1.0 Strategy and Communications Methods

Develop strategy and methods

The next stage in the communications planning cycle is to select the strategy and communication methods most appropriate to achieving your aim and objectives. This section helps you look at your overall approach, the issues to consider in different operational situations and how to choose the most appropriate mix of communication methods for your situation. You should start by considering your overall strategic approach and consider which main communication methods to use. This section takes you through this process and looks at the types of communication methods and how to use them to use to support services in different situations and target different audiences.

1.1 Overall approach

Using the information from your background research, your knowledge of your key target audiences and your likely budget, you need to decide which mix of communication methods will be the most effective to reach your target audiences. Key questions to ask yourself are:

- Do I need to reach everyone across the whole LA area (broad brush communications)?
- Do I need to target particular audiences or people in particular areas (targeted communications)?
- What type of information do I need to communicate (simple or detailed)?

Use your answers to help you decide on your strategy and select your communication methods. There is a range of communication methods to choose from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication methods</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Broad brush/targeted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Radio, press, TV, outdoor, mobile, online etc.</td>
<td>Mainly broad brush though can be targeted if used carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Media relations via radio, press, TV and online.</td>
<td>Mainly broad brush for local authority recycling communications though sometimes specific areas can be targeted e.g. via local weekly newspapers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct marketing techniques</td>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing, leaflet/information distribution (eg door-to-door), exhibitions and events.</td>
<td>Targeted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>Building on-going permanent relationships with local communities.</td>
<td>Targeted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Council website.</td>
<td>Broad brush (but capable of communicating detailed information).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communications</td>
<td>Internal communications with council staff.</td>
<td>Targeted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Depending on your situation, your communications may need to do one or more of the following:

- Create and maintain awareness
- Build interest and anticipation
- Provide practical information
- Address people's barriers
- Create behavioural change
- Keep people engaged and participating over time

You should focus on whichever of the above is the priority for your communications and develop an integrated strategy whereby different communication methods and activities target different audiences in different ways. For example, radio advertising is good at creating and maintaining awareness or building interest and anticipation in a current or new scheme whereas leaflets targeting people in an LPA provide practical information that can address their barriers. Your strategy and the communication methods you use should not attempt to cover everything all the time.

Some communication methods are better at reaching people across a wide area (broad-brush methods), whilst others are more effective if used in a targeted way in small, discreet areas (targeted methods). Some are effective at both. For example:

- TV is good for targeting people across an entire region with the same message
- Radio, depending on its coverage, is better to target people in smaller areas, say a single local authority area (although broadcast areas will probably overlap with other local authorities)
- Local weekly newspapers may target people in particular areas of a local authority
- Door-to-door canvassing is effective if used in a targeted way in relatively small areas e.g. particular estates
- Signage at recycling sites will only target people visiting that site
- Social media channels can be an effective way to target information about services and allows you to engage in two-way dialogue with residents to spread messages, improve customer service and build relationships.
- Mobile phone text alerts and information services e.g. reminders to put recycling bins out can be effective way to target residents.

Your choice of communication methods also depends on what type of information you want to give to people:

- Advertising is good for short, simple messages eg awareness raising and a simple call to action such as call a helpline or consult a website
- PR in your local press can be effective at communicating both simple and more complicated information eg launching a new service, or explaining to people what happens to their recycling
- Information leaflets and calendars delivered to every household and your council website can deliver detailed information eg what goes in a recycling container and when it is collected
- Door-to-door canvassing and call centre staff can give detailed information tailored to the needs of individual people

You should design your strategy to use a number of communications methods because no single method will be as effective in isolation and each has its advantages and disadvantages in different situations. Also, you should develop an integrated strategy with a range of communication methods targeting a number of target audiences at the same time in different ways. This type of approach will help to maximise the chances of hitting your target
audiences by delivering your messages via a number of different methods over a period of time and increase the impact of your communications as a whole.

For more information about developing a communications strategy and different communication methods - see Becoming an Expert No14.

For more information on specific communications methods for culturally diverse communities – see Becoming an Expert No15.

For more information about how communications can support operational activity – see Becoming an Expert No16 and Becoming an Expert No 17.

**CASE STUDY: Communication methods**

Corby Borough Council rebranded its communication materials to support the introduction of alternate weekly collections (AWC), which involved several service changes.

The overall aim was to inform all residents of the new scheme so that they felt confident in using it, understood how to use it and why it was being introduced. The specific objectives were to:

- Inform all householders of the new AWC services by February 2007
- Achieve an average participation rate of 75% in the new recycling services by May 2007
- Achieve the council’s recycling and recovery targets of 40%+ for 2007-08

**Communication methods and activities**

**Advertising:**
- Community posters - These were put up in strategic locations (supermarkets, libraries and community centres, etc)

**Direct marketing:**
- Letter - A letter (in a printed envelope so it would not be mistaken for junk mail) was sent to all households telling them about the proposed changes to the service
- A5 flyers - These had information about the new service, and were distributed at roadshows and local events
- Pre-rollout information pack - 30,000 information packs were delivered to residents as the bins were being distributed. These consisted of: a printed envelope containing a second letter; an eight-page instruction booklet; bin stickers and a collection calendar. Residents were told which materials went in each bin and when the bins would be collected
- Reminders - Residents were urged to recycle with the distribution of 49,000 bin hangers (reminders/contamination tags). In November 2007, 25,000 copies of a further leaflet were distributed to act as a reminder to residents of the services on offer and how to use it

**Community engagement**
- Roadshows - A series of roadshows were organised offering on-the-spot advice for residents. Additional roadshows were held throughout the year

The percentage of residents participating in the scheme by the end of the campaign had risen to 92%. As a result of the campaign, Corby BC decided to reinforce the Recycle for Corby message and to continue using the localised Recycle Now call to action and branding as it was widely recognised and liked by residents.

**WRAP Local Authority Communications Case Study: Corby Borough Council**

1.2 Methods to reach audiences

As well as selecting your communication methods and activities on the basis of how they can support your services, your selection also needs to take account of your target audiences as different communication methods are more/less effective with different audiences. The methods you select must:

- Be able to reach the desired target audiences
Address any barriers they may have
Present the information in a way that they will respond to

Research by WRAP suggests that not only do different audience groups have different barriers to recycling but that they are more receptive to specific recycling messages using different communication methods. Use the audience barriers and messages table in *Becoming an Expert No14* to check that the methods you intend using are applicable to your target audiences. Please note, that whilst this table is based on robust and comprehensive research carried out by WRAP, it should not be the only thing you use to look at audience communications and to provide you with a sense check. You should also check how all your proposed communication methods fit together to reach your target audiences via a number of methods.

When you have decided which communication methods to use you should look at how they fit together and assess whether they will reach all your target audiences. Use the communications matrix in *Becoming an Expert No14* to map your communication methods against your target audiences to ensure:

- You haven't missed any key groups
- All your target audiences are targeted using a number of methods to increase the chances of your message getting through
- The communication methods you have chosen complement each other and fit together

Checking that your selected communication methods are a good fit with your target audiences and your objectives should help you make your decisions about the mix of communication methods and activities you want to use to get the right messages to the right groups in the right ways.

**For more information about different communication activities – see Becoming an Expert No19 and 20.**

1.3 Impact of each method

Each communication method has different strengths and weaknesses and their impact will vary depending on how they are used. It is essential to use the most appropriate mix of communication methods based on your target audience, your objectives and your budget and consider the impact, influence and targeting of the communications method or activity.

**External impacts**
To assess the likely impact on your target audience and to decide whether a particular communication method is right for your strategy you should assess it against the following attributes:

- **Impact** - the degree to which the communication will be noticed by the person receiving it
- **Influence** - the extent to which the technique will influence the recycling behaviour of the people receiving it
- **Targeting** - the precision with which the technique can be used to reach a very specific audience or group

These attributes can be applied to different communication methods and activities, for example:

- TV advertising is high impact but it is also very indiscriminate so its targeting ability is low. This means its cost effectiveness for local campaigns is relatively low and should be given a low priority
- Leaflets delivered door-to-door are similar to TV in terms of their ability to influence people. However, their targeting can be highly effective and they can be very cost effective which means local authority recycling communications should give them a high priority

You should assess all the communication methods you have identified to check that they are the ones best suited to your situation before moving on to look at detailed activities. This is covered in more detail in *Becoming an Expert No14*.

