

Case Study

Luton Borough Council, with WRAP funding, commissioned StudentForce to carry out an innovative door-to-door canvassing exercise targeting diverse cultural and ethnic communities in an urban area. The canvassers employed could speak 10 different languages and over eight months spoke to more than 24,000 residents. Luton demonstrated that canvassing in urban areas and in more hard to reach communities can be successful. In some areas the participation rate increased by more than 10%.



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Background

Luton Borough Council (LBC) is a mainly urban Unitary Authority with around 70,000 households. All properties in Luton have access to a kerbside recycling scheme. 66,000 households are provided with wheeled bins, 4,000 use clear sacks and flats are serviced by communal 1100L bins. The recycling rate was 20% in 2004/2005, this needs to be increased to 24% in 2005/2006.

Luton has a large ethnic community, 18.3% of the population is Asian or Asian British.

About the campaign

- Number of residents targeted: 68,000
- Number of householders spoken to: 24,000
- Hit rate: 33%
- Time period: March–November 2005

Campaign's aims:

- Increase participation in kerbside recycling service
- Decrease contamination in materials collected
- Increase the sale of home composters
- Encourage residents to use the 70 mini recycling centres

Identifying target audience

Participation rates in all 19 wards within Luton were measured prior to the campaign. The data was used to select 9 low performing wards. The 2001 census data revealed that 3 of these wards had over 40% Asian or Asian British population. In these "high focus" wards the council wanted to improve the contact rate so each house had a second visit where there was no response on the first. The other 6 "low focus" wards had 60% of houses targeted with one visit.

Logistics

Recruitment

StudentForce for Sustainability (SFS) was commissioned to recruit the canvassers. Established in February 1996, SFS has experience of delivering successful communication campaigns to promote waste minimisation and of recruiting and motivating teams of committed graduates. SFS recruited by placing adverts:

- Nationally - in the Guardian (Society)
- Environmentjob.co.uk
- StudentForce vacancies webpage and StudentForce database
- Locally - in the Luton Herald and Post, Jobs Today, Luton News and the Dunstable Gazette

The job description included "Ability to speak Urdu or Hindi fluently". In total 10 project staff (taskforce) were recruited (1 data analyst and 1 recycling promotions officer, 2 team leaders, 6 recycling promoters). This taskforce could speak and communicate in 10 different languages. One promoter was a Luton resident.

[Click here to see Team Leader job description.](#)

Recruitment timescale:

	Team Leader	Taskforce
Advert	Approx 5th January 2005	Approx 5th January 2005
Interview	23rd February 2005	2nd March 2005
Start date	7th March	14th March 2005

'I would recommend that any council looking to hire graduates for recycling promotional work would do well using SFS'. (Nick Tempest, Project Manager)

Managing the project

SFS designed project plans in consultation with LBC. Weekly plans were prepared and were updated regularly. SFS also recruited a project manager who was trained to take over the management of the campaign. SFS supported this role in terms of budget management and re-scheduling of work plans.

The project manager held regular meetings with the team to guide the project. Many of the ideas for new initiatives came directly from these meetings. The role involved regularly briefing the Waste Disposal Officer and the Recycling Officer on the status of the project.

- Working hours: 37.5 hours per week
- Start and finish times: 10 am-6 pm

Health & Safety and Training

SFS carried out a week long induction for the taskforce. This included communications training, project

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management, waste management and health and safety. Health and safety advice included:

- Providing the canvassers with personal safety clothing; (hi vis jackets and vests for summer wear)
- Instructing the team never to enter a home
- Team members always to be in sight of or hearing distance of a team-mate

Questionnaire/Data gathering

An index type questionnaire was used to gather household information, provide a basis for a conversation and ensure quality control.

[Click here to see the questionnaire](#)

The type of recycler identified was calculated on the basis of score obtained from knowledge and usage of recycling.

