

Stopping Battery Fires From SaferWEEE to a takeover of the BBC June 2024

Scott Butler, Material Focus



Reducing the risk of battery related waste fires in the UK

- Battery fires in bin lorries and at waste sites in the UK have reached an all time high over
 1,200 battery related waste fires in the last year, an increase of 71% from 700 in 2022.
- 1.6bn batteries were thrown away in the last year, over 3,000 a minute including over
 1.1bn electricals containing hidden lithium-ion batteries.
- National Fire Chiefs Council says "fires involving lithium-ion batteries are a disaster waiting to happen".
- Battery fires cause **air pollution levels to spike in local areas, breaking WHO limits**, affecting the health of local communities.
- Cost impact of battery waste fires could also be significant Zurich UK has seen some insurance claims range up to **£20 million**.
- Technology transitions make it inevitable that more electricals containing li-on batteries are being sold and used, and **more are entering the waste stream**.
- But we can do a lot to reduce the risks.





Who are <u>Material Focus</u>?

We are an independent, not-for-profit organisation on a mission to get the UK fixing, selling, donating and recycling all of their old and unwanted electricals. And stop precious resources from being lost forever. We do this through...

Insights

 Identifying, producing and sharing insightful, timely and impactful research to help fill knowledge gaps to build a better UK e-waste/WEEE system.

Investments

• Identifying and funding projects which help make it easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals.

Inspiration

• Creating and delivering communications which help make it feel easier for people to reuse and recycle electricals through our <u>Recycle Your Electricals</u> campaign.



Who are <u>Recycle Your Electricals</u>?

Recycle Your Electricals is a UK-wide campaign motivating and making it easier for everyone to reuse and recycle unwanted electricals, ensuring we make the most of the valuable materials in them.

We educate people on what, how and where to reuse and recycle old, unwanted electricals.

- WHAT: that anything with a plug, battery or cable can be recycled
- **HOW**: by using our <u>postcode locator</u> simply put in your postcode and find your nearest drop-off point
- WHERE: with over 22k locations on our postcode locator, you can take your old electricals to retailers, local recycling centres, charities or reuse organisations

And don't forget about the Recycle Your Electricals' mascot HypnoCat - a pink, mesmeric cat with a mission to get everyone across the UK recycling their electricals!





SAFerWEEE - 2019



SAFerWEEE - Partners





SAFerWEEE - Background

- A trial aimed at reducing the risk of fire and increasing the value of recoverable material from recyclates.
- Encouraging the public to separate lithium-ion batteries (LIBs) from Small Mixed Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (SMW) at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).
- LIBs are extensively used in mobile electrical and electronic equipment. If damaged they represent a serious fire hazard.
- If not disposed of properly they pose a significant risk to people and property particularly during collection and processing of SMW.

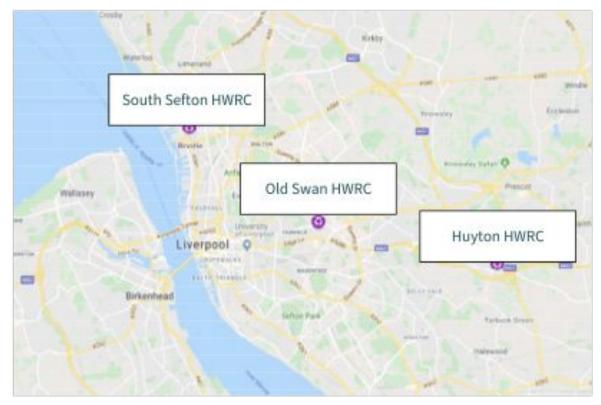


SAFerWEEE - Method

- In the second half of 2019, new communications materials were displayed alongside new collection bins for batteries and battery-containing devices at three HWRCs in Merseyside, UK.
- The signs focused on the importance of separating batteries and battery-containing devices from other SMW, in order to reduce risk of fire.
- Reviewing the waste collected after three months, researchers found the facilities were not being used as intended.
- They therefore modified the communications materials to focus on the need to remove batteries, and withdrew the bins for battery-containing devices.
- The trial ran for a further month and the waste collected was analysed again.



