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1. Introduction

In April 2017, the London Borough of Sutton’s waste collection services changed. In the lead up to the introduction of these changes, residents were informed about what these changes mean for them and why these changes were implemented. Once changes came into force, alongside new bins/containers, residents received communications from the council outlining information relating to specific areas of the service.

The London Borough of Sutton commissioned Westco, an independent market research agency, to conduct 288 quantitative, face to face, computer aided personal interviews (CAPI) with residents in the borough. The interviews took place between the 1st and 6th August and provides a representative evaluation of resident views towards the communications and implementation of the waste collection service.

Following this survey, Sutton Council commissioned Westco to conduct a focus group with residents to qualitatively explore the following objectives:

- To provide further detail and understanding to the quantitative survey findings collected
- To explore respondent experiences, awareness, understanding and expectations in regards to the waste and recycling service changes particularly;
  - The communications relating to the service change
  - The implementation of the service change
  - The response to problems with the service change
- To provide qualitative evidence to inform the scrutiny period
- To qualitatively explore recommendations outlined in the quantitative survey report

1.1 Methodology

One qualitative focus group took place at Sutton Council’s offices between 18:30hrs and 20:00hrs on the 7th September 2017 and was facilitated by a member of Westco. Ten participants were recruited for the focus group, of which five were in attendance. The focus group was recorded on a Dictaphone and four representatives of the council observed the session. Observers were introduced towards the end of the group, where a Q&A session was conducted with participants. Observers were not introduced beforehand to ensure the discussion was not inadvertently influenced.

Strengths of the approach

Employing a qualitative approach to the research to explore the waste and recycling service allowed researchers to gather rich insights into participants’ understanding and interpretation of the communications they received and residents experiences of the service. The focus group setting provided a discursive forum where the service was debated and evaluated. The key strength of a qualitative approach is that it enables researchers to gather spontaneous attitudes and insights, as well as highly nuanced feedback. Whilst qualitative discussions follow a clear structure, they emphasise the role of the participant in leading and driving the conversation through allowing them to answer in their own words and leading to responses that are full of rich insights. Participants are not limited in the way they answer the questions by being required to choose from multiple-choice answers as they would in a quantitative study. A qualitative research approach emphasises self-expression and insight over numerical outcomes. Whilst we included people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a variety of demographic characteristics, the qualitative nature of this research means the overall sample size is not statistically representative. The findings in this report focus on participants’ understanding and experience of the waste and recycling service.

Recruitment
As part of the quantitative face to face survey commissioned by Sutton Council, residents were asked if they would be willing to take part in a follow up focus group. Contact details were taken from those who were interested, and in compliance with data protection and the MRS code of conduct¹, permission was sought from participants to pass their details on to the council. Through the survey, Westco identified 40 residents interested in taking part in follow up research.

In order to identify suitable candidates, Westco developed a screening questionnaire for sign off by Sutton Council. The questionnaire ensured that a mixture of residents with different demographic characteristics, recycling behaviours and attitudes towards waste and recycling were invited to participate. The screening questionnaire also ensured that those who were more likely to have a greater understanding of the service change, and therefore potentially influence the dynamic of the group were ‘screened out’. For instance, this included those who work for Sutton Council, Veolia or as political campaigners. Finally, the screening questionnaire was also designed to identify participants who were communicative and articulate, ensuring that everyone attending the focus group would provide lively debate and discussion.

The screening questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

Those who expressed an interest in taking part in further research were contacted by an officer of Sutton Council who confirmed whether the participants were still interested in taking part and to ask them the screening questionnaire. Eight participants were successfully recruited to take part in the focus group through this method.

To recruit 10 participants to the focus group, a further two participants were recruited through ‘My Sutton’, the councils online community engagement tool. Westco designed an invitation, for sign off by the council, which was posted on the site to members and those who were interested in taking part were asked to provide their contact details. Officers from Sutton Council contacted those who expressed an interest in taking part and asked them a further screening questionnaire. This was produced by Westco for sign off by Sutton Council. This screening questionnaire included core questions that were asked in the quantitative survey and ensured there was a parity of information between those who had taken part in the survey and those who had not. Those who passed the screening questionnaire were then invited to take part.

The screening extended questionnaire can be seen in Appendix 2.

Incentives

All viable participants were offered a £40 high street voucher for attending the focus group. Offering incentives is considered standard practice when conducting qualitative research. Incentives were given in this project in accordance with MRS guidelines². The use of incentives improves attendance, as those that are motivated to attend are not only those with strong opinions that they wish to share. There were no other conditions participants were required to meet in order to receive the voucher, other than to attend the focus group.

Discussion guide

To facilitate the focus group, Westco produced a discussion guide for sign off by Sutton Council. The discussion guide contained three distinct sections; ‘Communications’ which discussed the communications and information provided by the council in the run-up, during and after the service change; ‘Implementation’ which focused on residents experience of the implementation, experience of the service change itself, resident contact with the council during this period and the perceived responsiveness of the council; and ‘Recycling Behaviours’ which explores reported recycling behaviour and the potential impact the service change has had on this behaviour.

The discussion guide can be seen in Appendix 3.

¹ https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/mrs%20code%20of%20conduct%202014.pdf
1.2 Sample

The sample was designed to focus on Sutton residents, and the following criteria were taken into account to ensure a good spread and mix of participants;

- Demographics
- Property type / the waste and recycling service they receive
- Levels of how informed they felt about the service change
- Levels of satisfaction with the collection service
- Significant issues experienced following the service change
- Recycling behaviours

An anonymised breakdown of the actual attending sample can be found below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Property type/ service received</th>
<th>Informed levels</th>
<th>Satisfaction levels</th>
<th>Significant issues experienced</th>
<th>Recycling behaviours</th>
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<tr>
<td>25-64 years</td>
<td>All received kerbside collection</td>
<td>Mix of informed levels</td>
<td>Mix of satisfaction levels in April and July</td>
<td>Mix of significant issues experienced in April and July</td>
<td>Mix of reported recycling behaviours since the service change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix male/female</td>
<td></td>
<td>All recall one/both of the leaflets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mix of ward they live in</td>
<td></td>
<td>All found leaflets useful</td>
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1.3 Analysis

The nature of qualitative research reflects opinions and is not designed to be statistically representative of the general public, rather an opportunity to discuss issues face-to-face and probe deeply into the views held. Therefore conclusions and recommendations from this group cannot be applied to the general population.

