



# Swansea #InTheLoop

Recycling on-the-go campaign

Impact Report



# The issue

In our busy modern lives, we are increasingly eating and drinking on-the-go.

5.5 billion plastic bottles



2.3 billion cans



1.4 billion glass bottles



2.9 billion coffee cups



go to waste every year in the UK, despite being easily recyclable.

## Why don't they get recycled?



Less than half of local authorities provide on-the-go recycling facilities, partly due to the high maintenance and infrastructure costs.



1/3 of us are unsure about what can and can't be recycled.

This is due to a lack of consistency in branding, signage and the different types of waste collected across the country.



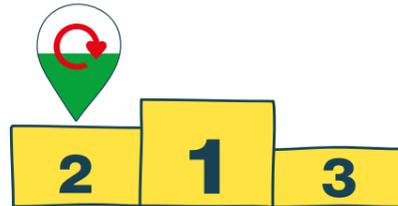
When recycling bins are in place, they get contaminated with food, liquids and things that can't be recycled.

This can cause whole truckloads of recycling to get rejected at the recycling plant.

# The context in Swansea

**1** Wales is a **leader** in **household recycling**, and has the **ambition** to become the **world's leader**<sup>1</sup>.

In Europe

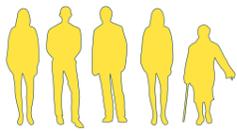


**2** Wales has **strict, ambitious targets** around **recycling**. Swansea residents face **£100 fines** if they **fail to recycle** at home.

**3** Survey respondents reported their recycling behaviours as...

**excellent at home**

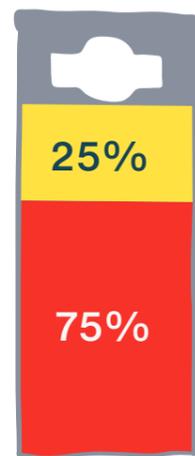
**poor on-the-go**



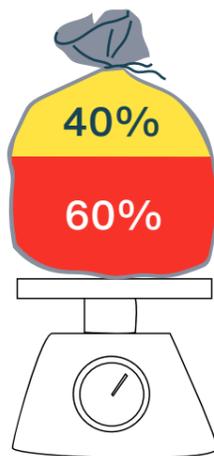
**4** Swansea city centre had **86 mixed recycling bins** in place **before the campaign**. But **3 out of 5** people surveyed did **not recall seeing them**.



**5** **Contamination** vs **target materials** before the campaign:



By volume



By weight

# The challenge

*How do we get more people in Swansea to recycle correctly on-the-go?*

# Our ambitions

Establish a cost-effective system for recycling on-the-go.



Encourage the correct use of new bins and foster a recycling culture.



Capture a large volume of high-quality materials for recycling.



Build a campaign model that can be replicated in other locations.



Leave a lasting legacy so the system remains in place after the campaign.



# A collective success

A problem of this scale requires an **ambitious, industry-wide collaborative solution**. Campaign achievements are collective and the result of a **true collaboration**.

The campaign relied on local partners – their **local expertise and network**, as well as their **commitment** to the **success of the campaign**.



“ Working in partnership with Hubbub, the Environment Centre and other partners has allowed us to pool our expertise and resources, explore new ways of thinking and reach a wider audience which has been integral to the success of the campaign. ”

Thomas Williams, Waste Minimisation Development Manager,  
Swansea City Council

“ The Environment Centre is always interested in projects that help us lead a more sustainable lifestyle, so we were keen to be part of the #InTheLoop partnership. The project was well received by the public and demonstrated real improvements in recycling rates. We are pleased that the trial and lessons learnt in Swansea will contribute to the development of a blueprint for other local authorities to benefit from. It has been rewarding to be part of such a positive and collaborative project. ”

Rhian Corcoran, Environment Centre Manager and  
Delivery Lead for Swansea #InTheLoop



# A unique funding coalition

## Funding

Funding came from a coalition of **16 organisations**, including the largest on-the-go retailers and brands in the industry.



This consortium is a best practice example of **competing organisations working together** constructively and partnering to fund a campaign to tackle an issue that related to all of them. It demonstrated the willingness of the food and drinks industry to proactively **take responsibility** for ensuring the products they produce are **recycled at end of life**.

