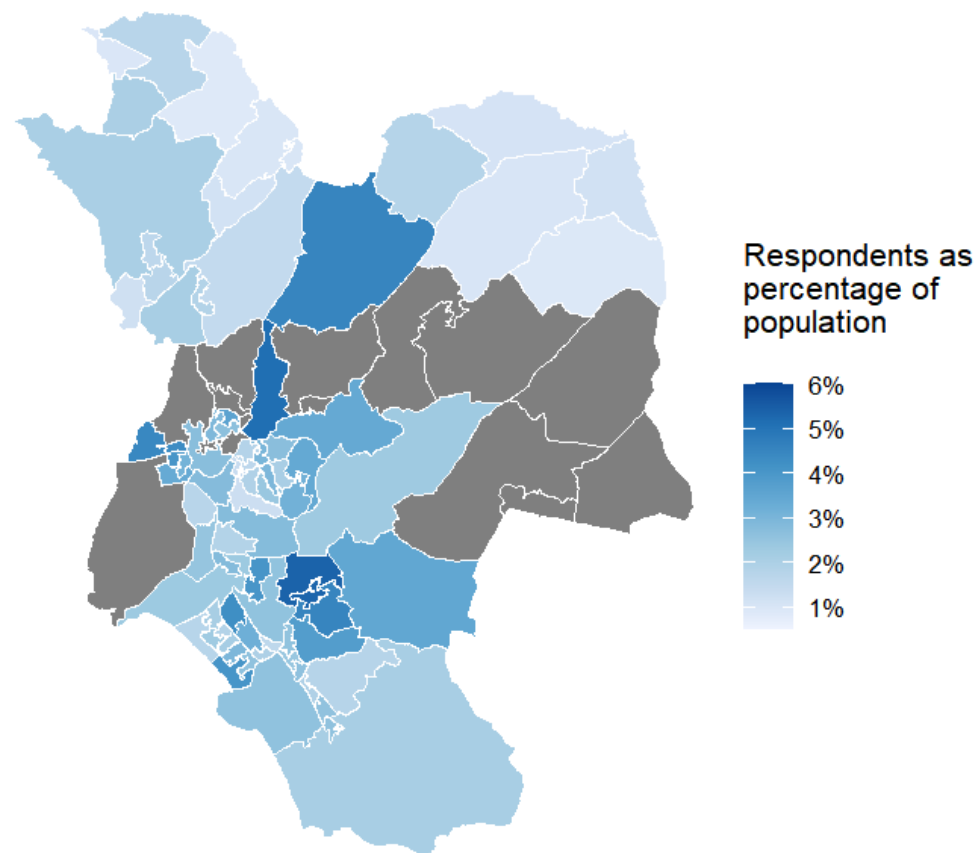
Most respondents identified their ethnicity as being White British (90%). 3% specified that they considered themselves to be White

Welsh. 3% were from other ethnic backgrounds and 4% preferred not to say.

Most respondents (77%) identified their nationality as being Welsh, with 12% identifying as British and 5% as English. 1% identified as other nationalities and 4% preferred not to say.

44% of respondents said that they had no religious beliefs, 42% that they were Christian, and 3% followed other religions. 11% of respondents preferred not to say.

Respondents were distributed across Neath Port Talbot as shown in the map opposite. Percentages are approximate based on population data from the Office for National Statistics ([2022 mid-year estimate of the usual resident population for LSOAs in England and Wales](#)). There were no responses from 13 of 91 LSOAs.



Recycling habits

Almost all respondents recycled plastics (100%), cardboard (99%), tins/cans etc. (99%) and glass (96%).

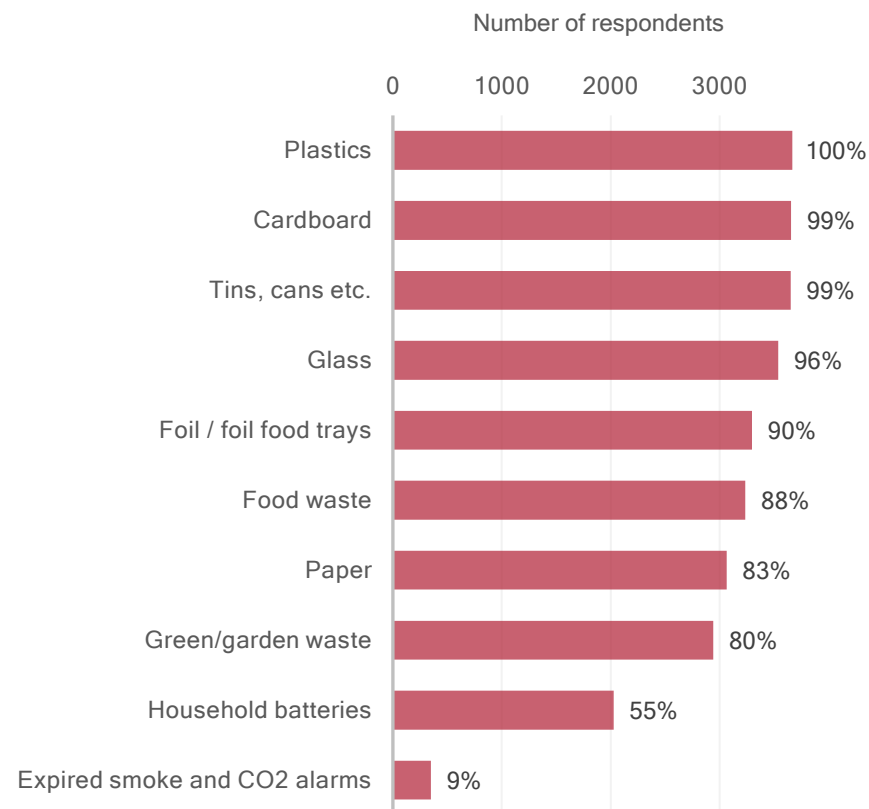
Fewer recycled foil (90%), food waste (88%), paper (83%) and green/garden waste (80%). Geographic variations in recycling of these products across Neath Port Talbot are shown on the following page. Those who did not recycle these products were more likely to be younger in age than the demographic profile across all respondents:

- Did not recycle foil: more likely to be aged between 25 and 39 (41% vs 25% across all respondents)
- Did not recycle food waste: more likely to be aged between 30 and 49 (57% vs 45% across all respondents)
- Did not recycle paper: more likely to be aged 30-39 (30% vs 20% across all respondents)
- Did not recycle green/garden waste: more likely to be aged 30-39 (27% vs 20% across all respondents)