The focus group was recorded on a Dictaphone and Westco later used these recordings to make a series of notes and quotes which reflect the content of the discussion. The facilitator of the focus group verified that content of these notes matched their understanding of the discussions. To analyse the data from the focus group, qualitative thematic analysis was employed, which highlights themes, opinions and experiences that participants share or consider to be particularly important.

1.4 Materials shown in the interview

Leaflets were sent to all households to notify them of the changes to the waste and recycling service. One of these leaflets was sent through the post a few weeks before the service change and the other was delivered with the new containers/bins. During the focus group, participants were shown two example leaflets; respondents were shown examples dependent on their property type/the service they receive.

The table below demonstrates the materials shown in the focus group. Please note that complete leaflets were shown, and the table below provides an overview of the front cover/first few pages of each.
1.5 Interpreting the Findings

The findings in this report are the perceptions of Westco.

The author of this report has sought to ensure that it is an accurate reflection of the research that has taken place. It is therefore important that the findings continue to be accurately reflected in any future internal or external publication. If you wish to reference the findings from this report please contact the author to ensure that your interpretation is correct.

Caroline Roper, Account Director, Westco, 5 The Strand, London, WC2N 5HR.
croper@westminster.gov.uk
020 7641 2940

Project Number: 1061E
September 2017
2. Executive Summary

This report provides the qualitative findings from the London Borough of Sutton’s Waste and Recycling Service focus group with 5 participants. This executive summary details the key headline findings from this survey, with the full breakdown of results detailed later in the report.

Communications

Informed levels

Overall, participants felt well informed about the waste and recycling service change. The majority of participants had heard about the changes in advance via multiple sources including; direct mail leaflets, local newspapers, social media, local libraries, road show events, visit from the council at their place of work and neighbourhood committee meetings. Overall, participants felt the communications regarding the service change were timely and frequent enough to allow for preparation.

Usefulness of communications

Whilst participants received/heard information about the changes from multiple sources, they all felt the two leaflets sent through the post and provided alongside the containers/bins were the most important and useful materials. Throughout the discussion, participants not only demonstrated high levels of awareness of the leaflets but high levels of engagement with the materials by spontaneously recalling specific information and sections in the leaflets. For example, the collection calendars provided were felt to be one of the most useful aspects of the leaflet by most as it clearly demonstrated which bins/containers were to be collected on which days/weeks.

Key message for service change

When asked about the key reasons for the service change, some participants felt that the most important reason was to increase recycling rates in the borough, particularly as this would match their understanding of recycling services that are provided in other local boroughs. However, a small number of participants also felt that the council implemented the service change to save money. Their belief was that the council has to spend considerable sums of money to send waste to landfill sites, and in light of austerity measures, the council was looking for ways to decrease expenditure.

Suggestions for further information

During the group, there were four suggestions regarding further information on; clear information on when the containers/bins would be delivered, assisted collection, recyclable materials and further messaging.

Clear information on when the containers/bins would be delivered: A small number of participants felt that the leaflets were not clear in providing this information. However, it is worthwhile to note that these particular participants experienced issues in receiving their containers/bins and it could be argued that this issue could have caused confusion/lack of understanding of the information provided in the leaflets.

Assisted collection: One area several participants raised was the accessibility of the waste and recycling service for older/disabled residents and some cited concern that these particular groups may need further information or support regarding assisted collection or providing further reassurances. All of the participants felt that information regarding assisted collections could be accessible, prominent and contain clear signposting.

Recyclable materials: Some participants cited confusion/lack of understanding as to why certain materials could not be recycled as cited in the leaflets, particularly as they believed these materials could be recycled previously. There
was a desire amongst participants for further information from the council to increase levels of understanding in this particular area.

Further messaging: A small number of participants suggested that council messaging should suggest to residents to retain the leaflets and refer back to for information, and to provide further messaging and information regarding the impact of the new service. For example, how much electricity has been generated from the food waste collected in the borough.

**Implementation**

**Satisfaction and experience in April**

Across the group, most participants were dissatisfied with the collection service they received in April. This was largely due to the fact that all participants had experienced a significant issue with the service in the first few weeks of implementation. For the majority, the main issue experienced was missed collections. Other issues cited were; not receiving bins/containers when expected, problems regarding hygiene/pests with the food waste bins and difficulty in contacting the council (discussed further below.)

**Expectation of the service**

Across the group, participants provided mixed views regarding their expectations of the service implementation. For some, they did expect the service to experience some issues or “teething problems”, particularly as they recognised that many changes were made to the service at the same time. However for other participants, they did not expect to experience any significant issues or “teething problems”. For these participants, they believed that the council and the waste collection provider should have used evidence from other boroughs to inform the service change.

**Recent satisfaction and experience**

For most participants, they were largely satisfied with the collection service they have received more recently (July/August) and increased satisfaction was usually due to not experiencing a significant issue.

**Further areas of satisfaction and experience**

The main area for concern, which was raised by all participants, was the size of the green crate/bin for plastics/tin/glass recycling. This was felt to not be large enough for most households, particularly those with families. Overall, participants were frustrated with this issue, and the perceived lack of information on rectifying this tended to cause levels of dissatisfaction. Participants demonstrated lower levels of awareness/knowledge particularly in regards to the following:

- How to request for an additional crate/bin
- The size your household needs to be in order to be eligible for an additional crate/bin
- Why households were only given one crate/bin
- That additional crates/bins/containers could be used for plastic/tin/glass as long as it is labelled correctly

The findings suggest that if this information was provided/accessible, participants would be willing to make arrangements for further containers/bins and therefore less likely to be dissatisfied with the service.

**Contact with the council**

All participants had contacted the council during the first few weeks of the implementation of the service to report the issues they had experienced. Participants cited a variety of contact methods used including; telephone, email, the council website and Twitter.
Overall, participants were likely to cite dissatisfaction with contacting the council, particularly as the responsiveness was not in line with participants’ expectations, such as online methods not receiving an automated response from the council. Although participants were pragmatic in recognising that the council was likely to experience a higher volume of communications from residents due to the service change, participants felt that the council did not plan and prepare for higher levels of contact. In turn, these experiences and levels of dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of the council were more likely to influence levels of satisfaction with the service and views towards the council as a whole.
3. Communications

3.1 Informed levels

Across the group, all participants were aware of, and cited that they had received council communications regarding the waste service changes. A variety of sources were mentioned including:

- **Leaflets**
- **Neighbourhood committee meeting**
- **Social media**
- **Local newspaper**
- **Local library**
- **Visit from the council at place of work**
- **Roadshow event**

The most cited source that all participants spontaneously recalled seeing was the two leaflets (often referred to in the group as “booklets”), one which was sent through the post a few weeks before the service change and the other which was delivered with the new containers/bins. Participants particularly referred to the leaflet that was delivered alongside the new containers/bins, and commented on its usefulness (discussed in section 3.2.)