Joining forces to test **new on-street recycling infrastructure, behaviour change techniques** and **recycling messages** to consumers meant so much more could be achieved in Swansea.

Campaign elements did not feature any partners logos.

Together, we ran a **6-month behaviour change campaign** from September 2019. We aimed to **help Swansea residents** to become both **able** and **willing** to **recycle when out and about**.

“ We are absolutely thrilled to see that the legacy of #LeedsByExample extends far beyond the improvements made to that one city. The #InTheLoop movement that is kicking off in Swansea and Edinburgh is testament to the power of collaboration by major producers and stakeholders. ”

James Piper, CEO at Ecosurety

“ Our long-standing partnership with Hubbub and the success of ‘In the Loop’ is yet further evidence that when it comes to driving meaningful change, collaboration is key. We’re proud of the impact the campaign has had and hope that by sharing our learnings we can encourage other communities to put in place measures that make recycling even easier. ”

As an industry we have both a responsibility and an opportunity to drive positive behaviour change. Only then can we become truly circular and drive forward our ambition to reach 100% sustainable plastic packaging by 2030.

Michelle Norman, Director of External Affairs and Sustainability at Lucozade Ribena Suntory

“ Our vision is that none of our packaging, including plastics, ends up in landfill nor in oceans, lakes or rivers. To enable this, Nestlé is taking an active role in the development of well-designed and functioning collection, sorting and recycling schemes across the countries where we operate. InTheLoop is a great example of how businesses are collaborating in Edinburgh and Swansea to improve ‘on-the-go’ recycling facilities, which is a key part in finding scalable solutions to address this challenge. ”

Alison Bramfitt, Group Packaging Manager at Nestle

# Our greatest achievements

## A lasting legacy of easy to use colourful bins

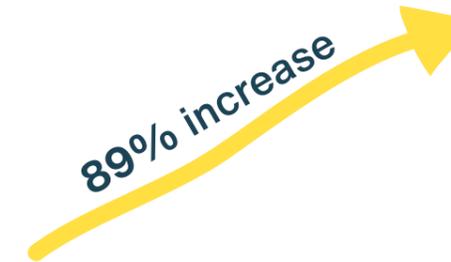


We introduced...  
**119** bright and colourful bins and coffee cup recycling for the first time in Wales.

