

 recycle for Scotland

Communications Toolkit

Disruption to Recycling and Waste Collections

All templates mentioned in this toolkit are available for download at:
www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/partners



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This guide aims to support local authorities to communicate any disruption to recycling and waste collections, caused by a number of reasons, to ensure citizens are aware of what is happening, what to do and how to find out more information. Effective communications during this period will help to counter negative perception of the service and avoid undermining public confidence, this is also a requirement of the Household Recycling Charter Code of Practice.

Disruptions to services can happen at any time, for reasons including:

- Severe weather causing hazardous conditions for vehicles and collection crews or blocking access to certain roads or areas (e.g. snow, ice or flooding)
- Road accidents or road closures blocking access
- Vehicle breakdowns
- Seasonal public holidays
- Industrial action.

Councils should have plans in place to ensure that where disruptions do occur, citizens are given the best opportunity to access up to date information. It is important councils respond quickly and clearly to avoid public confusion and unnecessary presentation of containers which could cause further hazards. This guide features a suite of communications assets which can be used across digital communications channels such as Facebook, Twitter and on a local authority's own website alongside advice and templates for internal communications. Each asset features generic text which should be used to direct towards further information and guidance on what the public are being asked to do, this can then be easily updated in a live environment as the situation develops.

Further support

For further guidance, please contact the Zero Waste Scotland Communications Team:
support@recycleforscotland.com

During a period of disruption there are a number of internal and external audiences who need to be communicated with.

Internally in the council other departments and teams beyond the waste department will help to run amended services reducing the effects of the disruption, these include:

- Communications teams
- Collection crews
- Contact centre
- HWRC staff
- Elected members and senior managers

They all need access to current, clear information on what is happening, what has caused the disruption, how it is being dealt with and what the impact on the service is, as well as consistent information on what the public is being asked to do. Especially if senior managers are asked to comment in the media should the situation escalate.

To help support this dissemination of information we have developed a [briefing document template](#) which can be tailored and used to quickly get key information out to council staff. This should be populated and supported with Frequently Asked Questions that the contact centre can use to answer queries about bin collections from members of the public.

In tandem to this proactive communication direct to residents should take place with clear guidance on what residents should do with their waste in the interim until collections are back to normal.

To ensure the council provides consistent information on the disrupted services, members of the public need to be proactively communicated with to ensure they are aware of what is happening and how their services are affected.

Key information they need to know is if, and when missed collections will be fulfilled, what to do with any additional waste not collected and when services will return to normal. In particular collections for food waste, non recyclable waste and Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs) will be of concern for residents.

Channels available to get messages out to the public locally in a cost effective, fast time frame include but are not limited to:

- Social media channels (Facebook, Twitter etc)
- The council's own website
- Text messaging services the council may use to communicate with residents

- Bulletin and email lists/council news
- Local radio stations can also be used if disruption is severe or widespread
- Automated recorded message on call centre landing menu

Many estates and towns now have their own Facebook page which can be used to help communicate official information on changes or disruptions to services, there would likely be a strong response to any published information through this means so it's important to consider answering follow up queries or directing to further sources of information if using this method of communication. Additionally local councillors if equipped with accurate information can use their social media channels to help spread the word.

In any communication it is important to include the following:

- ✓ Define the disruption, who and what services are affected and what changes to usual schedules can be expected

- ✓ Explain why the disruption is preventing collections taking place i.e health and safety, risk of lorries becoming stuck causing more transport issues, roads impassable, vehicle broken down etc
- ✓ Inform citizens when services are expected to return to normal
- ✓ Advise where the most up-to-date information can be found and direct to it
- ✓ Encourage citizens to speak to neighbours and friends to spread the message further

We have developed a suite of images and assets you can use on your digital channels to raise awareness of the disruption to recycling and waste services and direct the public towards further information >>>

