



Compost Awareness Week 2011

WEST LONDON WASTE PARTNERSHIP

FINAL
Date: 14 July 2011

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Waste Minimisation Coordinator
WLWA

West London Waste
Let's be resourceful

Campaign Report

Date: June 2011

DISTRIBUTION

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Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Job Title	Date Report Issued	Draft or Final?
Jim Brennan	Director WLWA	14/07/11	Final
Jonathan Nulty	Assistant Director (Resources) – WLWA	14/07/11	Final
David Pietropaoli	LB Brent Waste Policy Manager	14/07/11	Final
Catherina Pack	Acting Manager, Waste minimisation and recycling LB Ealing	14/07/11	Final
Andrew Baker	Head of Climate Change LB Harrow	14/07/11	Final
Natalie Morgans	Energy Officer LB Harrow	14/07/11	Final
Colin Russell	Waste Manager LB Hillingdon	14/07/11	Final
Naomi Hawkins	Waste and Recycling Manager LB Hounslow	14/07/11	Final
Lyndon Capewell	Waste and Recycling Officer LB Hounslow	14/07/11	Final
David Ingham	Waste Minimisation Officer LB Richmond-upon-Thames	14/07/11	Final

1. Compost Awareness Week Project Summary

1.1. Local authority name

West London Waste Partnership consisting of:

- LB Brent
- LB Ealing
- LB Harrow
- LB Hillingdon
- LB Harrow
- LB Richmond
- West London Waste Authority (WLWA)

1.2. Date

Activities started on Saturday 30 April and ended on Saturday 7 May.

1.3. Total amount spent on resources

£1,978.67 – resources were purchased. These can also be used for future years.

1.4. Project team members

Sarah Dickinson, WLWA

Representatives from the West London Boroughs:

- Varsha Palm (LB Brent)
- Andrea Vasquez (LB Ealing)
- Natalie Morgans (LB Harrow)
- Lyndon Capewell (LB Hounslow)
- David Ingham (LB Richmond upon Thames)

2. Local Authority Introduction

2.1. Total households in authority

Table 1

2009-10	Brent	Ealing	Harrow	Hillingdon	Hounslow	Richmond	Total
Population	263,464	300,948	206 814	243,006	212,341	172,335	1,398,908
Households	104,068	107,724	91,710	109,225	95,847	77,461	599,999

2.2. Home composting scheme details during campaign

Brent

Compost bins are available to residents with only a delivery charge of £5 for the first bin. Additional bins cost £13 for a 220 litre and £16 for 330 litre size. Residents contact Brent Council to request the compost bins. Traditionally, once a year residents can buy compost bins at the HWRC during Compost Awareness Week as well as going along to collect free compost. Since 2002 it is estimated that 9,000 compost bins have been distributed to Brent residents. Brent signed up to the national composting framework in June 2011 giving residents the same offer under this framework.

Ealing

Residents can purchase compost bins through the national composting framework. A 220 litre bins costs £15 and 330 litre, £18 plus £5.49 delivery charge. Compost bins are delivered within 28 days. Since 1999 around 14,000 composting bins have been distributed to Ealing residents.

Harrow

Until April 2011 compost bins were available free of charge to residents. There is currently no home composting scheme in place. Since 1995 over 17,000 compost bins have been given to Harrow residents.

Hillingdon

Hillingdon has compost bins available free for residents. The scheme is not advertised. Approximately 5,000 have been distributed since 2005.

Hounslow

Residents can purchase compost bins through the national composting framework. A 220 litre bins costs £5 and 330 litre, £8 plus £5.49 delivery charge. Compost bins are delivered within 28 days. Since 1998 almost 18,000 composting bins have been distributed to Hounslow residents.

Richmond

Residents can purchase bins through the national composting framework. A 220 litre bins costs £15 and 330 litre, £18 plus £5.49 delivery charge. Compost bins are delivered within 28 days.

Project Review

2.3. Summary of project


Compost Awareness Week ran from 1 to 7 May 2011. Events took place in all boroughs with the aim of encouraging residents to buy compost bins and compost more of their food and garden waste.

The resources purchased and the lessons learned during this week of activities will continue to be used to achieve the actions around home composting set out in the West London Waste Prevention Strategy and action plan which include selling 6,600 compost bins during 2011/12 and supporting people to compost more material more effectively.

Activities conducted

Table 2 outlines the activities that took place during CAW.



Table 2: Awareness raising activities during the campaign

Date	Activity	Outcomes and comments
30 April 08.00 to 18.00 1 May 09.00 to 16.00	Compost giveaway and compost bin sale at Townmead Road HRRC	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 10 tonnes of compost▪ 199 people spoken to▪ 181 people collecting compost▪ 5 compost bins and 2 wormeries sold▪ 102 information leaflets given out
1 May	Compost Giveaway at West London Composting (IVC) for Hillingdon residents	24 tonnes of compost Unknown number of people collecting compost

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Date: June 2011

Date	Activity	Outcomes and comments
3 May 08.00 to 16.00	Compost giveaway and compost bins sale at Brent HRRC	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 tonnes of compost ▪ 355 residents collecting compost ▪ Approx. 50 spoken to about composting
3 May 19.00 to 20.00	Master Composter talk at Hounslow Civic Centre	5 residents attended
4 May 08.00 to 16.00	Compost bin sale at Brent HRRC	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 57 bins sold over the two days ▪ 65 people spoken to ▪ 200 composting leaflets given out over the two

