

3Rs recycling knowledge, attitudes and reported behaviour survey 2015



Key highlights about recycling from the 3Rs tracking survey (Recycling, Re-use and Repair consumer behaviour, knowledge and attitudes survey), Spring 2015

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Front cover photography: Woman recycling glass bottle and newspaper at kerbside recycling bin.

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Executive summary

- This report summarises the key findings in relation to claimed recycling behaviour, knowledge and attitude from WRAP's 3Rs (recycling, reuse and repair) consumer survey.
- Self-reported recycling levels are high and relatively stable across years for most materials. There has been a substantial decrease from 2013 in the proportion of households putting plastic pots, tubs and trays in the general rubbish, while drinks cartons/ tetra-pak, soft plastic packaging and garden waste have also recorded smaller (but still statistically significant) decreases.
- Capture: Just under half (46%) of UK households say that on the last disposal occasion they disposed of at least one material in the general rubbish bin that their council collects as part of the kerbside recycling collection.
- Quality: 47% of households are putting at least one material in their recycling that is not intended to be collected locally for recycling. Drinks cartons/tetra-pak and plastic pots, tubs and trays are the two materials most frequently put out for recycling kerbside despite the council not collecting them.
- Looking at both dimensions of capture and quality, similar to 2014, around a quarter of households are 'completely effective recyclers', in that they neither place non-targeted materials in their recycling collection, nor dispose of any items in the general rubbish that could be put in the kerbside recycling. Conversely, approximately three-quarters of households could improve their recycling effectiveness in one or both of these respects.
- Across the UK, one-third of the population used a council food waste collection service the last time they had food to dispose of. There is a large degree of variability between nations in line with differences in coverage of food waste collection services. In Wales where the vast majority of households have a service, 71% of respondents claim to use the service.
- The breadth of issues identified as barriers to using a food waste collection service suggests that improvements to both services and communications will be required to encourage participation, especially to overcome perceived hygiene issues which were cited as a barrier by a substantial proportion of non-users.
- More could be done to increase capture of food waste amongst existing users. Between 7% and 13% of those who use their council food waste collection service still claimed to use the general rubbish bin for a range of food types on the last disposal occasion. This increases for items that are potentially more challenging to dispose of such as food still in its packaging; only about half of users report using the food waste service effectively for these items, with between 35% and 41% either failing to take food out of its wrapping before placing it in the food waste collection or saying they would use the general rubbish bin.
- For dry recycling, levels of uncertainty about what is and isn't collected locally for recycling are still high. Around four in five households are unsure about which container to put at least one material in. This is important because, as confidence about what can and can't be recycled increases, so do levels of recycling (although,

once there is a base level of confidence, there is a correlation between increased confidence and increased likelihood of people putting material in their recycling that is not intended to be collected locally for recycling).

- Those who are confident about what can and can't be recycled are much more likely to say they have received information about the kerbside collection in the past year. 56% of those who say they are 'very confident' say they received information compared to just 23% who are '50:50' and 17% of those who are 'not very' or 'not at all confident'.
- By extension, there is a strong relationship between reported receipt of information on the kerbside collection and levels of effective recycling – 56% of those who correctly recycle 9+ materials say they received information (vs. 36% and 22% of those correctly recycling 1-2 materials and 0 materials, respectively).
- There is a significant decrease in the proportion of respondents reporting that they received information in the past year. Just over half (55%) said that they received information on the kerbside collection in 2014, compared to 42% this year.
- There is no consensus among householders on the right thing to do with tops, lids and trigger sprays. A large minority (between 32% and 45%) are dissuaded from recycling materials by the perceived need to do something and /or a lack of clarity about what is required.
- Similarly, there is no consensus about whether householders are required to wash, rinse or clean out materials prior to recycling. Actual or perceived cleaning requirements also cause a large minority (41%) of households to not recycle certain materials, suggesting that councils communicating minimum requirements may encourage greater capture.
- Age has a significant bearing on self-reported recycling across materials. Rates of recycling paper, card, cans/tins, aerosols and foil all increase in line with age.

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Introduction

The 3Rs survey has been a staple of WRAP's research portfolio for nearly a decade, initially focusing on recycling (the Recycle Now survey) and expanding in recent years to also cover reuse and repair (the 3Rs). This report presents key highlights from the recycling section of the 2015 3Rs survey that have implications for recycling policy and practice.

Methodology

The survey was undertaken online between 27th February and 13th March 2015 by Icaro. Respondents were part of online panels¹ across the four UK nations.

A total of 4,512 interviews were completed with sample sizes in each of the four nations as follows: England (1,810), Scotland (1,101), Wales (1,101) and Northern Ireland (500).

The UK sample overall is representative of the target audience, i.e. adults aged 18+ who passed the initial filter of being at least jointly responsible for waste and recycling in the household. Nationally representative quotas were set on age within gender, region within nation and work status to ensure a representative sample were given the opportunity to answer this filter question.

To achieve the overall UK sample, the samples from each of the four nations were combined. Using the English sample as a reference point, the other three nations were weighted in line with their proportion of the UK population as follows: England (83.0%), Scotland (8.8%), Wales (5.2%) and Northern Ireland (3%). The overall 'effective base' for the UK, once this weighting is taken into account, is 2,169.

Question design and use of local authority scheme data

For key behavioural questions, each respondent's answers to the survey were compared with their known kerbside recycling provision, so that claimed behaviour, knowledge and attitudes could be understood in the context of the services that respondents have access to. The data matching process was as follows:

¹ This is not a longitudinal study where a single cohort is tracked over time. The researchers aim to have a fresh sample each wave to reduce priming. Panellists who complete the survey are prevented from doing so again in the following wave, but may participate in subsequent waves.

- Respondents' postcodes were used to identify their local authority and their kerbside recycling provision (using a database of all UK council schemes held by WRAP, and updated annually)².
- Respondents' survey answers were then compared with the service data across 12 material streams/materials³. Some respondents were excluded from the analysis for each material⁴
- The results of the data matching exercise apply to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The results give 3,785 valid, matched, records. When this is weighted in line with the distribution of the population across the UK the "effective matched base" is 1,892.

2. Key findings

1.0 Levels of dry recycling across the UK

Claimed levels of recycling are high across a range of materials (Figure 1). When recycling at kerbside as well as by other means (such as at HWRCs and communal facilities at flats) are taken into account, four materials were recycled 'last time'⁵ by 90% or more of householders: cardboard (92%), paper (90%), plastic bottles (90%) and glass (90%).

A high proportion of some materials are still disposed of in the general rubbish – particularly soft plastic packaging⁶ (54% of respondents disposed of this in the general rubbish), food waste (50%) and foil (41%). Sizeable proportions also dispose of aerosols (30%) and food/drink cartons (30%) in the general rubbish.

For many materials, there has been no significant change in disposal routes since 2014. For others, however, there have been some statistically significant changes.

Between the 2013 and 2014 waves, plastic pots, tubs and trays showed a reduction of 8 percentage points in households disposing of these in the general rubbish. This year,

² NOTE: The database is updated annually. There are margins of error within the population survey and the council survey. Postcodes also do not align precisely with council boundaries. Therefore, the results which draw on the matching exercise should be viewed as indicative rather than absolute.

³ Paper; card; glass; cans and tins; plastic bottles; plastic pots, tubs and trays; food and drink cartons; batteries; foil; carrier bags; aerosols; food waste

⁴ Respondents who stated that they did not generate a particular waste were not included in analysis for that material. Those living in a council area served by what is termed, for the purposes of the project, a "partial collection" were also excluded (i.e. in cases where local authorities do not offer a collection of that material to all households it is not known whether a respondent receives that collection or not). Respondents living in flats or tenements were excluded due to the high level of variability seen in recycling provision at these types of dwellings.

⁵ The question was "For each of the items please indicate how your household last disposed of them?" This was felt by the researchers to be better measure of recycling behaviour than asking respondents to consider their general recycling practices

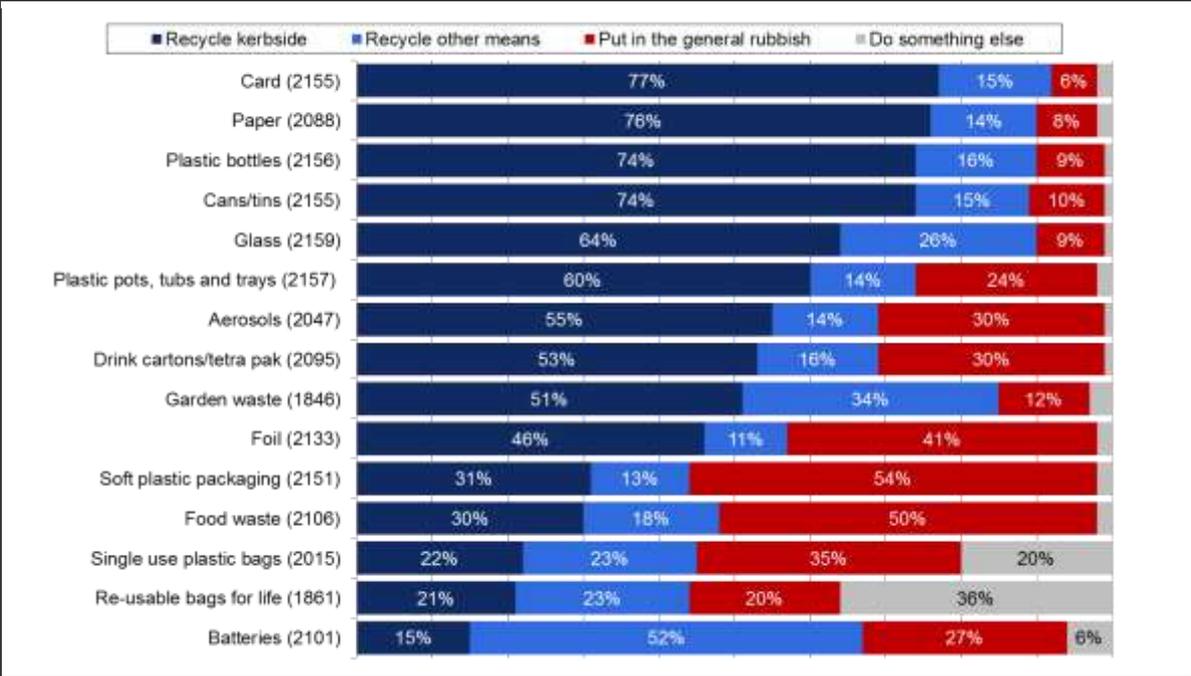
⁶ Defined as "Soft plastic packaging (e.g. bread and cereal bags, magazine wrappers and toilet paper packaging)"

the downward trend continues with a fall of a further 2 percentage points, although this is not statistically significant.

