
Research into the opinions of hosts and guests of holiday lets within London, with regards to recycling.

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The main body of this report was written by Newgate Research and overseen by ReLondon¹, and WRAP² with ReLondon authoring the executive summary.

Content was informed through various interviews with:

- Hosts of holiday lets within London
- Guests using holiday lets within London

ReLondon

We are a partnership of the Mayor of London and the London boroughs to improve waste and resource management and transform the city into a leading low carbon circular economy.

¹ ReLondon (formerly LWARB) is a partnership of the Mayor of London and London's boroughs to improve waste and resource management in the capital and accelerate the transition to a low carbon circular city

² WRAP is one of the globe's leading sustainability charities. It was established as a not-for-profit company in 2000 and became a charity in 2014.

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Executive summary

ReLondon (formerly LWARB) is a partnership of the Mayor of London and London's boroughs to improve waste and resource management in the capital and accelerate the transition to a low carbon circular city. ReLondon commissioned Newgate Research to undertake exploratory research into waste management behaviours with 44 'hosts' of London holiday lets, and a further 40 'guests' who had stayed in London holiday lets. In the context of this report, a 'holiday let' refers to a room or whole property which is rented out on a short term basis. It does not cover hotels or guest houses.

The research took place between October 2019 and May 2020 and aimed to provide an understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of guests and hosts toward recycling and waste management, and to identify opportunities to promote good waste management practices, specifically relating to recycling.

Interviews with guests identified that most people staying in London holiday lets would recycle if the expectation was set visually, verbally and/or in writing.

Recycling as an ingrained habit

Recycling is relatively commonplace in many areas of the world, particularly in those countries which most visitors to London travel from. It is therefore an established habit and one that - if facilities are in place - guests do not perceive to be burdensome to use in managing their waste. However, recycling facilities and practices vary considerably within and between countries. So, while guests may be inclined to recycle, they may not know how to use facilities correctly, leading either to mistakes or to not recycling so as to avoid making a mistake. To enable guests to recycle, it requires hosts to ensure facilities are accessible and signposted, and ideally to set expectations around recycling.

Through discussion with hosts, it became apparent that recycling facilities were predominantly made accessible to guests where the hosts considered recycling to be an important and worthwhile behaviour for the environment. This included having internal facilities, or having external facilities that were 'obviously' for guests to use due to their location (e.g. directly outside the front door). Internal facilities were explicitly signposted as part of the check-in process, though this was less consistently done where facilities were located externally. Many hosts would not signpost external facilities because they did not expect or want guests to use these facilities - primarily because it was felt to be an inappropriate level of responsibility to place on someone letting their property temporarily (and due to the small amount of waste reportedly generated during a typical stay). In a similar vein, few hosts felt comfortable setting expectations (or 'rules') for guests - including in relation to recycling - instead there was a common expectation that guests would use their common sense during their stay and would treat the property with respect.

Challenges for hosts

Where hosts did not have internal (or 'obvious' external) recycling facilities in place, it was largely because they had not seriously considered the need for these facilities. In prompting

hosts during this research, many highlighted that a lack of space (and the potential aesthetic impact) was an issue which would need to be overcome but, more importantly, they would need to be convinced it would not be detrimental to the guest experience (and therefore harm the profitability of their let). Conversely if it could be demonstrated that there were financial gains to be made (or losses to be prevented) through having facilities in place, this would prompt hosts to put internal facilities in place and/or to signpost external facilities. A significant proportion of host participants (13 out of 30) reported either not having or being aware of external recycling facilities – this is a key barrier to providing internal facilities or signposting external facilities to guests.

Hosts letting purpose-built flats were most likely to encounter variation in the external recycling facilities and services available to them, and the relative convenience of accessing external facilities where they existed. The process was relatively more straightforward for hosts with whole houses, or those letting flats in a split house.

The key findings of this research have been that:

- most guests will recycle where the facilities are in place and hosts set expectations, but they will not seek these facilities out where they are not obviously available, and
- most hosts will only put facilities in place when it becomes apparent that guests are demanding this, and it has the potential to positively impact their business.

For guests to be able to recycle, the first step is to ensure that hosts are providing the facilities for them to do so and then to ensure hosts are signposting these and clarifying expectations for their use. However, to create supply there needs to be demand (or perceived demand).

Implications and opportunities

Our analysis of the 84 interviews undertaken suggests the following implications for improving recycling behaviour and outcomes:

1. Hosts need to be prompted to offer recycling facilities

This could be through a holiday lets platform (such as Airbnb, Booking.com or Trip Advisor) initiative, such as a new profile section for detailing recycling/green features, a guide for new hosts or a campaign aimed specifically at guests or hosts.

2. Hosts need to have a reason to care or believe

This could be that guests care that properties have recycling facilities (so hosts will get more bookings, or lose bookings without putting facilities in place), that recycling is important for the environment and that doing the right thing by the environment is already part of hosts' identity (because they recycle at home), or that it is mandatory to

	manage waste in this way (as required by either the local authority, or a holiday lets platform).
3. Hosts need to be inspired with the art of the possible in terms of recycling facilities and signposting	This could include the range of ways people make recycling facilities fit with the aesthetic of their let, and innovative ways that hosts welcome and communicate with guests (e.g. filmed walk-throughs; illustrative folders etc.).
4. Recycling needs to be made easy for hosts	This includes hosts being aware of external recycling facilities (through communications, signposting and signage from local authority or property/ estate management), easy access to high quality facilities (i.e. through co- location of recycling with residual waste facilities), free recycling bags to prompt awareness and minimise expenditure, and could also include the provision of information on what can and can't be recycled (using pictures and/or simple language). ³
5. Recycling needs to be made easy for guests	<p>This includes ensuring that recycling facilities are available, that guests receive instruction from hosts verbally and/or in writing on waste management (and recycling options), and that internal recycling facilities are clearly marked with universal symbols to indicate what should and should not be disposed of.</p> <p>While there is a clear role for holiday lets platforms in encouraging recycling, in the immediate term local authorities could best support hosts through making clear what services are available for their property and helping to set recycling expectations (e.g. through social proof in communications or provision of free recycling bags). This then provides the foundation on which additional initiatives can be introduced which educate, persuade or tweak the environment in which decisions are made.</p>

There is a clear onus on holiday letting platforms to work with their registered landlord in order to ensure they provide internal arrangements for recycling that complement those provided by the local authority, and that they should communicate to their guests how the service operates.

ReLondon can support these platforms to advise on good practice and how to implement this.

³ For example of the practical steps that can be taken to improve the quality of recycling facilities (and increase recycling rates), see Resource London's previous research: Resource London (2020) Making recycling work for people in flats. Accessed at: <https://resourcelondon.org/resources/research-and-innovation/making-recycling-work-for-people-in-flats/>

I. Research context and approach

I.1. Research context

In May 2018 the Mayor of London published his London Environment Strategy setting out objectives, targets and policies for the management of London's municipal waste. The Mayor has established targets of a 50% recycling rate for local authority collected waste by 2025 (and 65% municipal waste recycling by 2030).

At present the household recycling rate for London is at 33%, approximately 11% lower than that of the average household in England as a whole. There is a huge variation between London boroughs (from 14% in Newham to over 50% in Bexley)⁴ which may reflect differences in the knowledge, attitudes and norms around recycling within different communities, and also the opportunities for engendering behaviour change.

There are 3.56 million properties in London, housing a total of nearly 9 million people. Of these properties, there are approximately 70,000 being offered for short-term let in London (c. 2% of the total number of properties). This is based on both Airbnb data collated by Inside Airbnb (and summarised in a 2019 House of Commons briefing paper⁵), and research undertaken by London Councils that covered six online letting platforms (Airbnb, Booking.com, Homeaway, Housetrip, Niumba and Trip Advisor⁶). While Airbnb is not the only source of short-term holiday rentals in London, it is the platform on which by far the largest proportion of London properties are let.

COVID-19

The research carried out for this project commenced prior to COVID-19, and the written report was completed during the pandemic in June 2020.

The holiday lets industry was severely disrupted by the pandemic, however, the findings of this report are still relevant and appropriate, especially as the holiday lets industry begins to recover.

There is an undeniable importance to London's economy of the re-emergence of travel and tourism to the city, and as such the current Lets Do London campaign⁷ is hugely significant in order to encourage visitors back to the capital.

⁴ Data taken from DEFRA's December 2018 'Statistics on waste managed by local authorities in England in 2017/18'.

⁵ <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8395/CBP-8395.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/press-release/22-january-2020/%E2%80%98one-50%E2%80%99-london-homes-potentially-used-short-term-let>

⁷ <https://www.londonandpartners.com/about-us/london-recovery#:~:text=Use%20the%20Let's%20Do%20London,channels%20with%20the%20%23LetsDoLondon%20hashtag.>

1.2. Research approach

Annually, over 2 million guests access temporary holiday accommodation in London, from across the world⁸, staying in one of around 70,000 properties being offered for short-term let in London⁹.

It was not within the remit of this research to provide a comprehensive, statistical breakdown of the attitudes and behaviours of guests and hosts, but instead to understand what factors influence their behaviours. To achieve this aim, we undertook in-depth telephone or video-based qualitative interviews with:

- 40 guests¹⁰ who had used a London holiday let in the preceding 3 months
- 44 hosts or managers¹¹ who had a live London holiday let

We recruited guest participants who had visited London in the past 3 months, in order to maximise their recall of their stay, and positioned the study as being about their holiday let experience, rather than recycling, to minimise the chance of biasing responses to questions around recycling. Recruitment was managed by professional recruiters via a combination of online recruitment via Facebook advertising, and through more traditional free find techniques drawing on a network of recruiters in the countries of interest.

The sample of guest participants was designed to reflect the varied nature of the London visitor profile. A key criterion for sampling was the country of origin, for which we utilised international visitor data collected from the International Passenger Survey and published by Visit Britain¹².

Through a review of the latest data for 2018, the top 10 countries from which the most visitors to London fly from were identified (see Table One below), onto which were mapped relative recycling performance of these countries¹³. Our recruitment strategy aimed to get representation from across these countries, ensuring representation of different relevant recycling performance.

⁸ https://www.AirbnbCitizen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/AirbnbUKInsightsReport_2018.pdf

⁹ <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8395/CBP-8395.pdf>

¹⁰ These 'guests' who participated in the research, shall be referred to as 'guest participants' from here on, with exception to when describing the general interactions and experience of letting hosts and their 'guests'.

¹¹ These letting 'hosts' or 'managers' who participated in the research, shall be referred to as 'host participants' from here on, with exception to when describing the general interactions and experience of holiday let 'hosts' and their guests or when making specific reference to differences between letting managers and hosts.

¹² <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/number-international-visitors-london>

¹³ Based on latest data from Eunomia: <https://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/recycling-who-really-leads-the-world-issue-2/>

Table One: Guest participant sample details

Variable	Quota aims	Quota achieved
Country of origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min 10 from Germany, Netherlands and Belgium - Min 10 from UK, Italy, Poland, Australia and Ireland - Min 10 from France, USA and Spain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 from Germany, Netherlands and Belgium - 16 from UK, Italy, Poland, Australia and Ireland - 13 from France, USA and Spain (with 1 additional from Portugal)
Recycling behaviour	<p>An even split of those who did and did not recycle their waste during their stay in London</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20 who stated they recycled in their holiday let - 20 who stated they did not recycle in their holiday let 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 21 who stated they recycled in their holiday let - 19 who stated they did not recycle in their holiday let
Length of stay	<p>Even mix of guests that have rented property for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 days or less - 4- 7 days - 8- 14 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17 who stayed for 3 days or less - 16 who stayed for 4-7 days - 5 who stayed for 8-14 days - 2 who stayed over 14 days
Type of property	<p>Range of properties rented to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Min 10 staying in private room in host-occupied property - Min 10 staying in flats and houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 who stayed in private rooms in host-occupied properties - 22 who stayed in flats and houses
Age	<p>Aiming for a mix of age groups (18-25, 26- 35, 36-45, 46-55, and over 55)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 13 from 18-25 - 13 from 26-35 - 11 from 36-45 - 1 from 46-55 - 2 from Over 55
Gender	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 Male - 24 Female
Visited with	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 travelled alone - 13 travelled with partner - 12 travelled with family - 7 travelled with friends

We recruited host participants who owned or managed a property currently being let through Airbnb. Recruitment was managed by professional recruiters via online recruitment via Facebook/Instagram advertising, and through more traditional free find techniques employed on relevant open Facebook forums and pages for Airbnb hosts (such as Airbnb London; Air BnB London Hosts Community).

The main sampling criteria related to recycling facilities and type of property, with quotas set in consultation with Resource London, accounting for what was known about recycling behaviours, facilities and services in different types of accommodation and London boroughs.

The sample was deliberately weighted towards hosts who don't provide facilities to enable the exploration of different barriers and how these might be overcome, as well as learning from hosts who do provide facilities¹⁴.

¹⁴ Note that there is no data on the provision of recycling facilities in London holiday lets

The final sample achieved is detailed in Table Two below.

Table Two: Host participant sample details

Variable	Quota aims	Quota achieved
Number of properties let	Aim for natural fall out but ensure minimum 10 who state they own and let more than one property.	- 34 own or manage one property ¹⁵ - 10 own or manage more than one property
Type of property	- Let room in host occupied property (min 5) - Let room in non-host occupied property (min 10) - Let entire flat (n 12) - Let entire house (n 8)	- 12 let room in host occupied property - 8 let room in non-host occupied property - 15 let entire flat - 9 let entire house
Recycling facilities	Aim for spread of properties with and without recycling facilities: - Internal facilities provided (n 10), with minimum 5 aware of external facilities - No internal facilities provided (n 30)	- Internal facilities provided and aware of external facilities (n 14) ¹⁶ - No internal facilities provided (n 30)
Cleaning services	Aim for natural fall out but ensure minimum 10 who state they use professional cleaning services in properties (max 20)	- 23 who use professional cleaning services - 21 who do not use professional cleaning services
Borough	Aim for spread across main London boroughs for Airbnb lettings (Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Islington, Camden, Westminster, Southwark, Lambeth and Lewisham). Aim to include 2-3 hosts from twin-stream authorities (e.g. Merton, Bexley, Richmond or Croydon).	- 3 x Tower Hamlets - 4 x Hackney - 6 x Islington - 4 x Camden - 6 x Westminster - 6 x Southwark - 1 x Lambeth - 2 x Lewisham - 2 x Merton - 2 x Richmond - 1 x Croydon - 7 x other locations (Ealing, Greenwich, 2 x Haringey, 2 x Hammersmith & Fulham, and Kensington & Chelsea)
Occupancy rate	Aim for even spread across occupancy rates: - Under 8% - 8-12% - Over 12%	- 5 under 8% - 12 between 8-12% - 27 over 12% (with 7 over 30%)

Working with ReLondon, Newgate Research designed qualitative discussion guides for both guest and host participants aimed at exploring recycling behaviours in London holiday lets. These are included in the Appendices.

¹⁵ Airbnb do not provide data on the actual or average number of properties let by individual host

¹⁶ Note that 4 host participants reported that while there were no external structural facilities, there were collections of recycling waste

2. Recycling is already an ingrained habit

“It’s the minimum you can do right? I guess it’s just my little, tiny part of saving the earth.”

