

Case study: Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

Increase metal recycling rates at the kerbside

The issue

This was a partnership project between WRAP, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and the Beverage Can Makers Europe (BCME)¹ (and their partners Novelis Recycling and Tata Steel).

The purpose of the communications activity was to develop best practice guidance for capturing metals at the kerbside. The collection of metal through kerbside schemes is already well established in the UK, with in excess of 95% of local authorities providing access to kerbside recycling services for most metal packaging. However, the capture rates for a valuable material are relatively low, thought to be around 40% to 50%.

BCME and WRAP investigated the ways of increasing the amount of metal recycled from kerbside collections through communication activities and worked with two local authorities to develop this, one of which was Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

The Borough Council provides a weekly kerbside sort recycling collection to 54,283 properties. There are also 2,141 flats in the area that recycle using bring banks. The Council provides a comprehensive collection service for most materials including food and drink cans, aerosols and foil. These are collected via a recycling box and sorted onto stillages on the recycling vehicles at the kerbside.

Key facts

- An **increase** of 12.9% in metals collected at the kerbside during the three week period after the communications campaign.
- **Carbon impact** saving of 255 tonnes carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent during the campaign. That equates to an estimated annual equivalent saving of 1,895 tonnes of CO₂ per year.
- The communications campaign delivered a **demonstrable increase** in other dry recycling materials collected in some areas.
- **Requests received** from almost 500 residents for additional recycling boxes during the campaign period and 20% more calls received to the Council's helpline.
- Identified **best practice** to increase the amount of metal collected at the kerbside, based on the results achieved in Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council.

1. BCME wants higher rates for metal packaging and to achieve this they work wherever metal arises in the waste stream, including encouraging great participation and use of the domestic kerbside collection.

Key lessons

- The pre-campaign research showed that apart from food and beverage cans people's **awareness of which metals can be recycled was low**, especially non-packaging metal in domestic waste such as metal pots, pans and DIY items.
- The desktop research showed that significantly more cans and metals were available for recycling amongst ACORN groups 3, 4 and 5 but that these are generally **less competent recyclers**. Targeting these groups would have the potential to deliver the greatest increase in metal recycling tonnages but previous studies had indicated these are the **hardest to reach groups**.
- **Testing** the communications showed that the majority of people (from whatever socio-economic group) want simple, clear information. Messages which reassure people of the value of metal worked well.
- **Energy saving** messages also proved of interest, along with practical hints on what can be recycled. The interactive 'reveal' and the image transformation in the leaflets were liked. The leaflet's colour was changed to black, as less competent recyclers claimed they were more likely to read it "as it didn't look like a recycling leaflet".

- **Findings** revealed that people were seeking reassurance that the effort to recycle was worth it. The **post campaign survey** results showed a significant improvement in peoples' attitudes about recycling being worth their time.

The results

During the period of the campaign the tonnage of metals collected for recycling was monitored by round. Residents had significant exposure to the messages through a number of channels:

- An increase of **12.9%** in metals collected at the kerbside.
- The communications campaign delivered an increase in **all dry recycling** in some areas.
- Following the campaign the percentage of respondents who knew bulky metals could be recycled **increased to 40%**.
- The increase in **average tonnage occurred** at a time of year when the tonnage of metal collected is usually below the average.

More information

- To view the full BCME report and find out more visit:
www.metalmatters.org.uk
- To download the resources visit:
www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk

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