

Zero Waste Scotland Communications Guidance

Improving Recycling Through Effective Communications



A practical guide to improving recycling performance through effective communications with your residents.

Zero Waste Scotland works with businesses, individuals, communities and local authorities to help them reduce waste, recycle more and use resources sustainably.

Find out more at
www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

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Introduction

Communications are an integral part of any local authority recycling service as, to participate fully, residents need to know clearly what their services are, what their service rules are and what happens to their recycling after it is collected. This view is based on consumer feedback on the most important aspects of a waste collection service.

This guide is built on experience of running national recycling and waste prevention campaigns, and on best practice from local authorities throughout the UK. It provides a broad introduction to the issues of developing a recycling communications strategy and follows the Zero Waste Scotland communications planning cycle :



The Zero Waste Scotland Communications Planning Cycle provides a methodical approach to campaign planning whether you are:

- Getting started with recycling communications.
- Keeping communications fresh.
- Expanding an existing campaign to cover new collections/materials or tackling specific issues.

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

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

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

This guide is designed to link into the Recycle for Scotland campaign which is based on the successful Recycle Now campaign in England which was launched in 2004. In Scotland, the Recycle for Scotland campaign was launched in November 2011 and the campaign logo and iconography is being used by every Scottish local authority and the logo is being adopted by more and more organisations across industry and commerce – anywhere in fact where recycling messages or information are being communicated. Over 140 organisations have signed up to use the brand in total, including the 32 Scottish local authorities.

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

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

1 Background - Identify where you are



This section looks at the information you need to gather to assess your current position and carry out a situational analysis (the next stage of the strategy development process). To help you identify where you are you need to start with your local authority's own information resources and gather basic demographic information about your area and the people who live there. Then, you need all the relevant information about the recycling and waste management services (current and proposed) which are available to the public together with up-to-date information about their performance as well as their targets. As you gather this information you should be asking yourself how it will help you understand:

- The area and the people living in it – who they are, how old they are, where they live, what types of houses they live in, what their lifestyles are.
- How well they use the local recycling and waste management services.
- What are their barriers to recycling.

Once you have gathered all the internal information you can, you should look further afield to see if there is other information or research that might be useful. The final stage is to review all the information to see what it tells you and to identify if there are any gaps in your knowledge that need to be filled.

Even if you know your local area, you should complete this first stage because it will give you the factual evidence you need develop your strategy, provide baseline information on which you can set targets and help you make the case for the communications budget you need. It will also set the context for anyone who may be less familiar with the area.

1.1 Demographics of your area

Start by gathering information about your local authority and describing it – its location, geography, population profile, housing types and amounts, urban/rural mix, areas of deprivation and local environmental quality. Include any other relevant demographic information you think is relevant. Sources of information may include:

- Colleagues in the waste and recycling department.
- Other council departments.
- Other local organisations, such as the local Primary Care Trust.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Draw on all sources to produce an accurate picture of your local authority for your communication plan.

1.2 Current and proposed services

The next stage is to summarise your current and proposed recycling and waste services including:

- All relevant waste management facilities and services covering all material streams.
- Collections types and frequency, drop-off facilities, services for other waste streams.
- Relevant collection policies (closed lid, compulsory recycling etc).
- Include other relevant information as required.

This information forms the basis of what you need to communicate to people whether you are providing standard service information, launching a new service, raising awareness of services, motivating people or preventing waste.

1.3 Waste data and targets

Then you need to look at your council's recycling and waste management data and targets, namely:

- The service performance information you gather, how it is gathered and how often it is gathered.
- Current and past service performance figures.
- Waste service and statutory targets.

Understanding this information will help you set targets by giving you the context for your communications and telling you what needs to be achieved and by when.

1.4 Research

Consider whether any other research and information may be available and useful, such as:

- Your authority's corporate strategy.
- Information from any previous communications campaigns undertaken by your authority.
- Relevant operational research undertaken by your authority e.g. participation rates, waste composition analysis etc.
- Any reports or research conducted for your council by external parties such as consultants or ZWS.
- Research or case studies from other organisations e.g. ZWS or other local authorities.
- Other relevant research eg by Scottish Government, ZWS, SEPA, WRAP etc.
- Feedback from collection and other front line staff.
- Helpline enquiry information.

As you gather the information, identify any knowledge or information gaps and undertake research to fill any gaps.

For more information about conducting research on recycling issues – see ZWS's Kerbside good practice guide to monitoring and evaluation which provides detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of suitable research techniques - <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/category/sector/local-authorities>

CASE STUDY: The value of research

When it upgraded its recycling facilities, the London Borough of Bexley found that purpose-built flats had a lower rate of recycling waste than low-rise accommodation. The council decided to run a campaign to address the problems associated with blocks of flats. Data was gathered about residents' attitudes, behaviour, ideas and barriers. Surveys looked at how many residents used the recycling service and communal bins. Focus groups discussed the barriers to recycling and waste management issues highlighted by the surveys.

A key finding was a lack of communication between the council and residents living in flats. Most council communications (via its quarterly magazines, website and the annual recycling calendar and recycling guide – along with adverts in the local free newspapers) were perceived to be insufficient. The focus groups highlighted the fact that:

- Local free newspapers were not distributed to flats
- The recycling calendars and guides were not relevant to flats
- Most residents in the targeted area did not have access to the internet in their homes
- Council magazines did not always have messages or articles about recycling

This was a major communications flaw and the Council developed its communications accordingly.

F_ For more information on collecting from flats: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/recycling-collections-flats>

1.5 Funding and Support

Depending on what you need to achieve, your communications will require funding - as a rule of thumb, you should aim for a budget figure of around £1.00 per household for standard communications. For communicating major service changes or more intensive communications activities for "hard to engage" residents, £1.50 to £2 per household is more realistic. You may need to do some initial research now to identify potential sources of funding and support:

- Find out how much funding previous campaigns had and where the funding came from.
- Look at internal budgets (possibly spread across your council) and the types and amounts of support (financial and other resources) available from other council departments and teams.
- If you don't know already, find out about your council's budgetary decision making processes and deadlines.
- Investigate possible external funding sources e.g. ZWS.



2 Situational Analysis - Establish where you want to be

This section looks at how to develop a situational analysis using the information gathered in Section 1. A situational analysis takes a snapshot view of your organisation or situation and where things stand at a particular point in time. This enables you to understand the context for your communications and identify the strategic goal you are working towards, for example reaching the target of 70% recycling and composting of all waste by 2025. The information gathered in Section 1 will now be used to:

- Look at the wider context for your communications, what is driving it and what it needs to achieve.
- Review the actions being undertaken to meet your local authority's waste management service targets.
- Identify what you need to do and by when.

The first stage is to analyse your current position by reviewing the demographic, operational and the communication information you have gathered. Once you have come to some conclusions about what the information tells you, you need to work out where you need to be ie what you need to achieve and by when. Finally, you need to look at and describe (briefly) the initiatives your local authority will take to reach its goals.

2.1 Analyse your current position

Demographic analysis

- What does the demographic information tell you? Are there any unusual or unique characteristics, e.g. areas of deprivation, above average terraced housing, lack and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities?
- What implications might the demographic information have for service delivery and your communications e.g. large numbers of elderly people who might need assisted collections?
- Are there areas with relatively high population turnover which might need basic recycling information on a more frequent basis or at specific times of the year e.g. in September when students start at college or university?