However, there appeared to be some confusion amongst participants regarding when and how they received the two leaflets. Some recalled receiving both leaflets through the post, whilst others recalled receiving the leaflet provided alongside the containers/bins first. It is worthwhile to note that the focus group was conducted five months after the introduction of the service change, and therefore recall may be low in regards to this. However, it is important to recognise that despite this confusion, all participants recalled receiving both leaflets, and all recall receiving these directly from the council (whether that is through the post or with the containers/bins delivered to their home.)

‘I think I got that one first (leaflet 1), and then I got the booklet later (leaflet 2) with the bins.’

Across the group, all participants cited other communication sources that had provided them with information regarding the service change, although this varied by participant. For example, a minority of participants commented that they had seen service change leaflets available at the local library, some had seen information provided in the Sutton Guardian, and some had seen information on social media (particularly Twitter and Facebook.) In regards to the latter, a small number of participants commented that the information was not always the council’s social media channels and had been seen on their personal feed.

‘I learnt about it [service change], believe it or not, through Facebook. People were putting their comments saying other boroughs had done this and be prepared.’
In addition, a minority of participants cited face-to-face communication sources. This included a neighbourhood committee meeting and a road show event, which the participant described as a stall on Sutton Central High Street and perceived to be run by the council.

‘They [the council] also had a stall out on the high street I think she was a Spanish lady [assumed council officer], who was handing out information and I stopped and had a chat with her to find out what went in the bins.’

Another participant described that a member of the council visited her place of work to provide information specifically aimed for older people.

‘We actually had one of the members of the council come and talk to the group of older people that I work with to inform them about it, so I picked up that information as well.’

Overall, participants felt that they were given enough notice and were told often enough regarding the service change. They recalled that they were first told/received information from the council 4 to 6 weeks before the service change was implemented, which was felt to be appropriate and allowed for preparation for the service change.

However, a small number of participants felt that other Sutton residents may not have read the leaflets, or that the leaflets could have been misplaced/lost, and therefore may not have realised the services were changing. This was particularly pertinent amongst participants as they felt the leaflets were the key piece of information for communicating the service change and important for all residents to read and receive.

### 3.2 Usefulness of communications

Across the group, all participants felt that the leaflets were the most important and useful source of information regarding the service change, particularly in regards to the leaflet that was provided alongside the bins/containers. Throughout the session, participants recalled specific details from this particular leaflet and its usefulness, not only demonstrating high levels of awareness but high levels of engagement with the materials. For example, some participants felt the inclusion of the collection calendar was very useful to inform them when to put out the correct bins/containers for collection, with some displaying their calendars in their kitchen as a reminder for each week.

‘The key thing is the calendar, it will tell you what days, which bins, and without it I think everyone’d be lost.’

‘The booklet is very good; I mean I have got it stuck up on the wall, otherwise I would forget what days [to put the bins out].’

A small number of participants also commented on the design of the calendars, particularly the colour coding which was felt to be particularly clear and intuitive in demonstrating which containers/bins should be put out on which weeks.

‘The coloured squares that match the bins, that’s a good help.’

For all participants, they found the leaflets to be clear and easy to understand, particularly: where to place the bins for collection, which materials go in which bin/container, how often each container/bin would be collected and the day of the week the bins/containers would be collected.

‘This booklet gets to the point, that bins for that, that bins for that, that bins for that, it starts on this date, it’s easy as pie.’

However, a small number of participants cited confusion/lack of understanding as to why certain materials could not be recycled. This is further discussed in section 3.4.
A small number of participants also felt that the leaflets were not clear in providing information of when they would receive their containers/bins. However, it is worthwhile to note that these particular participants experienced issues in receiving their containers/bins (further discussed in section 4.1). Therefore, it could be argued that this issue could have caused confusion/lack of understanding of the information provided in the leaflets.

‘I think from memory it said they’d be around from a certain date.’

### 3.3 Key messages for service change

When asked about the key reasons for the service change, participants cited a range of responses. Some felt that the most important reason for the council to implement the changes to the waste and recycling services was to increase recycling rates in the borough. For example, one participant felt that Sutton Council were now matching services provided by other local councils such as food waste collection service.

‘I was surprised when I moved to this borough that the recycling was the way it was three years ago because previously I lived in Kingston Borough and Richmond Borough and they were already doing food waste and separate crates for different kinds of recycling, and when I moved here I was surprised that they weren’t already doing this here, so I just think they are catching up with what other London Boroughs are doing.’

A small number of participants also felt that the primary motivation for the service change was the need for the council to save money, arguing that there is a ‘throw away’ culture and more waste is being sent to landfill sites which cost the council more money than it would to recycle.

‘Obviously the South London Waste Partnership is for four borough councils to save money, because we are running out of land for landfill.’

‘I think it’s to save money because it costs the council to put stuff in landfill, so if they can reduce the amount of waste they put in landfill then it will reduce the cost and gives the council the money to do other things.’

### 3.4 Suggestions for further information

Whilst participants felt well informed about the service change, there were some further suggestions for council communications and information.

**Assisted collection**

One area several participants raised was the accessibility of the waste and recycling service for older/disabled residents. In particular, one participant noted that while the leaflets may have offered assurance to younger residents, they had experienced concern from elderly residents who they work with.

‘For me, I work for [charity], so I work with quite a few older people, for us [younger residents] we find it quite easy to understand but we had quite a lot of anxious older people because it was a change to their usual routine and the information they were getting the crate for their food waste and recycling, old people are quite frail and they can’t put out a crate with their recycling for the dustmen. And we were having a lot of people coming in [to place of work] and asking why are they changing this. I think for a lot of elderly people the leaflet was quite alarming.’

Across the group, there was mixed levels of awareness of assisted collection services, and who would qualify for the service. Nearly all participants cited that they knew an elderly relative or neighbour that would benefit from additional information regarding the service change, and in some cases further support. This was particularly in regards to the plastics/tin/glass green collection box, as participants felt this would be difficult for elderly/disabled residents to move to a location for collection as it does not have wheels.
Therefore, all participants felt that information regarding assisted collections could be more prominent or contain clearer signposting on council communications.