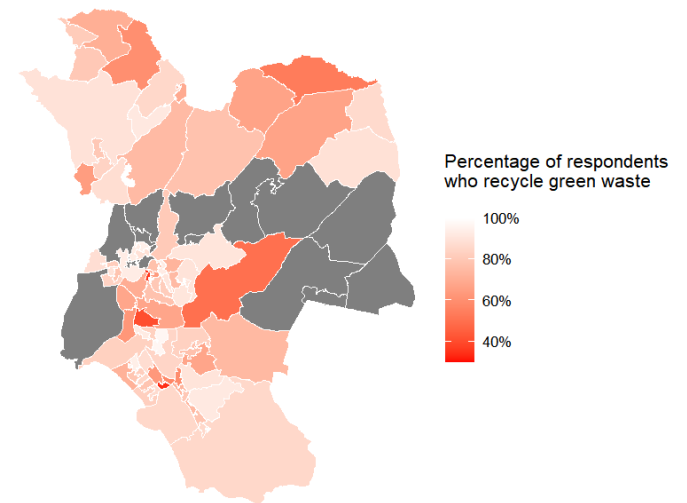
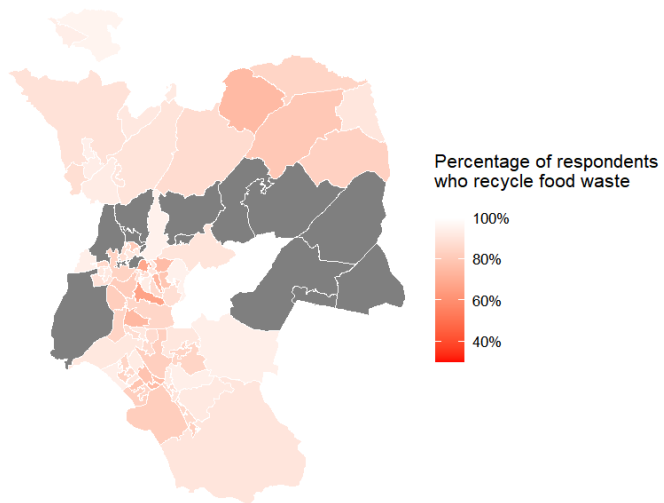
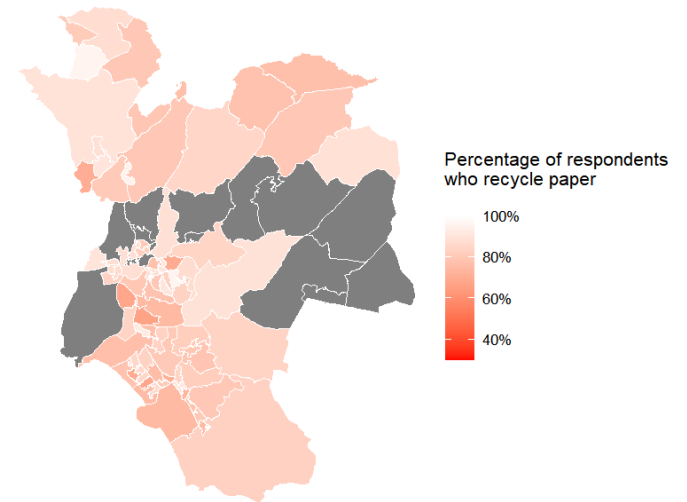
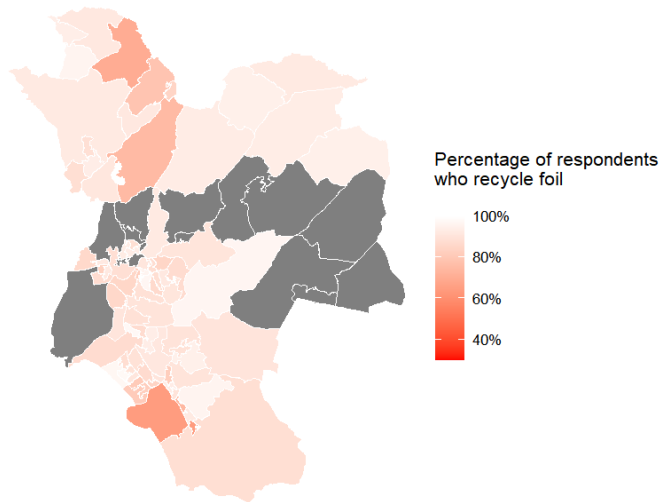
Only 55% reported recycling household batteries, and 9% expired smoke and CO₂ alarms.

43% of respondents said that nothing was preventing them from recycling more waste – they were already making every effort. 57% of respondents reported at least one barrier to recycling.

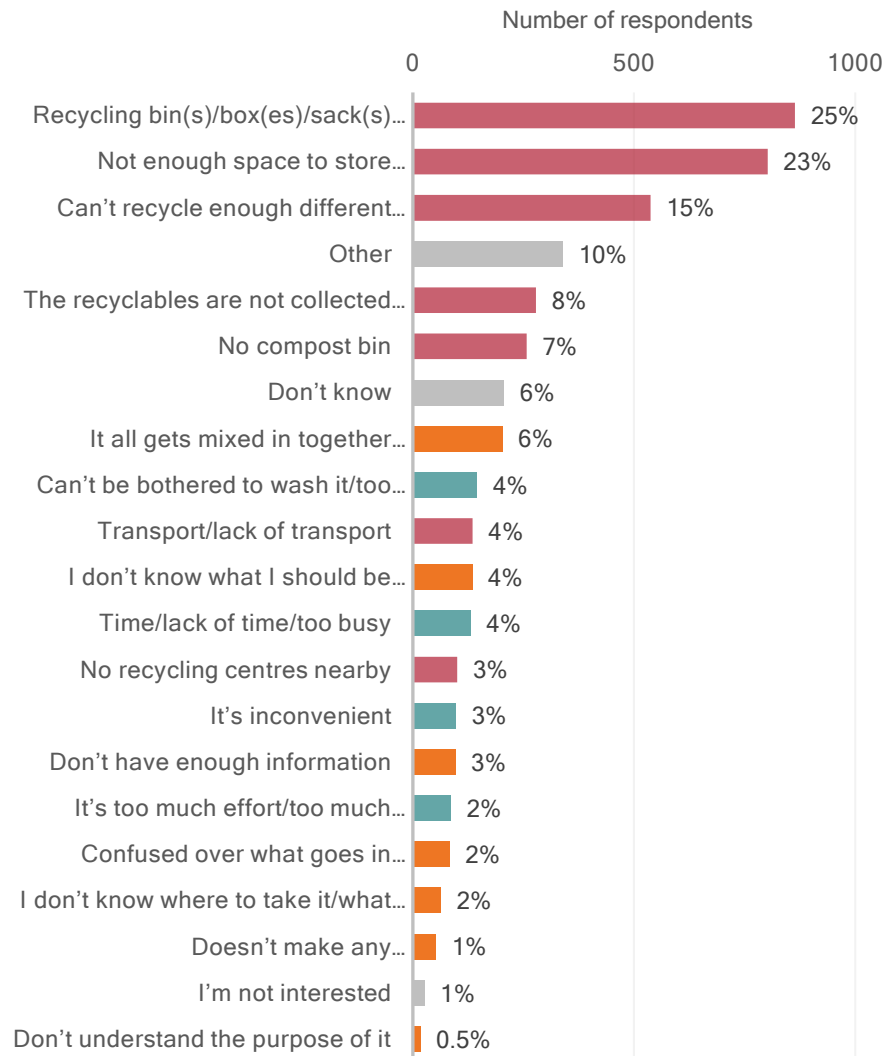
Recycling habits



The most reported barriers to recycling were that recycling bins/boxes/sacks were not big enough (25%), that respondents did not have enough space to store their recyclables (23%) and that they couldn't recycle enough different materials (15%).



