



How to guide

Kerbside: Setting up kerbside recycling in your area



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Kerbside recycling

Kerbside collection of small electricals allows residents to leave items outside their homes to be picked up by waste collection crews.

We have created this guide based on learning from all of the kerbside collection pilots funded so far through the Electricals Recycling Fund.



Top tips

1. Decide how best to collect in your area

- A regular collection alongside existing kerbside services may be easier to put in place, but a bookable service might allow you to focus resources on households who show interest.
- If you opt for a bookable system, pilot it early and factor in time for testing, development and approvals.
- Consider vehicle constraints — can cages or bins be emptied mid-round?

2. Phase roll-out

- Launching in smaller phases helps manage demand and operational pressure, and allows you to adjust as you go.
- Give your collection service chance to settle before launching the next phase — tonnage and logistics often fluctuate in the early weeks.

3. Work closely with crews, contractors and partners

- Brief crews in detail so that items are not missed or the wrong items collected. Try printed guidance sheets for trucks, and seek crew feedback early on.
- Work with housing associations, universities, community centres or local events to promote your kerbside collection service and increase engagement.

4. Keep instructions to users simple and visual

- Send clear instructions on how and when to leave electricals for collection, e.g. bagged, on top of waste bins.
- Specify the size and quantity of items that can be collected.
- Focus on key messages such as 'handheld items with a plug, battery or cable'.
- Repeat messages across channels.

5. Don't forget direct mail and traditional channels

- Leaflet drops can be more effective than digital outreach alone, especially in areas where fewer people engage online.
- Lorry side adverts help boost engagement.
- Keep promoting the service — unlike bring banks which double up as visual reminders, kerbside collection services can quickly be forgotten.

Checklist for setting up kerbside recycling collection

-  **Decide on the method of collection** – bookable, weekly/fortnightly
-  **Order retrofit of vehicle cages, if needed** – can take up to 6-8 weeks depending on fleet size
-  **Work with web developers** to create and test an online booking form, if needed
-  **Confirm contracts and agreements** with collection contractors or waste disposal authorities
-  **Make a contingency plan** for missed collections or hazardous items
-  **Train waste collection crews**
-  **Create a marketing plan** setting out how you will promote the new service
-  **Order vehicle banners and fit to vehicles, and other physical assets** – e.g. posters, leaflets, signage
-  **Organise leaflet distribution** to properties that will receive the new service
-  **Prepare social media assets and schedule posts** for owned channels
-  **Coordinate with media outlets** to organise a media release
-  **Source a quote from a local councillor to use in media release**
-  **Monitor collection tonnage and users' feedback** to decide on next steps

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



Retrofitting RCV vehicles with collection cages

Different options available include: plastic boxes + mounting brackets (from £900 + VAT) or steel cages and mounting brackets (from £1350 + VAT), plus an additional labour cost of around £250 per vehicle.



Renting electrical collection vehicle

Roughly £8,000 per year per vehicle.



Staffing

Some pilots absorb project management costs into existing staffing. Others have brought in temporary part time project management.

Collection crews – for a dedicated collection vehicle, staffing costs can be upwards of £30,000 annually.

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



Setting up online booking system

£10,000 - £45,000 for software development.



Communications

Communications costs can be £5,000 - £20,000.

See pilot spotlights for a breakdown.

Electricals Recycling Fund impact

Since 2020 we have funded 26 pilots with kerbside collection across the UK.

Our kerbside pilots have collected over 400 tonnes of electricals so far, and made recycling easier for over 3,400,000 households.



**26
funded
kerbside
pilots**



Pilot spotlight

Newcastle City Council

Target population	109,000 households
Funding amount	£30,800
Pilot duration	January 2024 – January 2025
Pilot aim	To offer free recycling for small electrics through two pilots: doorstep collections and pop up recycling centres.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5,561 small electrics (15 tonnes) collected via the doorstep• 12% increase in electrics recycling in Newcastle over the previous year



Pilot spotlight: Newcastle City Council

Collection approach

Newcastle City Council offered households a free bookable doorstep collection for small electricals. Residents were to fill a plastic bag with electricals and leave it out for the Waste and Recycling Engagement Team to collect in an electric vehicle. The bags were recycled through a plastic bag and wrapping trial.