Other materials show small yet statistically significant decreases in the proportion of households disposing of them in the general rubbish since 2014. These are drinks cartons, soft plastic packaging and garden waste, (all fall 3 percentage points).

Figure 1: Claimed disposal routes by material

Q1a/b. For each of the materials please indicate how your household last disposed of them?
 Base: Those creating each type of waste (base size for each material in brackets below), UK, 3Rs survey Feb 2015



Age has a statistically significant bearing on self-reported recycling across materials. Rates of recycling paper, card, cans/tins, aerosols and foil all increase in line with age. For example, 48% and 50% of those aged 18-24 and 35-34, respectively, recycle foil compared with 64% of those aged 65+.

2.0 Opportunities to increase capture and improve quality

There are two different aspects to being an effective recycler which are measured by the 3Rs survey: (i) the avoidance of putting materials in the residual bin that the council collects as part of the kerbside recycling service, and (ii) keeping non-targeted materials out of the recycling collection. These are discussed in turn, before being combined in Section 3.

2.1 Not recycling materials targeted for collection at kerbside

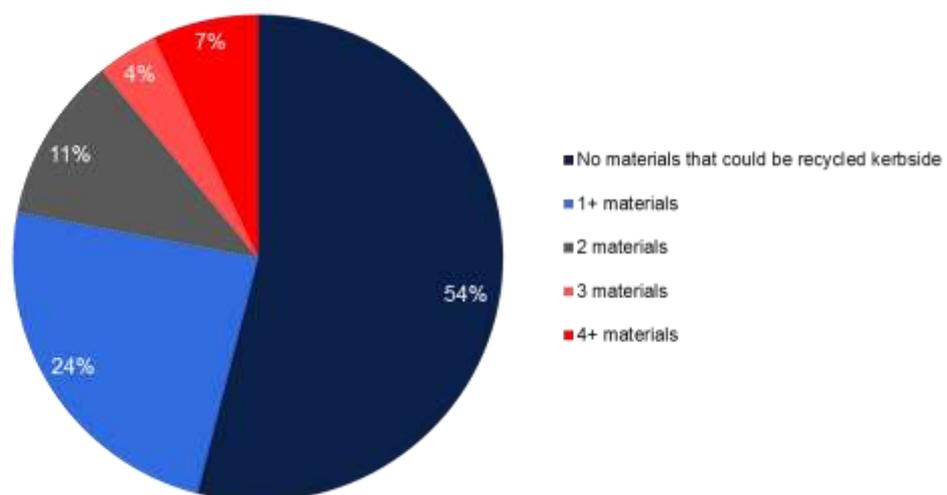
Nearly half of households (46%) could divert one or more materials from their residual bin into their recycling bin, as these materials are collected for recycling in their local area (Figure 2). Just under a quarter of households (24%) put a single material in the general rubbish bin that is recyclable kerbside, while a further 15% dispose of 2-3 materials that could be recycled kerbside. A small minority of 7% are a particularly low performing group – disposing of 4+ materials in the rubbish bin that can be recycled kerbside in their area.

By contrast, over half (54%) of householders do not report disposing of any materials in the general rubbish that could be collected kerbside for recycling. In simple terms, this suggests that just over half of the population are using the services they are provided with to recycle as much as possible⁷ and just under half are not.

Figure 2: Items being put in the residual bin that could be collected kerbside for recycling

Looking at the materials that households say they currently put in the bin and comparing this to what materials their council recycles at kerbside, this graph shows the % of households who are putting items in the bin that they could recycle kerbside. For example, 7% of households are putting 4 or more materials in the bin that are collected kerbside for recycling.

Base: Those creating each type of waste (excluding partial collections and flat dwellers), UK weighted records (1,892), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



2.2 Keeping non-targeted materials out of the dry recycling

Drinks cartons/Tetrapaks and plastic pots tubs and trays are the two materials most frequently put in the recycling container despite the council not collecting them in the kerbside collection service. Nearly six in 10 households⁸ (58%) say that they put their last

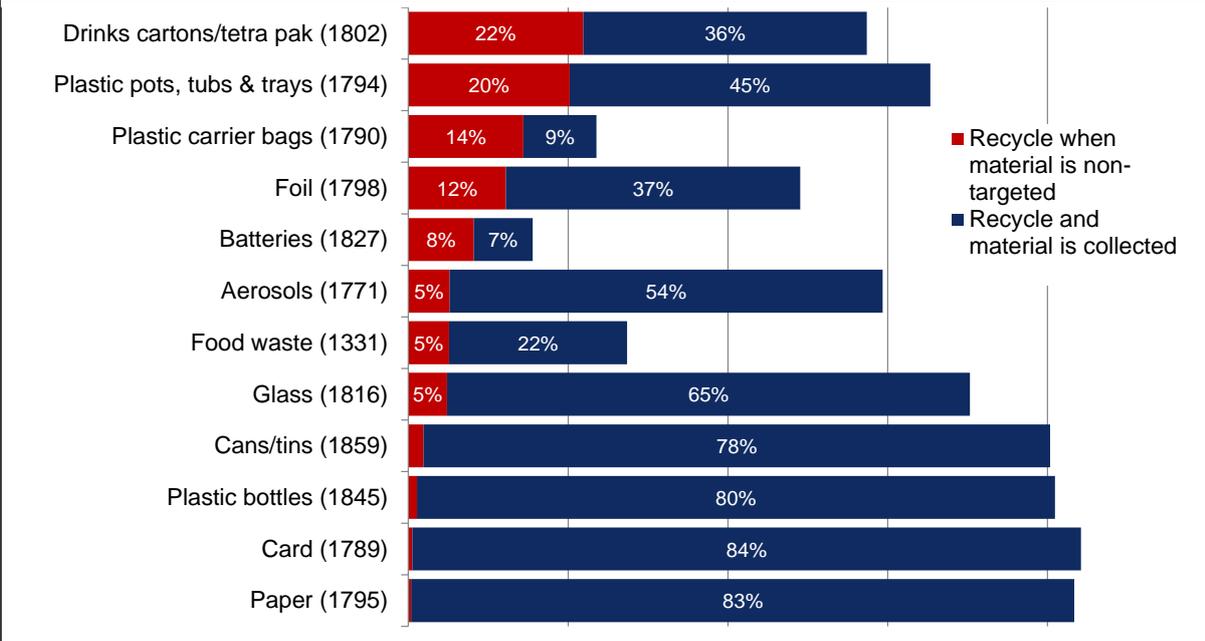
⁷ According to what they did the last time they disposed of each material

⁸ Of those living in houses

carton in the kerbside recycling collection (Figure 3 – the sum of the red and blue bars⁹). However, when the data is matched against local service provision, it shows that 22% of householders are putting the material in erroneously. A similar pattern is evident for plastic pots, tubs and trays – while 65% say they are recycling this in their kerbside collection, 20% are doing so when the material is not collected by their council.

Plastic carrier bags and foil are also commonly recycled erroneously, with 14% and 12% respectively of householders saying they put these materials in recycling when they are not collected by the council. In the case of plastic bags, this represents over half of those recycling this material. Likewise, over half of those putting batteries in kerbside recycling are doing so in areas where they are not accepted.

Figure 3: How well are people using their kerbside services?
This graph shows the % of households who are more or less effective at recycling materials at kerbside. 'Recycling non-targeted materials' refers to those respondents who say they recycle the material at kerbside when the data for their council suggests that it is not collected. NB – the 'missing' part of the bar is households disposing of the item away from their kerbside recycling collection e.g. in the residual waste bin.
 Base: UK weighted records excluding those who don't create waste, live in flats or have a partial collection (bases in brackets), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



Mirroring the 2014 results, the survey results indicate some key variations across the nations:

- Cartons/Tetra Pak- Inclusion as a non-targeted material is significantly higher in Wales; 30% of Welsh households that claim to recycle this material kerbside do not have the appropriate collection (compared to 22% in England, 14% in Scotland and

⁹ NB. There are minor differences between Figures 1 and 3 because the former is based on all respondents; the latter is based on the matched data which excludes respondents who live in flats, in partial collection areas and those whose postcodes could not be matched.

10% in Northern Ireland). This is an improvement, (12 percentage point decrease from 2014). However, this is most likely due to the increased collection of this material, (12 councils collect the material compared to seven in 2014) rather than the public changing their behaviour because the same proportion recycled this material kerbside as they did in 2014.

