

**apse seminars**

# **Simpler Recycling and Beyond: Recycling, Waste and Circular Economy Seminar 2026**

**Thursday 18 June**  
Sheffield Town Hall

Event sponsor:

**integrated  
skills.**

## **Welcome back!**

**Thank you for joining the WRAP Workshop:  
Good Practice Communications to  
support Effective Delivery of  
Simpler Recycling**



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Local Authority Technical Team  
**WRAP**



# Good practice communications to support effective delivery of Simpler Recycling

APSE Recycling, Waste and Circular Economy Seminar  
18 June 2026



# Introduction

WRAP is a global environmental action NGO transforming our product and food systems to create Circular Living. We examine sustainability challenges through the lens of people's day-to-day lives. We transform the systems that provide the products we consume. We catalyse action from policy makers, businesses, NGOs and citizens to make it happen.

# What we will cover today

- Evidence and insights
- Good practice communications
- Audience
- Message
- Method
- Workshop activity
- WRAP-UP

# Over to you ...

What do you think is more challenging – service change or behaviour change?

**Image: Dorset Council collections**

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# Evidence and insights (UK, 2025)

Recycling remains an established and normalised behaviour - 89% reporting that they *regularly recycle* at least *most things* that can be recycled.

**Worthwhileness:** 81% who believe their recycling efforts are *very worthwhile* state they recycle everything. 35% who view their recycling efforts as *fairly* or *not worthwhile* are significantly more likely to state they only recycle most but not all items.

**Low confidence levels:** 9% UK citizens feel *very confident* about what can and cannot be recycled, 58% only *mostly confident*. This lack of knowledge leads to high levels of missed capture and contamination.

**Low council communication reach:** 37% received information from their council this year and the past year on what can and cannot be recycled. Those who did receive recent communication, report higher confidence in their recycling efforts and perceive recycling as more worthwhile.

# Recycling rates have plateaued in recent years

Some clear and concerning trends: **feelings of worthwhileness are on the decline**, along with both functional knowledge (what can and cannot be recycled) and motivational knowledge (what happens to recycling after collection).

Partly due to a **decrease in confidence in the recycling system** caused by a lack of council feedback and negative stories in the media about recycling being shipped abroad or not actually recycled.

When citizens feel that the extra efforts asked of them to recycle are not matched with efforts by the council, feeling of worthwhileness declines resulting in **reduced engagement with recycling systems** and lower recycling rates.

# Barriers to participation

- **Situational:** lack of containers, lack of space, difficult access to recycling facilities.
- **Behavioural:** people being too busy to recycle, no established household routine, forgetting to separate their waste/recyclables or put them out for collection.
- **Knowledge:** uncertainty about what can and cannot be recycled, not knowing what to put in which container, not understanding the basic mechanics of how the scheme works.
- **Attitudinal:** people not believing there is an environmental or social benefit to recycling, viewing it as the council's job not theirs, doubts about whether recycling is worthwhile.

# Recycling behaviour change



In order to recycle, citizens need:

1. Easy access and use of the service
2. The correct knowledge to do so
3. To be motivated to do so

These conditions are interdependent. If any one or more of them is not met, it will undermine the other two.

A communications campaign is a good way to improve knowledge, but motivation and ease are more challenging to target.

# Good practice communications

# Communication aim & objectives

## AIM

- A **broad** statement of what you intend to achieve
- Can include vague and undefined terms
- Generally, you will only have **one aim**

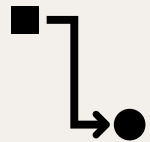
To help Anywhere Borough Council achieve its recycling and recovery targets for 2027/28 through targeted communications

## OBJECTIVE

- A **specific** statement of what you intend to achieve. Could link to KPIs.
- Terms will be defined and concepts understood
- There are likely to be **several objectives**

To design, print and distribute 45,000 A5 4-page leaflet informing all householders of the new collection services by March 2027

# Communication objectives



## **INPUT - What you will put in to achieve the desired outcomes and impacts**

Leaflets, road shows, advertisements, posters, promotional items

*45,000 introduction leaflets distributed to all homes in the Borough by March 2027*



