

Case Study

The *Don't Rubbish Essex* campaign brings together 12 councils to raise awareness of and participation in recycling. Part of this was a 6-month door-to-door canvassing campaign in poor performing areas and areas with high contamination of recyclables. The campaign was designed and managed by the County Council. Each collection authority identified the areas within their districts where canvassing was to be conducted.



Background

The Essex Waste Partnership is made up of 12 authorities including the county council, a unitary council and 10 waste collection authorities. The partnership covers 527,000 households. The councils provide a variety of kerbside collection services collecting cans, paper, textiles, glass, plastic, cardboard and green waste. The county recycling target is 33% for 2005/06. Its recycling rate for 2004/05 was 29.8%.

About the campaign

- Number of households targeted: 59,916
- Number of households spoken to: 22,993
- Hit rate: 38%
- Time period: From 25th April – 21st October 2005

Campaign's aims:

To encourage residents to use their doorstep collections and/or reduce contamination by concentrating on poor performing areas or areas with high contamination.

Identifying target audience

Poor performing areas were selected by each of the collection authorities, mainly through:

- Participation monitoring
- Analysing tonnage data
- Knowledge of their residents and areas

Recruitment

Essex County Council recruited the taskforce. They advertised in 2 newspapers and www.environmentjob.co.uk. The total cost was about £1000. (A job description is available on request)

Interview procedure

The County short-listed applicants and undertook face-to-face interviews. The following questions were asked at the interview stage:

1. Can you tell us what experience you have of communicating with the public?
2. Can you tell us about a difficult situation that you have been in when working with members of the public?

3. How would you persuade someone to change their behaviour? For example someone who isn't recycling how would you get them to recycle?
4. Can you tell us about a time when you had to demonstrate personal responsibility towards health and safety?
5. Can you tell us what experience you have of collecting and inputting information to a database?
6. You would be expected to door knock 100 houses per day how would you achieve this? Give an example of how you have met deadlines in the past.
7. Flexible to work the hours stated?
8. Have a driving licence and access to a vehicle?

Ten canvassers were employed by the County Council.

Health and Safety/Training

Training of the canvassers was undertaken with the help of in-house council staff and Watch Waste consultants (2 days).

Essex Taskforce Procedures

1. Daily signing in/out procedure - canvassers were required to contact the allocated district council contact to inform them that:
 - They had reached the allocated area
 - When they were leaving the area at the end of their shift

At weekends canvassers reported to a project manager.

2. Sickness Procedure/Annual Leave/Incident Procedure – Canvassers should contact the team coordinator as soon as possible
3. Expenses Claims - Canvassers could claim the following expenses: mileage, fuel, public transport fares, car parking costs, pay as you go mobile phone charges
4. Complaint Procedure - Canvassers should fill in a complaints form or ask the householder to contact the team coordinator

Essex County Council – Behind the logistics of door-to-door canvassing

5. Record keeping

- Log sheets and a street summary sheet had to be completed and compiled into a daily summary sheet
- Canvassers were provided with laptops and were encouraged to process their log sheets on a daily basis; most did this at home

Managing the project

- Driver licence holders and non drivers were paired up to work together
- Canvassers were contracted to work 37 hours per week Monday–Saturday with one day off in the week. However as a good contact rate was achieved Monday to Friday canvassers were not required to work on a Saturday
- Canvassers start and finish times: 10am–7pm
- Canvassers spent 8 weeks in each district over the 6 months
- There was always a contact officer at each collection authority and this person also provided training on the kerbside collection services available in the district/borough
- Pool cars were available for use by the canvassers

Questionnaire

The canvassers asked the following questions at the doorstep and recorded the number of responses:

1. Are you aware of your kerbside collection?
2. Do you use your kerbside collection?
If not why not?
3. What materials do you recycle through your doorstep collection?

A record sheet was used to monitor progress – copy provided at the end of this document. After each road/street visited, the canvassers recorded the day and time of the visit and how many households they had contacted. They could also record container orders and how the residents felt about the scheme. The information was entered into an Access database.