Barriers to recycling



By grouping the barriers together as shown below, we found that 49% of respondents were facing barriers related to recycling equipment, services and facilities; 12% related to knowledge and understanding; and 9% related to time and capacity. 10% said they faced other barriers, 6% that they didn't know and 1% that they were simply not interested.

Equipment, services & facilities-related barriers	Knowledge & understanding-related barriers	Time & capacity-related barriers
Recycling bins/boxes/sacks not big enough	It all gets mixed in together anyway	Can't be bothered to wash it/too much hassle to wash it/smelly
Not enough space to store recyclables	I don't know what I should be recycling	Time/lack of time/ too busy
Can't recycle enough different materials	Don't have enough information	It's inconvenient
The recyclables are not collected often enough	Confused over what goes in which bags/boxes	It's too much effort/ too much hassle
No compost bin	I don't know where to take it/what to do with it	
Transport/lack of transport	Doesn't make any difference/doesn't help the environment	
No recycling centres nearby	Don't understand the purpose of it	

Those who felt that 'it all gets mixed in together anyway' were more likely to be between 25 and 49 years of age (63% vs 50% across all respondents) and to be disabled (28% vs 21% across all respondents).

Of those who specified 'other' barriers to recycling, the most mentioned issues were related to the collection service, including bins not being fully emptied; missed collections; broken equipment through careless handling; waste being dropped on the street; and seeing recycling being put in with general waste.

"Two things - firstly, it is very frustrating to separate paper and cardboard...only to see the recycling team put them into the same compartment in the recycling vehicle. Why are we asked to do this if there's no intention to keep them separate? Secondly, it is very frustrating when recycling/rubbish collection staff fail to pick up items that they have dropped. This happens frequently on my street, and often results in a trail of paper/plastics/tins etc being left in their wake (which then needs to be cleared up by a separate council team, or by residents). Not only does this put people off from cooperating with recycling, but it is also blatant littering (i.e. something that I would be fined for if spotted doing so)."

"The bags & boxes when emptied (doesn't always get emptied mind) are thrown by the bin men some distance away from where they were picked up... Occasionally the contents are accidentally spilled on the floor by the bin men, but are just left there, no cleaning up after themselves."

"I consider myself an exemplary recycler, but I was appalled the other week, when I witnessed an operative blatantly combining green waste with household refuse. Not just putting it into the same lorry, but actually emptying my already separated green waste into my non-recyclable black bin! I am sure that that was not an isolated case"

People also said that the recycling equipment was poor quality, flimsy and not fit for purpose.

"The bags provided are awful. They blow rubbish everywhere and get taken by the bin men leaving me without. If they take them they should replace them. Sturdier bins would be better as cats pee all over them and you can't put anything in them until the night before collection so people don't recycle as much because they don't have space to keep the recycling in the run up to collection."

“Bags look awful, they get so dirty, nowhere to store them, easily accessed by animals, gets messed up with the wind, recycling boys drop recycling all over the floor and don't pick up afterwards, unhygienic, would be better to have small secure bins.”

“Recycling hessian bags are not fit for purpose.”

People mentioned issues with pests including rats, cats, birds, foxes and flies, particularly regarding food waste.

“Food waste is not recycled after too many instances of flies/maggots in the bin when food left for even a week, let alone two weeks if the collection is missed.”

“Unhygienic to keep food waste rotting for a week in the house, and collecting it outside attracts rats. So it's better in the black bin.”

“The bags are encouraging rodents, if we had large bin like the black wheelie bins it would be better to stop the encouragement of rats”

Some mentioned the need for kerbside recycling of soft plastics.

Others said that replacement equipment or food bags were rarely available, took too long to be delivered or didn't turn up at all.

“The recycling equipment takes weeks to be replaced to include food bags & equipment that isn't returned by the collection teams”

“Recycling equipment is not delivered for a long time when ordered and a lot of the time is out of stock - last summer I wanted to order green waste bags and they were out of stock for most of the summer - if residents are asked to recycle more the stock control of ordering recycling equipment to supply to residents needs to improve”

“Despite repeated requests the council fail to supply equipment”

Food waste

Most respondents (74%) put all their food waste/leftovers into their food waste bin. A further 15% said most of their food waste went into the food waste bin.

5% said that all their food waste went into the non-recyclable black bin and 3% that most of it did.



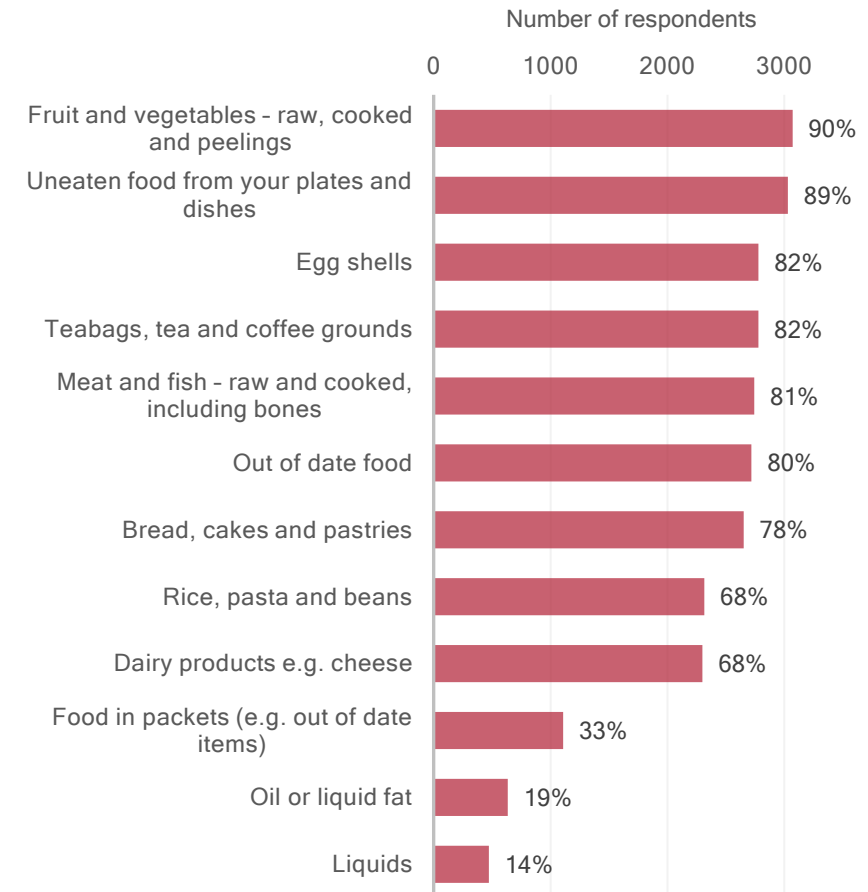
The majority did not compost food waste at home (80%), with 7% composting only sometimes.