**Internal impacts**
As well as the effects on your target audience you should consider the potential impact on the local authority if your communications succeed – will your services and resources be able to cope? You should consider the following issues and ensure sufficient resources are in place to cope with any extra demands created by your communications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential internal impact</th>
<th>Possible solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability of collection teams to cope with the additional material being collected</td>
<td>Rearrange rounds to take account of increased time collecting/emptying containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of containers and vehicles with the additional material being collected</td>
<td>Assess containers and vehicles to ensure they have enough capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure additional containers can be provided if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability of front line staff to deal politely and efficiently with questions from householders or HWRC users</td>
<td>Train staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra requests for help and support from householders eg assisted collections</td>
<td>Identify level of potential demand (use demographic information) and plan how to respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity and collection frequency of bring banks and ability of HWRCs to deal with increased numbers of users</td>
<td>Review size of banks and collection frequencies to see if any changes might be required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra requests for bulky waste collections</td>
<td>Review system for responding to enquiries to maintain adequate response times and plan to have extra resources on hand if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional enquiries to call centres</td>
<td>Train staff to deal with enquiries quickly and efficiently and arrange for additional staff to be available to deal with likely peak demand periods eg around the launch of a new service – perhaps through out-sourcing or sharing with a neighbouring authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householders visit website to obtain further information</td>
<td>Update information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check system can cope with increased hits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Crisis Planning**

Have you considered what to do if something goes wrong? You should have detailed emergency plans and a crisis PR plan. You should also have a trained media spokesperson, someone who can deal with media enquiries and give interviews.

You could conduct a SWOT analysis to identify potential internal weaknesses and develop ways to address them (see Becoming an Expert No5 for information about SWOT analysis). Ensure that all the likely internal impacts of your communications have been identified and addressed before you start your campaign.

For more information about the impacts of different communications methods - see Becoming an Expert No14.

**1.4 Distribution methods**

There are a variety of ways to distribute communications material and information to target audiences including:

- Door-to-door distribution (door-drops) of leaflets/calendars/service information packs by crews, canvassers, specialist distribution companies or the Royal Mail
- Pick-ups – from libraries, council offices, community centres, leisure centres and other public buildings
- Posters in libraries, council offices, community centres, leisure centres, doctors’ surgeries, schools, local shops, community notice boards etc

Each method has its advantages and disadvantages and the final decision over which method(s) to use is usually determined by a combination of factors:

- Effectiveness - will it reach the target audience?
- Ease - will it be simple, complicated or time-consuming to organise?
- Timescales - how quick/slow will it be? What are the lead times? Will it work in the timescale I need it?
Reliability - how reliable is this method? Can I guarantee people will see/read my message?
Cost - how cheap/expensive is it? Does it represent good value for money?

For more information about distribution methods - see Becoming an Expert No18.

1.5 Planning your Communications

The following section shows an extract from a typical communication plan to show how the communications strategy could be developed and written.
6.0 Communications Strategy

In order to achieve these objectives the campaign will adopt the following strategic approach:

- Deliver generic information to all households on the recycling services available in the district and what can and cannot be collected in order to recycle as much as possible;
- Deliver targeted information to households where there is low participation;
- Develop and maintain recognition of the recycle for Moving Forward Council (MFC) branding;
- Deliver recycling information to all MFC staff;
- Develop effective partnerships with media groups to support the recycling services and the benefits associated with recycling; and
- Include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within all communication activities to help measure their effectiveness.

A way of identifying some of the audiences, the messages you are trying to get across and the methods that could be used is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Householders</td>
<td>■ What you can recycle using the existing services&lt;br&gt;■ The benefits of recycling&lt;br&gt;■ What happens to recyclables&lt;br&gt;■ How to obtain more information</td>
<td>■ Direct Mail, instruction leaflets and calendar&lt;br&gt;■ Website&lt;br&gt;■ Council Helpline&lt;br&gt;■ Council Newspaper&lt;br&gt;■ Vehicle livery&lt;br&gt;■ Unmanned exhibitions&lt;br&gt;■ Roadshows&lt;br&gt;■ Feedback leaflets and surveys&lt;br&gt;■ New residents packs&lt;br&gt;■ Social Media Channels&lt;br&gt;■ Mobile phone text alerts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection crews</td>
<td>■ How to deliver the services&lt;br&gt;■ Benefits of the services&lt;br&gt;■ How to advise householders</td>
<td>■ Crew training&lt;br&gt;■ Calling cards&lt;br&gt;■ Information provided to householders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press and Media</td>
<td>■ Using the recycling services&lt;br&gt;■ The benefits of recycling&lt;br&gt;■ Events to promote the services</td>
<td>■ Press releases&lt;br&gt;■ Press briefings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Becoming an Expert No14: Communications strategy

Your overall approach

Your communications strategy is the overall approach you take with your communication methods and activities (bearing in mind your target audience and general situation) in order to achieve your aims and objectives. This section takes you through the process of developing your strategy and contains a number of tools designed to help you make the right decisions based on your situation and circumstances. There are two critical stages to communications that aim to change behaviour:

- **Initiation** - the communications need to get people to adopt the new behaviour and start doing it e.g. using a new kerbside collection service. This is a critical stage - their perceived barriers must be recognised and properly addressed for them to change their behaviour and it may take very little (e.g. one missed collection) to discourage them and for them to stop doing it.

- **Persistence** - once people have changed their behaviour, their new habit needs reinforcing with further messages and communications delivered over time to keep them motivated. As above, it is very easy for people to find excuses to give up and on-going communication must address these issues.

Your overall strategy should consider both aspects over a long-term period (i.e. more than one year).

Developing your communications strategy

You should develop your communications strategy using your aims and objectives as a guide together with the information from your background research, your knowledge of your target audiences, your timescale and your likely budget, to decide which mix of communication methods and activities will be the most effective to reach your target audiences and deliver the desired result. In considering your strategy there are three key questions to ask yourself:

- Do I need to reach everyone across the whole LA area?
- Do I need to target particular audiences or people in particular areas?
- What type of information or message do I need to communicate? Is it simple or complicated?

The key stages in developing a communications strategy are:

1. Decide what you need to communicate:
   - Launch a new service, promote an existing one, recycle plastic bottles etc

2. Decide who you want to communicate with:
   - Everyone in your local authority, specific audiences or a mixture of the two
   - Do you need one campaign for everyone or a number of interlinked campaigns targeting different audiences?

3. Decide on the mix of communication methods to use. Look at the attributes of the different methods and how they can help communicate:
   - Simple messages and/or detailed information to lots of people (broad-brush)
   - Simple messages and/or detailed information to specific audiences (tailored)
4. Review your initial list of communication methods:
- Will they help you reach your aims and objectives?
- Are all your target audiences covered?
- Can they be delivered in the required timescales?
- Do you have enough budget to pay for them?
- Do they support each other to increase their overall impact?

Choosing the right communications methods

Your communications strategy will use two main types of communication methods:

- **Broad-brush** communications aimed at all residents
- **Targeted** communication aimed at specific audiences

Both types have advantages and disadvantages for communications and often, a combination of methods (known as the communications mix) are used together to form an integrated strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad-brush</td>
<td>- Can target many people with focussed recycling messages</td>
<td>- May not address specific barriers in particular areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Good for targeting lots of people at the same time with the same message</td>
<td>- May not address barriers of specific segments of population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Cannot communicate complex information or multiple messages easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted</td>
<td>- Good for targeting specific issues or barriers in particular areas or to target specific audiences</td>
<td>- Not as good for large areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Messages and methods can be tailored for each area or audience group</td>
<td>- Messages generally only work for the group or area they are designed for – limited use elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Can target hard to reach or hard to engage groups which can be resistant to broad brush communications and messages</td>
<td>- Targeted communications can be more intensive - requiring as much or even more time than broad-brush communications to organise and deliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- They can require more research to understand the issues/barriers and check the message is likely to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Can be more expensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will also need to ensure the methods you use integrate with each other, i.e. your communication methods and activities overlap in a complementary manner to:

- Target all your audiences with appropriate communications messages, using the right communication methods and activities over a period of time
- Provide support for each other - reinforcing each other and increasing their overall impact and that of your communications

There is a range of communication methods to choose from (note - detailed communication activities are considered in Becoming an Expert No19, 20, 21 and 22).