**Recyclable materials**

Some participants also cited confusion/lack of understanding as to why certain materials could not be recycled as cited in the leaflets. For example, a small number of participants queried why shredded paper and pizza boxes could no longer be recycled under the changed service, where they previously believed that these materials could be recycled.

‘The shredded paper thing gets me, we have to shred all sorts of things these days for security, but there is something in here (leaflet 2) that you can’t put shredded paper in the paper recycling.’

Participants further discussed the issue of contaminated recycling, demonstrating differing levels of awareness and knowledge. One participant who was aware of contamination further explained to other participants that a council representative had visited their place of work and explained why certain materials cannot be recycled. Once this has been discussed in the group, those with lower levels of knowledge felt that further education should be provided to inform and encourage changes to recycling behaviour.

Resident 1: ‘What’s more harmful to put that pizza box, which might have a bit of cheese and tomato, in the normal bin which then goes into landfill or put it into the paper recycling bin and it gets recycled anyway?’

Resident 2: ‘But if you do go put it into paper they process it in the plant and if it is a contaminated batch then the entire batch goes in landfill.’

Overall, most participants felt that the council should provide information to provide further understanding regarding materials that can/cannot be recycled. Some felt that this information should be provided with the initial leaflets sent out with the containers/bins, whilst others felt that the council should provide further and continued education regarding the service.

‘I think this is what the council should be doing now, we’ve gone through first four, five months, and so there should be some more education to improve things, such as the thing about the contaminated things.’

**Further messaging**

A small number of participants suggested further messaging that could be provided by the council.

In particular, one participant recommended that the leaflet sent out with the bins/containers includes a call to action to suggest to residents to retain the leaflet and use for their information.

‘The only thing I would do with this one (leaflet 2) would be, for some people who just read the leaflet and throw it away, would put on there in big capital letters “PLEASE KEEP THIS ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD IN THE KITCHEN” because then you can’t get it wrong.’

Another participant also recommended that further messaging regarding the impact of the new service could be sent out in communications to residents.

‘I think it would be good if you could provide some information back to us with the food, we’ve collected x tonnes of food waste and this has produced x amount of electricity so people will know the benefits.’
4. Implementation

4.1 Satisfaction and experience in April

Across the group, most participants were dissatisfied with the collection service they received in April. This was largely due to the fact that all participants had experienced a significant issue with the service in the first few weeks of implementation. For the majority, the main issue experienced was missed collections. For some, this meant that their bins (particularly waste) were not collected for several weeks.

‘Right at the beginning if they missed a collection they’d missed it, they wouldn’t come and pick it up afterwards.’

As a result of these missed collections, some participants reported that they had to make trips to the local reuse and recycling centre (RRC) in order to prevent overflowing bins and hygiene problems.

‘We had to make dump runs… because they hadn’t taken them (dust men) and we had to take them (to the dump)’

A small number of participants commented that the issue of missed collections was compounded by instances where they believed/experienced the collection service would not accept overflowing bins. This also led to some participants taking their waste to the local RRC or anecdotally describing examples of where they have tried to compact waste/recycling in order for the lids to close on containers/bins.

‘If the bins are open than an inch then they won’t take it’.

‘This is a really awful thing to admit but my husband gets our son to jump on top of the bin to try and push it down.’

However for other participants, where there was a missed collection, they cited that the collection service did collect on a subsequent date, and before the next scheduled collection date.

‘We had a couple of missed collections, but then if they were missed they [collection service] would do something in the following week.’

For some participants, they reported that they did not receive their bins/containers when expected. For these participants their expectation for the delivery of their bins/containers was informed by the leaflet they received with their bins/containers. This led to these participants feeling uncertain of when the service change was starting, what would be expected of them and whether their bins would be taken.

‘I think ours [bins/containers] were delayed, we didn’t get out ours the week they were supposed to be starting and so we weren’t sure whether we were supposed to be doing it or not.’

A minority of participants also highlighted issues regarding the food waste bins, particularly in regards to hygiene issues and problems with foxes.

‘Well that is the big problem (referring to foxes), the first few weeks I put my food bin out it was ripped open even though I locked it.’

4.2 Expectation of the service implementation

Across the group, participants provided mixed views regarding their expectations of the service implementation. For some, they did expect the service to experience some issues or “teething problems”, particularly as they recognised that many changes were made to the service at the same time.
’I did [expect issues in the initial implementation]; things just don’t fall into line straight into place.’

However, although these participants had expected some initial issues, there was still an expectation that these would be resolved quickly by the council.

‘You expect some teething problems but you don’t want your bins left for an extra week.’

However for other participants, they did not expect to experience any significant issues or “teething problems”. For these participants, they recognised the waste collection provider as a large company and brand, and believed that the provider had a wealth of experience within the industry. Therefore, participants expected the provider to use their expertise to ensure a smooth implementation of the service. These participants also believed that the council and the service provider should have shared service knowledge with other local boroughs and to identify issues/teething problems they may have experienced in order to enact preventative measures using this evidence.

‘They [the council or the waste collection provider] should have spoken to other boroughs and said what problems did you have and what did you do to fix them?’

For a small number of participants, they believed that the waste collection service provider did not employ crews with local knowledge, and therefore exacerbated the issue of missed collections.

‘I think the problem with the South London Waste Partnership was that the crews that went round didn’t know the area.’

After further interrogation of the leaflets shown in the focus group, some participants noted the information in the leaflets advised that all waste and recycling would be collected in the first few weeks regardless whether or not it was in the correct bin/container. These participants interpreted this to mean that the council indicated that issues may be experienced in the first few weeks and their response to counteract this.

4.3 Recent satisfaction and experience

For most participants, they were largely satisfied with the collection service they have received more recently (July/August) and increased satisfaction was usually due to not experiencing a significant issue. For a small number of participants, they cited that they occasionally experienced a missed collection, but noted that subsequent collections were quickly made, and usually this was done the day after the scheduled collection. Overall, these participants were satisfied with this timescale.

‘The missed collections are not so bad now and they generally pick up the next day if they’ve missed it.’

4.4 Further areas of satisfaction and experience

For most participants, some further issues regarding the service were highlighted.

Plastic/glass/tin recycling container

One particular area for concern, which was raised by all participants, was the size of the green crate/bin for plastics/tin/glass recycling. This was felt to not be large enough for most households, particularly those with families. Participants acknowledged that for some households a single crate would have been appropriate, and some, although not all, agreed that the number of crates provided should have been proportionate to the number of people in the household. However, some participants also felt that the council should have identified households which needed more bins in advance of the implementation, rather than requiring residents to apply or buy their own plastic waste bins after the changes to the service.
'A box might be okay for two people in a house, but the council knows roughly how many people are in each house because they have electoral role, so perhaps the council should have said so okay for the bigger households we know we're gonna have troubles with the [plastics/tin/glass] bins we should give you a big bin.'

