Design of communications material
WRAP’s vision is a world without waste, where resources are used sustainably.

We work with businesses and individuals to help them reap the benefits of reducing waste, develop sustainable products and use resources in an efficient way.

Find out more at www.wrap.org.uk

Written by: WRAP

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## Contents

1.0 **Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 4  
2.0 **Planning your Communications** ........................................................................................... 4  
3.0 **Developing your Communications** ....................................................................................... 4  
    3.1 Employing an Agency ............................................................................................................... 4  
    3.2 Design Identity ....................................................................................................................... 5  
    3.3 Photography .......................................................................................................................... 5  
    3.4 The Design Process ................................................................................................................. 6  
4.0 **Developing the Layout and Content for your Promotional Material** ..................................... 7  
    4.1 Principle 1 – Headline ............................................................................................................ 7  
    4.2 Principle 2 – Hierarchy ........................................................................................................... 7  
    4.3 Principle 3 – Make it personal to the reader ......................................................................... 8  
    4.4 Principle 4 – Make it Positive ............................................................................................... 8  
    4.5 Principle 5 – Design ............................................................................................................... 9  
    4.6 Principle 6 – Action ............................................................................................................... 10  
    4.7 Principle 7 – Contact Information ......................................................................................... 11  
    4.8 Principle 8 – Make Information Understandable ................................................................. 11  
    4.9 Principle 9 – Testing Designs ............................................................................................... 11  
    4.10 Principle 10 - Recycle Now Campaign ............................................................................. 11  
5.0 **More Help and Support** ....................................................................................................... 12  
Appendix 1 – Design Brief Example ............................................................................................... 13  
Appendix 2 – Communications Checklist ...................................................................................... 15
1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to raise awareness and understanding of the development and design process for recycling promotions and to raise awareness of other guidance documents available to help you plan your communications. It also includes advice on how a typical local authority waste/recycling officer should work with a design agency or internal design team to develop and deliver promotional material and the timescales involved.

2.0 Planning your Communications

Before starting to develop a campaign or piece of promotional material, it is strongly recommended that you look at the WRAP document, Improving Recycling Through Effective Communications, to help you plan your communications. This can be downloaded from the WRAP website:

http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/improving-recycling-through-effective-communications

Planning your communications effectively will help lead to a successful outcome by linking your operational and key performance objectives to your communications.

3.0 Developing your Communications

This section provides a brief outline on the main things to consider when developing designs for communications material. Much of this is covered in greater detail in Improving Recycling Through Effective Communications guidance mentioned in 2.0 above.

3.1 Employing an Agency

If you do not have an in-house designer, you may need to employ an external agency. Ideally, you should use an agency that has knowledge and experience of your specific work area and can provide examples of materials designed/produced along with testimonials from clients who can be approached for references if required.

Develop a brief based on your proposed artwork requirements and ask a number of agencies to tender for the work. See Appendix 1 for a copy of a design brief template and sample content for a new service introduction leaflet. Include a reasonable amount of work within the brief to make it attractive for good companies to bid for the work. Expect to work with your chosen agency for a period of time.

Always interview a shortlist of candidates and look at a portfolio of their work – do not simply rely on prices. Some agencies may have a style that you do not like at all and would be totally unsuitable to promote your services. Where possible use an agency that is familiar with local authorities and has some knowledge and experience of waste and recycling and the national ‘Recycle Now’ campaign resources.

Example

Based on the introduction of AWC your brief should include the following elements in an invitation to tender:

- Develop 3 design identities from which you will choose one or a combination of the most appropriate elements;
- Produce design guidelines to based on the chosen design;
- Design and print introductory leaflets;
- Design and print instruction leaflets;
- Design and print collection calendars;
- Design and produce displays and posters;
- Design lorry livery and liaise with relevant Council contact/contractor regarding application; and
- Design options for newspapers, billboard and bus advertising.
3.2 Design Identity

Do you already have a design identity for your communications? Does your council have identity guidelines, which dictate how promotional material should look? Do you use the national ‘Recycle Now’ or Zero Waste Scotland’ brand guidelines?

