



Introduction

Communications are an integral part of any local authority recycling service. WRAP's (Waste & Resources Action Programme's) latest guidance in **The Waste Collection Commitment** (www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment) sets communications firmly at the heart of any good recycling and waste service. This is based on consumer feedback on what is considered to be the most important aspects of a waste collection service. In order to participate fully, residents need to know clearly what their services are, what their service rules are and what happens to their recycling after it is collected.

This guide is built on WRAP's experience of running national recycling and waste prevention campaigns, and on best practice from local authorities throughout the UK. It provides a broad introduction to the issues of developing a recycling communications strategy and follows WRAP's communications planning cycle (see page 7) which provides a methodical approach to campaign planning whether you are:

- Getting started with recycling communications
- Keeping communications fresh
- Expanding an existing campaign to cover new collections or tackle specific issues

The ultimate aim of any recycling communications campaign is to improve recycling performance. WRAP's research shows that key to the success of a recycling scheme is a well designed service with good communications to overcome people's barriers to participation. At the heart of a successful campaign lies a sound plan and the benefits of good planning include:

- Easier and faster decision making and activity planning under a clearly agreed strategic direction
- Creation of clearer messages, ones which are appropriate to and directed at well defined target audiences
- Added impact through continuity and consistency as a result of communication activities that build on each other
- Savings in time and money through the integration of activities and clear lines of responsibility
- Consistency and clarity of communications with well defined aims and objectives

As well as driving external communications, communication of the plan internally ensures that everyone knows what is trying to be achieved.

This guide is designed to link into the Recycle Now campaign for England which, since its development in 2004 has done much to change the face of recycling communications by communicating directly with consumers, providing the national fabric for local communications and giving practical support to local authority campaigns. It has, along with the expansion of kerbside recycling schemes to nine out of ten households, helped England's recycling rate climb from 19% in 2003/04 to over 37% in 2008/09 with the number of committed recyclers experiencing a corresponding increase, rising in 2009 to 69% of adults. The campaign logo and iconography is in widespread use by more than 90% of local authorities and the logo is being adopted by an ever-increasing

number of organisations right across industry and commerce – anywhere in fact where recycling messages or information are being communicated.



This guidance makes full use of all the most recent research to provide local authorities with an authoritative and comprehensive source of information on all aspects of communications planning. It also signposts users to sources of further sources of information and guidance produced by WRAP on specific subjects such as monitoring and evaluation.

If you are new to recycling or an old hand, it will have something new that will help you think through the issues and to plan your next campaign to ensure it achieves the results you and your local authority require.

How to use this guide

This guide is structured in two main sections:

- **The Essentials** – step-by-step guides that take you through the practical tasks at each of the nine stages of the planning cycle. At the end of each chapter in this section there is an examples from a typical communication plan, which used the WRAP communications planning template, entitled 'planning your communications'. This aims to demonstrate a small part of the content from a communications plan and how it could be written and developed.
- **Becoming an Expert** – detailed explanation of some of the key concepts raised in each Essentials section

Each chapter is designed to be used as a whole, or as key concepts as required so you don't need to read everything from start to finish – just dip in to the relevant section and use what you need.

There is also a detailed [Glossary](#) at the end of the guide with definitions of all the key terms.