One participant noted that other boroughs they had previously lived in provided several plastic/tin/glass recycling crates, and questioned why the same has not been applied in Sutton.

'I used to live in Kingston Borough and I had more than one recycling crate, and in Croydon they have more than one recycling crate so I don't know who decided to give out one recycling crate [in Sutton].'

One participant also highlighted that it was not just the size of the plastic crate which was an issue, but fortnightly collections were not frequent enough considering its size.

'I did have trouble about the plastics, the box is just not big enough, I was religiously crushing everything down as small as I could and it was still overflowing after two weeks.'

This led to some participants commenting they had heard through word of mouth, news outlets and social media of some residents trying to obtain additional crates/bins for the plastic, tin and glass recycling.

'The way it was handled with the additional crates, because people were saying one crate was not enough, I'm pretty sure every household has experienced this, they [the council] said well if you need an extra box go up to [store] and grab one, and then they had people queuing for hours and hours because they didn't have enough. And then when people phoned up to complain they had people on the phone for hours and I had friends who said that the website has just crashed.'

Overall, participants were frustrated with this issue, and the perceived lack of information on rectifying this tended to cause levels of dissatisfaction. Participants demonstrated lower levels of awareness/knowledge particularly in regards to the following:

- How to request for an additional crate/bin
- The size your household needs to be in order to be eligible for an additional crate/bin
- Why households were only given one crate/bin
- That additional crates/bins/containers could be used for plastic/tin/glass as long as it is labelled correctly

The findings suggest that if this information was provided/accessible, participants would be willing to make arrangements for further containers/bins and therefore less likely to be dissatisfied with the service.

Food waste

Alongside hygiene issues and pest control of the food waste (as described in section 4.1), a minority of participants stated that the food waste trucks are not watertight, meaning that the waste leaks and stains the roads.

'One thing I noticed was that the lorry that collects the food is obviously not watertight and it dribbles all down the road and the trail lasts a couple of days.'

Bin/container returns

Several participants were dissatisfied that the containers/bins were not being returned from waste collection crews to where they were taken from.

'The one thing that drives me nuts and I don't know why it's that difficult but why can't they [waste collection crew] put the bins back from where they got them from.'

'We're told not to leave our bins so that they obstruct the pavement but they [waste collection crew] can leave them where they like.'
'First couple of weeks or months we had those [plastic/tin/glass] crates, it was like a warzone down our road, there were crates and lids everywhere.'

**Fly tipping**

Some participants also noticed an increase in street litter/fly tipping since the service change.

'The thing that really annoys me that I don't think the council do enough of, they do the house bins well, but the general public bins and street sweeping is not so great because there is so much broken glass that gets left there for weeks and weeks.'

### 4.5 Contact with the council

All participants had contacted the council during the first few weeks of the implementation of the service to report the issues they had experienced. For some participants, the drive for contacting the council was simply to report the issue, for others, they contacted the council to request a response (e.g. requesting an additional plastic/tin/glass crate or to report a missed collection/request for a subsequent collection.) Participants cited a variety of contact methods used including:

- **Telephone**
- **Twitter**
- **Email**
- **Council website**

Some participants had contacted the council over the phone and reported varying degrees of satisfaction using this method. This was mainly in regards to these participants citing that they were placed on hold for longer than they anticipated, but overall cited a preference for speaking to "a real person" about their problem.

Some participants deliberately chose not to contact the council via telephone, and this was mainly due to their belief that they would experience long holding times.

'I knew if I contacted them [the council] by phone I'd be one the phone for half an hour, and I couldn't be bothered to do that, because I tried this before for other reasons.'

A small number of participants had contacted the council via email. These participants were most likely to cite dissatisfaction with the communications with the council, and reported that they did not receive a response back.

'That's the problem, they [council] didn't respond to three emails.'

One participant used the council website to get in touch. Initially they used the “contact us” form to request an additional plastic/glass/tin crate but did not receive a response. They used this form as they stated they could not find any additional contact means on the website.

'The first attempt, the generic contact us form, nothing – I might as well have talked to myself, [I used the contact us form because] it was the only option I seemed to have.'

However, this participant then visited the website at a later date and noted that an additional online request form had been provided.
'They (the council) had obviously then learnt and they’d improved it [website], you’d have expected them to learn some of this stuff from the other boroughs that had been through this, you would have expected [waste collection provider] to advise the council that they need to do this, you need to have these communications in place.'

For those that contacted the council via email and the website, they had expected to receive an automatic response to acknowledge that the message had been received and to provide an indication of when the council would respond.

One participant used social media to contact the council via Twitter. They felt this was the most likely way to get a quick response from the council, and noted that they received a response the next day.

'I find that the council will respond more if you use their twitter customer service.'

Overall, participants were likely to cite dissatisfaction with contacting the council, particularly as the responsiveness was not in line with participants’ expectations. Although participants were pragmatic in recognising that the council was likely to experience a higher volume of communications from residents due to the service change, participants felt that the council did not plan and prepare for higher levels of contact. This was particularly felt as participants believed that the council should have used evidence and learning from other local boroughs and the waste collection provider to put contingencies in place.

In turn, these experiences and levels of dissatisfaction with the responsiveness of the council were more likely to influence levels of satisfaction with the service and views towards the council as a whole. Although some participants anticipated issues/teething problems when the service was first implemented, they expected these to be resolved quickly, and feelings of frustration were exacerbated when the council was perceived to not respond in a timely manner. For those who did not expect any issues to arise, they felt that the council and the waste collection provider should have used evidence from other boroughs to ensure a smooth roll out, including consideration for additional resource to manage telephone contact centres with the potential for self-service and channel-shift.
5. Recycling Behaviour

Participants reflected whether they feel the service change has had an impact on their recycling behaviour. There was a mixed level of response from participants. For some, they felt that they unknowingly now recycle more.

‘I probably don’t really realise but I recycle slightly more.’

However, some participants felt that they recycle less as they are now unable to recycle certain materials that they believed could previously be recycled (as discussed in section 3.4.)

‘I’m recycling the same as I was before, but there are certain things that I would have recycled before which I’m not allowed to.’

As previously discussed in section 3.4, on learning about why certain materials cannot be recycled, participants obtained greater understanding and reflected that wider education of this may ensure/promote correct recycling behaviour.