SAFerWEEE - Locations





SAFerWEEE - Communications

BeBatterySavvy

Batteries can burn and fires can kill Recycle batteries separately





NO Batteries in skip

Please remove all batteries from devices and put them into the Battery Bank

Batteries can burn and fires can kill Recycle batteries separately BeBatterySavvy





SAFerWEEE - Findings

- The researchers concluded that static signage at the HWRCs alone did not significantly improve practice around recycling of LIBs.
- The interventions had little effect on the quantity of batteries collected although historic data for comparison was limited.
- The communications campaign alone did not lead to a reduction in the number of batteries disposed of in SMW.
- Users did not grasp the concept of separating battery-containing devices. Researchers attributed this, in part, to the limited time people are willing to spend at the site.
- A longer trial period of 12-24 months would be needed to generate more robust data.



SAFerWEEE - Recommendations

- Clear communications to encourage users to separate lithium-ion batteries before visiting HWRCs.
- Positioning SMW and battery bins next to each other to make it easier for users to recycle batteries while disposing of WEEE.
- Formal training for HWRC staff, and locating containers where it would be easier for staff to direct the public to use the correct bins.
- Use of signs next to collecting bins, highlighting the fire risk and telling users to recycle batteries separately.



Batteries Market Research - 2021

- To understand attitudes and behaviours to disposing of used batteries and electricals containing them
- To explore how to best influence people to recycle batteries correctly, to reduce the risk of fires



What have we learnt about 'binners'?

- Most (81%) say they don't know what to do with old batteries
- Only 10% aware of battery fire risk, and that they can use their local HWRC to recycle batteries
- Respondents who knew about battery fires much less likely to bin
- More likely to be younger and female, particularly for loose batteries
 - 1 in 3 have binned loose batteries;
 - 1 in 4 have binned embedded batteries
- Less environmentally aware
 - recycling too much effort, waste of time, less likely to be anti-waste

Fire framing is critical to getting cut through

- Awareness of fire danger very low and quite alarming for all respondents
 - Particularly for embedded batteries (45% unaware of fire risk of binning)
 - immediately made people less inclined to put batteries in the bin
- Risk assumed to be small, but credible with qualification
 - arises from crushing during collection and sorting
 - hundreds of fires happening every year
 - photographic/video evidence
- Awareness of hidden batteries inside common electricals new news to many
 - eg. electric toothbrushes, e-cigs etc
- Need concrete instructions about what not/ to do, why, how
 - <u>Never</u> bin hidden or loose batteries
 - They get crushed and damaged in bin lorries and cause (hundreds of) fires
 - Recycle them separately from your household waste and recycling
 - Search '*Recycle Your Electricals*' [or pop into your local supermarket, recycling centre etc]



Motivating and making it feel easier to act

Hope

Save precious and finite materials Avoid waste

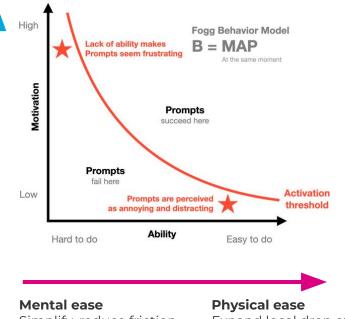
Fear Avoid causing a battery fires

Feel good

Tick something off the list Free up space in your home It's the right thing to do

Belonging

Be part of the herd Join the masses already acting Feel socially accepted



Simplify, reduce friction Show it's normal Highlight drop off points **Physical ease** Expand local drop off network Accessible drop off points



Never Bin Hidden Batteries - 2022



2022 campaign facts and figures

- 45% of householders are unaware of the fire risk if they don't safely dispose of batteries hidden inside electricals
- New campaign launched "Stop Battery Fires" to raise householders awareness of how to safely recycle their batteries and electricals
- Battery fires can endanger the public and waste truck operators by causing fires on streets, and waste centres across the UK and costing local councils millions of pounds.
- Three and half times more fires caused by batteries in the waste stream than previously reported, highlighting the significance of the issue.
- 90% of local authorities say that fires caused by batteries are an increasing problem.
- Research conducted by Material Focus amongst local authorities across the UK has identified that over 700 fires in waste trucks and sites were caused by batteries that haven't been removed from electricals.





