

**Communications & Behavioural Change Update**

**Waste and Recycling Committee**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March**

**Collaborating**

**Empowering**

**Delivering**

# Big Recycling Survey

Carried out in July/Aug 2025

8,892 total responses – representative sample

Report provides data on barriers, motivations, information sources

Some key takeaways include:

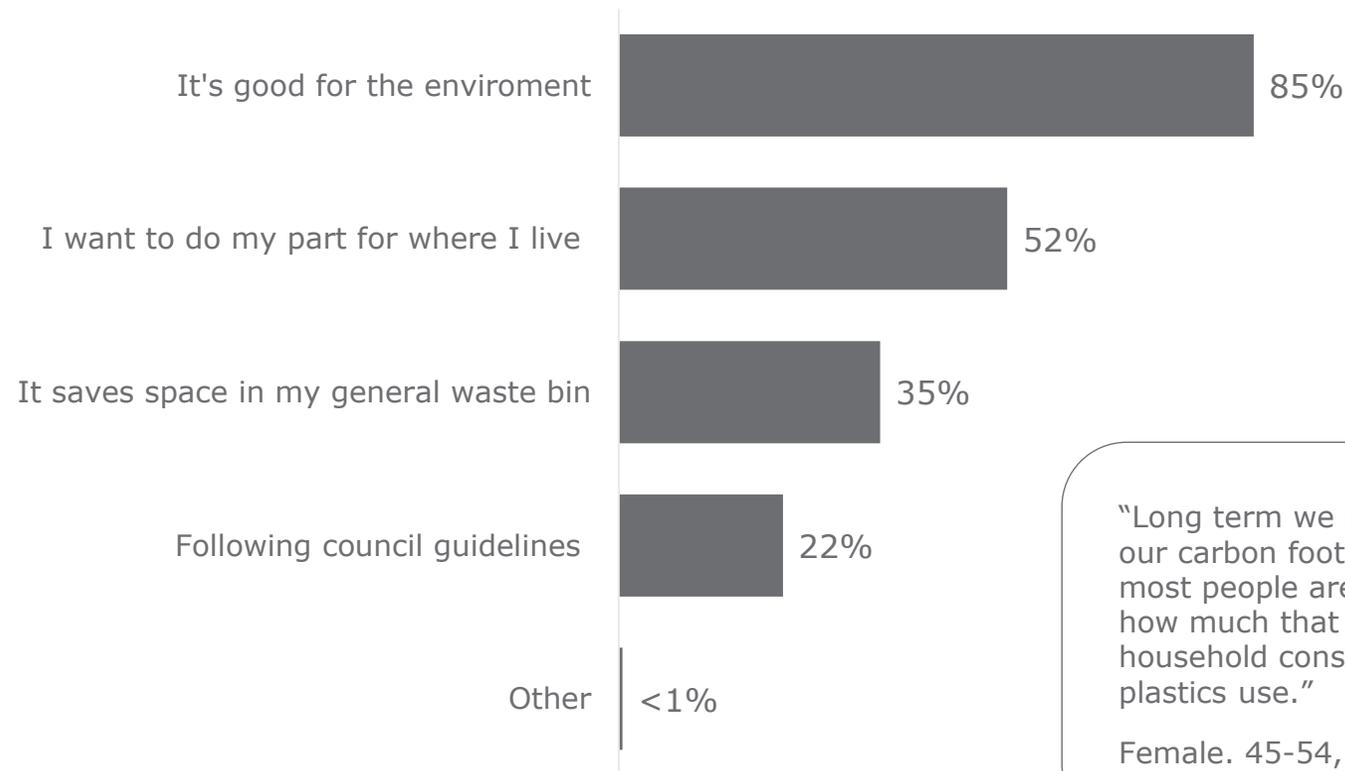
- Residents rely on councils for information
- Residents in flats are outliers
- Residents think they're doing a better job than they are



# Motivations & attitudes toward recycling

Four fifths of respondents said they choose to recycle because it's good for the environment. Over half reported that they do so to contribute to their community. One third recycle to save space in their general waste bin, and two in ten recycle to follow council guidelines.