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Date: June 2011

Date	Activity	Outcomes and comments
		days
4 May 09.00 to 13.00	Compost Giveaway at Roxeth Recreation Ground, Harrow	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 24 people spoken to ▪ 23 people collecting compost ▪ 1 compost bin request ▪ 3 information leaflets given out
5 May 09.00 to 13.00	Compost Giveaway at Kenton Recreation Ground, Harrow	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 37 people spoken to ▪ 37 people collecting compost ▪ 1 compost bin requests ▪ 8 information leaflets given out
5 May 19.00 to	Master Composter talk at Chiswick Town Hall	6 residents attended

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Date: June 2011

Date	Activity	Outcomes and comments
20.00		
6 May 12.30 to 17.30	Compost giveaway at Walpole Park, Ealing	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 70 people spoken to ▪ 58 people collecting compost ▪ 29 compost information leaflets given out
7 May 10.00 to 13.00	Compost giveaway at Hounslow Heath. Also master composter advice and planting seedlings in newspaper pots	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 tonnes of compost given away ▪ 108 people spoken to ▪ 108 people collecting compost ▪ 50 compost bin sales leaflets given out ▪ 120 composting information leaflets given out

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Date	Activity	Outcomes and comments
		
Totals		People spoken to = 564 Tools given out = 512 Compost bins sold = 66 People interacted with = 804

Engagement resources

A key aspect of behaviour change is the need to make it easy and simple for people to make a change. After speaking to staff at the events residents could simply go home and not do anything differently. To make it easy resources were there for the people to take home to encourage them to do something differently straight away.

Table 3

Quantity	Description	Cost
200	Compost giveaway double sided poster – to raise awareness of the event	£167.25
15,000	Why compost at home 4 page leaflet – gives the basics on how to get started composting at home	£766.42
5,000	Composting know how double sided A5 leaflet – gives more details about how to get the right mix and how to speed up the composting process	£253.60

Merchandising material

Whilst the pile of compost attracted people to the areas where the giveaways were happening once people got closer there were four outdoor banner stands to help them understand what was happening.

There were two different designs with four banner stands being available for use. The banner stands were produced at a cost of £791.40.



2.4. Monitoring and Evaluation Activity

Compost bin sales

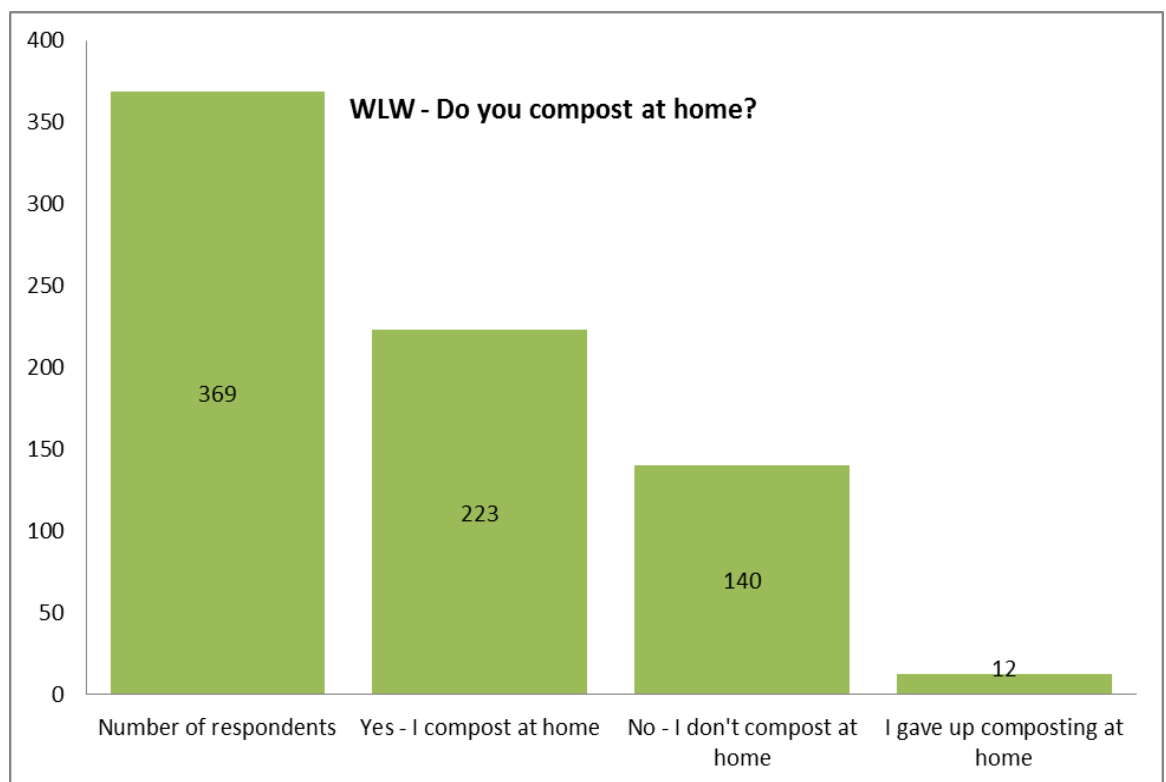
The activities during Composting Awareness Week resulted in 67 sales at events. Further sales will hopefully be seen in the reports from the composting framework.