Operational Analysis

- What is the current performance of different parts of your service?
- Analyse the feedback about your service from crews, call centres, satisfaction or other surveys etc. Look at levels and types of complaints, satisfaction levels etc. What does this information tell you?
- Where is the good performance, e.g. high participation levels, large tonnages collected? Can it be copied elsewhere?
- Where is the low performance, e.g. low participation, low tonnages collected, high contamination levels?
- Identify any operational issues e.g. crew access to properties or containers? Are recycling sites clean and tidy or overflowing and untidy? Are staff helpful and pleasant? Can the helpline deal adequately with enquiries?
- Are there any operational barriers to participation e.g. not all households having a container, containers too small?
- Are there any other issues?

If any service issues are identified, you need to look at how to address these *before* you begin your communications. If the service, *in the opinion of your residents*, is poor then communications alone are unlikely to succeed in raising participation.

Communications Analysis

- Are residents aware of your service? Do they understand how to use it?
- What results have previous communications achieved? Identify how they achieved their objectives and whether that success could be replicated or used in future communications.
- Have you developed a strong brand for your recycling communications? Is it effective?
- Do you have the staff capacity to manage a communications campaign?
- Are there any communications barriers that need to be addressed by your communications?

- Which operational areas or services would benefit from additional communications support?
- Are there any other issues?

You can undertake a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) and/or SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis to help identify and highlight key issues. Once you have completed your investigations, draw up a list of your main findings and review them:

- What issues have you identified? Are they new issues or were you already aware of them?
- What do they mean for your communications?
- How will you address the issues you have identified (through service changes or communications)?
- Have you uncovered any gaps in your knowledge? What are they? How will you fill them?

Before you go any further, it is important that you have thought carefully about your approach so far in order to develop improved communications. Look beyond the issues you identify first of all to gain a complete picture of what is happening. Look for facts and do not rely on unsubstantiated opinion alone. If you have insufficient information you will need to think carefully whether you are currently in a position to develop your communications or whether you need to do additional research to explore any issues you have identified.

For more information about operational solutions – refer to the Kerbside Good Practice Guide (<http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/category/sector/local-authorities>)

For more information about people’s barriers to recycling - see Section 4.

2.2 Outline where you need to be

Where you need to be depends partly on where you are now and what your future targets and plans are. Once you have looked in detail at where you are, list any implications for your communications based on the findings of your demographic, operations and communications analysis. Good practice needs to be continued, any issues identified should be addressed and successful communications continued in your new communications plan.

Next, consult your local authority waste strategy or colleagues for detailed information about your targets, operational plans, timescales and deadlines. These will give you a broad overview of what your local authority needs to achieve and how it intends to do it. You need to pay particular attention to any plans which have a communication dimension, for example: future operational activities which need communicating to householders such as service changes. Depending on your situation, you may need to pay particular attention to the following in your plan:

- Any deficiencies highlighted in your current or past communication activities which need to be addressed.
- Any deficiencies in operational performance which targeted communications might address.
- Any targets that need to be met through communications activity as no service changes are planned.

For more information about strategic targets – refer to your local authority waste management strategy

2.3 Explain what you will do to get there

Once you have identified the issues and where you need to be, you need to describe what your council intends to do to meet its targets. If you intend introducing further new services:

- What new services will be launched and when e.g. when will new food waste collections be introduced?
- How will your communications support new and existing operational activities e.g. supporting current collections of dry recyclables at the same time as introducing a new food waste collection service.

If you do not have any plans to introduce further services or improvements:

- What will your communications do to address any issues identified (e.g. low capture rates or Low Participation Areas)?
- How will your communications help you reach unattained recycling targets?

If you already have a high recycling rate, are there other opportunities to explore such as waste prevention?

Once you have described your operational plans and what communications can do to help, you should, in consultation with your colleagues, look at your service plans, draw up a list of actions and prioritise them in terms of the:

- Major issues that need to be addressed.
- Biggest potential gains.
- Quickest potential gains.
- Least resources required.
- Greatest alignment to corporate priorities.

3 Aim and Objectives - Define aim and objectives



This section looks in detail at defining your communications aim and setting your overall objectives. It considers the different nature of aims and objectives and how to set targets which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).

3.1 Define your aim

Identify the main aim for your communications plan. An aim is a general statement of what you intend to achieve and generally, you should only have one aim. Your aim can include vague and undefined terms, for example:

- Meet 2020 Scottish Government waste strategy target.
- Increase the amount of material recycled.
- Encourage low or non recyclers to recycle.

3.2 Setting objectives

Once your aim is defined you can set the overall objectives for your plan:

- An objective is a specific statement of what you intend to achieve.
- Any terms need to be defined and the concepts understood.
- You may have several objectives that combine to meet your overall aim.
- Your objectives must relate to the impact of your communications.

Your objectives should give your plan clarity of purpose and will help you prioritise activities, for example: does activity "X" help you meet the overall aim and objectives? If it doesn't, or has marginal benefit you should question whether to go ahead with it. They must also be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound – and should be stretching *but* achievable. A target that looks unattainable can be counter-productive.

Remember to make sure that your objectives can be measured and decide how to measure them now. Objectives that a) can't be measured or b) are too difficult, expensive or time consuming to measure will not be effective.

Example objectives might include:

- Increase the recycling rate from 40% to 55% by March 31st 2014
- Increase participation to 50% in identified Low Performing Areas by March 31st 2014
- Reduce contamination of recycling collections to under 5% by March 2014
- Achieve a Council-wide recycling and composting rate of 50% by 2015

Later, when you are looking at individual communication activities, you need to set specific objectives (targets) for each activity. These should also be SMART and link back to and support your overall aim and objectives. This is covered in more detail in Section 7.

For further information about setting aims and objectives for waste operations and communications campaigns, refer to Kerbside Good Practice Guide. See <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/category/sector/local-authorities>

CASE STUDY: Setting aims and objectives

The London Borough of Barnet ran a campaign to encourage residents in flats to recycle more.

The campaign aims were to:

- Maximise participation and tonnage collected from flats using communal recycling facilities through a door-to-door canvassing campaign
- Reinforce participation in the flats recycling service using a variety of communications

The specific objectives set were to increase the following by the end of the campaign:

- Claimed usage rate by at least 10%
- Quantity of recyclables by +10%
- Number of committed recyclers by +10%
- Level of awareness by +10%
- Level of usage of specific material containers by +10%

A wide variety of communication channels were used, spearheaded by canvassing. The campaign activities were monitored by:

- Collecting tonnage data from the bins at each set of flats (using estimates of the volume of material in the bins at the time of collection)
- Surveying a representative sample of residents about their recycling behaviour
- 'Committed Recycler' data determined through a series of linked questions in a face-to-face survey

WRAP Local Authority
Communications Case Study:
London Borough of Barnet

4 Target Audience



Identify your audience

This section helps you to identify and describe your target audience. There are four main groups to consider:

- **Householders** - the main focus of your communications.
- **Internal groups** - your staff, senior officers, elected members, other council staff who need to know about your communications plan and may be able to help.
- **External groups** - such as the media, community groups, other local authorities.
- **Specific subgroups** – community groups, religious and cultural groups, potential partners to help communicate your messages such as caretakers, landlords and housing associations.