## Why do you recycle?



### Other responses include;

- I don't recycle
- Saves money / make money recycling

"Long term we need to reduce our carbon footprint. I believe most people are unaware of how much that relates to our household consumption and plastics use."

Female. 45-54, Stockport

"I want to avoid waste being sent to landfill in poorer parts of the world."

65-74, Stockport

# Challenges to recycling – borough breakdown

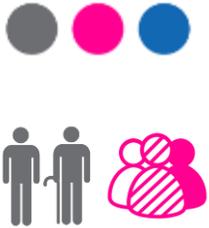
Manchester residents are more likely to say they are unsure what goes in each bin compared to Bolton, Oldham, Rochdale or Stockport residents. Rochdale residents are more likely to say they recycle everything compared to all other boroughs.



	Bolton (1016)	Bury (917)	Oldham (678)	Manchester (1733)	Rochdale (666)	Salford (652)	Stockport (1530)	Tameside (724)	Trafford (931)
No, recycle everything I can	47%	50%	56%	42%	61%	54%	44%	51%	47%
I'm not always sure what goes in each bin	26%	30%	27%	33%	28%	29%	28%	30%	33%
I don't always see the point in recycling	5%	6%	4%	7%	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%
I don't have the time to sort my recycling	5%	6%	5%	10%	5%	5%	3%	5%	4%
I don't have the correct bins	3%	4%	3%	6%	1%	5%	3%	2%	2%
I don't have the space	12%	10%	9%	11%	8%	8%	11%	11%	7%
My bins often get full too quickly	38%	25%	22%	25%	22%	16%	43%	28%	23%
Issues with sharing bins with neighbours	4%	4%	5%	13%	3%	9%	3%	4%	5%
Soft plastics/bottle tops	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%	7%	3%	3%	8%

# Information sources – age and ethnicity breakdown

35–74 year olds are less likely to look at packaging to know which bin to recycle in compared to 16–34 year olds. Ethnic minority groups are more likely to ask someone compared to those of white ethnicity. Older respondents are more likely to check information their council has sent out.



	16-34 (1258)	35-54 (2778)	55-74 (3792)	75+ (854)
Ask someone	27%	12%	9%	10%
Look at packaging of item	45%	41%	40%	41%
Search online	46%	46%	43%	39%
Check information my council have previously sent out	44%	55%	58%	62%
I'd just make a guess and hope it's the right place	13%	18%	18%	18%
Put in general waste	2%	2%	3%	3%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

