

# **Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan**

**Recycle for Greater Manchester**

**1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025**

**September 2023**

**Updated February 2024**

# Recycle for Greater Manchester Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan 2024/25

## Introduction

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)'s Communications and Engagement Strategy sets out its organisational mission, which is to build people's trust and confidence in our organisation; empowering them to participate in and benefit from Greater Manchester's ambitions and priorities.

The audience focussed strategy has people at its heart, aligned with the Greater Manchester Strategy's mission of "good lives for all". Our actions are tailored and targeted according to backgrounds and life stages, informed by insight into experiences, opportunities and challenges of different people living and working here.

Trust and confidence are key to securing our future – helping us to maintain our legitimacy and secure further opportunities, investments, contributions, and collaborations. They provide our mandate for delivering our plans and build reputational capital to protect us through challenges.

Each of the GMCA's Communications and Engagement team's functional areas are **committed to excellent and professional service, in line with the GMCA's values** – collaborating, empowering, delivering. In addition to following our service's key principles, they work towards delivering agreed functional aims, as well as the objectives of their portfolio teams.

Each portfolio team works with programme leads to **develop year-round plans** which enable delivery of their Business Plan objectives and Greater Manchester's Strategy commitments.

This plan outlines the Recycle for Greater Manchester communication and engagement behaviour change plan. This supports the Waste and Resources team function, their Business Plan, and the Waste contracts with SUEZ, as well as

supporting the nine councils' communications priorities related to their waste and recycling collections.

## **R4GM Communications & Engagement Behaviour Change Plan**

The Recycle for Greater Manchester communications and engagement behaviour change plan aims to;

- Inspire and encourage the residents of Greater Manchester to manage their waste responsibly; and
- Help residents to see the value of waste and the real benefits that can be achieved by wasting less, reusing, repairing and recycling right.

### **Communication Objectives**

The Recycle for Greater Manchester annual communications plan is designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To align with the National Resources and Waste Strategy for England which provides the direction of travel. Once the policies have been consulted on and introduced by Defra, this will provide the basis for the Greater Manchester waste strategy;
2. To support the aims of the 5 Year Environment Plan and the GMCA target of becoming a carbon neutral city-region by 2038;
3. To provide communications, engagement and media expertise to support the delivery of the Waste contracts. This involves working in partnership with the SUEZ Communications Manager on communicating about the household waste recycling centres, Renew Hub and shops, SUEZ social value plan and construction work at waste treatment facilities;
4. To support the Greater Manchester district councils (excluding Wigan) with joint communications to educate, promote and encourage residents to

minimise their waste and recycle correctly. This leads to the development of specific campaigns to improve the quality and quantity of recycling collected by the district councils;

5. To support the GMCA Waste and Resources Team business plan; and
6. To develop communications in support of new emerging issues; for example, e-cigarette or vapes which are the largest growing waste stream in the UK. Over 1 million single use vapes are thrown away every week in the UK (Source: Material Focus <https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/>)

Specific objectives and KPIs are set for each individual campaign based on available data. This is used in a Plan, Do, Review cycle to monitor and evaluate the communications and engagement plan, and adjust the communications tactics and channels accordingly.

## How do we get there?

We will build trust by **being clear with people** about our activities, purpose, and behaviours, and **creating genuine and meaningful opportunities for residents and partners to participate** in them, beyond a simply transactional relationship.

And we will build confidence by fulfilling our commitment to **form meaningful connections with individuals and organisations** across our city region, and regularly demonstrating how, by doing so, we are **delivering on the promises** of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the associated plans including the Greater Manchester waste and resources contracts in partnership with SUEZ.

**Insight and evaluation** are vital. Gaining information and ideas from residents and stakeholders based on their personal experience and expertise will help us create better priorities, policies and actions. And knowledge of our own performance, reputation and environment will equip and inform a continuously improving response to people's ideas and expectations.

