

Introducing a new recycling service to all residents



The issue

Coventry City Council asked WRAP to support their introduction of a three bin collection service to all household in the city, including a new co-mingled recycling bin. Working in partnership with the City Council WRAP helped the authority to deliver a communications campaign to maximise recycling and increase participation in new scheme.

The issues were:

- Introduction of a new co-mingled 240 litre wheeled bin collection and providing residents with a smaller residual bin.
- The changes required effective communications to residents, highlighting the reasons for the new service to influence positive recycling behavioural changes.
- Targeting 'hard to reach' communities
- Reducing contamination in garden waste collections.

Key facts

- In excess of **£1m savings** as a result of the service change.
- Objective was to **increase the recycling rate** from just over 26% to 32%.
- Change in service resulted in high tonnages - **28,811 tonnes**.
- **City-wide** communications campaign to 130,836 households.
- Cost was **£1.95 per household**.
- **Good quality recyclable** materials were collected as a result of the campaign.
- New service was **very well received** by the majority of residents.

The approach

WRAP provided detailed communications support and advice to Coventry City Council to introduce the new service. Working closely with WRAP's local communications manager, the Council used a range of tools to ensure the successful roll out of the new service to all households. The campaign included:

- A recycling **communications plan** for 2009/10 developed in conjunction with WRAP
- Pre- and post-campaign **participation monitoring** was carried out to track people's changes in behaviour as a result of introducing the new service and the associated communications
- **Brand and design guidelines** were developed to ensure consistency in all communications on waste and recycling for the immediate campaign and for the future.

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- Two recycling champions were appointed **support residents** and help them with the new service. They also organised community events to explain the changes being introduced.
- The Council's website was **re-branded** using the new designs
- **WRAP training** was organised for City Council helpline staff and recycling crews to enable them to deal effectively with inquiries from local residents.
- **Vehicle livery** was introduced on 31 collection vehicles, along with advertisements in local newspapers.
- **Printed materials** were produced including, a pre-rollout introduction leaflet, an instructional leaflet delivered to households when the new service was introduced, calling cards for use by the recycling champions and information postcards which were distributed by recycling collection crews.
- A **press pack** was issued to local media outlets explaining why the new service was needed, how it was being introduced and the benefits of it.
- **Bin stickers** were printed for use on recycling bins and articles included in the Council's residents' newsletter which reinforced the recycling messages.
- A range of **advertising** was used including billboards, Adshel sites, livery on taxis and bus advertisements (inside, side of buses and on the rear).

The results

- Cost per tonne of diverted waste was £37.30, with 28,811 tonnes diverted, making a saving of **more than £1m.**
- The new service was rolled out successfully and Coventry's combined dry and organic recycling rate **increased by 7% to 33%**, which achieved their target.
- The **feedback from residents was good**, with the service being very well received by the majority of residents.

Julie Bird, Project Manager said:

"...The high quality artwork was produced to very short timescales along with clear guidance. Again, the advice from...WRAP has been invaluable, supportive and encouraging at every stage. All of the advice...given has been spot on and supplied amazingly promptly."



Key lessons

- **Regular, timely engagement** with the local media is important for all recycling services. In Coventry there was a lot of media interest when the new recycling service began and reporting was balanced and, in general, supportive. This was followed by some negative publicity relating to waste and recycling collections over the Christmas period (not critical of the new service). This negative publicity was short lived but did impact on the whole waste and recycling collection service.
- The **critical feedback** received from residents was almost exclusively related to people saying they didn't have space for a third bin. Coventry City Council addressed these concerns by engaging with residents directly through a visit from a Recycling Champion if required, encouraging residents to share a bin where appropriate or swapping large bins for smaller ones.
- Developing a **consistent brand** for the campaign was very useful in setting the right tone for the whole communications campaign. It helped to provide consistent messages to local residents and a recognisable theme for the new service.
- The high quality of the materials collected by Coventry City Council was an excellent outcome of the communications activity. This was achieved by **providing clear, concise information and backing this up with community engagement activities**. Empowering the crews through clear training was vital to its success. Using a demonstration recycling bin and contents - to show people what can and can't be recycled at the kerbside - proved very useful tool at events.
- Having **dedicated recycling champions** as part of the City Council's recycling team, for the duration of the campaign, was an asset. It was helpful to have knowledgeable members of staff available to engage with local communities and provide face-to-face feedback to removing barriers to recycling.

More information

WRAP

Emma Marsh
01295 819666
emma.marsh@wrap.org.uk

Coventry City Council

Julie Bird
024 7683 3945
Julie.Bird@coventry.gov.uk

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Waste & Resources Action Programme

The Old Academy
21 Horse Fair
Banbury, Oxon
OX16 0AH

Tel: 01295 819 900
Fax: 01295 819 911
E-mail: info@wrap.org.uk

Helpline freephone
0808 100 2040

www.wrap.org.uk

