



How to guide

Community drop-off points: Setting up a service in your area



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Collecting electricals for reuse

Community drop-off points are smaller containers placed in convenient places such as libraries, leisure centres and schools where people can bring their electricals for recycling, repair, or reuse.

This guide is built on our own experience and expertise, along with insights from the community drop-off pilots we've supported through the Electricals Recycling Fund.



Top tips

1. Choose visible, accessible locations

- Position bins in busy, easily accessible areas like library foyers, community centres, and leisure facilities.
- Use bright, distinctive bin designs with the recycle your electricals branding to help draw attention and increase participation.

2. Promote heavily with clear messaging

- Run coordinated communications campaigns using social media, posters, leaflets, and local press.
- Examples include digital screens, packs for universities, bus shelter adverts and collection wagons.
- Engage different age groups with tailored approaches – e.g. via primary school competitions, university campaigns, youth ambassadors.

3. Monitor and adapt bin design

- Use bins that are durable, transportable, and suit the space available.
- Monitor bins for incorrect items (e.g., hoovers, plastic bags) and act quickly — by changing signage, delivering education, or redesign.
- If contamination is an issue (e.g. batteries in vape bins), be sure signage and labelling make instructions clear.

4. Build strong partnerships

- Collaborate with libraries, schools, universities and volunteer groups. For example, target landlords and students with tailored packs..
- Draw on partnerships with community spaces and consider establishing repair cafés and promoting reuse to complement recycling.

5. Trial and improve

- Be ready to experiment — test surveys, bin designs, educational resources, and outreach strategies.
- Some areas trialled QR code surveys and tally sheets to understand user behaviour.

Checklist for setting up community drop-off points

-  **Agree number and locations of bring banks** with stakeholders, including the local authority (if required)
-  **Order bring banks from manufacturer** – allow up to 6 weeks for delivery
-  **Collection process in place for emptying bring banks** – with frequency and method agreed
-  **Design eye-catching signage and stickers** – with clear recycling instructions
-  **Create marketing plan** – setting out how the new service will be promoted
-  **Order promotional and signage assets** – e.g. posters, flyers, stickers
-  **Install bring banks at agreed locations**
-  **Add bring banks to Recycle Your Electricals postcode locator** – email: hello@materialfocus.org.uk
-  **Launch local marketing campaign** – owned channels, local PR, partner channels, paid advertising
-  **Go live with social media plan** – post regularly, reminding residents of the service and how to use it

Cost summary – estimated from previous pilots (p1/2)



Nexus 30 Bin

For batteries or vapes: £79.81 + VAT.



Nexus 50 bin

£89.07 + VAT.



Pop-up bring banks box

Totebox – bundle of five: £87.55 – not available in pink but can be covered with a pink bin sticker.

Cost summary – estimated from previous pilots (p2/2)



Servicing

Collection costs range from £10,000 for waste collection crews to £28,000 for a dedicated staff member, depending on the collection contract.

Collections can also be incorporated into existing collection rounds to reduce costs.



Project management

Some pilots absorb project management costs into existing staffing.

Others have brought in temporary part-time project management to deliver the pilot.



Communications

See pilot spotlights for example costs – ranging between £500 and £20,000.

Electricals Recycling Fund impact

Since 2020 we have funded 478 community drop-off points in libraries, leisure centres and community centres across 26 pilots in England, Scotland, and Wales.

An additional 99 community drop-off points have been funded in schools, alongside 44 temporary amnesty events where people drop off their electricals.

Our community drop-off point pilots have collected over 150 tonnes of electricals and made recycling easier for over 4,400,000 households.

**26 funded
community
drop off
point
pilots**



Pilot spotlight

North Tyneside

Target population	96,232 households
Funding amount	£14,650
Pilot duration	December 2023 – December 2024
Pilot aim	To raise awareness of, and expand access to, small electricals and vape recycling for residents.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• North Tyneside diverted 9.56 tonnes of small electricals from landfill, a 43.56% increase over the previous year• Around 12,000 vapes were collected for recycling



Pilot spotlight: **North Tyneside**

Collection approach

North Tyneside Council installed 54 small electricals collection bring banks and 29 vape disposal bins in community locations across the borough.

Schools, businesses and community organisations were keen to collaborate and host recycling points. Many who weren't in the initial pilot plan asked for their own collection bins once they saw the positive impact the initiative was having.