## Our journey so far

- The recycling rate for Greater Manchester is over 50% (2022/23 figures 50.2% verified by DEFRA), making it one of the best performing urban city regions in the UK. The landfill diversion rate is 98.7% (2022/23) meaning that only 1.3% of household waste went to landfill. Non-recyclable waste from Greater Manchester's households goes to an Energy from Waste plant in Runcorn.
- The recycling rate at the 20 recycling centres has also been increasing year on year forecast to reach 57% for the 23/24 year.
- Three **Renew shops** opened in July 2021. A Renew eBay shop sells some of the more expensive or larger items that are available to click and collect from the Hub at Trafford Park. A new online Renew shop opened in December 2023 selling cheaper items such as white goods and bikes. A fourth Renew shop is planned on the Reliance St HWRC site once redevelopment has been completed and SUEZ are currently exploring the option of temporary pop-up shops at suitable sites. The money raised from sales goes into two funds; £100,000 a year is donated to the Greater Manchester Mayors charity and £220,000 to the R4GM Community fund.
- The **R4GM Community fund** is in its fourth year. Over the three years, 67 groups have been funded to deliver a range of projects including food redistribution, bicycle repair and maintenance to redistributing baby clothes to those in need.
- Our **education service** is now delivering tours around the Renew hub as well as increasing the number of outreach sessions delivered, particularly in areas where we have low engagement. The team are also reviewing and updating the **ESOL** (English as a Second Language) resources that were developed to help teach users about recycling at home, introducing word and phrases around recycling and waste. They will offer the resources to colleges and adult education establishments to use in their classes.
- We have recently developed a new **battery safety campaign** with the Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service (GMFRS) which aims to educate the public on the dangers on putting batteries in any of the household waste and recycling

bins. Batteries can combust and lead to fires once crushed by the compactor in bin wagons or during the mechanical sorting process. This campaign will continue into this year.

- An ethnographic study was carried out to help us understand resident behaviour at the recycling centres. This information is being used to develop a **campaign to encourage better recycling and reuse at the recycling centres**. The research highlighted that there are certain times in our lives when we're more likely to visit the recycling centres, these are moving house, dealing with bereavement, and doing DIY at home. This provides us with opportunities to provide bespoke information to make it easier for people to do the right thing.
- The team will also continue to communicate the household waste recycling centre access policy including **the van and twin axle permit** and any operational changes such as changes to materials collected at the sites, changes in opening times etc. They work with the SUEZ Communications Manager to ensure consistent messages are delivered to the SUEZ operatives as well as to the public via the R4GM website, leaflets, social media etc.
- The **In the Loop campaign** is continuing, this is designed to encourage more careful recycling by educating the public on the circular economy. Keeping goods in circulation for longer by reuse, repair and recycling helps to reduce the waste of natural resources. The next phase of the campaign will follow different materials from the recycling bin, through the sorting process to show what they are recycled into.
- A **textiles** campaign will launch in April which will educate residents on what to do with damaged clothing which often end up in the general waste bin. These items can be recycled at the recycling centres and do have a value.
- A campaign focusing on **contamination in the food and garden waste bin** is also being developed. The campaign aims to encourage residents to remove plastic packaging before recycling their food waste otherwise the resulting compost can contain unacceptable levels of plastic.
- We will also continue to offer discounted compost bins through the Get Composting website for all Greater Manchester residents (excluding Wigan).

These campaigns will be tailored and targeted to specific audience groups by changing the content, language, and visuals as appropriate. For example, we engage with students at the start and end of the year with specific tailored messaging to help them recycle whilst at university or college.

## **Waste Prevention and Reuse**

We have been working in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy on a research project that explores how to communicate waste prevention messages to the public. The research will build on their first report 'Shifting the Public Focus from Recycling to Waste Prevention'. The findings which are due to be presented at the Keep Britain Tidy conference on 29<sup>th</sup> February will enable us to start to shift the public up the waste hierarchy beyond recycling and repair to show how our consumption habits must change if we are to meet global climate change targets.