You must be clear about the target audience for your communications and keep them as the focus of your effort at all stages. This section looks at each main audience in turn (householders, internal and external groups, specific groups and hard to reach/engage audiences). It will help you identify and to understanding the target audiences relevant to your communication plan. This is important because your target audiences must be at the heart of your thinking about messaging, strategy, communication methods and activities.

4.1 All householders

Use the information you have already gathered to draw up a complete description of your target audience. You may need to split them up into smaller groups or audience segments (an audience segment is a subgroup of people with broadly similar characteristics). Different methods and messages might be required to effectively communicate with, for example, people living in a suburban street with large detached houses or people living in a high rise council flat. You should assess the following characteristics:

- Which are the most significant in terms of size and distribution?
- What are their life-stages? For example, young and single, families with young children, mature couples etc
- What are their similarities or differences?
- Are there any areas where distinct groups or types of people are concentrated?
- Any other characteristics?

You should use the information gathered as part of your background research as part of Section 1 to look at your target audiences. Local knowledge can be very useful in this process but opinions and anecdotal evidence should always be supported by factual evidence. A useful idea is to use a geo-demographical segmentation system like ACORN or MOSAIC that identifies and maps different audience groups. This can help you to 'see' where different types of people live and cross-reference other information against them e.g. anecdotal information from crews. Many local authorities use systems like ACORN or MOSAIC and you may be able to use it – find out from colleagues or other departments. You should use these systems to support and refine the information you have already gathered.

What do you know about their barriers to recycling?

Communications and operational services need to identify, understand and address the barriers to recycling that their target audiences (local householders) face. Use your audience research information and the known

CASE STUDY: Target audiences

The Staffordshire Recycling Partnership campaign covered the whole county.

The target audiences for the campaign were:

- Socio-demographic groups needing the most motivation and those most likely to support/use new services (75% of effort)
- Niche groups that had proved hard to engage in Staffordshire's 'Blue collar roots' Acorn group (20% of effort) and Asian communities (5% of effort)

The partnership campaign ran a generic campaign to target the major audience and tailored marketing approaches for the niche groups.

WRAP BCLF Case Study:
Staffordshire Waste Partnership

barriers/issues in your area to match your audiences against recycling competence levels and barriers that research by WRAP has identified.

Barriers to recycling:

Situational barriers	Not having adequate containers, a lack of space for storage, unreliable collections, unable to get to bring sites.
Behaviour	Not having the space or systems in place in the home to recycle, being too busy with other preoccupations, difficulties in establishing routines for sorting waste and remembering to put it out.
Lack of knowledge	Knowing what materials to put in which container, and understanding the basics of how the scheme works.
Attitudes and perceptions	Not accepting there is an environmental or other benefit, being resistant to householder sorting or not getting a personal motivational reward from recycling

Source: WRAP Barriers to Recycling report

Recycling competence levels:

1. Recycling unaware	5. Trying their best
2. Aware but inactive	6. Broadly competent
3. Contemplated but not engaged	7. 'The Complete Recycler'
4. Unreliable	

Source: WRAP Barriers to Recycling report

The recycling competence levels are roughly equivalent to ACORN categories 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and this information can be used to map possible recycling competence levels and barriers in your local authority area. WRAP’s barriers research containing more detailed information can be accessed online at: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/barriers-recycling-home>.

This process will help you better understand who you are talking to, how to talk to them and where they are. This will help you develop appropriate messages, which communication methods to use and where to run your activities.

It is important to point out, however, that whilst tools like ACORN or MOSAIC can be useful it is not a perfect science. Representatives from all types of groups will be found in specific audience segments and at an individual level, people may have: different barriers, combinations of more than one barrier or they may have different messaging needs and require different communication methods to reach them. Audience segmentation should not be seen as a replacement for detailed local knowledge and research and should be used in conjunction with other communication planning tools such as surveys and focus groups. On its own audience segmentation is not 'the answer' and using it exclusively to develop your communications can make you overlook some effective communication methods and activities.

4.2 Internal/external groups

As well as householders, you need to consider the other groups that might need to be involved in your communications plan. Generally, these groups may not necessarily be the recipients or 'end users' of your communications (i.e. householders) – they are more likely to be people or organisations that can lend their support to help deliver the campaign or its messages.

4.2.1 Internal groups

It is essential to address internal groups or audiences – local authority employees and employees of contractors working for the local authority - as these groups can play an invaluable role. Indeed, without their involvement, it may be difficult to deliver recycling communications campaigns effectively. As with external audiences, it is useful to segment internal audiences in order to give them appropriate messages. A few of these audiences and the roles they may play are listed below:

- Elected members (approving budgets, talking to residents, promoting recycling locally, speaking to the media).
- Call centre staff (handling enquiries, directing calls correctly).
- In-house press office staff (support on communications planning, help with campaign activities, media relations).
- Receptionists (handling enquiries, handing out information).
- Operational staff (dealing with residents, giving information on schemes).
- Other employees (local ambassadors, leading by example).

All internal groups must be kept informed of what you are doing or planning to do. You also need to make sure they have the right information at the right time in order to help you and that this information is clear and easy to use in the context of their job and daily work.

4.2.2 External groups

These are individuals or organisations outside your council that might be important because they can lend their support, give advice or engage with key target audiences on your behalf to reinforce your messages and extend the reach of your communications. These groups (or stakeholders) range from:

- Key opinion formers such as local MPs and MEPs.
- Community leaders, parish councillors, local religious leaders.
- Community groups and organisations.
- Local recycling groups and charities.
- The local media.

When you have identified all the groups (remember more groups may emerge during your campaign), you need to decide what sort of information they need, how you will communicate with them and how often.

4.3 Specific groups

The local community is a potential resource with a complex web of organisations and individuals that may be able to help deliver your communications. These networks may not be immediately obvious so take time and consult with local communities to investigate them thoroughly. Opportunities may include:

- Peer pressure opportunities e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, family and friends, Community councils.
- Religious and cultural groups or local societies e.g. Women's Institute, youth groups, student groups, religious networks and communities such as churches, gurdwara, mosques etc.
- Community links e.g. libraries, local amenities, leisure centres, community centres, schools, clubs and pubs.
- Local community voluntary groups e.g. environmental or conservation groups, elderly support groups.
- Housing groups e.g. tenants association, caretakers, landlords, housing associations.
- Others as necessary e.g. benefits agencies, police community support officers, neighbourhood wardens etc.

List them all and identify specific local groups that may be important or useful.

4.4 Hard to reach/engage

Hard to reach and hard to engage are sections of the population which are:

- **'hard-to-reach'** operationally due to their location or housing type e.g. high rise flats or an isolated rural area. The issues they face are best addressed by consulting with residents at an early stage and designing services that are convenient to use and simple to communicate.
- **'hard-to-engage'** because it may be difficult to communicate with them about the recycling service and/or how to use it. Language and literacy issues may present specific challenges.

Hard to reach/engage audiences are commonly associated with low performing areas (LPAs). LPAs are geographic areas (often relatively small) where there is a concentration of households that participate less in the recycling service(s) provided to them compared to households in other areas of the same authority. Low participation can cover a number of specific issues:

- Low levels of participation in terms of recycling services overall resulting in low tonnages collected and/or the range of materials collected resulting in low tonnages captured for some materials.
- Incorrect participation resulting in the wrong materials being presented and poor quality of recyclate collected which can lead to rejection of entire loads if contamination levels are high.