## **OUTCOME = Cognitive Change**

Knowledge, awareness, recognition, interest, motivation, beliefs

*95% of householders aware of the new collection service by April 2027*



## **IMPACT = Behaviour Change**

Tonnage, participation, set out, contamination

*80% of households participated in the new collection scheme by May 2027*

# Getting the basics right



# Audiences

## Internal

- Waste collection crews (contractors or council employees)
- Waste site staff (HWRCs)
- Councillors / Elected Members
- Funder / Budget holder / Senior personnel
- Corporate communications and press teams
- Receptionists, call centre staff and other front-line staff
- Other staff employed by the council

## External

- Householders
- Town and Parish Councils
- Housing Associations, Tenants Associations, Landlords
- MPs
- Community groups and organisations
- Media groups
- Schools
- Neighbouring LA's / Partnerships

# Audience demographics

Different audiences engage with different communication methods:

- **geography & locality:** printed materials, community networks, digital engagement
- **age & digital literacy:** younger audience social media, older audience newspapers, bin signage, radio
- **language & accessibility:** clear concise messaging, use of visuals, translated materials
- **representation:** it's important that people see themselves reflected in your campaigns, be mindful of the diversity in your target audiences
- **'hard to reach':** transient groups, those living in HMO's and flats

# Messages

- **informational messages:** what can be recycled, when and how - prompts around specific items or service change notifications
- **clear action-oriented messages:** “Right thing, right bin” “Let’s get it sorted!”
- **clear instructions:** “empty, rinse, recycle” “wash, squash, loose”
- **use visuals:** icons, colours, images help people quickly understand what can and can’t be recycled
- **behavioural nudges:** positive reinforcement works best: “Thanks for recycling!”
- **benefits messages:** focus on the outcomes of recycling - environmental or financial benefits at a global, local or individual level help provide the ‘so what’
- **normative messaging:** depict a high level of recycling as a normal, mainstream activity done by most people
- **avoid plea messages:** asking people to recycle more suggests recycling rates are low and can undermine the descriptive norm

# Messaging examples



Informational message

The amount of household waste we recycled in 2008 reached an impressive 8.7 million tonnes. That alone saved the same amount of CO2 that nearly a million return flights from London to Sydney would produce.

Benefit message



Normative message

# Choosing the right mix of communications

The **method** of communication you choose will depend on:

- Your communication objective
- Your target audience
- Your message
- Your budget
- What did you do in the past that has worked well?



# Method

External Channels	Internal Channels
<p><b>Print (Physical Materials)</b> Leaflets, direct mail, stickers, bin tags, posters</p> <p><b>Digital (Online &amp; Mobile)</b> Social media, website, QR codes, video streaming, influencers, Apps, SMS</p> <p><b>Direct Engagement</b> Schools, events &amp; roadshows, public meetings, door-to-door, word of mouth, friends &amp; family, helplines, partnerships</p> <p><b>Advertising (Paid Reach)</b> Digital advertising, OOH e.g. billboards, newspaper, radio, TV</p> <p><b>PR (Print and online)</b> Press releases, media briefings, interviews, local news coverage, trade media</p>	<p><b>Internal Print (Physical Materials)</b> Information sheet, guides &amp; handbooks, posters</p> <p><b>Internal Digital (Online &amp; Email-Based)</b> Intranet, staff emails, newsletters</p> <p><b>Internal Direct Engagement</b> Briefings, internal events, stakeholder meetings</p>

# Budget

## Adapting programmes to budgets:

- consider which objectives and communication activities will deliver the biggest outcome and spend on those
- if the budget changes, change the communications plan
- some activities are 'free' or may be paid through other people's budgets, such as website, helpline, council newspaper, etc
- piggyback onto others communication activities and leverage economies of scale for print, promotional materials, etc.

# Monitoring and evaluation

- Press coverage
- Sales of liners
- Consumer research
- Calls to freephone numbers
- Website hits
- Employee survey
- Participation rates
- Set out rates
- Analytics data from social platforms reach, interactions, and impressions
- Competition entries
- Advertising reach
- Members' survey
- Road show attendance
- Leaflets distributed
- Doorsteps visited

# Communication examples



**Cumberland Council**

**You can now recycle Tetra pak liquid carton packaging in your kerbside recycling**

[cumberland.gov.uk/recycling](http://cumberland.gov.uk/recycling)

**BENEFITS OF FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS**

Collecting food waste separately means that it can be turned into something useful. Your food waste is taken to Wexley's composting facility near Haslemere. There, it's turned into a nutrient-rich soil conditioner used in farming.

