

Veolia, in partnership with Westminster City Council, rings in the New Year with highest ever recycling rate for special events

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Veolia Westminster celebrated a fantastic end to the year with a 61% recycling rate for special events in 2024, by using a fresh approach to large-scale clean ups which maximises recycling capture whilst swiftly returning streets to a high standard of cleanliness.

A dedicated team of 150 Veolia workers swiftly collected cans, glass and other party leftovers at the largest New Year's celebration in the UK. This is just one of over 50 special events handled by Veolia in Westminster every year, returning the streets to normal and minimising public disruption as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Veolia's method of driving up recycling rates involves:

- Strategic distribution of clearly signed recycling and general waste bins to stallholders, enabling them to recycle easily
- Team trained to remove and divert any recyclables from general waste during events ahead of the main cleansing operations
- Rapid collection of specific materials via state-of-the-art EAV bikes, such as Nox canisters that pose a hazard if collected as general rubbish, enabling these to be safely recycled.

These aren't the only ways Westminster City Council and Veolia have been working towards net zero 2030.

The majority of recycling and waste is collected by a dedicated electric fleet, which saves up to 89% of the CO2 emissions compared with traditional diesel-powered vehicles.

Since the start of the year food waste bins have been introduced for stallholders serving food at special events, enabling recycling into biogas and fertiliser. A dedicated outreach team engages with food vendors to remind them of best approaches to avoid contamination in their recycling.

For sporting events, strategically placed textile bins have significantly boosted recycling rates: at the London Winter Run 10k, for instance, Veolia partnered with Cancer Research to capture jumpers for reuse. This accounted for nearly 20% of all recycling collected at the event, yielding the highest recycling rate ever recorded at a special event in the City of Westminster at 86.92%.

Scott Edgell, General Manager at Veolia, said: "I'm extremely proud of our teams for leading by example and showing what can be achieved. Special events are full of challenges including large crowds, high volumes of waste, and of course contamination and these exceptional recycling rates reflect our dedication to a low carbon future. Of course, none of it would be possible without the frontline team – a massive thank you to the crews for delivering this impressive feat at the New Year's clean-up and throughout 2024."

Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality at Westminster City Council, said: "We're thrilled to see the impressive results of our continued partnership with Veolia, achieving the highest ever recycling rate for special events in the City in 2024. It's a fantastic milestone in our efforts to create a cleaner, greener Westminster."

"We're committed to pushing for even better recycling rates across all our events, and last year's success highlights what's possible when we work together with innovative solutions and a focus on sustainability."