Low participation is a relative term as performance may simply be lower in relation to an authority's overall recycling performance or recycling/landfill targets. You should carefully consider whether you have any LPAs and look very carefully at the issues, barriers and people living in any LPAs you identify. Each area could have a distinct audience profile, geography and associated barriers to recycling. You may need to implement specific operational improvements to address people's barriers to recycling and run specific communications once their barriers have been addressed.

4.5 Review lifestyle characteristics

It is important to understand the impact which lifestyles, life-stages or cultural issues in your local authority may have on the recycling service and how it is communicated. There may be particular opportunities or barriers that are specific to different groups and your communications should aim to overcome or avoid them. Different areas within your authority may have different characteristics and need different approaches to both system design and communications.

Summarise the information you have on the lifestyles of residents in your target areas e.g.:

- Socio-economic status e.g. where do residents shop and what do they buy? This may affect where you can effectively get your message across to them. Are houses large enough to store the proposed mix of recycling containers easily? This will affect choices about communications messages.
- Population turnover/transience e.g. are residents students, migrant groups or travellers? Even in relatively stable districts, the population turnover can be 15%. This can affect the frequency of communications needed.
- Any other characteristics as necessary.

Summarise the information you have on the life stages of residents in your target area:

- Young people e.g. often transient, have other priorities and relatively low incomes.
- Young families with pre-school age children e.g. may have other priorities but may be open to recycling messages.
- Families with children at school e.g. may have other priorities but they are often involved in community activities.
- Middle aged e.g. more settled, may be active in the community.
- Elderly e.g. may have access issues and require assisted collections, may also be active in the community.
- Any others as necessary.

Review any cultural issues that may be present:

- Literacy and language e.g. groups where English may be a second language or literacy levels may be low.
- Social conventions e.g. in some cultures women will not talk to men they do not know or men may not accept advice from women.
- Social attitudes e.g. will environmental or cost messages have more impact? Do people care about where they live?
- Religious beliefs/practices e.g. some groups do not drink alcohol so might not respond to images using wine bottles.
- Differing waste practices in countries of origin e.g. some residents may not have experienced recycling.

Keep this summary to hand when you consider your communications messages and communication methods.

5 Branding and Message - Developing Communications



Having identified your target audiences and their needs you need to develop your brand and message. This section will help you develop your communications brand and its identity, the tone of voice for your communications and explains how to link to the national Recycle for Scotland campaign brand to get the most out of it. It uses some of the most recent research into people's barriers to recycling and looks at the implications for messaging.

Branding encompasses concepts such as identity, personality, promise and visual identity:

- Identity is the outward expression (name and visual appearance) of a company or campaign.
- 'Personality' is the assignment of human personality traits (e.g. seriousness, warmth, or imagination) to a brand.
- The promise is the experience consumers should expect from all interactions with the brand e.g. your recycling collection services.
- The visual identity is the overall look and feel of the brand – the images used, the style and design.

Brands and identities are easy to produce but can be hard to get right. Developing the right brand for recycling communications is something in which a great deal of time, research and effort has been invested in order to get right and the Recycle Now brand and its Scottish equivalent – Recycle for Scotland - enjoy high levels of public recognition throughout the UK.



Your communications should adopt the national Recycle for Scotland campaign branding for use locally as there are a number of benefits:

- Industry research shows that local communications benefit from association with national campaigns and messages through greater awareness and increased impact.
- The campaign logo (recycle mark) and iconography is in widespread use by all Scottish local authorities and is being used by an increasing numbers of organisations throughout the UK to communicate recycling messages.
- The campaign has an extensive range of resources designed to help local authority recycling campaigns.
- The brand and its activities are extensively tested and evaluated.

You can review the Recycle for Scotland branding guidance on the dedicated website for campaign partners: <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/partners>. Some examples of the Recycle for Scotland brand in use by local authorities are shown below:



5.1 Visual identity


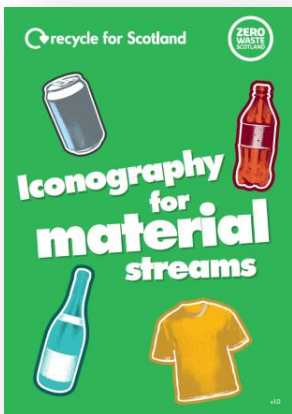

Use a graphic designer (in-house or external design studio/agency) to develop initial design ideas and ways to incorporate the Recycle for Scotland branding along with your own corporate branding if necessary. Ideally, you should test your designs (and messages) using focus groups (or at least circulate to non-waste members of staff and call centre staff) to ensure they will be effective. Remember to obtain approval for initial designs from senior managers and/or elected members as required before proceeding too far. And finally, once selected, your brand must be applied consistently across all your communications activities.

Example of a local authority visual identity applied across a range of materials:



In this example, East Dunbartonshire produced a range of materials including: recycling point signs, vehicle panels (for collection vehicles) and large stickers for telephone boxes.

There are a number of specific documents and a range of online information designed to help you develop your Recycle for Scotland brand identity and communications materials (see <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/content/partners>) including:

<p>Recycle for Scotland Brand guidelines</p>  <p>The cover of the 'Brand guidelines' document features the 'recycle for Scotland' logo, a 'ZERO WASTE' logo, and illustrations of various waste items like a blue bottle, a red bottle, a blue can, and a red can.</p>	<p>Iconography for material streams</p>  <p>The cover of the 'Iconography for material streams' document features the 'recycle for Scotland' logo, a 'ZERO WASTE' logo, and illustrations of a blue can, a red bottle, a blue bottle, and a yellow t-shirt.</p>	<p>ZWS branding guide to: Love Food Hate Waste, Recycle for Scotland, Stop the Drop, Home Composting, Peat Free Compost and Zero Waste Scotland</p>  <p>The cover of the 'Zero Waste Scotland' branding guide features the 'Zero Waste Scotland' logo, the text 'Making the most of campaign communications A guide for local authorities and partners', and logos for 'recycle for Scotland', 'STOP THE DROP', 'Home Composting', 'Peat Free Compost', and 'ZWS'.</p>
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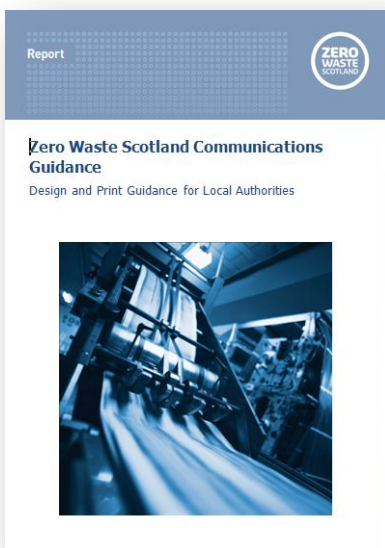
Basic design principles and communications checklist



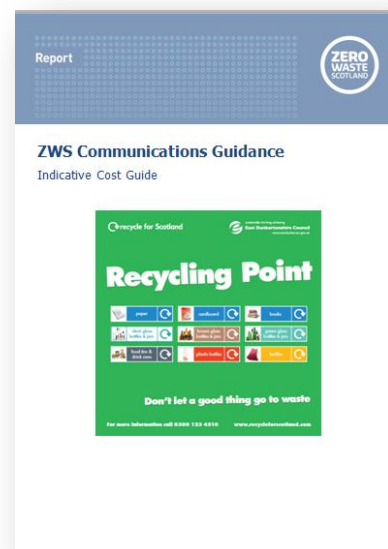
Calendar guidance



Design and print guidance



Indicative cost guide



5.2 Tone of voice

Tone of voice enables a brand to convey its values or qualities through the language it uses. A brand's tone of voice – what it says and how it says is very important. Research shows that the right tone of voice is critical to the success of recycling communications.