The most recycled types of food waste were fruit and vegetables (90%) and uneaten food from plates and dishes (89%). Egg shells (82%), teabags/tea and coffee grounds (82%), meat and fish (81%)

and out of date food (80%) were also commonly recycled.

Respondents were least likely to report recycling food in packets (33%), oil/liquid fat (19%) or liquids (14%).

Types of food waste recycled



Regarding the way forward

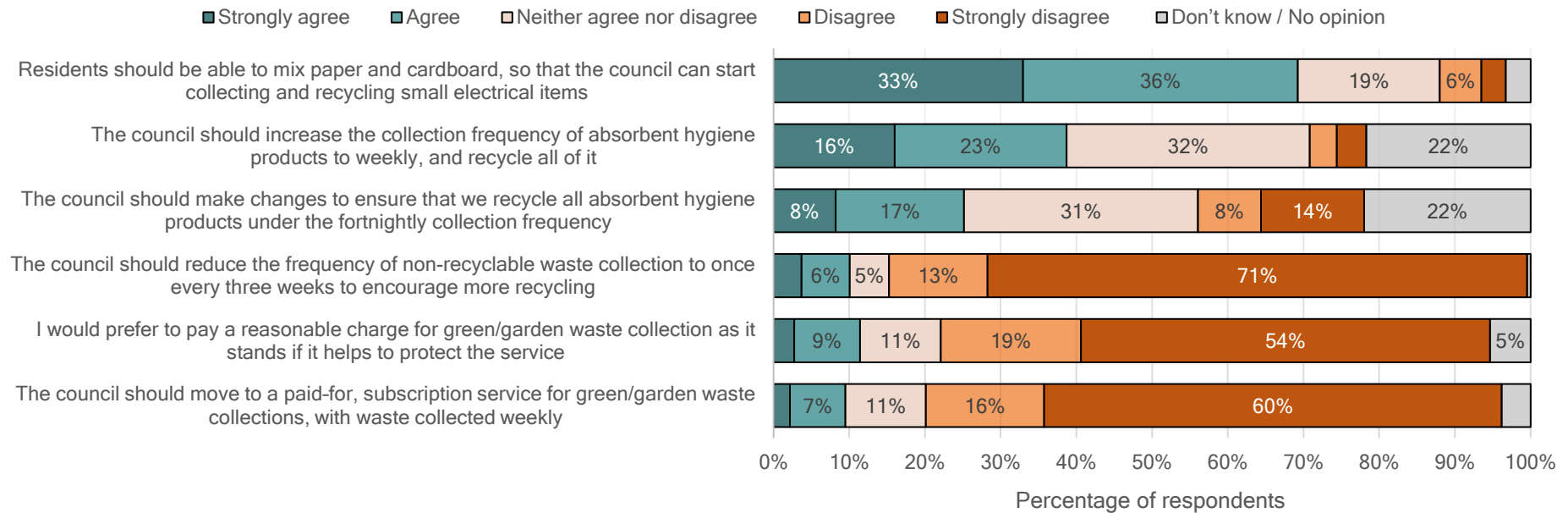
Most respondents (69%) agreed that residents should be able to mix paper and cardboard, so that the council could start collecting and recycling small electrical items.

More than a third of respondents (39%) agreed that the council should increase the collection frequency of absorbent hygiene products to weekly, and recycle all of it, while a quarter agreed that the council should maintain the current fortnightly collection frequency but make changes to ensure that all of it is recycled. A

large proportion responded neutrally or answered that they didn't know/had no opinion on these suggestions (54% and 53% respectively).

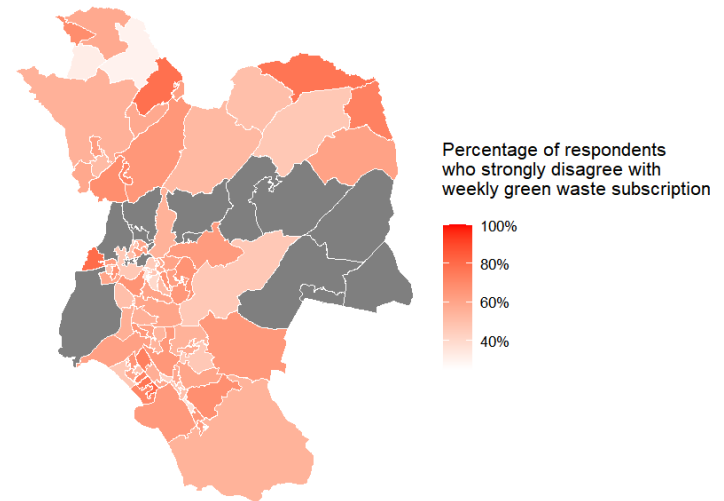
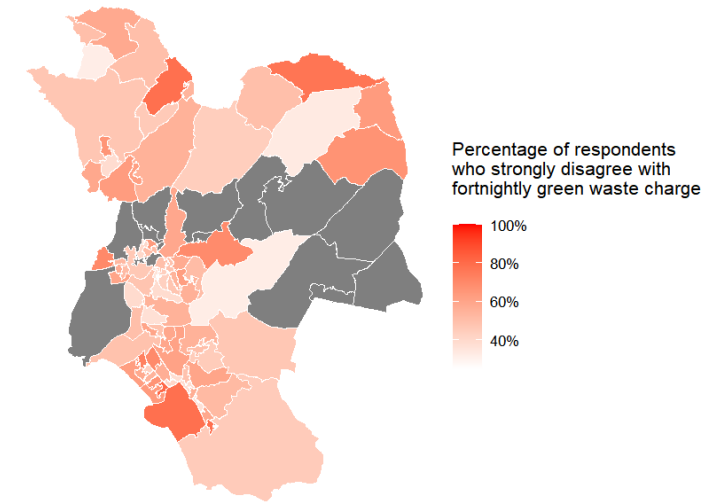
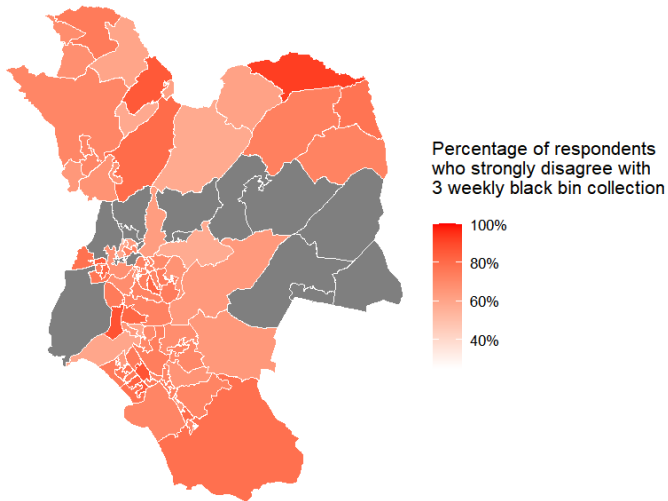
Most respondents disagreed that the council should reduce the frequency of non-recyclable waste collection to once every three weeks (84%). They also disagreed that the council should charge for green waste collection either at its current fortnightly frequency (73%) or with weekly collections (76%).