The soil conditioner is also available for residents to buy at the Household Waste Recycling site in East Sussex.

- Your rubbish bin will be cleaner and less full if you separate your food waste.
- This addition to your recycling service gives you the opportunity to recycle more of your waste.
- Your weekly food waste collection is easy and convenient.

**Top tip:** For tips and recipes to help you waste less food and save money, visit [lovefoodhatewaste.com](http://lovefoodhatewaste.com)

If you have any queries about the new collection service or require this facility in large print or another format, please contact your local council.

Check your local council's website for more information.

Haslemere Borough Council - [www.haslemere.gov.uk](http://www.haslemere.gov.uk)  
 Buxton District Council - [www.buxton.gov.uk](http://www.buxton.gov.uk)  
 Waddesley District Council - [www.waddesley.gov.uk](http://www.waddesley.gov.uk)

**LOVE LIFE!**  
Local Recycling

To the occupier

## FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS

Coming soon

**Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Post**

**FOOD RECYCLING**

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Are the council selling the food waste and how is it processed?**

Food waste that is collected will be processed using anaerobic digestion to generate heat, electricity, vehicle fuel, and fertilizer. There is a cost to the council to dispose of food waste.

**How often is it collected and will we have to pay for food waste collections?**

Food waste collections will be collected on a weekly basis and they will not be charged for.

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 Buxton District Council - [www.buxton.gov.uk](http://www.buxton.gov.uk)  
 Waddesley District Council - [www.waddesley.gov.uk](http://www.waddesley.gov.uk)

**LOVE LIFE!**  
Local Recycling

To the occupier

## FOOD WASTE COLLECTIONS

Coming soon

**Buckinghamshire Council**

## All food waste can now be recycled from flats

Your food waste is recycled into energy to power our homes and into a fertiliser for farming.

No amount is too small. Check what you can put in your food waste bin at [Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/food-waste](http://Buckinghamshire.gov.uk/food-waste)

**Buckinghamshire recycles**

**You can now recycle CARTONS & FOIL in your RECYCLING BIN**

good to know

**Dorset Council** **Dorset recycles**

**North East Dorset recycles**

### USING YOUR CADDY - QUICK STEPS

- USE A LINER:** Put food waste into a readily liner in an airtight container to keep the outdoor caddy clean.
- TRANSFER TO THE OUTDOOR CADDY:** Empty liners into the outdoor caddy before collection day.
- SET OUT WEEKLY:** Put the outdoor caddy out for weekly collection on your scheduled day.
- KEEP IT TIDY:** Keep on top of the caddy - no overflowing or spillage in-between collections.

## YOUR NEW FOOD RECYCLING SERVICE

Simply take your food waste to your communal bin collection point and put your food there in the food waste recycling bin.

**COLLECTIONS**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**COMMUNAL FOOD WASTE RECYCLING**

How to use your service

**Kent County Council**

## All councils in Kent now accept toothpaste tubes, aerosol cans and perfume bottles!

**recycle**

## FOOD WASTE RECYCLING COLLECTION

Coming Spring 2026

**Redcar & Cleveland recycles**

**Food Waste Recycling**

**YOUR NEW FOOD WASTE COLLECTION**

**YOUR NEW FOOD WASTE COLLECTION**

**YOUR NEW FOOD WASTE COLLECTION**

**CADDY**

- Line your kitchen caddy with one of the liners and put your food waste in it.
- Whenever you need to empty your caddy, tie the top and put it in your outdoor food recycling bin.
- Remember your food recycling bin comes with a lockable handle.