Home composting survey results

At the compost giveaways in Ealing, Harrow, Hounslow and Richmond and at the compost bin sale in Brent residents were asked about their home composting experience.

Do you compost at home?

The majority of the 369 respondents to the questionnaire did compost at home. When asked why they didn't the most common responses were they did not have space for a compost bin and they thought it would be a lot of input for little reward. There was also a concern about attracting rats.



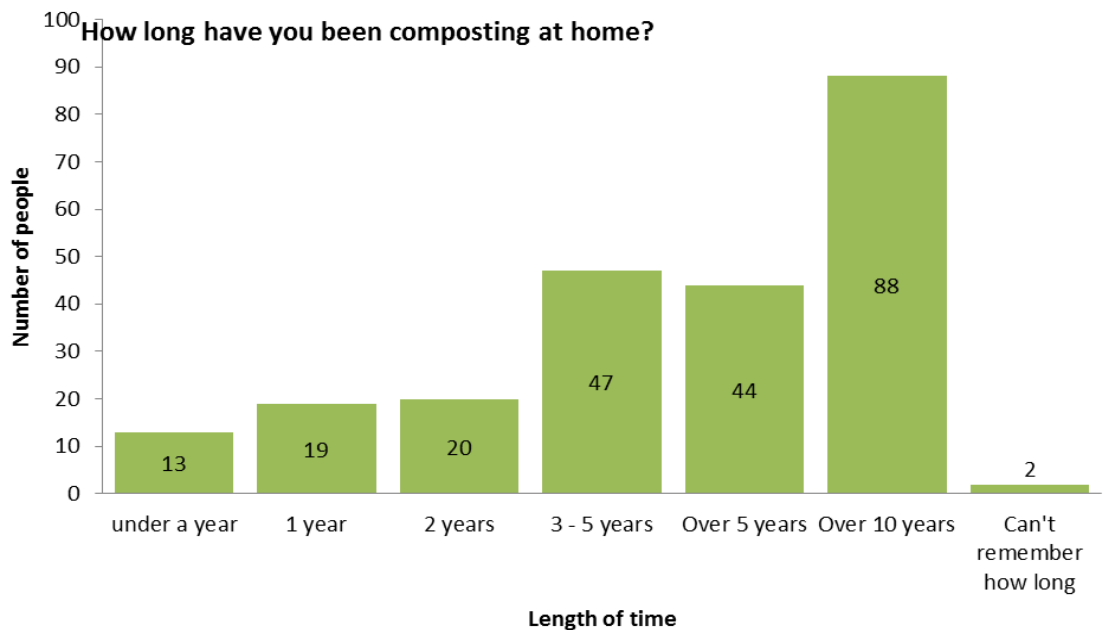
What do you use to compost at home?

Plastic compost bins were the main method used to compost at home with 169 residents having been given or bought a bin from their local council scheme. There were 51 home-made compost bins, typically made from wood and 20 compost heaps in use. Three other methods of composting at home were also recorded.

Allotment holders tended to favour the use of several bins at one time so they had compost at different stages of development.

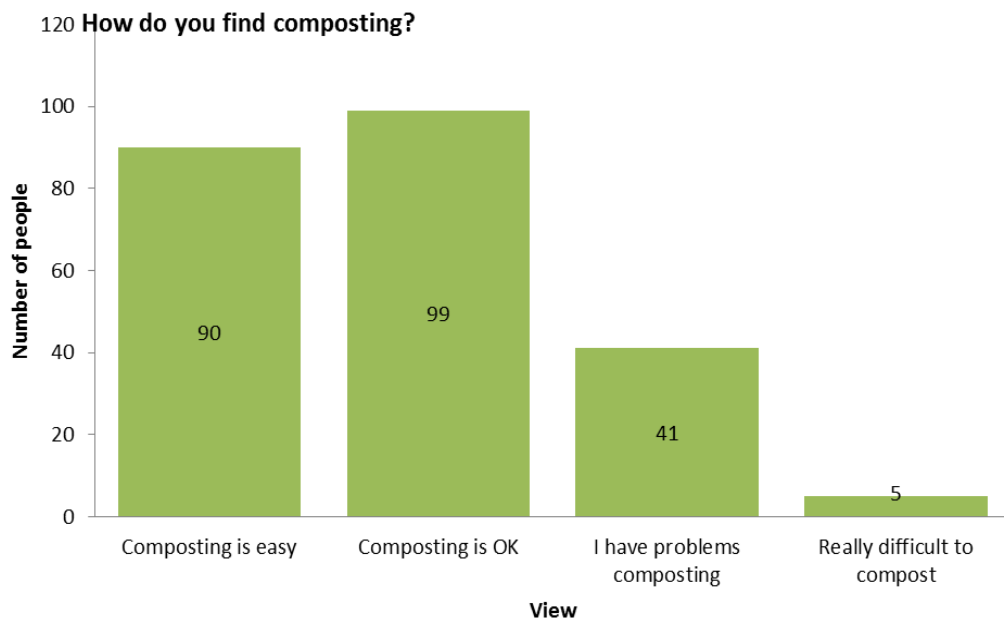
How long have you been composting?

When asked how long they had been composting the majority of residents asked had been composting for a number of years. The results appear to suggest that once someone begins composting and don't have problems they continue to compost for a long time.



How do you find composting?