2.1. Attitudes towards recycling and at-home behaviours amongst guests

The vast majority of guest participants interviewed were positive toward recycling. There was ready acknowledgement that it was good for the environment: an activity that helped reduce pollution and tackle climate change, with relatively minimal effort required due to the state-run kerbside collection commonplace across the countries from which guest participants were recruited. It was not a behaviour which guest participants felt needed to be justified or rationalised – there was largely wholesale acceptance that it was the ‘right thing to do’ both for the environment and for minimising waste.

‘Global warming’ or ‘climate change’ was reported as being regularly covered on the national news, and high-profile events such as flooding in Venice and wildfires in Australia were occurring during the fieldwork period for this research. These events were referenced by several guest participants, typically from the affected countries, as examples of human’s influence on the environment and strengthening the justification for recycling (as a way of helping tackle climate change).

“It’s important for the environment – everyone knows this now, and what you can/can’t recycle. It is a habit to recycle most materials. It’s not hard to do.”

Guest, male, Netherlands, 26-35 years old

“As a family we holiday often and there’s something about creating a smaller footprint as much as you can in terms of the waste you create. While I realise we’re not solving global warming, at least we’re doing something to help.”

Guest, female, UK, 36-45 years old

One UK-based guest participant had a more laissez-faire attitude toward recycling, believing that it required additional efforts that she was not willing to make and had limited positive impact on the environment as compared to the “petrol and all the gasses that go up”.

This was however a distinct outlier, with the vast majority of guest participants reporting that it was little-to-no additional effort, and that, as well as having implicit environmental benefits, it was also actively encouraged by national and local campaigns, and through direct and indirect penalties (ranging from fines in their home countries through to non- collection of rubbish).

Recycling, as a standard form of waste management, was a behaviour that was now deep-rooted, having been available and, in some cases mandated at home, for many years now. A number of guest participants – now adults – recalled recycling when they were young children 15-20 years ago, and that this behaviour was now just part of their daily routine for managing their waste. With the right recycling infrastructure in place (communal bins nearby and regular doorstep collections) recycling was seen to be easy and a ‘norm’ in terms of how guests managed their own rubbish.

“[It’s] second nature. Wherever possible I recycle, I don’t switch off. I don’t find it an extra effort to put a plastic bottle in a box instead of a bin.”

Guest, female, Netherlands, 36-45 years old

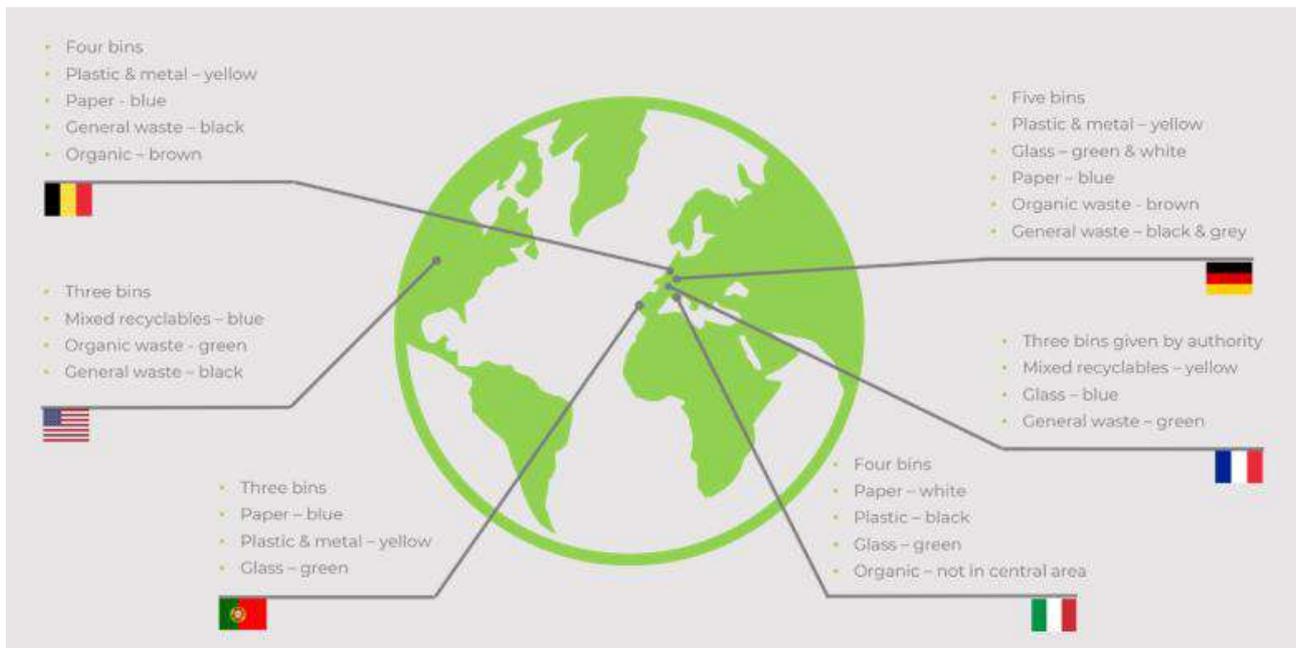
“I used to do it before it was the law. Every one of us should do what they can every day and recycling is a big part of what you can do; what everyone can do.”

Guest, female, Italy, 26-35 years old

Interestingly, while recycling was a ‘norm’ in terms of how guests managed their own waste, it wasn’t something that guest participants reported doing because of social pressure. In many countries (and in particular in urban centres) recycling was a social norm, but it was not an activity that guest participants seemed to judge their neighbours on. This may be because often in urban, communal facilities, where waste is mixed together it is more difficult to see who does or does not recycle.

Only a small number of guest participants stated that they did not recycle at home, and this tended to be because they were living in a sub-urban location not serviced by kerbside collections. In these cases, despite often being used to recycling – from having lived elsewhere where recycling was collected from their kerbside – guest participants did not recycle because this would have involved using communal facilities, located between 500m – 5km away. A very small minority of guest participants did still recycle in such circumstances, typically because they felt quite passionately about recycling as a means of helping the environment.

Figure One: Examples of reported differences in international recycling processes



While the majority of guest participants recycled while at home, the actual process for managing recyclable waste varied between countries. Figure One illustrates some of the differences reported between guest participants, from six of the countries from which they were based.

It was reportedly standard practice for paper, glass, metal and plastics to be recycled across the majority of countries, but the format for organising recyclables and the frequency and process by which these were collected varied between every country based on the interviews conducted¹⁷. In some cases, recyclables are split out by type, and in others comingled. Recycling materials are often associated with specific colours, though these differ by country. Collection procedures vary from doorstep collection of bags through to communal drop-off points.

As previously mentioned, there are different forms of incentives (and penalties) used in different countries. In some countries (e.g. the Netherlands and Italy) guest participants reported that there are fines for not recycling appropriately (e.g. mixing residual¹⁸ and/ or recyclables). In others, the penalty (or incentive) is not having your residual waste collected as often.

The implication is that while the process of recycling itself was relatively ingrained, there is little in the way of consistency in approaches to managing waste that cuts across national (or even local) boundaries. This makes it challenging for guest participants to know exactly what is 'normal' when it comes to recycling outside of their local environment without the appropriate cues or direction.

¹⁷ Note that systems could differ more widely than those reported by participants, depending on the specific location within the country, and they are also not necessarily country wide in the form and type of recycling

¹⁸ General waste and rubbish have been referred to as 'residual waste' for the purposes of this report. When speaking with participants, residual waste was referred to as 'general waste' or 'rubbish'.

2.2. Attitudes and at-home behaviours towards recycling amongst hosts

As with guest participants, the majority of host participants interviewed were positive toward recycling and - within their own homes - used either internal recycling facilities or external facilities that were directly outside of their property.

Those who recycled tended to do so either because it was a habit that they had developed growing up or in adulthood and it was a behaviour that was positive for the environment, or because they had been 'guilted' or 'pushed' into recycling by a partner or by children who were questioning waste management practices following school or work/projects.

“I do it because it’s good for the environment, so I don’t build up landfill, animals die in the ocean when you put plastic in there. Just generally trying to knock off global warming.”

Manager, whole flat, Ealing

“We recycle because my partner is a wannabe planet saver. For me it is all too little too late.”

Owner, whole house, Hammersmith and Fulham

Several host participants reported that the way that waste was managed had a big influence on their own practices (including recycling), with some reporting waste being left by council collection services (or warnings received) for incorrect use of the external facilities. Similarly, the provision of facilities to support recycling enables recycling at home.

“Because the council provides bags, you’d have to be very lazy not to. There is no harm so we just have a cupboard, where we sling paper glass and plastic, and there is no bother whatsoever to clear that out. Never quite sure about how recyclable plastic is though...”

Owner, whole flat, Southwark

One host participant reported recycling at home because the facilities were provided by the local authority and therefore they worked on the assumption that it was mandatory to recycle. However, the lack of information/communications from the local authority meant that this participant had no idea what could or could not be recycled and therefore mixed a

range of (dirty) items they assumed could be recycled. The majority of host participants were confident in their knowledge of what can and can't be recycled, though plastics could lead to some confusion.

“Everything that can be crunched in hand, like a crisp packet, can't be recycled – nice rule of thumb.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Westminster

Six of the 44 host participants interviewed reported not recycling at home. In two cases this was due to a reported lack of external facilities and collections, though the remaining four individuals simply placed limited importance on recycling and weren't aware of how recycling services operated in their area. Those host participants who did not recycle at home were much less likely to provide internal facilities, to signpost or even to be aware of external facilities in their letting properties as compared to those who did recycle at home. They were also more likely to hold more indifferent attitudes to recycling as determined by responses to the WRAP segmentation statements. However, as we will come on to discuss, not all host⁹ participants who recycled at home (and who had internal facilities) provided similar facilities at their letting property.

2.3. Visiting London

Guest participants in this research visited London for a wide range of different reasons, from short work trips alone or with colleagues, to longer leisure trips with friends and family, and potentially a combination of both.

The vast majority of guest participants (n 33) were guests in a holiday let for less than a week, and of these, almost half were staying for less than 3 days. While many had visited London before, they were often accompanied by partners, friends or family that had never visited London before. As a result, most guest participants spent substantial periods of their stay outside of their holiday let, visiting tourist attractions and going out for food and entertainment.

¹⁹ One guest participant booked their holiday let via booking.com and one via holidaylettings.com

2.4. Booking a holiday let

Guest participants in this study almost entirely booked their holiday let through Airbnb – the online marketplace for arranging or offering lodgings. The process for choosing a holiday let was typically the same for every person:

1. A longlist of properties was identified using the Airbnb website (or App) using Availability/Date, Price and Location to filter lets that are available.
2. Properties were further filtered out through secondary criteria that reflected the circumstances and needs of guests. For example, this might include the number of bedrooms in the property, the availability of a private bathroom in a shared property, kitchen facilities for those wanting to cook (relating to length of stay and reducing costs) etc. Internet access was expected as standard in properties.
3. Final choices were then made based on a combination of reviewing photos and guest reviews, taking into account factors such as ease of check-in, hospitality, cleanliness of property and the décor. Ultimately guest participants weighed these up in conjunction with price and location to determine which property best met their needs.

Once a property had been identified, guest participants booked via the website or App, with very limited direct communication with the host beyond introducing themselves. Once bookings had been made and confirmed, any further communication tended to be via the platform's messaging system or through direct calls/messages with the host. Communication tended to occur close to the date at which guest participants were due to arrive at the letting and concerned logistics around their arrival time and access to the property. Guest participants felt that the Holiday Lets platform site contained all the information they needed to know in advance of their stay.

In no cases did guest participants spontaneously mention recycling, waste management or eco-friendliness as factors that they considered when shortlisting or reviewing holiday lets, or in having questions around these aspects answered in advance of their stay in London.

3. Hosting a holiday let

3.1. Motivations for offering a London holiday let

Over three-quarters (n 34) of the host participants interviewed for this project were owners or managers of a single property. These host participants were typically letting a spare property, or spare rooms within their own property as a supplementary form of income.

None of these hosts described themselves as professional lettings managers and none had previous professional experience in lettings, though a small minority currently or previously worked in the hospitality industry.

Most host participants managing a single property recalled that when they started their letting, they did so without any significant preparation or investment in the outcomes. It was something that required no prior experience and could be 'soft launched' to a large extent – i.e. if the experience didn't meet expectations then they could easily cease without having expended significant time and money.

Indeed, many host participants went into letting as a bit of an 'experiment', without specific expectations on booking volumes, and were pleasantly surprised by the experience, particularly in terms of the financial returns.

Host participants managing a single property that was a whole flat or a whole house reported having weighed up selling their property, letting the property to tenants on a longer-term basis or going down the route of temporary, short-term lets. With London property values continuing to rise most host participants had decided that retaining and letting their property via a holiday let platform would be most financially beneficial.

In contrast to longer-term lettings, the financial returns from letting via a holiday lets platform were reported to be higher, as there were fewer perceived problems in terms of managing difficult tenants and it offered greater flexibility in how the property could be used by the owner (and their friends and family).

“I was owning a flat in Docklands and realised there was an opportunity to make income whenever there was a massive event at Excel London.”

Owner, whole flat, Lambeth

For host participants that rented a private room within their own home, the primary motivation was again financial. Renting one or two rooms within their property via a holiday lets platform was a way of supplementing their income or, in a smaller number of cases, provided their main source of income. While not a primary motivation, the social interaction that occurs within a shared letting was another reported benefit for hosts of these properties.

“I’m on my own and I’m 70 in a couple of months and my pension doesn’t quite cover my cost of living... and I thoroughly enjoy the social side of it.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Haringey

“If you’re going away for the weekend it pays for the trip while you’re away. And it helps with security.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Hackney

Where host participants reported managing more than one property (n 10), they were typically employed as a manager, working on behalf of a letting company, or one or more property owners. There were a small number of cases where host participants owned and let more than one property (either in the UK or abroad). Hosts managing more than one property had a stronger reported interest in real estate and property management as a career/profession, though again the primary motivation for involvement in holiday lets was financial.

4. Main challenges for hosts

When guests book a property through a holiday lets platform their primary expectation – from the perspective of host participants interviewed – is that the property they stay in matches the description of the property on the profile. In most cases the profile includes pictures which present the property in a good light and, importantly, show it as being clean.

Cleanliness, of the linen, bathroom and property in general, is amongst the most common guest expectations reported by host participants, which aligns with the feedback provided by guests in the previous chapter.

“Somewhere that’s clean, where the bathroom and bedroom is spotless; they want someone [a host who] is warm and friendly to give advice but not in their faces all the time.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Haringey

“The main challenges, with it being a house, is just to keep on top of the wear and tear, making sure everything is in its’ place, ensuring all the electronics are functioning.”

Owner, house, Hammersmith and Fulham

There was recognition that keeping on top of cleanliness and hygiene was amongst the highest priorities for a holiday letting. Maintaining a clean property is also the biggest challenge for hosts, particularly those renting out rooms or properties where they are not themselves also living in the property, and especially for those with larger properties. It is also a major logistical challenge for those who have a large volume of fast-turnaround bookings (i.e. guests leaving and arriving on the same day) and those who were letting as a secondary form of income – which was the case for most participants – as these hosts typically had commitments that required their attention during working hours. This could require them to call on friends, family, or cleaners to check guests in or respond to issues arising. While guests were largely felt to be ‘respectful’, properties were often left in a messy state and ‘treated like a hotel’. There were some host participants that reported having been on the receiving end of negative feedback regarding cleanliness, and this appeared to be a huge motivator for ensuring the property was kept clean.