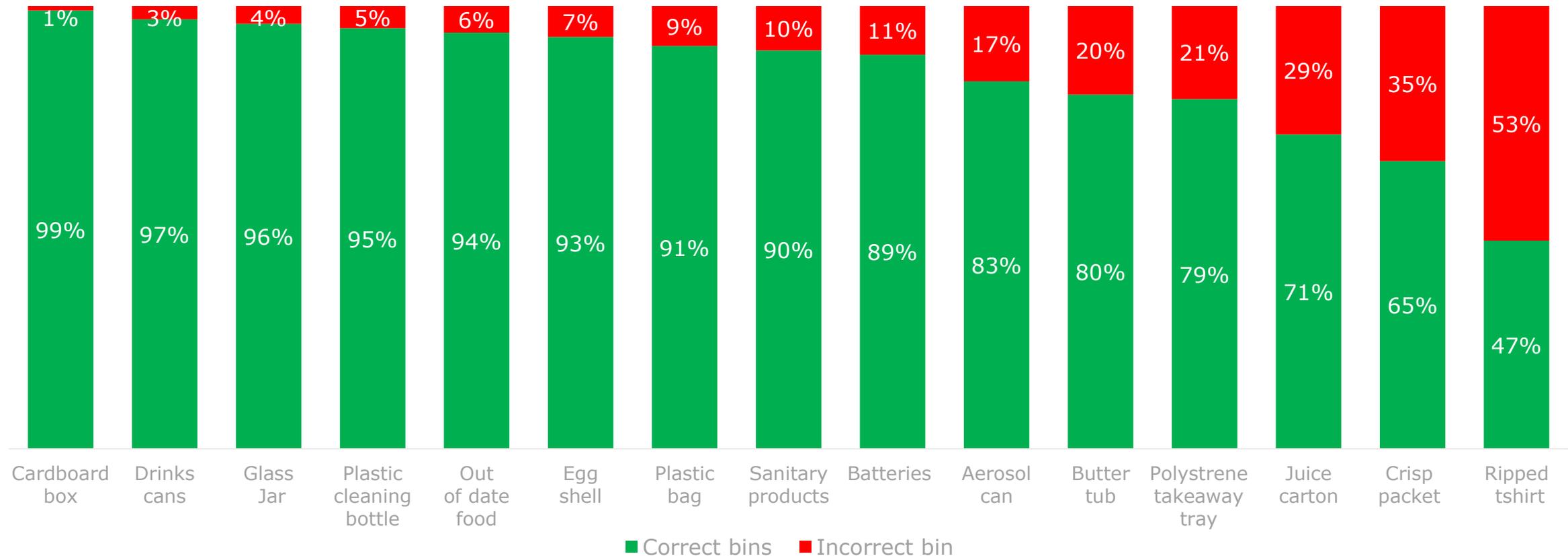
	Ethnic minorities (993)	White (7489)
Ask someone	24%	11%
Look at packaging of item	39%	42%
Search online	43%	44%
Check information my council have previously sent out	47%	57%
I'd just make a guess and hope it's the right place	15%	18%
Put in general waste	2%	2%
Other	<1%	0%

Source: Q6. If you weren't sure what bin to put something in, how would you find out? Base: All respondents (8852 Please note significant differences are illustrated by pink (lower) and green boxes (higher).