**Advertising**

Advertisements in printed publications (newspapers and magazines); in the outdoor environment (posters, bus backs, billboards, etc.); or in the broadcast media such as television or radio are best for broad-brush communications, have high impact and can generate significant awareness but are relatively expensive. They can be useful for targeted communications but only if used intelligently (as their accuracy is difficult to control), for example by booking particular advertising spaces in certain areas or in specific publications read by key target audiences. You will need to consider the scheduling of advertisements and consider whether you want a constant drip, or a burst of activity. Outdoor advertising spaces often need to be booked well in advance.
Specific activities include: radio, press, TV, outdoor advertising (static external – billboards, adshells, train, tube etc and static internal – bus, tube etc), mobile advertising (e.g. bus, advan and adbike). Alternatives include new livery for collection vehicles and free poster sites in public buildings and other places. It should generally be used to support other methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best for targeting lots of people (broad-brush) with a simple message or call to action</td>
<td>Can be relatively expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be used in a variety of different ways</td>
<td>Will be seen by lots of people, not just target audience – you pay for that as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some types are good at targeting specific areas e.g. local free newspapers</td>
<td>Difficult to monitor and evaluate the outcome/impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some types are good at targeting specific audience groups</td>
<td>Needs good design and testing of messages to ensure success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can’t communicate detailed or complex information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vehicle livery and operational signage
A form of advertising, so vehicle livery and operational signage are good broad-brush techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle livery best for broad-brush communications</td>
<td>Can seem relatively expensive due to cost of special outdoor graphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly visible and cost effective form of advertising</td>
<td>Vehicle livery can’t convey detailed or complex information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static infrastructure can be tailored for specific audiences/locations</td>
<td>Can be damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long lasting and cost effective provided graphics don’t get damaged</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PR
Public relations (PR) at its simplest is media relations and is intended to help pass messages from an organisation to its various audiences via radio, press, TV and online media. By linking to topics of public interest and news items, PR can help to secure positive media coverage and engage the public. Because PR works through credible third-party outlets (like newspapers) and is subject to scrutiny by them, it offers a credibility that advertising does not have. PR can be used to build rapport with your residents. When used effectively, PR, is a tool that can provide invaluable support to any local authority communications.

It is predominantly a broad-brush method although some targeting can be achieved depending on the distribution and coverage of local media outlets. You should have a continual and on-going media relations plan. PR can:

- Provide more in-depth information on communications issues, report on events (e.g. launch etc)
- Launch and promote new services via events, photocalls and press packs
- Report on the success of new services by reporting higher collection tonnages, meeting specific targets etc
- Thank residents for their efforts
- Provide continual feedback e.g. at various milestones such as 1,000th tonne of x material, annual tonnages collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good for all types of communications but probably best for broad-brush</td>
<td>Bad publicity can damage your campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be very effective in communicating complex information and issues</td>
<td>The media wants ‘news’ – it can be challenging to be constantly thinking of new stories/angles on recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can communicate your messages in a positive manner</td>
<td>The media can get ‘bored’ of recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can tailor messages to different types of media (radio, press, TV) and their audiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roadshows and Events
Events are generally considered a discipline within PR but can form a part of community engagement activities. Depending on the nature of the event, they can be broad-brush or targeted e.g. a road show event in a town centre or an exhibition display in the foyer of a block of flats.
### Advantages

- Good for broad-brush and targeted communications
- Good to engage with people on an individual basis
- Good for launches, promoting simple and/or complex messages
- Can generate additional media coverage which takes your message to more people

### Disadvantages

- Locations need careful selection
- Events can take a lot of management
- Difficult to monitor and evaluate
- Can be expensive
- May not reach as many people
- It is easy for the effort needed to exceed the benefits

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**Direct marketing techniques**

Direct marketing is based on a direct one-to-one relationship between you and the householder. Direct marketing activities typically include direct mail, leaflet inserts (in newspapers) and door-to-door canvassing. When using direct marketing techniques, take care to ensure that the material you provide is fit for purpose and focuses on clear service information. Unless material is clearly relevant, general leafleting and inserts in particular can be thrown away as “junk mail” which sends out the wrong message to householders – particularly if you are running a mail preference campaign yourself.

It can work at both broad-brush and tailored levels, for example:

- Pre-service leaflets/fliers delivered to all households receiving new services
- Service information leaflets (to include instructional and motivational information), delivered to all households receiving new services, ideally at the same time as any new containers
- Service calendars (collection information) delivered to all households receiving new services, ideally at the same time as any new containers. Calendars can be tailored to individual rounds and should be delivered on an annual basis
- Branding new collection containers
- Dedicated council recycling newsletter (if you have a general council magazine you should target this as part of your media relations)
- Crew information cards (for householders)

### Advantages

- Can be used for broad-brush or targeted communications
- Can be highly effective in targeting hard to reach or hard to engage audiences
- Delivering leaflets or other information door-to-door is very effective in getting your message to everyone you want
- Door-drops can be tailored to deliver specific material to specific areas

### Disadvantages

- Can be relatively expensive depending on the technique
- Distribution needs careful planning and management as they can go wrong or some houses or streets may be missed out
- “Junk Mail” image

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**Door-to-door canvassing**

Door-to-door canvassing can be considered a form of direct marketing and is an effective technique for recycling services where the issue is to explain the service being provided. Through face-to-face contact with residents, it is possible to give much more targeted information with a personal approach. For waste minimization, however, where the issues are about personal behaviours, door step canvassing is not cost effective and other techniques would be better.

### Advantages

- Can be highly effective in targeting hard to reach or hard to engage audiences
- Can deliver complex information
- Information can be tailored to the needs of

### Disadvantages

- Time consuming and relatively expensive
- Requires a lot of management but can be outsourced
- Canvassers need to have good people skills – if they don’t your communications won’t be as effective
Community engagement
This is the term for the process by which organisations like local councils, charity or community groups and individuals build ongoing, permanent relationships with local communities in order to work together for the benefit of a community. It is ideal for tailored communications targeting specific audiences. Approaches include:

- Local events promoting and explaining a new service to local householders
- Working in partnership with local community groups and other organisations
- Special support e.g. undertaking home visits to deal with issues and queries from householders

Optional extra activities may include door-to-door canvassing for low performing areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good for targeting hard to reach or hard to engage audiences</td>
<td>Can be time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can deliver complicated information</td>
<td>Long term (‘slow burn’) activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information can be tailored to the needs of individual communities, cultures and locations</td>
<td>Can take time to win trust and for message to spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The barriers and issues of individuals as well as the wider community can be addressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good at addressing low participation issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents may trust the messages from people they know more than from the council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online
Online has so far been mainly used as a broad-brush method though some activities (like e-mails) can be targeted. There are likely to be significant developments in the use of this medium. There are already a number of different types of online communication such as websites, blogs and viral e-mail. Use of social networking sites, and web based campaigns are sure to develop but it is too soon to try to identify best practice. The bedrock of any activity will be your council or campaign website which should be regularly updated with a wide range of information about your services and more generally about recycling and waste issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can be used to broad-brush or targeted activities</td>
<td>The information is passive i.e. people have to interpret and understand it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be very effective in communicating complex information and issues</td>
<td>People have to find it for themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can communicate your messages in a positive manner</td>
<td>Poor website design and layout of web pages can be a barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have complete control over the information</td>
<td>Not everyone has internet access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Internal communications
Internal communications is used to communicate with local authority employees, elected members and employees of contractors working for local authorities. It helps ensure council staff and members understand the waste and recycling services and their benefits. Some key activities for which internal communications is an important component include:

- Briefing or training telephone helpline staff and providing regular briefings and FAQs on services
- Crew & staff training to keep front-line staff engaged and on-message
- Staff newsletters
- Briefing sheets
- Intranet
Asking the public to recycle if the Council’s staff does not could be a significant communication problem and your internal communications should be used to encourage use of the Council’s in-house facilities. Some Councils run specific campaigns to address this issue like Gloucestershire’s OHIO (Own House in Order) campaign for this reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Can be very effective in targeting specific internal audiences with complex information</td>
<td>■ Can be time-consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Can communicate your messages in a positive manner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ You have complete control over the information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Selecting your communications mix**

As well as looking at the basic attributes of the different communication methods (see previous pages) it is important to consider the following factors to help you decide which to use:

- The impact, influence and targeting of the technique
- The barriers of your audiences, their messaging preferences and the types of messages you wish to communicate

**Impact, influence and targeting**

These refer to the following attributes:

- **Impact** - the degree to which the communication will be noticed by the person receiving it
- **Influence** - the extent to which the technique will influence the recycling behaviour of the people receiving it
- **Targeting** - the precision with which the technique can be used to reach a very specific audience or group

These attributes can be applied to different communication methods and activities as shown in the table below. The table also gives an indication of the cost effectiveness of each method as well as assigning a priority level. So, for example, TV advertising is a high impact medium, has a medium ability to influence people, low targeting ability and low cost effectiveness. As a result, it is given a low priority for local authority recycling communications. Note that while ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’ are used as relative terms, not absolute definitions, they are useful in assessing which method, or combination of methods disciplines, may be most appropriate for your communications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Method</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Targeting</th>
<th>Cost effectiveness</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV Advertising</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local newspaper advertising</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billboard advertising</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio advertising</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations (PR) - editorial coverage (e.g. in local newspaper)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct marketing (e.g. well-designed addressed mail)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing (incl. design, branding and communications literature)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet drops through letterboxes</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing for recycling</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadshows</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools visits</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Method</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Influence</td>
<td>Targeting</td>
<td>Cost effectiveness</td>
<td>Priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet – council website</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High/ Med/ Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet - viral e-mail (e-mail not addressed to named individuals)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communications</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational signage and vehicle livery</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional activity with retailers</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Messages and communication methods
Depending on the type of message, different communication methods may need to be used to gain the best impact. The table below shows different communication methods and the types of messages they are best suited for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Method</th>
<th>Simple</th>
<th>Complex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational signage and vehicle livery</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications literature (service leaflets, newsletters etc)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display panels</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations (PR)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Blogs &amp; You Tube)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key issues in deciding which message and communication method to use is any given situation are:
- What do you want to communicate - do you want to raise awareness or inform/educate?
- Where do you want your message to be seen/heard?
- Will people have time to read it or does it need to be taken in quickly?