You need to communicate with people so in ways that do not irritate or annoy them. Be careful of text that may unwittingly cause offence – the wrong word, phrase or tone could alienate sections of the population. Recycle for

Scotland is designed to engage consumers with clear messages in a positive, warm and friendly tone of voice. Consult the Recycle for Scotland brand guidelines for further information about the tone of voice of your communications.

Once your brand and tone of voice is decided you can begin to develop your communication message/s.

5.3 Type of message

Your messages must be designed to engage, inform, educate, motivate and even inspire your target audiences. Depending on what your objectives are, your message needs to:

- Be personal.
- Be simple, clear and consistent.
- Address the barriers of your target audience.
- Focus on a single action or an issue and how to overcome it.
 - You need a clear 'call to action' - a clear statement urging people to do something.

Different audiences may need different messages and you may need to develop separate specific messages to engage specific target audiences. What works for a high recycler may not necessarily work on a low/non recycler, for example: a high recycler may be motivated to greater recycling efforts by information on environmental benefits whereas a low/non recycler may only just respond to the fact that recycling is convenient and easy.

Don't overload people by trying to communicate too much – people are easily distracted or put off and saying too much can be a barrier in itself. It is better to focus on a single message and repeat it than try to communicate too much in one go. Your messages need to be developed with a range of communication channels in mind. How will it work, for example on a leaflet, in an advert, on an exhibition display, on the radio or on the side of a collection vehicle?

Test your messages on your target audience, ideally through focus groups or with non-waste council staff and obtain approval from senior managers and/or elected members as required before proceeding too far with detailed design work. Make sure you have a clear and quick decision-making process for approving designs and messages.

6 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. You should start by considering your overall strategic approach and consider the 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.

6.1 Overall approach

The first step is to use the information from your background research, 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 the most appropriate communication methods:

Communication methods	Examples	Broad brush/targeted
Advertising	Radio, press, TV, outdoor, mobile, online etc.	Mainly broad brush though can be targeted if used carefully.
PR	Media relations via radio, press, TV and online.	Mainly broad brush for local authority recycling communications though sometimes specific areas can be targeted eg via local weekly newspapers.
Direct marketing techniques	Door-to-door canvassing, leaflet/information distribution (eg door-to-door), exhibitions and events.	Targeted.
Community engagement	Building on-going permanent relationships with local communities.	Targeted.
Online	Council website.	Broad brush (but capable of communicating detailed information).
Internal communications	Internal communications with council staff.	Targeted.

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 targetting 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 eg particular estates.
- Signage at recycling sites will only target people visiting that site.

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 e.g. awareness raising and a simple call to action.
- PR in your local press can be effective at communicating both simple and complicated information e.g. launching a new service, or explaining to people what happens to their recycling.
- Leaflets and calendars delivered to every household and the council website can deliver detailed information.
- Door-to-door canvassers and call centre staff can give detailed, tailored information to 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 one has 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 in different ways over time. This type of approach will help to maximise the chances of hitting your target audiences and increase the impact of your communications.

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, 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 bins were 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 bins would be collected.
- **Reminders** - 49,000 bin hangers were distributed to urge people to recycle. In November 2007, 25,000 copies of a further leaflet were distributed to remind residents.

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 was 92%.

WRAP Local Authority Communications Case Study: Corby Borough Council

6.2 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. Refer to WRAP's barriers research which contains more detailed information. It can be accessed online at:

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/barriers-recycling-home>

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 a simple matrix 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.
- The communication methods you have chosen complement each other.

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

6.3 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, objectives and budget and to 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, they can be highly targeted and effective and can be very cost effective so they should be given a high priority.

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.

Potential internal impact	Possible solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability of collection teams to cope with the additional material being collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rearrange rounds to take account of increased time collecting/emptying containers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity of containers and vehicles with the additional material being collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess containers and vehicles to ensure they have enough capacity Ensure additional containers can be provided if required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability of front line staff to deal politely and efficiently with questions from householders or HWRC users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra requests for help and support from householders eg assisted collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify level of potential demand (use demographic information) and plan how to respond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity and collection frequency of bring banks and ability of HWRCs to deal with increased numbers of users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review size of banks and collection frequencies to see if any changes might be required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra requests for bulky waste collections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review system for responding to enquires to maintain adequate response times and plan to have extra resources on hand if required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional enquiries to call centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Householders visit website to obtain further information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update information Check system can cope with increased hits

Crisis planning

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

You could conduct a SWOT analysis to identify potential internal weaknesses and develop ways to address them. Ensure that all the likely internal impacts of your communications have been identified and addressed before you start your campaign.

6.4 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 and leisure centres, doctors’ surgeries, 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?

7 Campaign Activities



Develop individual activities

Your communication methods cover a wide range of individual activities and once you have decided on your overall strategy and selected the mix of communication methods to use, you need to look in detail at the communications activities you need to deliver your strategy's objectives.

You should begin by looking at which communication activities to use as part of the mix of communication methods you have selected – a list of potential activities is outlined below. Next, you need to set individual aims and objectives for each activity and decide how to monitor and evaluate them. This will enable you to identify which activities perform well, which perform less well and to report on your successes.

Communication methods	Communication activities	
Advertising	External advertising – billboards, adshels, bus, train and tube Internal advertising – bus, tube TV and radio advertising Online advertising Press advertising Free poster sites Branding of collection receptacles	Information stickers for collection receptacles Livery of collection vehicles Signage at 'drop off' sites Signage on bring banks Signage on recycling and waste collection containers
PR	Briefing local media (TV, radio, press and online media) Launch event(s)	Press packs and press briefings Council newsletters
Direct marketing techniques	Leaflets and service calendars (collection information)	Contamination cards Door-to-door canvassing
Community engagement	Building on-going permanent relationships with local communities and community groups	Events, roadshows and drop-in days
Online	Council website	Email and E-zines
Internal communications	Intranet Staff magazine	Briefings Crew & staff training packs

Like your communication methods, your activities need to be selected using the following criteria:

- Appropriate to your strategy and your chosen communication methods.
- Support the achievement of your overall aim and objectives.
- Appropriate for the services you are promoting.
- Best fit for the type of message and audience.
- Can be managed successfully with your available resources.
- Can be delivered within your anticipated budget – eg using a mix of 'high cost' and 'low cost' activities and 'free' media (such as posters in council/public buildings) wherever possible.

Again, you should use a number of activities for each communications method because no single method will be effective on its own and each activity (like their corresponding methods) has its advantages and disadvantages in different situations. Also, you should develop an integrated strategy with a range of communication activities and methods which overlap with each other. This will 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 overall impact of your communications.

CASE STUDY: Campaign activities

London Borough of Barnet undertook a campaign to boost participation in recycling by people living in flats.

The main campaign activity was **door-to-door canvassing** with teams of recycling promoters visiting all 15,000 flats with communal recycling bins. Return visits were carried out to achieve a 50% face-to-face contact rate. The promoters offered residents free, reusable bags to store recyclable items and handed out an information leaflet on recycling.

