

Case Study

In order to get the most out of a limited budget a door-to-door canvassing campaign was carried out in Macclesfield using expert knowledge from a contractor (MEL) and council resources. The Recycling Officer coordinated the campaign while MEL provided training and advice on how best to carry out the canvassing. A questionnaire survey to fulfil WRAP funding requirements was carried out at the same time.



Macclesfield

Background

Macclesfield Borough predominantly is a rural area comprising of 150,000 residents. The council operates 2 different kerbside collections:

1. Half of the Borough is on an alternate weekly collection with week 1 (paper/card and residual waste) and week 2 (tins/cans/glass/textile and garden waste)
2. 12,500 households have fortnightly multi-material dry recyclable collection along with a weekly black sack backdoor collection

The borough has steadily increased its recycling rate since 2000 from 7.5% to 13.2% in 2003/4. However, to ensure the borough meets its next target of 24% more work is needed.

About the campaign

- Number of households targeted: 18,500
- Number of households spoken to: 5,000
- Hit rate: 27%
- Time period: From July - August 2005

Campaign's aims

The overall aim of the campaign was to encourage residents to take part in the schemes or, if already taking part, to put more materials into their containers. The project's objectives were to:

- Communicate information about the council's kerbside recycling services
- Provide basic information on broader aspects of recycling and composting
- Gather feedback on the new scheme to inform potential improvement of the services provided
- 500 questionnaires to be completed

Identifying target audience

The council selected 3 towns for canvassing covering both low and high performing areas. The interviewers were given maps and streets lists. If no one was at home they would knock on the next door. They were given several streets to target to ensure the sample was spread across each area.

Logistics

Recruitment

Macclesfield has a number of retired/casual employees who are available to assist the Council for example, to deliver election cards. These staff are local and familiar with the area and were approached to help with the campaign, 17 canvassers were appointed.

Health and Safety

Health and safety training was carried out in-house. This included standard council working practices such as logging in and out and the lone worker policy.

Training

MEL organised a one day training session, attended by a representative from Macclesfield. The training from the council covered the recycling services and broader waste management issues. MEL staff delivered training on the questionnaire and how best to carry out the canvassing.

Managing the project

Ann Marie Lindsley, Macclesfield Waste Strategy and Recycling Officer, coordinated the canvassers on a daily basis. The "Wardens support call centre" was used by the canvassers to log in and out to ensure lone worker policy compliance.

- Start and finish times: between 9 am and 8 pm
- Other hours: evenings and weekends as necessary

Questionnaire

MEL was commissioned to carry out a WRAP survey to fulfil Macclesfield's requirements in monitoring the success of their WRAP funded campaign. To ensure that the survey element was carried out to the WRAP standard and the answers to the questions were not influenced a number of working practices were adopted. It was important that no promotion was carried out during the survey itself; after the survey was completed the canvassers could provide information as requested by residents.

The questionnaire Macclesfield used consisted of 18 questions in a tick-box (closed) style. An example is shown below

Macclesfield

	Recycling Box	Wheellie bin
Happy with service		
More reliable service		
More materials collected		
Help with carrying the container		
Collected more often		
Bigger container *		
More than one container *		
Smaller container		
Better information on what can be recycled		
Clear calendar of collection		
Other(specify)		

Cost

Canvassers were paid £2.75 for each completed basic questionnaire and £3.25 per WRAP questionnaire. In total the campaign cost around £20,000

Achievements

The results of the campaign highlighted the following:

- Reasons why respondents do not use the services (in this case, some residents did not have containers) and barriers to using the service
- Respondents were much less aware that they could recycle aerosols, textiles, drinks cans and some

- types of papers through the kerbside services
- A noticeable number of respondents did not use the service because they did not think they produced enough waste to participate. The council needs to emphasise to all residents that even one newspaper recycled is better than not recycling
- Overall residents claimed they used bring banks and civic amenity sites on a regular basis

The Council realised it needed to be clear about the materials that are collected at the kerbside (even if small amounts), so that it can concentrate on all other materials at bring sites.

Learning points

- Managing a canvassing campaign using in-house staff and an outside contractor works fine but managing and coordinating the project in-house involves extra work for the recycling officer
- Preparation is a key element to success, i.e. having the correct maps and information ready for the canvassers
- Ensuring the canvassers have the tools and knowledge available to answer the public's queries is very important (i.e. are trained in canvassing techniques and have information relating to the scheme and other recycling and composting services)
- Flexibility and ability to adapt in situations where things are not going to plan is key e.g. a doorstepper quits, areas are proving difficult to gain the required number of responses

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.

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