If you want to raise awareness you should use short messages in highly visible locations where lots of people will see (or hear) it. If you need to communicate detailed information you need to consider other methods that will deliver larger amounts of information to people in situations where they will have the time to read it.

Examples of simple messages include:

Large billboard advert:

![Large billboard advert](image-url)
At the same time as considering the impact, influence and targeting of the communication methods, you should also cross-reference them against your audiences and their barriers. The table on the next page allows you to cross-reference your target audience/s against the message and communication methods/activities. Use it to check your choice of communication methods to make sure they are likely to be appropriate for both your message and audience. Remember, however, that your local circumstances may present you with a situation where a different approach to normal may be required.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recycling Competence Level (1 to 7)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Recycling unaware              | Just not on their radar, no idea about it at all<br>**ACORN**: 2, 4 **Age**: 18-24 **Property**: Flats, terrace, maisonette **Lifecycle**: Young single, no kids yet; single parent | a) Instructions – what, when and how to recycle. Details of service and how to use it  
Leaflets, Calendars  
Bin/box stickers, Contamination tags |
| 2. Aware but inactive             | Know about it but have not seriously contemplated doing it<br>**ACORN**: 2, 4 **Age**: 18-34 **Property**: Flats, terrace, maisonette **Lifecycle**: Young single, no kids yet; single parent | b) Explanations – what is recycling? Why should you do it? What are the benefits to people and the environment?  
Door knocking & leaflets, Local displays/events, Adverts - TV & local radio, local newspapers, outdoor |
| 3. Contemplated but not engaged   | May have dabbled, possibly elsewhere, may do occasionally, drifted back<br>**ACORN**: 2, 4, 5 **Age**: 18-34 **Property**: Terrace, bungalow **Lifecycle**: Solitary retiree, single parent | c) Dispel myths – education about what is good & bad in recycling & waste disposal |
| 4. Unreliable                    | Recycle but sometimes forget, or miss out, recycle opportunistically not regularly<br>**ACORN**: 3, 5 **Age**: 35-54 **Property**: Bungalow, terrace, semi-detached **Lifecycle**: Solitary retiree, solitary adult worker | d) How it works – what happens to recyclables once collected |
| 5. Trying their best             | Usually take part, recycle ‘staple’ items but confused about other items<br>**ACORN**: 3, 5, 2 **Age**: 35-54 **Property**: Semi-detached, bungalow **Lifecycle**: Full nest couple with kids, solitary retiree | e) Feedback and thanks – How we are doing compared to everywhere else |
| 6. Broadly competent              | Reliable and regular but may still miss out some materials or collections<br>**ACORN**: 1, 2 **Age**: 55+ **Property**: Detached, semi-detached **Lifecycle**: Empty nest, couple with no kids | f) Saving cash – what is the cost of recycling, waste disposal, LATS etc |
| 7. ‘The Complete Recycler’        | Recycle all available items of all recyclable materials all of the time<br>**ACORN**: 1 **Age**: 55-64 **Property**: Detached **Lifecycle**: Empty nest, children living elsewhere | |
Developing a wider strategy for behavioural change

Communications need to use a range of communication methods and activities to stimulate the uptake of new behaviours and ensure people persist in them. They also need to be able to encourage people to do more and go further in their new behaviours. In order to develop strategic approaches that take in a wider range of potential activities which can influence behavioural change, DEFRA produced a framework – the 4Es model - to help plan communications for behaviour change. The framework (which WRAP has used in its waste prevention toolkit – www.wrap.org.uk/wptoolkit), is designed to ensure that all the factors necessary to change behaviour are present.

The framework was developed as part of the UK’s Sustainable Development Strategy – Securing the Future, published in 2005. This evidence-based strategy gives a strong lead to delivering sustainable behaviour change by engaging individuals, households and communities. It recognises the complexities that influence behaviour and the need for the consistent approach required to change deep-seated habits. The 4Es model defines a new approach that focuses on the need to enable, encourage and engage people to help them towards sustainability (by for example recycling and waste prevention) and recognises the need for those delivering the change to lead by example – exemplify.

All these elements (to enable, encourage, engage and exemplify) are necessary for change to take place, the aim being for the combined package to catalyse people into action and for the new behaviour to become the norm over time - at which point further possibilities for progress may be opened up. A diagram showing the 4Es model is shown below.

Defra 4Es model:

![Defra 4Es model diagram]

Source: Defra

The framework is designed so that your approach evolves as attitudes and behaviours change over time.

**Catalyse** – breaking the habits: What will really make things change? Unsustainable behaviour may be deeply entrenched and require powerful catalysts to change habits and ease the way to more sustainable habits like recycling and waste prevention. This means that you need to look at how your waste and recycling strategies come together as a package and how they are used to trigger change.
Enable – making it easier: this is the starting point. There is no point asking people to recycle if they don’t know how. Or, if they know what to do, what they need is not readily available. People need help to make choices by providing them with education, skills and good quality information. To help people make easy choices, an easily accessible alternative and suitable infrastructure will need to be provided. In some cases “enabling” may be all that is needed – for example by providing multi-material kerbside collections.

Encourage – give the right signals: this is about selecting the most effective techniques to encourage and, where necessary, enforce behaviour change.

Engage – get people involved: people need to take personal responsibility for what they do. This can work best if your target audience is involved early on in developing actions jointly – an approach known as co-production. Face-to-face contact often works best, e.g. via focus groups. People also care about real-life examples that they can relate to – so a localised approach works best. It is also recognised that remote messages from local government are often not the best way to get people to act and take responsibility. Working with local partners – organisations that are known locally and deemed to be “trusted” – is important to reinforce messages and encourage participation.

Exemplify – Local government takes the lead: local authorities need to lead by example this can include:

- Demonstrating your own commitment through in-house recycling, reuse and waste prevention schemes
- Using staff (and their stories) as local champions, e.g. real nappies, recycling and home composting
- Using partners, such as local businesses (who have environmental policies) or work with local communities and demonstrate their own commitment
- Promoting internal council waste prevention activities in council newsletters
- Ensuring that consistent policies are in place

It is a good idea to use the 4Es model as a framework to look in detail at the actions and messages you want to deliver. It may be useful to conduct this exercise as a team and brainstorm ideas using a framework like the one outlined on the next page to list all the activities your council could undertake in the four quadrants to enable, engage, encourage and exemplify. Focus on your overall aims and objectives and the key actions you want to change. A comprehensive strategy should have activities in all four boxes.
At the meeting, explain to participants the benefits of the framework and how it can be used. Use flip charts, ideally laid out in the “diamond” shape. The aim is to capture responses so that everyone can see their ideas and how the framework builds. Structure the time to ask the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enable – making it easier</th>
<th>Encourage – give the right signals</th>
<th>Engage – get people involved</th>
<th>Exemplify – local government takes the lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What type of infrastructure, services, guidance, information and/or support is needed to reach statutory targets? What do you currently have in place? What do you need?</td>
<td>What measures are needed to provide benefits and incentives?</td>
<td>How will you involve your audience early on in the process?</td>
<td>What do you need to do to demonstrate you own commitment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you make it easy for households to change behaviour and recycle more/differently?</td>
<td>How will you encourage responsible behaviour?</td>
<td>Who are the local networks that you could establish relationships with (at a general level)? If you know your target audience, then you can aim to be more specific</td>
<td>Who else is demonstrating/reinforcing their commitment (e.g. businesses, communities)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will you provide feedback</td>
<td>Who will you partner with?</td>
<td>What internal policies do you need to put in place to ensure consistency, particularly to help reinforce your messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This framework can be used to refine your strategy and ensure your overall approach considers the widest range of factors that can positively influence behavioural change and reinforce your communications.

**Audience planning**

Once you have developed your overall communications strategy you should check that your communication methods cover all your target audiences and approach them in a number of different ways to maximise their overall impact. Use an audience-planning matrix like the one below (you should make your own to suit your situation) to map your communication methods against your target audiences.

**Example communications matrix:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications Method</th>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council magazine</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct marketing techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information pack</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual calendar and reminder leaflet</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadshows</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste minimisation messages</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to reach communications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-occupancy campaign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Becoming an Expert No15: Engaging culturally diverse communities in recycling

This briefing looks at communications messages and methods, which may be useful for engaging culturally diverse groups in recycling activity and overcoming communication barriers.