**Top Tip:** If you don't have your own kitchen caddy, we have a free one available. [www.peterborough.gov.uk](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk)

**Top Tip:** Remember to tie the top of your caddy off with a rubber band or string.

**Please put your food recycling out for collection by 6.45am every week along with your black or green bin**

**PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL**

**Peterborough recycles**

**YOUR FOOD WASTE RECYCLING BIN WILL BE EMPTIED EVERY WEEK**

**WHY ARE WE MAKING CHANGES?**

**WHAT CAN I PUT IN MY CADDY?**

**RECYCLING YOUR FOOD WASTE HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER**

**NEW FOOD WASTE RECYCLING SERVICE**

Please use our new weekly service for all your food waste

For more information please visit [erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste)

## COMING SOON

Food waste recycling in East Hampshire

**East Hampshire recycles**

**EAST HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**YOUR FOOD RECYCLING SERVICE**

Everything you need to know - and why every pig, cow and sheep counts

**New Food Waste Recycling Service**

Visit us at [erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste)

For more information please visit [erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://erewash.gov.uk/foodwaste)

# Further examples

sefton\_council

Follow

## One month to go until you can recycle more materials at home!

21 4 7

sefton\_council One month to go! ... more

### New guidance for recycling food and drinks cartons



Stroud District Council is making a small change to help make recycling even easier and more efficient.

From 1 July, we're asking residents to place all food and drinks cartons – such as orange juice and milk cartons (including Tetra Pak) – in their green recycling wheelie bin or recycling bag, rather than the recycling box.

The change is taking place as new national guidance recommends that cartons are sorted with plastics and cans – which are collected from your green bin or bag. This will help streamline the sorting process and ensure your recycling is processed as efficiently as possible.

bassetlawdc

Follow

## You can now recycle more items!

From 31 March 2026

Nottinghamshire recycles

2 4 7

bassetlawdc Reminder you are now able to recycle... more

8 April

## RECYCLING MORE JUST GOT EASIER!

Lancaster City Council

28 Apr -

Great news! You can now recycle cartons and Tetra Pa... See more



## Recycle more items from 31 March

New national 'Simpler Recycling' rules come into effect at the end of March.

From 31 March, you can put the following items in your recycling sack or communal mixed recycling bin:

- Aluminium foil and food trays (must be clean and free from food)
- Empty square metal tins
- Empty square glass tins
- Aerosol cans (must be empty)

This is in addition to the items you can already recycle.

Wandsworth Council

# Workshop activity

# Scenario: Service change communications

Anywhere Borough Council ('ABC') will be rolling out a new separate **weekly food waste collection** to all **45,000 households**, including flats.

Residents in kerbside properties will be provided with a brown 5L indoor kitchen caddy and brown 23L outdoor food waste caddy.

Residents in flats will be provided with a brown 5L indoor kitchen caddy and 180L (black with brown lid) communal food waste bins will be provided to blocks of flats on a ratio of 1 bin for every 10 flats.

As well as the new food waste, residents in ABC will be able to **recycle their food and drink cartons** and foil by putting these items into their existing kerbside/communal recycling bins.

Food waste collections and the acceptance of cartons and foil will both start from **1st April 2027**.

ABC has a total budget of £45,000 to develop and deliver effective communications to support the successful implementation of the new food waste service and addition of cartons and foil.

# Situation analysis

ABC is **Rurality 4: Mixed urban/rural, high deprivation** with a transient population and high levels of ethnicity.

The recycling rate for 2025/26 was **29%**.

Each group is tasked with developing an **outline communications plan and communications activity delivery schedule** that targets a specific audience within ABC.

Each group will need to consider the following:

- decide your budget
- what is your main communication aim
- which communication channels and methods are appropriate for your target audience
- agree your timeline
- what is your one key communication message
- identify one challenge or barrier you might come across

# Elected Members (1k)



## What they need to know

- What changes & Why
- When
- What goes where
- Their role
- Costs

## What could confuse or any challenges

- Political differences
- Ability to get key messages to all at right time
- Phased approach
- Why having to change

## What Communication Channel

- Members in person briefing
- Members information pack
- On-going performance updates

## Single Key Message

Making recycling easier, Recycle more. Throw away less

# WRAP resources

# Local authority key resources



[WRAP England](#)

[WRAP Wales](#)

[WRAP Northern Ireland](#)

[Zero Waste Scotland](#)

[Business of Recycling - England, NI, Wales](#)

[Recycle Now Locator Tool](#)

[Recycle Now Campaign](#)

[Love Food Hate Waste](#)

[Household Waste Recycling Centre \(HWRC\) Guide](#)

[eTEEP Tool](#)

[LA Portal](#)



# Our team

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[wrap.ngo/sectors/local-authorities](https://wrap.ngo/sectors/local-authorities)



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Specialists – Local Authority Resource Management

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