In addition to the record sheet other methods were used to monitor progress and ensure quality control:

Learning points	Implemented (Yes or No)
Spot check carried out (10%) on those households visited. These asked the resident if the Taskforce knocked on their door, if they were polite and did they give information on recycling.	Not all the time, it was difficult to always find the time to do it.
Leaflets numbers recorded.	Yes
Track calls to helpline - asked callers if they were ringing due to a visit from a canvasser, to be carried out during and after the period the canvassers are in the district.	Yes most of the districts were able to do this
Arrange regular debriefing sessions with the Taskforce.	Yes every fortnight
Provide complaints forms (on service issues) to be passed back to the district within 48 hours and relevant authority to respond to complaint within 5 working days.	Yes
Feedback information to householder after the door knocking has taken place.	Yes

Resources and equipment

The canvassers were provided with:

- Uniform – bag, high visibility vest, security badge, name badge
- Mobile phones
- Lap tops – if applicable
- Stationery – pens, pencils, clipboards etc.
- Communication materials –leaflets, reusable bags for promotional activities
- Standardised questionnaire forms
- Participation monitoring forms (WRAP version)
- Complaints procedure
- Incident procedure
- Generic container request sheet
- Log sheet
- Maps highlighting roads to be knocked on
- Specific district leaflets on recycling schemes
- Specific district record sheets

Canvassers were provided with the following information to give to householders on request:

- Leaflet from collection authority detailing doorstep collection service and collection days/dates
- Generic Don't Rubbish Essex leaflets

Cost

The canvassers were paid a rate of approximately £7.50 an hour.

	Cost incl VAT
Equipment	
High Vis Vests	£360.73
Mobile Phones	£375.53
Giant Paperclips	£4,523.75
Laptop hire*	£7,111.74
Leaflet	£3,701.25
Name badges	£46.41
WasteWatch Taskforce Training	£1,581.08
Car hire for Taskforce	£1,233.75
Salaries and Expenses	
Taskforce*	£68,303.78
REED employees*	£15,940.46
Line Manager Salary*	£29,325.68
Total for canvassing campaign	£132,504.16

*estimated total costs

Achievements

The door-to-door canvassing increased participation by an average of 6.5% (these results are based on 6 out of the 11 areas covered by the campaign). Reports have been produced for each authority and a final report is being compiled for the overall campaign.

Learning points

Coordination of the teams was key; this included:

- Working out who was going to be working in which district
- Making sure canvassers were paired appropriately (a couple of the canvassers didn't drive which was a major factor to be considered when pairing up and locating)
- Arranging cover for canvassers during periods of absence, i.e. holidays and sickness. All canvassers were entitled to 10 days holiday. Options included:
 - Project manager provided cover
 - Some canvassers concentrating on paper work
 - Canvassers join another group for the day

As there were 10 staff a lot of cover was needed. After a couple of weeks the County Council decided to make one of the canvassers a 'floater'. This meant that there was always someone to provide cover when it was needed.

Managing the taskforce was demanding and the project manager needed to be contacted easily:

- "Canvassers text and ring for various things that they need or when they had a problem"
- "Phone was always on until early evening and on Saturdays in case there was any emergency!"

More case studies and specific advice is available through WRAP's ROTATE team – contact them on :

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Alternatively visit
www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities/rotate/index.html
 for more information.

November 2006

LA:

Week commencing:

Street	Day visited	Time			Hhs visited	No. contacted		% Contact rate	Box orders	Positive comments	Negative comments
		am	pm	eve		Yes	No				
Reme Ave	Mon	X			23	13	10	57%		9	4
New Rd	Mon	X			72	33	39	46%		20	13
Mortimer Rd	Mon	X			18	9	9	50%		7	2
Prospect Close	Mon		X		11	6	5	55%		5	1
etc	Mon		X		12	2	10	17%		1	1
etc	Mon		X		35	19	16	54%		15	4
etc	Mon		X		17	4	13	24%		2	2
Total					188	86	102	45%	0	59	69