

Communications & Engagement Behavioural Change Plan

Recycle for Greater Manchester

1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

January 2022

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Background

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a profound effect on our daily lives including on waste and recycling collection services which have been recently impacted by HGV driver shortages. Consumer behaviour has also changed in the way we shop, work and socialise, all of which has resulted in changes to the waste that's created.

Carbon

Environmental concerns are increasing, and more and more people are aware of climate change, however the link between waste, recycling and climate change is not generally understood. Globally, the production of food accounts for up to 37% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and requires significant resources including land, energy, and water. However, up to 40% is wasted.

In the UK, 70% of UK food waste comes from households, equivalent to a value of over £14 billion a year and 20 million tonnes of GHG emissions. Focusing on preventing food waste from households remains a key priority.

In terms of household recycling, we save 18 million tonnes of CO₂ a year by recycling, the same environmental impact as taking 12 million cars off the road. (Source: WRAP Recycle Week 2021). Recycling plays a crucial role in protecting our environment and preserving our finite natural resources such as oil, sand, aluminium, iron ore and trees. Most people now regularly recycle; however, evidence suggests that there are still opportunities to increase recycling, just over half of households still dispose of items that could be recycled in their general waste bin, mainly aerosols and foil.

There is also an urgent need to address contamination, 80% of UK households put items in the recycling that are not collected. The impact of this means that once it

enters the recycling system, it can potentially contaminate clean recycling thereby reducing the overall recycling rate and increasing the demand on raw materials.

The single biggest threat to decarbonisation is consumption. It is critical that in order to meet our target of becoming a carbon neutral green city region, that we focus on working towards a more circular economy; creating opportunities for people to retrain in the waste and resources industry, giving them the skills, they need and creating good green jobs right across Greater Manchester. Repairing and reusing also minimises the need to extract raw materials to make new products and makes better use of the existing materials. We want to live in a world where there is no waste.

Increasing repair and reuse of products could add over £54 billion to UK gross value added (Source: WRAP: [WRAP Net Zero Emissions Report](#)).

Overall Communication Objectives

- To provide communications, engagement and media expertise to support the delivery of the Waste and Resources contracts;
- To support the 9 local councils with joint communications to educate, promote and encourage residents to minimise their waste and recycle correctly both at home and at the 20 household waste recycling centres; and
- To deliver joint communications with SUEZ on the social value plan, including the Renew shops and Hub, construction work at waste management treatment facilities and regular stakeholder engagement

Specific objectives and KPI will be set for each individual campaign based on available data.

How do we get there?

Our communications strategy is based on;

- Using insight, market research, focus groups and surveys as well as results from previous campaigns to develop a targeted approach;
- Working closely with the local councils to understand their service needs and develop the campaigns in partnership;

- Continuing to use consistent language when referring to recycling, repair and reuse ensuring that this is used across all communication channels;
- Adopting flexibility to react to changes; for example, changes to council services due to shortages in HGV drivers, changes caused by COVID restrictions which may prevent events from going ahead for example etc changes to collection services; and
- Incorporating key messages into the education centre visits to ensure they are aligned to the campaigns. A sustained change in behaviour occurs over time as new habits are formed. It is essential that education and engagement is a key part of the campaigns.

Priority Themes

Key themes have been identified that will form the focus of the behavioural change communications and engagement plan for the next financial year; these are:

- Food waste reduction and correct use of the food waste recycling service;
- Reducing paper and card contamination;
- Tackling fly tipping and providing advice on the correct disposal of bulky waste;
- Home composting advice and guidance; and
- Supporting the SUEZ Social value plan

In addition, the team will continue to support national campaigns such as Recycle Week and work with external organisations including Keep Britain Tidy, Alupro, and WRAP etc on campaigns that help to promote general messaging around reduce, reuse and recycle.

Food Waste

According to a recent survey carried out in June 2021 by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), two key trends have emerged with significant implications for food waste. Firstly, as restrictions have eased and more people return to work, there has been a significant increase in meals out and takeaways and time pressures are returning meaning we have less time to plan, batch cook, use up leftovers etc. Levels of food waste have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The Government are also consulting on the National Waste and Resources strategy which includes the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections. A recent waste compositional analysis study showed that 28.4% of the general waste bin contains food. Removing food waste from the general waste will create more capacity in resident's bins and may also help to improve contamination rates in the recycling bins where food has been left in packaging and placed in the recycling bin.

During 2021, a new food waste campaign launched called Buy, Keep, Eat, Repeat which focusses on both preventing food waste and the correct use of the food waste recycling service.