Communications messages and targeting

It is important to ensure your communications messages are appropriate for a specific audience. Look at the expert briefing on Identifying and engaging culturally diverse communities in recycling to help you with this.

Attitudes to recycling differ across ethnic groups, therefore communications approaches aimed at these groups should also differ as with targeting to any audience. However, whilst modifying communications messages to specific culturally diverse groups is a good idea, it is important not to make any group feel it is being singled out as non-recyclers as this can cause resentment and discourage participation.

Be careful with the messages you use, as blanket messages across all groups will not be effective. You will need to use different hooks for the different groups you are targeting.

Example

In Leicester, different outreach and support approaches are used to address three types of ethnic minority community:

- The newly-arrived (who may have limited English and few established social networks)
- Those with high levels of dependency on support from statutory agencies, but who have developed community welfare and support networks
- Those who are well established and largely self-sufficient, but may still experience prejudice.

Targeting audiences should be based on knowledge of their socio-economic profile, culture, behaviour and attitudes – ethnic minority communities are markedly different from each other, and like any community often have internal divisions too.

Responsibility to family can be a strong motivator for many ethnic groups, especially within Asian and Chinese cultures. Messages encouraging residents to recycle for ‘the future of their children’ can prove particularly effective with these groups. Bristol also found that a storyboard format also worked well with cultures where story telling is common.

Using religious messages to encourage recycling could also be considered; this could be particularly effective within Muslim, Jewish and Sikh communities. Whilst religion can be an effective motivator, caution should be used when considering this approach. It is vital to check all messages and communications material with someone who has deep understanding of the religion as you may inadvertently cause offence in the way material is presented. Ideally a representative from a local centre of worship, for example the rabbi, should be asked to review and approve any material.
Communications methods

As with any communications it is important to tailor your methods to your target audience. Once you have clearly identified your target audience and the messages you want to get across, the next step is to investigate the available media relevant to these groups.

Once you have decided on which activities to use to target your culturally diverse groups, it is essential to plan your communications as it will enable you to effectively structure the delivery of your activities, maximise the use of resources and enable you to confirm a realistic budget and timescales for the project.

The two sections below identify issues and activities you should consider when delivering communications to ethnic communities.

Leaflets and Written Material

Many local authorities already provide copies of leaflets translated into languages other than English, nevertheless the case for translation is divided. Translation can be positive as it helps promote inclusion of culturally diverse groups (i.e. all residents are provided with the same information); however, translation may not always be appropriate or necessary. Many authorities say that residents welcome translations as it shows the authority has made and effort (e.g. Preston City Council) but these are used as part of a wider programme of engagement and not stand alone. If local authorities are considering translation they should bear in mind the following:

- It can be difficult to determine in which languages leaflets should be made available and thought should be given to how the translation is phrased, as a straight translation from English may not always be suitable. If you plan to translate any written material always make sure you check with your community contacts which languages are most suitable. Once you have translated the text it is recommended that the style of the language is reviewed by a native speaker to ensure it is appropriate to your audience.
- Many people from culturally diverse groups may not read their own languages, meaning a translated leaflet could be as inaccessible as one in English.
- Local authorities should consider the cost of translation against the cost of other approaches and the likely benefits of each. Translation can be costly and for the reasons outlined, translated leaflets may not be the best approach to communicating with residents for whom English is not their first language.
If people have to ring a helpline in order to request a translated leaflet, they are unlikely to do so as the person answering the call will probably speak to them in English. Local authorities using this method have had a poor response rate.

An alternative to translation is to offer leaflets primarily in English with key phrases in other languages; this will enable members of the household with a better understanding of English to translate orally for the rest of the family.

An example of a bilingual leaflet from Preston

A higher pictorial content and use of diagrams should be considered, as this will significantly reduce language barriers. It is important that the images used should be clear and instructive or descriptive to make sure that they illustrate the message. Images which are too stylised may be confusing. Simple leaflets clearly illustrated with images are often most effective.

The London Borough of Bexley found that translated leaflets with a strong pictorial element were more effective than simply translating leaflets. For more information, please see the case study. Derby City Council also developed a recycling booklet where the emphasis was on graphics after consultation with the local community, see their case study.

Characters should be credible and recognisable in terms of their ethnic and cultural identity, but not stereotypically “ethnic”. Photographs including people from the local community have been used to good effect in several local authorities. The use of photographs rather than cartoon or animated characters is recommended for less integrated culturally diverse communities as animated characters could be viewed as non-serious.

Using WRAP’s iconography or photographs on your collection containers may help to overcome language barriers, making it easier for ethnic residents to understand what materials go in which container. Breckland District Council and Preston City Council provided bin stickers with images and a simple translation of the material in areas where they had a high proportion of Eastern European residents. The full case study for Breckland can be found here - http://www.wrap.org.uk/lpa. This method may also be useful in areas where there is a high turnover of residents.

For help on developing printed material look at WRAP Design Guidance for Local Authorities.

Working directly with communities

Sometimes, outreach can be the most effective way to overcome the cultural, language or physical barriers, which prevent individuals and communities from accessing services or information. But it also offers great scope
to create credible advocates, increase trust and empathy, demonstrate the organisation’s commitment to the community and target effort with great accuracy. Outlined below are a number of methods for working with local communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Presentations to groups | Give presentations (or get a local leader to do so) on recycling and/or re-use to local community groups. When arranging a meeting, consider whether:  
- A translator will be required;  
- You will need printed supporting material; and  
- It would it be helpful to take along examples of containers and recyclable materials |
| Utilising existing environmental networks | Contact established environmental organisations, for example:  
- The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers;  
- Wildlife Trusts;  
- Groundwork; and  
- Black Environment Network. |
| Events | Contact local community groups to find out if there are any events happening in your area and make arrangements to attend. As part of your event planning bear in mind:  
- Have people manning your stand who speak the appropriate language;  
- Asian women are unlikely to interact with men outside their family – therefore a mix of men and women on the stand is vital;  
- Ensure staff are dressed appropriately to respect the cultural norms of your target community; and  
- If translation is appropriate make sure you have enough translated or pictorial material available. |
| Liaison with community and religious groups | Identify relevant local groups in your area and investigate ways they could promote your message to their members, ideas include:  
- Putting up posters and distributing leaflets;  
- Including recycling messages in group discussions;  
- Developing activities for the groups to undertake that involve recycling  
- Act as recycling ‘champions’ in their area; and  
- Carrying out informal research of awareness and attitudes to recycling amongst their group. |
| Using ethnic media | Ethnic media is available in English and ethnic language formats, and includes:  
- Satellite TV channels;  
- 24-hour a day local commercial Asian radio stations in the major urban conurbations;  
- Ethnic language publications;  
- English language publications;  
- Monthly magazines;  
- Weekly newspapers;  
- Websites and social media.  
Ethnic language media is more appropriate for targeting 1st generation BME groups and those who may have little or no English language. |
| Door to door canvassing | Door-to-door canvassing has proved to be an effective communications mechanism to target culturally diverse residents. In an area with a high ethnic population it is important to bear in mind the impact of cultural issues such as:  
- Use a mix of male and female doorsteppers as Asian women are unlikely to be drawn into a discussion with an unknown man;  
- Seek advice from someone within the community to ensure that you are not overlooking any important cultural issues;  
- Recruiting doorsteppers with relevant language skills; and  
- If it is appropriate, translated or pictorial communications materials should also be produced, these can be left with households to reinforce the message.  
Look at the [WRAP step by step guide to door-to-door canvassing](#) for more information. |
Case Study: London Borough of Bexley

Bexley has a population of nearly 3,000 Sikhs, many of whom use the Gurdwara (Sikh temple) to worship. In line with the teachings of the Sikh religion the Gurdwara has a volunteer-run free kitchen open seven days a week. The main kitchen waste consists of milk bottles, food cans, cardboard boxes, glass jars and vegetable peelings, all of which could be recycled but were being disposed of in the general refuse bin instead.