Digital communications assets

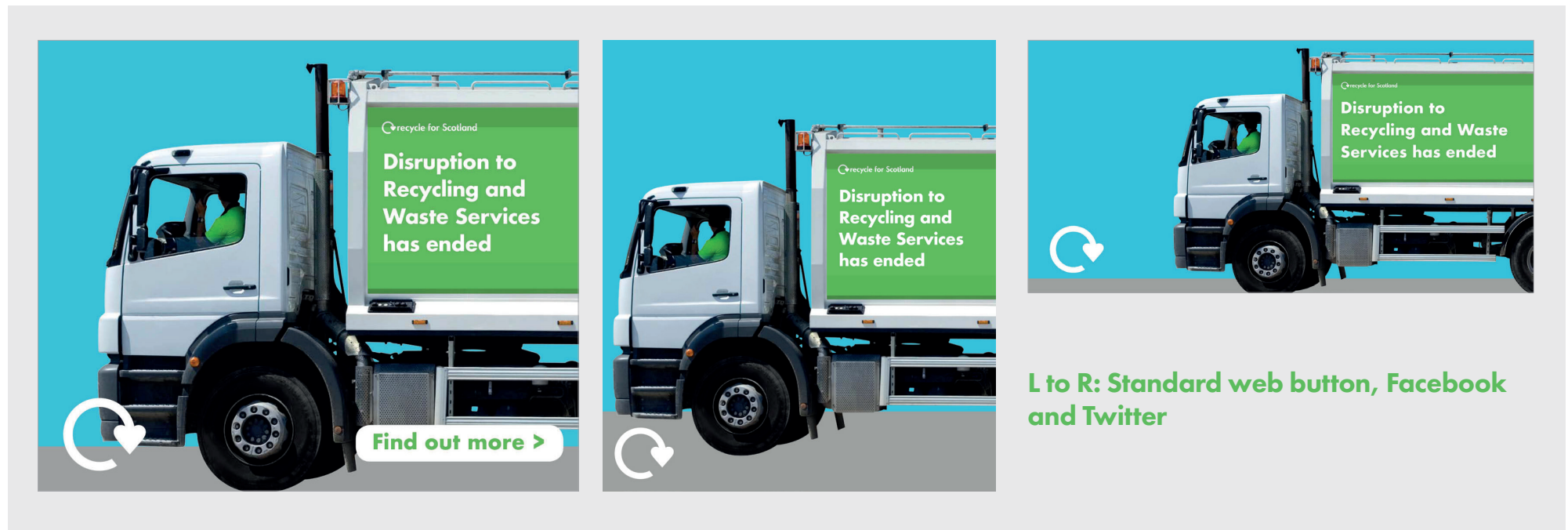
These are generic assets available across a range of sizes for different platforms.



L to R: Standard web button, Facebook and Twitter

Digital communications assets

These are generic assets available across a range of sizes for different platforms.



Digital communications assets

These assets have been designed to be used for specific purposes such as flooding, snow and wind affecting services. The seasonal image can also be used should your collections change over the festive period and you need to communicate this.

Each asset is available for Facebook, Twitter, and as a standard sized web button.

Recycling and Waste Collections are currently affected



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L to R clockwise: Standard web button, Facebook and Twitter

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Disruption to Recycling and Waste Services has ended



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Disruption to Recycling and Waste Services has ended



Disruption to Recycling and Waste Services has ended



L to R clockwise: Standard web button, Facebook and Twitter

Here are a number of assets which can be used to direct people to a webpage detailing service changes and messaging to the public around actions they need to take to have their bins collected.

R to L clockwise: Twitter, Facebook and standard web buttons

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R to L clockwise: Twitter, Facebook and standard web buttons



Ongoing communications updates

It is important to update the information publicised about the affected waste and recycling services and any amended schedules or collections to ensure the public know when the disruption has ended or if the situation worsens as with occasional bad weather. In addition to this if a major incident has meant that a significant number of collections and households have been affected it will be important to demonstrate to the public that work is being done to resolve the situation as soon as possible and detail ongoing work as well as the challenges being faced.

If an entire collection cycle is missed for a particular stream and this means bins have been on street for a long time, it's important to try and get the message out that these bins shouldn't be presented and that they cause access issues when left on pavements.

Lower participation?

As there may have been confusion over when and where bins should have been presented participation and capture rates for the following cycles may be lower than expected. Therefore it is important to communicate to the public that everything is back to normal and they should continue to use their recycling service to its full extent again. Furthermore if industrial action has taken place and affected a few parts of the service and multiple collections, public confidence could be very low and much more intensive re-engagement is needed to get people participating again.

You can utilise the [Annual Campaigns toolkit](#) and resources to re-engage your residents on recycling more generally following service disruption ending and collections back to normal pattern.

Additional waste?

Some households may have missed entire collection cycles and as such have additional waste which needs dealt with. Your communications need to explain to householders what they are advised to do in this circumstance.



A Zero Waste Scotland initiative
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**If you can't find what you are looking for
in this document, please get in touch at
support@recycleforScotland.com**