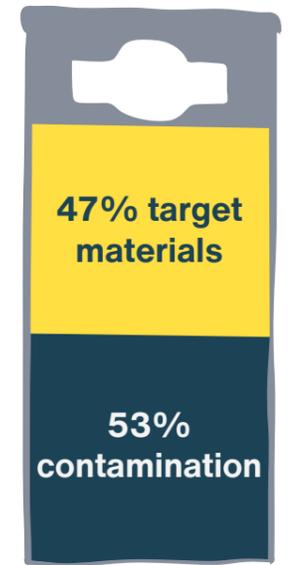


## We've improved the quality of recycling collected (by volume)

Campaign start



Campaign end



## We've increased the amount of target materials collected

**75,000**  
plastic bottles

**12,000**  
glass bottles

**40,000**  
cans

**20,000**  
coffee cups



**147,000** items put back #InTheLoop!

## We led a diverse and impactful communications campaign



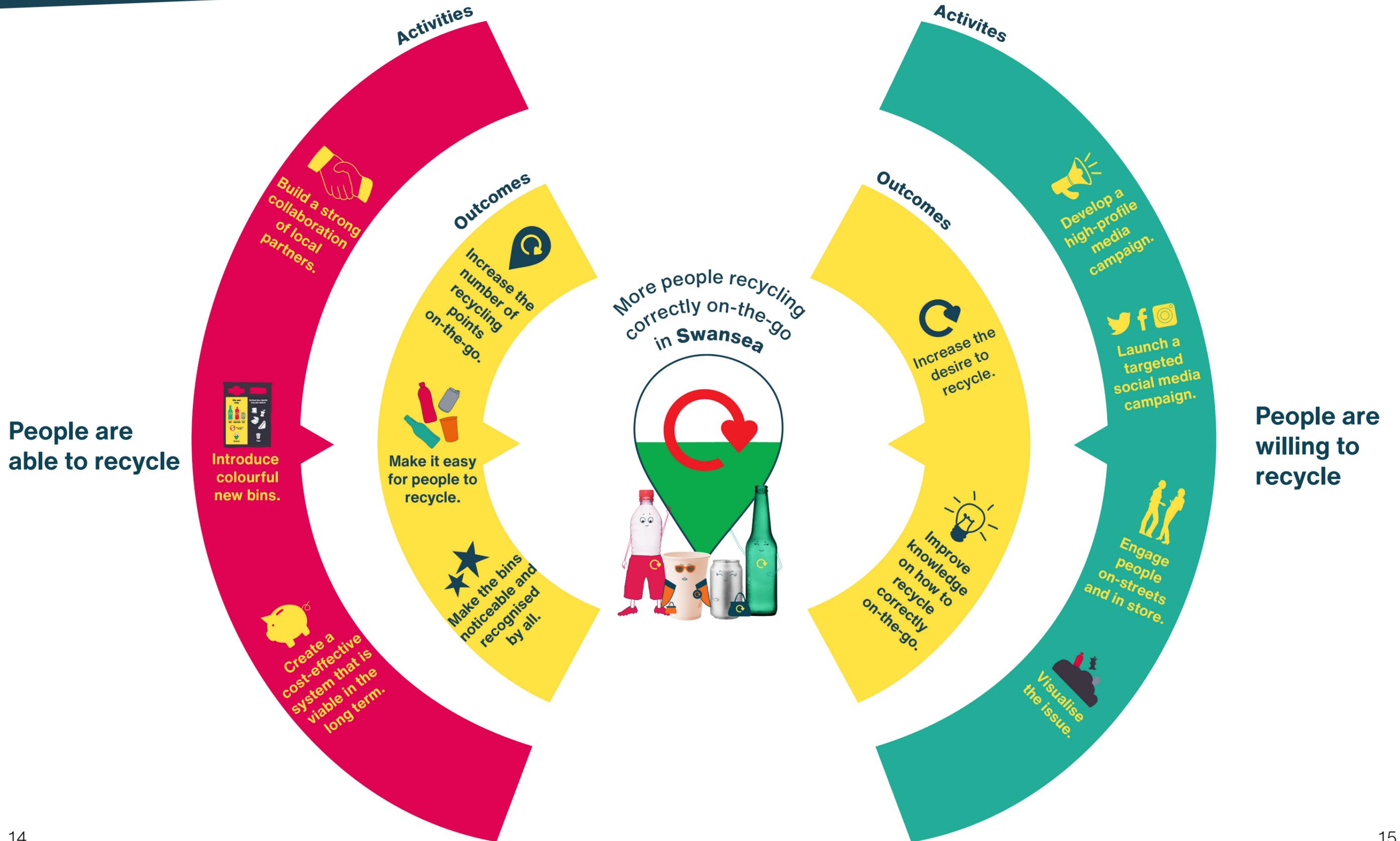
**12 million**  
opportunities to see

**900,000**  
impressions on social media

**4,000**  
people engaged at events

**100+**  
businesses on board

# Our behaviour change model



# People became able to recycle

*because we improved the system,  
making it easy for them to do the right thing.*