Buy – messaging is centred around only buying what you need, encouraging residents to plan meals, write a shopping list etc

Keep – this is about storing food correctly to reduce food waste, making sure the fridge is at the correct temperature and freezing leftovers.

Eat - this part of the campaign focusses on portion sizing to reduce food waste and checking best before dates

Repeat – is a reminder about using the food waste recycling service to recycle any unavoidable food waste.

As part of the campaign a trial will be carried out in Oldham to re-introduce the food waste collection service in an area of low participation. Residents will be provided with a kitchen caddy, and information on how to use the service. Participation will be monitored, and the learnings incorporated into the campaign so that it can be rolled out in other districts.

The Buy, Eat, Keep Repeat campaign will continue into 2022/23 using a mix of communication channels and direct engagement via events to raise awareness of the problem of food waste.

Paper and Card Contamination

Paper and card contamination has improved over recent months with fewer loads being rejected at the transfer loading stations. However, some councils have proactively been tackling the issue at the kerbside by leafleting residents and rejecting bins that are contaminated with the wrong items. Resourcing this type of on the ground direct engagement is prohibitive so the Recycle for Greater Manchester team has been exploring ways to recruit officers to carry out intense periods of monitoring and door knocking to engage with residents who are contaminating the paper and card bin. A business case has been approved to recruit four recycling officers on a fixed term contract to enable us to deliver a paper and card contamination campaign in partnership with the councils. Areas with the worst levels of contamination will be targeted as a priority.

Home Composting

The home composting campaign encourages residents to compost their own garden waste to help reduce demand on the garden waste collection service.

An offer has been secured with Get Composting; a website operated by Straights who supply home composting bins and water butts across Greater Manchester. Residents can buy either a Bokashi bin, 220 litre or 330 litre compost bins and receive £10 off the standard price and will receive further savings through free postage and packaging.

The discounted bin offer is accessed directly from the [Get Composting website](#)

Since August 2021, a total of 394 bokashi and composting bins have been sold through the website. The compost bin and bokashi bins will continue to be subsidised throughout 2022/23 and this will be promoted via social media, newsletters, and the councils' websites.

Bulky Waste and Fly Tipping

The councils have recently set up a SOG (strategic officers' group) subgroup to discuss tactics around tackling fly-tipping and the collection of bulky waste from households. It is proposed that a budget is allocated to communications to support the outcomes of this group.

Supporting the Delivery of the Waste and Resources Contracts

The Recycle for Greater Manchester team will continue to work with the SUEZ Communications Manager to deliver joint communications related to construction works at the waste treatment facilities and operational changes at the Household waste recycling centres, (HWRCs).

The household waste recycling centre at Reliance Street is being redeveloped so a public consultation and communications will be required in the Summer 2022.

Increasing recycling at HWRCs also remains a priority. In February 2020, the trade waste access restriction policy was introduced to deter traders from illegally using the HWRCs to dispose of trade waste. As part of this policy, a van and trailer permit were introduced in December 2021 to act as a further deterrent to stop traders from accessing the HWRCs. This policy will continue to be promoted at key times throughout the year.

In addition, top tips and helpful advice is regularly shared to help residents recycle as much as possible at the HWRCs as well as donate items for reuse that can be sold in the 3 Renew shops.

Social Value Plan

SUEZ is committed to delivering an extensive social value plan to create value from Greater Manchester's waste. As part of this vision, three Renew Shops have opened at HWRCs in Oldham, Trafford, and Salford. A Renew Hub in Trafford Park is also being developed. This will be used to repair and upcycle items working with likeminded business and charities. The hub has also allowed the introduction of electrical and white goods and will lead to the Hub becoming more of a community space.

The layout includes a number of work pods, each containing equipment for repairing, upcycling or repurposing items, for example cycle repair, white goods checking and repair, upholstery, and painting.

The Hub will create training and employment opportunities for the local community and as it develops will create partnerships with businesses, charities and other organisations.

Communications will initially focus on continuing to develop the Renew brand, promoting the opportunities for training and employment and on raising awareness of the social, economic and environmental benefits of the social value plan.

The Recycle for Greater Manchester Team will also work with SUEZ on developing a visitor centre and community events space at the HUB.

Education Centre

The education centre at the Materials Recovery facility is a key part of the R4GM education service. The classroom has been refitted and brought up to date with new interactive iPads and digital screens. COVID restrictions has meant that in person tours have not always been possible and virtual tours have been offered instead. From March 2022, the education team will resume in person tours around the Materials Recovery Facility at Longley Lane, South Manchester. They also offer tours at the solar farm in Bolton and are exploring opportunities for a visitor centre at the Renew Hub in Trafford Park. Throughout 2022, the virtual tour will continue to be offered as well as outreach session with local communities and schools.