# Using evidence to shape better services





Wheelie Bin Trial Residents Feedback Consultation

**London Borough of Merton** 

October 2015

**FINAL REPORT** 





Community safety & neighbourhood policing



Affordable housing



Sure Start & Children's

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## 1) Project details and acknowledgements

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## **Executive Summary**

During April and September 2015 Merton Council provided residents in the Lavender Fields area with trial wheelie bins for general rubbish and commingled dry recycling which temporally replaced the existing sack and box collection containers. The trial was funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). M·E·L Research were commissioned to carry out a face to face consultation with residents to gain feedback on the trial. The fieldwork was carried out just before the trial ended at the beginning of September 2015. Overall 350 face to face surveys were completed out of 1,035 households taking part in the trial. The key indicators of the consultation are presented below, further detail can be found in the main body of the report.



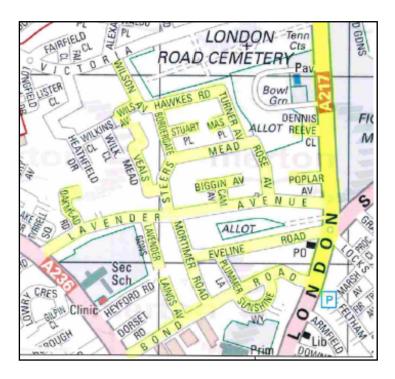
## **Background**

#### **Overview**

During April and September 2015 the council provided residents in the Lavender Fields area with trial wheelie bins for general rubbish and commingled dry recycling which temporally replaced the existing sack and box collection containers. Other than the containers provided no other aspect of the service changed during the trial period. The council's main aim of running the trial was to measure any changes in street cleanliness, the cost effectiveness of collecting waste in the wheeled bins rather than the sacks/boxes and to measure the environmental impact i.e. has recycling increased. The trial was funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). To gain feedback from residents in the trial area; during August 2015 M·E·L Research was commissioned to undertake a doorstep resident consultation. The main objectives of the project were to:

- Understanding residents perceptions of the wheelie bins opposed to the sacks/boxes i.e. ease of use, size of bins
- Perceived environmental improvements i.e. street cleanliness
- Perceived changes in residents waste disposal behaviour i.e. recycling more
- Satisfaction with the way the council communicated to residents about the trial

The trial area consisted of approximately 1,035 households (please see map of the trial area below). All households within the trial area received an introductory letter about the wheelie bin trial. Residents were then provided with a 240 litre green wheelie bin for commingled dry recycling and a 180 litre grey wheelie bin for non-recyclable waste as well as an informative leaflet about how to use the service.



#### Sampling Method

During 8th and 12th of September 2015 experienced M·E·L Research surveyors were deployed to carry out the doorstep face to face consultation. The Surveyors called at different occasions spread over daytime and evenings to ensure maximum opportunity to contact residents. The Surveyors worked on a two-knock approach; if no one was home on the second approach then a postal version of the survey was left. The face to face questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix C. In total 350 face to face surveys were completed by M·E·L Research and 675 households were provided with a postal survey.

This report covers only the face to face results as the postal survey responses were collected and analysed by the Council. For information purposes, the postal survey results are presented in a tabulated format in Appendix B, overall 201 surveys were returned.

#### **Confidence intervals**

It is necessary to take account of sampling errors when assessing the accuracy of any sample base. It is therefore possible to be more specific about how accurate each percentage value is from a survey. The confidence intervals shown in Table 3.1 below are reported to give an indication for the precision of the results and are not an absolute measure. With 350 completed surveys, this means that at a confidence level of 95% the results are within +/- 3.1% of the calculated response. For example, a figure where 50% of residents were satisfied with the collections could in reality lie within the range of 46.9% to 53.1%.

