

Zero Waste Scotland Communications Guidance

Basic Design Principles

The image displays several examples of recycling communication materials:

- Scotland-wide poster:** "All your paper, cans, card and plastic bottles can be recycled in your blue bin". Includes the slogan "Don't let a good thing go to waste. Na leig rud math a dèilig".
- Paper sign:** "paper" with a recycling symbol and contact info: "If this bin is full please call 01349 886603 or e-mail recycle@highland.gov.uk".
- Clear glass bottles & jars sign:** "clear glass bottles & jars" with a recycling symbol and contact info: "If this bin is full please call 01349 886603 or e-mail recycle@highland.gov.uk".
- Aberdeen poster:** "Give cans another life. Recycle now". Includes contact info: "Don't let a good thing go to waste. ☎ 08456 08 09 19. 🌐 www.aberdeenscity.gov.uk/wastewarrior. 📘 www.facebook.com/wastewarrioraberdeens".
- East Ayrshire poster:** "everything here can be recycled in East Ayrshire". Lists items for recycling in blue bins, brown bins, black bins, and local recycling centres. Includes contact info: "To check contact 01563 554033 or visit www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk".
- Blue box sign:** "Use your blue box to recycle". Includes contact info: "Need a blue box call 0500 545 540".

Zero Waste Scotland works with businesses, individuals, communities and local authorities to help them reduce waste, recycle more and use resources sustainably.

Find out more at
www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

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Also refer to 'Improving Recycling through Effective Communications' ZWS, 2012. This guidance includes useful suggestions about campaign planning, targeting your audience, maximising the communications mix and much more.

1 Principle 1 - Headline

In a calendar, leaflet or advertisement the **most important element is the headline**. The headline is either the heading that goes at the top or if there's no heading it's the first few words. The headline needs **to grab peoples' attention** and tell them what it is about. If the headline of your calendar or leaflet is currently the name of your local authority, you can almost certainly increase its effectiveness significantly by changing the headline to what the communication is about.

In a calendar, leaflet or advertisement the most important element is the headline.

Keep it simple; do not try to be too clever – a catchy and appropriate strap line is best. A clever concept can go over peoples' heads – they don't have the time or the inclination to try and work it out. A good example of a strapline is:

Don't let a good thing go to waste – use your box

It tells people what to do (first and foremost it is an instruction) and what the communication is about.

2 Principle 2 - Hierarchy

It is very important that you develop a hierarchy so that the most important information or message is at the top and the least important at the bottom. Peoples' attention span can be short and they will skim the information after the first few sentences unless you can maintain their interest.

Develop a hierarchy so that the most important information or message is at the top

In terms of presentation:

- get the important information across first – **if people feel they need more detail they will keep reading. Do not bury the important stuff at the end so that it gets missed**
- emphasise the important parts of a sentence - you can make a long paragraph **really easy to read** by embolding **key words** which get your **message across**
- change the font colour to emphasise points where appropriate but obviously not excessively or inappropriately where the colour conflicts with the message, such as:

■ **Go**

■ **Stop**

3 Principal 3 - Make it Personal to the Reader

The copy of your calendar, advertisement or leaflet needs to be a personal communication to the individual reading it. It should address their needs, desires and fears and it needs to constantly communicate the benefits of what you are offering.

Advertisement or leaflet needs to be a personal communication

Do not say things like:

'Ben Avon Council has decided that it will change the way it collects domestic refuse'.

Relate it to the individual:

'We are making improvements to the way we collect **your** waste' or

'We are making it easier **for you** to recycle'

People will know 'We' is Sandy-on-Sea Borough Council because you will have put your crest/logo and your contact information on the communication.

4 Principal 4 – Make it Positive

Generally the message you are trying to get across or the service or product you are introducing is a positive thing – otherwise you would not be doing it!

The service or product you are introducing is a positive thing

Do not anticipate problems by putting a negative slant to the message you are trying to get across or by developing them in your communication.