If not, it would be wise to develop an identity, which can be integrated across all your communications. It is important to develop a consistent look and feel as it will aid householders in recalling information and recognising whom the communication has come from. The ‘recycle now’ or ‘Recycle for Scotland’ guidelines are easy to integrate and can be localised specifically for your area and the services you provide. This enables you to develop an identity that has the benefit of a local focus but also links to a well recognised national campaign.

Be aware of the massive amount of media clutter there is in everyday life and how it competes with the information and messages you are trying to communicate; a well developed identity will help get your communications noticed.

If you need to develop an identity for your communications employ an agency that will come up with three or four design concepts for you to consider. These should include any constraints your authority places on promotional material. Ensure agencies are familiar with your guidelines and the resources available via the national campaigns.

Once you have chosen a design identity ask the agency to produce written and illustrated guidelines on its use, this will include:

- Design features;
- Which font you will use consistently and what sizes;
- The use of colour, primary palettes which may be based on your council logo, the colour of your vehicles, or some other cues which link to your council or service;
- Secondary colours;
- Layout including suggested grids for leaflets;
- Examples of promotional material;
- Use of logos – primary and secondary; and
- Use of national iconography.

These guidelines will keep your material consistent and allow you to use more than one agency in future.

3.3 Photography

Good photographs can be extremely helpful to the finished product and you should consider employing a professional photographer (through the design agency if your project is big enough) to take photographs of your services, equipment, sites, etc. You will be able to use these throughout the project and you will have created a library of images, which will be invaluable. This is
generally a cheaper option than trying to find photographs on Internet image libraries, which are very rarely suitable and due to licensing arrangements for multiple use, very expensive. Don’t forget, there is an extensive photo library of free and suitable images available on the www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk website.

If you chose to employ a photographer create a list of photographs you need and, preferably, ask your designer to accompany you and to give some direction as to how they want the photographs taken. Make it clear from the outset to the photographer that the copyright of the photographs will rest with you and you will not have to pay any royalties if you want to use them in the future on other projects. The photographs should be in a digital format and you should be given a copy on CD.

Disclaimers, usage fees, permission (especially for children) should be obtained from all people appearing in the photographs at the outset – if this is not done there may be problems later in publishing the photographs.

3.4 The Design Process

Unless you are dealing with a designer who understands waste management, expect to produce all the text (the copy) for the leaflet yourself and an idea of the layout – see section 4 below for guidance. If you come across one that is experienced in both design and waste management it will make your life much easier as they will be able to develop the copy for you.

Make sure you know exactly what you want to get over to the public, in what order and what size the creative it is likely to be. For example, will it be a 4 page A5 leaflet, a bus advertisement or vehicle livery. Have a look at examples of work other local authorities have carried out.

Talk to your designer about your needs and what you are trying to achieve and let them develop a design that augments your message. Agree a format, taking their advice as to whether there is too much text for the creative you are proposing.

Discuss the material you will be printing on or the media it will be used in – each process will require particular parameters to be set to create the design file. Also, an important part of the design process is selecting the paper on which you will be printing. It is essential that consideration is given to the paper type, its weight and fitness for purpose. WRAP have produced Print Guidance for Local Authorities, which is available on the WRAP Website and goes into this in more detail.

If you are just getting your designer to provide you with the design expect to give them the specification the printer, newspaper, bus or billboard company will expect the design file to be in – or at least a contact so that they can get the information themselves.

You will be expected to provide logos and possibly photographs all in the right format and at the right resolution. The designer will explain what they want and help with any conversions at a cost.

Expect to receive draft designs electronically by pdf (portable document format). This is much quicker and easier than printed copies, which can be very time consuming. All PCs should have acrobat reader loaded on to them, which will allow you to open pdfs and if you have the latest version, add your comments electronically and send them back to the designer.

The first draft of a creative will be the first time you see your copy and the design put together. If you have design guidelines, there should be an expectation that it will be about right but some changes might be required. Review what you have and discuss any amendments with the agency.