# Introducing colourful new bins

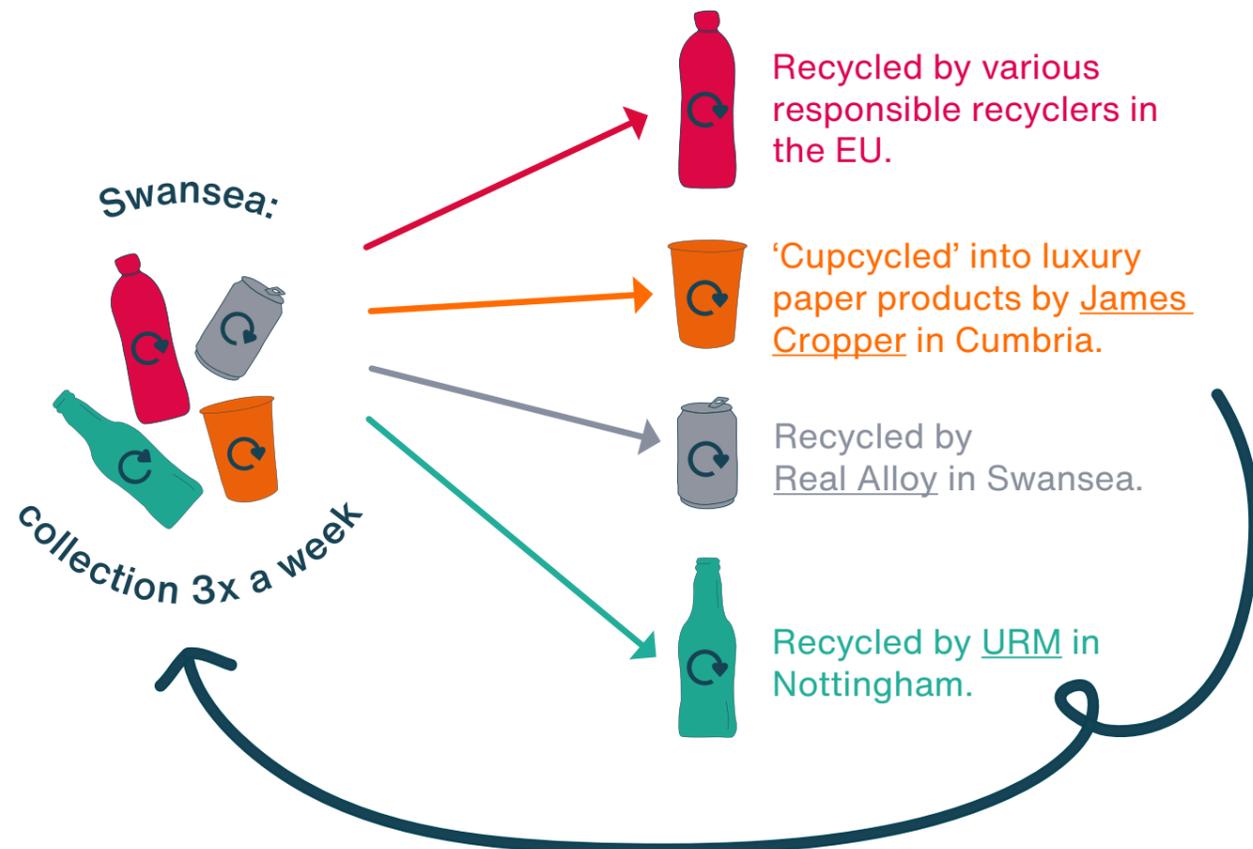
The Swansea #InTheLoop campaign introduced or improved 119 recycling points:

- 105 yellow plastic bottles, cans and glass recycling bins. 19 of these were brand new bins
- 14 brand new orange coffee cup recycling bins

We made the most of recycling facilities by reskinning 86 existing on-street bins to take part in the trial. We rebranded them with bright colours and consistent signage that grabbed the public's attention, making sure they noticed the bins and recycled the right materials.

Our post-campaign survey shows that 69% of locals had seen the new bins.

## Putting materials back #InTheLoop



“ It was great to see some action taken in the city centre. So many of us have takeaway food and drink, the bins are really noticeable now and a good reminder to recycle. ”

Collaborator at Gower College



“ The bins are really easy to identify and it's easy to see what goes where. ”

Sian, Swansea resident



“ The new bins are big and bright and have bold stickers. They are eye-catching. I do think that more emphasis needs to be on the amount of waste we produce, and about how recycling is a last resort before landfill. Saying that, any steps we do take that stops waste going to landfill is a positive thing. ”

Isabel, #InTheLoop volunteer

# More quantity, better quality

The campaign **achieved one of its key aims**: for the Swansea City Council to be **satisfied** with the **quality of the recycling materials collected**.

**Contamination rates** have **dropped** as a **result of the campaign**, and have stabilised at an **acceptable level**, which was not the case before.

Since the beginning of the campaign, we estimate<sup>1</sup> having collected:



“ We’ve been very pleased with the clear increase in the quality of materials collected since the introduction of the new signage and wider communications campaign. Lower contamination levels and a higher capture rate mean more packaging waste is being recycled on-the-go than ever before. This is great news and will help ensure Swansea continues to be #InTheLoop for many years to come. ”

Thomas Williams, Waste Minimisation Development Manager, Swansea City Council

\*Based on estimates from our measurement and evaluation partner Keep Wales Tidy.

