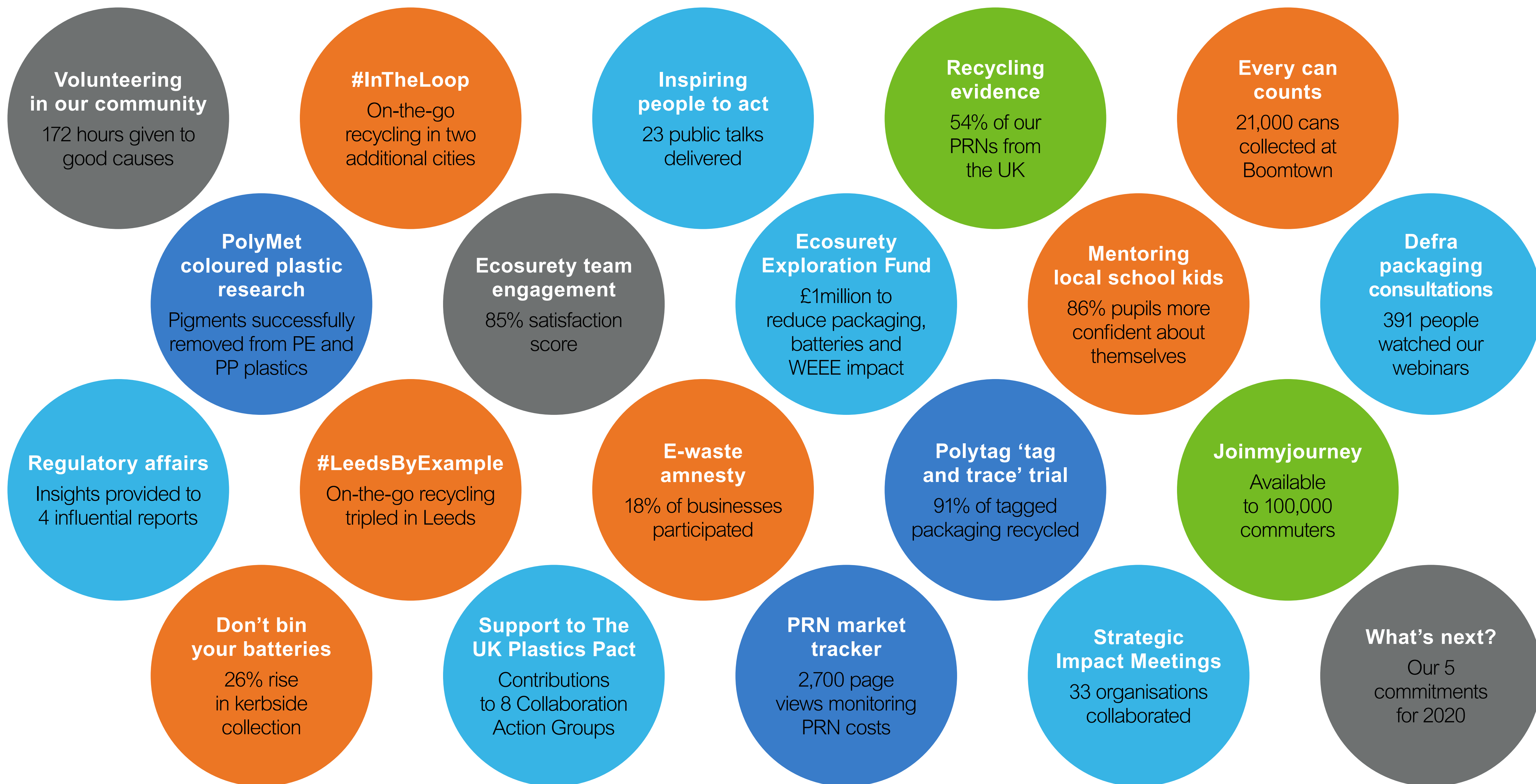


Impact report

2019



Impact overview 2019



Introduction

The writing of any report demands of its authors a level of reflection and scrutiny. Writing this, Ecosurety's 2019 impact report, has been no exception. As a compliance scheme dedicated to driving forward change in the UK recycling and waste sector, it is our impact report that shows us that we're on the right track and that we're going above and beyond the compliance obligations we secure for our members.