2022 campaign activity

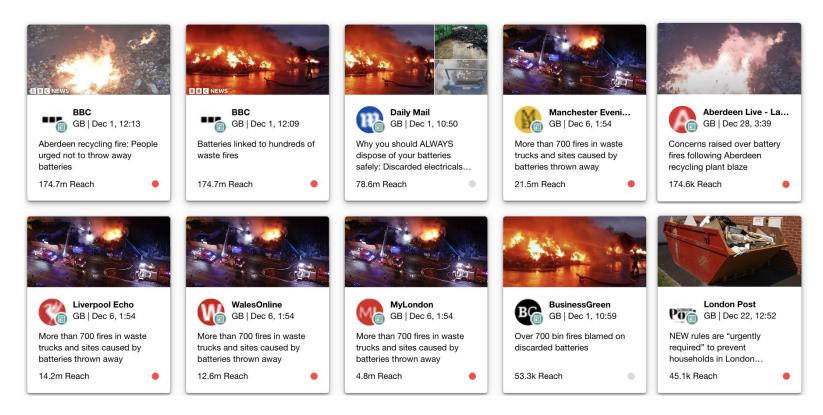
- Target: 18 34 years old environmentally agnostic binners
- July/August 2022
- Unaware of dangers binned batteries cause
- National and localised multi-media campaign across PR, social media and advertising including radio, Youtube, billboards advertisements
- Over 70 local authority partners
- Personalised campaigns in **25 cities** across the UK



Local authority campaign support across the UK



PR coverage highlights







B B C L Signin A Home Revis Sport of Weather C Player 4

Home Cost of Living | War in Ukraine | Coronavirus | Climate | UK | World | Business | Politics | Tech Scotland | Scotland Pelitics | Scotland Business | Edinburgh, Fife & East | Glasgow & West | Highlands & Islands

Alba Local News

Aberdeen recycling fire: People urged not to throw away batteries





Why you should ALWAYS dispose of your batteries safely: Discarded electricals were responsible for more than 700 FIRES in bin lorries and recycling centres in the UK this year, report warns





atterie



Build it for her almb to the top Build it for sustainability Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her alm build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her alm build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build it for her almb to the top build Build it for her almb to the top build it for he

Topics 🗸 Events Net Zero Video Hub BusinessGreen Intelligent

🔒 Become a BusinessGreen member

Over 700 bin fires blamed on discarded batteries





More than 700 fires in waste trucks and sites caused by batteries thrown away

A new campaign highlights the danger of not disposing of electrical appliances properly

New + UK News



MATERIAL FOCUS

Instagram & Facebook

hampshirerecycles

Follow

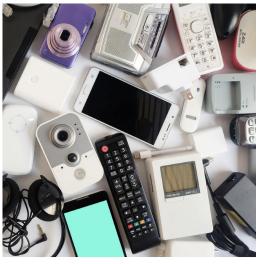
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11 likes

hampshirerecycles Did you know hidden ... more



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line

surrey_ep

 \square

5 likes

surrey_ep Did you know hidden batteries in electricals can start fires when crushed in recycling and bin lorries? There are batteries hidden in more items than you think! Find out how you can dispose of your batteries safely by visiting our search tool - Link in bio. #RecycleYourElectricals #SurreyRecycles

1 day ago

 \square

Follow ...

Broadland District Council · Follow

Did you know hidden batteries in electricals can start fires when crushed in recycling and bin lorries? There are batteries hidden in more items th... See more



07

1 comment

...







...

We are supporting the @recycleelectric campaign to remind people to dispose of batteries correctly. You can recycle batteries at our Mavis Valley Recycling Centre as well as many local shops.

