

Communicating bring site recycling services

Effective communication of bring site recycling services can:

- raise awareness of recycling generally;
- promote bring site use; and
- educate residents about the proper use of bring sites.

This can help to increase the quantity and quality of materials collected and reduce issues such as fly-tipping and contamination. Communications related to bring sites should be a two-way process: listening to what residents say and – where possible – acting on their comments, as well as giving instructional information.

Issues to consider

As in any area, effective communication requires an understanding of your audience and messages. For bring recycling, that typically means considering why sites are used, why you – as an authority – provide bring site recycling services, and who uses them. These are factors that will influence the messages in promotional activities and how they are targeted for your different audiences. Some reasons for providing bring site recycling services include:

- to give residents a recycling route for excess material between kerbside collections;
- to offer a recycling route for material not collected via the kerbside collection e.g. textiles;
- to provide a convenient service for those who do not receive a kerbside collection, such as residents in flats;
- to act as another visible reminder of recycling in everyday life.



Clothes container – example of recycling route for material which might not be collected through kerbside recycling

Bring sites are evolving to meet changes in demand either through optimising the number of locations or changing the range of materials offered at different locations. Communications are an important part of ensuring residents are aware of these changes, so must be kept current.

Monitoring usage and awareness

Before spending time and effort on communications, it is good practice to monitor usage and awareness of bring sites and services. This can help target where communication efforts need to be focused, e.g:

- raising awareness of new/existing bring site location;
- increasing usage of a particular site/s;
- increasing the quantity of material collected at a bring site/s – particularly when services are extended to include new materials.

Monitoring also provides the evidence base for removal or relocation of a bring site that is not used effectively.

Information on how to monitor scheme usage is available in [WRAP's Improving the Performance of Waste Diversion Schemes – A Good Practice guide to Monitoring and Evaluation, Chapter 5 Monitoring Scheme usage, participation and uptake](#) (February 2010) .

Audiences

Communication should be targeted for different audiences. Think about audiences in terms of their attitudes and motivations to recycle, and the potential barriers they might face. As well as providing general information about bring sites, consider the communication needs of specific audiences such as:

- people who do not use English as a first language – consider translating communication material into different languages or using pictures to convey messages;
- residents without a car who are not able to transport large quantities of material;
- temporary residents such as university students, who may have different arrangements during term time from their home location; and
- residents who have limited access to kerbside recycling – for example, residents in high rise flats, or in rural areas.

For each of these audiences, different messages and methods may be required.

For guidance on how to identify the different audiences within your authority, see WRAP's [Improving Recycling Through Effective Communications](#) (November 2009).



Messages

As well as thinking about your audience, communications need to have a focused message. The right messages will depend on what you want to achieve, for example:

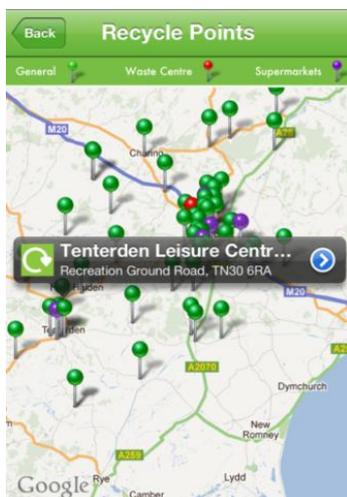
- reducing contamination in bring site containers;
- increasing quantity of material collected at a bring site/s;
- promoting a new material that can be recycled via a bring site/s;
- reducing fly-tipping at a bring site/s;
- increasing awareness of new/existing bring site locations; or
- informing residents about site closure or re-siting.

The communication methods you choose will depend on both the audience and message. Potential approaches are highlighted below.

Raising awareness of bring sites / services

Potential steps to raise awareness of bring site locations in your authority include:

- ensuring that your local authority website has up-to-date information on where bring sites are located – consider a postcode finder on the website to help residents locate their nearest bring site;
- creating a smartphone app to promote and map bring recycling sites as well as kerbside recycling schemes;
- attending community events to generate awareness of local sites and get feedback on any issues affecting use;
- ensuring that all sites are well signposted;
- promoting bring recycling messages via your annual calendar, leaflet campaigns on recycling and in your authority's newsletters to residents.