For example when introducing alternate weekly collections of refuse and recyclables:

- **'We won't be picking up your waste weekly any more we will be doing it fortnightly'.** This implies that residents are getting a lesser service. If you are operating an alternate weekly collection residents are still receiving a weekly collection service. Reinforce the benefits of this scheme
- **'Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 we are not obliged to collect your waste every week – we just have to make a regular collection and tell you when it is going to be'.** Don't hide behind a piece of legislation that most people will never have heard of. Explain the new service by clearly focusing on the benefits. You are trying to encourage people to sort their waste not put them off using the service

There is **no need to give people ammunition** with which they can criticise the service you are providing.

People need to be encouraged to join in because the service is being improved and will be better for them - if they accept a level of responsibility for their own waste and for their environment.

People need to be encouraged to join in because the service is being improved and will be better

Give people reasons to join in with the scheme and tell them the benefits. Consider including a list of the benefits such as:

Why Recycle

- it's easy and convenient with at least 90% of householders having access to a kerbside collection scheme
- waste disposal costs are increasing so by recycling you can save money
- it helps create employment and supports the local economy
- by recycling we can help sustain natural resources for future generations
- reduces pollution caused by extracting virgin raw materials and through the disposal of waste at landfill sites
- saves natural resources and extends the life of raw material reserves
- conserves wildlife habitats where materials are extracted
- saves energy as less energy is used to produce goods from recyclable materials rather than from virgin raw materials

5 Principle 5 – Design

Branding is a word you will have heard on many occasions. It is **not** a logo, your council crest or just another mark. It embodies the values of your campaign and your organisation to your audience.

A brand embodies the values of your campaign and organisation

It is achieved by developing a visual identity through consistent use of colour, font, illustrations, photographs, layout, etc. Ultimately, given enough exposure you could leave your logo off and people would still know the communication was from you.

It is important to **be consistent from one communication to the next** as people will recognise it is from you after a short while and know what the subject is and that it is important. Keep changing the style and they will treat it as junk in the sea of advertising that is trying to catch their attention.

Be consistent from one communication to the next

So, develop a brand write some guidelines and stick to them! These guidelines should provide advice and information on how to use the brand. It will help maintain a consistent look and feel for all communication material and protect the brand from misuse.

Please note ZWS will not fund the development of new identities as the Recycle for Scotland identity can be used: the Recycle for Scotland Branding Guidelines are available from www.zerowastescotland.org.uk.

If you come across a designer who does not want to use your design guidelines or does not suggest assisting you to develop some – go somewhere else.

Consider the message you want to get across and your audience.

Make sure information is easy to understand and uses simple and concise language. If you are using facts and figures make sure information is as up to date as possible.

Waste collection it is a service provided by a local authority which, we all hope, is an efficient, effective and professional organisation providing an important service. So by default you should get householders' attention. However, targeting information is essential in order to reach the appropriate audiences. You need to consider who is likely to read/respond to the communication.

Have a look at the ZWS communications toolkit – it gives much more detailed information on targeting audiences.

Your design should be appropriate – toys and pets do not have anything to do with the collection of rubbish or recycling. They might appeal to a few primary school children but not generally to adults. Please do not treat adult audiences like children – it is condescending, unhelpful and it is rarely fun. Look at:

- top quality designs for inspiration - that is what designers are taught to do
- the top brands and how they maintain the appearance of all their products, services and communications – you may not have their budgets but you are still competing with them for people’s attention

Do not distract the reader by making the design too fussy. A clean design carefully set with the minimum of distraction is best. Space around paragraphs makes the text much easier to read, pages packed with text without features makes it difficult. Put information in easily understood ‘chunks’. **Do not make a leaflet a battlefield of complex colours, images and text.**

Do not distract the reader by making the design too fussy

Fonts should be Futura. Futura Book is for normal text, Futura Heavy for subheadings, and Futura Extra Bold for main headings. Consider using embellishments like drop shadows carefully and subtly if it helps lift the design. When using black text on a white background try putting it in a tint – **80% for example makes it a lot less harsh** – experiment; see which is best.

