

# STRAIGHT<sup>®</sup> FOCUS

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Home Composting grows  
in popularity in Wales  
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New lease of life  
for kerbside recycling  
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## Home Composting grows in popularity in Wales

**Home composting is high on the agenda for Welsh authorities as an option for residents to divert organic waste from landfill. Almost a quarter of the amount of rubbish put in the average refuse bin is organic and can be composted at home.**

Straight is the UK's market leader in home composters and has recently provided Pembrokeshire County Council with 30,000 home compost bins. Straight also managed the home delivery of one composter to every household in the county.

Under the Council's new county-wide composting campaign every household has received a free 335 litre Compost Machine. This is in a bid to encourage residents to compost their garden waste and uncooked kitchen waste in a more environmentally friendly

and economically sustainable way; reducing the amount of green waste sent to landfill whilst providing the householder with a free supply of compost for use in their garden.

The home compost bins are made from 100% recycled plastic, with a twist locking windproof lid and a large side-hatch allowing easy removal of the finished compost.

In addition to the compost bin, householders will receive a composting information guide with further support available through a telephone information line and local compost advisors. Straight is also offering discounted accessories including bases for the compost bins and an organic accelerator liquid.

Home compost officer Paul Watkins commented: "Pembrokeshire is quite a rural area so home delivering all of the composters is a difficult task; however Straight have delivered the bins to households with ease. According to the Assembly Government, home composting of green and vegetable wastes is the single most effective waste prevention measure that local authorities can promote, so by encouraging people to compost at home we're confident of making a significant contribution to meeting Pembrokeshire's landfill diversion targets".

Powys County Council has been promoting the benefits of home composting since 1999 and has sold around 8,000 units to date. The bulk of these have been supplied by Straight. Home composters are currently available to residents with a free kitchen caddy collected from civic amenities centres across the County at subsidised prices from as little as £10.



There has been a surge in the numbers sold since the council introduced a charge for the collection of garden waste from households earlier this year. Lee Marshall, Street Scene Manager commented: "We wanted to offer residents an alternative option to utilise their garden waste and home composting is a good way to do this. We believe this will eventually contribute towards meeting the Biodegradable Municipal Waste targets set by the government."

Menter Mon is a community based enterprise agency working in partnership with the Isle of Anglesey County Council. Funding received from the Strategic Recycling Scheme (SRS) earlier this year, has allowed them to make 3,000 compost bins available to Anglesey residents free of charge and these were snapped up by keen residents within 6 weeks.

## Merthyr Tydfil pioneers the way for kitchen organics in Wales

**One of the key provisions of the Landfill Directive requires a reduction in biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) going to landfill. To meet these targets Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) has set in place a biowaste collection scheme to households in their borough.**

By 2010 MTCBC's maximum allowance for the landfill of biodegradable municipal waste will be 14,753 tonnes. In a borough of less than 56,000 residents, this equates to approximately a quarter of a tonne per person per year.

To succeed in diverting a large amount of recyclable material away from landfill the Council realised that an integrated package of options would be required. A combination of separate collections, treatment, centralised composting and materials recycling would have to be employed together with the availability of adequate capacity and markets for the materials collected. It also recognised that a combined garden and kitchen

waste collection scheme would need to be introduced to maximise the amount of BMW diverted from landfill.

During 2003/4 funding became available from the Strategic Recycling Scheme; one of the main criteria within the application was that the option of kitchen waste collections must be included. At the same time MTCBC was trialling a garden waste collection scheme and so submitted a bid for the development of this scheme including provision for the collection of kitchen waste from 10,000 properties.

Following the funding award, Straight successfully won a tender to supply 10,000 of its five litre Kitchen Caddy and 10,000 25 litre Minimax containers. The Kitchen Caddy is used by the householder to store kitchen waste in prior to transferring to the 25 litre Minimax which is left outdoors for collection purposes. Straight has significant knowledge in this area as they have supplied this system to a number of other authorities in England.



MTCBC is one of the first authorities in Wales to pioneer the collection of kitchen waste and so could not gain information from its peers. However they gained knowledge from outside of Wales and also attended the Welsh LARAC conference in 2005 focused on kitchen waste collections.

To date the Council has not experienced any contamination problems and has in fact received praise on the quality of the materials being delivered. Val Steel, Waste Services Officer at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council said "We have collection staff who are dedicated to the project and they are encouraged to speak to residents if they experience problems whilst collecting. Secondly the door-stepping campaign has achieved positive results."

Although the scheme in Merthyr Tydfil is still in its infancy the council has noted that in the first four months there has been a significant reduction in the amount of BMW being sent to landfill compared with the previous year.

Val Steel continues: "Some daily rounds are achieving nearly 50% participation which is encouraging. We will be able to give a more accurate comparison during the autumn and winter months when the garden waste component significantly reduces".



## New lease of life for kerbside recycling

**Local authorities in Wales are breathing new life into their existing kerbside box recycling schemes with an aim of further reducing the amount of recyclable material sent to landfill and increasing recycling rates.**

Caerphilly County Borough Council produces 80,000 tonnes of waste per year of which 60% can be recycled. This equates to approximately 1 tonne per household. To reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and encourage households to recycle the Council has been running a kerbside collection scheme for the past 9 years with great success.

Caerphilly County Borough Council uses a 55 litre kerbside box supplied by Straight, to collect paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, cans and textiles from over 70,000 households across the County. This fortnightly collection currently includes glass; however this material will soon be collected in a separate 44 litre purple kerbside box. Following this there will be a move to a weekly collection from many properties within the scheme. This second kerbside box is from the same family as the 55 litre box and is also supplied by Straight. Smaller kerbside boxes are ideal for collecting heavier materials such as glass or paper as these materials can be difficult to handle for both the resident and collection operative.

Malcolm Smith, Waste and Recycling Officer at Caerphilly County Borough Council said: "We have worked with Straight for a number of years and have always received a high level of service. The Council is now using a twin pack vehicle that allows the separation of materials and so we have opted to separate out the glass from the rest of the recyclables using a separate container."

Mr Smith continues, "We are delighted that residents are committed to the recycling scheme we have in place and hope to see their enthusiasm continue with the glass collected in a separate box".

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's kerbside scheme has been operating since 1997 covering 90% of the Borough and collecting multi materials. To increase participation and the amount of recycled materials collected, Blaenau Gwent Community Recycling Ltd, trading as "Tidy Trev" in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is currently rolling out a new scheme to every home in the Borough with a blue Straight 55 litre kerbside box and lid. This is for the collection of mixed recyclables including glass, newspaper, cans, plastic bottles, textiles and shoes.

Tidy Trev is a community not for profit company that has received funding from the Strategic Recycling Scheme, funded by ESF/ERDF through the Welsh Assembly Government. Frances O'Brien,



Project Manager of the scheme said: "There were many contributing factors why we chose the Straight 55 litre box and lid, however the biggest pulling factor was that they are produced from 100% recycled plastic as this fits in with our environmental policy. The wind-proof snap-on lid was also a great additional feature. The boxes are now being delivered and look fantastic".

Blaenau Gwent currently collects around 2,000 tonnes of recyclable material from the kerbside and following the implementation of this scheme it is hoped this figure will double by December 2007. Marketing plays a key role to help with this and a positive response has been received by the media. In addition to this each household will receive a leaflet with their box outlining what can be put into the recycling box. Tidy Trev is also hoping to secure funding for an education officer in the near future.