Table 3.1: Confidence intervals at 95%

Size of sample	Approximate sampling tolerances			
Size of Sattiple	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%	
	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>	
350 surveys (Face to face sample)	3.14	4.79	5.23	
201 surveys (Postal sample)	4.15	6.34	6.91	

#### **Reporting conventions**

The output from the survey is in the form of conventional cross-tabulations. These provide results for the total sample and various sub-groups of the resident profile (e.g. gender, age, household size and housing stock).

Within the main body of the report, where percentages do not sum to 100 per cent, this is due to computer rounding. The 'base' figure referred to in each chart and table is the total number of residents responding to the question with a valid response.

In addition, percentage levels for satisfaction are reported for valid responses only, meaning that this excludes respondents who were unable to rate their level of satisfaction i.e. 'don't know' or 'don't use service' were both deemed to be invalid responses. As an additional reference, the count of respondents citing an invalid response is highlighted for each indicator.

### Findings

This section sets out the results for the face to face resident's consultation in both tabular and graphical form. Data tables for all of the results presented in graphical form can be viewed in Appendix A.

#### **Demographics**

The tables below present the socio-demographic characteristics for the survey respondents and are compared with Merton as a whole. It should be noted that no demographic quotas were set by age, household size, gender or housing stock and are presented for information purposes only. Table 4.1, shows that the sample surveyed was broadly representative by age relative to the adult population of Merton, although the 25-34 age groups was under represented and the older age groups (65+) have been over represented. This is due to the nature of the activity, whereby older people are generally more likely to be at home and more willing to take part when Surveyors call.

Table 4.1: Age group of respondents surveyed compared to Merton as a whole

	Merton <sub>I</sub>	Merton profile		profile
	Count	%	Count	%
18-24	16301	10%	26	7%
25-34	40781	26%	44	13%
35-44	32759	21%	78	22%
45-54	25333	16%	68	19%
55-64	18126	12%	48	14%
65-74	11880	8%	45	13%
75+	11242	7%	36	10%
Prefer not to say	0	0%	5	1%
Total	156422	100%	350	100%

Table 4.2 shows that one person households were under represented and the larger household sizes (4+) were over represented.

Table 4.2: Household size of respondents surveyed compared to Merton as a whole

	Merton profile		Survey profile	
	Count	%	Count	%
1 Person in Household	22294	28%	46	13%
2 People in Household	23958	30%	85	24%
3 People in Household	13311	17%	48	14%
4 People in Household	11747	15%	73	21%
5+ People in Household	7447	9%	97	28%
Prefer not to say	0	0%	1	0%
Total	78757	100%	350	100%

When comparing gender, females were slightly over represented.

Table 4.3: Gender of respondents surveyed compared to Merton as a whole

	Merton profile Count %		Survey	profile
			Count	%
Males	98515	49%	140	41%
Females	101178	51%	203	59%

Total	199693	100%	343	100%

Table 4.4 shows that the housing stock surveyed was fairly representative to Merton as a whole. The trial area was selected as it provided a good representation of housing types compared to the council area.

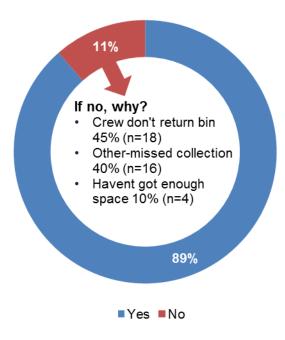
Table 4.4: Housing stock of respondents surveyed compared to Merton as a whole

	Merton profile		Survey	profile
	Count	%	Count	%
House or Bungalow: Detached	4807	9%	12	4%
Detached with front garden over 6ft in length			7	2%
Detached with front garden less than 6ft in length			5	1%
House or Bungalow: Semi-detached	14661	28%	71	21%
Semi-detached with front garden over 6ft in length			67	20%
Semi-detached with front garden less than 6ft in length			4	1%
House or Bungalow: Terraced (including end-terrace)	32882	63%	251	71%
Terraced with front garden over 6ft in length			226	62%
Terraced with front garden less than 6ft in length			25	9%
Other			15	4%
Total	52350	100%	349	100%

#### **Results**

Respondents were first asked if they were happy with the council's wheelie bin collection service. Almost nine out of ten (89%) said they were. The 11% who said that they weren't were then asked why; most commonly cited reason was that the collection crew don't return the bin to the place of origin. This was followed by 'missed collections' which was not on the pre-coded list of reasons. When comparing satisfaction with the wheelie bin collection by different age groups, the results showed that as age increased satisfaction with the service decreased.