One participant stated that the service change has influenced her purchase behaviour and shopping habits, and now tries to be less wasteful and purchase items with less packaging.

‘When I go shopping I consider what I’m buying before I buy whereas before I didn’t’.
6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Screening questionnaire (version 1)

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is XXX and I’m calling on behalf of Sutton Council. Please could I confirm I am speaking with XXX?

**Caller instruction: please confirm you are speaking with the named contact as outlined on the contact list before progressing further. If not available at the time, please re-arrange/call back another time.**

You may recall your recent participation in a waste and recycling service survey that was conducted on behalf of Sutton Council. At the end of the survey you expressed an interest in taking part in a focus group and provided your contact details so we could provide you with further information.

We are looking for people to take part in a focus group to discuss their experiences of the new waste and recycling service; the group discussion is 90 minutes in length and would be with 9 other Sutton residents. The focus group would be moderated by an external market research agency and would be viewed by officers at Sutton Council. The group would also be audio recorded.

Please be reassured that under the Data Protection Act and the Market Research Society code of conduct, your details will be kept confidential and anonymous, and discussions will not be attributed to individuals. Your contact details will not be passed on to any third parties and will only be used for the purpose of the focus group.

As a token of our appreciation for participation, attendees will receive a £40 high street voucher as a thank you for their time.

**Caller instruction: details of the vouchers have been provided in case you are asked further about this.**

The focus group is to be held on 7th September at 1830hrs at Sutton Council’s offices.

Please could I confirm that you are still interested in taking part?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Continue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Thank for their time and close conversation</td>
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</table>

To ensure we are speaking to a mix of Sutton residents, would it be possible to ask you some final questions? Just to reassure you that the questions I am going to ask are for research purposes only, to ensure you are eligible to take part.

### OCCUPATION/INDUSTRY EXCLUSIONS

**Q1** Thinking about the following occupations, can you tell me which, if any:

- a) you currently work in or have worked in the past?
- b) any member of your family or close friends currently work in?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read out:</th>
<th>a)</th>
<th>b)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Research</td>
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<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>Government</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Waste and Recycling Services
Communications
Political group

None of the above

**Caller instruction:** If yes to any responses above the line, close interview

**Q1c** Do you intend to work in any of those occupations in the next 6 months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Close</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
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**PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE**

**Q2a** Are you scheduled to participate in a market research group discussion/depth interview in the near future?

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<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Close</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

**Q2b** Have you ever attended a market research group discussion/depth interview?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Ask Q2c</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Invite to group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Q2c** How long ago did you last attend a market research group discussion/depth interview?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the last 6 months</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Close</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 months ago</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Go to Q2d</td>
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</table>

None to have attended in the last 6 months

**Q2d** How many market research groups discussions/depth interviews have you attended in total?

_________________

If more than 3 market research group discussions/depth interviews attended in total close

**Q2e** What was each of those market research group discussions/depth interviews about?

Interviewer write in:

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

If on a similar subject as this group, close interview

**INVITE TO PARTICIPATE IF RESPONDENT MEETS ALL QUOTAS**

Please confirm the following before closing phone call:
Re-confirm date/time/venue of group, Provide venue address and directions (if required), Re-confirm incentive amount, Provide contact number in case they need to get in touch before group. Who they should ask for on arrival in reception
Appendix 2: Screening questionnaire (Version 2)

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is XXX and I’m calling on behalf of Sutton Council. Please could I confirm I am speaking with XXX?

**Caller instruction:** please confirm you are speaking with the named contact as outlined on the contact list before progressing further. If not available at the time, please re-arrange/call back another time.

You recently provided your contact details on the My Sutton online forum page and expressed an interest in taking part in a focus group.

We are looking for people to take part in a focus group to discuss their experiences of the new waste and recycling service; the group discussion is 90 minutes in length and would be with 9 other Sutton residents. The focus group would be moderated by an external market research agency and would be viewed by representatives of Sutton Council. The group would also be audio recorded.

Please be reassured that under the Data Protection Act and the Market Research Society code of conduct, your details will be kept confidential and anonymous, and discussions will not be attributed to individuals. Your contact details will not be passed on to any third parties and will only be used for the purpose of the focus group.

As a token of our appreciation for participation, attendees will receive a £40 high street voucher as a thank you for their time.

**Caller instruction:** details of the vouchers have been provided in case you are asked further about this.

The focus group is to be held on Thursday 7th September at 6.30-8pm at Sutton Council’s offices.

Please could I confirm that you are still interested in taking part?

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To ensure we are speaking to a mix of Sutton residents, would it be possible to ask you some final questions? Just to reassure you that the questions I am going to ask are for research purposes only, to ensure you are eligible to take part.

**OCCUPATION/INDUSTRY EXCLUSIONS**

Q1 Thinking about the following occupations, can you tell me which, if any:

- c) you currently work in or have worked in the past?
- d) any member of your family or close friends currently work in?

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<td>Communications</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political group</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

None of the above 0 0

**Caller instruction:** If yes to any responses above the line, close interview
Q1c  Do you intend to work in any of those occupations in the next 6 months?

Yes  X  Close
No    2  Continue

PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE

Q2a  Are you scheduled to participate in a market research group discussion/depth interview in the near future?

Yes  X  Close
No    2  Continue

-  

Q2b  Have you ever attended a market research group discussion/depth interview?

Yes  1  Ask Q2c
No    2  Invite to group

Q2c  How long ago did you last attend a market research group discussion/depth interview?

In the last 6 months  X  Close
More than 6 months ago  2  Go to Q2d

None to have attended in the last 6 months

Q2d  How many market research groups discussions/depth interviews have you attended in total?

_________________

If more than 3 market research group discussions/depth interviews attended in total  close

Q2e  What was each of those market research group discussions/depth interviews about?

Interviewer write in:

4.  ________________________________
5.  ________________________________
6.  ________________________________

If on a similar subject as this group,  close  interview

GENERAL

Q3  Please may I record your post-code? This is to ensure we are speaking to a variety of residents across the borough.

______________________________________________________________

Q4  And are you responsible for organising the waste and recycling in your household?

Yes - respondent responsible  1  Ask 4
Yes – jointly responsibility  2  Ask 4
No – other household member responsible  X  Close
No – out household does not use the waste/recycling service  X  Close
Q5 Which of the following age bands do you fall into?

18-24  1  
25-49  2  
50-64  3  
65+    4  

Q6 There are four different waste and recycling collection services for different property types. Which of these best describes the types of waste and recycling service you receive?