A certain degree of contamination is inevitable when collecting recycling. Especially on-the-go, where **people spend an average of less than two seconds** making a decision on how to dispose of their waste.

However, **waste audits**<sup>2</sup>, performed on a **monthly basis** on a selection of recycling bins, indicate a **positive trend** in the **quality of the materials** collected for recycling. This demonstrates that the public used the recycling bins better and better as time went on.

## We observed:



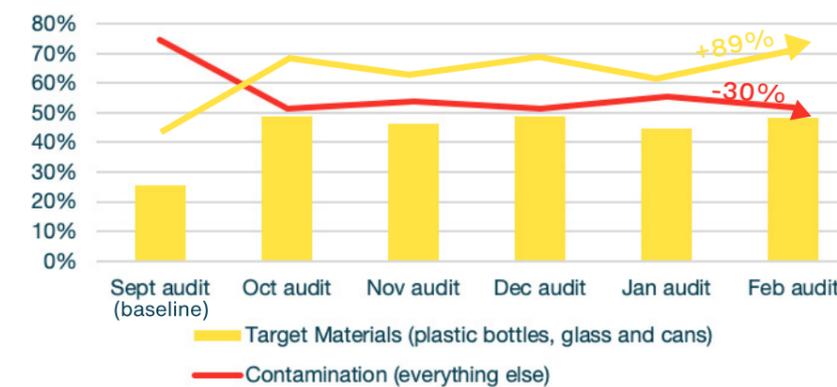
A **30% decrease** in **contamination of recycling bins** (anything that shouldn't be there, e.g. plastic wrappers).



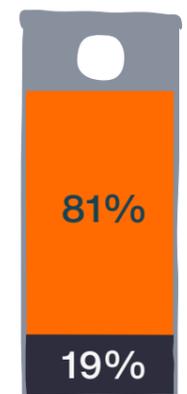
A **89% increase** in collection rates of **target materials** (the things we're aiming to collect).



A **39% decrease** in **contamination of coffee cups bins**, from their introduction to the end of the campaign.



Evolution of the quality of target materials collected (in volume)



Final waste audit (volume):  
 • Coffee Cups  
 • Contamination

# Building a network of local partners

The success of the Swansea #InTheLoop campaign is the result of a true collaborative effort:

- **100 local organisations** promoted and amplified the campaign's messages in their stores or online. These organisations helped to create a **culture of recycling** in Swansea.
- **Iconic central locations** introduced new recycling systems for the first time and **saved valuable materials** from going to waste.



“ Our traders are really keen to recycle, but we were not sure how well public recycling bins would be used here in the Market. I have to say it has been a real success. The bins are used well with the right waste generally being put in the right bins. We are now looking at extending the options for our traders to recycle plastics too. ”

John Burns, Swansea Market Advisor



“ We all have a responsibility to care for the environment, which is why at TfW, we're embedding sustainable development into the heart of everything we do. ”

We were excited to get involved in the #InTheLoop campaign from the start, as it was the perfect opportunity to trial cups recycling at Swansea railway station.

We're looking forward to seeing the results of the trial and if successful, hope to roll-out cups recycling bins to more of our stations. ”

Sophie Duggan, Transport for Wales

# **People became willing to recycle**

*because we engaged the public through a creative  
and far-reaching communications campaign.*

# A high-profile communications campaign

## Press and media coverage

The campaign received **18 items of media coverage** to date, **all positive**.

- Broadcast coverage including an interview of local partners on **ITV Wales News at Six** and **The Wave Radio**.
- **South Wales Evening Post** ran four pieces about the announcement to businesses, the launch, coffee cup recycling and results to date.
- Trade coverage included **Business News Wales**, **Edie.net** and **British Plastics & Rubber**.

Opportunity to see over **12 million!**

You can read our comprehensive media report [here](#).

## Social media campaign

The social media campaign was driven by the combined efforts from **Swansea council**, the **Environment Centre** and **Hubbub**. The posts were in both **English** and **Welsh** for maximum reach.

A further **31 local organisations** helped **amplify** the campaign messages online, via their own communication channels – social media, newsletter, etc.

