

How is the much higher rate of recycling in Newport Wales explained compared with the relatively low rate in Brighton and Hove UK?

ChatGPT said:

There are several concrete reasons why Newport (Wales) has much higher recycling rates than Brighton & Hove. These stem from differences in policy, collection systems, public engagement, regulatory pressure, infrastructure, and contractual limitations. I'll lay out what I found, with evidence, and compare the two in terms of the key factors.

Key data

- Newport's recycling rate for 2024-25 is ~ **71.45%**, comfortably over the Welsh government's 70% target. [Newport City Council](#)
- Brighton & Hove's household recycling rate is much lower: around **27–30%** in recent years. [Brighton and Hove News+1](#)

What Newport does well / what helps achieve high rates

Here are the practices or policies in Newport that seem to make a big difference:

1. Strong statutory targets and regulatory pressure in Wales

- Welsh government has set high statutory targets (70% recycling of local authority collected municipal waste by 2025) with the threat of fines for councils that fail to meet them. [Newport City Council+3Newport City Council+3BBC+3](#)
- This provides strong incentive for councils to improve services and reduce residual waste.

2. Frequent source-separated collections including food waste

- Newport collects food waste weekly via brown caddy, provides separate containers for dry recyclables (paper/card, plastics, glass etc.). [myrecyclingwales.org.uk+1](#)
- This helps capture materials that often go wrong in places without such services (food, organics, etc.).

3. Reducing residual waste capacity / making non-recyclable waste more inconvenient

- Newport replaced large non-recyclable bins (180L) with smaller (120L) ones, while keeping or improving recycling service – this sort of “bin size / capacity” change forces more waste into recycling streams. [wrap.ngo](#)
- They also monitor what goes wrongly into residual bins and seek to reduce that (food and dry recyclables ending up in the non-recyclable bins). [wrap.ngo+1](#)

4. Consistent, frequent collections

- Weekly collection of dry recycling and weekly food waste; separate containers for different materials. myrecyclingwales.org.uk+1
- Regular recycling collection is known to improve capture rates and reduce contamination.

5. **Public engagement, outreach, enforcement**

- Newport's council runs behaviour change / outreach / enforcement teams visiting households and businesses to advise them. [Newport City Council](#)
- Awareness-raising and direct outreach are part of their strategy.

6. **Infrastructure and reuse options**

- They have a "Tip Shop" at a household waste recycling centre (reuse) which helps divert usable items. [Newport City Council](#)

7. **Welsh Government policy consistency**

- Wales has more uniform recycling / waste policy across local authorities. There are national laws/guidance that mandate certain collection types and separation of materials. [BBC+2PITA+2](#)

What hinders Brighton & Hove / what they lack

Here are some of the obstacles or weaker practices in Brighton & Hove that help explain the lower recycling rate:

1. **Lack of food waste collection (or delayed rollout until recently)**

- Brighton & Hove have historically not had a full food waste collection service. They have been planning to roll it out, but only recently (from September onward in phases). [BBC+1](#)
- As a result a large portion of household waste (food & drink waste) remains in general residual bin rather than being composted or recycled. [BBC+1](#)

2. **Low capture and high contamination**

- The council reports contamination of recycling (wrong items in bins, which then have to be rejected). That reduces the effective recycling rate. [Brighton and Hove News+1](#)
- Communal bin schemes, which are more common in Brighton & Hove (flats, apartments, etc), are harder to manage for contamination, correct sorting, etc.

3. **Contractual / infrastructure constraints**

- The city's recycling service has been constrained by legacy contracts with contractors which limited what they could collect / how service expansions could be delivered. [Brighton and Hove News+1](#)

- Delays in upgrading fleet, containers, logistics. [Brighton and Hove News+1](#)
4. **Irregular or less generous collection frequency / less separation of materials**
- Some recycling services may be less frequent, or offer less separation at source (e.g. mixing many materials vs separate bins). Less separation tends to mean more contamination, and lower capture.
5. **Lower regulatory pressure and weaker statutory targets (in England)**
- England's statutory targets are generally lower, and less aggressive enforcement/fines compared with Wales. So less incentive for councils to push harder.
 - Local government funding pressures: budget constraints make expanding services (new bins, vehicles, staff) harder.
6. **Challenges of high-density housing / communal bins**
- Brighton & Hove has many flats, high density housing which often leads to communal bins rather than individual kerbside bins. Communal collections are generally less efficient, have higher logistic costs, more contamination, less control over what ends up in which bin.
7. **Public awareness / behaviour**
- Where residents are not used to food waste separation, or confused by what is recyclable, recycling rates suffer.
 - Brighton's council has run campaigns, but historically perhaps less consistent or extensive than in places that have achieved high rates over a longer period.

Comparing policy / institutional environments

- **Wales vs England:** Wales has a more centralised/integrated approach to waste policy. It sets uniform targets, legislation (for example requiring separation of materials, workplace recycling rules), and strong local authority obligations. England has more variation between councils, more local discretion, sometimes less ambitious requirements. [GOV.WALES+2BBC+2](#)
- **Enforcement / regulation:** Welsh councils may face more direct risk of penalties/fines for not achieving targets. Newport's documentation references potential fines (e.g. over £500,000) for failure to meet targets. [Newport City Council+1](#)
- **Resource allocation:** Councils in Wales like Newport appear to have invested in the infrastructure (bins, collection rounds, food waste containers, residual waste bin reduction) and in outreach / behaviour change. Brighton & Hove are starting to invest in food waste and material expansion more recently. [Brighton & Hove City Council+1](#)

Summary: Why the gap

Putting this together, the gap between Newport ($\approx 70-71\%$) and Brighton & Hove ($\approx 27-30\%$) seems to come down to a combination of:

- **Better policy & legal framework** in Wales (higher targets, statutory obligations, fines)
- **More frequent and more comprehensive recycling services** in Newport (weekly collections, separation of materials, food waste)
- **Reduced capacity / inconvenience of residual waste** in Newport (smaller general waste bins, etc), which nudges behaviour.
- **Greater infrastructure & investment** in bins, vehicles, reuse facilities, outreach in Newport.
- **Better public engagement, enforcement, and behaviour change initiatives.**
- **Brighton's constraints:** delays in services (food waste), contractual/historical limitations, high share of communal / flats, contamination, collection issues, underinvestment historically.

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