

CASE STUDY: ISLINGTON

Islington introduced Recycling on the go (RoTG) units along Upper Street in December 2009.



Key facts

- In December 2009, RotG units were introduced on Upper Street, Islington's busiest high street and collect commingled recyclables. These are cans, card, cartons, glass, mixed plastics (including plastic bottles and packaging) and paper.
- From a recent waste compositional analysis, the overall recycling rate for the units was 53%, with 74% of the materials captured.
- The scheme is a success in promoting recycling, raising awareness and diverting a significant amount of materials that would have otherwise ended up in landfill.
- These high-quality RotG units are suited to this well-known trading thoroughfare in Islington, and this justified the capital cost. It would be difficult for Islington to validate this cost if this initiative was rolled out borough-wide in its present form.

Location

The London Borough of Islington is located in North London and is the smallest London borough, covering just six square miles. Despite this, the number of residents is 199,130¹, in 88,000 households, with 44% of households being social/council housing (compared to the London average of 26%)².

Rationale

Upper Street was chosen for the RotG scheme as it is the busiest shopping high street in the borough and has the highest footfall. As litter bins were already in place along Upper Street, the RotG units were paired up with these bins where space allowed.

The introduction of the RotG units will assist with the Borough's aim to increase recycling tonnage by diverting recyclable materials destined for landfill. They will act as a highly visual reminder of the boroughs commitment to making it easy for residents and visitors to recycle.

Scheme overview

The RotG scheme in Islington was rolled-out in December 2009. Upper Street is busy at all times of the day, with the busiest periods being over lunch times and during the evening rush hour. In total, 30 Broxap Derby individual RotG units are located along Upper Street. These are individual 120 litre units, co-located as close as possible

1. Source: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/islington/maps-statistics/councilabout/Pages/adiversecommunity.aspx?extra=52>
2. Source: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/islington/maps-statistics/councilabout/Pages/housing2009.aspx?extra=10>

with a litter bin of a similar size. The target materials are cans, card, cartons, glass, mixed plastics (including plastic bottles and packaging), and paper for recycling.

Units are emptied 3-5 times per day. The material is bagged and one operative empties the unit leaving the sack beside it, whilst another operative and a dustcart follow, placing the sacks into the split compartment vehicle.

Planning

No planning permission was required to install the freestanding RotG units. However, highway engineers were consulted on unit type to ensure those chosen would be appropriate for the particular locations. The factors considered in the decision making-process were: budget restrictions, characteristics of the location, existing litter bin provision.

Containers

Figure 1: Islington RotG unit



Table 1 Details of units

	Town centre units
Number of containers	30
Type of container	Single unit containing clear recycling sack
Container capacity	120 litres
Container manufacturer	Broxap Derby
Cost per container	£395
Waste streams segregated	Paper, cardboard, drinks cans, plastic, glass, cartons
Special features	Small footprint, ease of emptying, durable and well made with a 10 year structural guarantee

Signage

The signage on the RotG units is WRAP Recycle Now iconography and colour scheme including a green aperture. The signage also includes the Islington logo and name in white along the bottom edges of the RotG unit (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Islington RotG signage on unit



Capital expenditure

The largest expenditure was for the units. The scheme was internally funded.

Collection and storage arrangements

The collection from the units takes place up to 5 times per day (at approx 8.30am, 1.30am, 3pm, 6.30pm, 11pm), 7 days per week, as the units are in use throughout the day. Inside the units are clear recycling sacks which the street cleaners remove and replace with an empty sack, leaving the full sack by the unit for collection. A split-body scarab RCV collection vehicle follows the street cleaner and clears the sacks left beside the units, along with the white sacks from the litter bins.

The vehicle goes to the Hornsey Street waste transfer station where it is bulked and taken to North London Waste Authority for reprocessing at a materials recovery facility in Bow, East London.