**Caller instruction:** USE PROMPTS TO ASCERTAIN THE TYPE OF COLLECTION SERVICE THE RESPONDENT RECEIVES.

KERBISDE (Mainly used for normal houses)
Properties will have:
- Brown outdoor bin for the food waste
- Green wheelie bin for paper and card
- Green box(es) or possible second green wheelie bin for plastic, cans, glass and cartons
- Brown wheelie bins for general rubbish

KERBSIDE BAGS (Mainly used for houses with no frontage)
Properties will have:
- Brown outdoor bin for the food waste
- Branded sacks (clear) for paper & card
- Branded sacks (blue stripe) for paper & card
- Branded sacks (red stripe) for general rubbish

COMMUNAL (Mainly used for purpose built flats)
Properties will have:
- Shared bins for recycling and rubbish (and possibly food waste) in communal areas

FLAT ABOVE SHOPS (Mainly used for flats with no outside space at all)
Properties will have:
- No separate food waste collection
- Branded sacks (blue stripe) for all recycling
- Branded sacks (red stripe) for general rubbish

Q7a To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that ‘Sutton Council kept me/my household well informed about the changes to the waste and recycling collection service before they were introduced in April’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7b To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that ‘Sutton Council have kept me/my household well informed about the progress of implementing the new waste and recycling collection service since it was introduced in April’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8 Two leaflets were sent to all households to notify them of the changes to the waste and recycling services. One of these leaflets was sent through the post a few weeks before the service change and the other was delivered with the new containers/bins.
To what extent do you recall seeing either or both of these leaflets notifying you/your household about the changes to the waste and recycling service?

YES – SEEN BOTH 1
YES – SEEN ONE 2
NO 3

Q9 And how useful did you find either/both of these leaflets in informing you about the changes to the council’s waste and recycling services?

VERY USEFUL 1
FAIRLY USEFUL 2
NOT VERY USEFUL 3
NOT AT ALL USEFUL 4

Q10 Casting your mind back to April when the new service was introduced, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the collection service in its first four weeks?

VERY SATISFIED 1
FAIRLY SATISFIED 2
NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED 3
FAIRLY DISSATISFIED 4
VERY DISSATISFIED 5

Q11 Did you experience any significant issues with the new service in those first four weeks in April?

YES 1
NO 2

Q12 And overall, thinking about the waste and recycling collection service during the month of July, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service?

VERY SATISFIED 1
FAIRLY SATISFIED 2
NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED 3
FAIRLY DISSATISFIED 4
VERY DISSATISFIED 5

Q13 Did you experience any significant issues with the service during the month of July?

YES 1
NO 2

Q14 What impact, if any, has the new collection service had on the amount of waste you/your household now recycle?

I/MY HOUSEHOLD NOW RECYCLE MORE 1
I/MY HOUSEHOLD RECYCLE THE SAME AMOUNT 2
I/MY HOUSEHOLD NOW RECYCLE LESS 3

INVITE TO PARTICIPATE IF RESPONDENT MEETS ALL QUOTAS

Please confirm the following before closing phone call:
Re-confirm date/time/venue of group, Provide venue address and directions (if required), Re-confirm incentive amount, Provide contact number in case they need to get in touch before group, Who they should ask for on arrival in reception
Appendix 3: Discussion Guide

London Borough of Sutton: Waste and Recycling Service Focus Group

**Discussion Guide FINAL**

**Objectives:**
- To provide further detail and understanding to the quantitative survey findings collected
- To explore respondent experiences, awareness, understanding and expectations in regards to the waste and recycling service changes particularly;
  - The communications relating to the service change
  - The implementation of the service change
  - The response to problems with the service change
- To provide qualitative evidence to inform the scrutiny period
- To qualitatively explore recommendations outlined in the quantitative survey report

---

Please note: This document is to be used as a guide; the exact question wording and order will be tailored by the participant(s). Therefore, not all questions may be asked in the order or wording below.

Please note that it is important for the discussion to explore participants’ knowledge, awareness and understanding to inform further learning and communications. If knowledge etc. is not in line with current services/communications, the moderator is to explore further how knowledge etc. has been formed.

All questions in red are required and to be asked by the moderator.

---

### Section 1: Introduction (10 mins)
**Objective:**
- To introduce all participants and gather contextual knowledge
- To set the ground rules

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in this group discussion
- Introduce moderator and Westco
- Westco is carrying out research for Sutton Council
- Explain purpose: You may recall your recent participation in a waste and recycling service survey conducted on behalf of Sutton Council. They are interested in hearing further about your experiences of the service.
- Reassurance that Westco abides by the MRS Code of Conduct: confidentiality, anonymity and will not pass on contact details to third parties
- Our discussion will last around 1.5 hours – moderator to keep an eye on the time to ensure group does not overrun and all key questions are asked
- Importance of being able to say what you think, no right or wrong answers
- Ask for permission to audio record and to sign audio recording agreement form
- As a thank you for your time you will receive £40 voucher - ensure participants sign incentive form
- Explain group is to be observed by representatives of Sutton Council – observers to be introduced and 15 minute Q&A section at the end

- Respondent introductions;
  - Please tell me a bit about yourself:
    - First name
    - Age
    - Where you live / how long have you lived in Sutton / who you live with
    - To ascertain collection type you receive (probe: what bins/containers do you have? What type of property you live in)

---

### Section 2: Communications (25 mins)
Objective:
- To explore awareness and understanding of the service change and how effective the communications were at increasing knowledge and understanding
- To ascertain preferred sources, channels and timing of service change information
- To identify any information gaps or unclear information given in the campaign
- To qualitatively assess the usefulness of the two leaflets
- To explore key messages, particularly quantitative survey findings which indicate “increasing recycling rates” was felt to be the most important reason for the service change

Moderator read out:
As you may be aware, Sutton Council recently introduced changes to the waste and recycling service. Before we discuss your experiences of the changes and the collections you received, I would like to ask you about the information you received about the service change.

- What information was you given/did you hear/see in regards to the service change?
  - PROMPT if required:
    - How / where did you find out about this? (moderator; prompt on source and channel)
      - Would you expect to hear/see about this from anywhere else?
      - Where/why would you expect to see/hear this from this source/channel?
      - Do you feel this was the best way (channel) to tell you about the service change? Why?
    - When did you find out about this?
      - Do you feel this was an appropriate time? Why?
      - Do you feel that you were told often enough? Why?
    - How useful/clear was the information in telling you the following;
      - Why the changes were being introduced
      - What changes were being introduced
      - How the changes would affect you/your household
      - How the changes would affect the wider borough/other residents in Sutton
      - The progress of the implementation of the service change
      - Where to put your containers/bins out
  - Do you feel you were given all of the information you needed to know about the service change?
    - If so: prompt participants to briefly explain why they feel this
    - If not: What else would you liked to have known/received? Why is this important?
    - If not: How else would you liked to have known / received information? Why is this preferred?