As this, our third impact report, has been pulled together, I have been struck by the gathering momentum for positive change in the UK (and indeed across the globe) during 2019. From the Global Climate Strike movement to the declaration of Net Zero commitments from UK businesses and governments, there is a new urgency in the call for environmental action.

A similar drive for reform has taken hold in the waste and recycling sector. Fears of reduced supply in 2019 led PRN prices to increase dramatically. While these price spikes undoubtedly affected every obligated producer across the UK, they also reinforced what Ecosurety has long been calling for; a transformation of the UK's waste and recycling system into a system that is fully transparent for all.

Happily, reform is underway. In 2019, the Government published a series of consultations to improve the packaging producer responsibility system in the UK. As you will read in the pages that follow, we've worked closely with our members to respond to these consultations and will continue to advise and scrutinise Government proposals so the fairest and most transparent EPR system is built in the future.

Alongside the changes wrought in the recycling sector over the last 12 months, Ecosurety has grown in size, and this has increased our capacity to make a positive difference



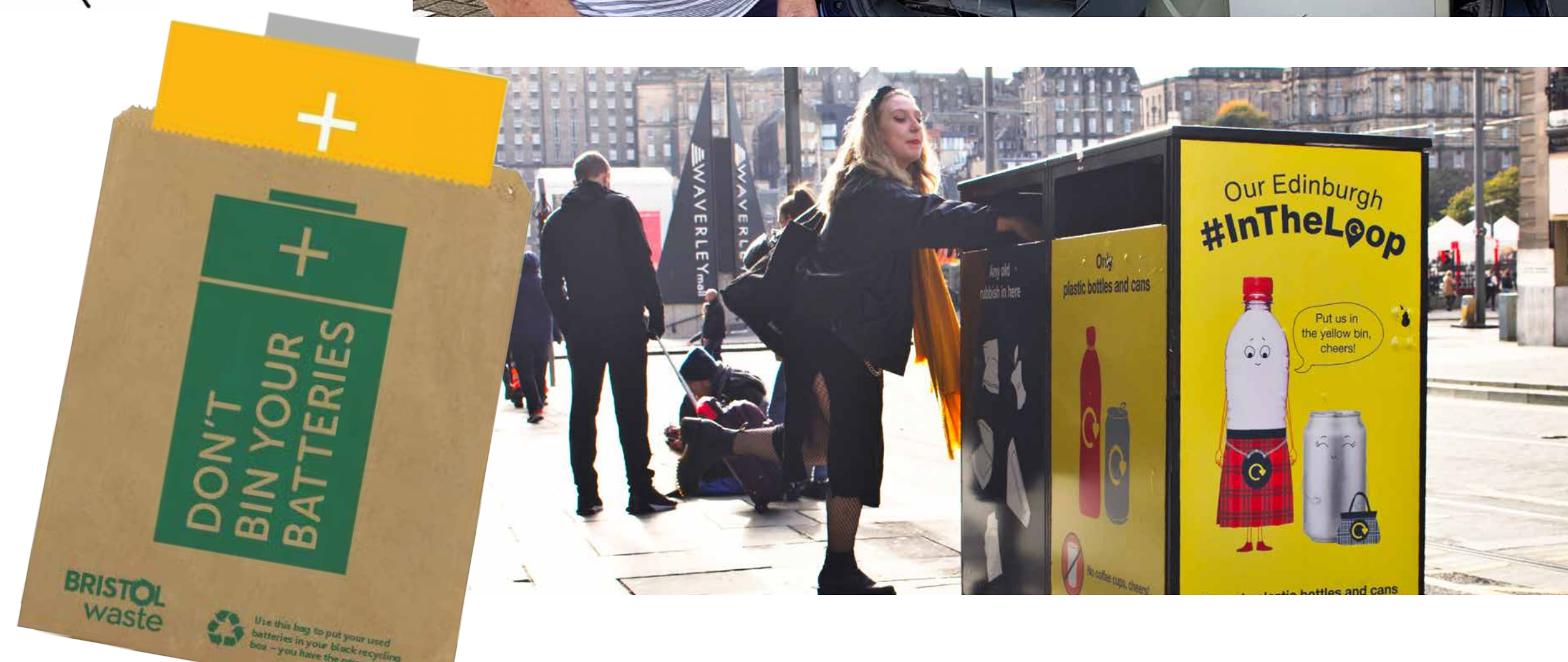
beyond compliance. We've honoured our longstanding commitment to support innovation, infrastructure, collaboration and education in the recycling and waste sector. 2019 has seen some fantastic awareness campaigns and initiatives, including the launch of our first ever Ecosurety Exploration Fund. By ring-fencing £1million for projects tackling the negative impact of waste on the environment over the next three years, we hope the Ecosurety Exploration Fund will become a vital springboard for innovation and research initiatives in the UK. With our support and that of our partners and members, we will use the Exploration Fund to support the growth of the UK waste and recycling sector.