- Plastic pots, tubs and trays - By contrast, levels of contamination is lowest in Wales (9%), compared to Northern Ireland (25%), Scotland (23%) and England (22%). Again, this is likely to be due, at least partially, to higher levels of collection of this material in Wales. 77% of respondents in Wales lived in areas where this material is accepted for recycling, compared with 62% in Northern Ireland, 47% in Scotland and 55% in England.

3.0 Increasing effective dry recycling

Further improvements in recycling performance will require action to increase the capture of materials that are collected for recycling while, at the same time, ensuring that this does not lead to increased levels of non-targeted materials (thereby reducing quality). To establish current levels of performance, these two requirements – increasing capture and improving quality - can be used to segment UK households (Figure 4).

According to this segmentation, approximately a quarter of households are 'highly effective' recyclers – they neither placed non-targeted materials in their dry kerbside collection on the last disposal occasion nor did they put any materials in the general waste bin that are collected for recycling by their council. However, by extension, this means that approximately three quarters could be recycling more effectively in one or more ways: either because they say they disposed of a material in the general waste bin that they could recycle kerbside; or because they say they placed a material in the kerbside recycling that is not collected locally for recycling; or both.

For example, and taking the bottom row first (and in particular the middle and right hand boxes), these two segments combined show that circa 28% of households did not place non-targeted materials in their recycling but could be recycling more (i.e. by recycling one or more materials that are collected at kerbside which they put in the general waste bin on the last disposal occasion)¹⁰. By contrast, and looking at the left hand column (and in particular the central and upper boxes) a similar proportion (circa 31%) could be recycling more effectively by not placing one or more non-targeted materials in their kerbside recycling collection.

Overall, half of all households (circa 47%) say they placed at least one non-targeted material in their recycling (sum of the top two rows) whereas circa 44% (the sum of the

¹⁰ Survey respondents' self-reported behaviours were matched against actual service provision by councils using respondents' postcodes and a WRAP database of the materials collected by each council. The database is updated annually, primarily via a survey with every council in the UK. **There are margins of error within the population survey and the council survey.** Postcodes also do not align precisely with council boundaries. Therefore these proportions should be viewed as indicative rather than absolute.

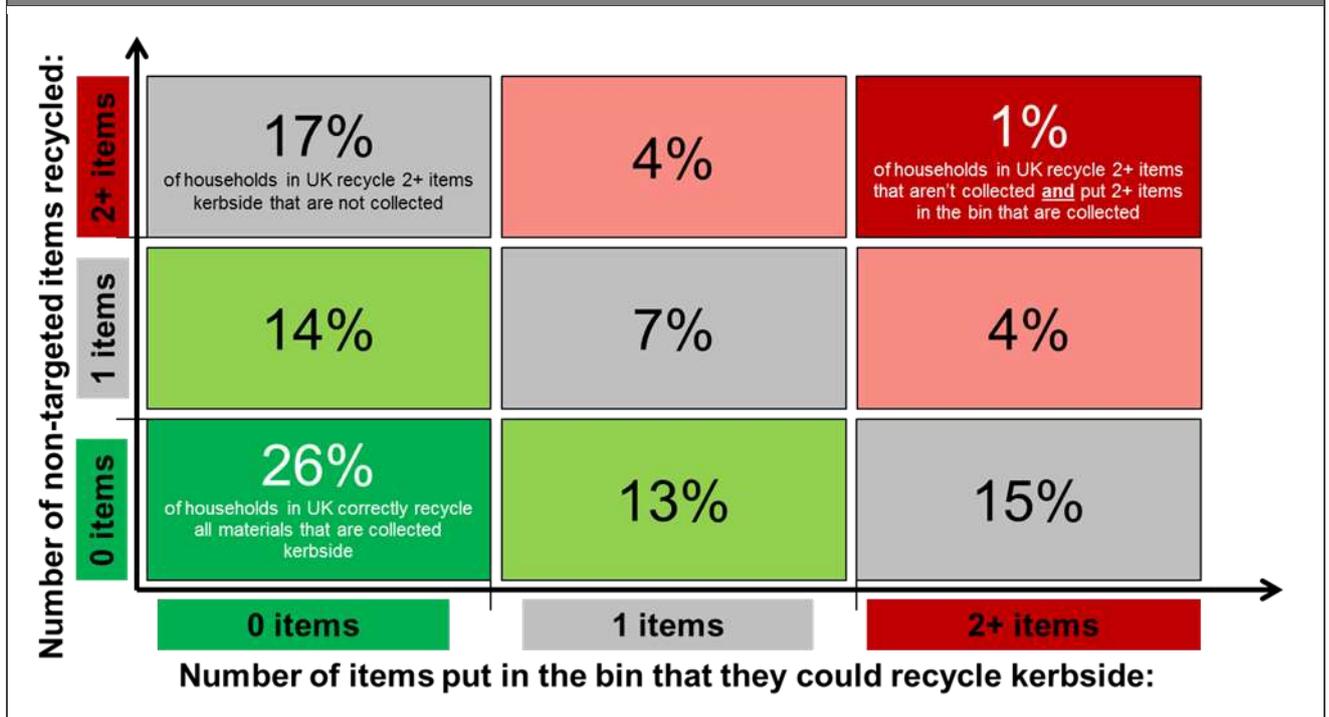
centre and right hand columns) could be recycling more materials at kerbside than they claimed to on the last disposal occasion.

Levels of effective and less effective recycling behaviours have remained relatively static since 2014.

Figure 4: Segmenting the population: the potential to recycle (dry recyclables) more effectively at kerbside

This table allocates households into one of nine segments. The x axis represents the % of households that currently are putting one or more materials in the bin which they could be recycling kerbside. The Y axis represents the % of households who are putting materials in their kerbside recycling that are not collected locally for recycling. Note: the figures in the matrix are subject to margins of error and should not be read as exact figures..

Base: UK weighted records (1,896), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



4.0 Food waste recycling

In 2015, new questions were added to the 3Rs survey to track attitudes and behaviour in relation to food waste recycling, which were known from previous research to be distinct from those for dry recycling.

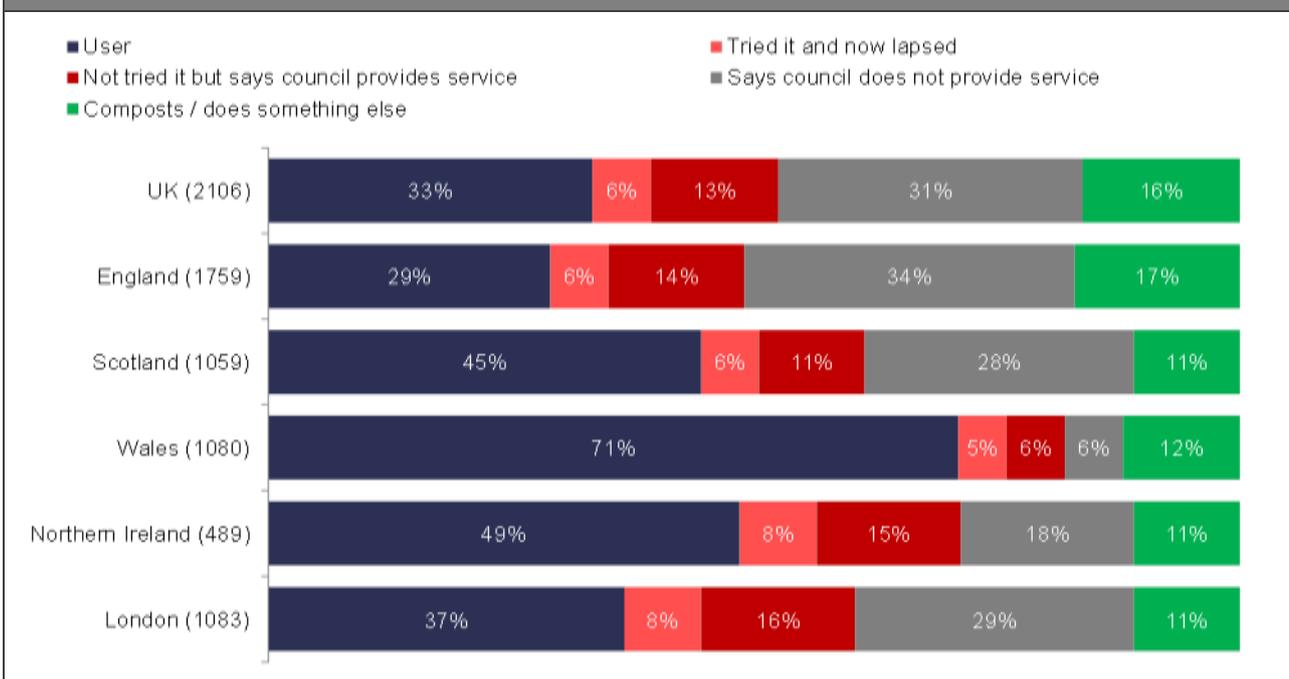
4.1 Participation

Across the UK, one-third of respondents are a user of the food waste collection service provided, with just under a third saying the council doesn't provide the service (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Profile of food waste collection users

Q1b + Q2a – What type of food waste user are they? (1b – how did you last dispose of food waste?; 2a – have you ever used your council’s food waste collection service?)

Base: UK weighted records excluding those who don’t create food waste, live in flats or have a partial collection (bases in brackets), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



There is a large degree of variability between nations, particularly in Wales where 71% of respondents claim to use the service, compared with less than half of respondents in each of the other nations.