Case study: Smartphone app

Ashford Borough Council launched a smartphone app 'Recycle for Ashford' in October 2011, to raise awareness of recycling. Within three months there had been over 530 downloads. As well as showing kerbside recycling information, the app allows residents to search for their nearest bring site and lists materials collected at each site. The free app is available for iPhone and Android devices. It was developed at a reasonable cost as a local IT developer approached the local authority to find an opportunity for research and development.



Promoting site usage

Promotional activity for bring sites will depend on the messages being conveyed and the audience the activity is directed at. For example, social media may be an effective means of communicating with students but is unlikely to be as effective with a more elderly audience who may prefer to consult a newspaper for information.

Specific promotional activity includes:

- encouraging community groups, parish councils and schools to use bring sites by promoting incentives such as payment of recycling or re-use credits based on the quantity of materials collected;
- using social media such as Facebook and Twitter to promote services and details of where to recycle specific materials that are not collected at the kerbside;
- using text messaging and the local authority website to promote the bring site service, particularly where the kerbside scheme may not collect a particular material, for example glass;
- working with recycling champions in the community, who may report issues with a site, promote its use locally and highlight how money from recycling credits generated by the sale of material collected at the site might be used for the community's benefit; and
- incorporating information about bring sites for items not collected at the kerbside within kerbside recycling calendars and leaflets.

Educating users about how to use the site correctly

When residents visit a bring site, it is important that they understand how to use the site correctly. This will help:

- increase the quality and quantity of material collected;
- decrease contamination in bring containers; and
- reduce fly-tipping and littering.

Methods to communicate these messages effectively include:

- clear signage at the bring site, including who is responsible for site maintenance and contact information so that any issues – such as overflowing containers – can be reported; and
- consistent and clear labelling on bring site containers – highlighting what material can and cannot be accepted in the containers
- signage can also be used as a means of providing feedback to residents on site/service performance and to pass on thanks for their participation.



Example of clear signage at a bring site, including feedback on recycling. Source: Luton Borough Council

Good practice in communications

- Use consistent branding – follow the Recycle Now brand and/or kerbside scheme branding.
- Ensure all communications materials (signage, leaflets etc) address language barriers, using pictures and translations, where appropriate.



A multi-lingual sign using the Recycle Now brand. Source : Cambridge City Council

- Ensure promotional material produced complies with the [Equality Act 2010](#), which requires you to take reasonable measures to prevent disability discrimination.

The Recycle Now website <http://www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk/> has a large amount of information which local authorities can use on communication material. It can ensure a consistent message for residents and reduce the costs of designing promotional materials.



Example of Recycle Now standard colour iconography for different material streams

In addition, WRAP has further guidance on communication activities and associated costs:

- WRAP – [Indicative cost guide](#) (December 2011)
- WRAP – [Design & print guidance for Local Authorities](#) (March 2010)
- WRAP – [Basic design principles](#) (March 2010)

Frequently asked questions

How can we promote bring sites effectively with a limited budget?

1. Ensure your local authority website has up-to-date information on bring sites.
2. Use free Recycle Now branding and resources to reduce the design costs associated with communication materials.
3. Consider including bring site service information on material that is being produced for other services. For example, kerbside recycling calendars or leaflets can be used to highlight where complementary services exist for additional materials.

Now we have a comprehensive kerbside scheme in place, should we stop promoting bring sites?

Not necessarily. Where resources allow, consider conducting a survey to gauge levels of awareness and usage of bring sites. By speaking with residents and operatives servicing the sites, and monitoring incoming calls, you should get an indication of the role bring sites have in your authority – see ‘*Understanding the Performance of Bring Sites*’ sheet. Based on this, you can then consider what level of communication is required, for which audiences, and select the most important messages to focus on.

Checklist

- Always identify your target audience and messages you want to convey so that you can target communications accordingly.
- Make sure information on your authority’s website is up-to-date and review it regularly.
- Consider using standard Recycle Now signage and imagery, which is available from WRAP, to all local authorities, for free use. Ensure you have permission from your internal communications department prior to publishing. <http://www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk>
- Check whether existing signage is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- Check whether communication materials take account of the key languages spoken in your authority area.
- Look at ways to harmonise communications around bring services with communications about kerbside collection services.
- Consider the use of recycling champion volunteers to increase awareness of services.
- Consider paying recycling or reuse credits to local community groups and schools as means of increasing interest in use of bring sites or community-based facilities.
- Consider using social networking to promote bring site recycling services potentially to new audiences.
- Incorporate questions about bring site awareness and usage in existing Council surveys.