

Northern Ireland - arc21

February – March 2012

Over the last 10 years, Northern Ireland has witnessed a dramatic surge in recycling, with rates increasing almost seven-fold to reach 39.7% in 2012. Sustaining performance is a challenge, especially against a backdrop of falling waste arisings, but when one of the three management groups responsible for waste - arc21 - engaged MetalMatters to support continued improvement, dry recyclables rose by five per cent.



KEY FACTS

Number of households: 407,000

Recycling service:

Services vary across the 11 authorities but all offer kerbside recycling services, the majority are co-mingled collections of dry mixed recyclables.

Funding partner:

DOE Northern Ireland,
via the Rethink Waste Fund.

Campaign Cost: £104,000

Cost per household: 25p

PRE-CAMPAIGN

Average Metals capture rate: 30.5% (2008/09)

POST CAMPAIGN

Overall percentage increase: 5.36%

Total waste arisings fell 2.45% compared to the base period



Data provided by arc21 and Bryson Recycling
Base period July-December 2011



MetalMatters

www.metalmatters.org.uk/case-studies



Overview

The north-eastern arc21 region includes around a quarter of the country's land area and half of the population. Made up of 11 councils with a diverse range of rural and urban housing stock, it is the most densely populated area in Northern Ireland, with an equally wide socio-economic mix.

Participating authorities operate a range of kerbside sort and co-mingled services, with collected recyclable materials sent to Northern Ireland firm Bryson Recycling for sorting before they are forwarded for reprocessing.

Five of the 11 authorities expanded their services to include aerosols and foil trays during 2011, so that by the launch of the campaign all were collecting food and drink cans, foil trays and empty aerosols for recycling.

The Campaign

The programme was launched in February 2012 with funding from DOE Northern Ireland's Rethink Waste programme and MetalMatters. The first implementation since MetalMatters' initial trial programmes, the campaign was significantly scaled up to cover 407,000 households, and represented the largest recycling communications programme jointly funded by public and private sector partners.

The eight-week campaign incorporated

- Two leaflet drops to every household, week 1 and week 6
- Radio advertising (3 weeks, 280 x 30 second slots)
- Outdoor advertising (110 buses, 106 bus shelters)
- Recycling vehicle advertising (60 collection vehicles)
- The refit of the arc21 education bus, and a range of giveaways
- PR support, including access to free template materials for local campaigns
- High profile launch event attended by Alex Attwood, Environment Minister for Northern Ireland.

To enhance MetalMatters' existing knowledge base and provide valuable feedback to programme partners, a series of post-campaign focus groups were commissioned. In addition to gauging the effectiveness of the communications campaign and its messaging, the Perceptive Insight participants also explored more general barriers to and knowledge of recycling.



Programme Results

Results showed a conclusive rise in the collection of both dry recyclables and household metals. While waste arisings as a whole continued to decrease, the level of dry recyclables witnessed a 4.71 per cent increase on 2011 baselines. Metals capture in dry recycling performed even better, rising by 5.36 per cent.

Belfast reported even greater levels of recycling, with waste arisings falling by almost eight per cent and the percentage of metals found in the dry recyclable stream reaching 7.91 per cent. The capital city – historically the worst performing council in terms of recycling and, of the council areas included, the one with the densest housing and financially most deprived residents – operates a combination of kerbside sort and co-mingled recycling systems, and was typically the most challenging from a communications point of view.

arc21 Policy & Operations Director Ricky Burnett describes the headline figures as positive, highlighting the results in Belfast. He points out that since the city had not run a more general recycling communications campaign recently, the improvement in capture rates was clearly attributable to the MetalMatters programme, adding: **“Traditionally, dense areas are the hardest to reach so, in particular, that was a good healthy result there.”**

Post-campaign research:

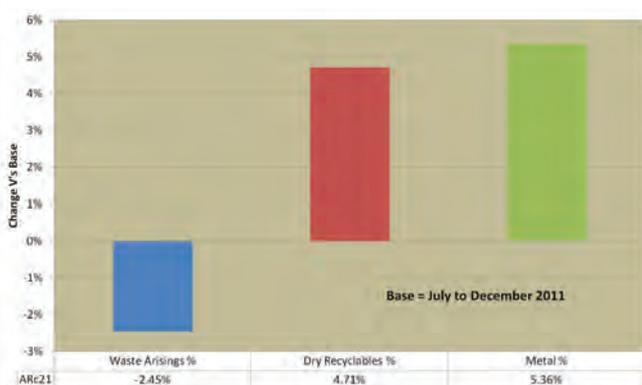
Initial discussions concluded that the leaflets in particular were eye catching and led to a better awareness of the range of metal materials that could be recycled and the cleaning and preparation needed to include metals in recycling collections.