“There is always an issue with cleanliness. Pizza boxes and waste left on floor. Toilets left unclean. I’ve had a couple of occasions where people have had a massive party. The cleaner comes in and takes a picture of the property before they do any cleaning.”

Owner, whole flat, Islington

“It’s left untidy, it’s not left how they find it. If they were to turn up at the property and things were how they had left it would they be happy to stay there? Probably not.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Lewisham

Over half of those host participants interviewed reported using a cleaner or ‘housekeeper’ to ensure that the property was professionally cleaned following a guest stay. These included hosts who let whole houses, whole flats and private rooms. However, the use of a cleaner was no guarantee that the property would be kept to the standard that they would expect, and that their guests would be satisfied with. In many of the cases where a cleaner was used, hosts would still inspect the property ahead of a guest arriving (notably in those properties where a face-to-face tour was provided) and some managers would be present during the cleaning itself to ensure it was being done time-efficiently. Several hosts reported that cleaners’ standards could drop over time, which called for them to keep tabs on the quality of the services provided.

For those host participants who did not use a cleaner, around half rented properties which they also resided in, and therefore managed the cleaning themselves. Other host participants who managed the cleaning tended to work in more flexible lines of work that enabled them (or their family members) to clean properties after guests had departed.

It appears that most host participants used a cleaner as it was a relatively small expense to reduce the risk that the property was not deemed to be clean, and therefore have the potential for negative guest feedback to harm bookings. It appears that one specific challenge here is that hosts must provide guests with a refund on their deposit within 24 hours so, if the property is not inspected immediately, they must refund deposits regardless of the state of the property.

Conversely there are two weeks to provide feedback, and it isn’t possible to view the other people’s feedback in advance of leaving your own. There is therefore a strong disincentive to provide negative feedback on guest cleanliness, as it can lead to a tit-for-tat exchange which harms both parties.

Other challenges raised by hosts varied more by individual and included:

- guests being noisy and having parties in the property – despite house rules
- being able to offer flexibility in greeting guests in person. In some cases, this led to the provision of an after-hours key lockbox, or the cleaner, family member or friend will provide the tour
- guests booking shared properties and anticipating that they have the property to themselves
- mismanagement of waste when communal facilities in flats (i.e. waste disposal chutes), breakdown

“Managing people’s expectations. I think the power of the internet with regards to reviews is an amazing thing but it’s also a nightmare. We provide what we would like to receive, if we were staying in our property.”

Owner, private room shared with other guests, Camden

4.1. Host/guest engagement

Guest participants reported gaining access to their holiday let either by:

- being met by the property host, ‘manager’, a friend of the host or by another guest staying in the property; or
- accessing the key or swipe card through a lockbox, or given a code to enter a digital keypad

Around half of guest participants (n 17) gained access to the property independently using a key, card or code, and therefore had no direct contact with a host or anyone welcoming them into the property. Some guest participants preferred being able to access the property independently as it meant that they didn’t feel constrained as to when they needed to arrive or feel beholden to someone to let them into the property. This was particularly the case for younger participants and for those arriving at more unsociable hours.

The flipside of this is that those who were met by a host (or equivalent) felt more welcomed and were typically given a formal tour of the property which covered the different rooms, facilities and ground rules (where applicable). Having an opportunity to meet the host (or equivalent) face-to-face and get a tour of the property was particularly useful for those guest participants staying in a house or flat where they occupied a private room. Guest participants who accessed the property independently, could be unclear on which facilities and areas of the property were accessible and which were ‘out-of-bounds’, which typically led to using communal facilities less frequently and staying predominantly within their room.

The majority of host participants (n 35) reported meeting guests face-to-face for check-in - a notably higher proportion than that reported by guest participants - rather than providing a lock-box service.

There were a wide variety of reasons for this, though largely it was to ensure that the guests put a human face to the property and therefore treated it with more respect than they might do if this personal contact was not made.

Several host participants reported having previously tried lockboxes and found that the property was treated substantially worse by guests accessing remotely than by those who they met face-to-face, so stopped offering this as an option. Many host participants reported that, where they were unable to greet guests themselves, they would ask the property cleaner, housekeeper a friend, neighbour or family member, to help with the check-in process.

“If they see you they’re less likely to actually take liberties with your property as well. I just think if it’s faceless, you’re more inclined to mistreat a place.”

Owner, whole house, Southwark

A face-to-face approach was seen (by hosts) as offering a more personal and warmer welcome, as well as providing the opportunity for them to provide a tour of the property, ensuring guests know where everything is and that any house rules were communicated. Guest participants reported that rules typically related to noise and access to property, but also to the setting of expectations for managing waste. In these cases, hosts typically explained if waste was to be recycled, and if so, indicated the location of internal or external recycling facilities, and how recycling should be organised. From a host participant perspective, the main ‘rule’ tended to be for guests to treat the property with respect; as they would their own homes. Beyond this there could be specific rules around pets, parties, visitors and the use of facilities, including waste.

“Basic rules of, no partying, keep the noise down, respect the neighbours and clean after themselves.”

Owner, whole flat, Hackney

“The lady [host] was very aware of being eco-friendly & environmentally friendly. She was very specific in saying ‘here goes the paper & here goes the plastic & here the food waste & here everything else that you cannot sort out by yourself & I will do it myself’.”

Guest, female, Italy, 26-35 years

“He just said it [the bin] was outside and that any rubbish just put it outside.”

Guest, female, UK, 36-45 years

Interestingly, there was a high degree of reticence among host participants for making house ‘rules’ explicit. Hosts talked about not wanting to “*come across as matron*” or feeling uncomfortable in setting rules as that “*goes against the vibe of keeping things relaxed*” or it feeling “like home”. All house rules were explicitly referenced in the holiday lets platform listing, and in some cases in FAQs or communications that were sent in advance of someone staying in the property. Having these covered in advance, albeit passively, enabled host participants to avoid covering them face-to-face with participants. It didn’t appear that more ‘procedural’ rules, such as entering/leaving the property, the use of kitchen facilities or waste management, caused the same level of unease. Typically, where recycling facilities were accessible and hosts wanted these to be used, these were signposted during the tour. More detail is provided on recycling communication in the next section.

“There are no house rules as such, but it is immaculate when you arrive, with everything – pressed tea towels, rubber gloves, bath cleaner – all provided. At the end of the stay I would expect the guest to make a good effort in leaving as found. I don’t say this though.”

Owner, whole house, Islington

A minority of both host and guest participants (less than one-in-three) reported that letting properties included a folder containing information on the property and/or the surrounding area.

Where it was provided this varied in form, from a folder containing leaflets on local restaurants and tourist attractions to professionally illustrated welcome packs containing information on every aspect of the property and London, including house rules. Folders typically contained relatively basic information, including the wi-fi code, host contact details as well as instructions on the use of facilities such as heating and cooking facilities. From discussion with both guests and hosts, only in a small number of cases did the welcome pack contain information on waste management and recycling facilities.

Guest participants typically said, where a welcome pack was provided, they would review it briefly on arrival to check for any important or relevant information. The wi-fi code was the one piece of information that everyone required, though this was typically provided via a message from the host in advance, or else written down somewhere clearly visible in the property.

A small number of host participants mentioned that – in lieu of a folder – guests were provided with instructions on using the facilities in the property via stickers on windows and cupboards (e.g. with instructions to operate extractor fans, or to close windows), or via a written notice on a notice board or bedside table. This kind of ‘functional’ signage could be seen to detract from a cleaner, more professional look and feel so wasn’t considered by many hosts. Some host participants also reported having chosen not to put a folder in place, as it felt too formal. In these cases, guests were provided with instructions by email in advance, face-to-face or by phone on arrival. As part of the check-in process, all guests were provided with contact details for their host and a number of hosts reported checking in with guests by text or email during their stay.

5. A 'home away from home'

5.1. An overview of waste and recycling facilities in London holiday lets

Feedback from both hosts and guests illustrated that the internal waste management 'set-up' varied between properties depending on the availability of internal and/or external recycling facilities, the size and type of property being let.

The main internal waste facility in holiday let properties tended to be a 'large' (typically 30-60 litre) freestanding general waste bin located in the kitchen area.

In a minority of cases host participants reported having dual-stream standalone bins, or ones (typically in new-build apartments) that were integrated into the cupboards. The size of bin was determined by the type of property (i.e. whether a flat, house or shared accommodation), whether internal recycling facilities were available, and the typical length of stay of guests. The average guest stay was between 3-5 days, and during this time it was rare for either guests or hosts to report the general waste bin being filled (regardless of whether recycling facilities were available).

Outside of the main kitchen waste bin, other internal (mixed-waste) bins could sometimes be found in the guest bedrooms and bathroom/s. This was typically only the case in shared properties, where there was an increased likelihood of guests remaining in their rooms to consume food and to dispose of waste.

Only in a very small number of cases – where the hosts were an active presence in the property – did guest participants report that food waste was separated out from residual waste. Similarly, only a small number of host participants reported providing food waste facilities, and these only in properties where the host resided and let a private room. Unlike dry recyclables, the provision of food waste was seen to introduce a level of complication for the guest and host which was beyond what was deemed to be practical due to the potential for error and mess.

Where internal recycling facilities were made available, these included dedicated crates, boxes and bins, or could simply involve recyclables being stored in bags or a free space in the kitchen area. As we will come on to describe, there was no consistency in the form of internal facility provided as this related to what space was available, the décor of the flat, how hosts expected waste to be managed, and the preferences and priorities of hosts. Furthermore, the provision (or type) of internal facilities does not appear to be directly influenced by host recycling behaviours in their own home environment (in which other factors such as size of property, partner/family attitudes to recycling had an influence) – as many hosts who recycled at home chose not to put facilities in place in their rental property. The influencing factors on these decisions are covered later on the section entitled 'Incentivising hosts by creating the demand.'

A total of 14 host participants were recruited who provided internal recycling facilities for guests; these included hosts of whole houses (n 2), whole flats (n 4), and private rooms shared with hosts (n 8). These hosts used various forms of container for managing dry recyclables indoors, including crates provided by the local authority (for use externally),

generic plastic/wooden boxes, bins or dual-stream bins, and recyclable bags that were kept on a hook or simply on the floor. Several other participants who did not provide facilities per se, did have a dedicated space on the counter or floor for recyclables. Facilities were typically limited to the kitchen. Recycling facilities were rarely provided in guest bedrooms and bathrooms, which may potentially limit the capture of recyclable waste. The choice of facility appeared to be largely dependent on host sensibilities and balancing aesthetics with functionality in the context of the space available.

Of the 30 host participants recruited as not providing internal facilities:

- 7 had 'obvious' external facilities directly in front of the property. These tended to be houses or small apartment blocks where the facilities were directly in front of the front entrance or housed in the garden. These facilities tended to be used in lieu of any internal facility as having a larger external facility easily to hand reduced the need for internal facilities to be put in place.
- 10 had more 'secluded' external facilities, where the recycling facility was situated in a shared communal area that was tucked away in a courtyard, carpark, or an internal or external communal waste facility. These properties were almost exclusively flats (all except one) and recycling facilities (or collection points) were provided alongside residual waste. In two cases, host participants reported only being able to recycle one form of dry recyclable (glass bottles, and paper/ cardboard) due to the restrictions in facilities available to them.
- 8 reported having no external recycling facilities available to them. This could mean that no facilities existed, that no collection services were made available by the local authority or that the host participants were unaware of the presence of facilities. These were again predominantly flats (n 5), though there were several hosts who let houses (e.g. Camden and Hammersmith & Fulham).
- 5 were unaware of what facilities were available, largely because they managed their property arms-length and/or had limited interest or knowledge of the facilities.

This aligns with findings from guest participants who reported that external facilities – where they were aware of them - varied in where they were situated dependent on the type of property. In houses, the facilities tended to be directly in front of the property and therefore clearly associated with the property. In flats, the facilities could be in an internal communal room on the ground floor (which may or may not be signposted), or located externally in a dedicated, partitioned space (again, which may or may not have been visible to participants). It is worth noting that guests wouldn't necessarily be aware of external facilities because – as will be discussed - there tended to be no expectation that they transfer their waste to these external facilities placed on them by hosts.

5.2. Recyclable waste in holiday lets

Through discussion with both guests and hosts, it was clear that there were three main forms of waste generated (and to be managed) within letting properties:

- I. **Food waste and associated packaging.** Over half of guest participants (n 25) reported using the kitchen facilities in the holiday let, though this was typically relatively 'light' use, largely for a (continental) breakfast and on occasion for cooking convenience meals or

consuming take-aways. Lunch and dinner were less frequently prepared or consumed within the property, though this depended on a range of factors including length of stay, budget for eating out and whether the participant was travelling with children. Where lunch and/or dinner were prepared and/ or consumed within the property, a diverse range of meals were prepared.

Some guest participants cooked meals from scratch, using ingredients purchased from the local supermarket, while others typically consumed convenience food in the form of pizzas or ready meals.

Host participants similarly reflected that a minority of guests used the kitchen facilities, and rarely for cooking whole meals from scratch. The main form of food-related waste generated was packaging from microwaveable ready meals or from take-aways, including pizza boxes.

2. **Drinks bottles and cans.** These included both water and soft drink bottles and cans purchased for consumption internally and externally, but also alcoholic drinks such as wine and beer. Several host participants reflected that a much higher quantity of tin and glass waste was generated through consumption of alcohol in their properties than was generated as a by-product of cooking or food consumption.

3. **Shopping packaging.** Host participants reported that a large proportion of their guests were tourists and, as part of their visit to London, could generate a sizeable quantity of cardboard packaging from clothes and other goods that come wrapped and boxed, with accompanying bags. This was especially the case for purchases from more luxury stores.

5.3. Communications on waste management

As mentioned previously, hosts often covered waste management as part of the check-in process, detailing the location of bins for waste and any recycling facilities. This was typically done face-to-face, with few guest or host participants reporting that instructions for managing waste were written and included, for example, in the welcome folder or on a notice board. In some cases though, this level of explicit instruction was provided to help clarify expectations.

“[There was] a laminated sheet in the apartment to request dealing with the rubbish in a specific way. It was very polite, like could you please put the bin bag [with general waste] in the outer bin but the recycling can be left...”

Guest, female, UK, 36-45 years old

A total of 13 guest participants recalled being given verbal or written instruction on how to manage waste, of which the majority (n 12) were instructed to use internal and/or external recycling facilities. Similarly, almost half of host participants (n 21) reported providing verbal

or written instructions on managing waste, including all those who had internal recycling facilities and around half each of those who had obvious or more secluded external recycling facilities.

“We do say to guests that if you’re happy to recycle for the environment and stuff, that we prefer if you put your recycling stuff in here. Just rinse them out and put them in the bag. People are quite good.”

Owner, whole flat, Islington

Where internal facilities were available, host participants tended to show the facility and to provide relatively more detailed instructions on what could and could not be recycled based on their knowledge. This included physically showing guests the types of materials and, in two cases, deliberately ensuring there were some recyclables already in the facility to illustrate what was meant to be recycled. However, not all provided this level of instruction, in part because they didn’t feel it was up to letting hosts to have to *“educate people on waste management – especially for a short visit”*. It should be noted that these instructions were not made with reference to material provided by the local authority but instead based on their knowledge (or interpretation) of how the recycling facilities should be used.