Other communication activities included:

- **Media releases** to achieve instant and sustained awareness and to launch the Flats Recycling publicity campaign
- **Newsletters** – including features in local newsletters and community magazines
- **Council website** – the council’s recycling pages were updated with a separate section for flats
- **Service leaflets** were produced for distribution as part of the door-stepping campaign
- **Direct mail** – a letter about the service was posted to residents who were not in when the door-steppers called
- **Posters** featuring details of the campaign were produced for communal areas of flats
- **Reusable bags for storing and transporting recycling** were distributed to all residents visited
- **Signage on recycling containers** – new clear, easy-to-follow information stickers were introduced
- **Show cards** showing the materials collected for recycling were produced for use by non-English speaking residents

WRAP Local Authority Communications Case Study: London Borough of Barnet

7.1 Individual aims & objectives

For each communication activity you need to identify an individual set of aims and objectives against which progress and achievements can be monitored and evaluated. Your aims and objectives for each activity need to link back to and support your overall aim and objectives. If they do not, you should question the value of a particular activity. This approach will help you to be clear about the purpose of each activity and see how it fits into your overall plan.

Remember to make sure your objectives are SMART and include inputs, outputs and impacts where relevant (NB you do not need to include input, output and impact objectives for every activity – use them sensibly). Setting input and output objectives is relatively straightforward as they are easier to measure. Objectives based on impacts should be approached with more care as it as be more difficult to apportion impacts to specific communication activities. Be sensible with the measures you chose – make sure they are appropriate, for example:

Activity	Objectives		
	Inputs	Outputs	Impacts
Posters in public buildings and shops throughout local authority	Print 500 A4 colour posters	450 posters distributed 400 displayed to the public	No objective set (too difficult to apportion impacts (ie increased tonnage of recycle collected) directly to posters)
Door-to-door canvassing in LPA	3,000 houses called at	1,000 people spoken to	5% increase in recycle collected from the round covering the LPA

7.2 Communication tactics (tasks)

Next, you need to look in detail at the individual tactics (or tasks) that make up each activity. You should list all your communication activities and break down the individual tasks each one needs in order to be developed and delivered successfully.

7.3 Agree Monitoring & Evaluation mechanisms

Each activity should have its own monitoring and evaluation system so you know whether it has succeeded in meeting its aims and objectives. You need to measure the inputs, outcomes and impacts (as appropriate) of each activity to determine whether they have met their aim and objectives. For example, the monitoring and evaluation for an event could comprise:

- The number of events organised (input).
- The number of people attending the event (outcome).
- The number of people spoken to (outcome).
- The amount of information taken away (outcome).
- A survey of attendees (all or a sample) to obtain information on attitudes towards, understanding of and opinions about the event and recycling locally (impact).

For detailed information about target setting and monitoring and evaluating your communications see **Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes – A Good Practice Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation**. This comprehensive guidance document gives detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of monitoring techniques for waste operations and communications and can be accessed here: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/monitoring-and-evaluation-guidance> . Zero Waste Scotland can also offer technical support and guidance with respect to monitoring and evaluation. For further information view <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/category/sector/local-authorities>.



8 Planning Your Activities - Scheduling and costs

This section looks at the process of putting your ideas into a coherent implementation plan and provides you with a mechanism to ensure that all activities are completed on time and within budget.

First, you need to ensure your communications plan dovetails with any operational activity that is planned - such as the launch of new collections. Then the plan needs to take account of any national activities with which your communications could link in order to generate added media and public interest. Once all these key dates have been timetabled you can schedule all your communication activities. At the same time you need to obtain costings for all the communications activities and materials in order to develop your budget.

The length of your plan will depend on how far into the future you need to plan and how far you can accurately forecast your budget levels and make reasonable planning decisions. In most cases the best approach is to plan and review communication activities over a 12 month cycle although occasionally, for short campaigns, your plan may only need to cover a few months. It is a good idea though to have an overall strategy that covers 2-3 years, though you do not need have prepared detailed plans for that length of time. Finally, you should consider the level of detail for different people:

- A simple overview of main activities, timescales, deliverables and outcomes for managers and key stakeholders.
- A more detailed version which you and your team will use on a day-to-day basis.

In terms of the format for your plan, a simple Gantt chart produced in Excel will be sufficient.

8.1 Link with service provision

Start your communications plan by looking at your service targets and operational activity. List the key milestones and deadlines:

- Operational/service performance targets.
- Operational activities and initiatives designed to achieve your service targets eg launching a new service.
- Changing collection times/frequencies.

It may be useful to show key operational activities that will affect your communications activities within the same plan to provide a focus for key deadlines. Operational actions could be shown in your plan alongside communications activity by displaying it in a different colour, for instance.

8.2 Link with national events

Identify key national dates or events that you can use to base activities around or generate positive local PR. Key international, national awareness days and events include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compost Awareness Week. • Earth Day. • World Environment Day. • European Week for Waste Reduction • Scottish Food Fortnight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle Week. • The Clean Up the World Weekend. • St. Andrew’s Day • Rabbie Burns’ Day
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National events can be used effectively by local campaigns and have a number of benefits:

- There may be general public awareness about the national event as a result of national media coverage.
- Any event you organise locally in support is likely to attract more interest from the public.
- A local event may attract the interest of your local media looking for a local angle or story about a national event.

8.3 Schedule campaign activities

When you have identified all the key dates, deadlines and milestones you need to plot them onto a Gantt chart, planning each activity and breaking it down into its individual tasks. Look at when each activity needs to be completed and allow time for all the tasks required to organise each one. Other key points to consider:

- Allow time for funding or sponsorship applications and build in campaign meetings as required.
- When scheduling activities, remember to allow for holiday dates (staff, public and school holidays).
- Booking advertising space (eg billboards) may need to be done well in advance to get the best spaces and deals.
- Leaflet distributions may need to be ready a long time in advance – as much as a couple of months for Royal Mail.

You need to list your entire communications programme and schedule all your activities and tasks. Include everything.

8.4 Outline indicative costs

You should make some initial budget decisions quite early on based on indications of the size of any budget you are likely to have. As a rule of thumb, and based on the experience of a large number of UK local authorities, effective communications costs a minimum of £1.00 per household for ongoing communications. This will vary depending on local circumstances, for example the figure for smaller LAs could be greater as core costs for activities like monitoring will absorb a greater proportion of funding. Also, if you are launching a brand new service, you may need to spend more in order to ensure you do so successfully – up to £2.00 per household.

Work to an initial target budget somewhere between £1.00 - £2.00 per household. Prioritise your activities into 'must have' and 'nice to have' activities and fully cost all your 'must have' activities first. Is the budget figure you obtain higher or lower than your target budget?

- If lower, prioritise and start costing your 'nice to have' activities until you reach your target budget.
- If higher you need to investigate what scope there is for finding some extra budget or economise by prioritising your 'must have' activities. Rule some out or find more economical ways of delivering them:
 - Reduce the scale of activities e.g. five events instead of ten or two weeks advertising instead of four
 - Investigate cost efficiencies for some activities by working in partnership with neighbouring authorities.
 - If your activities straddles a financial year, see what activities you can push back or pull forwards.

If you have to economise you should also be wary of making some activities so small that they may not have any impact at all. It might be better not doing them and reallocating that proportion of the budget to other activities that have a greater chance of achieving your objectives.