We don't always get things right, however. During 2019 we have taken risks, and there have been occasions when we've been forced to step back and reconsider whether we need to adapt or adjust. We will take these valuable lessons with us as we approach 2020.

This impact report isn't meant to be a glowing account of the seismic changes that we've triggered, but rather, an honest account of our journey, our commitments and our collective energy. We hope you find it informative and motivating. If you'd like to join us on this journey, we'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

James Piper





#LeedsByExample

Extended on-the-go recycling trial reveals key findings, insights and recommendations

Whilst kerbside recycling is available to most of the UK population, on-the-go recycling facilities are most certainly not. Only 42% of local authorities offer some form of on-street recycling facility¹.

Compounding this low coverage is the fact that the material collected outside the home is often so contaminated and of such poor quality that it cannot be recycled. Instead it is commonly incinerated or landfilled, unbeknown to the consumer who disposed of their plastic bottle in the correct manner on the way to work.

This is a problem of gigantic proportions. In the UK we consume a staggering thirteen billion single-use plastic bottles, nine billion cans² and nearly three billion coffee cups a year³. If those numbers aren't sobering enough, the quantity of food and drink consumed on-the-go continues to increase year-on-year.

A problem of this scale requires an ambitious, industry-wide collaborative solution. This is why Ecosurety worked with environmental charity Hubbub to launch an unprecedented campaign to test various approaches that could improve on-the-go recycling in the city of Leeds. This campaign brings together an impressive spectrum of over 30 stakeholders including major brands, producers and recyclers through to industry associations, local action groups and the local authority.

¹ **Tightening budgets preventing councils from delivering 'on the go' recycling collections, Resource**

² **Consultation on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Page 5 , Defra**

³ **LeedsByExample impact report 2019**

#LeedsByExample had three stated objectives:

1

Make a connection

Raise awareness of on-the-go packaging and inform the public and employees in Leeds City Centre of which items can be recycled on-the-go

2

Change behaviour

Nudge people to recycle their on-the-go packaging in the correct recycling bins

3

Make a transformation

Leave a lasting legacy of on-the-go recycling for Leeds City Centre whilst creating a collaboration of groups to tackle the issue, and to propose a new method for recycling on-the-go nationwide

#LeedsByExample launched in October 2018 and ran for an initial six-month period. Due to clear successes and identified potential improvements, a second phase extended the campaign to a full twelve months, enabling further insights to be gained and a more robust dataset of results for analysis.

The intention of the campaign was to share the key findings and recommendations so that proven best practice could be easily implemented by other towns and cities. A six-month report was officially released at a high-profile event at the House of Commons in London in May and the final 12-month report was released in December 2019.

“ The huge success of this ground-breaking initiative shows that not only is Leeds city centre growing and thriving, but that busy Leeds people are really keen to help the city respond to the climate emergency by doing their bit. The council will continue to explore new ways to help people recycle more items more easily, alongside promoting reuse and ways to reduce excess waste.”

Cllr Al Garthwaite,
Deputy Executive Member for
Environment and Active Lifestyles

How has on-the-go recycling improved?

Recycling facilities were carefully located, colour coded and branded with the identity of the campaign to improve performance indicators including bin contamination, the quantity of material collected and consumer behaviour.

Following the installation of new and reskinned recycling bins, recycling reward machines and coffee cup collection points in participating coffee shops, the number of people recycling whilst out-and-about in Leeds City Centre almost tripled from 17%⁴ to 49%, whilst the number of people recycling their coffee cup quadrupled to 53%, by the end of the trial⁵.

The key issue of contamination was also tackled through clear messaging on the bins and on-street advertising in the regional dialect, using phrases such as ‘Empty plastic and cans, nowt else’. Together with consistent, clear colour coding of bins according to the target material, contamination rates of 25% were achieved over second phase of trial.