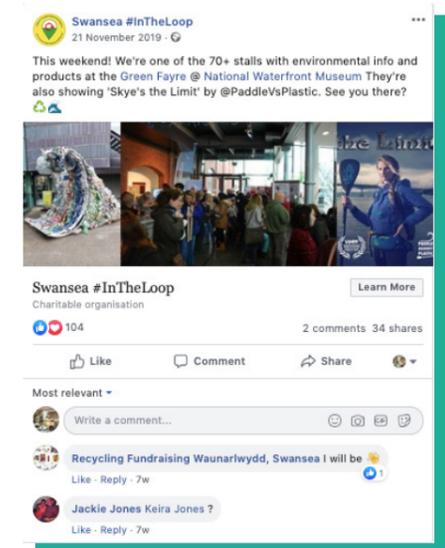
Our survey shows the campaign **doubled the amount of people under 30** using **on-street recycling** facilities to dispose of their **cans**. Young people were a **key target audience** as they consume the most on-the-go.

To ensure the consistency of our branding and messaging, all visual assets and communication guidelines were stored on a shared Dropbox account for local amplifiers to access and use.

The #InTheLoop hashtag reached **910,000** people, with **1.5 million** timeline deliveries on Twitter in launch week<sup>3</sup>.

Our **locally targeted Facebook** and **Instagram adverts** produced more than **540,000** impressions over the course of the campaign.

A local Swansea #InTheLoop Facebook group gained **120 followers** and reached **85,000** people through boosted posts.



# In person engagement

## Local events

As well as the campaign having a **strong online and media presence**, **events and workshops** also proved to be **good engagement tools to change recycling behaviours**.

Thanks to our local delivery partner, Swansea #InTheLoop **benefitted from the support of volunteers** who helped **run public engagement sessions** on the streets of Swansea.

Events attended included:

- Lush in-store charity event
- Rotary Club annual conference
- A stall at the Vegan market
- A stall at the Green Fayre
- Workshops at the Environment Centre
- St. David's Student Roost Accommodation
- A stall at the Swansea University Freshers Week

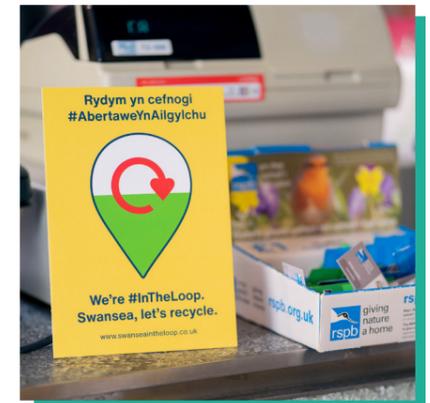
4,000+  
people  
engaged!

Gordon Binnit is a bubble blowing, burping bin! He collects plastic bottles and cans and is a great ally for engagement.



## Local stores and shops

We distributed **1,900+** communication materials to a total of **65 local stores and shops** across the **city centre**.



## Local advertising

### City centre screens

Partnering with the city council allowed us to benefit from **in-kind support** throughout the campaign. This included the **access to screens** located in **key central locations** in Swansea to display our campaign messages.

This proved to be a **cost-effective way** to **widen our reach** and **increase the number of times** locals were **nudged to recycle on-the-go**.

### Local magazine

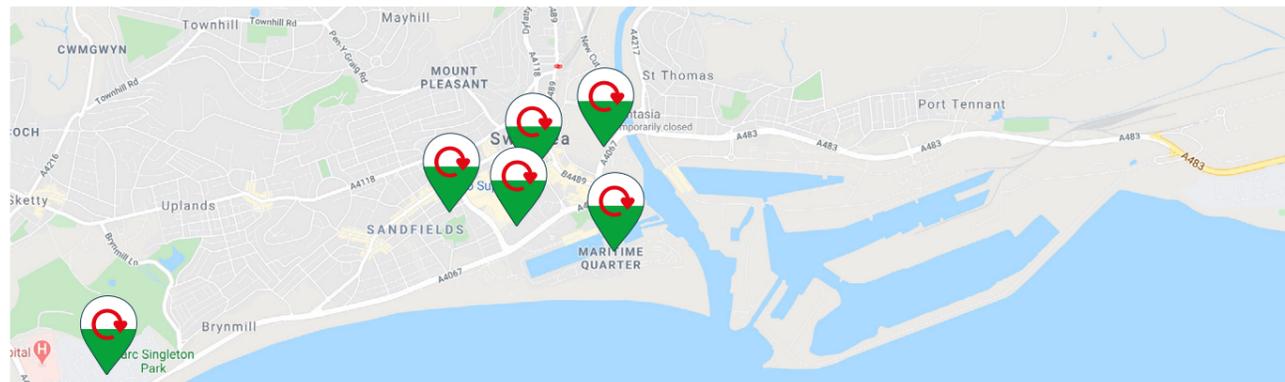
The Swansea #InTheLoop campaign was featured **3 times** in **What's On**, a local magazine read by locals in the Swansea bay area.