Communications approach

Communications aimed to raise awareness of what could be recycled and why it's important, to share updates on the pilot, and to let people know the locations of the new bring banks. Channels included:

- Press release
- Council newsletter
- Organic social media
- Recycle Your Electricals postcode locator
- Decal advertising for vehicles (£540)
- A3 posters (£70)

Key learnings

Make sure batteries are removed from electrical items – North Tyneside encouraged this by placing battery recycling tubes next to each bring bank, so people were reminded to separate them.

Provide feedback to residents – a press release was published mid-way through the pilot to thank residents for their contributions and let them know how collection rates were increasing.

Allow plenty of lead-in time for marketing materials – amendments and sign-off can take time. Factor time into your plan to ensure the launch is not delayed.

Pilot spotlight

Hillingdon

Target population	305,900 households
Funding amount	£16,059
Pilot duration	October 2023 – October 2024
Pilot aim	To improve access to electrical recycling, especially for residents unable to visit household waste recycling centres.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11.88 tonnes of electricals for recycling• Over 100 electricals were collected for repair through repair cafes



Pilot spotlight: **Hillingdon**

Collection approach

Hillingdon set up 15 library collection points across the borough.

Residents were encouraged to pop into their local library and recycle unwanted or broken electricals using the 240L pink bins.

Hillingdon also set up a series of repair events in collaboration with Friends of the Earth.

Communications approach

The communications campaign was aimed at increasing the tonnage collected, and included:

- 50 x A3 posters (£25)
- 500 x A2 Flyers (£296)
- 1,000 x A5 flyers (148)
- 80 x stickers (£227)
- Social media (owned channels)

Key learnings

Positive relationships with partners is essential – community bring banks rely on working with partners to deliver the service, so developing good relationships early on is essential.

Buy-in from communications team – early engagement with communications teams internally is important to ensure the service can be promoted and generate uptake.

Adaptability is important – Hillingdon had to adapt the size of bins they had planned to use so that they would fit in community locations.

Pilot spotlight

Hubbub

Target population	358,786 households
Funding amount	£53,625
Pilot duration	March 2023 – July 2024
Pilot aim	To test how Community Fridges could expand their role beyond food redistribution to include rehoming small electricals.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hubbub collected 729 electrical items• 522 items rehomed and 189 recycled



Pilot spotlight: Hubbub

Collection approach

Hubbub set up electricals collection and redistribution at 2 Community Fridge locations (Milton Keynes and Albrighton).

At Milton Keynes, people could drop off electricals at set times while the Fridge was open and at a monthly repair cafe. They did not have to use bags or containers, and didn't need to pre-book. In Albrighton people were invited to drop electricals at the community centre reception.

Volunteers PAT tested, sorted and cleaned items so that they could be passed to local rehoming partners, or made available directly to anyone visiting the Community Fridge.

Communications approach

The communications campaign aimed to let people know that they could drop off small unwanted electricals to be rehomed. Media included:

- Paid social media advertising (£400)
- 2 x roller banners (£170)
- 1,000 x A5 flyers (£200)
- 90 x A4 flyers (£160)
- 60 x A3 flyers (£172)
- Event photography (£360)
- Local media campaign (£5,000)

On social media, photo-led stories about the impact of the work performed particularly well.

Key learnings

Community readiness and partnerships are crucial – projects thrive where locations have storage, trained volunteers and strong local partners to redistribute items and amplify impact.

Sustainability depends on planning and resourcing – adequate preparation, insurance clarity, volunteer training (PAT and digital), and ongoing funding are essential for long-term success.

Be clear up-front about what can and can't be accepted – and expect to spend time cleaning and sorting donations for reuse.

We've created a communications toolkit of HypnoCat assets and bring bank designs, that you can use to use to promote your project.

These include: posters, leaflets, bin wraps, bin hangers, press ads, pull-up banners, lorry / vehicle sides, stickers, social media posts.

All driving people to drop off their electricals...



- Clockwise from top left:
- Pull-up banner
- Bin hangers
- Posters & leaflets
- Social media posts
- Bin wraps
- Lorry/vehicle sides

Material Focus support

Check out our [website](#) for more information on funding opportunities, toolkits and resources to support your projects.



Material Focus is an independent, not-for-profit organisation on a mission to save valuable, critical and finite materials inside electricals from going to waste. We lead the 'Recycle your electricals' campaign.



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hello@materialfocus.org.uk



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