User profiles are also associated with a number of demographic differences:

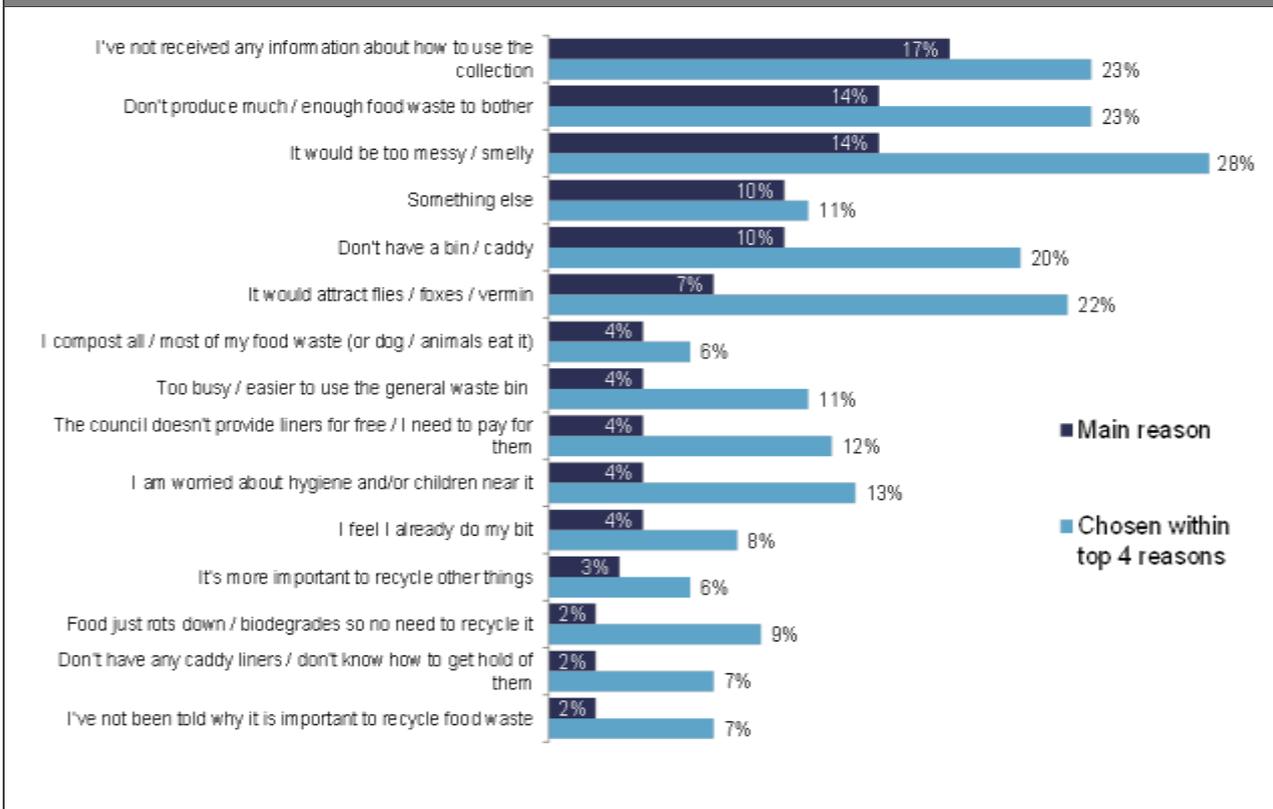
- **Gender:** Non-users tend to have a higher proportion of women – they account for 60% of non-users (vs. 51% of users and 54% of lapsed users).
- **Age:** Lapsed users have a younger age profile – 21% are aged 18-24 and 32% are 35-34 (vs. 9% and 16%, respectively, of users). Users have a slightly older profile (38% are aged 55+ vs. 15% of lapsed users and 33% of non-users).
- **Dwelling:** 24% of users live in detached homes (vs. 18% of lapsed users and 12% of non-users). Both lapsed and non-users are more likely than users to live in flats (20% and 20%, respectively, vs. 11% of users).
- **Young children in home:** Lapsed users are much more likely to have young children at home – 22% have a child aged 0-5 (vs 11% of users) and 22% have a child aged 5-9 (vs. 14% of users).

Respondents who said that they **didn’t use** the food waste collection service offered by their council were given a list of potential barriers and asked to select four that most applied to them (Figure 6). From these they could then select one primary barrier.

Figure 6: Reasons for not using the food waste recycling collection

F2 – What are the main reasons why you don't use the food waste collection in your area? Please select up to 4 reasons then choose one main reason on following screen

Base: Those who don't use the food waste collection but say there is one, UK (394), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



The issues for non-users relate to the service itself; lack of knowledge about how and why to use the service; and perceptions about hygiene, smells and the degree of effort required. The breadth of issues identified suggest that improvements to both services and communications will be required to encourage participation, particularly to overcome perceived hygiene issues which were cited by a substantial proportion of non-users.

- **The service itself:**
 - I don't have a bin/caddy (20% of those who know the council offers a service but don't use it)
 - The council doesn't provide liners for free/I need to pay for them (12%)
- **Lack of knowledge about how and why to use the service:**
 - I've not received any information about how to use the collection (23%)
 - Don't produce enough waste to bother (23%)
- **Perceptions and attitudes about hygiene, smells and effort:**
 - It would be too messy/smelly (28%)
 - It would attract flies/foxes/vermin (22%)
 - I am worried about hygiene and/or children near it (13%)
 - Too busy / easier to use the general waste bin (11%)

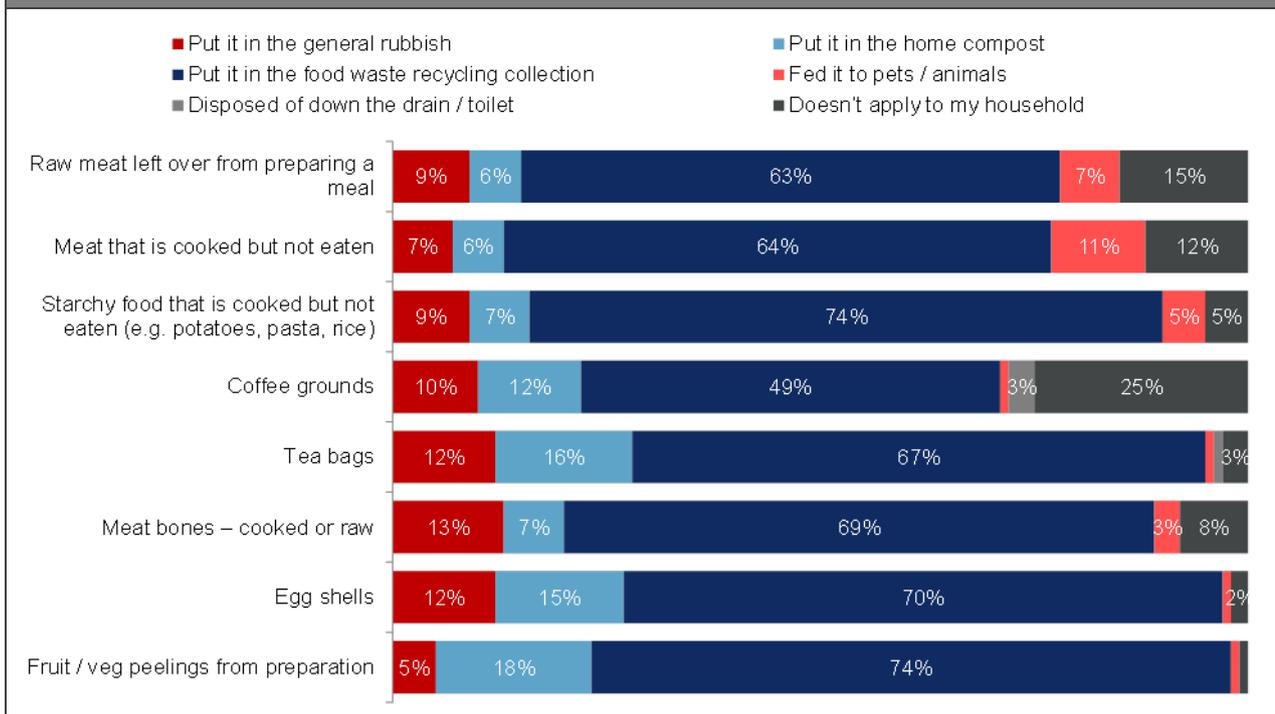
4.2 Capture

In order to improve overall recycling rates, it will be important not just to increase participation in food waste collection schemes but also capture amongst existing users. When prompted, between 7% and 13% of those who use their council food waste collection service still claimed to use the general rubbish bin for a range of food types on the last disposal occasion (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Disposal of specific food items

F3a – Thinking about the last time you disposed of the following food items that were unwanted or had gone past their best, what did you do with them?