“I’m a laid-back person, I like for them to feel at home, I try not to stress things that need to be done, you see notices everywhere. Its self-explanatory, there are signs on top of the bins, and outside, the bins are clearly labelled, they’ve got a recycling sign.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Lewisham

“Sometimes I forget. But generally, I show them: this is the food waste and here is your clean cardboard, here is the plastic, glass and cans. Last one, the general waste I say – if you’re not sure put it in this one.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Merton

Where internal recycling facilities were not available, but where hosts were aware of external facilities, only seven out of the 30 host participants interviewed reported communicating the presence of these facilities regardless of their location. For those external facilities which were more prominent (i.e. due to their immediate proximity to the property) communications

were more likely to involve both signposting and setting expectations for use. Where facilities were less obvious in their location, communications were more focused on signposting their availability, should guests wish to recycle.

Where external facilities were reported to be available, less than half of host participants referenced their presence during check-in or in other communications. Where external facilities were prominent due to their location, the lack of communication was either because the facilities were felt to be “obvious”, or because the host did not want them to be used, in order to minimise the perceived burden on the guest or in preferring to manage the waste themselves (to ensure it was correctly done). Where external facilities were more secluded, host participants reported not signposting these as it was “unreasonable” to expect guests to go out of their way to transfer waste (unless they specifically expressed a desire to use these facilities). In a similar manner, where both internal and external recycling facilities were available it was very rare that hosts set any expectations on guests transferring waste from the internal to the external facility – instead this would be managed by the host or cleaner as part of getting the property ready for new guests.

Guest participants we spoke with recalled that the external signposting of facilities was key in facilitating recycling where no internal facility was in place. Any confusion over whether or not a facility is ‘for me to use’ (e.g. a lack of a flat number on bins in a communal area) acted as a barrier and could lead to guests opting to just use the residual waste bin. Guest participants tended to be clear on what was an external recycling bin based on colouring (typically anything that was not black) and symbols/ writing on the bins.

Both guests and hosts reported that, due to the short length of a typical stay (3-5 days), most guests did not generate a large amount of waste. As previously mentioned, it was rare that the volume of waste generated – regardless of whether separate recycling facilities were provided or not – would exceed the capacity of the bins provided. Possibly as a result of this, it was relatively rare that host participants reported instructing or suggesting that guests transferred their waste from an internal to an external facility. Instead – where communications around waste were explicit – guests were informed to ensure that the waste bag was securely closed, and that waste would be managed on their departure.

Those host participants that did signpost external recycling facilities tended to provide limited detail on what could or could not be recycled, but instead conveyed that if guests wanted to recycle then they could do so using that facility (in the absence of any internal facility). The level of direction provided here related to how easy the facility was to access; for those facilities which were out of direct line-of-sight, there was much less overt expectation setting in relation to recycling behaviours.

“People can transfer recycling from inside to outside using the recycling bag. We ask them to close the bag and ‘suggest’ they take it out themselves, but it’s not positioned as a request.”

Owner, whole flat, Islington

Both hosts and guests themselves acknowledged that relatively few people proactively ask specifically about recycling facilities, though some host participants report that this has increased more in recent years. In one case, a host in Greenwich that was unable to offer recycling - due to the lack of collection services to their apartment block - actively communicated this lack of facility during the check-in tour to counter any potential for negative feedback from guests.

“You get a lot of millennial guests who are a bit more conscious about the environment. I think it might impact our reviews and ratings if we are not perceived to care about what they care about.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Greenwich

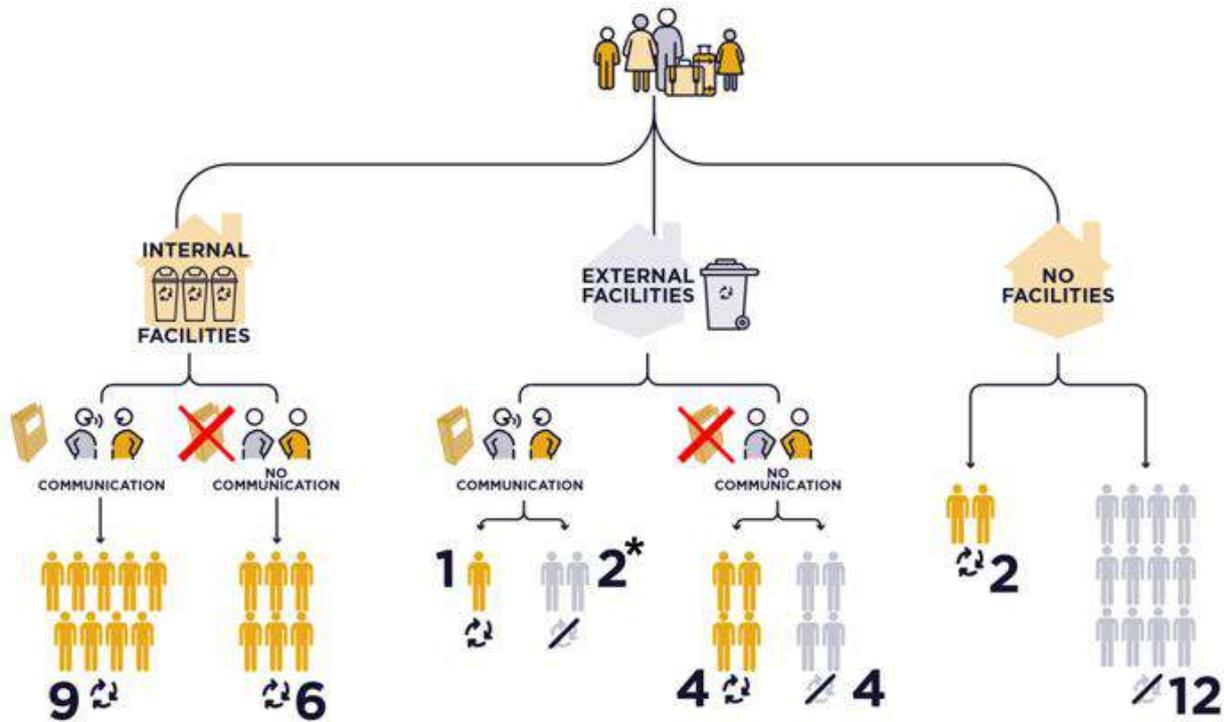
Only one guest participant reported asking about recycling facilities (directed toward another tenant), and they were told “not to bother” recycling. No-one else actively communicated with the host to enquire about recycling facilities or sought out information, even where they were in a longer-term letting (i.e. staying over 14 days). The implication of this is that - in the absence of internal recycling facilities - clearly signposted external recycling facilities appear to facilitate recycling amongst guest participants, and that this is further supported through communications (verbal or written) from the host. Passive external channels of information are less likely to be effective due to the lack of proactive information seeking among guests.

5.4. Managing waste and recycling in holiday lets

Figure two (below) illustrates the range of reported recycling behaviour of guest participants in this research, and how these varied according to the facilities available and whether they received verbal or written instruction on their use. Where internal facilities were available, regardless of the communication or instruction received from hosts, guest participants reported recycling. Where external-only facilities were provided, around half of participants reported they recycled, even with no communication or instruction from hosts (*note that two guest participants who did receive communications reported not recycling due to not generating recyclable waste). Where no facilities are provided, the vast majority of guest participants reported not recycling, even if their preference would have been to be able to.

There was no notable influence of socio-demographics, country, or attitudes toward recycling (as determined by the WRAP segmentation) on reported recycling behaviour of guest participants. This is interesting, in that recycling engagement tends to be lower among younger people based on previous Resource London research, though this was not the reported case in this research. If facilities were present and perceived as intended for use, most guest participants appear to be willing to use these (even on their own initiative).

Figure two: Recycling outcomes



Where internal facilities were provided, and where guest participants generated recyclable waste, they reported that they used these facilities, and that the use of the facilities was relatively straightforward. They based their knowledge on a combination of instruction from hosts (where given), “common sense” or assumed knowledge (based on experience of what could be recycled at home), icons on the facilities, and/or looking at what was already contained in the receptacles provided.

Plastic materials were the only real area of confusion for guest participants (as it was for hosts themselves), with some recognising that not all plastics can be recycled and some stating that it can be confusing which can and can't be recycled. A small number of guest participants actively sought to determine which plastic materials could or couldn't be recycled (e.g. through Google or recycling apps like Junker). However, where internal recycling facilities were made available, the majority of guest participants reported recycling most of their plastic packaging, with the exception of food-soiled materials, and ‘small’ plastics such as yoghurt pots, with the expectation that it would be sorted out later in the process.²⁰

Guest participants typically recycled plastic milk bottles, egg cartons, cardboard and plastic food packaging, glass wine bottles and cans. Where raised in the course of interviews, guest participants reported cleaning glass, tins and ready meal containers, as they would do at home – though not everyone discussed this specifically.

There was a strong sense amongst guest participants that holiday lets are a home away from home, and that you abide by the rules of the host, regardless of whether the behaviour is something you would normally do at home or not.

²⁰ It should be noted that this was a qualitative study, and the sample recruited were not – statistically-speaking - representative of all visitors to London holiday lets.

“You’re going to someone else’s property. It depends on what they do as standard.”

Guest, female, UK, 18-25 years old

“We didn’t have much rubbish so I think we can take time just to put it in the right place.”

Guest, female, France, 18-25 years old

“I wanted to follow the hosts instructions perfectly.”

Guest, female, Italy, 26-35 years old

Around half of guest participants who stayed in properties with internal recycling facilities reported disposing of recyclable waste into external facilities, either at the end of each day or at the end of their stay. This was dictated by habit, the type of waste (e.g. if recycling material was contaminated with food – such as ready meal packaging, it would typically be removed daily where recycled or simply placed in the general waste) and length of stay. It wasn’t necessary for them to receive instructions from the host – if the facilities were determined as being for their use, through proximity to the property, signage or contents - then they would still use the external facilities, as they would do at their own home.

“I applied what I know from Italy. I know that certain plastics can’t be recycled, therefore I threw that in the unrecyclable bag.”

Guest, female, Italy, 26-35 years old

Only a small minority of the host participants reported providing guests with specific bags or containers to transfer recyclables, and these tended to be those used as the internal ‘facility’ for managing dry recycling. This relates to the finding that very few hosts set any expectation for the transfer of waste from internal to external facilities.

Through discussions with hosts it was apparent that while most guests would recycle if the internal facilities were in place for them to do so, this could vary between 50-70% of guests (i.e. less reported compliance than was suggested from the interviews with guest participants). This was variously attributed to cultural differences in recycling behaviours, language barriers and “laziness”. Where guests did recycle using internal facilities, hosts also reported around a third of guests made mistakes by putting organic waste in the dry recycling or not cleaning dry recyclables sufficiently.

“The only thing that they don’t do is to clean out cartons properly. I won’t worry about that. I’m not a crazy person saying they must scrub it clean. I will get rubber gloves and wash it myself as I’m a little OCD.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Westminster

“People are not as careful when on holiday as when on when they are at home - I don’t expect them to be”.

Owner, whole house, Merton

In one case, in a shared house, a guest participant recalled how the host noticed what they were doing with their waste, and requested they separated the recycling out. In this case the host had not previously communicated the need to do this, and despite it being a habit at home, the guest participant had not previously noticed the separate bins for recyclables. Several host participants that let private rooms in their property also reported checking and correcting guest recycling behaviour by looking both in the general waste and recycling waste.

“[He] forgot to tell us where is the recycle bin at the beginning. I do a mistake and put in the wrong one and he saw it...he just explained me where to put the recycled packaging.”

Guest, male, France, 26-35 years old

Over half of the host participants we spoke with employed cleaners for their letting property. A key role for cleaners was to manage the disposal of waste. Where internal recycling facilities were in place hosts reported that cleaners transferred this to the external recycling. A small number of hosts would still manage the transferral of recyclables to ensure that it was done correctly (where hosts were present as part of checking properties and/or welcoming new guests). Hosts did not expect cleaners to inspect the general waste and identify recyclable material that had been put in by mistake, though several reported that obvious material like bottles or pizza boxes would be pulled out on occasion. It is unclear whether cleaners would also remove any food contamination from recyclables that had been put in the residual waste. One host participant reported that recyclables that had been left to one side in the property would be thrown in the general waste, despite the presence of external facilities, purely because it was “easier”.

“If the guest hasn’t separated then I wouldn’t expect the housekeeper to do so. There is a health and safety consideration here.”

Owner, whole flat, Southwark

Where internal recycling facilities were not provided but where guests were aware of external facilities, around half of participants reported recycling (regardless of whether hosts directly signposted these facilities). This was largely done as a matter of habit and/or duty based on how they would behave at home. As previously reported, this was facilitated through facilities being ‘obvious’ in terms of their location (being visible) and being signposted as recycling facilities for the property that is being let.

In some cases, guest participants were reportedly provided with bags to transport recyclables from inside to outside²¹, though in most cases - where guest participants used the external facilities - they used their own carrier bags purchased at the supermarket to keep the mixed recyclables to one side (as a matter of habit), or they recycled the materials one ‘piece’ at a time (e.g. wine bottles).

This was sufficient for most of these guest participants, though could lead to frustrations where a larger amount of recyclable waste was being generated.

As previously mentioned, most guest participants in this research recycled in their home country and had done so for many years, so where there were no internal and/or external facilities, several guest participants found this ‘odd’. For the majority of guest participants however, the lack of knowledge of the UK (and London) context simply led these guests to assume that recycling is not undertaken here, or in that property. Given the short length of stay and largely operating outside of their typical routine (including generating smaller amounts of waste), guest participants did not necessarily question this or seek out facilities - it was simply less of a priority for them, even if they were ardent recyclers at home and would have ideally liked the option of recycling.

“I haven’t been to England before so didn’t know if they recycle. In Poland we have bins that are in three parts. So, I am used to, maybe not advanced recycling, but the basics. If I had the opportunity maybe I would, but if all the bins are the same and all the waste goes to the same bin then how can I recycle?”

Guest, male, Poland, 18-25 years old

²¹ It was unclear from interviews whether these bags were recyclable, or whether these were placed in the recycling along with the other recyclable material.

“It’s a person’s home in another country. I don’t want to force my values [to recycle] on other people necessarily. I’m only there for a few nights. If it would have been friend’s [apartment] I think I would have told them [about wanting to recycle].”

Guest, male, Netherlands, 18-25 years old

In a very small number of cases (n 2), even where no internal or external facilities were available, some guest participants still recycled small amounts of recyclable waste (e.g. plastic bottles and cardboard), using communal on-street facilities within walking distance of the let or in foyer facilities. In these cases, participants made the conscious decision not to put this material in the residual waste, as they knew it could be recycled, and actively sought out a communal recycling facility. These individuals were the distinct minority with no other guest participants recycling where they did not have internal or external facilities available to them.

Host participants did report that some guests put certain dry recyclables to one side (notably glass bottles) where no internal recycling facilities were in place or obvious external facilities. These hosts (or cleaners) tended to recycle this recyclable waste where external facilities were in place, though didn’t see this as cause to put facilities in place. In fact, the only time where demand was perceived was through conversation between guests and hosts, as opposed to guest behaviour (in terms of leaving recyclables to one side).

5.5. Host contact with the local authority

Many host participants that we spoke with had little-to-no contact with the local authority except when in receipt of recycling bags (which occurs in a minority of boroughs). Where recycling facilities (and collection services) were available they had typically been in place for many years and therefore most hosts reported receiving no recent written communications about recycling. Where communications had been received, this related to collection dates and in some cases recycling services, though this was a minority of participants and recall was poor. No hosts provided recycling information from the local authority to guests.

