

Recycling Participation Rates & Public Attitudes in Swansea

by

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Summary

The Kerbside Recycling Scheme (KRS) originally began in the Swansea area in 1991, beginning in the Llamsemllet area; the later expanded to include West Cross and Morriston. Currently all homes in the Swansea area are provided with a fortnightly KRS, which collects cans, glass and paper, with the normal refuse collected once a week on the same day as the KRS.

The recycling rate in Swansea has improved drastically in recent years, as ever improving legislation and statutory targets, means that local authorities have to manage their waste in a sustainable, and environmentally friendly manner. However, Swansea City Council (SCC) still has some way to go before meeting statutory targets set for recycling rates by national government, and put out by the EU. An integral part of meeting these targets is achieving a high KRS participation rate, and to also understand the general public's view on their KRS and recycling facilities, in order to make any improvements to the scheme.

The main aim of this project was to assess the effectiveness of the KRS and recycling facilities in three areas of Swansea. In order to achieve this, the project involved gathering data through means, including a questionnaire survey, observing KRS participation rates and gathering data from the local authority. The results allowed a comprehensive assessment of public perceptions and opinions of the scheme, an analysis of the scheme's practicality, a comparison of claimed and observed participation rates in each and between each area, and finally a comparison between the three study areas of the weight of the recycling materials collected via the KRS.

The overall results indicated that questionnaire respondents are generally satisfied with the current recycling facilities, although respondents were dissatisfied with the amount and quality of recycling information supplied, which is evident with the lack of respondents who are aware of the help offered to disabled householders. Respondents generally agreed that a more frequent KRS collection would increase their participation rate. Respondents generally view the concept of both financial penalties and incentives negatively. Respondents argue for a choice of receptacles, with a general dislike for the current green bag receptacle. Also, respondents would like to have more materials included in the KRS, the most popular material being plastics.

The observed participation rates show that more people claim to participate in the KRS, than the observed participate rate during a six-week monitoring period. The theory that more affluent areas recycle more effectively than less affluent areas are apparent, in both observed participation rates and recycle weight data.