Moderator read out:
In the lead up to the service change, Sutton residents were sent two leaflets. One of these leaflets was sent through the post a few weeks before the service change and the other was delivered with the new containers/bins.

MODERATOR TO HAND OUT LEAFLETS

- Do you remember receiving/reading either or both of these leaflets?
  - What did you do with the leaflets when you received them?
    - If did not read: why not/ what would have encouraged you to read these?
    - For those who did read; how useful were these leaflets? Why? What encouraged you to read them? Were there particular sections you read/found most useful?
  - Do you feel sending these out by post / in the containers was appropriate? Why?
  - Do you feel the timing of sending these out by post a few weeks before the service change and delivery with the bins/containers was appropriate? Why?
- Overall, how clear do you think this information is? What is clear / unclear?
  - Prompt if required:
    - What containers/bins you would receive
    - When the containers/bins would be delivered
    - Which waste/recycling goes in which containers/bins
    - How often each container/bin would be collected
    - The day of the week your bins/containers would be collected
How useful do you think the information is in explaining the service change?
- Which parts are most / not useful?
- What, if anything, is not necessary / missing? Why?

Round up:
- **Enabling question:** If you were in charge of sending out information about the waste and recycling service changes, what would you have recommended is sent to residents?
  - PROMPT if required:
  - Key pieces of information that is important to know
  - How would residents receive this information
  - When would residents receive the information

**Moderator read out:**
There are two key reasons as to why the council introduced changes to its waste and recycling service. These were to increase recycling rates and save local taxpayer’s money.

- **Enabling question:** The results of the survey Sutton Council recently conducted show that 62% of those asked feel that increasing recycling rates in the most important reason for the service change.
  - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this? Why?
  - Why do you think 62% of respondents in the survey feel that this is the most important reason for the service change?
  - Do you feel that this message has been clearly communicated by the council? Why?
  - What, if anything, could be done to promote/communicate this message further?

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**Section 3: Implementation (25 mins)**

Objective:
- To explore experiences and satisfaction of the collection service and whether these were in-line with expectations
- To identify whether experiences influenced wider perceptions and reputation of Sutton Council and other universal services it provides
- To explore contact with the council, particularly those with lower engagement levels
- To explore and understand expectations of Sutton Council as a service provider

**Moderator read out:**
I would now like to ask you about your experiences and opinions of the changes to the waste and recycling service.

- **What were your experiences of the collection service you received?**
  - How satisfied were you?
  - Did you experience any issues? If so, what were they? When did you experience these issues?
  - To what extent did you expect any “teething problems”/issues with the service?
  - Were your experiences in line with what you expected to happen? Why/why not?
  - To what extent do you feel the information you received helped you to prepare for the service change / know what was going to happen?
  - To what extent do you feel that the council communicated about the issues/teething problems with the service? How well do you feel the council communicated this? What, if anything, could have been done to improve this communication?
  - Do you think other Sutton residents had similar experiences to you? Why do you think this?
  - Have your experiences changed over time? If so, how?
  - Overall, how well do you think the council responded to the teething problems/issues? Why do you think this?
  - Were your experiences of the waste and recycling service in line with your experiences of other services you receive from Sutton Council? Why? How?
    - PROMPT if required: e.g. road and pavement maintenance, street cleaning, street lighting, parks and open spaces, libraries, playgrounds, sports and swimming facilities, theatres/arts/events, historic places/museums
  - For those who experienced an issue;
    - Did you contact the council about this?
- If so: How? Why did you contact the council in this way? Was this the most convenient / preferred method? 
  Was the issue resolved? How well was your issue dealt with?
- If not: Why not? What would have helped/encouraged you to report your issue?

  - What, if anything, could have been done to improve your experiences of the collection service?
    - PROMPT if required: What, if anything, could have been done to improve the way the service change was introduced?
    - Why would this have improved your experience?

**Round up:**
- Enabling question: In comparison with other service providers, how well do you think Sutton Council did in informing you and implementing the waste and recycling service change?
  - Prompt if required: For example, car insurance / mobile phone / gas and electric / bank / train companies notifying you of service changes such as changes to contract, changes to costs, end of contract
  - Why do you say this?
  - What, if anything, could Sutton do/learn from other service providers to meet your needs?

**Section 4: Recycling behaviour and round up (5 mins)**

**Objective:**
- To explore the service change impact on recycling behaviours
- To explore key messages, particularly increasing recycling rates

**To what extent do you feel the changes to the collection service have had an impact on the amount of waste you / your household now recycles?**
  - Why do you say this?
  - Is there anything that makes it difficult / prevents you from recycling more?
  - To what extent do you think the changes to the collection service have an impact on how much other Sutton residents now recycle? Why do you say this?

**Moderator read out:**
- Enabling question: 58% of respondents in the recent waste and recycling survey said that they feel they/their household recycles the same amount and that the service changes have not had an impact. However, recent statistics show that 52% of Sutton residents now recycle their waste compared to 40% in 2016.
  - Why do you think some residents feel they are not recycling more despite statistics showing that the borough is recycling more?
  - Have you heard that recycling rates have increased in Sutton? Is this something you would like to know? Why?

**Section 5: Observer questions (15 mins)**
- To introduce observers
- To invite observers to ask questions – moderator to chair Q&A period
- Thank and close
7 Quality Assurance

Quality is central to our work and our aim is to consistently provide a service that exceeds the requirements and expectations of our clients. To maintain this we actively pursue quality improvements that enable each member of the team to do their job right first time, every time.

We follow the code of Marketing & Social Research Practice of the International Chamber of Commerce/European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR).

ISO 20252:2012

We are fully accredited to the international standard for the management of market research (ISO20252:2012). It is designed to drive quality improvements and our adherence demonstrates that Westco is an industry leader.

To meet this standard we have a quality manual, training and processes to ensure we can set and maintain standards for quality assurance, project management, data collection, preparation and processing. The accreditation process is on-going and repeat visits from the auditor will take place. All staff receive training on Westco quality standards and the implications for their job role.

As part of our ISO 20252:2012 accreditation Westco must ensure that all sub-contractors are compliant with our quality processes.