# Making waves

Designed and built by local eco-artist Wren Miller, The Wave is a **striking installation** that shows the amount of **easily recyclable on-the-go materials** that **go to waste every 20 seconds** in the UK. It helped visualise the scale of the issue in the UK and acted as a **powerful call to action**. It also made a **great media hook**, even capturing attention outside of Swansea.

The Wave toured around Swansea, making a splash in a large variety of iconic Swansea locations:

- Oxford Street and Castle Square
- Swansea University, Singleton Campus (Fresher's Fayre Week)
- Quadrant Shopping Centre
- Swansea Market
- Waterfront Museum

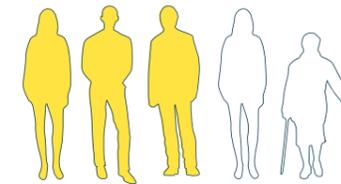


The Wave is scheduled to **continue to tour** across **Swansea** and **Wales** until May 2020. Beyond that date, if no permanent home is found, it will be **dismantled sustainably** with **all materials getting recycled** and **going back #InTheLoop**.

## Based on our post-campaign survey

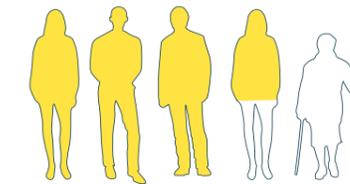
*"I've seen the wave!"*

59% of locals



*"It made me reconsider my recycling habits"*

70% of those who had seen The Wave



*(based on the population of Swansea)*

During the **6 months** of the campaign, Swansea collected enough recycling to build the equivalent of **96 Swansea Waves**.

That's a Wave every **36 hours!**



**Thank you Swansea, you've bin great!**

**“** From the moment it was unveiled in Castle Square in Swansea, I could immediately see both the interest of the public in the Wave, and how powerful it was in igniting discussions. The presence of the Wave and new bins in Swansea led to a positive change in attitudes towards on-the-go recyclable materials. **”**

Wren Miller, local eco-artist behind The Wave



# Our legacy

# Our main conclusions

Swansea #InTheLoop campaign confirms and strengthens the learnings and main conclusion from its predecessor, the #LeedsByExample campaign.



**Collaboration is key** to raising awareness when introducing recycling.



**Make recycling simple, visual and fun.** The public responds well to playfulness, bold messaging and interventions that visualise the issue.



**Clear, simple and consistent communications** are crucial to make people less confused about recycling.



**Quality of recycling** varies and is influenced by bin positioning, weather and season.



**Cup collections are important** but need scale and clear messaging to be effective.



**Thorough, regular and consistent monitoring** is important.



**Build a legacy** and ensure the system remains in place in the long term.



# What happens next?

One of the key objectives of the trial was to ensure its **long-term viability**. This was achieved by building a productive relationship with two key campaign partners.

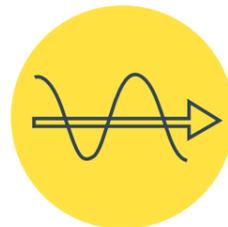
- **The Swansea city council**, to whom we demonstrated the scheme's worth, is now taking full ownership of the campaign's assets, infrastructure and learnings.
- **The Environment Centre**, our delivery partner, have successfully applied to a [Welsh Government funding programme](#) to continue running activities on-the-ground and amplifying on-the-go messages. Allowing them to also begin their broader aim, of strengthening community involvement in reuse, repair and enhanced recycling in Swansea.