Observations and surveys completed by the Ecosurety team, together with collection data analysis, provided key insights that enabled improvements to be made during the campaign and for conclusive trends to be identified. For example, the trial found that changing the colour and messaging of the bins had a significant impact on the amount of recycling collected – simply re-skinning a bin caused an immediate increase in target material from 42% to 57%.

Other valuable insights included changing to a round bin aperture reduced contamination

rates of the re-skinned bins to 17% from 30%; bins located in high-traffic areas where people tend to be in a rush had the worst contamination levels; and the quality of recycling reduced significantly during holiday or leisure periods when footfall rises, due to more people in the city centre who were not ‘regulars’.

Situating bins next to where people naturally wait, like bus stops and pedestrian crossings, were the top performing, as were those that were easily seen from a distance. This is because people had enough time to identify if a bin was the correct one to use, as the average time people spent in front of a bin was found to be less than two seconds.

When faced with a choice in a rush, the material would often be placed in the wrong bin, thus areas outside rail stations and at the bottom of stairs were the worst performing in terms of contamination. Ensuring recycling bins were not located next to general waste bins also helped to improve the quality of recycling, as busy people would often place their waste in a random bin when situated together, regardless of the material.

Whilst the campaign collected a huge number of coffee cups, it highlighted the degree of confusion over coffee cup recycling. 32% of people surveyed thought coffee cups should go in mixed recycling and 30% thought they



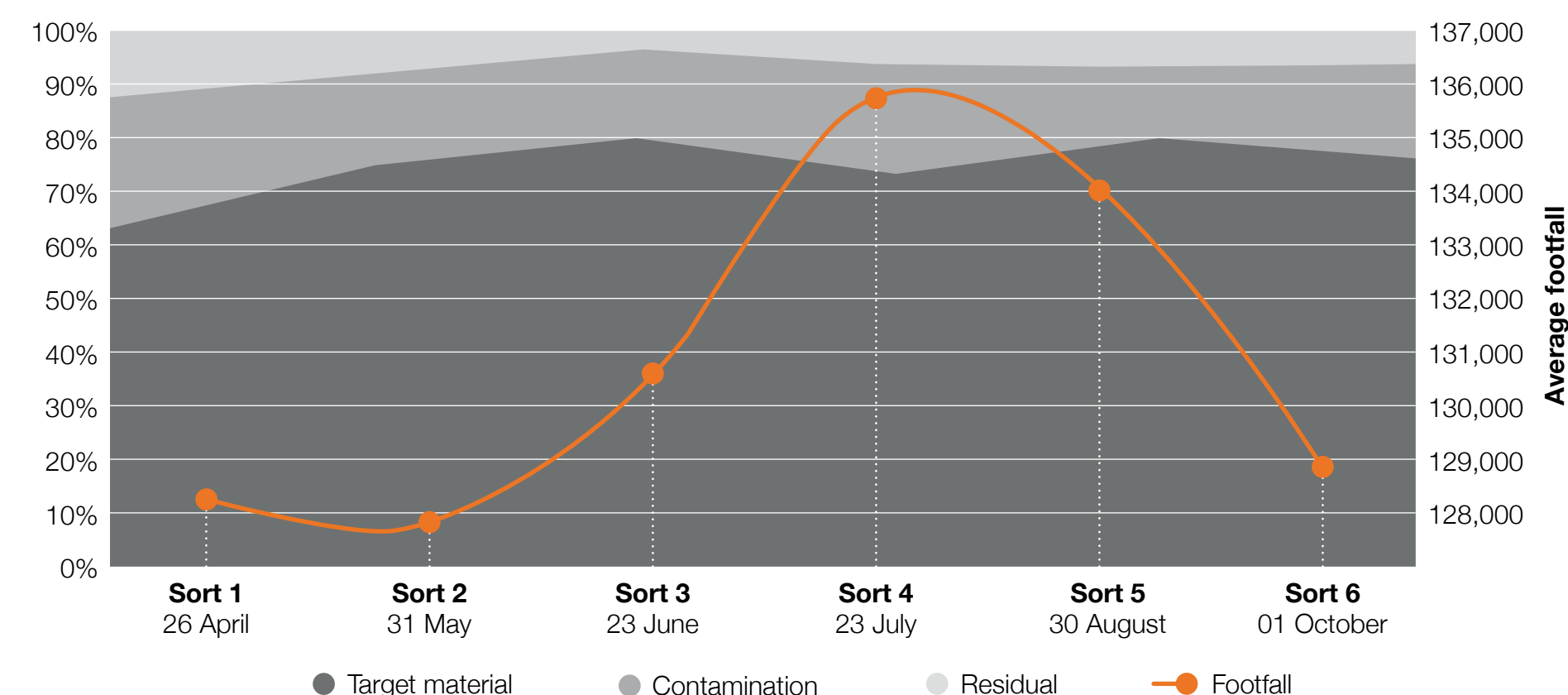
186 new recycling points and technology were installed in the square mile of Leeds City Centre leading to **1.2 million** coffee cups, **160,000** plastic bottles and **140,000** cans being recycle⁴

