

# The Waste Collection Commitment

Principles for domestic waste and recycling collection services



This commitment has been developed based on the findings of comprehensive market research.

The Waste Collection Commitment sets out in plain English the principles which should underlie domestic waste and recycling collection services. By signing up to this voluntary service commitment a local authority is committing to ensuring that the needs of its residents are central to the design and delivery of their waste and recycling collection services.

# The Waste Collection Commitment

A local authority's commitment to a good waste and recycling service

We are committed to providing waste and recycling services which are good value for money and which meet the needs of our residents.



This means we will:

- 1 explain clearly what services you can expect to receive;
- 2 provide regular collections;
- 3 provide a reliable collection service;
- 4 consider any special requests that individual households may have;
- 5 design our services and carry out collections in a way that doesn't produce litter;
- 6 collect as many materials for recycling as we can and explain to you what happens to them;
- 7 explain clearly what our service rules are and the reasons for them;
- 8 tell you in good time if we have to make changes to your services, even temporarily;
- 9 respond to complaints we receive about our services; and
- 10 tell all our residents about this commitment to collecting waste.



## Why has the commitment been developed?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide residents with waste collection services but the way these services are delivered has changed radically and is still evolving. Residents are still coming to terms with these changes; and may feel unsure how to decide whether the service they receive is a good one.

The Communities and Local Government Select Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2006-07 (Refuse Collection) recommended that Government agree a core definition of what householders should expect from their waste collection services.

In response to this recommendation, WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) and the Local Government Association were asked to look at what, from the householder perspective, constitutes a good refuse and recycling service and to work with other appropriate bodies to see whether some common principles could be developed and communicated to local residents.

## How has the commitment been developed?

This commitment has been developed based on the findings of comprehensive market research which was undertaken in the autumn of 2008. The research involved a telephone survey of more than 2,000 householders, weighted to reflect the national demographic profile of England, followed by four focus groups that further explored some of the emerging issues.

The findings from the market research were shared with local authority representatives by means of two workshops in spring 2009. The key themes that emerged from the market research were developed with local authority involvement into a number of principles that define a good collection service. The principles have been developed in such a way that they can successfully underpin any service, regardless of specific scheme design.

## Why sign up?

Applying the principles of the Waste Collection Commitment will help local authorities provide better waste and recycling services, and improve communication with their service users so that ultimately residents are clear on the level of service that they can expect to receive.

Both of these aspects feature in the biennial Place Survey and its measurement of public satisfaction with local services. In time, we expect that this clearer understanding to improve customer satisfaction and reduce the number of enquiries which local authorities receive and are required to respond to from their householders. Greater satisfaction and understanding will also increase effective participation in recycling services and reduce the cost of landfill.

## Who should sign up?

Any local authority with responsibility for the collection of household waste and recyclables.

Many local authorities will already be delivering on the principles of the commitment and therefore will be able to sign up straight away. Others may wish to consider reviewing their services against the 10 principles that form the commitment and work towards signing up in due course.

Advice on how a local authority can assess whether it is already delivering on the principles of the commitment are included within the supporting information available at [www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment](http://www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment)



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### How can a local authority sign up?

Local authorities can sign up to the commitment by visiting [www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment](http://www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment) registering their details and downloading the commitment, and informing WRAP of your decision.

### What support is available to local authorities?

The guidance for local authorities report aims to explain how the 10 principles of the Waste Collection Commitment were developed based on the findings from the market research and consultation with local government. It also provides advice to local authorities on the issues that ought to be considered when assessing their services against the commitment.

For those authorities working towards being able to sign up, information is included on guidance documents and training courses which may help with the development of services in line with the principles of the Waste Collection Commitment.



**WRAP and the Local Government Association were asked to look at what constitutes a good refuse and recycling service.**

The guidance for local authorities report is available via the WRAP website at [www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment](http://www.wrap.org.uk/lacommitment). Authority specific support is available from the Local Government Services Team at WRAP in the areas of collections, communications and waste prevention. Further information is available at [www.wrap.org.uk/local\\_authorities](http://www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities)



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