■ Broadcast Revolution @broadcastrevo · Jul 20

.@recycleelectric found that over 600 fires in waste trucks & sites were caused by batteries that weren't removed from electricals in the last year.

The non-profit spoke to media about the impact of incorrect #recycling on #climate action procedures.





https://twitter.com/EDCouncil/st atus/1550511155315183616



Fh

SouthamptonCC @SouthamptonCC

Did you know that anything with a plug, battery or cable can be recycled? Find out what you can do with your old electricals, and where your nearest recycling point is at soton.cc/electricals. #RecycleRight @recycleelectric



1:08 PM · Jul 4, 2022 · Twitter Web App

https://twitter.com/SouthamptonCC /status/1543929831615827971

Moray Council @MorayCouncil

...

We should be recycling batteries separately from household rubbish.

Find out where you can recycle batteries in Moray here: recycleyourelectricals.org.uk

O Recycle Your Electricals @recycleelectric - Jul 6 Did you know hidden batteries in electricals cause hundreds of fires across the UK when crushed in recycling centres & bin lorries?

Never bin hidden batteries. Always recycle them separately from your household rubbish or recycling.

Find out more - bit.lv/30SuroL



https://twitter.com/MorayCouncil /status/1550024400765861889



Twitter



Nottinghamshire County Co... 🤣 · 39m ···· 📕 🔥 | Batteries in electrical items can start fires when crushed in recycling & bin lorries

Batteries are hidden in more items than you think! Find local battery & electrical drop off points 👇

orlo.uk/RecvcleElectri... #RecycleYourElectricals #NottsRecycles





West Lancashire Borough Cou... 📀 · 4h ····

Did you know- everything with a plug, battery or cable must be recycled separately 🔌

#RecycleYourElectricals properly and keep them out of your waste & recycling bins. Visit @recycleelectric and enter your postcode > bit.ly/3yzrh3L



broadlanddc @BroadlandDC · 2d Broadland District Council Did you know hidden batteries in electricals can start fires when crushed in recycling and bin lorries? There are batteries hidden in more items than you think!

> Visit Recycle Your Electricals to find your local battery and electrical drop off point ow.ly/aymq50JKBg7





2022 campaign results

- 28.23m people reached with ads
- 242 pieces of broadcast and 66 editorial media coverage across the UK & potential editorial reach of 922,953,392
- **Over 90%** of people who recalled the ads said it **improved their understanding** of how to recycle batteries and electricals:
 - **43%** say it's made them reconsider what they do with their old batteries and electricals
 - **32%** claim to have either started recycling, or recycle more of their old electricals
- 98,000 new visitors during core campaign period
- +20% visitors to drop off points having seen ads



Stop Battery Fires - 2023



2023 campaign activity

- Partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
- Creating a video with the NFCC, featuring a story of an impacted recycling lorry driver and the Waste Fires Lead expressing the dangers of binning batteries and electricals
- Updated local authority **toolkit**, which was shared across the UK





Examples Local Authority Support - Retweets



North Northamptonshire Council Retweeted
 National Fire Chiefs Council @NFC... · 2d ···
 700 fires in the last year were caused by batteries being thrown in with household rubbish and recycling.

Share this video and use @recycleelectric's postcode locator to find battery and electrical recycling points: bit.ly/3XLPrm





 Penzance Community Fire Station Retweeted
 National Fire Chiefs Council @NFC... · 2d ···
 700 fires in the last year were caused by batteries being thrown in with household rubbish and recycling.

Share this video and use @recycleelectric's postcode locator to find battery and electrical recycling points: bit.ly/3XLPrm





Examples Local Authority Support - Retweets

13 Swansea Recycles 🛟 Retweeted

Recycle Your Electricals @recycleel.....7h Repeat after me. Never bin batteries - always recycle them separately from your household rubbish and recycling.

Binned batteries can cause fires when crushed in bin lorries.