Generally, hosts were not in contact with the local authority as waste management expectations were being met. A small number of host participants recalled having been in touch with their local authority around waste facilities and services. These included raising complaints about missed waste collections and to request replacement recycling bins.

“Camden is a nightmare for a lot of things and sadly recycling is one of those things. The council make it near impossible. They like particular recycling bags to be used which is fine, it just impossible to get a hold off, they’re delivered to the wrong place when you need replacements, they often miss the collection dates and the foxes get into it. Normal waste seems to be managed a lot better.”

Owner, private room shared with other guests, Camden

One host participant based in Greenwich reported having been in touch with the local authority twice over the course of two years to check on the availability of recycling collection services for his property which was a flat in a small apartment block. This was driven in response to guest queries around recycling and the desire to meet their expectations. In both cases he was told that the council was unable to provide collections to the property.

Below we provide some illustrative pen portraits of guests staying in London holiday lets.

Guest pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Paola and I am 32 years-old. I visited London with my partner for 3 days in September. We stayed in a private room within a shared property. We came to see all the famous moments in London as it was my partner's first time. We had our breakfast within the flat, lunch was almost always out and dinner was either out or prepared at home.

My experience of waste management at the property...

The host did not communicate about recycling within the property at all. There were no recycling facilities in the flat, only one general waste bin. However, I did notice some recycling bins at the front of the property. There were three bins; plastic, paper and organic. We'd use a paper bag to collect up the cardboard packaging from our ready meals and we would recycle our food packages into the correct bin. We didn't have any other bags so couldn't do anything else. Although the bins outside were quite full, they were still accessible.

I recycled because...

The facilities were available and accessible, although not in the flat, but just outside of it. When I stayed in my parent's house, recycling was part of the daily routine. The government also encourages it through its mass-advertisements and so, it became part of the norm, a habit, a routine. The ease of recycling is very important as I have now moved to smaller town where you have to walk to recycle, and I don't do it anymore. Also, it is unclear whether you can recycle some packaging - typically plastics which cause you not to recycle.

Guest pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Jenny and I am 40 years- old. I visited London for 2 days with my partner in October. We stayed in a private room within a shared property We went to do some sightseeing and had most of our meals in the property. Although, we ordered our food to the property and didn't prepare any of the meals.

My experience of waste management at the property...

The host pointed out the general waste bin in our room and told us later to take the waste out and dispose of it in the general waste communal bin. After saving our take-outs, we went outside and noticed there was a red bin for plastics which as the host didn't inform us about, I didn't recycle anything, I Just put all waste in the general bin. I can't be bothered to do it if the host didn't even tell me about it.

I didn't recycle because...

I don't recycle back at home. I used to in the past, but now I feel it's just too much effort. It's really because I'm lazy and can't be bothered to do it as I don't believe recycling affects the environment. To me, it's more like carbon, petrol and all the gasses that go up that affect the environment, as opposed plastic and waste management. I got a recycling leaflet from the council. I've just recently moved to Maidenhead. It [the leaflet) said what to put in each bin. There are no incentives & no penalties for recycling or not, so I just don't do it.

Guest pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Mateo and I am 23 years- old. I visited London for 5 days with my partner in August. We stayed in a private room within a shared property. We went to do some sightseeing and visit tourist attractions. We mostly had our breakfast and dinner in the property, for lunch however, we mostly had it out.

My experience of waste management at the property...

The host did not communicate about recycling within the property at all. There were no recycling facilities in the flat, only one general waste bin in the kitchen, however, I did notice some recycling facilities near the property — it was only 100m away. There were three recycling bins — plastic, glass, organic. The bins were coloured differently (plastic is usually yellow, blue for paper, dark green for organic, more clear green for glass) I mostly recycled plastic meal packaging.

I recycled because...

I didn't want to wash up dishes after our meals. I thought it was easier to recycle outside. I wanted to take the trash out daily, so, I kept all the waste in the bin and in bags that took from Tesco's, then disposed of it in the morning. I was guided by the spectrum of colours, it was relatively simple. Back home, I take the recycling out once or twice a week. There are different recycling facilities in different areas. There are no fines or penalties for not recycling, but a lot of advertising about it. It is not a huge effort but at least I can do a little bit of good.

6. Incentivising hosts by creating the demand

6.1. Barriers to providing internal facilities, and signposting

The primary reported barrier by host participants to the provision of internal recycling facilities was a lack of space within the property to accommodate a bin or receptacle. This was regardless of whether the property was a whole house, a flat or a shared letting – all hosts acknowledged that space in London properties is at a premium, and accommodating more than one bin for waste (i.e. a recycling bin alongside a general waste bin) was just something that wouldn't work. Through further discussion it appeared that this decision was largely related to aesthetics and how an additional bin would 'clutter' the space – this was particularly the case for hosts who placed a high value on simple, clean and chic-looking lettings. No hosts seemed to factor in the downsizing in the general waste bin that could result from having a recycling facility in place.

Those hosts that had put internal facilities in place chose facilities that could be accommodated in the space available without creating any notable issue in encroaching on the available floorspace.

“The space. I have a nice kitchen; I don't want too many things and I want to keep it to a high standard. In my case, I don't understand why they wouldn't recycle because the bins are outside, and you have to pass the bins when going outside.”

Owner, whole house, Southwark

“Space is an issue to provide more bins – if had space, I would have something. Great. But where would I then put it?”

Manager, whole flat, Camden

Allied to space and aesthetics was a sense that putting internal recycling facilities in place added a layer of complexity and complication for guests, which could go against the ethos and 'feel' that hosts were trying to create within their property. Hosts justified this decision by reflecting on the limited amount of recyclable waste that guests generated during their stay, and that it wasn't warranted in trading off the benefit to the environment and the cost it

would have on the aesthetics and guest experience. Reducing the perceived burden on guests was also a key reason that many hosts did not signpost external facilities or set expectations for their use.

“To sum it up in one word I would say complexity. My aim is to make the process as straightforward as possible for my tenants, so that we have a mutually agreeable and satisfying experience. And part of that is to keep everything clear and simple, and adding a layer of complexity, particularly when the quantities involved are minimal, appears to me more bother than it’s worth.”

Owner, whole flat, Southwark

Other barriers cited by smaller numbers of hosts included:

- Concerns around the potential for guest error, both in putting the incorrect materials in the recycling and in recycling being contaminated with food waste, and therefore leading to unwanted mess/smells. This is due to challenges with communicating to guests in languages other than English
- The presence of external facilities, either obvious or less obvious, meant that there was an alternative option to having internal facilities in place. This could lead to hosts thinking that “if people really want to recycle they will find a way”
- The design and aesthetic of the bins themselves. When people thought about recycling bins, they seemed to either have in mind (prohibitively) expensive dual-stream bins or the boxes the local authority provides for external use, which wouldn’t suit the look of many properties
- The cost implications of putting in place a recycling bin and, potentially, for the additional time that cleaners would spend transferring recyclable waste
- Cynicism over the environmental benefits of recycling and the amount of recyclable material that is collected which is then recycled as opposed to being put into landfill

Most host participants reflected that, while space may be an issue, they would be able to find a way to put facilities in place if it was important enough for them to do so. Similarly, signposting external facilities would not be overly problematic. Fundamentally it came down to a lack of consideration to putting facilities in place (or indeed signposting external facilities) and discounting the relevance of these facilities for guests. Hosts who did not have the internal facilities in place, or very ‘obvious’ external facilities, largely had never thought about offering recycling facilities in their letting properties.

“It is not a priority. I’m apathetic toward it. There is no particular reason. Nothing has urged me toward doing it.”

Owner, whole flat, Croydon

“There’s not really any reason [for not putting facility in place], it’s probably something I’ve overlooked as a host.”

Owner, whole house, Hammersmith & Fulham

6.2. Supporting and incentivising hosts

Through discussions with both host participants that did and did not have internal facilities in place it was clear that there were three main factors that helped to facilitate the provision of internal recycling facilities. These included:

- having space within the property (or directly outside the property) to include a recycling bin in a way that didn’t compromise the aesthetic or any rules
- where hosts believed that recycling was important and the ‘right thing to do’ for the environment
- where there was perceived demand from guests for recycling facilities AND that recycling was ‘easy’ for guests to manage. I.e. that it wouldn’t negatively influence their experience and therefore the appeal of their letting to other guests

As already discussed, space was frequently mentioned by host participants without internal facilities as the initial reason for not providing internal facilities. However, to motivate hosts to consider putting facilities in place, or to signpost external facilities, it will be necessary to raise their consciousness of recycling by either appealing to (i) their concern for the environment or (ii) their desire to maintain (or improve) financial returns made through their property. Hosts reflected on a range of options that might motivate action:

'Design options'

Improving hosts' awareness and access to recycling facilities.

For example:

- Raise awareness of attractive and affordable bins of different sizes
- Subsidising recycling/twin-stream bins to increase consideration
- Providing free recycling bags to prompt awareness and spur action
- Improving guest awareness and use of recycling facilities through nicely designed, highly visual stickers for recycling bins and/or information sheets
- Changes to the holiday lets platform listing options so that recycling facilities could be included on the letting profile (either for optional or mandatory completion), and potentially for guests to be able to search/filter using this as an option
- Changes to the holiday lets search results returns process so that properties that include recycling facilities are prioritised relative to those that do not
- Holiday lets platforms to implement a new process for rewarding hosts that provide recycling facilities. E.g. through factoring into Superhost status, through a new 'green badge' (based on reported facilities and/or guest feedback) or through host discounts on transaction fees

'inform options'

- Local authorities to raise awareness of what recycling services are provided by the council, and to ensure that all properties have access to external facilities
- Hosts to be provided with information on what can and cannot be recycled (e.g. a dummies guide), and what happens to recycling (i.e. evidence or proof-points)

'Persuade options'

Campaign to raise awareness of London Recycles amongst host and visitors, establishing a norm for recycling in London

- Campaign to increase demand for recycling amongst guests as a choice factor in lettings (e.g. led by prominent holiday let platforms such as Airbnb)
- Campaign targeted at estate management to put collection facilities in place and/or to signpost these to residents
- Local authorities to mandate recycling, with fines levied on property owners where recycling goes into the general waste

“Maybe if you had a stamp on your profile saying that you are eco-friendly also something or, it made you further up the search list or gave you some sort of advantages over other people that weren’t in the search.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Westminster

“You could have ‘green host’ as a filter. People could sell that then. It is really current now. So, I think that could encourage hosts to provide these. I’ve had guests telling me it was nice to have refills for shampoo and toilet papers, where 50% of profits go to building toilet facilities for people. They really like that and they tend to comment.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Merton

Through discussion with host participants it was apparent that the strongest incentive for changes to host behaviours (either putting facilities in place or signposting these) would come from pressure being placed upon them from guests, from a holiday lets platform, or potentially the local authority. While all hosts reported that they would be much more likely to put recycling facilities in place should a holiday lets platform incentivise this (e.g. through listing prioritisation or some formal recognition like factoring this into Superhost status), there was a high degree of scepticism around how this would work in practicality. Neither the holiday lets platform nor guests were seen as having the capacity or capability to effectively judge the relative quality of facilities provided, so it would need to be a binary option – either recycling facilities were available, or they were not. If availability of facilities were then to play into any form of reward or prioritisation it would be liable to be ‘gamed’ by hosts, though may be the prompt that some hosts need to put facilities in place.

“I suppose you’d have to up your game a little bit. Sometimes you do have to look at stuff again and think actually, could I be doing more, so it would give you that incentive to do that.”

Owner, whole house, Hammersmith & Fulham

“You put lots of effort into the other aspects. You wouldn’t want to fall short and lose stars over something like recycling.”

Owner, private room shared with other guests, Richmond

Additionally, while some hosts reported having seen an increase in environmentally aware visitors to London over recent years (particularly ‘younger’ guests), others were highly doubtful that there was any demand from guests. A much more important factor in their decision making was price. Hosts will need to be persuaded that the demand is there to really raise consciousness of recycling as an issue they should consider supporting.

“I think this is an issue that a lot of guests pay lip service to, but when push comes to shove well it really comes down to is price and quality.”

Owner, whole flat, Greenwich

“I don’t think that’s going to make much difference, most people make their choice on money and type of property. I think the percentage of people that will be persuaded by that kind of information is so small.”

Owner, private room shared with host, Haringey

Host pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Flo and I am 40 years old. Until recently I lived with and cared for my sick mother. When she passed away, I lost my main source of income so decided to let a spare room in my house. It's been financially beneficial but also good to meet people from all over the world. I'm quite clear with people on what they can and can't do in the property, I need my own space so don't allow people to use my kitchen for cooking.

Waste management at the property...

Recycling facilities are all located directly outside in the garden, accessible by the kitchen door. There are no internal facilities as no space really because so much volume of recycling is generated. I don't signpost the external facilities to guests though I will tell them where it is if they ask. The main reason for this is because I like to check through what has been left by guests as you never know what you might find. I'm happy to clean dry recyclables that are left in the kitchen waste.

Promoting recycling....

It is probably easier for whole lets rather than private rooms. You would need to have very clear instructions for guests and would probably also need to organize for a cleaner to manage it. Personally I'm not looking to do anything differently. It's easier if guests just leave it in the room and I'll organize it once they've gone.

Host pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Jonathan. When I moved in with my partner 5 years ago, I decided to rent my flat next to Tower Bridge rather than selling it. I enjoy the challenge and it is financially rewarding. The flat is kept to a high standard. It is tastefully decorated in a simple, chic and stylish manner - lots of clean lines. We keep clutter to a minimum and employ a housekeeper to manage the property and check-in/out process.

Waste management at the property...

We don't provide recycling facilities on the property. It is impractical and an unnecessary complication given the volume of waste that guests generate. They are only in the property for a small amount of time and rarely use the kitchen. We try to keep things as simple as possible - having more than one bin would go against the aesthetic look we are after. No-one has ever commented on this and there is no requirement to recycle from the council otherwise would have put facilities in place.

Promoting recycling....

I recycle at home but really, for the letting, I'd struggle to find the appropriate space to put a facility in. If it could be shown to lead to an uplift in rentals then might consider - even a 5% difference would make it worthwhile. Realistically I'd only put facilities in place if I could smell it in the air that the mood of guests was changing and there was the demand for it.

Host pen portrait

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Jeff and I rent two rooms in my apartment out via Airbnb. I'm a software developer and my partner used to work in the hotel business, so we think we know what we're doing. We're very customer-centric, so have put quite a lot of thought into the communications and check-in process. For example, we have a nice first-person video that takes people from Greenwich station right into the property.

Waste management at the property...

Unfortunately, we don't have the option to recycle in the property. The council just don't distinguish between recycling and general waste. I've been in touch with them twice now, over the last 18 months, and both times we get the same answer. It is just not available for our particular apartment block. I'm going to be honest, it's lovely not having to recycle. It's much simpler than the alternative but guests do care. We had some German guests recently who were staggered we don't offer it so we just have to explain to people that we would like to offer it but can't.

Promoting recycling....

Everything in London is compact because space is at a premium. I'd focus on making dual bins small enough and affordable enough that people can accommodate them. The other thing is to provide people with really nicely designed stickers to put on the bins, clearly indicating what can and can't be recycled. I don't think hosts will be motivated by putting details of their facilities on Airbnb. I just can't see many guests paying attention to that. It may get lip service but really it comes down to price.

7. ‘We recycle. It would be great if you did too.’