Most agencies will make a reasonable number of amendments before the final version but please don’t expect several designs and major changes to the copy to be ‘reasonable’. If you expect them to produce a 4 and a 6 page leaflet for the same purpose just so that you can see how they look or you have not taken enough care over the copy, expect to pay for the design of two leaflets. Make sure you agree the number of amendments prior to the work starting and the charge should you exceed them.
Designing the artwork for a four page A5 leaflet where the copy, photographs, logos and illustrations are available and the design guidelines are clear can take between 1 and 2 days – this time can double if elements are missing.

Amendments, however minor, can have a significant impact on the design – especially text changes which may need realignment of text boxes, images, adjustment of text size not just on the affected page but on adjacent pages as well. Consider using the WRAP communications checklist provided in Appendix 2 to provide amendments to your designer in a structured way – see section 4 and Appendix 2.

Ask a few people not directly involved in the service to proof read the original copy and the final pdf for you prior to the final set of amendments you send to the designers.

When you have a pdf that you are happy with, you will be expected to ‘sign it off’ - the designer will have a procedure for this. Don’t forget, the responsibility for making sure the content is correct is yours. The design agency will then provide you with a press ready file to send to your printer or they will send it to theirs if they are arranging print.

4.0 Developing the Layout and Content for your Promotional Material

The purpose of this section is to give basic and practical suggestions on the development and design of effective communications. These principles can be applied to collection calendars, leaflets, adverts and other marketing communications.

WRAP has developed a communications checklist based on these principles which allows a structured approach to reviewing artwork – this is provided in Appendix 2. Consider using it to give feedback to your designer as it allows you to identify issues clearly and make suggestions for change.

4.1 Principle 1 – Headline

In a calendar, leaflet or advertisement the most important element is the headline. The headline is either the heading that goes at the top or if there’s no heading it’s the first few words. The headline needs to grab peoples’ attention and tell them what it is about. If the headline of your calendar or leaflet is currently the name of your local authority, you can almost certainly increase its effectiveness significantly by changing the headline to what the communication is about.

Keep it simple; do not try to be too clever – a catchy and appropriate strap line is best. A clever concept can go over peoples’ heads – they don’t have the time or the inclination to try and work it out. A good example of a headline is:

Recycle – use your bin

It tells people what to do (first and foremost it is an instruction) and what the communication is about.

4.2 Principle 2 – Hierarchy

It is very important that you develop a hierarchy so that the most important information or message is at the top and the least important at the bottom. Peoples’ attention span can be short and they will skim the information after the first few sentences unless you can maintain their interest.
In terms of presentation:

- Get the important information across first – if people feel they need more detail they will keep reading. Do not bury the important stuff at the end so that it gets missed;
- Emphasise the important parts of a sentence – you can make a long paragraph really easy to read by emboldening key words which get your message across; and
- Change the font colour to emphasise points where appropriate but obviously not excessively or inappropriately where the colour conflicts with the message, such as:

  Go
  Stop

4.3 Principle 3 – Make it personal to the reader

The copy of your calendar, advertisement or leaflet needs to be a personal communication to the individual reading it. It should address their needs, desires and concerns, communicate your message in a friendly way and it needs to communicate the benefits of what you are offering.

Do not say things like:

‘Moving Forward Council has decided that it will change the way it collects domestic refuse’.

Relate it to the individual:

‘We are making improvements to the way we collect your waste’ or ‘We are making it easier for you to recycle’

People will know ‘We’ is Moving Forward Council because you will have put your crest/logo and your contact information on the communication.

4.4 Principle 4 – Make it Positive

Generally the message you are trying to get across or the service or product you are introducing is a positive thing – otherwise you would not be doing it!

Do not anticipate problems by putting a negative slant to the message you are trying to get across or by developing them in your communication.

For example, when introducing alternate weekly collections of refuse and recyclables:

- ‘We won’t be picking up your waste weekly any more we will be doing it fortnightly’. This implies that residents are getting a lesser service. If you are operating an alternate weekly collection residents are still receiving a weekly collection service. You are likely to be introducing improved recycling services at the same time - reinforce the benefits of this scheme; and

- ‘Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 we are not obliged to collect your waste every week – we just have to make a regular collection and tell you when it is going to be’. Don't hide behind a piece of legislation that most people will have never heard of. Explain the new service by clearly focusing on the benefits. You are trying to encourage people to sort their waste not put them off using the service.
There is **no need to give people ammunition** with which they can criticise the service you are providing.