The results suggest that overall home composting was not perceived difficult by those already composting. People who said it was easy tended to get compost out of their bins and had been composting for a while. Those who said it was ok, seemed to have the view that it took a little effort but wasn't difficult. The residents who reported they had difficulty tended to be newer to home composting.

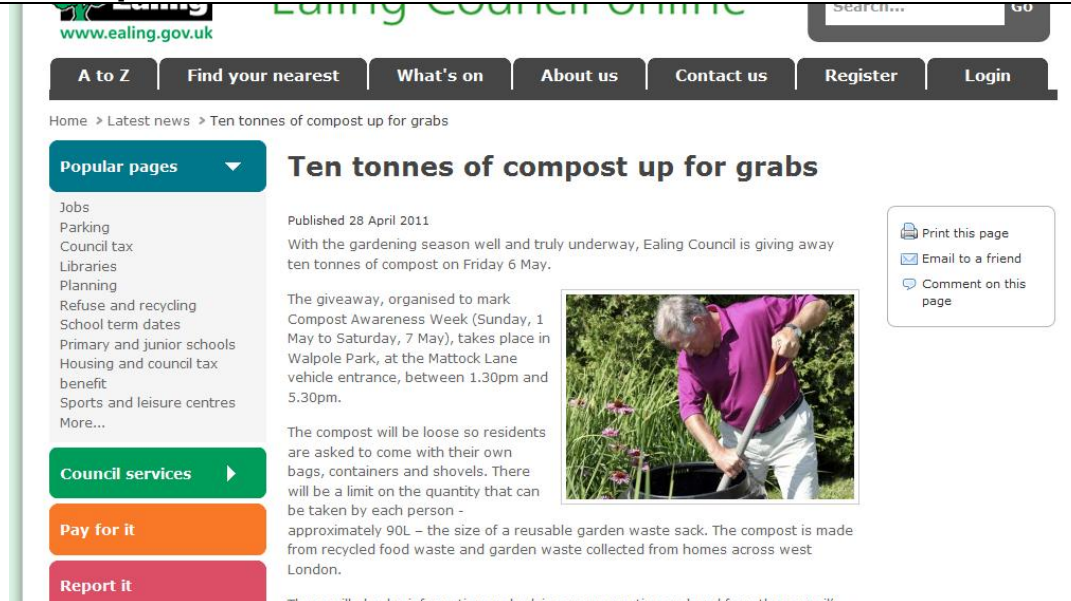


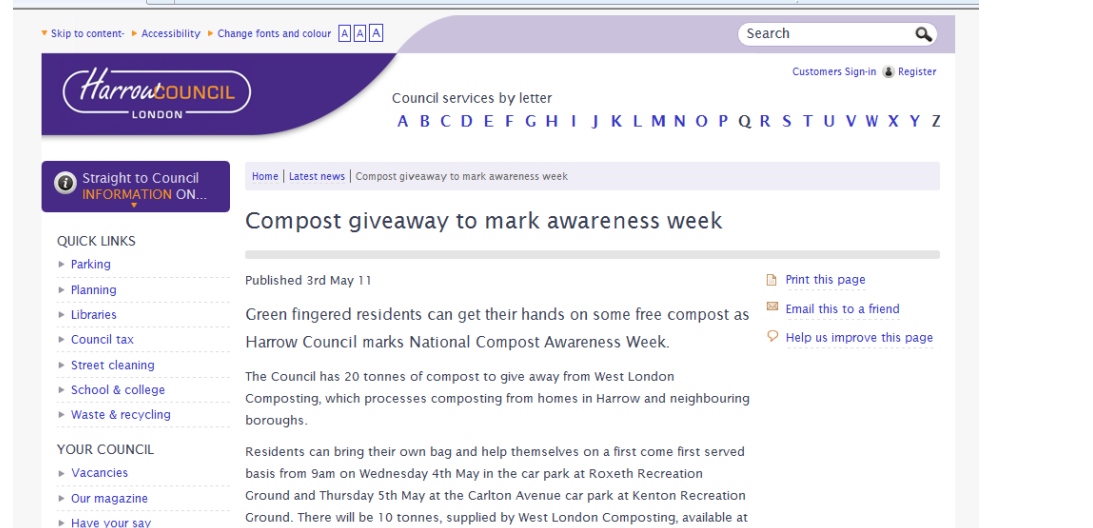

Some residents were asked what resources would help them compost more. A choice was given of leaflets, a website, someone to talk to and events to attend. Leaflets were given to a lot of the people spoken to, they believed that for basic reminders about what could compost these would be useful. 50 people thought having someone they could ask would be useful, at the compost giveaways questions about particular problems were asked and this was useful to those individuals. Although only 15 said they'd be likely to attend events. A further 28 thought having a website would be useful, these residents were directed to the recycle now composting website which holds a wealth of information.

2.5. Press and Media

Borough officers liaised with their press teams to deliver information about events to the media.