Communication

Information about the RotG units being installed along Upper Street is disseminated to residents through the quarterly borough newsletter that is delivered door-to-door to every resident (Figure 3). Communication about the scheme is also available in the libraries and council buildings including the customer centre at the municipal offices and the foyer of the Town Hall. The information is also placed on the Islington Council website and is sent out to e-news subscribers (people spoken to at events and have provided email contacts to the Recycling Team). The installation of the RotG units received positive press coverage in the local newspaper (The Islington Tribune).

Figure 3: Extract from Islington quarterly newsletter

The image shows a page from the Islington quarterly newsletter. At the top left, the website address 'www.islington.gov.uk' is visible. The page number '4' is in a large font, followed by the word 'ENVIRONMENT' in green capital letters. The main headline is 'Recycling on the go' in a large, bold, black font. Below the headline, there is a sub-headline: 'Have you spotted the fantastic new recycling bins spanning the length of Upper Street? The new bins let you recycle while you're on the move...'. To the right of the text is a photograph of a woman, Alara Gee, wearing a brown jacket and glasses, standing next to a black recycling bin with green accents. The bin has a recycling symbol and the text 'Recycle now Recycling bin'. Below the photograph, there is a caption: 'Local resident Alara Gee tries out Upper Street's cool new recycling bins, which take the whole range of recyclable materials'. The page contains several columns of text providing information about the recycling scheme, including statistics and tips for recycling.

www.islington.gov.uk

4 ENVIRONMENT

Recycling on the go

Have you spotted the fantastic new recycling bins spanning the length of Upper Street? The new bins let you recycle while you're on the move...

Over 9,000 people walk along Upper Street every hour, and they can now recycle their papers, magazines, drink cans and other items that sometimes end up in the rubbish bin. This is all thanks to the 30 new recycling bins that have been placed the length of the road from Highbury Corner to Angel tube station.

The recycling bins are easy to spot and take the full range of recyclable materials, so shoppers can put all their glass bottles and jars, paper and card, food tins and drink cans, and plastic packaging and cartons into the bins. This is all part of Islington's commitment to making recycling as easy as possible and reaching our recycling target of 35%.

Cut the rubbish

There are also many ways to reduce your rubbish when you're out shopping. To start with, you can choose products that come with less packaging or packaging that can be recycled. And why not buy products sold in refill packs, concentrates or in bulk and use a reusable cotton or string bag when shopping rather than a plastic bag?

And remember, you can now recycle all your plastic packaging and cartons at home using your green box or recycling bag collection schemes.

All these things are helping us make a drastic reduction in the household rubbish we produce, with a fall last year of nearly 8.5% in household rubbish compared with the year before. That's the second highest fall in London, so thank you – and keep up the good work!

Find out more at www.islington.gov.uk/recycling. You can also join the debate and have any questions answered at our Facebook group, 'Recycling Islington'.

Local resident Alara Gee tries out Upper Street's cool new recycling bins, which take the whole range of recyclable materials

The colourful units generate on-going publicity and also continue to feature in trade magazines as a good example of RotG units.

The RotG units formed part of a wider general waste minimisation message to residents. It is not a one-off campaign but is helping to deliver an on-going message that can be utilised in any campaign.

Performance, contamination and monitoring

In a recent waste composition analysis (WCA) carried out in January 2012, the overall recycling rate for the units was found to be 53%, with 74% of the materials captured.

Other key observations from the WCA were that paper represented 46% of the recyclable material collected - the highest material stream. This result reflects the fact that these containers are in high footfall commuter areas, close to train and underground stations where free morning and evening newspapers are handed out. There was also a high level of paper in the residual waste stream (34%).

The crew monitor contamination in the units and report back any specific issues.

Lessons learned

- Placing a RotG unit without it being paired with a general litter bin results in higher levels of contamination.
- Time spent in planning the RotG unit locations is very important.
- If the budget allows, a premium RotG unit will give durability and longevity. This will result in minimum maintenance costs.
- Signage is important to residents; the RotG units should stand out and be instantly recognisable as a recycling unit.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Janice Grant, Waste Minimisation & Recycling Officer at Islington Council.

**For further information about
Recycle on the Go please visit:
www.wrapcymru.org.uk/rotgwales**

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a world without waste**



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