**People need to be encouraged to join in because the service is being improved and will be better for them** – if they accept a level of responsibility for their own waste and for their environment.

Give people reasons to join in with the scheme and tell them the benefits. Consider including a list of the benefits such as:

### Why Recycle

- It’s easy and convenient with at least 90% of householders having access to a kerbside collection scheme;
- Waste disposal costs are increasing so by recycling we can save money;
- It helps create employment and supports the local economy;
- By recycling we can help sustain natural resources for future generations;
- Reduces pollution caused by extracting virgin raw materials and through the disposal of waste at landfill sites;
- Saves natural resources and extends the life of raw material reserves;
- Conserves wildlife habitats where materials are extracted; and
- Saves energy as less energy is used to produce goods from recyclable materials rather than from virgin raw materials.

### 4.5 Principle 5 – Design

**Develop a consistent brand**

Branding is a word you will have heard on many occasions. It is **not a logo**, your council crest or just another mark. It embodies the values of your campaign and your organisation to your audience.

It is achieved by developing a visual identity through consistent use of colour, font, illustrations, photographs, layout, etc. Ultimately, given enough exposure you could leave your logo off and people would still know the communication was from you.

It is important to **be consistent from one communication to the next**, as people will recognise it is from you after a short while and know what the subject is and that it is important. Keep changing the style and they will treat it as junk in the sea of advertising that is trying to catch their attention.

**So, develop a brand identity write some guidelines and stick to them!** These guidelines should provide advice and information on how to create designs, which reflect your identity. It will help maintain a consistent look and feel for all communication material and protect your brand identity from misuse. If you come across a designer who does not want to use your guidelines, or does not suggest assisting you to develop some, go somewhere else.

**Your design should be appropriate** – Barbie dolls or fluffy animals do not have anything to do with the collection of rubbish or recycling. They might appeal to primary school children but not generally to adults. Please do not treat adult audiences like children – it is condescending, unhelpful and it is rarely fun. Look at:

- Top quality designs for inspiration – that is what good designers are taught to do;
- Top quality advertising to see how clearly they focus the message on their target audience; and
- The top brands and how they maintain the appearance of all their products, services and communications – you may not have their budgets but you are still competing with them for peoples’ attention.
Do not distract the reader by making the design too fussy. A clean design carefully set with the minimum of distraction is best. Space around paragraphs makes the text much easier to read, pages packed with text without features makes it difficult. Put information in easily understood and assimilated ‘chunks’.

Do not make a leaflet a battlefield of complex colours, images and text.

Fonts should be plain (sans serif) without those little embellishments like Times Roman. Choose a font and stick to it – do not change it in the same leaflet. Plain fonts are easier to read especially for those with visual impairment. Equally, please do not be obsessed with Ariel either; there are much more friendly fonts like this one which is Tahoma. When using black text on a white background try putting it in a tint – 80% for example makes it a lot less harsh – experiment; see which is best.

Point size for paragraph or body text can be anything between 8 and 12 point, any smaller and it is difficult to read, any larger and it starts to look like a child’s first reading book and becomes condescending to adults. Do not make it unecessarily large, remember a newspaper is about 8/9 point and the vast majority of people can read newspapers. You will, or course, provide a large text version for the visually impaired.

There is some excellent guidance for published material for the visually impaired on the Office for Disability Issues website, A guide to accessible publishing. Consider some of this advice for all your material, as it will make it easier for everyone to read.

‘Wingdings’ like ticks and crosses to use as bullet points, especially those that have been designed for your brand, can be very effective and will give your communications a consistent look. Do not use the standard range of characters that may be available on the software you are using – like MS Office – they can make any communication look crude and unprofessional.

WRAP recommend you stipulate a minimum of 50% recycled content (where recycled content includes pre and post consumer waste but excludes mill broke and any virgin pulp comes from a sustainable source) but higher proportion good quality paper is also available.

Include a reference on the communication – this will help enable you to track the effectiveness of the communication if you choose to ask residents where they have seen the information.