Table 4: Use of the press releases



Ealing	 <p>The screenshot shows the Ealing Council website. The header includes the council logo, the URL 'www.ealing.gov.uk', and a search bar. A navigation menu contains links: 'A to Z', 'Find your nearest', 'What's on', 'About us', 'Contact us', 'Register', and 'Login'. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Latest news > Ten tonnes of compost up for grabs'. On the left, there is a sidebar with 'Popular pages' (Jobs, Parking, Council tax, Libraries, Planning, Refuse and recycling, School term dates, Primary and junior schools, Housing and council tax benefit, Sports and leisure centres, More...) and 'Council services' (Pay for it, Report it). The main article is titled 'Ten tonnes of compost up for grabs', published on 28 April 2011. The text states: 'With the gardening season well and truly underway, Ealing Council is giving away ten tonnes of compost on Friday 6 May. The giveaway, organised to mark Compost Awareness Week (Sunday, 1 May to Saturday, 7 May), takes place in Walpole Park, at the Mattock Lane vehicle entrance, between 1.30pm and 5.30pm. The compost will be loose so residents are asked to come with their own bags, containers and shovels. There will be a limit on the quantity that can be taken by each person - approximately 90L - the size of a reusable garden waste sack. The compost is made from recycled food waste and garden waste collected from homes across west London. There will also be information and advice on composting on hand from the council's'. An image shows a man in a purple shirt using a shovel to fill a black bin with compost. On the right, there are links to 'Print this page', 'Email to a friend', and 'Comment on this page'.</p>
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<h3>Harrow</h3>	 <p>The screenshot shows the Harrow Council website. The main headline is 'Compost giveaway to mark awareness week'. The article text states: 'Published 3rd May 11. Green fingered residents can get their hands on some free compost as Harrow Council marks National Compost Awareness Week. The Council has 20 tonnes of compost to give away from West London Composting, which processes composting from homes in Harrow and neighbouring boroughs. Residents can bring their own bag and help themselves on a first come first served basis from 9am on Wednesday 4th May in the car park at Roxeth Recreation Ground and Thursday 5th May at the Carlton Avenue car park at Kenton Recreation Ground. There will be 10 tonnes, supplied by West London Composting, available at'.</p>
<h3>Hillingdon</h3>	 <p>The screenshot shows the Hillingdon Council website. The main headline is 'Free compost offer for residents'. The article text states: 'West London Composting (WLC) will be kicking off Compost Awareness Week (1-7 May) by giving away free soil conditioner to residents. Residents are invited to visit Highview Farm, Newyears Green Lane in Harefield on Sunday 1 May between 9am and midday to collect free supplies of 10mm soil conditioner which will be sure to benefit flowers and vegetables being grown in gardens and allotments this year. WLC will be giving away 24 tonnes of the product on a first come first served basis. Residents will be required to bring your own bags and the gates will shut as soon as the all of the allocated compost has been given away. Please note that trailers will be turned away at the gates. Last updated: Wed 20 Apr 2011 at 10:42'.</p>
<h3>Hounslow</h3>	<p>Hounslow paid for 2 adverts in the local paper rather than issuing a press release.</p>
<h3>Richmond</h3>	 <p>The screenshot shows the Richmond Council website. The main headline is 'Pick up free compost this weekend'. The article text states: 'In celebration of Compost Awareness Week, gardeners in the borough can pick up a free gift from the Council, thanks to West London Composting Ltd, if they visit the Townmead Road centre in Kew this weekend (30 April - 1 May). Free compost will be available on Saturday and Sunday from the site, on a first come, first served, basis. Ten tonnes of compost has been made available by Harefield-based West London Composting, a processing company where garden and food waste from homes across the region is taken to be composted. The compost will be loose, so residents are asked to come to the site with their own bags/containers and shovel to take the compost home. This compost give-away is limited to 100 litres per visit per resident, while stocks last. Residents are advised to arrive early before it runs out. The site is open from 8am to 6pm on Saturday 30 April and from 9am to 4pm on Sunday 1 May. While visiting the site residents can also buy compost bins starting in price from £10 each. For further information contact Townmead Road Waste and Recycling site on 020 8876 3281. View the full press release'.</p>

<p>WLWA</p>	<p>Action plan agreed to reduce rubbish in West London 20 Jun 2011</p> <p>West London Boroughs to get out of landfill 17 May 2011</p> <p>Leftover mashed potato – make a mash cake! 8 May 2011</p> <p>Great Compost Giveaway 24 Apr 2011</p> <p>How do you buy yours? 12 Apr 2011</p> <p>Hillingdon resident wins leftovers competition 3 Mar 2011</p> <p>Brent resident wins Green Hamper 21 Feb 2011</p> <p>Share your leftover recipes and win a prize 6 Jan 2011</p> <p>Great Compost Giveaway</p> <p>During Compost Awareness Week (Sunday 1 May to Saturday 7 May) all the councils in West London are giving residents the opportunity to collect free compost to use on your garden. The compost is supplied by Harefield-based West London Composting where garden and food waste from homes across west London is taken to be composted.</p> <p>The compost will be loose, so residents are asked to come to the events with a shovel and their own bags to take the compost home. As well as free compost you could also pick up a compost bin or get details of your local compost bin scheme and get information about composting in your garden at home. The amount of compost is limited so residents will be restricted to approximately 100 litres, arrive early before the compost runs out.</p> <p>Home composting is a good way of getting value from your food waste and garden waste. Once the organic material has composted, you will get compost you can use on the garden.</p> <p>Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, Chair of the WLWA: "Good compost is the crucial ingredient for any garden so it's fantastic that we're able to offer compost that has been made thanks to the keen recycling gardeners of West London back for free. Cheap compost bins are also on offer to help gardeners across West London reap the rewards of their work in the garden. I'd encourage all keen gardeners to come along to the compost giveaway in their borough and pick up their free compost."</p>	<p>APR 24 2011</p> <p>Upcoming Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hounslow Furniture Recycling Day 16 July 2011 Hounslow Furniture Project O 30 July 2011 Nappuccino in Hounslow 4 August 2011 Hounslow Furniture Project O 13 August 2011 <p>Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2011 June 2011 May 2011 April 2011 March 2011 February 2011 January 2011 December 2010 November 2010 October 2010 September 2010
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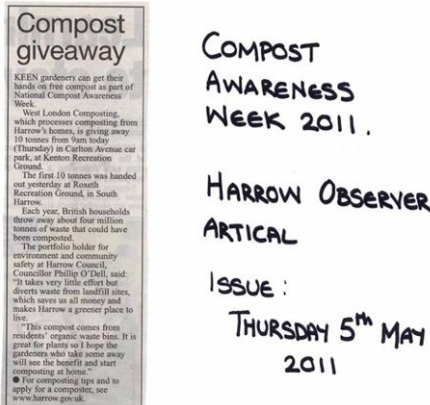

