

Community composting provides solutions to food waste for residents without gardens living in cities that do not collect food waste. This fact sheet explains the process followed in Brighton & Hove for setting up their successful community compost scheme.

How to set up a community compost scheme

WHAT IS COMMUNITY COMPOSTING?

Community composting schemes offer residents the chance to **recycle their food waste in cities** where the council does not take food waste.

They consist of three or more wooden compost bins in a green space like a public park.

Residents join for free as members and contribute their fruit and veg waste, and receive a share of the compost when it's ready.



WHO IS INVOLVED?

Residents organise to start a scheme, and join the scheme for free as members.

Each scheme has two volunteer **compost monitors (who are residents)**, who take responsibility for turning the compost, checking the quality of the compost, and inducting new members to the scheme.

The council fund the scheme, which involves paying for materials, maintenance costs, and a staff member at the Food Partnership.

The **Brighton & Hove Food Partnership** are responsible for the administration of schemes citywide - managing new members and enquiries, and advocating for new schemes.

CAN I SET ONE UP TOO?

This factsheet describes the process for setting up a scheme in Brighton & Hove. Regulations will be different in each city, but our tips remain the same - finding committed volunteers, building decent bins and setting up rotas for turning.



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HOW DOES IT WORK?

Our community compost schemes work as a partnership between **residents, the council, and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.**

Each compost scheme is free to join and has on average 40 households signed up.

Residents from these household take their food waste to the compost bins. To make sure the compost is getting regularly turned and has the right components, two **compost monitors** per scheme will turn it weekly.

Monitors have the responsibility of informing the **Food Partnership** if there are issues with the bins - if food is not decomposing, or the structure is faulty.

After roughly 6 months, a bin will be full of food waste and will be left to transform into compost, at which point another bin is started.

Once the food waste has decomposed, members of the scheme take this home to their gardens, or it is redistributed within the city.

The **Food Partnership** is funded by the **council** to run the schemes, and deals with the administrative side of the project.

This includes directing interested residents to new schemes, liaising and campaigning for new sites, maintaining the bins, and having a citywide overview of demand.



Photo: BHFP



It takes between 6-12 months to get a compost scheme set up, and around 6 months for a bin to produce compost



Composting schemes can be set up in parks and other flat green spaces



It's important to get residents, the local authority, and the voluntary sector on board



Schemes aim to reduce food waste whilst also increasing community cohesion and providing a form of 'everyday activism'

LESSONS FROM SETTING UP COMMUNITY COMPOST SCHEMES

Whilst you are working with food waste, you are also working with **people**.

Your compost can only be as good as the residents and volunteers, so put effort into building relationships with them.

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership hold annual **compost monitor** celebrations, for example, to show that we value them and the community they are building through compost.

Changing the perception of compost from dealing with **food waste** to an active process of **creating compost** is an important way to get people engaged in the process.

You need to make people excited about the thought of compost!

Your compost will **nearly always** be **too wet** - never stop encouraging people to add cardboard and paper to their compost heaps.

Communities can be **resistant** to compost schemes - it can take a long time to get approval for a scheme, but don't give up!

Good bin design is essential to minimise rodents, reduce costs, and speed up the process - you need something that makes it easy for people to turn the compost. We'd recommend using these specifications from Tim's Bin's [here](#).

