

Refuse Changes

Pre Publicity

- Refuse round changes have been completed on a number of occasions in Darlington. The practices adopted for notifying the public and providing logistical support and back up, were what had worked best in the past.
- In preparation for the change, additional refuse vehicles and staff were made available and rounds were closely monitored with feedback from crews to Team Leaders to send additional resources to collect refuse or to leaflet certain areas where it was clear residents had not responded to the changes.
- 3000 streets were leafleted where refuse/recycling rounds were changing, of which 45 received the wrong leaflet. On 29 September 2008, the operatives delivering the leaflet recognised their error, stopped and the problem was rectified the following day, 30 September 2008.
- Refuse round changes were advertised in October's Town Crier, reference on the front page and an article inside (although the article inside the Town Crier could have been bigger).
- Press release in The Northern Echo.
- Information on the Website has proved to be extremely successful with 7378 hits from 29 September (when leaflets started to be delivered) to Friday 24 October 2008.

Round Changes from 13 October 2008

- Leaflets and pre publicity were effective as in most cases where there had been changes, residents had put rubbish out for collection on the correct day. Those who had either not read the information or discarded the leaflet and not put their refuse out were contacted by back up resources where necessary.
- Regular contact was maintained with the Contact Centre to monitor the calls coming in. In terms of lessons learnt, for any future changes, there will be a higher level of upfront communication with the Contact Centre involving them in the planning process.
- Where residents were not putting rubbish out, further letter/leaflets were delivered and also door knocking to inform residents of the changes.
- Staff acted on the experience of the early part of the week to try to preempt possible problems later in the week by putting out information for Thursday's and Friday's collections.

- Generally, the majority of rounds were in on time or early but some rounds struggled to complete their workload. This is normal in any refuse round change and a degree of rebalancing between rounds will take place in coming weeks to deliver the best possible efficiencies. This work will not impact on residents.
- One of the main problems experienced was in the case of residents whose day had not changed but the round had changed. They were putting their refuse out at their normal time of collection but due to the round changes, actual collection time may have changed. These areas were addressed by staff as issues arose.
- Telephone calls to the Contact Centre received during the week were:

	Week 1	Week 2
Monday	104	99
Tuesday	156	82
Wednesday	100	54
Thursday	102	45
Friday	<u>89</u>	<u>39</u>
Total	551	319

- In any week, between refuse and recycling, there are over 70,000 collections. The 870 enquiries received over two weeks, were therefore 0.6% of collections.
- Frontline staff and managers who have been involved in a number of earlier refuse round changes in Darlington felt that the changes had gone well and the amount of calls and problems experienced were below any other changes previously carried out.
- Changes have been a lot more straightforward than those for Christmas and New Year.

With any refuse round changes there is a period of time where everyone gets used to the new system and takes a few weeks for everything to settle down. There is always the requirement for a slight rebalancing where some rounds find it difficult to complete within the shift. This work will be ongoing to ensure smooth delivery of services.