4.6 Principle 6 – Action

Your communication must make it clear what action you want people to take. Your first message must be the last message your audience need before they do whatever you want them to do. They must not have to ring someone to get a leaflet to find a number to do it – it will never happen!

‘Recycle – use your bin’ – do not give them an escape route!

Do not distract the reader by making the design too fussy.
4.7 Principle 7 – Contact Information

Never produce a communication, which does not have:

Your council or campaign logo
Web address: www.movingforward.gov.uk/recycling
Email address: recycle@movingforward.gov.uk
Telephone number: 0845 123 4567

You need to be easily accessible using memorable contact information.

4.8 Principle 8 – Make Information Understandable

Make sure information is easy to understand and uses simple and concise language. If you are using facts and figures make sure information is as up to date as possible.

Use clear and simple terminology that householders will understand and do not use jargon, which may be familiar within your industry but to no one else.

It is important that you provide appropriate information. Is the copy relevant? Is there an unnecessary amount of information? Too much information can reduce the impact of key messages and confuse householders.

Do it right and people will understand what you want them to do and will change the way they do things. Get your communications wrong and you may as well have thrown the money down the drain.

Consider using the services provided by the Plain English Campaign (www.plainenglish.co.uk). For a charge they will check and amend your promotional materials and let you use their Crystal Mark to show it has been checked for plain English.

Also, remember to ask someone reliable to check the spelling, grammar and punctuation before you press the print button. This is very important.

4.9 Principle 9 – Testing Designs

Testing design concepts and copy can be costly if you employ specialist research agencies. An alternative is to test designs and copy on non-recycling/waste related staff or members of the public using on street survey techniques. This can provide a good insight into peoples’ opinions and feedback on the communication can then be used to modify or improve the communication.

Let your call centre comment on your promotional material, they are in daily contact with householders and will invariably know the types of questions they will ask and whether the content is clear and appropriate.

4.10 Principle 10 - Recycle Now Campaign

The Recycle Now campaign is a national consumer brand which has a high recognition factor and is synonymous with driving positive changes in recycling behaviour. It is used widely by retail and local authorities and retail, aiding recall at a local level.

Guidelines for using the Recycle Now campaign, how to localise it to your local area and extensive design resources and templates for local authorities are available on www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk
**Benefits of using Recycle Now**

- 67% recognition as the national recycling brand in England;
- 90%+ local authorities are using the brand;
- Wide use in the retail and wider industry;
- Being used by retailers and brands for the on-pack recycling labels;
- Used by many business and government organisations on printed literature;
- Aids recall locally of a nationally used brand;
- Extensive free design resources and templates are available; and
- Guidance on using Recycle Now freely available.

### 5.0 More Help and Support

For more research and guidance on all aspects of communications planning and delivery, please visit [http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/resources-local-authority-communications](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/resources-local-authority-communications). Alternatively, for free communications support and advice contact WRAP's Community Partnerships Team on 01295 819900 or email: info@wrap.org.uk
Appendix 1 – Design Brief Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Give a title to the work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New service introduction leaflet</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Give a brief background to the Council services and the project.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving Forward Council has a population of approximately 230,000 with 100,000 households. It is a mix of urban and rural with a deprived area of terraced housing with low literacy levels in North Moving. 10% of the area is made up of flats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The waste management team operates its own recycling and waste helpline and there is a well-developed council website with a specific URL link to the waste and recycling pages – <a href="http://www.movingforward.gov.uk/recycling">www.movingforward.gov.uk/recycling</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Council is planning to introduce:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fortnightly collections of residual waste using a new 240l wheeled bin and implement a closed lid, no side waste policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weekly collection of food waste using 7 litre kitchen caddies and 25 litre bins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weekly collections of paper, cans and glass using the current 55l boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To all households (excluding flats and houses in multiple occupation) in one phase in September 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New containers will be distributed week commencing 15th September 2013.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The work</th>
<th>What do you want to achieve? By when and quantities of promotional material?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design a leaflet to introduce the new recycling and waste collection service to households. Text for the leaflet has been provided and it is anticipated that this will be sufficient for a 4 page A5 leaflet. The Council’s corporate guidelines, policies on legibility, accessibility and Recycle Now brand and partner guidelines, which must be taken into account in the design, have also been provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Recycle Now style is to be integrated with the Council’s visual identity, utilising the localised Recycle Mark and the Council logo. Two concepts are to be developed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Using illustrations of the collection containers and the Recycle Now family – available from the recycle now partners website <a href="http://www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk">www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. A photographic version. Limited photographs are available from the recycle now partners website. The Council Containers can be made available to photograph.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once the Council makes the decision on the style, which will be adopted, produce the final version, making allowance for up to three sets of amendments.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please note: The Council expects to retain the copyright for the final leaflet and all work arising from it. The designer is to provide the final press ready artwork on disc or via email, if appropriate, for the Council to retain for its records.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Leaflet printing