Base: All who use food waste collection, UK (705), 3Rs survey Feb 2015

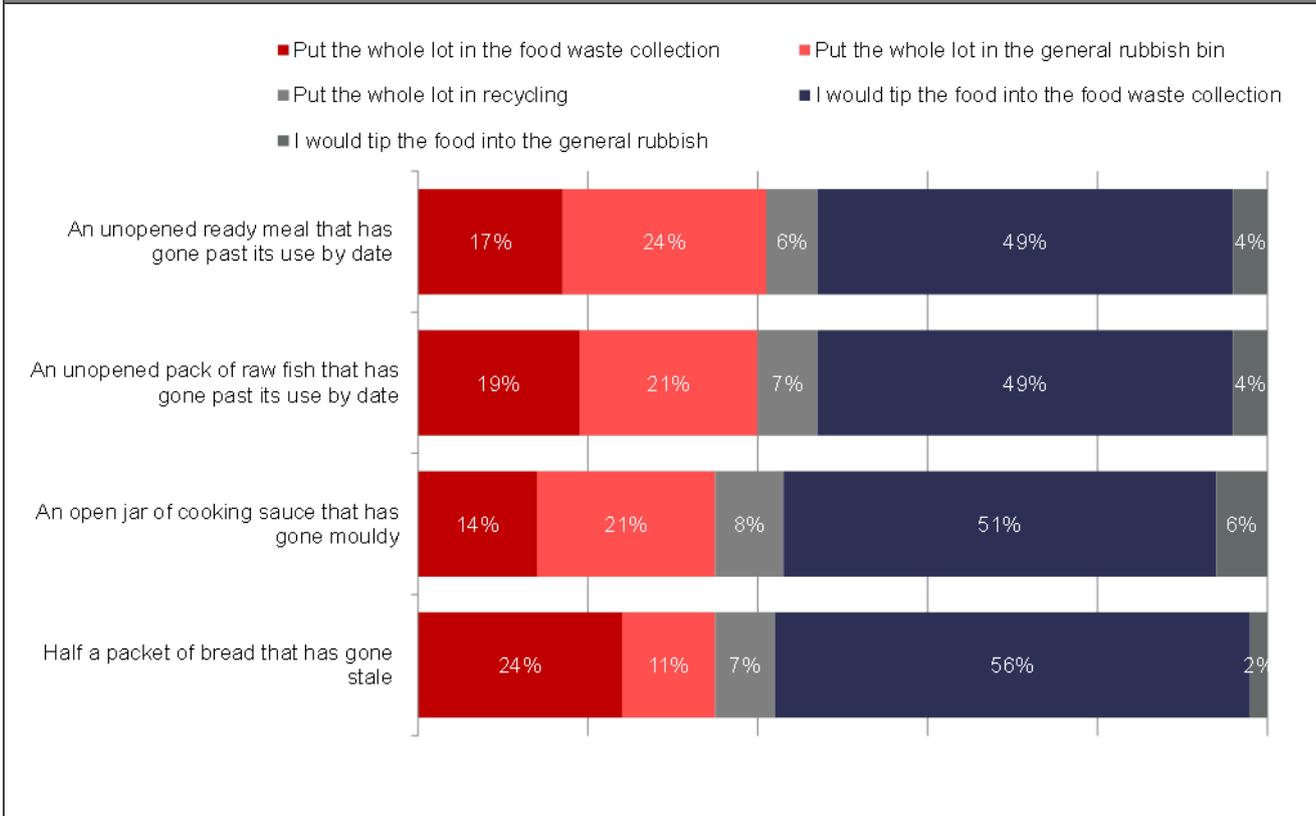


However, when presented with food types that were considered by WRAP to be potentially more challenging to dispose of, only about half of users report using the food waste service effectively, with between 35% and 41% either failing to take food out of the wrapping before placing in the food waste collection or saying they would use the general rubbish bin (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Disposal of more challenging food waste

QF3b – Thinking about the following situations, what would you be most likely to do in each instance?

Base: All who use food waste collection, UK (705), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



5.0 Levels of confidence

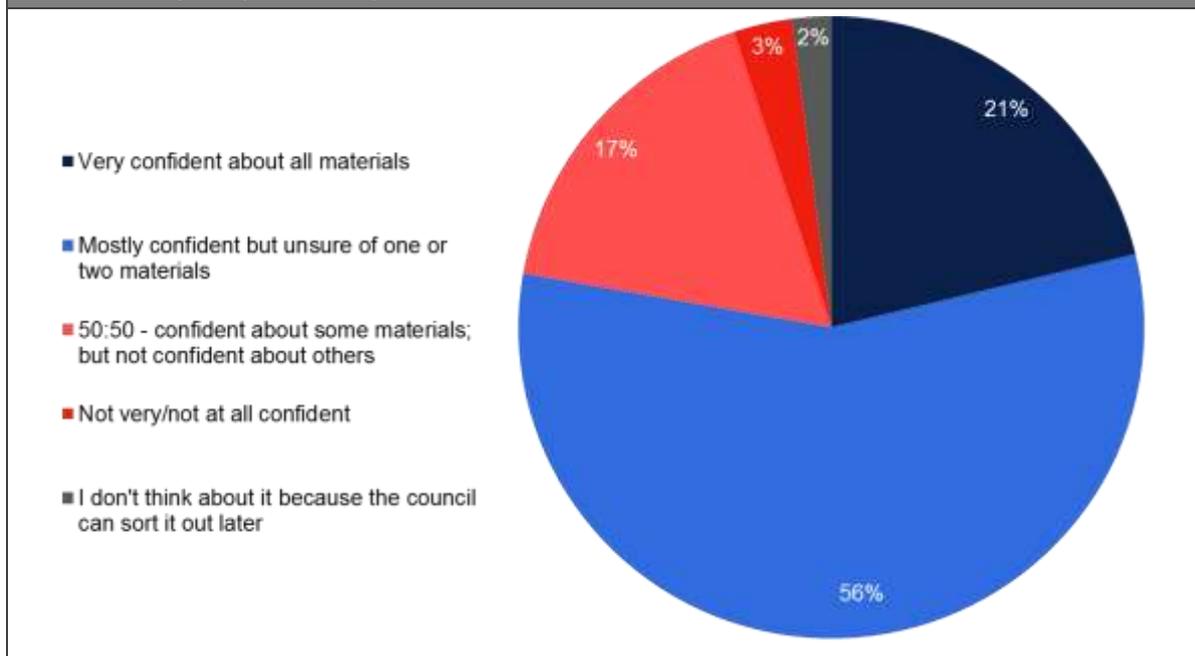
For both dry and food waste recycling, confidence in what can and can't be recycled varies across households (Figure 9). Levels of confidence have remained stable since 2014.

- Close to one in five (21%) say they are “very confident about all materials”.
- 56% are “mostly confident, but unsure of one or two materials”.
- 17% describe themselves as “50:50 – confident about some materials but not confident about others”.
- Relatively few are “not very” or “not at all confident” (2% and 1% respectively).

Figure 9: Confidence in what can and cannot be recycled

Q31. Overall, how confident are you about which materials can be put in the recycling collection and which cannot?

Base: All, UK (2,169), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



Confidence varies by age: younger groups aged 16-24 and 25-34 are less likely to say they are “very” confident (16% and 17%, respectively), compared to 27% of those aged 55+.

Furthermore, those who are satisfied with the clarity of guidance provided by the council, about what can and can't be recycled, are much more confident than those who are dissatisfied with the clarity of guidance. (62% of the people rating this 10 out of 10 are very confident – compared to 21% in the sample overall who are very confident - while 45% of those rating it a zero are 50:50 confident or less – compared to 21% in the sample overall).

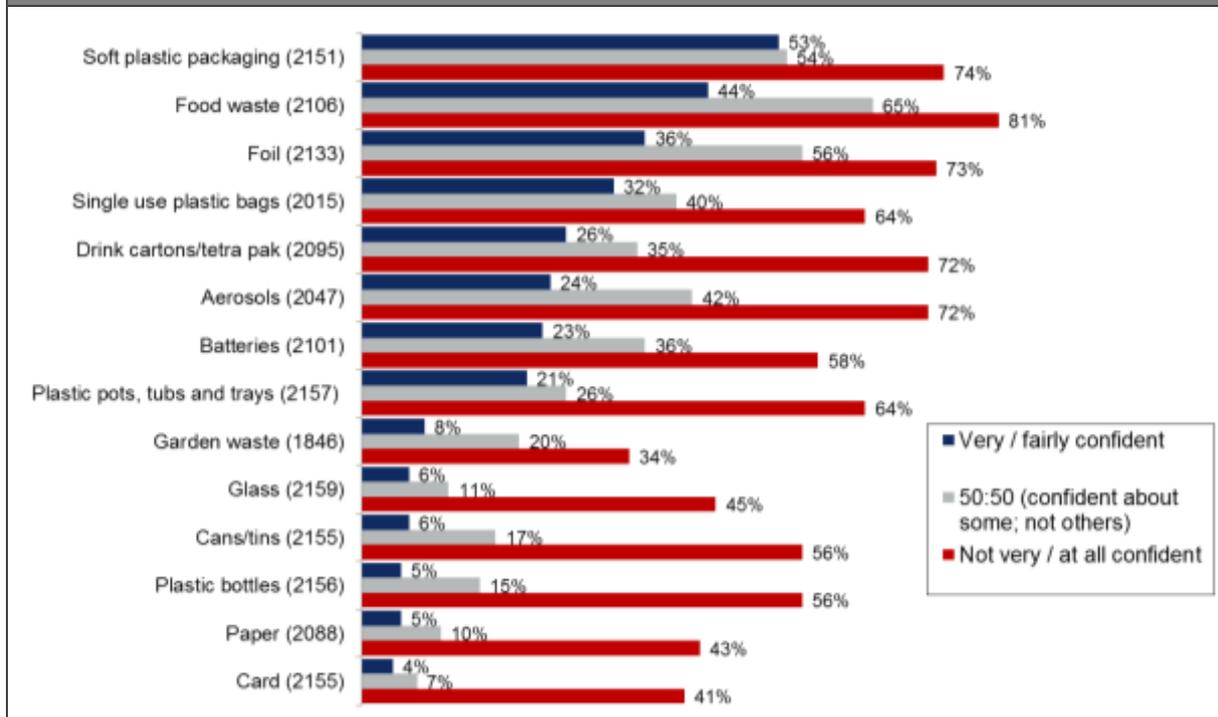
Confidence is important because it correlates closely with reported recycling; those who are less confident (bars in red in Figure 10 below) are significantly more likely to dispose of any given material in the general rubbish. For example, only 5% of those who are “very” or “mostly” confident dispose of plastic bottles in the general rubbish, compared to 15% of those who are “50:50” and 56% of those who are “not very” or “not at all confident”.