After discussion with the Gurdwara elders, the council was allowed to install bring banks at the kitchen. Prior to this the recycling officer met with the kitchen volunteers to make sure that they were ready for the scheme. Posters and stickers were produced in Punjabi and English and supplemented with pictures so that all of the congregation would be reached by the recycling message. The council has also installed recycling facilities at the nearby Belvedere Community Centre. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the waste produced at this Gurdwara has been diverted from landfill and messages have been linked to make the Sikh community more aware that they can recycle at home, at work and at school, as well as at the Gurdwara.
Becoming an Expert No16: How communications can support operational activity

There are a number of communication methods and activities, which are particularly suitable for providing direct support to operational services in different situations. These methods fall into three types:

- **Tailored methods** which are specifically useful for particular situations
- **Generic communications methods** which should be running continuously regardless of other activity and updated or boosted with tailored methods as necessary e.g. when a new service is launched
- **Optional communication methods** which can help strengthen your communications by reaching more people or increasing its overall impact

The table below shows the communication activities which are considered to be essential in different operational situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Essential Communication Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining an existing service</td>
<td>Service leaflets (to include instructional and motivational information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service calendars (collection information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branding of collection receptacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lorry livery of collection vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing a new service</td>
<td>Pre-service leaflet (to introduce the new service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service leaflets (to include instructional and motivational information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service calendars (collection information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branding of collection receptacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lorry livery of collection vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch event(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing an existing service</td>
<td>Changes to service leaflet/information pack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service calendars (if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch event(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing contamination</td>
<td>Contamination stickers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contamination notices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crew information cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting 'drop off' sites</td>
<td>Signage at ‘drop off’ sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signage on bring banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service information leaflets (combined with kerbside services where possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic Areas of Support</td>
<td>Crew &amp; staff training packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helpline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PR and Press packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Area</td>
<td>Essential Communication Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Extras</td>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing for poor performing areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External advertising – billboards, adshels, bus, train and tube etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal advertising – bus, tube etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information stickers for collection receptacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roadshows &amp; giveaways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crew information cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council newsletters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maintaining an existing service

In the absence of anything ‘new’ to communicate you will need to work harder to make your communications grab peoples’ attention and maintain existing changed behaviours or building on them by encouraging further changes in behaviour.

If you want to improve your overall performance (from a reasonably good starting level) your research, audience segmentation and messaging will have to be even better to identify key communications/audience issues and opportunities. You will also need to be more imaginative in your communication methods, messages and design in order to capture people’s attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication methods</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>PR should run a series of mini-campaigns and run ‘good news’ stories about recycling to keep awareness high:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Report successes and milestones e.g. 1,000,000th can recycled etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Highlight interesting recycling stories e.g. initiatives by community groups or individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Focus on stories showing the end result and local benefits of recycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organise recycling collections by council staff for special causes e.g. clothing and textiles collected for an air ambulance etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct marketing</td>
<td>If you have any areas that perform relatively less well e.g. through lower participation or there are quality or contamination issues with collected recyclate, you should consider specific campaigns for each area using direct communications with households using a combination of contamination stickers, contamination notices and crew information cards. The aim is to make individuals aware that they are participating incorrectly and encourage them to recycle the correct materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>On-going, permanent relationships should be built with local communities to nurture the development of a recycling culture within local people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Information on the council website should be refreshed at periodic intervals. Recycling should be featured permanently on the council home page with links to pages containing relevant information e.g. press releases with latest news or information about services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal communications</td>
<td>Internal communications with all relevant council staff should continue with a steady stream of news and information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themed communications

Themed communications can be useful if you want to have a number of activity peaks to retain awareness over a long period or you want to promote a particular material. Themes could include:

- Specific materials (e.g. glass, plastic or food waste) which could be targeted in a series of mini-s throughout the year, coinciding with periods when households may be throwing more of them away e.g. plastic bottles and drinks cans in summer, food cans in the autumn/winter, glass at Christmas etc
- Seasonal communications which could focus on the materials generated at that time of the year e.g. garden waste in summer, DIY waste around Easter, Christmas waste (cards, trees, food and packaging) around Christmas and new Year
- Communications focused on specific audiences and the materials they generate, possibly at particular times of the year e.g. DIY enthusiasts, gardeners, students etc
- Local communications supporting national or regional themed or celebratory days e.g. Recycle Week, World Environment Day, Composting Awareness Week, Yorkshire Day etc

Your communications need to be co-ordinated and planned well in advance to ensure they don’t clash or occur too close together to give yourself enough time to organise everything properly (try to allow a minimum 6 weeks between any activity peaks).

**Introducing a new service**

If you are introducing a new service you have an immediate advantage – a good local news story to tell. You should consider a range of activities including the following:

**Tailored activities**

- Targeted advertising is useful but should be considered an optional activity and used selectively to target as many people as possible. You should consider new livery for collection vehicles
- PR is an essential activity and can be used effectively to launch a new service by holding a launch event (or events) to promote it and obtain local media coverage. The local media should be kept informed and fed positive news stories and information from the very earliest stages and your activity should culminate in your launch event
- Direct marketing is also essential as it your main means of direct communication with householders. You should produce material like a pre-service leaflet, a service information leaflet (to include instructional and motivational information) and service calendars with collection information. All items to be delivered to all households receiving the new service (the service leaflet and calendar should be delivered at the same time as any new containers). All new collection receptacles should be branded
- Community engagement is also valuable with events and other activities designed to promote and explain the new service to local householders

**Generic activities**

- PR is an on-going process and after the launch you should proceed with a series of follow-through PR activities reporting on the success of the new service, thanking residents for their efforts and providing feedback at various milestones e.g. 1,000th tonne of x material, braking the 40% recycling barrier etc
- Online activity includes revising the information on your council website
- Internal communications should consist of updated briefings and training for all relevant front line council staff (collection crews, telephone helpline staff, recycling wardens, canvassers etc) to ensure they know about the new service and can deal with enquiries from householders effectively. Your internal communications also needs to target relevant elected members to ensure they understand the new service and can answer questions from householders in affected wards or direct them to the right source of information

**Optional activities**

- Further supporting advertising could be conducted if necessary to increase the profile of the campaign and its impact
- Community engagement activities could be extended to provide special support for householders e.g. undertaking home visits to deal with individual issues and queries

Communications in support of new operational activity should follow the relevant elements of the joint LGA/WRAP Waste Collection Commitment¹, including:

- Make potential users aware of the new service or facility
- Address any likely public concerns
- Explain clearly and simply to people how to use the new facility or service:
  - For kerbside collections, what can be collected for recycling, what won’t be collected, how to collect and store materials at home, when to put containers out for collection

¹ www.wrap.org.uk/localAuthorities/waste_commitment.html
Where a new recycling site is located, what can be recycled, opening times

Explain the benefits of a new service and why it is important:
- Easier to use, collects more materials, more convenient etc
- Reduces waste to landfill which in turn reduces cost to council tax payers of waste disposal (which is rising)
- Landfill space might be running out
- Reduction in landfill site gas emissions that contribute to climate change
- Your council has legal targets to meet and there are financial penalties for not meeting them – financial penalties which council tax payers will have to pay

Communicate specific policies or rules connected with recycling:
- Policies regarding side waste, missed collections, contamination of containers, assisted collections etc
- Any rewards for people who recycle (if applicable)
- Any policies on penalties (if applicable)
- Provide contact information

You should also consider whether to have special support on hand to undertake home visits to deal with issues and queries e.g. requests for assisted collections, dealing with new policy enforcement issues, people being confused and ‘getting it wrong’ at first.

Changing an existing service
If you are changing existing services or collecting a new material using existing containers or adding new containers and materials, you should treat it as if you are launching a new service (see previous section) but substitute the following instead of a new service leaflet and calendar:

- A "changes to service" leaflet/information pack delivered to all affected households
- Revised service calendars delivered to all affected households (if relevant)
- Small changes to existing services may just require revised leaflets, calendars and online information

In addition you must consider the following:

- Your promotional materials should make the changes appear as simple and as easy for people as possible – simplicity and clarity of branding, messaging and leaflet design is essential. Focus on:
  - The changes - clearly and simply tell people what, where, how to recycle
  - Explaining the benefits and why these changes are being introduced
  - Addressing likely concerns
  - Highlighting the benefits
  - Pointing out the consequences of inaction
- Briefing and training for all relevant front-line council staff (collection crews, telephone helpline staff, recycling wardens, canvassers etc)

Reducing contamination
Has your research identified specific low participation issues and are these confined to certain geographical areas or do they extend throughout your local authority? If you have low participation areas (LPAs) you will need to investigate the reasons for low performance thoroughly, address the barriers people have to recycling and develop dedicated communications targeting the people and communities living in those areas.