Feelings regarding potential service changes to increase recycling rates



The level of disagreement with proposed measures varied by location across Neath Port Talbot as shown below and opposite.

Those who were most discontent (strongly disagreed with all proposed changes to non-recyclable and green waste collections) were slightly less likely to be female (60% vs 66% across all respondents) and more likely to be male or have preferred not to report their gender (39% vs 34% across all respondents).



Why people disagreed that residents should be able to mix paper and cardboard, so that the council could start collecting and recycling small electrical items

Many of those who disagreed with this statement said that the need for electrical recycling was not frequent enough to warrant a collection service and that they were happy to take these items to a local recycling centre.

“Small electrical items are replaced infrequently. A person can make the odd trip to use a recycling centre.”

“It's rarely that these things need recycling and can easily be taken to the local recycling centre”

“Small electrical items aren't things that break often and as such shouldn't require a constant use of recycling staff time.”

They felt that priority should be given to improving the service for current items.

“It's more important current items are collected. These items people could just take to the tip”

“I'd rather my green waste collected as usual there's not going to be many electricals”

“I don't think collecting electrical items is priority over more used items.”

They also mentioned that there was not enough space to store paper and cardboard in a single box or bag.

“There's not enough space in one bag for both products”

“Our cardboard recycling and paper black boxes are already full without combining them”

“Mixing cardboard and paper will allow far less room for one or the other”

Many people who disagreed with this statement did not think there was anything that could be put in place to make the change acceptable – they wanted the service to remain as-is. Some suggested that the collection of electricals could be infrequent, e.g. once a month or once a quarter. Some suggested on-request collection or drop-off points at supermarkets/in car parks/at community centres.

“Maybe a monthly collection of small items but certainly not at the expense of the weekly paper etc collection”

“For those people who don't have transport perhaps small electrical items can be collected by request - maybe a similar system to requesting more food waste bags. I'm not sure whether the environment benefits from car emissions with driving to recycling centres for individual small electrical items.”

“Central electrical recycling points at supermarkets likely to be more cost effective.”

“Residents could take these items to a local collection point, e.g. Community Centres”

Some suggested that the bins/bags would need to be bigger to accommodate paper and cardboard together.

“You would need to change the recycling bins to accommodate both cardboard and shredded paper, it would need to be more secure than the bags provided for the cardboard as it would result in spillages on collection day.”

Why people disagreed that the council should increase the collection frequency of absorbent hygiene products to weekly, and recycle all of it

Most respondents who disagreed with this statement felt that the fortnightly collection frequency was sufficient.

Some respondents were concerned about the costs of increasing the frequency of this service. They did not support a change to weekly collections if it meant the green/garden waste service had to be charged for, or the black bin collection had to be reduced to every three weeks.

“If the only way this can happen is to introduce a charge for green waste, then I don’t believe increasing nappy waste to weekly is the answer”

“Not acceptable if it results in black bins being collected every 3 weeks”

Some respondents who disagreed felt that the changes could be acceptable as long as the service remained free and didn’t come at the cost of other waste collection services.

Why people disagreed that the council should make changes to ensure that all absorbent hygiene products were recycled under the current fortnightly frequency

Respondents who disagreed with this statement mostly felt that absorbent hygiene products should be collected weekly rather than fortnightly to avoid smells and reduce the risk of unsanitary conditions.

“Fortnightly nappy collections are not enough, the smell from the sacks are foul after a fortnight”

“I think nappy collecting should be weekly not fortnightly as it is now due to hygiene”

Many were concerned about the costs and trade-offs of this change, and they did not support anything that would require the black bin collection frequency to be reduced to every three weeks.

“I think they should be recycled but not at the expense of a three weekly bin collection.”

Some people had misinterpreted the statement as reducing the frequency of collection of absorbent hygiene products to every three weeks, and felt this would be insufficient from a storage and sanitation perspective.

Why people disagreed that the frequency of non-recyclable waste collection should be reduced to once every three weeks to encourage more recycling

People disagreed that the frequency of non-recyclable waste collection should be reduced for the following reasons:

- Insufficient storage capacity: many residents found that the current bin sizes were already insufficient for fortnightly collections, particularly large households, families with children and/or pets, and those with disabilities, who may produce more non-recyclable waste by necessity. While many residents stated that they recycled as much as possible, they highlighted that certain non-recyclable items, such as cat litter, medical waste, and certain types of packaging, still filled up their bins. They felt that until more items could be recycled, reducing the collection frequency of black bins/bags was impractical.

“I recycle almost 100% every week. Unfortunately a lot of materials are non recyclable. I just about manage with 2 weekly bin collection. I'm have a family of 4 and have the same size bin as my next door neighbour who is living alone. If you change it to 3 weeks then you will need to provide larger families with bigger bins or 2 bins. If common sense is not used then it will encourage fly tipping.”

- Environmental concerns: many residents believed that less frequent collections would lead to more illegal dumping of waste, overflowing bins and littering. They felt that the costs of dealing with the increase in fly-tipping would outweigh the cost of maintaining the service as it stands. People were concerned about negative impacts on community cleanliness and aesthetics.