Table 5: Media coverage

Borough	Nature of coverage
Brent	<p>The Brent magazine (May 2011)</p> <p>News article: Bag your free compost pg 6</p> <p>Scope: Basic facts about the giveaway</p>  <p>Advert: Pg 8</p>

	<div><p>Free compost for Brent residents on 3 and 4 May*</p><p>To mark Compost Awareness Week, Brent Council is offering free compost from the Reuse and Recycling centre at Abbey Road (see map below), as well as composting bins at a special reduced price of £5.</p><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the voucher below to the Reuse and Recycling Centre on 3 and 4 May to claim your free compost.• For free compost please bring your own bags.• Only one voucher per household.• You must be a Brent resident. If you wish to buy a compost bin at the reduced price, you must bring a proof of address.<p>The free compost is provided by West London Composting.</p><div><div><p><small>cut here</small></p><p>Voucher for free compost</p><p>Name _____</p><p>Address _____</p><p>Postcode _____</p><p><small>Only one voucher per Brent household. Please show proof of your address. *Offer open while stocks last.</small></p></div><div></div></div><p>020 8937 5050 www.brent.gov.uk/recycling</p></div>							
Ealing	<div><p>Ealing Today website 28 April 2011</p><table border="1"><tr><td><p>The Great Compost Giveaway</p><p>Ten tonnes of compost up for grabs on 6th May</p><p>With the gardening season well and truly underway, Ealing Council is giving away ten tonnes of compost on Friday 6 May.</p><p>The giveaway, organised to mark Compost Awareness Week (Sunday, 1 May to Saturday, 7 May), takes place in Walpole Park, at the Mattock Lane vehicle entrance, between 1.30pm and 5.30pm.</p><p>The compost will be loose so residents are asked to come with their own bags, containers and shovels. There will be a limit on the quantity that can be taken by each person - approximately 90L – the size of a reusable garden waste sack. The compost is made from recycled food waste and garden waste collected from homes across west London.</p></td><td><table border="1"><tr><td>Related Links</td></tr><tr><td>Let The Gardening Begin!</td></tr><tr><td>ActonW3.com, ChiswickW4.com EalingToday.co.uk PutneySW15.com and WandsworthSW18.com</td></tr><tr><td>Participate</td></tr><tr><td>Comment on this story on the forum</td></tr></table></td></tr></table></div>	<p>The Great Compost Giveaway</p> <p>Ten tonnes of compost up for grabs on 6th May</p> <p>With the gardening season well and truly underway, Ealing Council is giving away ten tonnes of compost on Friday 6 May.</p> <p>The giveaway, organised to mark Compost Awareness Week (Sunday, 1 May to Saturday, 7 May), takes place in Walpole Park, at the Mattock Lane vehicle entrance, between 1.30pm and 5.30pm.</p> <p>The compost will be loose so residents are asked to come with their own bags, containers and shovels. There will be a limit on the quantity that can be taken by each person - approximately 90L – the size of a reusable garden waste sack. The compost is made from recycled food waste and garden waste collected from homes across west London.</p>	<table border="1"><tr><td>Related Links</td></tr><tr><td>Let The Gardening Begin!</td></tr><tr><td>ActonW3.com, ChiswickW4.com EalingToday.co.uk PutneySW15.com and WandsworthSW18.com</td></tr><tr><td>Participate</td></tr><tr><td>Comment on this story on the forum</td></tr></table>	Related Links	Let The Gardening Begin!	ActonW3.com, ChiswickW4.com EalingToday.co.uk PutneySW15.com and WandsworthSW18.com	Participate	Comment on this story on the forum
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<p>Harrow</p>	
<p>Hounslow</p>	<p>Hounslow Chronicle 29 April and 6 May</p>  <p>Adverts to promote the compost talks and giveaway</p>

2.6. Public Feedback

Brent

The compost giveaway was advertised as a two day event but all the compost was taken on the first day. Residents who arrived on the second day were disappointed so next year the giveaway will only be advertised as taking place on one day.

Ealing

The residents were happy the compost was given away and the people coming knew about the event.

Harrow

Residents collecting compost were unaware of the event, they found the giveaway because they were using the park or were from an allotment near to the park and had heard through word of mouth. Feedback was that advertising needs to take place before the event.

Hillingdon

The compost was given away very quickly at the beginning of the day. Even though the event had been advertised as first come first served residents felt that controls on the compost should have been more tightly enforced so more people could have benefitted.