Following the research project with Keep Britain Tidy, we will be looking at how we can incorporate the research into our campaigns. It will enable us to start to talk to residents about reducing waste by challenging their consumption habits and encouraging them to repair and reuse items before considering recycling. This is known as the waste hierarchy. As part of the research, it has been redesigned to help convey the importance of how over consumption is not sustainable and contributes to global warming, and how we need to rethink our consumption habits to move beyond just recycling to reduce the waste we create in the first place.

## **Social Value**

In addition to the development of the Renew hub and shops, SUEZ are delivering an extensive social value plan with 54 individual commitments all designed to achieve value from Greater Manchester's waste. These include offering at least 65 apprenticeships over the course of the contract, along with 92 traineeships, 88 work experience placements and supporting local schools with career days.

SUEZ pay their staff the Real Living Wage and are now members of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. The team works jointly with the SUEZ Communications Manager to communicate the range of ways that SUEZ are generating value from waste and giving back to the local community. A joint communications plan is being developed in support of the Renew Hub, Renew shops and these additional social value commitments.

## **GMCA Waste and Resources business plan**

In addition to the campaigns and communications actions summarised above, the GMCA waste and resources business plan includes the following objectives which requires bespoke communications and engagement support.

- Develop plans to decarbonise the service, assets and infrastructure. This provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the range of waste treatment sites and the way in which the sites are being retrofitted to reduce the carbon emissions;
- Redevelopment of the Reliance St household waste recycling centre which will close in Summer 2024 for 9-12 months. We will work with Manchester City Council, Oldham Council and SUEZ on a joint communications and engagement plan to communicate the closure and to provide regular updates for the local community;
- Design and develop a new Materials Recovery Facility to allow us to accept a wider range of plastics in line with the Simpler Recycling Policy; and
- Carry out waste compositional analysis to inform a Greater Manchester waste strategy. The waste compositional analysis data will be used to inform and adapt the campaigns and communications.

## **Tactics**

In support of the delivery of the communications and engagement plan, the following tactics will be implemented.

- Maintain a clear narrative throughout our communications and campaigns so that R4GM is seen as the trusted voice on recycling, reuse and repair, signposting residents to clear and honest information, without jargon;
- Engage with residents face to face at events, meetings to provide them with information on recycling but also to receive feedback and insight on their knowledge and understanding to help better inform our campaigns;
- Engage and educate residents at our three visitor centres which provide education and advice on recycling, reuse, repair and wider environmental issues to deliver specific learning outcomes;
- Keep the Recycle for Greater Manchester website updated with the latest recycling guidance, campaigns and information on the 20 household waste recycling centres;
- Use the R4GM social media channels to inspire and connect with residents providing jargon free advice, useful tips and clear explanations;
- Use images where possible to assist communities where English is not their first language;
- Use photographs depicting residents carrying out recycling, reuse and repair in local places;
- Take a multi-channel approach making the most of on and offline channels to reach a wide audience;
- Identify and work across portfolio teams where appropriate, e.g. Fire Service, Digital, Homelessness etc;
- Produce campaign materials for the local councils and other partners to share on their own channels;
- Work with influencers to deliver the recycling messages, e.g. Cloud Gardener is a well-known small space gardener helping to raise awareness of our home composting offers;
- Update the GMCA waste and resources page regularly with case studies, annual reports, newsletters etc to demonstrate our progress on delivering high quality waste management services in GM;

- Use GMCA LinkedIn, Twitter/X and Facebook channels to champion our success in delivering the largest waste disposal contract in the country;
- Enter awards to raise awareness of our success in delivering successful campaigns and communications;
- Submit regular articles in the trade press to further raise awareness of the work of the GMCA among industry professionals; and
- Network and horizon scan for opportunities to work in partnership with key leading national organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy, WRAP, Alupro, Recycle your electricals etc.