# Recycling knowledge – Excellent recyclers breakdown

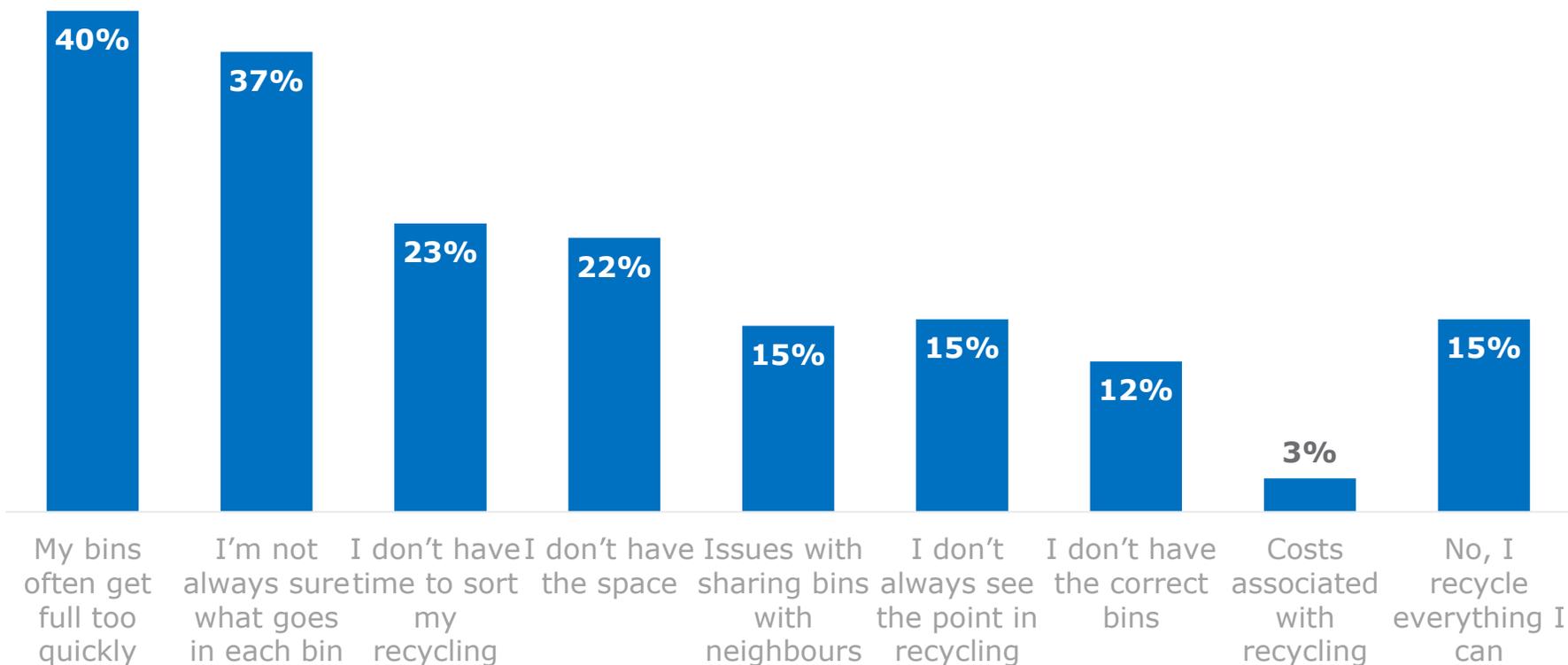
While self-identified excellent recyclers correctly sort most everyday items, the chart below reveals persistent problem areas. Items like drinks containers, cardboard, glass, and egg cartons are placed in the correct bin by over 90% of respondents. However, confusion rises sharply for items such as juice cartons, crisp packets, and especially ripped t-shirts, where incorrect disposal reaches as high as 53%.





# Challenges when recycling for those who sometimes or never recycle

Four in ten residents who sometimes or never recycle say their bins get full too quickly. While over a third (37%) of residents say they aren't always sure what goes in each bin. Just under a quarter (23%) don't have the time to sort their recycling and 22% don't have the space for recycling.



They leave or don't empty the bins, less frequent connections.

Female, 65-74, Bolton

There are too many exceptions for what can't be recycled, so it gets too confusing when sorting out recycling.

Male, 25-34, Trafford

Source Q05 Do you face any challenges when recycling? Base: All respondents who said they sometimes/never recycle (1129)

# Repair Week



**2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> March '26**

A week-long celebration of repair across Greater Manchester.

Supporting residents to find local repairers and **inspiring them to fix instead of throwing away.**