## Legacy plans include:



### Bin infrastructure

All the recycling bins are now the property of the Swansea city council. Bin vinyls will need to be replaced in a couple of years.



### Monitoring

Swansea city council will continue to monitor the bins performance with regular waste audits



### Extension

Swansea Council will explore the idea of scaling up the campaign area to additional streets in a couple of years.



### Coffee cups

Collections will stay in place indefinitely. Swansea Council will work in collaboration with the Environment Centre to expand the number of points of collections across the city. Both organisations will continue to promote messaging around coffee cups recycling, in a way that also promotes the use of reusables.



### Communications

Swansea City Council and the Environment Centre will continue to put key messages on social media on a regular basis, keeping messaging simple and sharing photos of the bins. The ambition is to gradually extend the campaign's messaging from recycling to refill and reuse.



### Roll-out in other Welsh locations

Our hope is that the resources and learnings of the Swansea #InTheLoop campaign will facilitate other local authorities across Wales, of which some have already expressed an interest, to roll-out a similar recycling on-the-go scheme.

“ I am really pleased to see the positive outcomes of Swansea #InTheLoop, the increase in recycling rates and the raised awareness of Swansea residents on the importance of recycling. The campaign successfully captured the imagination of the public and secured the support of many of our local businesses. Swansea City Council will maintain and build on the scheme in the future. ”

Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure Management at Swansea City Council

# Our methodology

We measured impact through independent monitoring by Keep Wales Tidy to ensure the credibility of our results. These included:

- **Monthly waste audits**  
Providing robust and comparable data based on a monitoring of a representative sample of bin bags. Collating both weight and volume data, and focusing on the assessment of the quality (contamination rate vs target materials) and quantity of the waste collected.
- **Pre and post campaign public surveys**  
Gauging public awareness, perception and behaviour related to recycling before the campaign, asking the same questions afterwards and monitoring the change. Tracking the amount of people reached and engaged, the levels of awareness of the campaign, as well as the impact of the project in shifting recycling awareness, values and behaviour.

We also worked closely with the Environment Centre and other local organisations throughout to gain on-the-ground insights, enabling us to **adapt our strategy, communications and interventions in real time**. This feedback loop helped us learn fast and fail cheap.

## Notes and references

### 1 Waste quantity

The number of materials collected stated in this document are conservative estimates and is likely to be higher.

### 2 Waste quality

A certain degree of contamination is inevitable when collection recycling. This is especially true of on-the-go recycling where there is more opportunity for mistakes to be made. The important question is whether the recycling plant are satisfied with the quality of the recyclate they receive, which is the case in Swansea as a result of the campaign.

### 3 Online reach and following

It proved difficult to measure #InTheLoop hashtag reach beyond the launch week push due to the widespread use of the hashtag by other parties. The decision has been taken to only measure the hashtag reach during the week of the campaign launch, and across a limited amount of channels. Here again, the number stated is a conservative estimate.

# Our ambitions for recycling on-the-go

After **Leeds**, **Swansea** is the **second city** #InTheLoop in the UK, with **Edinburgh** being our **third city** and with more locations already in the pipeline. But this is only the beginning...

The **combined learnings** of testing how to implement an **effective** on-the-go recycling campaign in **different settings**, are helping to **build a model** that can be **replicated almost anywhere**.

Our ambition is to **integrate** #InTheLoop in **DEFRA's Waste and Resources strategy**, **outreach to the Welsh government** and **link the scheme to the policy agenda**. Our aim is to help to **transform the national approach** to recycling on-the-go.

Ultimately, recycling is only a part of the jigsaw in fixing the waste problem. Moving towards a more **circular economy**, #InTheLoop aims to encourage both **recycling and reuse**. We are delighted that local partners in Swansea have used the campaign as a springboard to **secure more funding** and **broaden out the messages towards reuse**.



# Further resources

## About the Swansea #InTheLoop campaign

[Website](#)

[Campaign results infographic](#)

## About other #InTheLoop campaigns across the UK

[#LeedsByExample impact report](#) and [executive summary](#)

[Edinburgh #InTheLoop impact report](#)

## About recycling on-the-go

[Key principles for success](#)

## Get in touch

[Hubbub project team](#)



Feed me empty plastic  
and cans, that's all.