Hounslow

People were really happy the council were giving away compost, even though the average wait to collect was 35 minutes the residents were patient and thought they were treated fairly.

Richmond

Residents liked that the council was giving something away, they saw this as unusual and wanted it more often. Residents using the HRRRC found out about the event because they were using this service rather than from advertising.

2.7. Campaign Successes

- At the Hounslow events where there was a compost expert present, this was very well received. This helps residents who have been composting for a while, as well as the new people.
- In Hounslow, working with the parks service was particularly successful. The event went smoothly and helped build positive relations with another department for the future.

2.8. Campaign Learning points

- Having adequate levels of staffing is really important to the success of the event. It was difficult to control the amount of compost each individual was taking and staff were needed to ensure that everyone had fair access.
- Pre-bagged compost would make it easier to restrict amounts taken to make it fair - this should be investigated as a future option.
- Choosing a location with car parking makes it easier for residents to take compost. With an access road rather than parking area, there were delays and people getting upset about access.
- Publicity received for the events could have been improved:
 - Ensuring that details are placed on a very visible part of the council website in good time for the event.

- Gain an understanding of the borough magazine deadlines: if events are decided far enough in advance, there will be greater opportunities to get coverage in the borough magazines which promotes the event to all residents.
- Need to explore other ways of telling people about events, such as contacting people who have previously bought compost bins.

3. The Future

Compost bin availability

Brent will be signing up to the national composting framework in June 2011 to ensure a future supply of compost bins. Compost bins sales will continue to take place during compost awareness week in subsequent years.

Harrow will be entering into the national home composting framework in August 2011 to provide a supply of compost bins to residents.

Publicity

WLWA has funding to promote home composting bins across all 6 boroughs, if a borough wants to take advantage of this they will be able to bid for funding.

Work is being undertaken to work more closely together to promote a range of waste prevention initiatives. Home composting will be included in this.

Helping more people compost

There is an action in the 2011-12 Waste Prevention Action Plan to set up a scheme to support residents who want to compost. A solution for this will be procured for Autumn 2011.

Appendix 1: Compost giveaway poster

A double-sided poster can be used at community locations to promote events then turned over for the rest of the year.



Appendix 2: Composting Know-How leaflet

COMPOSTING KNOW-HOW

Tips and advice for more experienced composters

TOPIC 1

How to get the right compost mix

Using microscopic organisms break down the materials we compost by feeding on them. These microbes include bacteria and other very small organisms. In order to live, microbes need food, air, moisture and warmth – just like you and me!

Food:
The key to making good compost is to use a balance of different types of materials. Young, wet, sappy materials, like grass cuttings and vegetable peelings, rot quickly and are known as 'greens'. Greens need to be mixed with tougher, dry items, like old bedding plants and cardboard known as 'browns'. Browns add structure to the compost allowing air in and providing the microbes with a balanced diet.

Air:
The microbes that make the best compost need air to live. It is important to allow air into the bin to aid composting. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- Add scrunched up paper, cardboard (egg boxes or box roll tubes to ensure air pockets).
- Stick a fork or broom handle as far into the compost as possible and give it a good wiggle!
- Dig your compost over using a garden fork (if you use a compost bin please make sure you have good access to the material before you do this).

Enough moisture:
If you have the right balance of 'green' and 'brown' you should have the correct amount of moisture. However, if it is too dry add some more greens, and if it is too wet add some more browns. For a quick fix you can add

moisture with a watering can (See topic 2), or a really easy way is to leave the lid off for a while and let the rain in.

Warmth:
Microbes need warmth to thrive, so sit your bin in partial sun and keeping the compost covered will ensure plenty of warmth.

Half full bins:
If the bin is quite empty lay some flattened cardboard over the top. This will keep heat in. You can keep adding waste on top of it as it will not rot down as well.



www.recyclenow.com/compost

wlap Waste Local Action Partnership

recycle
compost at home



TOPIC 2

How to speed up the compost process

Making compost is simple as all the hard work is carried out by nature. As a general rule you will get usable compost after about 6 – 12 months. However, it's not always as fast as one would like it. Here are some tips on how to speed up the composting process.

Add water:
A dry compost bin can slow down the rotting process. Compost should be made like a watering out sponge. If necessary, you can add water to the bin gradually using a watering can and mix with a fork or broom handle to ensure there is plenty of air.

- Shing the bin – warmth speeds up the composting process so it's best to shingle your bin in partial sun.
- Chop up any large items – the smaller the bits the faster they'll rot.
- Get the right mix (See topic 1).

Speedy ingredients:
Green sappy materials that are quick to rot will activate and get a compost bin started by adding more nitrogen to the compost. However, there are certain plants and liquids that can also be added.

- Grass cuttings, conifers and nettles are very rich in nitrogen. Adding these to the compost bin will speed it up.
- Both human and animal urine is a great source of nitrogen and potassium. It can be diluted and added to a compost bin. However, too much will also kill plants and discourage worms, so be careful. Manure and bedding from vegetable plots are also good sources of nitrogen.

Compost tea apps:
If you use a compost heap make sure you cover it with old carpet or cardboard to retain the heat.

Compost bins:
There are a variety of bin sizes available – the more you fill your bin the more efficient it will be!



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Appendix 3: Why compost at home leaflet

START HOME COMPOSTING TODAY

At least 30% of your household bin could be composted!

