



Case Study: Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP)

Web: <https://bhfood.org.uk/how-to-hub/setting-up-a-citywide-community-compost-scheme/>

Location: Brighton

Organisation Background: The idea for a community composting scheme came from a group of garden volunteers who were active in one of the city's garden schemes, co-ordinated with help from the BHFP. This generated confidence and support from the local council to provide ongoing support.

Current status of composting project: The scheme was established to provide a food waste composting solution for residents without gardens. Compost produced from these schemes is being used in parks, community gardens and food growing projects in local schools. The English waste exemption form (T23) is completed on their behalf by the council (a Paragraph 12 exemption in Scotland) to allow the site to take waste for composting.

Relevance to the Highlands: Although Brighton is a large municipal area, the individual projects have on average 30 householders involved. The scale is therefore possible to duplicate, however, co-ordination may require support from paid staff that covers a number of projects across an area of the highlands. There is no energy required to manage equipment, which may make this type of project more easily duplicated at remote sites.

Type of composting solution: Householders bring their food waste to the wooden compost bins (three) at each project location. Currently, one compost bin (out of a maximum set up of three) can accommodate waste from 30 households or roughly 340L of food waste a week which would otherwise be sent to landfill. This waste is instead repurposed into compost for use by residents and the leftovers for local community organisations. The 'active' bins are turned weekly and the resting bins between weekly/monthly depending on the time resources of the volunteers.

How the staff, volunteers and community work together: Residents are members of the compost scheme. They drop off their food waste at the bins and turn the compost, as well as take responsibility for keeping the area tidy. As well as paid staff, the scheme is reliant on a dedicated team of volunteers and residents, and on having the administrative facilities (the BHFP) to liaise between all of them. There are two part-time members of paid staff who collectively have one day a week to administer the composting scheme. There is also a maintenance person paid per job to maintain and repair the bins. Compost monitors have a contact list for everyone on their scheme, which they can use to inform people on the scheme if compost is ready for collection or if there are any issues with the bins. Each scheme has two volunteer compost monitors

Scale: Working with the council, the partnership supports 40 community compost schemes with over 1,300 households (an average of just over 30 per project) taking part.

Input material: Food waste plus paper and cardboard to create the right balance. No garden waste - it would fill the bins up far too quickly. Cooked or prepared food that includes meat/egg shells is not allowed because this attracts rats/flies.

End use: The key beneficiaries are the scheme members themselves, who are able to compost their food waste locally, and local food growers and community groups who are able to access good quality compost for free.

Partners/ collaborators: The wooden compost bins are hand-made to a specification by a local contractor. The Food Partnership provides staff time for support of the scheme, as well as training and provision of caddies and guidance materials.

Price: A single bin costs about £300 to make, whilst a whole package for a new site costs about £1,000 for materials alone. With staff time and overheads added on, the price is closer to £1,200.

Funding: The Council funds the scheme, including compost caddies, compost boxes, signage and ongoing maintenance and repairs.

Main motivator: To provide a food waste composting solution for residents without gardens.

Number of years the scheme has been running for: The scheme was established in 2012.

Additional Comments: It can take a long time to get a new scheme approved and set up. Each site has to be checked and approved by the Council, which carries out a risk assessment on behalf of the projects.