The 'transformational' message, which emphasises the products manufactured from metals waste streams, was especially impactful. Participants felt that messages such as: 'Within as little as six weeks, the empty can you put into your recycling container could be back on the shelf as a new can of cola or a tin of beans', would have a real impact on the frequency of metal recycling.

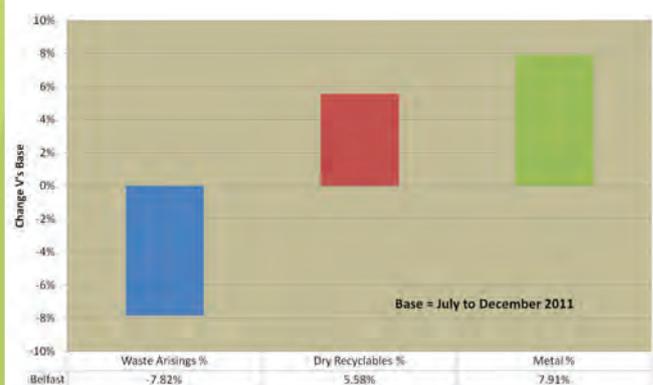
All those taking part recognised the importance of recycling metals and the value associated with it, but many accepted that they could expand the range of products recycled at home. For example, none indicated that they could recycle aluminium wrapping foil, while aluminium trays and aerosols were recycled less frequently than food tins and drinks cans. The main barrier to recycling greater quantities of metals was the time taken to clean materials.

Overall, however, the message was positive – participants indicated that they were more inclined to recycle metal if they had better knowledge of the eventual outputs, and clearly liked the MetalMatters slogan, describing it as 'snappy'.

ARC21 MetalMatters Results
Tonnes Change Vs Base



Belfast MetalMatters Results
Tonnes Change Vs Base



Summary and conclusions

Burnett describes the headline figures as positive, highlighting the results in Belfast. He points out that since the city had not run a more general recycling communications campaign recently the improvement in capture rates was clearly attributable to the MetalMatters programme, adding: **“Traditionally, dense areas are the hardest to reach so, in particular, that was a good healthy result there.”**

He points out that the sheer scale of the project and the task of compiling data across 11 different authorities was challenging, but that the campaign as a whole had proved successful, not least because the materials provided by MetalMatters were tried and tested, with an evidence base that worked.

“In conclusion I think the campaign has been a success. From a basic point of view, we wanted to increase the level of capture on metal, and perhaps increase the capture of other materials. But there were other things we felt we could achieve as well, such as the building of stronger relationships within and beyond the arc21 partnership.

“The big impact for me is that this does work - producers and councils can work together and make a difference, maximising the strengths of both organisations to achieve mutual benefit.”
Ricky Burnett, Policy & Operations Director, arc21

links:

www.arc21.org.uk

www.rethinkwasteni.org

About MetalMatters

MetalMatters was developed and is funded by the metal packaging manufacturing industry, reprocessors and fillers. The programme works in partnership with local authorities and their waste collection partners to promote metal packaging recycling, and thereby improve capture rates for metal packaging at the kerbside. The MetalMatters programme is supported by WRAP.

MetalMatters is being managed on behalf of the funding partners by the Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation (Alupro).

For details of MetalMatters campaigns and case studies visit www.metalmatters.org.uk

METALMATTERS FUNDING PARTNERS

(AT 1ST JANUARY 2013)

INDUSTRY ORGANISATIONS:



METAL PACKAGING REPROCESSORS



FOIL CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS



HOUSEHOLD FOIL MANUFACTURERS



METAL PACKAGING CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS



PACKER/FILLERS



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