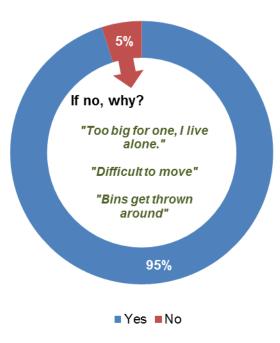
Figure 4.1: Are you happy with the council's wheelie bin collection service, if not why? Base = 349



Respondents were then asked if they found using the wheelie bin easier when compared to the sacks and boxes. The vast majority (95%) of respondents agreed that it was the case. Of the 5% (n=17) who didn't

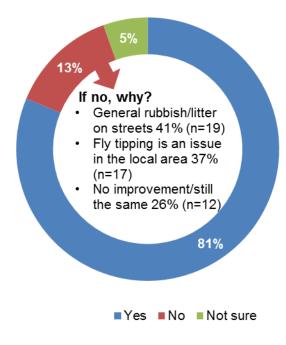
find the wheelie bins easier to use were then asked why, common responses were the bins are too big and are difficult to move, bins get thrown around and bins get in the way i.e. space issues.

Figure 4.2: Have you found using the wheelie bins easier to use than the sacks and boxes, if not why? Base = 346



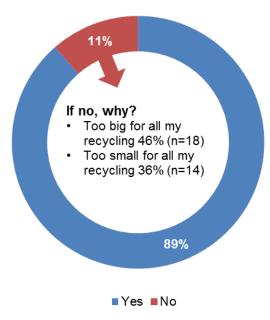
To assess any changes in the local area respondents were asked if their street was cleaner than before the wheelie bin trial started. Around eight out of ten (81%) said yes, 13% said no and 5% where unsure. Respondents who said no were asked why, most commonly cited reasons were that there is still general rubbish and litter around the local area with some respondents commenting that the road sweeper didn't come or clean properly (n=19). This was followed by concerns with fly tipping (n=17) and 12 respondents felt there had been no change in the condition of the local area since the introduction.

Figure 4.3: Is your street cleaner than before the wheelie bin trial started, if not why? Base = 347



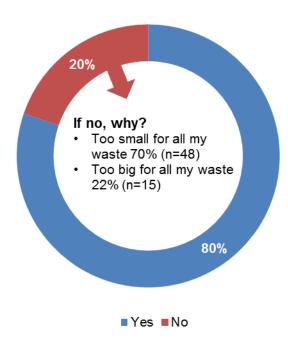
Almost nine out of ten (89%) respondents were happy with the size of the recycling wheelie bin provided. Of those who weren't (11%) when asked why, 18 respondents said the bin is too big for all their recycling; this is more so with older residents and smaller households. This was followed by 14 respondents stating the recycling wheelie bin was too small for all the recycling.

Figure 4.4: Are you happy with the size of the wheelie bins for recycling, if not why? Base = 350



Respondents were then asked if they were happy with the size of the general rubbish wheelie bin provided. Slightly fewer respondents were satisfied with this aspect when compared with the results of the recycling wheelie bin, with eight out of ten (80%) stating yes, whilst a fifth (20%) stated no. Respondents who weren't happy were ask why; 70% (n=48) felt the wheelie bin was too small for all their waste and 22% (n=22) felt it was too big for all their waste.