Type	Score
High	8,7,6
Medium	5,4
Low/non	3,2

Supporting promotional material was made available to the canvassers. The council recommends:

- Provide leaflets regardless of whether the resident answers the door or not
- Leaflets should include information on the recycling services, an explanation of how to use the service and collection dates
- Have information leaflets available on compost bins/real nappies

Costs

Campaign costs included:

- Training Costs - £2,400
- Volunteer Costs - £450
- Staff Costs - £159,860. The rate paid to canvassers was £5.90 per hour.
- Promotional Material - £19,900
- Travel - £19,820
- Office Equipment/Stationery - £2,350

Total cost £240,617

Top Tips

Tips for canvassing at flats:

- Contact the management of the flats to ensure access to the premises. Also this person will be your first point of contact for that building. If you succeed in convincing this person of the importance of recycling then the chances of successful promotion increase dramatically. Often this person may have contact information for other flats/blocks as well
- In flats it is essential to work in pairs for safety reasons
- Flats will often require bespoke recycling solutions, so that means keeping an open mind for suggestions from residents and the management

Achievements

- Increase in participation rate of 7% (The pre-campaign participation rate was 69% and the post campaign rate 76.29%)
- Increase in participation in Luton's high focus wards of 10% (increased from 62% to 72%)
- Increase in tonnage of kerbside dry recyclables compared with 2004/05
- Marked drop in contamination of dry recyclables
- Textile recycling participation increased by 12% (went from 31% to 43%)
- Garden waste recycling participation increased by 18% (from 35% to 53%)
- 335 compost bins sold

Learning points

- In high ethnic minority areas, women canvassers had a higher rate of success
- If possible, recruit staff who speak minority languages
- Engage community leaders in the project (e.g. Ward Councillors, leaders of religious organisations)
- It is good to engage the canvassers in the project; their experiences are extremely valuable

'We expected to achieve an increase in participation rate and recycling rate, and we have achieved these goals. We have also made beneficial and growing community links, one of which will produce a poster and leaflet campaign aimed at Luton's Muslim community.' (Nick Tempest – Project Manager)

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

01295 819661
rotate@wrap.org.uk.

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

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Project Work Description

Project Worker Title: Recycling Team Leader (2 positions)

Project Work Number: 710117-2, 710117-3

Objectives:

As a result of a recent grant from the WRAP (Waste and Resource Action Programme) Performance Improvement through Communications initiative; Luton Borough Council has been awarded funds to increase participation and reduce contamination from the kerbside schemes, primarily through a door knocking campaign.

The main role of the Recycling Team Leader will be the day-to-day supervision and motivation of his/her team of Promoters to meet targets set by the Project Manager. As a member of the team the Recycling Team Leader will also be measuring participation and contamination and raising awareness through a door-knocking campaign.

Benefits of the Project Work to the Graduate

The Luton LETS scheme is an innovative project in an area of high ethnic diversity. The work will allow the graduates to gain essential and relevant experience if they are keen to work in the waste sector or within local authorities in the future. This field is a high growth area and relevant work experience is a prerequisite of most positions.

Employment potential and options post Project Work

Graduates from similar projects have gone on into a variety of related fields, primarily into local authorities working as Recycling Officers or Education Officers, but also as consultants for organisations such as Waste Watch, Enforcement Officers for the Environment Agency and into other environmental charities.

Output 1 Recruitment, induction and some training of the Recycling Promotions Team consisting of three members

Output 2 Collation and initial analysis of data collected by the Recycling Promotion Team

Output 3 To promote a greater awareness and understanding of waste reduction, reuse and recycling/composting

Key Task 1 Liaising with the Project Manager to assess areas for door-knocking and agree performance targets

Key Task 2 Supervising and motivating a team of Promoters and liaising with householders, primarily through a door-to-door waste awareness campaign to increase participation, reduce contamination and promote waste minimisation and recycling in general

Key Task 3 Collecting and collating relevant data, and accompanying collection crews in order to record relevant data in order to measure participation and contamination

Key Task 4 Maintaining customer service objectives as set by the host council

Employer Ulysses

Salary (per annum pro rata): £13,008

Interview Date, Week commencing: 18th January 2005

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Telephone Interviews: 6th and 7th January 2005	The telephone interviews will be short and fairly informal. Please make sure you are contactable on the stated dates
Start Date:	3rd January
Length of Project Work:	43 weeks
Hours/Week:	37
Work outside normal hours:	May be some evening and weekend work
Base:	Luton
Reports to:	Project Manager

Background

Luton's recycling rate and current monitoring indicate that for a section of householders the current leaflets and a helpline are sufficient. However, the previous recycling campaign and other ongoing council monitoring has identified weaknesses, for example large areas of poor participation can be found, particularly in ethnic areas of Luton.