Figure 10: Disposing of materials in the general rubbish – split by confidence levels

Q1a/b – For each of the items on the list please indicate how your household last disposed of them?

Q31 – Overall, how confident are you about which materials can be put in the recycling collection and which cannot?

Base: Those creating each type of waste (excluding partial collections and flat dwellers) Base size for each material in brackets below, UK, 3Rs survey Feb 2015



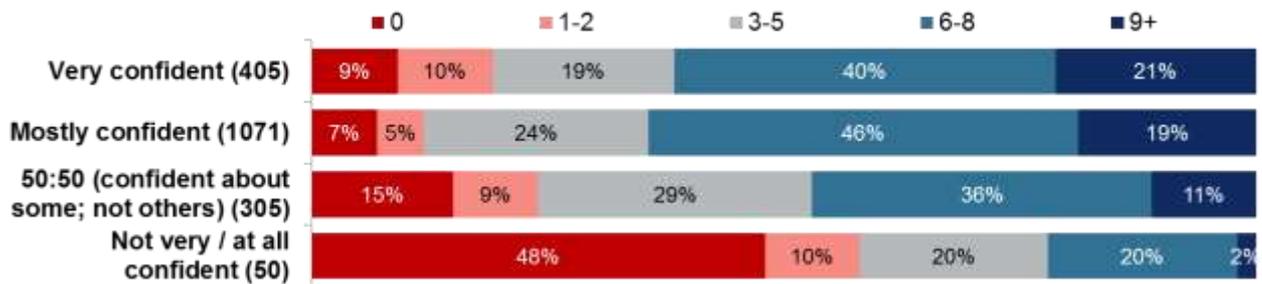
5.1 Confidence as a predictor of effective dry recycling

- Capture: As seen in the 2014 survey, levels of confidence about which materials can be put in the kerbside recycling, and which cannot, are again positively associated with claimed recycling levels (Figure 11).
- Where materials are collected, increased confidence is correlated with an increased number of materials claimed to be recycled at the kerbside (Figure 11, top graph).
- Similarly, increased confidence is correlated with a decrease in the materials claimed to be disposed of in the general rubbish that could be included in the kerbside recycling collection (Figure 11, bottom left graph).
- Quality: However, as in 2014, the same is not true of the relationship between levels of confidence and the claimed number of non-targeted materials in recycling (Figure 11, bottom right graph).
- All levels of confidence, (except the lowest), are equally likely to put materials in their recycling that are not collected locally for recycling (i.e. to contaminate); for example, 7% of those who are 'very confident' include 4+ materials in their recycling that are not collected locally for recycling, as do 10% of those who are '50:50'.
- Those with the lowest confidence are, by virtue of their lower levels of claimed recycling in general, the least likely group to put non-targeted materials in their recycling collection – 72% include no non-targeted materials (vs. 49% of the 'very confident group').

Figure 11: Confidence as a predictor of effective recycling

These graphs shows three different measures of recycling effectiveness, each split by levels of confidence
Top graph – number of materials claimed to be recycled at the kerbside that can be recycled at kerbside
Bottom left graph – number of materials currently claimed to be put in the general rubbish that are collected by the local kerbside recycling service
Bottom right graph – number of materials currently claimed to be put in their recycling collection that are not accepted locally for recycling
 Base: UK weighted records excluding those who don't create waste, live in flats or have a partial collection (bases in brackets), 3Rs survey Feb 2015

Matched data vs. Q31 – How many materials do they effectively recycle kerbside split by their level of confidence over what they can include in this collection



How many items could they recycle kerbside that they currently throw in bin



How many non-targeted materials do they put in their recycling



6.0 Knowledge of recycling collection services

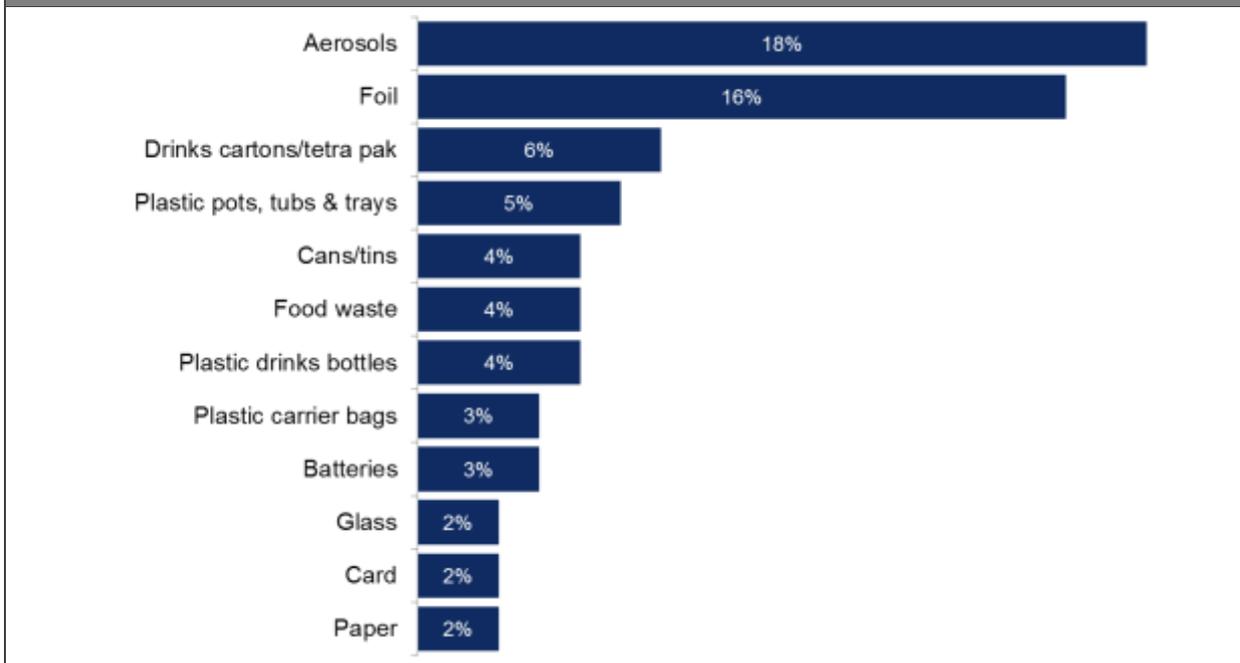
Focusing specifically on those respondents who say they put at least one material in the bin that they could be recycling at kerbside, the survey identifies two materials where there is a particular knowledge gap (Figure 12). These are:

- Aerosols - 18% of all households could be diverting this material from their general waste bin to recycling, yet they claim that either their council doesn't collect this material or are not sure whether or not it does.
- Foil - 16% of all households could be diverting this material from their general waste bin to recycling, yet they claim that either their council doesn't collect this material or are not sure whether or not it does.

Figure 12: Levels of 'mistaken' non-participation

This graph shows the % of non-flat dwelling households in the UK who could be recycling the material kerbside but a key barrier is lack of awareness (i.e. it is collected by the council but they don't think/are not sure that it is).

Base: UK non-flat dwellers (1,869), 3Rs survey Feb 2015



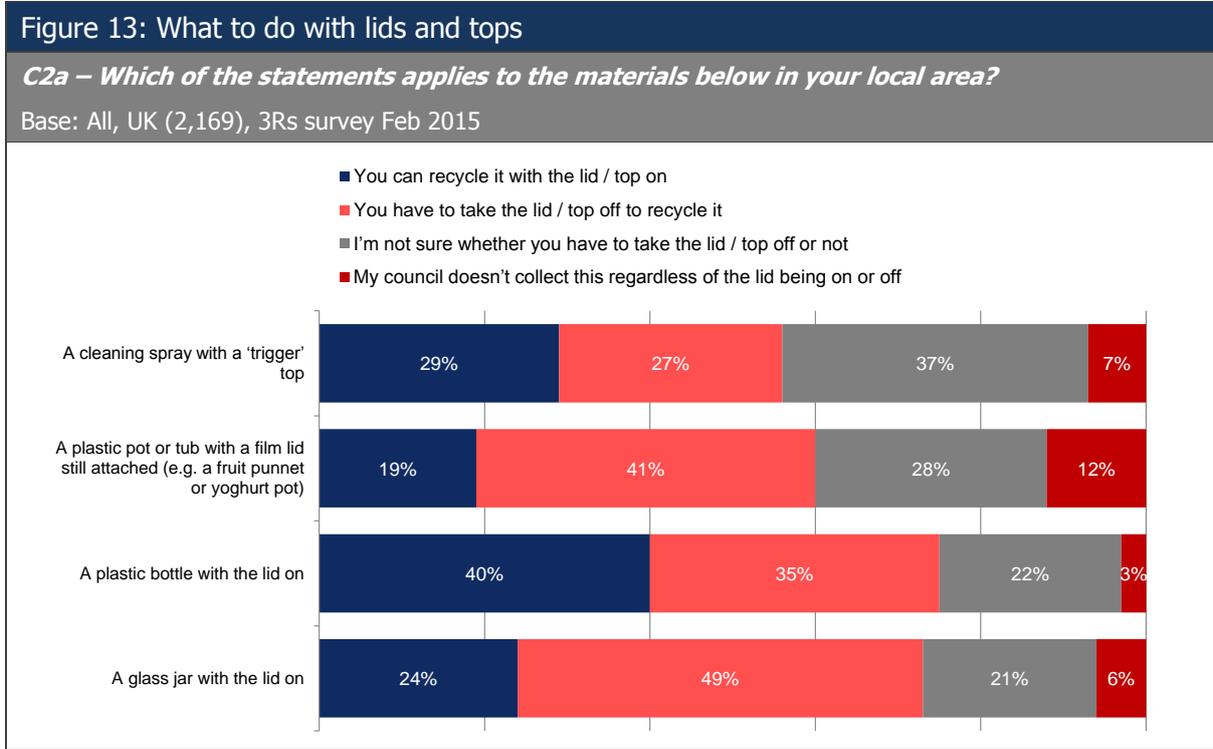
Materials such as food waste, cartons/Tetra Pak and plastic pots, tubs and trays represent a different challenge. They don't show as much potential for increased awareness simply because fewer people are served by a recycling collection service that accepts these materials. So while we saw earlier in this report that a sizeable number of households disposed of these in the general rubbish, this graph is telling us that broadening service provision is required as well as tackling any lack of awareness amongst those householders who do have these materials collected for recycling.