Figure 4.5: Are you happy with the size of the wheelie bins for general rubbish, if not why? Base = 349

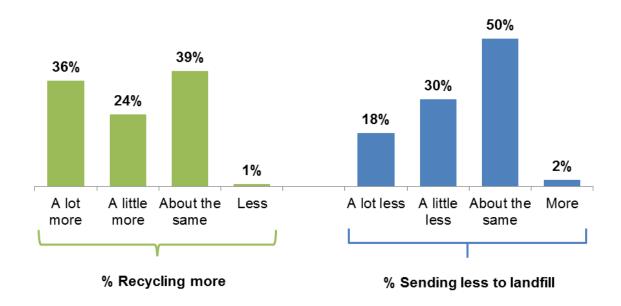


To assess any changes in residents perceived waste disposal behaviours, residents were firstly asked if since receiving the wheelie bins if they now recycle more. Almost two thirds (60%) said they now recycle a

little (24%) or a lot (36%) more since receiving the bins. When analysing the result by age, respondents falling into the middle age group (25-34) were most likely to have positively changed their recycling behaviours. When compared by household size, respondents recycling a little or a lot more increased as household size increased.

Respondents were then asked if they felt that since receiving the wheelie bins if they send less of their waste to landfill. Almost half (48%) said they now send a lot (18%) or a little (30%) less to landfill. When comparing the result by household size, those claiming to send less to landfill increased as households size increased.

Figure 4.6: Changes in waste disposal behaviour since receiving the wheelie bins? Base = 349



To assess how well the council communicated with residents about the trial, respondents were firstly asked how much they agree that the council kept them well informed about the wheelie bin trial. The majority (91%) either strongly (57%) or fairly (34%) agreed with this statement. Secondly, respondents were asked how much they agree that the council's wheelie bin leaflet was easy to understand and clearly informed them of what can go in each bin. Again the majority (94%) either strongly (70%) or fairly (24%) agreed with this statement.

Image 4.1: Respondents stating they strongly or fairly agree Base = 321 (don't' know responses removed)



The council kept me well informed about the wheelie bin trial.



The council's wheelie bin leaflet was easy to understand & clearly informed me of what can go into each bin.

### Conclusion

In summary the consultation results show that the majority of the respondents were happy with the wheelie bin collection and found the bins easier to use than the boxes and sacks. Although happiness with the wheelie bin collection decreases as age increases, with crews not returning bins to the place of origin and missed collections being the most common issues cited by respondents aged 55+. These issues could possibly be overcome by communicating residents' grievances to the collections crews.

Respondents were more satisfied with the size of the recycling wheelie bin when compared to the size of the general rubbish wheelie bin although both bins scored 80% or above. When comparing satisfaction by demographics, older respondents and smaller households were most likely to cite that the recycling bins are too big, whilst younger respondents and larger households were most likely to state the recycling bins are too small. A possible suggestion for this would be to offer larger households bigger recycling wheelie bins if the service was rolled out and the opposite for smaller households.

In terms of street cleanliness eight out of ten respondents surveyed felt that there had been a positive change in the condition of their street since the introduction of the wheelie trial. This satisfaction decreased as age increased, although when asked why they felt this way fly tipping was most commonly cited. This could potentially be an existing neighbourhood problem or linked to the reduction in general rubbish bin capacity; these are both out of scope of this consultation but further research could be carried out, such as a street scene/cleanliness survey, to investigate the degree of the issues.

When assessing the impact the wheelie bins have had on waste disposal behaviours, around two thirds felt they recycle a lot or a little more since the introduction of the trial. When comparing this by age and household size, the 25-34 age group and larger household sizes were most likely to have positively changed their recycling behaviours. Just under half of respondents felt that they are also sending a lot or a little less to landfill.

Finally, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the way the council communicated with them about the wheelie bin trial and the information about how the service operates.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Data tables (face to face survey)

Appendix B: Postal survey results

Appendix C: Questionnaire

# Appendix A: Data tables (face to face survey)

Table A1: Are you happy with the council's wheelie bin collection service?

