

Recycling in schools backed by £120,000 scheme

A study into recycling in Edinburgh's schools has revealed that almost three-quarters of waste sent to landfill is recyclable, as the council prepares to review the success of a £120,000 scheme designed to boost recycling rates.

Waste Compositional Analysis (WCA) undertaken earlier this year at several council-run schools across the city found that on average, 72 per cent of the contents in general waste bins was recyclable material.

Food accounted for around half the recyclables found in bins whilst plastic, metal, paper and card made up roughly a quarter.

In May The City of Edinburgh Council distributed additional recycling and food bins for canteens, classrooms and corridors as part of a £100,000 initiative to encourage more pupils to recycle and reduce the amount of school waste unnecessarily sent to landfill.

Council officer Robert Turner said: "In terms of food bins, all the schools have external food bins and what we have done as part of this project is ensure there are specific internal food bins in all home economics departments and all areas of the school where food is produced.

“Children will be encouraged to use those bins with leftover packed lunches or leftover school meals.

“We should have now ability to capture all food waste in the schools.”

The scheme has also meant that pupils take on the responsibility of moving recycling bags from classrooms to collection points for cleaning staff to pick up as part of their curriculum for excellence.

Posters designed by pupils have been put up around schools and films produced for assemblies as part of a £20,000 communications campaign to spread awareness.

Further analysis of the contents of schools’ non-recyclable waste bins will be carried out in the coming months to assess the effectiveness of the scheme.

Cllr Ben Parker, Green Party, said the project signals “positive change”, but he added: “We also need to look at reducing waste in the first place by changing consumption habits and also reusing materials as far as possible.”

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter

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