Point size for paragraph or body text can be anything between **8 and 12 point**, any smaller and it is difficult to read, any larger and it starts to look like a child’s first reading book and becomes condescending to adults. Do not make it unnecessarily large, remember a newspaper is about 8/9 point and the vast majority of people can read newspapers. You will, or course, provide a large text version for the visually impaired.

‘Wingdings’ like ticks and crosses to use as bullet points, especially those that have been designed for your brand, can be very effective and will give your communications a consistent look. Do not use the standard range of characters that may be available on the software you are using – like MS Office – they can make any communication look crude.

ZWS recommend you stipulate a minimum of 50% recycled content (where recycled content includes pre and post consumer waste but excludes mill broke and any virgin pulp comes from a sustainable source) but higher proportion good quality paper is also available.

Include a reference on the communication – this will help enable you to track the effectiveness of the communication if you choose to ask residents where they have seen the information.

6 Principle 6 – Action

Very simple this one – one sentence only. Your communication must make it clear what action you want people to take.

Make it clear what action you want people to take

Your first message must be the last message your audience need before they do whatever you have persuaded them to do. They must not have to ring someone to get a leaflet to find a number to do it – it will never happen!

‘Recycle – use your box’ – do not give them an escape route!

7 Principal 7 – Contact Information

Never ever produce a communication which does not have:

Council or campaign logo

Web address: www.benavon.gov.uk/recycling
Email address: recycle@benavon.gov.uk
Telephone number: 0845 123 4567

You need to be easily accessible using memorable contact information.

8 Principal 8 – Make Information Understandable

Make sure information is easy to understand and uses simple and concise language. If you are using facts and figures make sure information is as up to date as possible.

Use clear and simple terminology that householders will understand and do not use jargon which may be familiar within your industry but to no one else.

Make sure information is easy to understand and uses simple terminology

It is important that you provide appropriate information. Is the copy relevant? Is there an unnecessary amount of information? Too much information can reduce the impact of key messages and confuse householders.

Do it right and people will understand what you want them to do and will change the way they do things. Get your communications wrong and you may as well have thrown the money down the drain.

9 Principal 9 – Testing Designs

Testing design concepts and copy can be costly if you employ specialist research agencies. An alternative is to test designs and copy on non recycling/waste related staff or members of the public using on street survey techniques. This can provide a good insight into peoples' opinions and feedback on the communication can then be used to modify or improve the communication.

Provide a good insight into people's opinions

Also, remember to ask someone reliable to check the spelling, grammar and punctuation before you press the print button. This is very important.

10 Principle 10 – Recycle for Scotland Campaign

The Recycle for Scotland brand has been designed to raise the profile of recycling across Scotland using high profile press and radio advertising. All authorities are encouraged to use the national campaign iconography on their communications materials to aid recall at a local level.