	Count	%
Yes	309	89%
No	40	11%
Total	349	100%

Table A2: If no, why aren't you happy with the council's wheelie bin collection service?

	Count	%
Looks less visually pleasing	1	3%
Hard to manoeuvre	3	8%
Crews do not return to property/where left	18	45%
Haven't got enough space to store bins	4	10%
Don't need such a big bin, box/bags were adequate	1	3%
Other	18	45%
Total respondents	40	100%

Table A3: Have you found using the wheelie bins easier to use than the sacks and boxes?

	Count	%
Yes	329	95%
No	17	5%
Total	346	100%

Table A6: Is your street cleaner than before the wheelie bin trial started?

	Count	%
Yes	282	81%
No	46	13%
Not sure	19	5%
Total	347	100%

Table A7: If no, why do you think that your street isn't cleaner than before the wheelie bin trial?

	Count	%
No improvement	12	26%
Still lots of fly tipping	17	37%
General rubbish on streets	19	41%
Other	4	9%
Total respondents	46	

Table A8: Are you happy with the size of the wheelie bins for recycling and general rubbish?

	Recycling wheelie bins		General rubbish wheelie bins	
	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	310	89%	280	80%
No	40	11%	69	20%
Total	350	100%	349	100%

Table A9: If no, why aren't you happy with the size of the wheelie bins for recycling and general rubbish?

	Recycling wheelie bin		General rubbish wheelie bin	
	Count	%	Count	%
Find it hard to manoeuvre	2	5%	2	3%
Too big for all my recycling/waste	18	46%	15	22%
Too small for all my recycling/waste	14	36%	48	70%
Too big, I don't have adequate storage space	3	8%	2	3%
Other	3	8%	6	9%
Total	39	100%	69	100%

Table A10: Do you recycle more or less since receiving the wheelie bins?

	Count	%
A lot more	125	36%
A little more	85	24%
About the same	137	39%
Less	2	1%
Total	349	100%

Table A11: Do you have less waste going to landfill since receiving the wheelie bins?

	Count	%
A lot less	63	18%
A little less	103	30%
About the same	175	50%
More	7	2%
Total	348	100%

Table A12: Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how much to you agree with the following statements (excluding don't knows)

	The council kept me well informed about the wheelie bin trial.		The council's wheelie bin leaflet was easy to understand and clearl informed me of what can go into each bin.	
	Count	%	Count %	
Strongly agree	182	57%	212	70%
Fairly agree	111	35%	72	24%
Disagree	20	6%	11	4%
Strongly disagree	8	2%	7 2%	
Total	321	100%	302	100%

## **Appendix B: Postal survey results**

The tables below present the results from the postal survey. All data was processed by Merton Council.

Table B1: Are you happy with the council's wheelie bin collection service?

	Count	%
Yes	183	91.0%
No	13	6.5%
blank	5	2.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B2: Have you found using wheelie bins easier than sacks and boxes?

	Count	%
Yes	187	93%
No	12	6.0%
Blank	2	1.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B3: Is your street cleaner than before the wheelie bin trial started?

	Count	%
Yes	161	80.1%
No	35	17.4%
Not Sure	5	2.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B4: Are you happy with the size of the bins

	Count	%
Yes	172	85.6%
No	24	11.9%
No response	5	2.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B5: How well did the council tell you about the trial?

	Count	%
Very well	132	65.7%
Satisfactory	57	28.4%
Not well	6	3.0%
No response	6	3.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B6: In the council's wheelie bin leaflet, how easy was it to understand what to put in each wheelie bin?

	Count	%
Very easy	161	80.1%
Satisfactory	34	16.9%
Not easy	4	2.0%
no response	2	1.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B7: Is it easier to recycle using a wheelie bin?

	Count	%
Yes	187	93.0%
No	12	6.0%
Blank	2	1.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B8: Are you recycling more of your waste using wheelie bins?

	Count	%
A lot more	110	54.7%
A little more	43	21.4%
The same	44	21.9%
Less	2	1.0%
Blank	2	1.0%
Total	201	100.00%

Table B9: Do you have less waste going to landfill using wheelie bins?