Remember, if you have to cut down, you may need to revise your aims and objectives down as well as you may not be able to reach your original targets with a reduced budget. If it looks unlikely, use this information to make a stronger case for additional budget or seek agreement to a less ambitious target.

ZWS has produced an Indicative Cost Guide that aims to help with costing communications activities and should help you develop initial budgets and obtain value for money.

8.5 Include contingencies

Your plan will need to allow for contingencies and the unexpected:

- Time - you should build in time ('slack') for unexpected delays such as staff illness or key staff leaving, decision-making delays or stoppages, having to re-do work etc.
- Emergencies - you should draw up an emergency plan and a crisis PR plan in case, for example: any controversy arises related to your new services or facilities or there is an accident involving a collection vehicle.
- Staff – some communications activities may require additional staff support. You should plan the time and budget to secure and train temporary staff if necessary.
- Re-programming - plan to be able to respond to budget changes in either direction so that you know how to maintain the best value for money and achieve your objectives.
- Budget – you should allow for unexpected costs or cost over-runs with a contingency budget of between 5%-10%.

Communications sometimes end up costing more than expected if activities and materials are changed a lot, especially at the last minute. Practical ways to avoid this are by having a clearly agreed plan at an early stage, clear decision-making lines and by completing approvals on messaging and copy before the design stage.

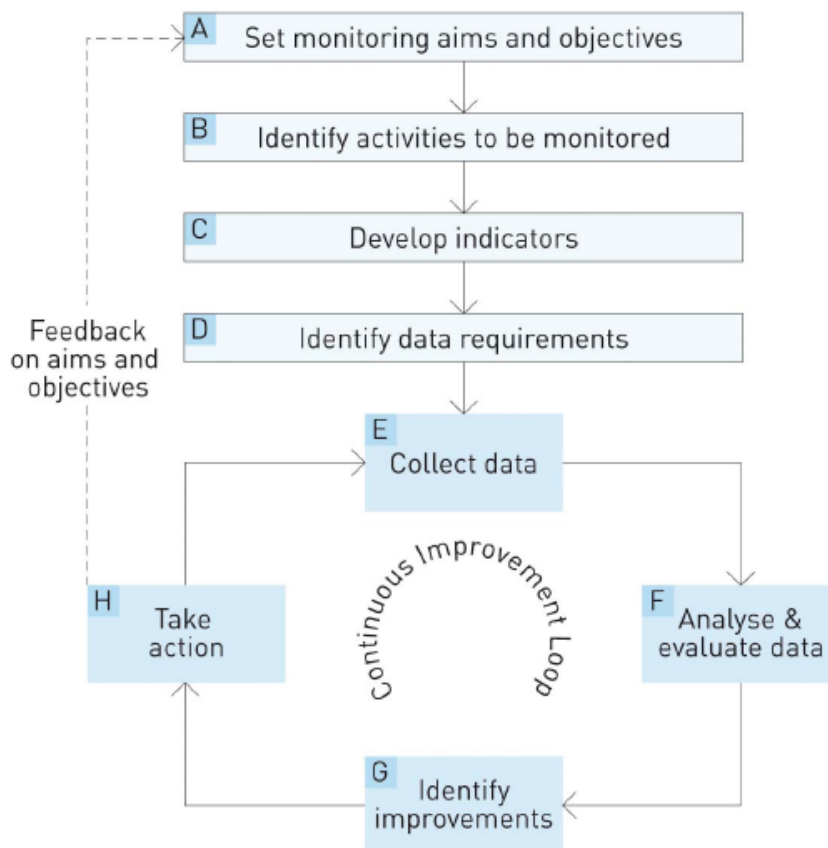


9 Monitoring and Evaluation - Evaluate effectiveness

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is part of a continuous process of learning and improvement that enables you to assess the performance of your communications against your aim and objectives. Effective monitoring and evaluation will help you:

- Know whether your communications have achieved or exceeded their aim and objectives.
- Identify which activities worked well and which didn't; how they might be improved or whether they should be substituted for other activities.
- Justify the expenditure on communications to senior managers and elected members.
- Develop better communications in the future by refining and improving activities, focusing spending more effectively and achieving better results.

The continuous improvement loop:



You need to be thinking about your monitoring and evaluation techniques right from the start of the communications planning process:

- If you undertake any pre-campaign research when you assess your current situation, consider whether it could be repeated to form part of your post-campaign evaluation.
- You should ensure your monitoring and evaluation measure impacts which directly link back to the attainment of overall recycling and waste management service targets e.g. increasing your recycling rate. Elements like operational performance, should be monitored and evaluated on a continual basis.
- If you are measuring changes in awareness, attitudes and behaviour you need to undertake pre- and post campaign monitoring to evaluate changes.

You will also need to decide who is responsible for undertaking the M&E activities and how much they will cost. This last point depends on whether they will be managed in-house or contracted out to specialists (or a mixture of the two).

For detailed information about monitoring and evaluation research for waste operations and communications campaigns there is a comprehensive guidance document – “Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes”. This good practice guide (produced by WRAP) gives detailed step-by-step guidance on a range of monitoring techniques.

CASE STUDY: Monitoring and evaluation

Bath & North East Somerset Council ran a communications campaign to target householders in hard-to-reach areas to increase awareness and take-up of its recycling services.

To determine whether the campaign had worked the council conducted:

- Pre-and post-campaign participation monitoring in the areas served by a kerbside collection and targeted by the communications campaign
- Pre-and post-campaign usage monitoring in the areas served by mini recycling centres (MRCs) and targeted by the communications campaign
- Pre-and post-campaign ‘committed recycler’ monitoring by surveying flats served by MRCs and shared houses served by the kerbside collection service
- Monitoring of tonnage of recyclate collected at MRCs and by the kerbside collection service on rounds serving the target community

The monitoring programme enabled the council to evaluate the achievements of its campaign against objectives:

- Participation monitoring in shared housing - 5.2% increase in properties using the kerbside recycling service
- Usage monitoring - 28% increase in reported usage of the mini recycling centres. This is supported by tonnage data
- Committed recycler survey - the proportion of committed recyclers increased by 5% in flats and 9% in shared houses. Respondents claiming to recycle ‘a lot’ showed the most increases (26.2% in flats and 10.3% in houses)
- Tonnage monitoring - overall there was a steady increase across Bath and North East Somerset in the amount of material being recycled and composted and a decrease in the amount of residual waste being sent to landfill. Data for houses was disrupted but for flats, tonnages increased from 554,053 tonnes to 621,922 tonnes

The monitoring programme provided evidence that the communications campaign had increased tonnage, participation, usage and the proportion of committed recyclers. It also showed the importance of using a range of monitoring techniques – supported by anecdotal information – as practical constraints interfered with some of the monitoring methods (and therefore the results) and to add weight to results which, on their own, might not appear as significant. By investing resources in measuring performance, it was possible to build evidence to support the use of communications and to make the case for additional funding for future campaigns.

WRAP Local Authority Communications Case Study: Bath and North East Somerset Council

9.1 Overall aims and objectives achieved?

You should decide how to measure and evaluate your overall communications aims and objectives when they are set. Your overall objectives (see Section 3) should relate to the impact of your communications. Measuring impact is essential as this is the only way of knowing the extent of behaviour change and every campaign, even the smallest, should aim to measure its impact.