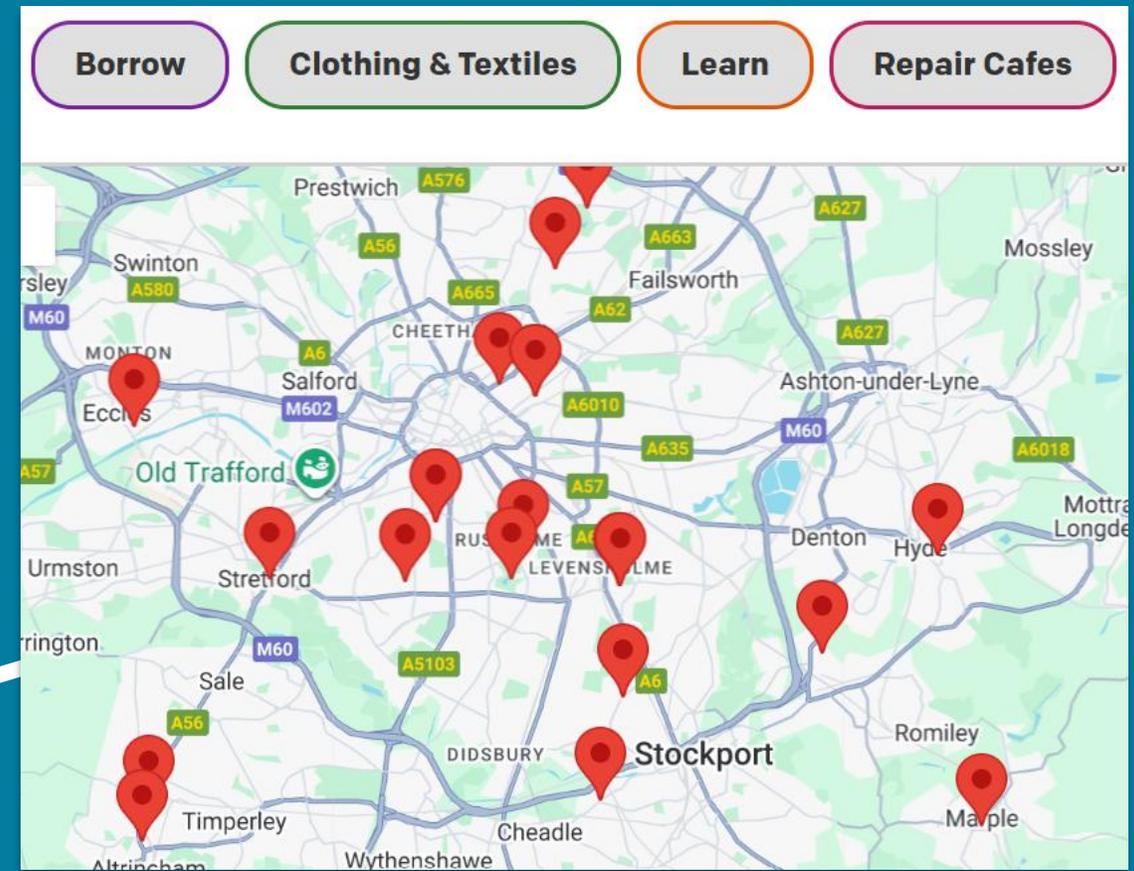
# New look GM Repair Directory

To make it easy for residents to find and use repair services we created a local repair directory. This sits on the [R4GM website](#) and is available all year round.

We've added interactive maps so people can quickly find local repairers.

Any community group, business or training provider who repairs can be listed for free.

<b>Boggart Hole Cloug...</b>	Repair Cafes	Boggart Hole Clough, Ch... M9 7DF
<b>Boothstown Repair ...</b>	Repair Cafes	Vicars Hall Lane, Booths... M28 1JF
<b>Chorlton Repair Cafe</b>	Repair Cafes	St Margaret's Centre an... M21 0TT
<b>Horwich Repair Cafe</b>	Repair Cafes	Brazley Community Cen... BL6 6HT



# Events happening in 2026

**32+ events** happening across GM including; repair cafes, sewing workshops, bike repair sessions

We're supporting **RepairFest**, where repair cafes from across GM come together at **The Monastery, Manchester**



We're sponsoring **Manchester Library of Things** deliver a session to help others start their own borrowing libraries



# ESOL

Resources being developed for English for Speakers of Other Languages

Teach the basic vocabulary to help residents contact their council about the recycling collection service.

- Help residents find info on council website
- Worksheet shows each bin and what items goes into each one
- Trialled with South Asian Women's group and asked for feedback

# GMCA Recycling and Waste Plan

- 4 year plan builds on the already successful contract
    - GM has a recycling rate of over 50% (44% is national average)
    - 4 bin system is the default system that Defra suggests other councils must adopt
    - SUEZ developing new social value commitments
    - Plan shows how we will build on this whilst navigating new policies being introduced.
- <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/waste-and-resources/our-plan/>

**Thank you**