7.1. London recycles?

There were a wide range of views from guest participants as to whether London was a city that was seen as supportive of recycling. Guest participants that had visited more frequently tended to be more positive about the recycling infrastructure seen on the streets of the city, as were those visiting from cities (such as Rome) in which street rubbish was more visible.

Overall, guest participants felt the streets were clean and largely free of rubbish.

“Everywhere you go, tourist attractions, malls, streets, you find recycling facilities. When you go to restaurants, they give you paper straws instead of plastic, wooden utensils instead of plastic. London specifically is more of a pioneer than other cities in the UK in terms of recycling.”

Guest, female, UK, 26-35 years old

Other guest participants were less positive, largely because they couldn't recall seeing many (if any) recycling bins – just the residual waste bins – and recounted examples of very specific experiences that shaped their views (e.g. lack of facilities at city festival sites, or at certain restaurants). It is likely that views were influenced by where participants stayed and visited, and their need/use of public waste management facilities. One guest participant remarked that urban streets can be very busy spaces making it difficult to identify facilities if they didn't stand out. Several others highlighted that there was a lack of supporting messaging and advertising presenting London as a city which recycles, in contrast visitors to places like Denmark and Copenhagen reported having seen public statements of support for recycling, often through adverts and billboards in very public places (including the airport arrivals).

7.2. ‘We recycle in this holiday let’

Where facilities were made available to recycle then virtually all guest participants stated that they would be used, implying that recycling could be increased by ensuring internal facilities are provided and/or that external facilities are obvious or signposted, so there is clarity that these facilities are for guest use. Feedback from hosts suggests that this may be overly optimistic, in that not all guests make use of available facilities, but it is clear that not having or signposting facilities presents a large barrier to recycling behaviour.

“My advice would be to make it as easy as it can be. You don’t have to make any guidelines, just give a bin in three parts and label what it is exactly.”

Guest, male, Poland, 18-25 years old

“Bins with separate compartments. If I see that, it will already raise a question with me - oh I need to separate.”

Guest, female, Netherlands, 36-45 years old

“Most people are too lazy. If you go to an Airbnb and there’s nowhere to recycle, you’re not going to find your own bag where you can put your recycled stuff in and afterwards find out where it has to go to the recycle facility.”

Guest, male, Netherlands, 18-25 years old

The differences in recycling facilities and norms between countries and regions, and potential language barriers, mean that there is room for confusion around what can and can’t be recycled. Guest participants expected that it should be made obvious how recycling facilities are intended to be used through signage near the facility, and pictures, symbols, icons or text should be prominent on the facility itself, perhaps as stickers. They would need to look attractive as many facilities are out in the open rather than hidden away.

While instruction or information does not always appear to be needed to prompt recycling, guest participants did recommend that hosts communicate their expectations around waste management and recycling at the point at which participants are resident in the property.

Where hosts welcome participants face-to-face, facilities can be signposted and the process for managing waste explained (including whether to transfer waste to an external facility). Where hosts are not present, guest participants suggested that instructions are either provided in a welcome pack, or on signage located on or near the waste facilities. This should again detail how waste should be managed to set expectations.

“I’m a rule follower, so just tell me what to do and I will do it. If I had bins inside that said plastic, glass, paper, rubbish then I would definitely put my products in the right place.”

Guest, female, Spain, 36-45 years old

Host participants were less receptive to the idea of putting up information sheets in their property, largely for aesthetic reasons, though welcomed the idea of being able to access information on recycling from the local authority (both online and through laminated leaflets sent to property owners). It should be noted that no guest participants reported seeing or being given council-branded material on recycling by hosts. Some host participants reported that they would make information available to guests should they receive this in a suitable format, while others were adamant that recycling is straightforward, and that more information and more leaflets would just serve to overcomplicate matters.

“Recycling should be common sense – especially as it is all mixed in this council area. We don’t need more information from local authorities. It would be like using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut.”

Owner, whole flat, Southwark

7.3. Incentivising recycling

Suggestions from guest participants for helping encourage more visitors to London to recycle in holiday lets, tended to focus on ways in which hosts could be encouraged to provide facilities. The following suggestions were all tested with host participants, as reported in the preceding section.

Several guest participants felt that some form of ranking/badge system for ‘eco- friendly’ or ‘green’ properties could be established by the holiday lets platforms, so participants would be made aware of which properties have a strong recycling policy or facilities, which may inform their choices. Similarly, there could be an option for hosts to provide more detail on their recycling facilities/ethos as part of their letting description. One participant even suggested that some form of external endorsement (i.e. there could be a partnership between the booking platform and an organisation such as Resource London²²) may be a valuable differentiator for guests.

“Maybe on Airbnb they [hosts] could win badges for recycling.”

Guest, female, Spain, 36-45 years old

“Say it’s a Resource London Approved Letting. I would be more likely to book that than one that doesn’t have that.”

Guest, female, UK, 36-45 years old

²² One participant specifically suggested Resource London be named once they understood their remit.

Guests could provide feedback/ratings on the quality of the 'green' or recycling facilities which might encourage hosts to provide these, and likewise hosts could feedback on whether guests followed the rules/policies of the property. There was acknowledgement that reviews were an important part of the selection process.

A smaller minority of guest participants suggested some form of incentive scheme in which they might receive rewards (such as discounts on their next booking, or free coffee) in return for having recycled waste.

8. Implications and opportunities

Qualitative research with 40 guests from across 11 different countries identified that recycling is an established habit for many visitors to London (from the UK and abroad) and that the act of recycling itself is not – for most – considered burdensome or requiring any justification in rationalising it as an action. If the facilities are available then the majority of guest participants reported they will recycle their waste, regardless of existing attitudes toward recycling. This relates to a powerful motivator that may be relatively unique to short-term holiday lets: participants are staying in someone else’s home. This is in effect a personal contract between the participant and host and comes with it an expectation from both parties that the letting is treated with respect and that rules (implicit and explicit) are followed. It is possible that this relates to potential repercussions (e.g. in the form of negative feedback) but more likely it is because guest participants can relate to the situation of staying in someone else’s home and what this entails in terms of expected behaviours.

“It is important and respectful to follow policies. It is not your place.”

Guest, male, Belgium, 18-25 years old

“I always think they [house rules] are very important because the nature of an Airbnb is someone’s home, you are essentially in someone’s home, so I always treat it with the utmost respect, it’s not a hotel.”

Guest, female, UK, 25-36 years old

Further qualitative research with 44 hosts of London holiday lettings helped to contextualise the guest findings.

Where hosts provided internal facilities, most guests would use these, though not everyone, and it was reported that a significant proportion made mistakes (either recycling items that could not be recycled, or not removing organic waste from the dry recyclables). In some cases, this was rectified by hosts (or cleaners), though in other cases it meant recycling was either left contaminated or put into the general waste. It appears that guests do generally want to follow rules and meet expectations but are not always clear on how to recycle due to either a lack of signposting and expectation setting, and/ or cultural differences in what can and cannot be recycled.

For guests to be able to recycle, the first step is to ensure that hosts are providing the facilities for them to do so, either internally or externally²³, and then to ensure hosts are signposting these and clarifying expectations for their use. As we've seen, this requires raising hosts' awareness of recycling in their letting and for hosts to be motivated to act on making facilities available and to signposting these facilities. Finally, the facilities themselves need to have clear labelling with universal symbols to indicate what can and cannot be recycled.

The key findings of this research have been that:

- (i) most guests will recycle where the facilities are in place and hosts set expectations, but they will not seek these facilities out where they are not obviously available, and
- (ii) most hosts will only put facilities in place when it becomes apparent that guests are demanding this and it has the potential to positively impact their business.

For guests to be able to recycle, the first step is to ensure that hosts are providing the facilities for them to do so and then to ensure hosts are signposting these and clarifying expectations for their use. However, to create supply there needs to be demand (or perceived demand).

In analysing the interviews with participants, we made use of the COM-B model²⁴ as a framework for understanding the behaviour of participants. This model posits that behaviour is the outcome of a combination of Capability, Opportunity and Motivation to perform a given Behaviour. It is a useful lens through which to review the findings of this study, and the implications this presents for how Resource London (and others) may seek to positively influence recycling behaviours.

Our analysis of the 84 interviews undertaken suggests the following implications for improving recycling behaviour and outcomes:

1. Hosts need to be prompted to offer recycling facilities	This could be through a holiday lets platform (such as Airbnb, Booking.com or Trip Advisor) initiative, such as a new profile section for detailing recycling/green features, a guide for new hosts or a campaign aimed specifically at guests or hosts.
2. Hosts need to have a reason to care or believe	This could be that guests care that properties have recycling facilities (so hosts will get more bookings, or lose bookings without putting facilities in place), that recycling is important for the environment and that doing the right thing by the environment is already part of hosts' identity (because they recycle at home), or that it is mandatory to manage waste in this way (as required by either the local authority, or a holiday lets platform).

²³ Noting that this relates to local authorities and building/estate management also enabling recycling through the provision of external recycling facilities and collection services

²⁴ See Michie et al., (2011) The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implement Sci.* 2011; 6: 42.

<p>3. Hosts need to be inspired with the art of the possible in terms of recycling facilities and signposting</p>	<p>This could include the range of ways people make recycling facilities fit with the aesthetic of their let, and innovative ways that hosts welcome and communicate with guests (e.g. filmed walk-throughs; illustrative folders etc.).</p>
<p>4. Recycling needs to be made easy for hosts</p>	<p>This includes hosts being aware of external recycling facilities (through communications, signposting and signage from local authority or property/ estate management), easy access to high quality facilities (i.e. through co- location of recycling with residual waste facilities), free recycling bags to prompt awareness and minimise expenditure, and could also include the provision of information on what can and can't be recycled (using pictures and/or simple language).</p>
<p>5. Recycling needs to be made easy for guests</p>	<p>This includes ensuring that recycling facilities are available, that guests receive instruction from hosts verbally and/or in writing on waste management (and recycling options), and that internal recycling facilities are clearly marked with universal symbols to indicate what should and should not be disposed of.</p> <p>While there is a clear role for holiday lets platforms in encouraging recycling, in the immediate term local authorities could best support hosts through making clear what services are available for their property and helping to set recycling expectations (e.g. through social proof in communications or provision of free recycling bags). This then provides the foundation on which additional initiatives can be introduced which educate, persuade or tweak the environment in which decisions are made.</p>

Table three, below, details the factors influencing Capability, Opportunity and Motivation for both guests and hosts and what this means for influencing behaviours to promote good waste management practices, including hosts offering and signposting facilities, and encouraging recycling behaviour amongst guests.

While there is a clear role for holiday lets platforms in encouraging recycling, in the immediate term local authorities could best support hosts through making clear what services are available for their property and helping to set recycling expectations (e.g. through social proof in communications or provision of free recycling bags). This then provides the foundation on which additional initiatives can be introduced which educate, persuade or tweak the environment in which decisions are made.

Table three: COM-B analysis

AREA	Hosts	Guests	Implications for behaviour change
CAPABILITY	<p>Hosts (generally) knew what recycling was (in terms of the practice and rationale) and what could be recycled at their letting property. However, not all hosts were aware of what external facilities were available, or what services the local authority provided. In some cases local authorities not providing recycling facilities (e.g. to flats) severely restricted the capability of hosts to put facilities in place. The management of waste (and recycling) typically rested with either the host (owner or manager) or with a cleaner where the host employed one. Hosts (or cleaners) had the physical capability to use external facilities, where these were available though time constraints (relating to guest turnaround and other commitments) could impact on their capacity to manage their letting. Owners can make decisions around putting internal facilities in place, though managers have more limited influence over these type of property decisions</p>	<p>Guests (generally) had the physical capability to use recycling facilities internally, though external facilities presented more of a barrier where a container was needed to transport waste. It was not the expectation that guests transferred waste externally in most lets. Guests (generally) also knew what recycling was (in terms of the practice and rationale) and what can be recycled. However, recycling practices and processes differ by country (and within countries) which creates a degree of uncertainty in terms of expectations that can present a barrier to action and lead to defaulting to residual waste. This is most readily seen in relation to plastics, particularly those from ready meals. This can also result in potential contamination of recycling, as guests could be putting the wrong things in, in the hope it will be sorted later or because they are used to different systems.</p>	<p>To increase capability for guests to recycle in London holiday lets, it will be necessary to ensure that property owners are aware and familiar of what external facilities are available for their letting properties. I.e. whether recycling collection is offered, where these facilities are located, whether dual stream or single stream, and what this means for managing recycling. This information is likely to be communicated by or accessed via the local authority. Guests would benefit from guidance on how recycling ‘works’ in London, and more specifically in the let itself to ensure they manage recycling correctly. This might include specific instructions around recycling of plastics and meal containers. This should be provided during the check-in process (verbally or in writing) and via symbols on the facilities themselves. What they do not need is to have the rationale for recycling explained. Hosts may benefit (especially at the outset of joining a holiday lets platform) from a concise guide for helping promote recycling in their letting. Where there are only external recycling facilities available, ideally hosts would make it more convenient to recycle through providing container options (such as bags) to store and transport recycling.</p>

OPPORTUNITY

Lack of space is reported as the primary barrier to internal recycling facilities, though most hosts acknowledge this could be overcome and many hosts report external facilities being easily accessible, which can justify not putting internal facilities in place. Many hosts also provide a face-to-face tour of the property at the outset, or written information/instructions so these are opportunities to signpost and set expectations for guest use of facilities. Where external facilities are less straightforward to access, this can act as a barrier to recycling (and signposting facilities).

Visual cues from external facilities and services (e.g. being sent free recycling bags) can raise awareness of recycling and create expectation for recycling. Other cues that create opportunities for hosts to consider recycling included increasing levels of environmental awareness amongst the public, with guest requests and queries often leading to changes in behaviour to keep satisfaction levels high. A section on the holiday lets platform site for detailing recycling facilities could also act as a prompt for consideration by both hosts and guests.

Recycling is already a social norm which is largely entrenched for people who live in locations where kerbside recycling is available: this includes most hosts. Where letting properties are not host-occupied, there can be a disconnection with the day-to-day lived experience, which increases over time. New hosts are likely to have greater levels of interest and engagement in the set-up of their property.

Recycling is already a social norm which is largely entrenched for people who live in locations where kerbside recycling is available.

As such the primary physical opportunity barrier is the lack of internal recycling facilities within the letting property. A second barrier here is the lack of external facilities that are identifiable as linked to the property and therefore for the use

of guests. This is especially relevant for those external facilities that are effectively used and regarded as internal facilities (e.g. doorstep recycling boxes).

Most guests will recycle if the facilities are present, therefore the host needs to ensure that internal recycling facilities are present, obvious and located in relevant places (such as the kitchen) which will help (visually) set expectations for desired recycling behaviours. Hosts can be encouraged to put these facilities in place through various means as detailed in the next row: Motivation.

Should it not be possible for hosts to put internal facilities in place, then external recycling facilities located near the property should be marked with an identifier so that guests know it is for recycling and for the property they are letting. Hosts can reinforce expectations through communications which verbally (or in writing) communicate how waste should be managed

and guide what can/can't be recycled. Crucially this needs to be delivered on arrival, or shortly following arrival, as this is when guests are most receptive. The implications of this are that the host or property manager communicates expectations (face-to-face or perhaps via text/WhatsApp as part of their welcoming guests), that these are contained within a welcome pack/folder, or that they are communicated in the kitchen area of a property (e.g. on a poster, leaflet or sticker on/near the waste facilities).