A lot of people think that garden waste is the only thing that you can put into your compost bin. But there are actually loads more everyday waste items from your home and garden that you can add to enrich your compost. Things you CAN add to your compost bin include:

'GREENS'

- Tea bags
- Grass cuttings
- Vegetable peelings (including lettuce and cabbage leaves)
- Old flowers
- Fruit scraps (including citrus peel)
- Nettles
- Coffee grounds & filter paper
- Spent bedding plants
- Comfrey leaves
- Rhubarb leaves
- Young annual weeds (e.g. chickweed and speedwell)
- Pond algae & seaweed (in moderation)

'BROWNS'

- Egg shells (crush them first to speed up composting)
- Egg boxes
- Cereal boxes
- Corrugated cardboard packaging (crunched up in small amounts)
- Newspaper (crunched up)
- Toilet & kitchen roll tubes
- Garden prunings
- Dry leaves, twigs & hedge clippings
- Straw & hay
- Bedding from vegetarian pets
- Wool
- Feathers
- Ashes from wood, paper, or lumpwood charcoal
- Woody clippings
- Cotton threads
- String (made from natural fibres)
- Tumble dryer lint (from natural fibre clothes)
- Old natural fibre clothes (e.g. woolly jumpers or cotton habits - cut into small pieces)
- Vacuum bag contents (if you have natural fibre carpets)
- Tissues, paper towels & napkins (unless they have been in contact with meat, fat, oils or disease)
- Shredded confidential documents
- Corn cobs & stalks
- Pine needles & cones (slow to compost - don't put too much in)

Composting is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into an invaluable and nutrient rich food for your garden.

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT...

Doing your bit to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by composting at home can save powerful global warming gases equivalent to:

- the CO₂ your kettle produces annually; or
- what your washing machine produces in 3 months; or
- not watching television for 3 months.*

*Based on Larnac Council 22 Waste Pk 10-12 Pk 10 L2B 7Y

FOR THE GARDEN...

Your compost is a nutrient-rich food product for your garden and will help:

- improve soil structure and condition;
- maintain moisture levels;
- keep your soil's pH balance in check; and
- suppress plant disease.

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GETTING THE RIGHT MIX

We filled three compost bins with three different mixtures to show you how to make the best compost

TOO GREEN!

This is a classic mistake made by many first time composters. They get their brand new compost bin and just use it to get rid of their grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable peelings. These are great things to put in a bin, but on their own you will end up with a sludgy, smelly mess.

- 1 First day - only grass cuttings and peelings visible.
- 2 After a couple of weeks - lots of fruit flies, looks like a green lump, smells rotten and the bin feels warm at this stage.
- 3 After a month - will just be a moist, lumpy mess and will have lost that vital heat, that is needed for the composting process due to the lack of air.

Can I do anything about it?

A bit of hard work is the remedy for sludge. Use a fork to empty the bin and break up any solid clumps. Then fill the bin adding plenty of brown material and some fresh greens as you go. Be patient, as it will take a couple of months to look like it should do.

TOO BROWN!

Autumn is a typical time of year for this to occur. Because of the large number of leaves falling from the trees and a flurry of plant pruning, bins get filled with too many leaves. Leafmould usually takes two years before it is ready to use. You don't necessarily need nitrogen to kick start the process but it helps. Autumn leaves just don't produce enough nitrogen to activate the heat production.

- 1 First day - a heap of leaves, branches, straw and paper, very dry looking.
- 2 After a couple of weeks - looks much the same, no smell and just a few woodlice and ants.
- 3 After a month - still no change!

That's like my bin, what can I do?

Leaves should be composted separately to make lovely leafmould. Thoroughly water the leaves and place in black plastic sacks, punched with a fork to allow air to circulate. It should take about two years for leafmould to be produced. This rich leafmould can be used as a weed suppressing and moisture retaining mulch or a soil improver. If your bin does have more leaves in it than it should do, you can add nettles soaked in cold water which also make a great activator for a dry compost bin.

JUST RIGHT!

The 'green' items contain bacteria that generates the initial heat that is required by the process. A healthy compost bin is a living ecosystem. By keeping a good mix of green and brown material you will provide the perfect conditions for a variety of mini-beasts, and can let them do all of the hard work.

- 1 First day - green and brown items visible; egg shells, vegetable peelings, crunched up cardboard, grass cuttings, prunings etc.
- 2 After a couple of weeks - looking a bit moist, the level will keep dropping and airpockets will be letting it breathe.
- 3 After a couple of months - small clumps of green material are still visible, brown items still showing but starting to decompose and looking quite damp, fruit flies and slugs and worms may also be present.

After six months - black and crumbly material, no smell, some woody brown material and egg shells still visible, some worms and bugs left but most creatures will have moved on to find fresher food.

That wasn't too tricky, what should I do to keep it going?

Just keep on doing the same thing. Make sure you keep adding the right combination of green and browns and you'll have a continuous supply of nutritious compost for your garden. Don't forget to aerate your compost once in a while by using a fork or a broom handle.

Why do I need to compost my peelings when they break down in landfill anyway?

In reality organic waste that is sent to landfill is unable to decompose properly because, squashed under all the other waste, it doesn't have any access to air. So instead methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, is produced which contributes to global warming. When you compost your organic waste at home you are not only providing your garden with a limitless soil improver for plants and vegetables, but you are doing your bit to reduce global warming too!

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