“The fly tipping problem in my area is terrible and cutting the frequency of collection will make this worse”

“Absolutely do not do this. Collecting fortnightly is enough to keep our area sanitary, odour free and for the people who utilise the black waste bins more, it's manageable. If we forget a bin collection, the next one is two weeks away but if it moves to Tri-weekly, that's 6 weeks worth of waste sitting in our area. In summer, this could cause a risk to health, promote infestations and increase fly tipping and littering which is already too common where I live”

- 🕒 Odours, hygiene and pests: many residents were concerned that longer intervals between collections would mean more waste being left outside to attract rats, foxes, and other pests, especially in warmer weather, leading to potential health risks. They were also concerned about odours with waste sitting for three weeks, including pet waste and nappies. The term “unsanitary” was frequently mentioned.

“I recycle everything I can but as a family of 4 my bin is always full by the 2 weeks I could never go 3 weeks! Fly tipping will be through the roof and with open land behind my house I know people will dump it there. We have a huge problem with rats in Cwmafan and it will only make this situation worse! Unsanitary and you’re assuming for trouble! Health and mental wellbeing will be affected”

- 🕒 Service expectations: some residents felt that reducing the frequency of waste collections would not align with the level of service they expect for the amount of council tax they are charged. Some suggest that a reduction in service should come with a reduction in council tax.

“We already recycle everything except food waste and our black bin is full after two weeks. Weve had our council tax raised by 10% but service isn’t increased by 10%, if anything this would be a reduction in service in return for paying more. The public aren’t completely stupid, they’ll see this for what it is; money saving, not encouraging recycling.”

- 🕒 Recycling equipment, facilities and education should be improved first: many residents called for improved recycling infrastructure and equipment, as well as clearer information about recycling practices before taking the step of reducing the frequency of black bins/bags. Some believed that increased involvement from local leaders could help to improve recycling rates rather than reducing black bin collection frequencies. They also suggested that use of recycling centres could be made easier, for example removing the requirement to book a slot.

“Most people recycle, you want to target/encourage the people who can't be bothered. People with big families will struggle with 3 weekly collections. By going to 3 weekly it penalises the majority for the minority who won't change, no matter what happens and you will see an increase in fly tipping as what happens in the laybys on the A465. Education is best.”

“If you are collecting black bin waste less often, you need to put in place better recycling options and equipment. The bags and boxes are not good to store or keep clean.”

“Change your recycling centre policy. Let vans come and big cars with recycling only so they can recycle more stuff for free. You will soon hit your target then. If I didn't have to book a slot, I'd happily take more things down there like bags of clothes, old doors etc, instead because I work full time and the booking is inconvenient, I arrange for the rag and bone man to come... sorry.”

Most people felt there was nothing that could be put in place to make three-weekly collections more acceptable and wanted the service to remain as it is. However, the following suggestions were made by some residents:

- 🕒 Larger bins to accommodate increased waste over three weeks
- 🕒 Emergency extra bag stickers for occasional excess waste
- 🕒 Reduction in council tax if the frequency of collections is reduced
- 🕒 Providing separate bins for pet waste that are collected more frequently

- 🕒 Collecting nappies and other absorbent hygiene products more frequently
- 🕒 Pushing corporations to use more recyclable materials to make it easier for the consumer

Why people disagreed that they would prefer to pay a reasonable charge for the green/garden waste service as it stands if it helps to protect the service

Respondents disagreed that they would pay a charge for the existing green/garden waste service for the following reasons:

- 🕒 High council tax: many residents felt they already paid a lot in council tax, which should cover the garden waste service. There was a strong sentiment that additional charges were unjust given the current high rates. Residents did not feel that they were getting value for money from their council tax.

“Extremely high council tax in our area as it stands. Any more fees would be unjust and unsustainable, we don't get value for money as it is in NPT”

“We continue to pay more council tax every year. I can't afford to pay keep paying more, but with less services.”

- 🕒 Financial burden: residents were concerned about affordability, especially for those on low incomes, pensions,

or with disabilities. People mentioned that the cost-of-living crisis was making it difficult to manage additional expenses.

“Not everyone can afford the charges. We are living through a cost of living crisis in an area with high levels of poverty. Not everyone can get to the recycling centres to dispose of garden waste themselves due to not having a car, being unable to drive or being disabled.”

- 🔹 Fairness and equity: some residents felt it was unfair to charge for a service that has been free for a long time. Residents with small gardens or those who rarely use the service felt they would be disadvantaged by a standard charge. There were concerns that requiring payment for the service would have a disproportionate negative impact on those who were already disadvantaged.

“Why should we pay for a service which has always been free. Garden waste has to be disposed of somehow.”

“I have a very small garden and lack space to compost my own garden waste, I would not want to pay for the small amount I produce.”

- 🔹 Environmental concerns: many residents believed that charging for garden waste collection would lead to increased fly-tipping and illegal dumping. They were also concerned that people would burn their green waste or put it in their

black bin, reducing recycling rates. Some noted that having green gardens is environmentally beneficial and should be encouraged, not penalised. They felt that a charge could lead to an increase in artificial grass, decking, and paving, which are less environmentally friendly.

“Only use it in autumn for leaves & grass cutting in summer. If you didn’t offer the service, I wouldn’t recycle it at all - burn it or dump it in black bags. Not going to go out if my way & take more time to get it to a centre. It would actually cut down my recycling, not improve it.”

“People should be encouraged to have gardens that encourage wildlife rather than be penalised financially.”

“Reduction in waste collection services will negatively affect the environment in which we live. It will become more messy and choices about garden design may include more plastic grasses etc which are worse for the environment and wildlife”

Most respondents felt that there was no way to make such measures acceptable. Many suggested that any additional charges for garden waste collection would need to be compensated for with a corresponding reduction in council tax. Some suggested that there should be different payment levels or a pay-per-use system, and exemptions for those who were disabled, elderly or on a low income.

“A generous reduction in council tax to do it ourselves”

“Maybe different levels of payment especially for disabled or old people”

“Means testing so that people who can’t afford the charge don’t have to pay it and still get the waste collected for free”

Many said that some level of free service needed to be maintained to avoid fly-tipping. Some residents were open to a reduced collection frequency (particularly in winter), such as monthly or three-weekly, if the service remained free, although most would prefer the service to stay as it is.

“Collection of green waste less often, if it stops a charge being introduced”

“Garden waste collections could be reduced to every 3 weeks/monthly during the winter months to cut down costs”

Some suggested that the council could provide free or low-cost compost bins for home or community use and reduce the frequency of collection. They also suggested that the council could compost collected green waste and sell it back to residents at a low price to recoup costs of the service.

“Neath Port Talbot council should provide free compost bins for residents therefore there will be a reduced need for collection.”