	Count	%
A lot less	96	47.8%
A little less	42	20.9%
The same	55	27.4%
More	4	2.0%
Not sure	4	2.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B10: Gender

	Count	%
Male	124	61.7%
Female	66	32.8%
No response	11	5.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B11: What is your age group?

	Count	%
Under 16	0	0.0%
16-24	0	0.0%
25-34	15	7.5%
35-44	44	21.9%
45-54	47	23.4%
55-64	37	18.4%
65-74	25	12.4%
75 or over	22	10.9%
No response	11	5.5%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B12: Do you consider that you have a disability?

	Count	%
Yes	21	10.4%
No	164	81.6%
No Response	16	8.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B13: How many people live in your house?

	Count	%
1	45	22.4%
2	47	23.4%
3	26	12.9%
4	39	19.4%
5	23	11.4%
6	0	0.0%
7	1	0.5%
No Response	20	10.0%
Total	201	100.0%

Table B14: Please tick which property type best describes your house.

	count	%
Detached with front garden over 6 foot in length	10	5.0%
Detached with front garden less than 6 foot in length	6	3.0%
Semi-detached with front garden over 6 foot in length	48	23.9%
Semi-detached with front garden less than 6 foot in length	20	10.0%
Terraced with front garden over 6 foot in length	51	25.4%
Terraced with front garden less than 6 foot in length	29	14.4%
Other, please specify	16	8.0%
blank	21	10.4%
Total	201	100.0%

#### Table B15: Other specified to be as follows:

	Count
end of terrace	8
block of flats	4
maisonette	2
terraced with no front garden	1
terraced with rear garden over 6 foot	1

## **Appendix C: Questionnaire**



#### 15120 Merton Wheelie Bin Trial survey

Good morning/afternoon, my name is and I am working for M·E·L Research o0n behalf of Merton Council to carry out a survey to gain residents feedback on the wheelie bin trial. Do you have 5 minutes to spare to answer a few guick guestions?

Intervie	ewer details:					
Intervie	wer Name					
Date of	Interview					
ID num	ber					
	e you happy with the council's	wheelie bin colle				
<b>1</b>	Yes [GO TO Q3]		<b>2</b>	No [GO 7	FO Q2]	
Q2. If n	o, why is this? [TICK ALL THA	AT APPLY / DO N	OT REA			
<b>1</b>	Looks less visually pleasing		<b>4</b>			ce to store bins
<b>2</b>	Hard to manoeuvre		□ 5	Don't nee		in, box/bags were
<b>□</b> 3	Crews do not return to prope	rty/where left	<b>G</b>	Other (sp	ecify)	
	ve you found using the wheeli	e bins easier to u				NGLE CODE]
<b>1</b>	Yes [GO TO Q5]		<b>2</b>	No [GO 7	TO Q4]	
Q4. If n	o, why is this? [OPEN ENDED	1				
<b>Q</b> 5. Is y	your street cleaner than before	the wheelie bin	trial sta	rted? [SINGL	E CODE]	
<b>1</b>	Yes [GO TO Q7]	□ 2 No [0	OTO	26]	<b>3</b>	Not sure [GO TO Q7]
00.15						
Q6. If n	o, why is this? [OPEN ENDED					
	e you happy with the size of th	e wheelie bins fo	r recyc	ing and gene	ral rubbish? [	SINGLE CODE FOR
EACH (	OPTION]					
			Yes			No
	ng bins		ОТОС			(GO TO Q8a)
Genera	l rubbish bins	<b>⊔</b> 1 (G	о то с	9)	<u></u>	(GO TO Q8b)
00 If n	o why is this? ITICK ALL TH	T ABI V EOD EA	CH 14/A	STE TVDE1		
	o, why is this? [TICK ALL THA ecycling wheelie bin	I APLT FOR EA			te wheelie bin	<u> </u>
	Find it hard to manoeuvre		<b>□</b> 1		to manoeuvre	!
	Too big for all my recycling			Too big for a		
	Too small for all my recycling		<u>3</u>		r all my waste	
	Too big, I don't have adequate s	torage space				ate storage space
	Other (specify below)	norage space	<b>1</b> 5	Other (speci		late storage space
<b>_</b>	Other (specify below)			Other (speci	ily below)	
G9 Do	you recycle more or less sinc	e receiving the w	heelie l	nins [SINGI F	CODE	
	you recycle more or less sinc	e receiving the w				
<b>1</b>	A lot more	e receiving the w	<b>3</b>	About the sa		
<b>1</b>	•	e receiving the w				
□ 1 □ 2 Q10. Do	A lot more A little more o you have less waste going to		□ 3 □ 4 ceiving	About the sa Less the wheelie	ame bins? [SINGLE	: CODE]
Q10. D0	A lot more A little more		□ 3 □ 4	About the sa Less	ame bins? [SINGLE	: CODE]