7.0 Lids, tops and rinsing out

WRAP's previous qualitative research undertaken as part of the Recycle Now Refresh indicated that householders are confused about what they are required to do to prepare materials for recycling, particularly how clean the materials need to be, with participants also saying that this causes some materials to not be recycled.

The 3Rs survey was expanded in 2015 to include a series of questions to gather quantitative information on householders' views on how clean materials need to be and what to do with tops and lids. WRAP does not collect details of these requirements from local authorities; therefore unlike previous sections of this report where survey responses were matched with local authority service information, this commentary relates to claimed behaviour only.

The main conclusion is that there is no consensus on the right thing to do (Figure 13). Taking the cleaning spray with a trigger top as an example, broadly as many households say it can be recycled with it on (29%) as who say it needs to be removed (27%). Furthermore, the largest single group admit to not being sure either way (37%). This trend is repeated across all four materials tested, showing the high level of uncertainty across the UK.

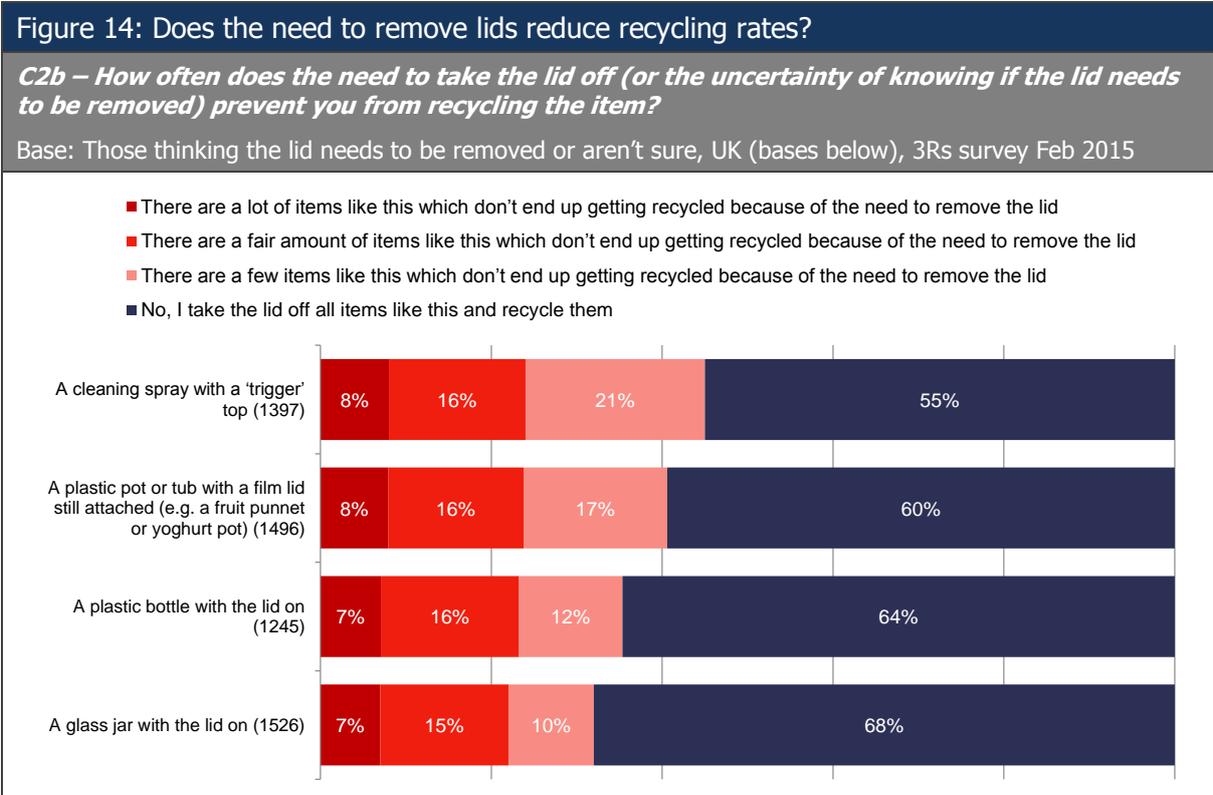


Given that different councils recommend different things, it might be expected that there is this variation across the UK– at authority level more agreement may well be apparent. To investigate this line of enquiry, the answers for individual local authorities were analysed¹¹; these showed the same lack of consensus (NB base sizes are very small and therefore results are illustrative, rather than conclusive):

- Trigger sprays: For a single authority with a sample of 29 respondents, 24% said the trigger top could stay on; 28% said it had to come off; 28% weren't sure and 21% didn't think it was collected.
- Plastic pot or tub with a film lid: For a single authority with a sample of 69 respondents, 36% said the film lid could stay on; 42% said it had to come off; 19% weren't sure and 3% didn't think it was collected.
- Plastic bottle with the lid on: For a single authority with a sample of 107 respondents, 22% said the lid could stay on; 49% said it had to come off; 27% weren't sure and 2% didn't think it was collected.
- Glass jar with a lid on: For a single authority with a sample of 96 respondents, 26% said the top could stay on; 20% said it had to come off; 49% weren't sure and 5% didn't think it was collected.

¹¹ Those with the biggest number of responses for each question were chosen

A large minority claim to be discouraged to some extent from recycling these materials because of the requirement to remove lids and tops or because of their uncertainty about whether or not this is necessary (Figure 14).



Rinsing materials generates slightly less variation in responses (Figure 15):

- Half the sample agree that materials need to be rinsed before recycling;
- 33% say it is necessary to wash things thoroughly; and
- Just 3% of respondents claim nothing needs to be done with materials before recycling – not even emptying the food out – but this small minority could contribute disproportionately to levels of contamination if materials containing food are placed in dry recycling collections.

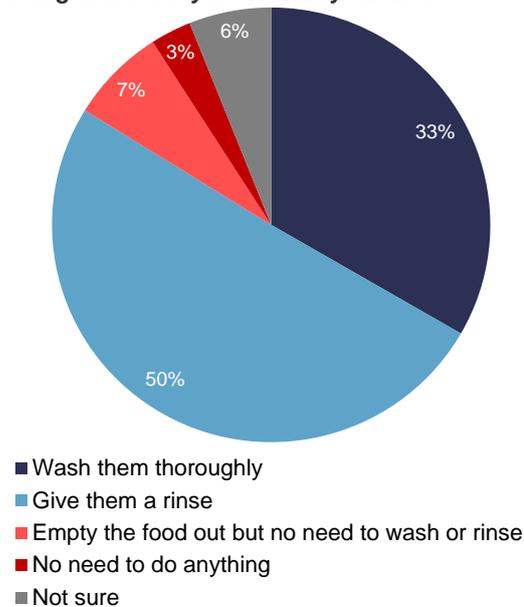
41% claim to be discouraged to some extent from recycling these materials because of the actual or perceived cleaning requirements (Figure 15 – C3b).

Figure 15: Rinsing out

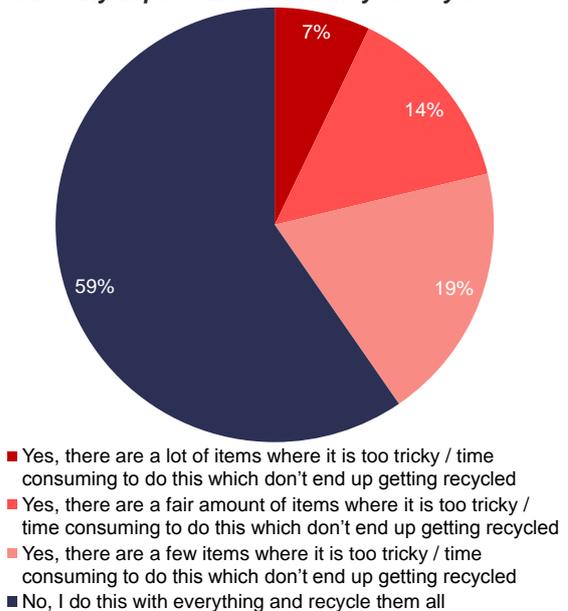
Questions below

Base: C3a = All, UK (2,169); C3b = those who think there is a need to wash/rinse (1959), 3Rs survey Feb 2015

C3a – For items that have some food on (or in) them; is there anything you need to do before being able to recycle them in your area?



