

Bangor University Student Focus Group: Scrutiny Investigation on Waste Enforcement (23/01/19)

8 Attendees

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Issues with HMOs

- In shared housing, some flatmates don't recycle. The difficulties of living with new people is that some are conscientious and others are not – who then takes responsibility for the recycling and bins?
- Issues / questions regarding HMO's:
 - How would the Council know who is not recycling properly if 5-7 people are living in the same flat and sharing a bin?
 - Would the Council fine the property or the individual(s)?
 - The landlord should be involved if it was continuously the same house repeat offending. The landlord must take responsibility for providing the bins and informing their tenants of the waste and recycling arrangements.
 - The Group didn't agree with just fining landlords. It was thought that the landlords would take it out of the deposit and students would not know until the end of term – which means they would not learn from any mistakes.

Section 46/47 of the Environmental Act

- It was noted that the students preferred the enforcement of litter picks rather than fines (used as a type of community service). It could work in a similar way to speeding fines e.g. you could pay a fine or take part in a litter pick or both a litter pick and fine could be enforced. However, is this possible with the legislation? Students do not see a monetary fine as "punishment" as it could be expected that they would ask their parents to pay on their behalf. It was suggested that an enforcement which benefits the community would be better.
- The offence should be evaluated over a 6 month period so that people have time to sort out any problems. It was suggested that people should receive 3 "strikes" before they get issued a fine / community service.
- There is an issue of people walking by and using other peoples bins incorrectly e.g. kebab wrappers and pizza boxes after nights outs. It would be unfair to penalise the residents as they are not the ones placing the items in the wrong containers.
- The ethics of the Service was questioned. There is a difference in punishing someone who keeps their bins out every day as compared to someone who try their hardest but sometimes put the wrong items in the bin. It was made clear that each case of offence would be viewed individually.
- It was questioned if the Council should be looking through personal bins? Should the Council be informing people that the recycling Officers will be out between X and Y date and targeting areas not people?

- It was noted that positive reinforcement should be undertaken rather than punishment. An idea would be for people to be rewarded with points for recycling correctly and could be entered into a prize draw every couple of months?
- Peer group pressure could help if one individual was causing the issue – try and encourage behaviour change.

Issues with Landlords / Landlord Agencies

- It was noted that often no bins are provided in private accommodation and no information is provided regarding the waste and recycling arrangements.
- Students noted that the landlords often tell the Council that they have given out information but this information is often not passed on to students.

Calendars

- The Students felt that Bangor should be on yearly calendars (rather than two yearly) because students moving out in summer often misplace / lose calendars. Unfortunately this often means that the new tenants then are not made aware of the waste and recycling arrangements.
- It was suggested that a good idea would be to make calendars available via an App, but there would be a need to advertise this to students directly. Concern that some would only download the app to get certain information and then delete because of issues with phone storage.
- In order to raise awareness of the arrangements, events such as Serendipity, Halls 2 Houses should be targeted.

Education

- It was felt that steps should be put in place to educate people – and target the worst offending areas first.
- It was acknowledged that those who do not adhere to the arrangements in the correct manner do it because they are ignorant / cannot be bothered and are not doing it maliciously. It was felt that the main reasons for not using the waste and recycling arrangements correctly was due to being uninformed / too lazy to recycle / in a rush etc.
- It was noted that some people have difficulties with plastics and awareness of what can and cannot be recycled.

Overseas Students

- It was noted that recycling could be difficult for students from overseas. This would be mainly due to the fact that the arrangements are new to them and they may not be aware of what can be recycled and also the languages used could be seen as a barrier. However, if the Council were to start translating the calendars into various languages, it would be difficult to determine into which languages.
- It was also noted that overseas students should not need translations into their first language as they study their university course in English and know more than the basics.

Other Ideas

- It was noted that there should be stronger links between the Council and the University.
- It was asked does the Council need to enforce Section 46 if the recycling targets are currently being met. It was felt that the focus should be on improving street littering.
- It was suggested that there should be more promotion / campaigns for individuals to see the benefit in customising their bins.

Some areas where problems were reported:

- **Mount Street Bangor**– can be difficult to keep bins off the road because the properties have stairs which are obstructing the movement of the bins.
- **Edge Hill Bangor** – the bins are often left out for days after collection. This causes problems blocking the entrance which is on an uphill drive.
- **The Crescent Bangor** – issue with bins being stolen.