Use our locator to find your local recycling points: bit.lv/3JIdTO4





11 Cambridge City Council Retweeted

National Fire Chiefs Council · 13/07/2023 Never chuck loose batteries or small electricals in your rubbish; those small batteries could cause huge fires when crushed.

Always recycle batteries separately. Use @recycleelectric postcode locator for recycling points: bit.ly/43iMevD bit.ly/ **3NFXtZR**



1] Gravesham Council Retweeted



Recycle Your Electricals @r... · 11/07/2023 ···· 100 fires in the last year were caused by batteries being thrown in with household rubbish and recycling. Share this video and use our comms toolkit to help reduce battery fires in your area.

bit.ly/3XGWUDA @NFCC FireChiefs





Battery posters for HWRCs







Stop Battery Fires - 2024



Overall Campaign Activity





Battery content



Mark Andrews National Fire Chiefs Council Waste Fires Lead



Over 1,200 fires caused by binned hidden and loose batteries **1.6 billion batteries binned** In the last year



MATERIAL FOCUS

3 reasons

never to bin

hidden or loose batteries





#3 - Losing valuable materials



Always recycle batteries and electricals at a designated

U recycle your electrical

drop-off point.

じ

Print & online coverage

416 Pieces of media coverage



The Guardian

UK public warned after huge rise in fires caused by binned batteries

Fire chief says incorrect disposal of devices powered by lithium-ion batteries are 'disaster waiting to happen'





Battery fires from discarded electronics on the rise, study warns

Recycling campaigners have urged the public to properly recycle their old electronic devices.

Martyn Landi • Friday 10 May 2024 00:01 BST

💷 🕑 💟 🖾





Broadcast coverage



164m+ Total Reach







2





Local Authority support

77 Survey Responses

- 77/382 completed survey
- 50/53 reported increase in fires
- 1,200 battery related fires over past year

116 LAs Involved

- completing the survey
- sharing images/ footage
- providing quotes
- case studies
- resharing our stats,
 - research and assets

28 New LA's

 28/115 new partners proving benefit of audience led (LA in this case) insights



New assets to help reduce contamination



Scan the QR code to find your nearest recycling drop off points for the items not accepted
vour
recycle
vour
ecycle
vour
ecycl



NO vapes, NO light bulbs & NO loose batteries please No vapes here Nearest vape recycling drop off point:

vour electricals



No loose batteries here

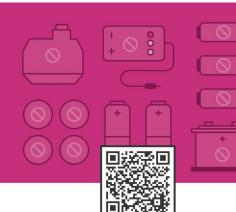
Scan the QR code to find your nearest battery recycling drop off point please





No vapes here

Scan the QR code to find your nearest vape recycling drop off point please





Scan the QR code to find your nearest battery recycling drop off point please





Social media examples

Creater Cambridge Recycles reposted
 Recycle Your Electricals @recycleel.....5h
 Don't let your old batteries go up in smoke

Binned batteries and electricals are causing dangerous fires in bin lorries and at recycling centres.

Read our research on how battery fires are on the rise: ow.ly/sqn850RBbgs+





NS Recycling & Waste @ns_recycli... · 21m Please #RecycleYourBatteries

 Either put them in a loosely tied bag and place in your kerbside box
 Or take them to a super market collection

point Vapes have batteries too and can be recycled check our website for more detail: n-

somerset.gov.uk/recycling

Recycle Your Electricals @recyc.... 5h
 Don't let your old batteries go up in smoke

Binned batteries and electricals are causing dangerous fires in bin lorries and at recycling centres.

Read our research on how battery fires are on the rise: ow.ly/sqn850RBbgs+





Surrey Environment Partnership @... · 5h Protect Surrey's crews, don't bin your batteries!

Recycle Your Electricals @recyc... · 5h
 Don't let your old batteries go up in smoke

Binned batteries and electricals are causing dangerous fires in bin lorries and at recycling centres.

Read our research on how battery fires are on the rise: ow.ly/sqn850RBbgs+





Social media examples



Recycle for Greater Manche... @recycle4gm

recycling points: bit.ly/3UtvzF1



Derby City Council @DerbyCC

🔋 Batteries don't belong in bins!