C3b – Does this requirement [“to wash items out”; “to rinse items”; “to empty the food out”] have any impact on the amount you recycle?



8.0 Communications

8.1 Receiving information

Over half of UK households (57%) report receiving information on recycling or reuse in the past year – this is significantly fewer than in 2014 when 69% said they had received information (Figure 16). Information about how to use the kerbside recycling collection remains the most frequently cited (42%), followed by information on other recycling facilities in the area (21%) or about the food waste collection service (18%).

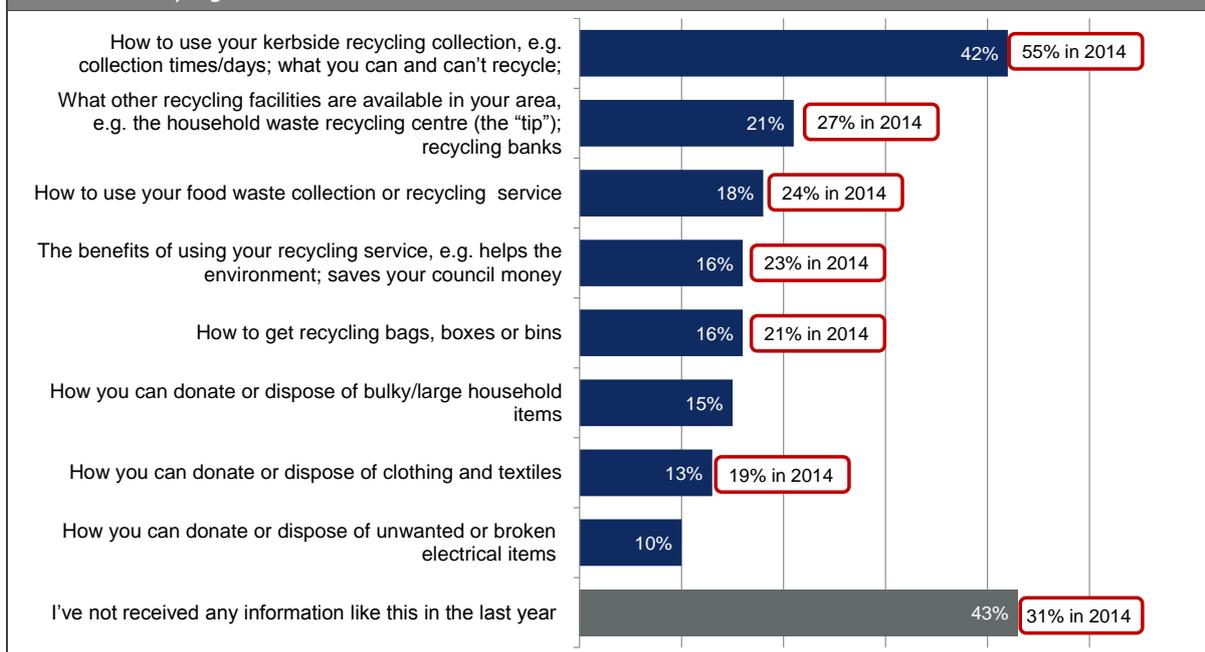
Comparisons to 2014 reveal a pattern of reduced information receipt across the board, with all except two types of information having seen a statistically significant decline. Just over half (55%) said that they received information on the kerbside collection in 2014, compared to 42% this year. Despite this, reported levels of confidence and effective recycling have remained stable since 2014.

Figure 16: Receipt of information at home

Q5 – Do you recall receiving any of the following information at your home in the past year, e.g. in a leaflet or a council newsletter?

Base: All UK (2,176), 3Rs survey Feb 2014

NB. Statistically significant differences from the 2014 wave are shown in the red text boxes.



There are a number of important differences across sub-groups within the population. For example:

- **Age:** there is a strong relationship between age and reported information receipt, with older age groups reporting much higher levels of receipt of all information types. For example, only around a third (32%) of those aged 65+ say they have not received any information in the past year, compared to 52% of those aged 18-24.
- **Dwelling:** Those in flats are less likely to report having received information – those in blocks of flats (57%) and those in converted houses (60%) are both far more likely than those in terraces, semis or fully detached houses (40%) to say they have received no forms of information.

There are a number of strong associations between receipt of information about how to use the kerbside recycling collection and corresponding recycling behaviours. It should be noted that these serve only to highlight an association between the variables - it is not possible to demonstrate a causal link (i.e. receiving information causes e.g. correct recycling):

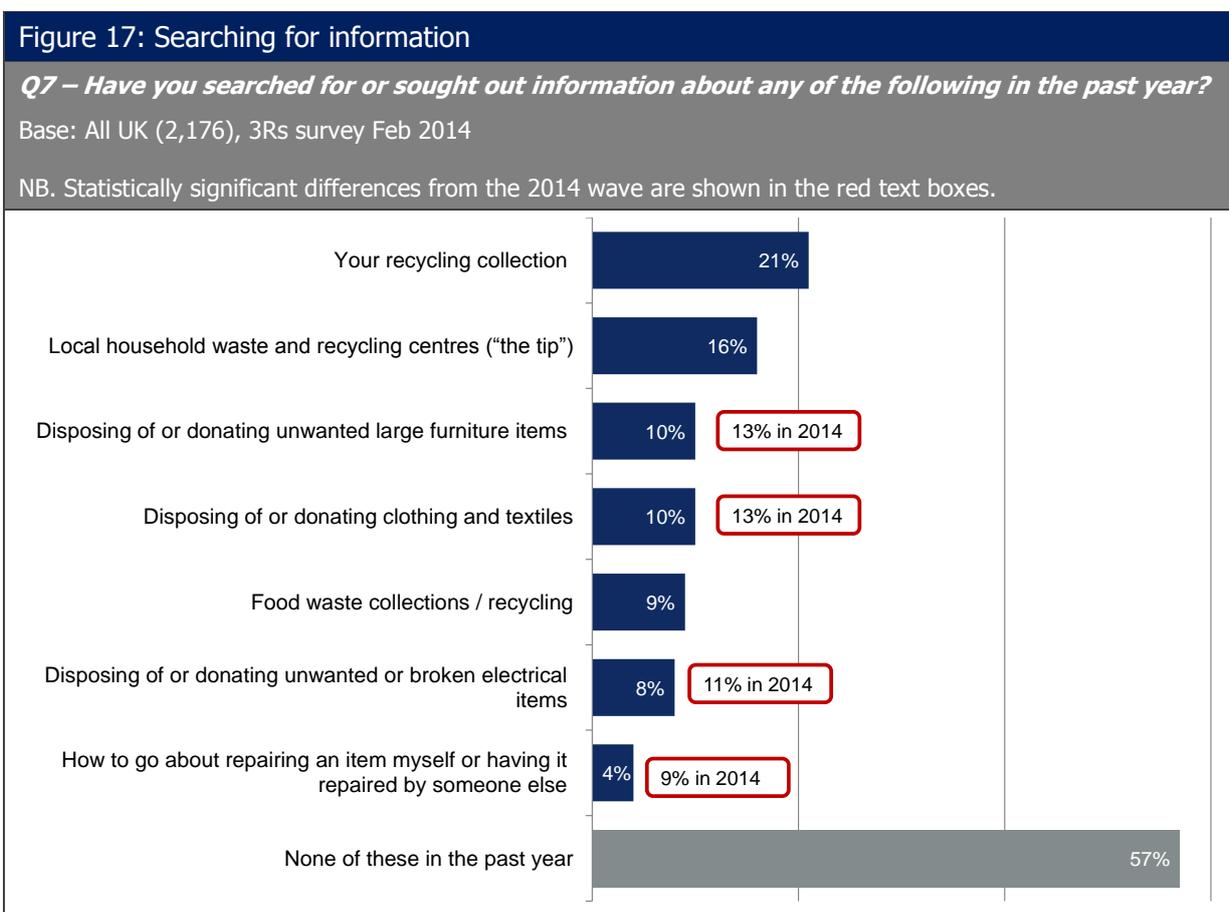
- **Confidence:** Those who are confident about what can and can't be recycled are much more likely to say they have received information about the kerbside collection in the past year. 56% of those who say they are 'very confident' say they received information compared to just 23% who are '50:50' and 17% of those who are 'not very' or 'not at all confident'.
- **Number of materials recycled correctly:** there is a strong relationship between reported receipt of information on the kerbside collection and levels of effective

recycling – 56% of those who correctly recycle 9+ materials say they received information (vs. 36% and 22% of those correctly recycling 1-2 materials and 0 materials, respectively).

8.2 Searching for information

Compared to 2014 there has been a significant decrease in householders seeking information; 43% of respondents say they actively searched for information on recycling and reuse topics in the past year, compared with 48% in 2014, (Figure 17).

- Information on recycling collections is the main category of information sought (21%), which is similar to 2014, followed closely by information on HWRCs (16%)
- 9% sought information about food waste collections.



There are a number of key points to consider:

- **Information type:** The information most commonly sought in relation to recycling is holiday collection days and times (52% of those seeking information) as well as standard collection days and times (46%) – both representing no significant change from 2014.
- **Source:** The local council website remains the primary source for recycling information with 74% of those searching using it.

- **Age:** the youngest two age groups (18-24s and 25-34s) are significantly more likely to search for information on food waste collections – 16% and 14% respectively compared to 5% of those aged 55+.
- **Confidence:** 24% of those describing themselves as “very confident” with their recycling have searched for information about the kerbside collection (vs. 7% of those are not very/not at all confident).

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