Manage all aspects of procuring and printing of 48,000 A5 4 page leaflets 4 colour on 170 gsm recycled paper (minimum recycled content 50%) and deliver to Moving Forward Council.

Note: Further promotional material will be developed in the near future, such as: instruction leaflets, displays, newspaper advertising, newsletters and will be the subject of a separate design brief.

Target audiences

Who are you planning to target with your communications?

The new recycling and waste service information leaflet will primarily target:

All householders in the authority (not flats or houses in multiple occupation)

Secondary target audiences will be:

- Council Employees including: waste and recycling crews, elected members, district and ward committees
- Community groups including: schools, parish and church groups and tenants associations

Key tasks, deliverables and timescales.

Provide full details of each task you want the designer to deliver, what deliverable is expected and by when. Clearly identify what the designer will be responsible for.

- Development and presentation of the two concepts by 1st July 2013
- Completion of the final design by 1 August 2013
- Delivery of leaflets by 15th August 2013

Sign off & approval

What are the sign off/approvals procedures that the designer needs to follow? Who is responsible for signing off/approving the designs e.g. WRAP, internal communication teams?

Moving Forward Council, Waste Management Section will be responsible for ultimate sign off.

Please note: up to three sets of amendments are to be covered by the overall design costs.
## WRAP Communications Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Design Principles*</th>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Minor Issue</th>
<th>Major Issue</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle 1</td>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Does the headline make it clear what the communication is about?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is the headline simple? Does it explain what the communication is about?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 2</td>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Is the hierarchy of information clear? Is the most important information at the top?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 3</td>
<td>Make it personal to the reader</td>
<td>Is the communication personal to the reader? E.g. use phrases like ‘your service’, making things easier for ‘you’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 4</td>
<td>Make it positive</td>
<td>Is the message positive?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does the communication encourage people to participate?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the communication promote the benefits of the scheme?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 5</td>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Continuity of campaign identity e.g. consistent look and feel across all communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clarity of layout</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use of colours</td>
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<td>Use of appropriate images</td>
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<td>Font style</td>
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<td>Use of unnecessary logos e.g. IIP. If these logos have to be used can then be included discretely</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 6</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Does it encourage readers to take action?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 7</td>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td>Is it clear what action is required?</td>
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<td>Email address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principle 8</td>
<td>Make information understandable</td>
<td>Will people understand what they are expected to do?</td>
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<td>Is the copy relevant? Is there an unnecessary amount of information?</td>
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<td>Is the information understandable e.g. clear and simple terminology, concise wording, avoids jargon</td>
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<td>Principle 9</td>
<td>Testing designs</td>
<td>Have designs been tested? Internally/Externally</td>
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<td>Has the spelling &amp; grammar been checked?</td>
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<td>Principle 10</td>
<td>Recycle Now campaign</td>
<td>Is the Recycle Now icon included?</td>
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<td>Have Recycle Now materials been used? E.g. material streams, straplines etc.</td>
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<td>Does the artwork comply with the Recycle Now Iconography guidelines? E.g. spacing, font, size, positioning</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Appropriate Translations - visual/pictorial images</td>
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<td>Appropriate Braille &amp; larger text options</td>
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<td>Printed on paper with a minimum recycled content of 50%</td>
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<td>Inclusion of printed paper content on communication</td>
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<td>Inclusion of reference to help track communications</td>
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