Raise the profile of recycling across Scotland

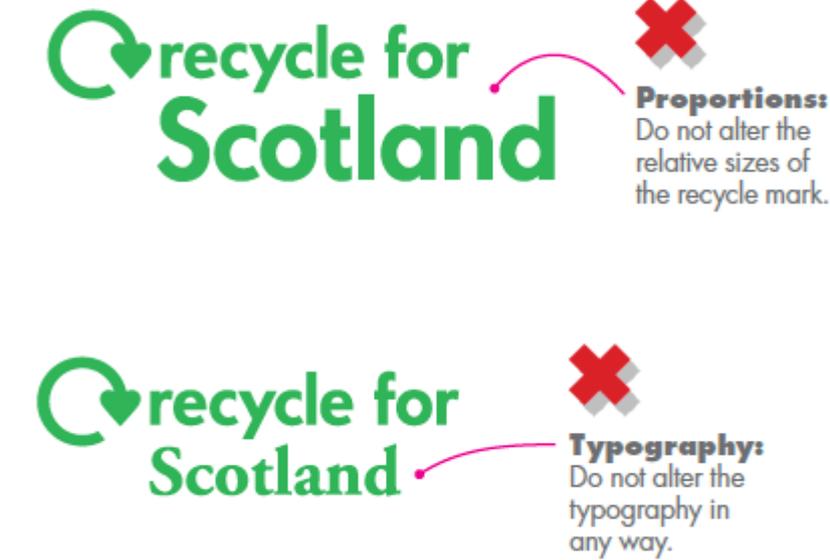
Using the National Campaign Visual Guidelines

The Recycle for Scotland branding has produced detailed visual identity guidelines for local authorities on how to use the iconography. This can be downloaded from the website www.zerowastescotland.org.uk.

However, here is a quick reference guide on how to use the iconography.

Don't let a good thing go to waste

Copyright	The recycle icon copyright and intellectual property is owned by Zero Waste Scotland. The icon is a registered trademark
Brand Mark	 <p>Or</p> 
Icon Based Branding	<p>Using the icon with localised identity</p>  <p>Or</p> 

<p>Campaign based branding</p>	<p>The Don't let a good thing go to waste strapline can be used as shown below</p> 												
<p>Font</p>	<p>Futura is the chosen family of fonts for the recycle identity. Visit for more information visit www.zerowastescotland.org.uk.</p>												
<p>Size</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="284 528 756 875"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="284 528 756 584">Sizing guide:</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="284 584 488 645">Document size</th> <th data-bbox="488 584 756 645">Height of logo</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 645 488 705">A5</td> <td data-bbox="488 645 756 705">10.5mm</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 705 488 766">A4</td> <td data-bbox="488 705 756 766">15mm</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 766 488 826">A3</td> <td data-bbox="488 766 756 826">21mm</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="284 826 488 875">A2</td> <td data-bbox="488 826 756 875">30mm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sizing guide:		Document size	Height of logo	A5	10.5mm	A4	15mm	A3	21mm	A2	30mm
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Document size	Height of logo												
A5	10.5mm												
A4	15mm												
A3	21mm												
A2	30mm												
<p>Space</p>	<p>Clear space around the logo is equal to a quarter of the height of the recycle loop.</p>												
<p>Distortion</p>	<p>DO NOT stretch, rotate, separate the icon and text, alter the typography, change the colours or arrangements</p> 												

	
<p>Colour</p>	<p>Recycle for Scotland green</p> <div data-bbox="304 1122 584 1285" style="background-color: #00bd3f; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Pantone 361 c76 m0 y91 k0 Web #00bd3f</p> </div> <p>You can reverse out the logo from any colour, but not a patterned background. Recycle for Scotland green or black is recommended. Whether positive or reversed out, ensure the recycle mark stands out clearly.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div data-bbox="325 1487 874 1554" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div data-bbox="940 1487 1230 1554" style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div data-bbox="325 1592 874 1659" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div data-bbox="940 1592 1230 1659" style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>
<p>Material Stream Colours</p>	<p>These must be strictly adhered to. No other colour combinations are permitted without prior permissions from ZWS. The Colour Palette on the website provides full pantone and cmyk references for print, web and RAL references for lorry livery etc.</p> <p>Visit www.zerowastescotland.org.uk for more information</p>

Messaging	<p>The campaign messaging maintains a pragmatic focus on the what, how and where of recycling.</p> <p>What, how and where</p> <p>What can be recycled, how to reduce waste, ease of action and signposting.</p> <p>Transformation and value</p> <p>How materials are transformed and the value they bring.</p> <p>Evidence and benefits</p> <p>Achievements, facts and benefits at the national level.</p>
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