There is a range of measures, relevant to waste management communications programmes, which you could use to assess your communication activity including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collection tonnages. ● Participation rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set-out rates. ● Capture rates.
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As a minimum, you should use data from your council's routine statutory recycling and waste management performance reporting to measure the impact of your communications. Once you have chosen the methods you are going to use you should schedule when all your monitoring and evaluation will take place:

- Pre-campaign – measuring your baseline.
- During the campaign – measuring inputs and outcomes.
- Post-campaign – measuring impacts.

Remember to allow time for tendering, briefing and start-up if you are using external consultants to help you and don't forget to schedule your post-campaign M&E to give you time for analysis, review and report writing before any reporting deadlines.

How much to spend on monitoring and evaluation

The following table is a guide as to what is thought to be reasonable.

Communications costs (excluding core staffing and in-kind contributions)	Recommended types of monitoring (both pre-campaign and post-campaign)
£1 - £10,000	All routine operational performance monitoring, especially quantities diverted measured as kg per household per week for recycling schemes
£10,001 - £50,000	All routine operational performance monitoring, especially quantities diverted measured as kg per household per week for recycling schemes Optional - participation rates for kerbside schemes or usage rates for bring bank and HWRC schemes
£50,001 - £200,000	All routine operational performance monitoring, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantities diverted measured as kg per household per week for recycling schemes • Participation rates for kerbside schemes, usage rates for bring bank and HWRC schemes • Proportion of committed recyclers If relevant to an objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of each targeted material captured or avoided or level of contamination of recycle
£200,001 +	All routine operational performance monitoring, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantities diverted measured as kg per household per week for recycling schemes • Participation rates for kerbside schemes or usage rates for bring bank and HWRC schemes • Proportion of committed recyclers • Proportion of each targeted material captured or avoided Only if relevant - level of contamination of recycle

Note: For authorities that operate alternate weekly schemes, participation rate monitoring is normally less important than monitoring capture rates and contamination rates. This is because most people will participate to a certain level in alternate weekly schemes because of the restricted waste container capacity. However, incorrect participation is likely to be higher. Alternate weekly authorities should therefore consider whether they should substitute participation monitoring for capture rate analysis or contamination analysis, even at for lower value campaigns.

9.2 Individual aims and objectives achieved?

As well as your overall communications aims and objectives you should have set individual aims and objectives for all your communication activities. Your individual objectives (see Section 3) should consist of the following types:

- Input objectives.
- Outcome objectives.
- Impact objectives.

All three are useful for different reasons but measuring impact is the most important as this is the only way of knowing the extent of behaviour change and the relative success of your communications in improving recycling. There is a range of measures, relevant to waste management communications programmes, which you could use to assess your communication activity and these are shown in the table on the following page.

In order to measure individual aims and objectives, you need to ensure the monitoring and evaluation system developed for your overall aim and objectives covers your individual activity objectives too. If it does not, you should add extra monitoring and evaluation to measure the relevant inputs, outcomes and impacts of your activities.

Measures used to evaluate communications

M&E Technique	Objectives		
	Input	Output	Impact
Advertising reach		✓	
Brochure requests		✓	
Calls to freephone number		✓	
Capture rates			✓
Collection tonnages			✓
Competition entries		✓	
Consumer research			✓
Doorsteps visited		✓	
Employee survey			✓
Journalist research		✓	
Leaflets printed	✓		
Leaflets distributed		✓	
Members survey			✓
Participation rates			✓
Press coverage		✓	
Roadshow attendance		✓	
Sales of composting bins		✓	
Set-out rates			✓
Website hits		✓	

9.3 Review impact of campaign activities

When you evaluate the monitoring information you have gathered you should review the impact of your communications by answering the following questions:

Did you achieve your overall aims and objectives?	Refer to the overall aims and objectives you set and check the corresponding monitoring and evaluation information you have gathered.
Did you achieve the aims and objectives for your individual communication activities?	Refer to the aims and objectives you set for your individual communication activities and check the corresponding monitoring and evaluation information you have gathered.
What was the overall impact of your communications?	Identify the overall or 'headline' achievement of your communications eg increased tonnage collected, increased participation etc.
Investigate any other issues (positive or negative) which you identify or relate to your communications objectives	The review process may uncover some unexpected results (good and/or bad) that require investigation as well. You should look at all the issues your monitoring and evaluation reveals in order to conduct a thorough review and build on your successes and avoid repeating any mistakes.

Dealing with disappointing results

If you have followed all the advice in this document your communications should be effective, but success can never be guaranteed and any communications programme may experience disappointing results from time to time.

It is important that any temporary setbacks or disappointments – which may have had causes entirely outside your control are not seen as failures by key stakeholders and budget holders. Success in dealing with such situations lies in the consistent and credible presentation of results in an easy to understand format, always relating the actions undertaken to the objectives. Honesty is essential – it is never acceptable to misrepresent or overstate results.

Finally, even disappointments can be turned to your advantage as they will undoubtedly form opportunities to learn. When presenting disappointing results, it is important to show what has been learned as a result and what will be done differently in future.

9.4 Determine future activities

Once you have established whether your communications have succeeded or not you should study the information again in more detail to see what you can learn for future campaigns. This final review could even act as the first stage in your next communications plan with the results forming your baseline information. You should:

- Identify activities that worked well, e.g. reached lots of people in a cost effective manner, had high impact, produced marked increases in participation or tonnage. Could any successes be replicated or built upon in future campaigns? Review the M&E information gathered about the inputs, outputs and impacts of your communications activities. Identify which activities worked well and which worked less well. Consider what changes you might need to make in order to repeat successful activities in a different location, on a different scale, with a different audience etc. You may want to conduct debrief meetings with relevant staff to look at the information in more detail.
- Identify activities that weren't so successful and why not. Look at weaker performing activities and try to identify the reasons for their weaknesses. Could their shortcomings be eliminated or avoided? Would it be better not to repeat the activity? Is the activity basically 'sound' but needs improving in some way? NB - weakness does not necessarily mean failure to reach an objective, it may be a particular activity performed less well than others e.g. an event that attracted less visitors than other similar events. Again, you may want to conduct debrief meetings with relevant staff to look at the information and implications in more detail.
- Review the findings, identify and list your key recommendations for future communications.

This final assessment process will give you a firm, factual basis on which to:

- Build evidence to support the use of communications.
- Make the case for additional funding for future communications.
- Build and develop campaigns which achieve even greater results in the future.

Your results should be summarised, written up into a short campaign report and disseminated to key internal stakeholders and used to gain support for further communications. The findings should also be used in internal communications to thank staff involved in the campaign for their support and in press releases to give feedback to the public on how well they are doing, to thank them for their efforts and urge them to continue to recycle. This will generate additional positive media coverage and further your overall communications aim.



10 Conclusion

Once you have reached this point, by working through this document, you should have prepared and finalised your communications plan and be ready to start delivering your communications. By now you will be familiar with all aspects of communications planning but there are a few key points to re-emphasise:

- Your communications need to reflect your situation and your aspirations. Your area and its issues will be unique and may require tailored solutions to encourage and embed long term behaviour change. Understanding your area, the people living in it and the barriers present are all key to the development of a campaign which successfully increases recycling performance.
- You will need to use a range of different communication methods and activities to target your audiences successfully and you will need to use all the resources available to you imaginatively in order to achieve your objectives.

Careful objective setting together with intelligent use of monitoring and evaluation techniques are vital to measure success and to build on your achievements for the future.