Depending on your exact situation, you could tackle issues in areas of low participation by using one or more of the following:

Tailored activities
- Reducing incorrect usage by using contamination stickers/notices and crew information cards
Generic activities
- Explaining to people how to use the existing facilities or service by issuing additional information leaflets locally:
  - For kerbside collections, what can be collected for recycling, what won't be collected, how to collect and store materials at home, when to put containers out for collection etc
  - Where a recycling site is located, what can be recycled, recycling site etiquette, opening hours etc

Optional activities
- Undertaking communications with specific hard to reach groups to make people aware of the service - tell them how to use it and how easy it is to use and why it is important. Your communications must address their perceived barriers
- Engaging local communities, cultural groups or specific areas with targeted communications addressing their barriers and issues:
  - Working with local community leaders and community or cultural groups can be very effective
  - One-to-one engagement through door-to-door canvassing can be very effective in addressing people's barriers

For more information on tackling contamination — see Becoming an Expert No 17
As well as this guide, WRAP has produced two other toolkits that would be useful for those contemplating a communications designed to improve the performance of existing services:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improving Low Participation Areas – Effective communications planning Guidance Document</th>
<th>Barriers to recycling at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="https://example.com/lowparticipationareas" alt="Low participation areas" /></td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/barriortorecycling" alt="Barriers to recycling at home" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="https://example.com/lpa">www.wrap.org.uk/lpa</a></td>
<td><a href="https://example.com/barriortorecycling">www.wrap.org.uk/barriortorecycling</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Promoting ‘drop-off’ sites
If you want to stimulate collections at bring sites or HWRCs for materials not collected at kerbside you should consider the following:

Tailored activities
- Issuing revised service information leaflets (combined with kerbside services where possible) promoting the sites and services
- Improving signage at ‘drop off’ sites and on bring banks

Generic activities
- Ensuring information about sites on your council website is up to date
- Issuing press releases marking particular recycling bank milestones or achievements
Optional activities

- Run mini campaigns promoting bring banks and HWRCs in particular areas
Becoming an Expert No17: Communications to improve the quality of commingled collections

Usually there are three main aims for communications to support recycling collection services:

- increasing participation and the \textit{quantity} of material collected;
- demonstrating service commitment to keep residents well informed; and
- improving the \textit{quality} of material collected.

Improving quality is an area where operations and communications have a close relationship. Evidence shows that getting both right so that they mutually support and reinforce each other delivers better results. As with any communications, there are a number of key steps to consider when planning activities to address quality issues:

- firstly, understand your current situation:
  - What is the nature of the contamination? – is it material that cannot be recycled or materials that could be recycled but are not accepted by your kerbside service (e.g. non-target plastics);
  - What is the cause of the contamination? : are there any service or communications issues which need to be addressed;
- secondly, make any necessary improvements in service design and provision before embarking on communications activities;
- thirdly, develop and deliver integrated communication activities which address the issues and support the service provided; and
- finally, undertake pre and post monitoring to accurately measure the impact of your activities, and learn lessons for the future.

Reasons for performance issues

A number of reasons have been identified for the presence of non-target materials in commingled collections, including:

- types of materials collected for recycling are limited by the scheme (materials such as glass bottles, tetrapaks and plastic packaging can be recycled by some local authorities but not all, leading to confusion if residents move between local authority areas);
- communications not reaching residents – due to high turnover of population, access issues, delivery issues;
- communications not being understood by residents – due to language or literacy issues and cultural barriers;
- communications do not contain the appropriate information – for example, lack of awareness of assisted collections for elderly people or those with disabilities;
- lack of regular information – evidence shows there is a need to reinforce correct behaviour repeatedly and give feedback on progress;
- poor service provision (missed collections, not returning bins, damage, unhelpful staff etc.) resulting in a lack of commitment by householders to the recycling scheme resulting in disenchantment and less efficient segregation;
- cross-border effects i.e. the influence of a neighbouring authority’s scheme which may encourage residents to put out the wrong materials because their friends, neighbours or relatives are recycling different materials;
- lack of convenient facilities for flats and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs); and
- poor understanding amongst collection crews about what the recycling scheme target materials are and why the quality of the materials collected is important.
There are a number of ways of identifying the issues underlying the contamination of the recyclables collected. These include:

- visual monitoring which looks at disposal behaviour. It can tell you what types of contaminants are visible in collection containers, as well as give an indication of the frequency with which contaminating behaviour by households is observed. This can be presented as the proportion (%) of bins containing non-target materials and can tell you how widespread the issue is;
- a waste composition analysis which will provide data on the quantity (tonnage) and type of contamination by non-target materials which can be presented as a percentage of material set out for recycling;
- talking to crews about the problems they encounter on their collection rounds; and
- undertaking quantitative or qualitative research (surveys or focus groups) with local residents into how they use the recycling scheme and whether they experience any problems with it.

Visual monitoring can be carried out at the kerbside and waste analysis at the transfer station or MRF. These methods can also be used pre and post intervention to monitor the impact of any service change or communications campaign. For further information about monitoring and evaluation see: ‘Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes: A Good Practice Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation’ (www.wrap.org.uk/monitoringandevaluation).

Used together, these techniques can identify problems in terms of the nature of the issue(s) and which collection rounds are most affected.

**Methods for improving quality of recyclate**

Once the issues have been identified, there are three main methods of improving the quality of recyclables collected by commingled collections:

- be easy for all residents to access, use and understand;
- be delivered reliably and to a high standard; and
- be communicated to all residents in a clear, straightforward manner.

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**Case Study: Kingston Upon Thames**

Prior to the launch of its new collection scheme, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames conducted a trial to test its operation. Set out and non-target material levels were monitored over a six week period and where non-target material or side waste issues were identified, a leaflet was left with the resident explaining the problem. Residents who required additional support were offered home visits by a team of recycling advisors who helped residents by providing advice on contamination, storage, washing, waste minimisation and recycling.

Levels of recorded contamination reduced from 9.8% of residents to 6.8% of residents during the last five weeks of the 12 week trial. The reminder cards were welcomed by residents and new cards were developed to accompany the Borough-wide roll-out including a plastic specific factsheet for residents when it was found that this was the most frequent -target material found in containers.

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![Diagram](image-url)
Internal communications
Your collection crews are one of the key instruments for improving the quality of material collected. Any initiatives should involve crew training so that they:

- understand how the MRF works, what it can process and why the quality of material collected at the kerbside is so important;
- can recognise non-target materials in containers and reject contaminated bins at the kerbside;
- understand the importance of householder satisfaction with services;
- are able to engage householders and encourage them to recycle correctly; and
- understand that their work and the reliability/consistency with which it is delivered is important and valued by residents.

Initiatives to train crews to be more pro-active in identifying and addressing contamination issues need to be supported by communications to raise awareness amongst the public regarding reasons for possible rejection as well as telling them the correct way to recycle.

It can be useful to get a supervisor or crew member to review your communications materials before they are printed as they can often point out where things aren’t clear or common issues which they find with collections.

It is also important to have regular communications between the local authority and MRF regarding material quality so that any issues arising can be dealt with as promptly as possible.

Communications with householders
Providing householders with a clear and simple service reminder leaflet at least annually will help them understand how and what to recycle. However, almost every local authority in the UK has areas (streets, neighbourhoods, wards or even larger geographical areas) that under-perform compared to neighbouring or similar areas within the same authority. The range of communication activities which can specifically address contamination issues are outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Activities</th>
<th>Targeted communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training crews to understand quality and contamination issues, recognise non-target materials in containers and reject contaminated bins at the kerbside.</td>
<td>Training crews how to engage with householders and encourage them to recycle correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information cards to remind crews which are target and non-target materials</td>
<td>Contamination cards or stickers for crews to put onto contaminated containers highlighting what the problem is and explaining why it has not been collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contamination notices (to give to residents/post through letterboxes) explaining why their container has not been collected</td>
<td>Contamination notices (to give to residents/post through letterboxes) explaining why their container has not been collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal systems to: record householders which participate incorrectly; carry out follow-up visits by staff to explain why their container was not emptied and how they can recycle correctly and feed-back information on actions undertaken to crews</td>
<td>Internal systems to collate resident feedback and use to inform future communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door to door canvassing and community engagement with local groups to explain the message and receive feedback and reach hard to engage groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Study: London Borough of Lewisham
The London Borough of Lewisham provided training for its collection crews about the recognition of target and non-target materials. The crews also record properties which presented non-target materials at the kerbside. This has been done in conjunction with the introduction of:

- new bin-stickers which clearly state what can and cannot be recycled;
- a ‘checklist’ which enables crews to tick a box next to specific non-target materials present within the material presented at the kerbside and post this through the door; and
- a bin hanger which also states that non-target material has been presented at the kerbside.

Waste advisors also visit properties where issues with non-target materials have been recorded by collection crews.

This programme resulted in the level of non-target materials in the recycling collections declining over a 12 month period from 22% to 13%.
Case study: Durham County Council

Durham County Council promoted their Kerb-it campaign to increase participation and improve quality of recyclables in areas of low participation. In all, 36,000 households were targeted by the campaign which used a number of resources including:

- adverts, posters, leaflets, bus back / sides, road shows and door-to-door canvassing (which managed to contact 12,000 people).

Non-target material rates were only measured in areas with high student population, but within these areas rates decreased from 17.5% to 5.8% during the trial period.

When planning your communication activities, research shows you can start from the presumption that householders want to do the right thing. In the first instance you should work on the basis that incorrect use of the system is probably a matter of misunderstanding about the system or the problems which are caused by putting out the wrong materials. The tone of communications will be important in gaining the co-operation of the household. It needs to be explanatory rather than accusatory. WRAP's report on 'Barriers to recycling at home' (www.wrap.org.uk/barrierstorecycling) provides advice on the best mix of communications for different audiences.