Promoting recycling to householders in areas like Essex and Devon has demonstrated its benefits and the experience in Luton backs this up. As such it seems the obvious answer to the many issues brought up in our monitoring and a new campaign was required to increase recycling and waste awareness.

Personal Specification

Weighting

Please note that Weightings should indicate the importance of each selection criteria, the higher the weighting the greater the importance. The weightings will be used to calculate the interview score in order to fairly assess all candidates.

Essential Selection Criteria 1

Weighting 4

Some previous experience of managing people. Ability to lead and motivate team members, and coordinate tasks.

Essential Selection Criteria 2

Weighting 4

Campaigning Skills. Competence and willingness to engage face-to-face and confidently with householders, employees, community, church and school groups on the topic of waste and recycling in a light-hearted, clear and assertive way. Appropriately dressed. Understanding of the principles and issues of household waste minimisation.

Essential Selection Criteria 3

Weighting 3

Teamworking Skills. Competence to work as part of a Council-wide team and as a team of four. Willingness to work in and adopt the culture and values of local authorities. Competence and willingness to cooperate with and help others resolve conflicts and solve problems.

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Essential Selection Criteria 4

Weighting 2

Recording and Evaluative Skills. Competence to record interviews methodically as well as ability to evaluate waste minimisation and public participation.

Essential Selection Criteria 5

Weighting 2

Organisational and Time-Keeping skills. Competence to manage time to make appointments, arrange events, displays, presentations and record time.

Desirable Selection Criteria 1

Weighting 3

Full clean driving license

Desirable Selection Criteria 2

Weighting 3

Ability to speak Urdu or Hindi fluently

Desirable Selection Criteria 3

Weighting 2

Local knowledge of Luton and relevant cultural and recycling issues.

The successful applicant must agree to an Enhanced disclosure under the Criminal Records Bureau procedures. Employment offer is subject to a satisfactory disclosure report.

StudentForce is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. Accordingly, StudentForce will not accept any form of discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex, marital status or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working with StudentForce

A StudentForce Coordinator to act a point of contact for any help and assistance you may need from StudentForce.

Educational resources, management support, and networking opportunities.

A CD Rom of relevant information to the project sector and a number of learning notes and material available to you throughout the project.

A monthly Newsletter informing you of current sustainability news topics, up and coming events and workshops and a network of other Project Workers.

Training and Development Opportunities:

- 1 An Introductory Meeting to provide guidance for the successful completion of the project, and to detail the training opportunities and support offered by both the client and StudentForce.
 - 2 A Review Meeting in order to discuss your progress and offer guidance for job hunting or CV editing, also to gain feedback about StudentForce and the project from the client and Project Worker.
 - 3 A City and Guilds Professional Development Award (this is optional and can be agreed between the client and Project Worker).
 - 4 Three Core Learning Workshops run every quarter: Managing Small Projects, Marketing Sustainability and Assertive Communication.
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- 5 Additional Optional Workshops run on demand, these have included: Fund Bidding, Influencing and Negotiating, Effective Presentation and Facilitation Skills.
 - 6 Careers Workshops, visits to Sustainable Development organisations to introduce the Project Worker to various career options and provide networking opportunities.
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We strongly encourage you to attend training events and provide for 3 days of training within your working hours, as well as covering travel expenses to all StudentForce workshops.

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Questionnaire

Date

Time

1	Morning	09:00-12:00
2	Afternoon	12:00-14:30
3	Late Afternoon	14:30-17:30

Promoter's name

Knowledge

- 1 Don't know about service/I don't recycle
- 2 Aware of service using for one material
- 3 More than one material
- 4 Good knowledge
- 5 Very good knowledge (including rinsing the cans & tins etc.)

Satisfaction

- 1 Not at all satisfied (many complaints)
- 2 I am not happy but use my bins
- 3 Not bad service
- 4 Satisfied
- 5 No complaints at all, very much satisfied

C.A sites

- 1 Don't use it/ don't know
- 2 I do use sometimes
- 3 I use most/every time

Recycling centres

- 1 Don't use it/ don't know
- 2 I do use sometimes
- 3 I use most/every time

Compost

- 1 I don't compost my bio-degradable waste/I don't know
- 2 I am interested to have compost bin/ I have compost bin and I am not using it
- 3 I have a compost bin and I use it