These are necessarily personalised as it relates to the style the hosts is trying to embody in their letting and profile.

Enabling hosts to detail the availability of recycling on the holiday lets platform listing for their property could prompt consideration to put facilities in place. This would be particularly timely for those

hosts creating their listing for the first time, potentially supported by guidance recommending the provision and signposting of facilities where they exist (and visual cues in the form of photos of stylish recycling solutions).

Where hosts did not live in the property being let, there is potentially less motivation to be aware or up-to-date with the facilities or services provided which are not directly relevant to the guest experience.

Hosts predominantly let their properties to maximise profit in the most efficient manner possible. A primary motivation will therefore be to maintain or increase bookings of their let. Status 'rewards' (green badges, ticks, Superhost status contributions etc.) or prioritisation

in listing returns on holiday lets platforms for offering recycling facilities would be a motivating factor for some hosts as it would be seen to help elevate their offer. Conversely, if hosts felt that not providing facilities would lose them guests or result in negative feedback, this would drive action.

A (strong) 'recommendation' from the holiday lets platforms that lettings should provide recycling facilities would also both raise awareness and create an expectancy that hosts would be likely to follow. Most hosts solely let via Airbnb and would want to follow what they saw to be 'rules' or 'best practices'. This will be particularly the case for newer hosts.

The participants in this research were already largely motivated to recycle because they do it as a default action at home, and because they recognised it as being an intrinsically good action. However, a lack of expectation setting leads to uncertainty over what to do. Given that visitors to London will likely be time restricted due to other priorities, this creates a barrier which doesn't capitalise on participants willingness to recycle, if the facilities are present.

One of the most powerful findings of this research is that guests will seemingly largely do as they are directed in the context of a holiday letting. This novel setting - another persons' home - creates an opportunity for clear expectations and rules to be set which participants will abide by.

On the flipside, outside of their normal home routine, if no facilities are provided or expectations set, then without any additional extrinsic drivers to motivate (or facilitate) their recycling, the most likely outcome is that people will not recycle.

Recycling doesn't need to be 'sold' to guests of London holiday lets; most will recycle if the facilities are there (especially if this is reinforced by communications which set expectations), though they may benefit from guidance on what can and can't be recycled. Hosts are in a powerful position to be the prime motivator for improving recycling by providing facilities and setting expectations, taking advantage of heuristics relating to cognitive ease and norming.

Recycling is something which many hosts who do not have internal facilities will have given little thought to. It isn't something that either holiday lets platforms or guests ask about. To motivate their engagement with recycling as an issue and facility they should provide (or signpost), hosts will need to feel it is important.

The key route to this is persuading hosts that this is a normative behaviour (aligned with their current behaviour at home and that of other hosts) and one which has a competitive consequence for their let (and their business). If hosts felt that either holiday lets platforms or guests themselves felt recycling was important, such that it would impact the way their let was perceived by not having facilities in place. This could be achieved through evidencing the importance of recycling amongst guests, or through holiday lets platforms helping to set expectations around good practice. If one of the prominent holiday let platforms, like Airbnb, booking.com or TripAdvisor were to be in a position to evidence this demand (e.g. through a survey of guests) this could go a long way to persuading hosts of the value of supporting recycling behaviours. While it may not have been top of mind for participant guests in booking lets, there may also be scope to increase motivation by emphasising the contribution that visitors to London can make in reducing their carbon footprint through their recycling activity.

9. Appendices

9.1. 'Guest' Topic Guide

Timings	Objective	Content and questions
0-2 minutes	Participant introduction	<p>Welcome and thank for participation.</p> <p>Newgate Research is an independent market and social research company. The client, Resource London, commissioned us to conduct research with recent visitors to London regarding their holiday let experience.</p> <p>Reassure there are no right or wrong answers. Our purpose is to understand your opinions and experiences.</p> <p>Your participation is confidential, and no participants will be identified by name in our reporting. Newgate Research is a member of the market research industry associations and operates under strict privacy laws.</p> <p>Having said this, we are recording this interview to make sure our report accurately captures your views. The recording will be treated confidentially and not be made public or provided to any third parties outside of Newgate Research.</p> <p>You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any point during this interview or subsequently.</p> <p>Interview length – 45 minutes.</p> <p>Any questions</p>
2-8 minutes	Context and pre visit	<p>Confirm timing of visit and length of stay (from screener)</p> <p>Can you start by telling me a little about the purpose of your visit to London? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business/leisure • Travelling alone or with others • Area in London stayed/based <p>Can you talk me through the process of booking your holiday let in London? Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you choose the property (or properties)? • Did criteria include specific amenities in the property? <p>What criteria were important in choosing property? Probe on environmental criteria specifically.</p> <p>What communication did you have with your host before arriving in London? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact via Airbnb website • Contact via text or phone • Information received about the property • Challenges with communications (timing, responsiveness, language)
8-15 mins	Holiday letting stay	<p>Once arrived in London, can you talk me through the process of checking into your Airbnb property? Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication did you have with your host? Probe whether with owner or an agent (if known), and whether face-to-face or remotely. • Whether any communication specifically on property facilities and amenities. <p>What written information (if any) was provided to explain the property facilities and amenities?</p>

- Again, any challenges with communications (timing, responsiveness, language)?
- Whether anything in the check-in process could have been improved to better meet needs.

How did you spend your time in London? Probe on

- Activities/how spent time (e.g. shopping)
- Eating snacks/meals out vs eating snacks/meals in
- If eating in, explore what snacks/meals consumed or prepared within the property, and what level of preparation required (get participant to walk through process for some example meals)

If cooking facilities used, probe whether the facilities for cooking and/or managing waste were:

- Suitable / met expectations
- Similar to those at home
- Specific items/facilities you think should have been provided but weren't

15-30 mins	Recycling within a holiday let	<p>Can you recall what facilities were available within the property to manage waste? Explore specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What (if any) recycling facilities were available in the property (food waste; paper/ card; glass, metal or plastics)? • Where were these recycling facilities located? Internal and/or external? <p>If it's a flat, were the outside bins communal or bins/boxes/sacks just for that flat?</p> <p>Whether the host provided any information or direction on how waste was to be managed, including when/how waste/recycling put out for collection? Was it clear/unclear what you were supposed to do with waste/how to recycle it? If unclear, what specifically was unclear? Probe if investigated themselves what to do.</p> <p>Can you recall using these facilities?</p> <p>If can recall, ask participant to walk through experiences of using facilities, including what prompted use, how used (including any/all parts of the recycling process from in-home separation to transfer and collection), how often used, satisfaction with facilities/process?</p> <p>What types of materials recycled (or not recycled) and why? For each of the materials mentioned, explore whether/how they knew what they could or could not recycle (i.e. what knowledge, information or cues were relied upon)</p> <p>If cannot recall, ask participant to recount experience of undertaking an activity that generated waste (e.g. cooking or unwrapping goods) within the property. How was the waste disposed of?</p> <p>Would they have wanted or expected to recycle? If not, why not? How does this compare with how they manage waste at home? If different, then why?</p> <p>Were there any factors that encouraged or discouraged recycling? Probe on practical and more emotional/contextual factors. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided on recycling by the host • Confidence doing the 'right thing' • Location of recycling facilities (internal or external) • Signposting of recycling facilities • Management of recycling (e.g. emptied by host) • Lack of time • Being out of the 'normal' environment and routine (e.g. not wanting/expecting to deal with recycling while on trip)
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30-38 minutes	Attitudes to recycling	<p>How do you manage waste at home? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of property living in • Recycling facilities (including how recycling collected) • Recycling behaviour (i.e. when/what recycle; explore habits and routines) • Source/s of information on recycling • Social norms <p>If video interview being conducted on mobile device, ask whether participant is willing to show recycling facilities. (Internal vs external) motivations/reasons for recycling or for not recycling. Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recycling infrastructure and waste collection (private vs communal facilities) • perceived ease of recycling • incentives for recycling (or penalties) • knowledge of what and how to recycle • attitudes toward environment • routines • peer behaviour (or social responsibility) • feelings of personal responsibility <p>How did recycling facilities at the (most recent) London property compare to previous holiday lettings?</p>
38-43 minutes	Encouraging recycling	<p>What do you think could be done to encourage participants like you to recycle in holiday let properties in London? Probe (and challenge) on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recycling facilities (visibility, accessibility and knowledge of how to use) • communications around recycling (type, format, content, messenger/channel, timing etc.) • other factors/incentives that can shape or support a need to recycle <p>Reflecting on these suggestions, which one thing would make the biggest difference to how you personally would manage waste on future visits? What is your overall impression of recycling in London? Do you get the sense it is a city which supports or encourages recycling?</p>
43-45 minutes	Attitudinal questions	<p>Now I want to ask you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (Strongly Disagree; Tend to Disagree; Neither Disagree nor Agree; Tend to Agree; Strongly Agree)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling is too much of a hassle to bother with • Everyone has a responsibility to help towards cleaning up the environment • I am prepared to make lifestyle compromises to benefit the environment • It's only worth doing environmentally-friendly things if they save you money • I feel my recycling efforts are worthwhile <p>Researcher to assign segment within pro-forma.</p>
Closing @45 minutes		<p>Thank you very much for your participation. Confirm confidentiality, anonymity and how data will be used.</p>

9.2. Host topic guide (with internal facilities)

Timings	Objective	Content and questions
0-2 minutes	Participant introduction	<p>Welcome and thank for participation.</p> <p>Newgate Research is an independent market and social research company. The client, Resource London, commissioned us to conduct research with owners and hosts of London Airbnb's and holiday lets regarding their holiday let, specifically kitchen and waste management amenities and facilities.</p> <p>Reassure there are no right or wrong answers. Our purpose is to understand your opinions.</p> <p>Your participation is confidential, and no participants will be identified by name in our reporting. Newgate Research is a member of the Market Research Society and operates under strict privacy laws.</p> <p>We would like to record this interview to make sure our report accurately captures your views. The recording will be treated confidentially and not be made public or provided to any third parties outside of Newgate Research.</p> <p>You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any point during this interview or subsequently.</p> <p>Interview length – 60 minutes.</p> <p>Any questions?</p>
2-6 minutes	Context / hosting background	<p>With reference to the screener, confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how many short term letting properties and how many London properties • whether manager/owner <p>(if more than one) which London property will be the main focus of the interview (validate location, type of property etc.)</p> <p>How long have you managed/hosted properties on short-term letting sites like Airbnb? Explore whether solely use Airbnb or other platforms.</p> <p>Can you tell me a little about how and why you decided to become a host (or manager)? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivations (e.g. economic, social etc.) • whether experience lived up to expectation • whether any prior experience of hospitality trade • whether other forms of income
6-15 minutes	Engaging guests	<p>Based on your experience, what are the main expectations that guests have of London short-term, holiday lettings? Probe on what they perceive guests as expecting/wanting in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the property in general • amenities, facilities, and supplies • communications from the host • the check-in process <p>Briefly explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical guest profile/length of stay <p>What are the main challenges for you in terms of managing your London property/ properties? Explore specifically challenges around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing the check-in and check-out process • issues with guests during the stay issues with cleanliness, i.e. guest behaviour/ meeting guest expectations of cleanliness

How are these challenges managed?

Do you meet guests at check-in, or do guests check in to the property independently? Explore rationale and the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Do you have any house rules and/or clearly set expectations of guests? With reference to rules mentioned. Listen for waste management specifically, and explore:

- How are these communicated? (e.g. face-to-face, messaging, website, folder, signage)
- Extent to which guests follow rules/expectations (including any end of stay requirements)
- Perceived effectiveness of different forms of communicating expectations and the communication materials, i.e. phone, folder, poster, etc.

15-40 mins

Facilities within the holiday let

With reference to the screener. Can you tell me about the facilities the property has for guests to cook and/or prepare food? Probe on:

- rationale for provision (or lack of provision) of different cooking facilities in property
- how guests tend to use facilities (i.e. how often are meals prepared from scratch)
- any challenges with guest use of kitchen facilities

We now want to spend some time exploring waste management facilities in or around the property.

INTERNAL WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Can you tell me what kind of waste management facilities, if any, are provided within (inside) the property? Probe on provision of:

- general waste bins/ bags (including location) ∩ food waste bins/ bags (including location) ∩ dry recycling bins/ bags (including location)
- if yes, were these already there? Or did you provide them (and why)?

Are these internal recycling facilities signposted? Probe for:

- written instructions on or near facilities
- use of signs/symbols to communicate how the facility is to be used

Generally speaking, how do guests tend to manage their waste during their stay. Probe:

- volume and type of waste generated
- use of waste facilities (where available)
- 'correct' use of waste facilities – start to explore how they determine what is correct
- have there been any challenges you face from guests managing their waste? How frequent are these?

Do you set any expectations on guests in terms of their use of internal facilities or taking their waste or recycling to any outside bins?

If yes, then:

- how are these expectations communicated to guests (i.e. face-to-face by host/ manager, through written instructions etc.)?
- do guests ever have any specific questions around how to manage their waste / recycling? If so, when and how do they ask these questions?

If no, then:

- do guests ever enquire about managing waste, and specifically recycling? If so, has that made you reconsider providing them?
- in the absence of any instructions, how do you anticipate guests determine how to manage waste generated during their stay?

- is there any reason you don't provide any guidance in terms of how guests should manage their waste?

Why do you provide recycling facilities in your London holiday let? What were your motivations for putting these in place?

- Have you had these in place from when you started letting the property?
- What were the key considerations you took into account in deciding to provide internal recycling facilities, and the type and location of these facilities? Probe on:
 - whether it's worthwhile/ necessary
 - physical space
 - cleanliness
 - transferral of waste
 - impact on look/feel of property
 - guest experience/burden
 - time/cost of managing (e.g. if host/cleaner manages recycling on behalf of guests or if guests don't recycle correctly it creates burden on managing the property)
 - consideration of the environment (i.e. importance of encouraging guests to recycle for environmental reasons)

EXTERNAL WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Can you tell me what kind of waste management facilities, if any, are available outside the property? Probe on provision for:

- general waste (including location, form/colour)
- food waste (including location, form/colour)
- dry recycling (including location, form/colour, and what can/cannot be recycled)
- Are bins collected by the council or a private contractor? Where hosts ARE aware of external facilities. Explore the following.
- Do you expect guests to transfer waste (both general waste (and recyclables if relevant)) from the property to the external facilities?

If yes:

- how do you communicate with guests about where the external facilities are and what the different bins are for?
- how are external facilities signposted? Probe for:
 - written instructions on or near facilities
 - use of signs/symbols to communicate how the facility is to be used

for recyclables specifically,

- how do guests transfer dry recyclable waste (e.g. are there any specific facilities/ containers/bags etc. provided)? If plastic bags are recommended, do you advise guests on their disposal?
- do guests ever use the external recycling bins even if you haven't asked them to? How do you feel about that? Does it create any challenges?

If no:

- how do you organise for internal waste to be transferred to external facilities?
- do guests ever use the external recycling bins without you asking them to? Does that create any challenges?
- if using cleaning services, then how are they asked/expected to manage recycling?
- are recycling bins checked for items contaminated with food residue? If so, what do you do if they are contaminated?
- Are there any conditions around the property (such as location of facilities, stairs etc., or identifying the appropriate bins amongst

others) that might make it difficult for guests to use external facilities?

Do you have any interaction with the local authority in relation to waste (i.e. do you have to personally be actively involved)? (Questions will need to be adapted if services are provided by a private contractor).