Additional approaches which may be useful in areas with low participation or high rates of contamination include:

- use of pictures on labels on bins;
- leaflets illustrated with images;
- leaflets primarily in English with key phrases in other languages as an alternative to translation for BME communities;
- using Community Liaison Officers who understand and empathise with concerns of the particular communities;
- recruiting some of the refuse and recycling crew members from the target communities;
- landlord forums (for owners of HMOs) to give landlords the chance to meet with council officers, find out about and discuss issues relating to council services, including the waste and recycling; and
- engaging with local community leaders, networks and organisations offers opportunities for influencing behaviour change. This is generally a long-term approach as it takes time to develop relationships, but it can be very effective.

I want to know more about Low Participation Areas – see the specific guide developed by WRAP to help users identify areas of low participation, examine why they experience low participation and to develop effective communication solutions. The document is available on the WRAP website:

www.wrap.org.uk/lpa
Becoming an Expert No18: An overview of different distribution methods

There are a variety of ways to distribute communications materials and information to target audiences including:

- Door-to-door distribution (door-drops) of leaflets/calendars/service information packs by crews, canvassers, specialist distribution companies or the Royal Mail
- Pick-ups – leaflet displays in libraries, council offices, community centres, leisure centres and other public buildings
- Posters in libraries, council offices, community centres, leisure centres, doctors’ surgeries, schools, local shops, community notice boards

The table on the next pages looks at each distribution method in terms of:

- Impact – what is the impact of this method on the target audience?
- Ease - will it be easy, complicated or time-consuming to organise?
- Timescales - how quick/slow will it be? What are the likely lead times? Will it work in the timescale I need it?
- Reliability - how reliable is this method? Will it reach the target audience? How can I guarantee people will see/read my message?
- Cost - how cheap/expensive is it? Does it represent good value for money?

**Warning** – if you have complex collection arrangements because you have a number of containers collected on different days in different combinations across your local authority, your information leaflets and calendars, together with their distribution may become complicated and problematical. You will need to manage your distribution very carefully to ensure the right households receive the correct information. Your design and print costs will also increase if you have to produce lots of slightly different leaflets/calendars to cope with the complex variety of collection information. Potentially, this is the single-most expensive item in your communications plan and one of the most important. If householders don’t get the information or get the wrong information then it is a waste of time and money. Be careful to select the best method for your needs. If possible it may be better to review whether the service can be simplified. Complex schemes are not as effective as simple ones.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Method</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Ease</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Door-to-door (leaflets, letters, service packs etc)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crews</td>
<td>Generally very good so long as materials are well designed and easy to read/understand.</td>
<td>Needs careful planning and liaison.</td>
<td>Long lead-time. Execution can be relatively quick (2-3 weeks depending on number of households/complexity of delivery).</td>
<td>Good but does depend on crews. Careful planning and management is required especially for calendars, which need to be delivered to specific properties. Good briefing of crews essential.</td>
<td>There may be additional staff overtime costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door delivery by canvassers</td>
<td>Generally very good (as above).</td>
<td>Easy as part of communications training.</td>
<td>Depends on scale and duration of campaign. Can be relatively long (4+ weeks).</td>
<td>Good but careful planning and management is required especially for calendars, which need to be delivered to specific properties. Beware of the distribution distracting them from their main task – talking to people!</td>
<td>Cheap if you are already doing canvassing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist distributors</td>
<td>Generally very good (as above).</td>
<td>Relatively straightforward with careful planning. Can be difficult if there are problems.</td>
<td>Depends on scale. Relatively short execution (2-3 weeks) depending on number of households/complexity of delivery).</td>
<td>Should be very good but can be variable. Get recommendations and find a good, reliable company. Careful management and planning is required especially for calendars, which need to be delivered to specific properties.</td>
<td>Can be expensive. Don't necessarily go for the cheapest - look closely at value for money and track record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Mail</td>
<td>Generally very good (as above).</td>
<td>Relatively straightforward with careful planning.</td>
<td>Long lead times – possibly as much as 2-3 months prior to actual distribution date. Deliveries are relatively quick.</td>
<td>Very reliable. Careful management and planning is required especially for calendars, which need to be delivered to specific properties.</td>
<td>Can be relatively expensive. Probably the best quality though. May not cover all areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral register distributors</td>
<td>Generally very good (as above).</td>
<td>Needs careful planning.</td>
<td>Variable depending on the amount of planning required. Actual delivery should be relatively</td>
<td>Good but careful management and planning is required especially for calendars, which need to be delivered to specific properties.</td>
<td>Check costs as they can vary considerably. Like other distribution methods, reliability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the Royal Mail has a range of services for letters and Door to Door (for leaflets). For more information see Royal Mail Delivery Services and Marketing Services respectively - [www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Method</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Ease</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inserts in local free paper</td>
<td>Not very effective as your leaflet can be one of many.</td>
<td>Relatively easy to organise.</td>
<td>quick (2-3 weeks).</td>
<td>Can be unreliable.</td>
<td>Medium cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council magazine</td>
<td>Impact could be variable – depends on position in publication and design/presentation of material. Probably more effective with audiences that take notice and read such publications. See if there is any readership research.</td>
<td>Relatively easy – liaise with internal production team.</td>
<td>Publication can be quarterly or a similar frequency.</td>
<td>Generally good.</td>
<td>N/A – uses internal resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poster and leaflet distribution sites (posters, leaflets, surveys, displays)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries, leisure centres and council offices</td>
<td>Variable – depends on number of visitors and location of material within building. Better for communications in discreet areas.</td>
<td>Relatively easy – there is probably an internal circulation/distribution list/system - unless you visit all the buildings centres in person and put out the material yourself.</td>
<td>Variable – can depend on internal distribution systems. Timescales can be controlled if the team distributes material itself.</td>
<td>Variable – dependent on staff to put material up unless you or your team do it yourself. The advantage of the DIY approach is you can pick the best location so increase the likely impact. Best to contact locations in advance.</td>
<td>N/A – uses internal resources unless material is posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community centres, health centres, doctor’s and dental surgeries</td>
<td>Variable – depends on number of visitors and location of material within building. Better for communications in discreet areas. Would need to be for relevant information such as real nappies.</td>
<td>Can be time-consuming. You will need to get permission and send the material or deliver it. There may be issues in medical premises with non-medical information.</td>
<td>Variable. May take longer than expected unless a list of contacts is already available.</td>
<td>Variable – dependent on staff to put material up unless you or your team do it yourself. The advantage of the DIY approach is you can pick the best location so increase likely impact. Best to contact locations in advance.</td>
<td>N/A – uses internal resources unless material is posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local shops</td>
<td>Variable – depends on location, footfall, numbers of passers-by and location of material in window or inside shop. Some shops will not allow any communications material in them (unless you pay). Better for communications in discreet areas.</td>
<td>Can be time-consuming. You will need to get permission and send the material or deliver it yourself.</td>
<td>Variable – dependent on how many shops there are and how long it takes to contact them and arrange for posters to be positioned. Some shops may have long lead times.</td>
<td>Variable unless you visit each shop and position material yourself.</td>
<td>N/A – unless you have to pay for space to put up posters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road shows</td>
<td>Variable but can be very good. The aim is</td>
<td>Depending on the size of</td>
<td>Prime spots can be</td>
<td>Variable as they are dependent on</td>
<td>Can be expensive.</td>
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<td>Distribution Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>HWRCs</td>
<td>Good. Signs and posters at HWRCs can communicate to a captive and interested audience. Positioning is important – posters etc should be placed where traffic is queuing. Instructional signs should be on/by containers. Leaflet dispensers should also be on-site. Potentially a limited (but very engaged) audience depending on site visitor numbers.</td>
<td>Refurbishing sites can involve a number of departments and budgets so may not be straightforward. Worth the effort though.</td>
<td>Fully refurbishing sites can be a lengthy process but rebranding by updating information on signs and banks should be quicker.</td>
<td>Good – total control over the message and positioning. New signage can be very effective in changing sites from 'tips' to high diversion recycling centres.</td>
<td>Can be an expensive investment but a valuable one over the long term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Distribution Method
- Impact
  - to pick busy locations on busy days e.g. a town centre or shopping centre on key shopping days such as a Saturday or the local market day. Supermarket car parks are not as good – good positioning can be difficult and people tend to focus on their shopping and be in a hurry. Audiences at events generally can be limited and possibly self-selecting i.e. you will only get the interested people (good recyclers), not others.
- Ease
  - roadshow they can be complicated and time consuming to arrange. Access arrangements (timings, restrictions etc) are key to the smooth running of an event
- Timescales
  - booked months in advance. Depending on the location, arrangements can also take time. Allow 3 months.
- Reliability
  - numbers of people in the area and the ability of your display/event to draw people in. Have as open a space as possible – doorways and entrances can deter people.
- Cost
  - Cost may include: the space, your displays, producing special material and/or giveaways, a trailer (or similar), some kind of attraction/event as well as possible overtime for staff depending on the day.