“Make the compost made from collections of green waste available to the NPT borough householders at a reasonable fee”

Why people disagreed that the council should move to a paid-for, subscription service for weekly green/garden waste collections

Respondents disagreed that they should pay a charge for a weekly green/garden waste service for all the same reasons as already noted above regarding payment for the existing service. Additional issues mentioned included:

- Administrative and logistical concerns: some residents were concerned that the costs of managing such a service could outweigh the financial benefits.

“I think you’ll find the admin burden will outweigh any financial gain.”

“The management of this model would likely prove to be more resource heavy than the delivery of the current service. The repercussions of removing the free service will likely lead to more instances of fly tipping as people will view this as green waste and “harmless” and therefore add more burden on NPTCBC.”

- Community aesthetics and wellbeing: some residents felt that charging for garden waste collection could lead to neglected gardens and a decline in the overall appearance of the community. There were concerns that this could also discourage people from gardening, which is good for mental and physical wellbeing.

“Not paying more money for garden waste to be taken away, you will find more people either fly tipping or not keeping gardens tidy, thus making the area look awful and unkept”

“Gardening is good for increasing people's mental health/wellbeing and also helps the local biodiversity. By collecting green/garden waste as part of normal service it encourages people to be out and about in their gardens gardening. Charging will provide a financial barrier and have a knock on impact”

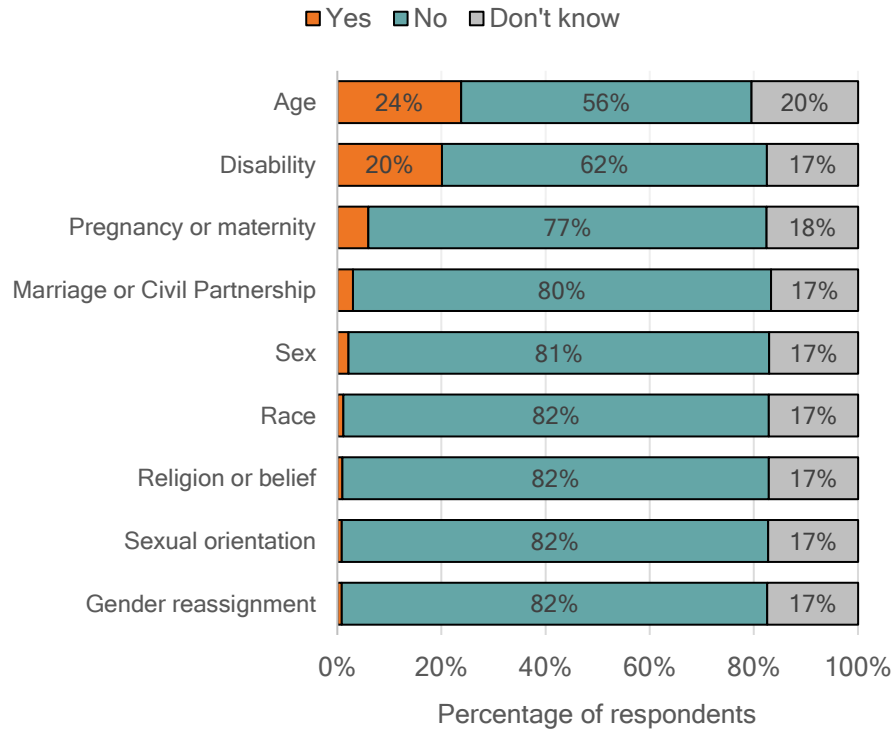
Again, most respondents felt that there was no way to make such measures acceptable, and many suggested that any additional charges for garden waste collection would need to be compensated

for with a corresponding reduction in council tax. The practical suggestions from the previous questions were repeated here, including exemptions for low-income households, free or subsidised compost bins, a pay-per-use model, selling compost to generate revenue, and reducing collection frequency during winter.

Impact of proposed changes on protected characteristics

Most respondents did not expect the potential measures to improve recycling rates to impact them or their family because of protected characteristics. However, some were concerned due to their age (24%), disability (20%) or pregnancy/maternity (6%).

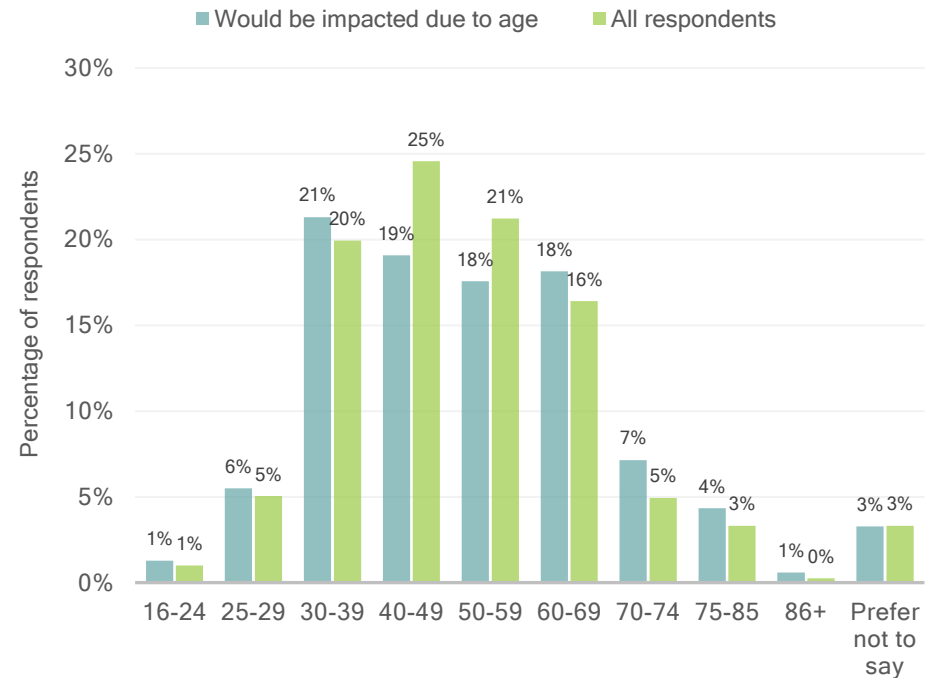
Would the potential measures to improve recycling rates impact you/your family because of your...



Age

Those who said the potential measures would impact them or their family because of their age were less likely to be aged 40-59 (37% compared with 46% across all respondents) and more likely to be aged over 60 (30% vs 24%).

Age of respondents who said potential measures would impact them because of their age



Concerns about the impact of proposed changes relating to age were mostly around the elderly and having young children. People were worried about the impact of potential measures on older residents with reduced mobility, disability or otherwise poor health, particularly that reduced frequency of collections would make bags/bins heavier to move, and that the elderly may become confused by changes to processes they are used to. People also mentioned that the elderly were less likely to have transport to access recycling centres and would have limited ability to pay for services whilst on a pension.