Did you know hidden batteries can start fires when crushed in recycling and bin lorries? Make sure that you recycle them separately.

Find your closest battery recycling point: orlo.uk/IJpw8

@recycleelectric



Binned batteries can cause fires when crushed

Always recycle batteries separately.

in bin lorries. So remember - never bin batteries!

Use @recycleyourelectric's locator to find local





Go Recycle Right 🥏 @GoRecycleRight Follow

#Batteries cause hundreds of fires every year in Recycling Centres, as well as bins and recycling lorries.

The only way to prevent fires and keep crews safe is to recycle old electricals!

Visit recycleyourelectricals.org.uk to find out where to drop off your electricals & batteries.





Retailer partnerships - consumer communications



Social Media Posts

Such as LinkedIn post in screenshot

Filming for BBC

Successful day filming in Currys Brixton store for the BBC piece

Currys plc 93,819 followers 1h · (5) + Follow ...

We were delighted to help launch Material Focus' latest Recycle Your Electricals campaign this week, tackling the challenge of fire-risk batteries getting into household waste.

Scott Butler and the BBC Breakfast team joined us in Currys Brixton to discuss just how many of our much-loved electricals rely on tiny lithium-ion batteries which, if not properly recycled, can represent a real risk of fire when crushed in bin lorries or in household waste centres.

As one of the UK's leading electricals retailers, anyone can bring their old batteries - or any manner of old tech - down to one of our 300 UK stores for free recycling, no matter where they originally bought them.

What's more, we'll even give you a £5 voucher to spend in store when we take any old tech off your hands, giving you **#CashforTrash**.

#LongLiveYourTech #RecycleYourElectricals



Digital Till Screens

Digital poster using our copy/logo was placed on till screens in all **2,400 stores for 2 Weeks** - 22.5.24-4.6.24

and an in-store radio piece too was created to discussing campaign





Retailer partnerships - internal communications



Colleague communications – all Currys colleagues (25k) were briefed on this campaign, to push it with their customers over several weeks. It was shared on their internal comms channels several times. For example, post from 8.5.24 shown on the right....



Content from our campaign deck was shared across their intranet - over 11.5k staff



Regarding battery info/toolkit - it was provided to L&D team and was signposted to on the JLP Learning and Development portal (intranet) - 80k staff potentially



Contact said info about this campaign would be sent out to their 60k staff members



As you know, in all of our stores you'll find a battery recycling bin which can be used to deposit old AA and AAA batteries, as well as computer, mobile phone and watch batteries. But do our customers know this? We ve partnered up with Material Focus who are launching "Recycling your Electricals", a nation wide recycling campaign aimed at raising awareness and making it easier for everyone to re-use and recycle unwaited electricals.

The campaign runs from Thursday 9th May until Thursday 16th May and in this time, we want you to let all your customers know that Currys is the go-to place for recycling old batteries and appliance.

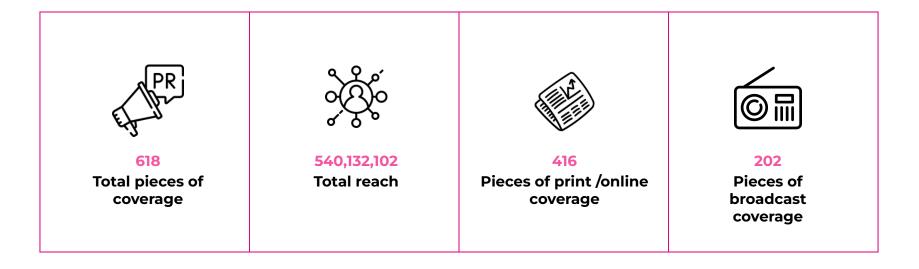
Did you know that many old electricals have batteries hidden within them? Cameras, shavers etc. These batteries cause hundreds of fires a year across the UK when crushed in recycling centres and bin lormes. Batteries should always be recycled eparately from household rubbish and other recycling, and that's why we provide battery recycling bins in all our stores. Keep in mind that we do not accept damaged batteries, as these are a fire risk in themselves, so please politely decline these.