Newcastle offered 40 slots a week. To book, residents could call the contact centre. Alternatively they could scan a QR code on a HypnoCat-branded leaflet or pop-up banner, or follow a link from a social media post – taking them directly to an online booking page.

Communications approach

- Pop-up banner (£180)
- Door-to-door leaflet drop (printing and delivery) (£160). Leaflets were consistently found to most effective in driving people to attend pop-up recycling events
- Organic social media and facebook adverts
- Vehicle livery
- Press release showcasing the start and end of the project, as well as The Great Cable Challenge (see right)
- BBC One Show and BBC Newcastle reported on the pilot

Key learnings

Engage with local partners – the council worked with Newcastle United Football Club on the Great Cable Challenge, encouraging fans at games to donate old electrical cables. High-profile partnerships can boost engagement and awareness of other services like kerbside.

Monitoring trends and behaviours can provide valuable insights – Newcastle found people were more likely to store vapes in a bag/container and bring them to a Pop Up Recycling Centre or a library drop-off, rather than book a collection.

One size doesn't fit all – different residents recycle in different ways.

Pilot spotlight

Hart

Target population	42,500 households
Funding amount	£21,250
Pilot duration	January 2024 – January 2025
Pilot aim	Hart aimed to introduce a kerbside service across the district with a phased roll-out, in order to increase participation in electrical recycling.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 27 tonnes of electricals collected through kerbside since the service launched• 89% increase in electricals recycling after kerbside collections were added to bring banks alone• Approx 10% of residents engaged



Pilot spotlight: Hart

Collection approach

Kerbside collection of small electricals was rolled out to all households in the district in four phases to manage demand and avoid overloading collection vehicles.

Direct mail was used to tell residents about the scheme.

Residents were encouraged to place items in carrier bags on top of their waste or recycling bins on collection day, with no need to book.

The service encouraged people to recycle little-and-often, in order to consistently fill vehicle cages.

Communications approach

- Printing and postage: door-to-door letter drop (£20,000)
- Crew feedback card (£1,000)
- Organic social media posts on local authority channels
- Printed articles and images
- Take-up of the service was high, suggesting the combination of communications methods worked well.
- Social media engagement actually increased after roll-out.

Key learnings

Provide clear briefings and help sheets for crews – Hart received feedback that waste collection crews were leaving some items behind on collection rounds. They held briefings with crews and provided in cab help sheets to make sure everyone was clear on what to accept.

Consider vehicle capacity when estimating collection tonnage – Hart initially overestimated the collection capacity of vehicles, meaning their initial collection estimate was too high. Although they didn't collect as much as expected, vehicle cages are consistently full, showing the success of the pilot.

Pilot spotlight

Solihull

Target population	94,000 households
Funding amount	£45,896
Pilot duration	January 2024 – January 2025
Pilot aim	To set up a free bookable collection service so that residents could easily recycle electricals on their doorstep.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 760 electrical items collected (3 tonnes)• Small electrical recycling increased by 12%



Pilot spotlight: Solihull

Collection approach

Solihull established an online booking system which meant residents could fill in an online form or call the contact centre to arrange for small electricals to be collected from their homes.

Residents were told to leave their items in a carrier-sized bag visible at the front of the property.

Items were collected by a small collection lorry with Hypnocat livery and deposited at the household waste recycling centre (HWRC).

Communications approach

- Vehicle livery (£9,000) (banner printing and installation)
- Pull up banner (x2) (£138)
- Banner at HWRC (£148)
- Posters (A3 and A4) (£70)
- A5 leaflets (£195)
- Newsletter – article in Solihull Community Housing newsletter
- Direct email to people who had subscribed to collection reminders
- Organic social media

Key learnings

Allow additional time to pilot a booking system – developing the online booking form took longer than anticipated.

Be prepared to flex your operations based on the amount of material actually collected – After a year running the service, Solihull evaluated collection figures and decided that there isn't the demand to warrant a 5-day collection. By monitoring collections and gathering staff feedback, they can adapt to ensure the service is as cost-effective as possible, and able to continue into the future.

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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