Detail what can / can't be recycled

If aware of external recycling facilities. Probe whether these were always in place, or whether they requested these from Council/ private contractor

If bins go missing/ get damaged, do you contact the council for replacements?

Have hosts ever received any information/contact from the council about local recycling services? What did they think of it?

Do you ever get communications from the Council that you make available to guests?

If unaware of external recycling facilities, or if facilities unavailable then explore reasons why and whether any contact with Council about recycling facilities.

Are there any factors that you think encourage or discourage guests to use the internal and/or external recycling facilities available? Probe on practical and more emotional/ contextual factors. For example:

- Information provided on recycling by the host
- Confidence doing the 'right thing'
- Location of recycling facilities (internal or external)
- Signposting of recycling facilities
- Management of recycling (e.g. whether emptied by host, cleaner or guest)
- Lack of time
- Being out of the 'normal' environment and routine (e.g. not wanting/expecting to deal with recycling while on trip)
- Where relevant, what tips would you give other hosts to engage/encourage guests to recycle?

40-45 minutes

Host recycling attitude and behaviours

For those not operating a host-occupied letting. Can you talk me through how you manage waste in your own home? Explore:

- presence and location of recycling facilities (organic and dry)
- if and how use recycling facilities (internal and external)
- knowledge of what can and can't be recycled (probe on plastics specifically), sources of information and any areas of potential confusion
- how often is recycling collected
- motivations/rationale for recycling (or not recycling) at home (e.g. ease, convenience, knowledge)

For those operating a host-occupied letting. Can you talk me through how you manage your own waste? Reconfirm presence and location of recycling facilities (organic and dry) and then explore:

- if and how they use recycling facilities (internal and external)
- knowledge of what can and can't be recycled (probe on plastics specifically), sources of information and any areas of potential confusion
- how often is recycling collected
- motivations/rationale for recycling (or not recycling) at home (e.g. ease, convenience, knowledge)
- how do you get guests to fit in with your own routines for rubbish and recycling? What works well? What doesn't work well? What are tips you would give other hosts?

45-60 minutes Encouraging recycling

The client for this research (Resource London) is interested in understanding what might encourage hosts to provide recycling facilities, to signpost recycling facilities and to encourage their use.

What do you personally consider to be the main barriers toward the provision of internal recycling facilities within holiday lettings? For example, these may be a lack of information/understanding, structural challenges of accommodating recycling bins, concerns around cleanliness and waste management etc.

Thinking about other London hosts, can you think of other potential barriers that may exist toward the provision of internal recycling facilities within holiday lettings?

How could these barriers be overcome? Education, signage, planning for it. Is there anything that you think would encourage other hosts to put internal facilities in place? Probe and challenge on what the incentive would need to be for them to provide internal facilities referring to referenced barriers as appropriate (e.g. financial benefits, marketing advantage etc.).

If you advertise you're clean/ green stamp, you do X, Y and Z. Emotional blackmail, by doing this, you've saved 1,000 trees, it makes them.

Is there anything that you think could be done to encourage hosts to signpost facilities and to communicate expectations around their use?

If you made it a standard that they had to, it gets down to the company: how much they care about putting hurdles in front of people, if they're going to risk not getting clients by saying: you have to do this.

In discussions with guests, a number of ideas were generated that we'd be interested in getting your feedback on in relation to how practicable and attractive these might be in incentivising hosts to more actively support recycling within their London holiday lets.

For each idea, explore

- appeal/interest
- thoughts on how it might work, including messengers/channels for engaging hosts
- likely influence on actions in support of recycling within their property/ies,
- whether they would be motivated by any of these ideas

1. Recycling information to influence guests in the property search process e.g.

- An option for hosts to include detail on their recycling facilities in a dedicated section of their profile
- A higher 'ranking' on search result returns on Airbnb for more 'eco-friendly' or 'green' properties

2. Feedback 'rewards' for 'green' or eco-friendly hosts e.g.

- Enabling guests (and hosts) to provide feedback on the quality of the 'green' or recycling facilities available in properties (and how well guests followed property rules)
- An accreditation or badge on listing profile that differentiates more 'eco-friendly' or 'green' properties

3. Help/support from an external body/local council to provide the right recycling communications and facilities to guests e.g.

- A recycling information resource tailored for short-let landlords

Most boroughs aren't a fan of short term lets, information booklets, leaflets, dedicated it depends on the environment that you're in, including: communal bins, in some areas: they could have a short term lets, smaller containers, easier to manage, you might have 1100 litre bins, if you had smaller, sexier bins people might use it more.

Externally provided communications materials – e.g. a portfolio of free downloadable materials they could tailor for their property

How prepared would you be to adopt other measures such as displaying recycling information from the local council website in your property(ies)?
Reflecting on everything that we've discussed, do you have any further ideas for ways in which hosts may be encouraged to:

- put in place internal recycling facilities (bins and bags)?
- communicating with guests about recycling (both to encourage and inform)? At booking, check in, signage.
- where guests are responsible for using external recycling, to signpost external recycling facilities?

Closing @60
minutes

Thank you very much for your participation.
Confirm confidentiality, anonymity and how data will be used.

9.3. Host topic guide (without internal facilities)

Timings	Objective	Content and questions
0-2 minutes	Participant introduction	<p>Welcome and thank for participation.</p> <p>Newgate Research is an independent market and social research company. The client, Resource London, commissioned us to conduct research with owners and hosts of London Airbnb's and holiday lets regarding their holiday let, specifically kitchen and waste management amenities and facilities.</p> <p>Reassure there are no right or wrong answers. Our purpose is to understand your opinions.</p> <p>Your participation is confidential and no participants will be identified by name in our reporting. Newgate Research is a member of the Market Research Society and operates under strict privacy laws.</p> <p>We would like to record this interview to make sure our report accurately captures your views. The recording will be treated confidentially and not be made public or provided to any third parties outside of Newgate Research.</p> <p>You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any point during this interview or subsequently.</p> <p>Interview length – 60 minutes.</p> <p>Any questions?</p>
2-6 minutes	Context / hosting background	<p>With reference to the screener, confirm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how many short term letting properties and how many London properties • whether manager/owner • (if more than one) which London property will be the main focus of the interview (validate location, type of property etc.) <p>How long have you managed/hosted properties on short term letting sites like Airbnb? Explore whether solely use Airbnb or other platforms.</p> <p>Can you tell me a little about how and why you decided to become a host (or manager)? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivations (e.g. economic, social etc.) • whether experience lived up to expectations • whether any prior experience of hospitality trade • whether other forms of income
6-15 minutes	Engaging guests	<p>Based on your experience, what are the main expectations that guests have of London short-term, holiday lettings? Probe on what they perceive guests as expecting/wanting in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the property in general • amenities, facilities and supplies • communications from the host • the check-in process <p>Briefly explore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical guest profile/length of stay <p>What are the main challenges for you in terms of managing your London property/ properties? Explore specifically challenges around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing the check-in and check-out process, and • issues with guests during the stay

- issues with cleanliness, i.e. guest behaviour/ meeting guest expectations of cleanliness

How are these challenges managed?

Do you meet guests at check-in, or do guests check in to the property independently? Explore rationale and the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Do you have any house rules and/or clearly set expectations of guests? With reference to rules mentioned. Listen for waste management specifically, and explore:

- How are these communicated? (e.g. face-to-face, messaging, website, folder, signage)
- Extent to which guests follow rules/expectations (including any end of stay requirements)
- Perceived effectiveness of different forms of communicating expectations and communication materials, i.e. phone, folder, poster, etc.

15-40 mins	Facilities within the holiday let	<p>With reference to the screener. Can you tell me about the facilities the property has for guests to cook and/or prepare food? Probe on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale for provision (or lack of provision) of different cooking facilities in property • how guests tend to use facilities (i.e. how often are meals prepared from scratch) • any challenges with guest use of kitchen facilities <p>We now want to spend some time exploring waste management facilities in or around the property. Note that participants have been recruited not to have internal facilities</p> <p>INTERNAL WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES</p> <p>Can you tell me what kind of waste management facilities, if any, are provided within (inside) the property? Probe on provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general waste bins (including location) • food waste bins (including location) • dry recycling bins (note they should have none) <p>Generally speaking, how do guests tend to manage their waste during their stay. Probe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volume and type of waste generated • use of waste facilities (where available) • 'correct' use of waste facilities – start to explore how they determine what is correct • have there been any challenges you face from guests managing their waste? How frequent are these? <p>Do you set any expectations on guests in terms of their use of internal facilities or taking their waste or recycling to any outside bins?</p> <p>If yes, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how are these expectations communicated to guests (i.e. face-to-face by host/ manager, through written instructions etc.)? • do guests ever have any specific questions around how to manage their waste / recycling? If so, when and how do they ask these questions? <p>If no, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do guests ever enquire about managing waste, and specifically recycling? If so, has that made you reconsider providing them? • in the absence of any instructions, how do you anticipate guests determine how to manage waste generated during their stay? • is there any reason you don't provide any guidance in terms of how guests should manage their waste?
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Did you ever consider making internal recycling facilities available within the property? Why/why not?

If previously provided facilities but no longer do, why/ why not?

What were the key considerations you took into account in deciding not to provide internal recycling facilities? Probe on:

- availability of external facilities
- whether it's worthwhile/ necessary
- physical space
- cleanliness
- transferral of waste
- impact on look/feel of property
- guest experience/burden
- time/cost of managing (e.g. if host/cleaner manages recycling on behalf of guests or if guests don't recycle correctly it creates burden on managing property)
- lack of interest/concern for the environment

EXTERNAL WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Can you tell me what kind of waste management facilities, if any, are available outside the property? Probe on provision for:

- general waste (including location, form/colour)
- food waste (including location, form/colour)
- dry recycling (including location, form/colour, and what can/cannot be recycled)
- Are bins collected by the council or a private contractor?

Where hosts ARE aware of external facilities. Explore the following.

- Do you expect guests to transfer waste (both general waste (and recyclables if relevant)) from the property to the external facilities?

If yes:

- How do you communicate with guests about where the external facilities are and what the different bins are for?
- how are external facilities signposted? Probe for:
- written instructions on or near facilities
- use of signs/symbols to communicate how the facility is to be used

for recyclables specifically,

- how do guests transfer dry recyclable waste (e.g. are there any specific facilities/ containers/bags etc. provided)? If plastic bags are recommended, do you advise guests on their disposal?
- do guests ever use the external recycling bins even if you haven't asked them to? How do you feel about that? Does it create any challenges?

If no:

- how do you organise for internal waste to be transferred to external facilities?
- do guests ever use the external recycling bins without you asking them to? Does that create any challenges?
- if using cleaning services, then how are they asked/expected to manage recycling?
- are recycling bins checked for items contaminated with food residue? If so, what do you do if they are contaminated?

Are there any conditions around the property (such as location of facilities, stairs etc., or identifying the appropriate bins amongst others) that might make it difficult for guests to use external facilities?

		<p>Where aware of external facilities explore whether there are any factors they think encourage or discourage guests to use these? Probe on practical and more emotional/ contextual factors. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information provided on recycling by the host • Confidence doing the 'right thing' • Location of recycling facilities (internal or external) • Signposting of recycling facilities • Management of recycling (e.g. whether emptied by host, cleaner or guest) • Lack of time • Being out of the 'normal' environment and routine (e.g. not wanting/expecting to deal with recycling while on trip) <p>What are tips you would give other hosts to engage guests in recycling?</p> <p>Do you have any interaction with the local authority in relation to waste (i.e. do you have to personally be actively involved)? (Questions may have to be adapted if through private contractor)</p> <p>If aware of external recycling facilities. Probe whether these were always in place, or whether they requested these from Council (or private contractor)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If bins go missing/ get damaged, do you contact the council for replacements? • Have hosts ever received any information/contact from the council about local recycling services? What did they think of it? • Do you ever get communications from the Council that you make available to guests? <p>If unaware of external recycling facilities, or if facilities unavailable then explore reasons why and whether any contact with Council about recycling facilities.</p>
40-45 minutes	Host recycling attitude and behaviours	<p>For those not operating a host-occupied letting. Can you talk me through how you manage waste in your own home? Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presence and location of recycling facilities (organic and dry) • if and how use recycling facilities (internal and external) • knowledge of what can and can't be recycled (probe on plastics specifically), sources of information and any areas of potential confusion • how often is recycling collected • motivations/rationale for recycling (or not recycling) at home (e.g. ease, convenience, knowledge) • motivations/ rationale for recycling (or not recycling) in the lettings. <p>For those operating a host-occupied letting. Can you talk me through how you manage your own waste? Reconfirm presence and location of recycling facilities (organic and dry) and then explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if and how they use recycling facilities (internal and external) • knowledge of what can and can't be recycled (probe on plastics specifically), sources of information and any areas of potential confusion • how often is recycling collected • motivations/rationale for recycling (or not recycling) at home (e.g. ease, convenience, knowledge) • If guest management of waste is different to host management of waste, why so?

45-60 minutes Encouraging recycling

The client for this research (Resource London) is interested in understanding what might encourage hosts to provide recycling facilities, to signpost recycling facilities and to encourage their use.

What do you personally consider to be the main barriers toward the provision of internal recycling facilities within holiday lettings? For example, these may be a lack of information/understanding, structural challenges of accommodating recycling bins, concerns around cleanliness and waste management etc.

Thinking about other London hosts, can you think of other potential barriers that may exist toward the provision of internal recycling facilities within holiday lettings?

How could these barriers be overcome?

Is there anything that would encourage you to put internal facilities in place? Probe and challenge on what the incentive would need to be for them to provide internal facilities referring to referenced barriers as appropriate (e.g. financial benefits, marketing advantage etc.).

Is there anything that you think could be done to encourage hosts to signpost facilities and to communicate expectations around their use?

In discussions with guests, a number of ideas were generated that we'd be interested in getting your feedback on in relation to how practicable and attractive these might be in incentivising hosts to more actively support recycling within their London holiday lets.

For each idea, explore

- appeal/interest,
- thoughts on how it might work, including messengers/channels for engaging hosts
- likely influence on actions in support of recycling within their property/ies,
- whether they would be motivated by any of these ideas

1. Recycling information to influence guests in the property search process e.g.

- An option for hosts to include detail on their recycling facilities in a dedicated section of their profile
- A higher 'ranking' on search result returns on Airbnb for more 'eco-friendly' or 'green' properties

2. Feedback 'rewards' for 'green' or eco-friendly hosts e.g.

- Enabling guests (and hosts) to provide feedback on the quality of the 'green' or recycling facilities available in properties (and how well guests followed property rules)
- An accreditation or badge on listing profile that differentiates more 'eco-friendly' or 'green' properties

3. Help/support from an external body/local council to provide the right recycling communications and facilities to guests e.g.

- A recycling information resource tailored for short-let landlords
- Externally provided communications materials – e.g. a portfolio of free downloadable materials they could tailor for their property

How prepared would you be to adopt other measures such as displaying recycling information from the local council website in your property(ies)?

Reflecting on everything that we've discussed, do you have any further ideas for ways in which hosts may be encouraged to:

- put in place internal recycling facilities (bins and bags)?
- communicating with guests about recycling (both to encourage and inform)?
- where guests are responsible for using external recycling, to signpost external recycling facilities?

Probe any differences between live in hosts versus those letting a whole property

Closing @60
minutes

Thank you very much for your participation.
Confirm confidentiality, anonymity and how data will be used.

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ReLondon is the operating name of the London Waste and Recycling Board.