Q11. [SHOW CARD A] Overall, on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly agree and 4 is strongly disagree, how much to you agree with the following statements? [TICK ONE FOR EACH OPTION]

	1 – Strongly agree	2 – Fairly agree	3 – Disagree	4 – Strongly disagree	[DON'T PROMPT] Don't know
The council kept me well informed about the wheelie bin trial.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	□ 3	<b>4</b>	□ 5
The council's wheelie bin leaflet was easy to understand and clearly informed me of what can go into each bin.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	□ 5

	And now I'	d just li	ke to ask	some que	stions	about	you aı	nd your household
	SHOWCARD B] V	Vhat age	<del></del>	you fall into?	[SINGL	E CODE		
<b>1</b>	18-24		<b>4</b>	45-54			<b>1</b> 7	75+
<b>2</b>	25-34		□ 5	55-64			□ 8	Prefer not to say
<b>□</b> 3	35-44		<b>□</b> 6	65-74				
	re your day-to-d ed to last, at lea					problem	or disa	ability which has lasted, or is
<b>1</b>	Yes		<b>2</b>	No	•		<b>3</b>	Prefer not to say
Q14. H	ow many people	live in y		hold includin ildren 18 and	- Γ	elf?		☐ 1 Prefer not to say
Q15. IN	NTERVIEWER TO	CODE	SENDER [S	INGLE CODE	E ONLY	l.		
<b>1</b>	Male				<b>2</b>	Female	!	
Q16 IN	ITERVIEWER TO	RECOR	D HOUSET	YPF ISINGI I	E CODE	ONI YI		
<b>□</b> 1		O RECORD HOUSETYPE [SINGLE CODE ONLY] th front garden over 6 foot in  □ 5  Terraced with front garden over 6 foot in				ront garden over 6 foot in length		
<b>2</b>	Detached with length	h front garden less than 6 foot in			Terrace length	ed with f	ront garden less than 6 foot in	
<b>3</b>	Semi-detache length				<b>a</b> 7	Other (s	specify I	below)
<b>4</b>	Semi-detache foot in length	d with fro	nt garden le	ess than 6				
Q17. IN	NTERVIEWER: D	o vou thi	nk English	is responde	nt's firs	t languad	ie ľDO l	NOT DIRECTLY ASK RESIDENT]
<b>1</b>	Yes	•			<b>2</b>	No	, .	
randon		they real	lly were in	terviewed. C	ould Ì p	lease tal	ke your	ered the survey will be selected a r name and telephone number s
Respo	ondent name:							
Teleph	hone no:							
street a		ill be pas	ssed back	to Merton Co	ouncil s	o that the		ovided, including your number, improve services. This does not
	Yes			,	<b>2</b> 2	No		

That's all the questions, thank you for participating!

Interviewer: Please tick if resident asked what was going to happen to the wheelie bin once trial ends

**1** 

# Using evidence to shape better services



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