And let's not forget Cash for Trash. Customers bringing in their old tech to recycle with us get a £5 voucher to spend in store. This is a perfect time to let your customer know that any batteries in that old tech should be removed and recycled separately in our battery recycling bin. (Cash for Trash vouchers should be given out for old tech only, not for batteries).

With Cash for Trash and the Recycling Your Electricals campaign we're ensuring old tech is recycled responsibly and safely, our customers get a little treat and we help the environment. Everyone's a winner!



PR results



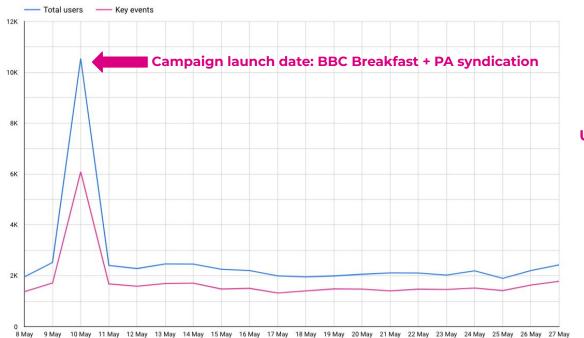


Stop Battery Fires coverage breakdown





Web traffic during campaign period



New Users: 47,488 Uses of the Locator: 35,205 Conversion rate: 61.6%

Users increased by 18% and new users by 21% May vs April



Reducing the risk of battery-related waste fires in the UK

- Battery fires in bin lorries and at waste sites in the UK have reached an all time high over 1,200 in the last year, an increase of 71% from 700 in 2022.
- 1.6bn batteries were thrown away in the last year, over 3,000 a minute including over 1.1bn electricals containing hidden lithium-ion batteries.
- National Fire Chiefs Council says "fires involving lithium-ion batteries are a disaster waiting to happen".
- Battery fires cause air pollution levels to spike in local areas, breaking WHO limits, affecting the health of local communities.
- Cost impact of battery waste fires could also be significant Zurich UK has seen some insurance claims range up to £20 million.
- Technology transitions make it inevitable that more electricals containing li-on batteries are being sold and used, and more are entering the waste stream.
- But we can do a lot to reduce the risks.







• Understand your audience:

- Know who your audience is, what they care about and where they get information.
- Tailor messages to specific segments and locations to increase relevance and impact.

• Be clear:

- Develop a clear and concise core message that sums up the campaign's purpose.
- Avoid using acronyms and technical terms like WEEE.
- Speak to the people on the street or in the cafés who are hearing about these issues for the very first time.

• Be consistent:

• Make sure that all communications across different platforms and channels are consistent to reinforce the key messages.



• Collaborate:

- Work with experts, trusted voices, influencers, media and other stakeholders to get more reach.
- Good partnerships are mutually beneficial and line up with the campaign's goals.

• Be creative and be engaging:

- Use creative approaches to stand out in a crowded media landscape.
- Be bold and brave, try new tactics and adjust based on what works.
- Craft stories that hit the spot with your audience.
- Be real:
 - Be genuine to build trust and credibility.



• Use the channels:

• Use a mix of traditional and digital media to reach a broader audience and have the messages across different channels support and amplify each other.

• Be timely and responsive:

- Launch campaigns at times when they are most likely to gain attention.
- Be agile and respond quickly to feedback and emerging trends.

• Measure, learn and adapt:

- Have clear, measurable objectives before launching the campaign.
- Track performance metrics and use analysis and feedback to continuously improve the campaign.



Contact

The Recycle Your Electricals campaign is led by Material Focus.

Material Focus is a not-for-profit organisation - our vision is of a world where materials are never wasted.

Please follow us and share our content on social media



facebook.com/recycleyourelectricals



@recycleelectric



@recycleyourelectricals_



www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk



hello@materialfocus.org.uk



linkedin.com/company/materialfocus