“Nobody elderly will be able to pick up and move the heavier bins if moved to every 3 weeks”

“I have elderly family members who can't afford additional fees and can't drive to the recycling centre”

“Older people, especially with dementia, get confused by it all. My parents used to be fanatical recyclers, but once dementia set in, they got confused by it”

Those with young children felt that the higher volume of non-recyclable waste generated by their household could not be accommodated with 3-weekly collections.

“We have young children and despite recycling everything we can we still need the fortnightly collections as a minimum”

“I still have children living at home, so I'd struggle to further reduce my black bag use. I recycle everything that I'm aware that I can”

“We have a baby so we need regular nappy collections to prevent an environmental health issue. If not then we need bigger black bins to be able to put them in the black bin”

Disability

51% of respondents who considered themselves to have a disability said that the potential measures to improve recycling rates would impact them because of their disability. 31% said no and 15% said they didn't know.

The most common concerns were around the additional weight of black bins under a three-week collection frequency, which would prove difficult for those with a lack of mobility or ability to carry/wheel bags/bins.

“We have steps to our garden. Dragging 3 weeks worth of rubbish/recycling up would be difficult with physical problems”

“I have a heart condition, I do not need to be lugging an extremely heavy bin up to the road because its packed full of 3 weeks' waste.”

“Bins would be heavier to move. I find it them difficult enough now with my bad arthritis in knees back and hands”

Many respondents mentioned that their or their family member’s disability meant that they produced higher volumes of waste, particularly non-recyclable waste and absorbent hygiene products, and therefore required regular waste collection.

“Mum has full incontinence so her purple bags already smell. Storage of them is tricky. They are really heavy also birds etc try to rip bags. Warm weather is awful for storage as 3 bags are filled in a week.”

“Due to my disability I produce more waste than the average person, especially non recyclable items such as soiled clothing. Also physically impaired so cannot take my recycling to the tip myself”

“I have Type 1 Diabetes and have various bits of non recyclable waste as well as specific collections organised privately for medical waste”

Some said that they lacked sufficient storage for bins and bags, and this impacted on their need to avoid trip and/or hygiene hazards in and around their home due to their or a family member’s disability.

“Storage could impact paths and floor space at home”

“Autistic son. Bin bags hanging around in his play space for 3 weeks.”

“I have special needs children who can’t use their own garden from dirty giant rats coming for the bins”

Respondents also said that they would not be able to get to a recycling centre with additional waste or garden waste, and that due to their disability they would be unable to afford to pay subscriptions for collection.

“I have a chronic illness and as mentioned I am unable to use recycling centres. Less collections means fuller/heavier bins to take out which I struggle with. Due to illness I often miss collections and therefore would not have space to store refuse until next collection date.”

“I cannot take waste to the tip. I could not afford the green waste collection or take it to the tip”

“If non-recyclable refuse exceeds the current wheelie bin on a three week collection then separate black bags would need to be taken to the recycling centre. This is not feasible due to disability.”

Pregnancy or maternity

11% of respondents who said that they were pregnant or on maternity leave said that the potential measures to improve

recycling rates would impact them because of pregnancy or maternity. 70% said no and 16% said they didn't know.

Respondents were concerned about nappy collections, with some saying that nappies needed to be collected more frequently.

“Used nappies smell. The caddies provided are lucky to hold a day’s worth of nappies! They smell and it’s awful.”

“We have 2 small babies. Changing the fortnightly black bin collection wouldn’t be possible. Just change the nappy recycling to every week”

They also worried about their ability to move heavy bins/bags and were concerned that three-weekly black bin collections would not accommodate the increase in waste associated with having a baby.

“Pregnancy makes any physical activity more difficult and a baby in the house means more waste“

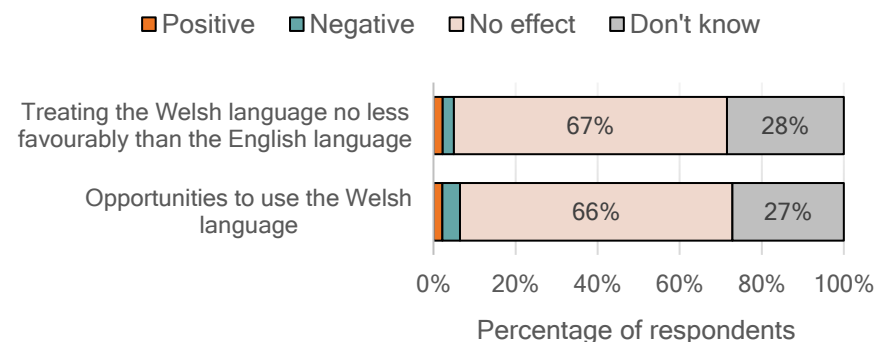
“Longer time for waste to build up at people’s homes affects the pregnant in the weight of their bins and the moving of them to kerbside”

“We have a young baby who is breastfed. In the time after having her, we have had to dispose of things such as maternity pads and breast pads in our black bin. If we were to have any more children in the future, we would struggle greatly on a 3-week cycle.”

Impact of proposed changes on the Welsh language

Most respondents felt there would be no effect of the proposed measures to improve recycling on opportunities to use the Welsh language (66%) or treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language (67%), or they didn't know (27% and 28% respectively).

What effect do you think the potential measures to improve recycling rates will have on...



Summary

Self-reported recycling rates for plastics, cardboard, tin and glass exceed 95% across Neath Port Talbot, while there is some room for improvement in recycling of foil, food waste, paper, green/garden waste and household batteries.

Residents of Neath Port Talbot are generally supportive of changes that would enable them to mix paper and cardboard and recycle small electricals. In contrast, they are strongly against proposed reductions to the frequency of black bin collections and the introduction of a charge for green/garden waste collection, either at the current fortnightly frequency or weekly.

Opinions around the collection frequency of absorbent hygiene products are more neutral, reflecting that some residents do not require the use of this service – nevertheless, comments suggest that residents would be happier with a weekly collection rather than the current fortnightly service.

The elderly, families with children, and those with a disability are concerned that the proposed changes could have disproportionate negative impacts for their household, particularly in relation to reduced frequency of black bin collections.

Some key suggestions for mitigating any negative impacts of proposed service changes were:

- Larger black bins to accommodate the additional waste under a three-week collection interval
- Additional support for those who are elderly and/or disabled and may struggle to move their bins for collection

- Means-tested and/or pay-per-use charges for green waste subscription services, with exemptions for low-income households
- Seasonal variation in collection frequency (with reduced collections in winter) to avoid or reduce subscription charges for green waste collection
- Free or subsidised compost bins for home use