## Behavioural Change principles

Behavioural change principles are used to develop the campaigns. Unconscious behaviour is tied to everyday routines and linked with specific spaces. The more we repeat a behaviour, the more automatic and habitual it becomes. People prefer to behave as we always have done and tend to go with the default option.

Large scale social change is driven by social interdependencies – it is crucial to observe that others are acting to change your own behaviour.

Recycling is now the social norm, and most people now do it as part of everyday life.

A popular behaviour change model that we use is the COM-B model, to do a behaviour an individual must have the **Capability** to do it, the **Motivation** to do it, and external factors must provide the individual with an **Opportunity** to do it.

When designing behavioural change campaigns, we identify our audience, identify the specific behaviour that we want them to take, e.g. recycle plastic bottles only in their mixed recycling bin. We then identify the possible motivations and barriers to carrying out the behaviours such as confusing product labelling, or they don't have the right bin. We then identify when and how we want them to carry out the behaviour. It is important to focus on one audience and one behaviour at a time. Appropriate behaviour change interventions then can be applied and communicated.

## Activity Plan 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

The table below summarises the main communication, engagement and campaigns that are planned and how they link to the objectives.

Communications Activity	Timescales	Objective
R4GM Community Fund – promote the fund in April-May to encourage applications.	April – May 2024 Sep – Oct 2024	3,4
Renew Shops, Hub, social value commitments	Ongoing	3,4
Discounted compost bin offer through Get Composting.com website	Ongoing	2,4
Compost donation scheme – free compost for community groups and schools	Ongoing	3,4
Education service – provide learning outcomes via 3 visitor centres, outreach and online sessions	Ongoing	2,3,4
Reliance St, Manchester HWRC closure (Summer 2024, TBC)	March 2024 to March 2025	3,4
Maintain and update R4GM website	Ongoing	1,3,4,5,6
In the Loop recycling campaign – continue to develop campaign for different audiences and for different materials	Ongoing	3,4
Battery safety joint campaign with GMFRS – continue to develop this in support of battery fire hotspots.	Ongoing	3,4,6
Recycle your electricals – continue to support this national campaign aimed to increase the recycling of batteries and electricals	Ongoing	3,4,6
Run a survey to collect data on disposal of vapes – use this to develop a campaign to increase recycling of vapes	Feb 2024 and ongoing	3,4,6

Textiles campaign – focussed on keeping textiles out of the general waste bin	Ongoing from Nov 2023	3,4
Food waste contamination campaign – focussed on reducing plastic contamination	Ongoing from Jan 2024	3,4
HWRC recycling campaign – use ethnographic study results to develop and run a recycling campaign aimed at better segregation, recycling and reuse	Ongoing from Nov 2023	3,4
Support Keep Britain Tidy on waste prevention research project - incorporate results into R4GM Communications Plan	Sep 2023 to March 2024 - ongoing	2,3,4
Support national awareness weeks including GM Repair Week (March), Compost Awareness Week (March), Food Waste Awareness Week (March), Recycle Week (Oct)	Ongoing	3,4
Develop communications to raise awareness of the decarbonisation of the waste treatment sites.	TBC once programme of work has been finalised	2,5
Deliver seasonal communications e.g., at Christmas, Eid, Hannukah etc. ensuring messaging is relevant to the audience.	Ongoing	3,4

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Quarterly impact reports are produced to demonstrate the effectiveness of the campaigns, communications, and engagement and to report on progress against this plan.

Specific KPIs are set for each activity depending on the specific objectives.

Throughout the year we use contractual data to monitor contamination and recycling rates.

The waste compositional analysis data that will be produced this year will also provide us with useful insight into the composition of each of the recycling and general waste bins so that we can better target our communications.

Controls are put in place for each campaign and communications activity so that adjustments can be made if the campaign isn't reaching the intended audience.

Self-evaluation surveys and engagement data provides feedback from residents to help us to understand if the communications are effective and the campaigns are adapted accordingly.