⁴ [#LeedsByExample impact report 2019, Hubbub](#)

All the collected plastic, cans and coffee cups were **recycled as locally as possible** in the north of England⁵

⁵ [#LeedsByExample impact report 2019, Hubbub](#)

Change in contamination rates by volume (litres) over time



Source: p30 of the #LeedsByExample Second Impact Report

should go in general waste – when in reality paper cups must be collected and recycled separately. Despite all major coffee shops and fast food outlets accepting any coffee cup for recycling as part of #LeedsByExample, it was found that the public were uncomfortable returning a cup to a different retailer than the one they bought it from.

Thankfully it was found that liquid contamination did not prove to be a problem for the collected cups, and contamination caused by plastic coffee cup lids was reduced to 10%, thanks to new bins where they could be separated at collection point.

Eight recycling reward machines were also trialed, collecting 31,700 items, more than 50% of which were cans. Rewards included money off vouchers for local outlets. Material quality was very high and intriguingly recycling reward machine usage appears to be driven by wanting to recycle over the reward itself, as less than 10% of rewards were redeemed and removing the rewards altogether did not affect their performance. Financial rewards were popular in student areas however, with 50% being redeemed.

Effective PR, social media, awareness installations and outreach teams also proved essential to spread the word to the population of Leeds, resulting in a reach of 18.8 million across social media channels, 255 pieces of news coverage and an overall opportunity to see or hear about the campaign of 173 million.

“ We have learned a huge amount from this trial and would like to thank the people of Leeds and our partners for their support. The information we’ve gathered will inform many similar programmes in the future and we hope this will have a huge impact on recycling on-the-go levels across the UK. The city is now leading by example when it comes to recycling.”

Gavin Ellis, Co-founder and Director of Hubbub

⁴ All figures on this page come from #LeedsByExample impact report 2019

⁵ Comparing survey results recorded in August 2018 and August 2019

Ensuring a lasting legacy

The #LeedsByExample campaign created a significant legacy. Leeds City Council and local partners decided to take ownership of the campaign at the end of the 12-month trial, including the new recycling infrastructure, and will continue making new improvements throughout the city to build on lessons that have already been learnt.

Crucially the council has decided to collaborate further with the academic researcher, Dr Elaine Kerrell, who analysed results from the original campaign to ensure continual improvement through analysis and data insights. The campaign has now gone far beyond on-the-go recycling, spawning new community activities focused on the climate emergency that includes the recently re-launched project website leedsbyexample.co.uk.

Realising that every town, city and region is different, Ecosurety and Hubbub have launched two new phases of the on-the-go recycling campaign in 2019, in the cities of Swansea and Edinburgh, albeit with a change of identity to #InTheLoop. This was to facilitate the development and roll-out of the on-the-go recycling campaign concept.



Click here
to download
the full 55 page
#LeedsByExample
12-month impact
report 2019



The intention of doing this went beyond simply implementing the best practice from Leeds in other locations. Instead the key learns and results from all three cities will ultimately combine to form a blueprint for on-the-go recycling across the UK.

If you would like to be involved in the legacy of #LeedsByExample, please do get in touch with our team.



Building on #LeedsByExample to improve on-the-go recycling in Swansea and Edinburgh



The city of Swansea had **some existing on-street recycling facilities** but they were poorly performing.

#InTheLoop
brought on-
street recycling
to Edinburgh
for the very
first time.

Following on from the success of the pioneering #LeedsByExample campaign that saw on-the-go recycling rates nearly triple in the city of Leeds – thanks to an unprecedented collaboration between major brands, producers, recyclers and a local authority – #InTheLoop aims to take the key learnings and successes and apply them in other key locations.

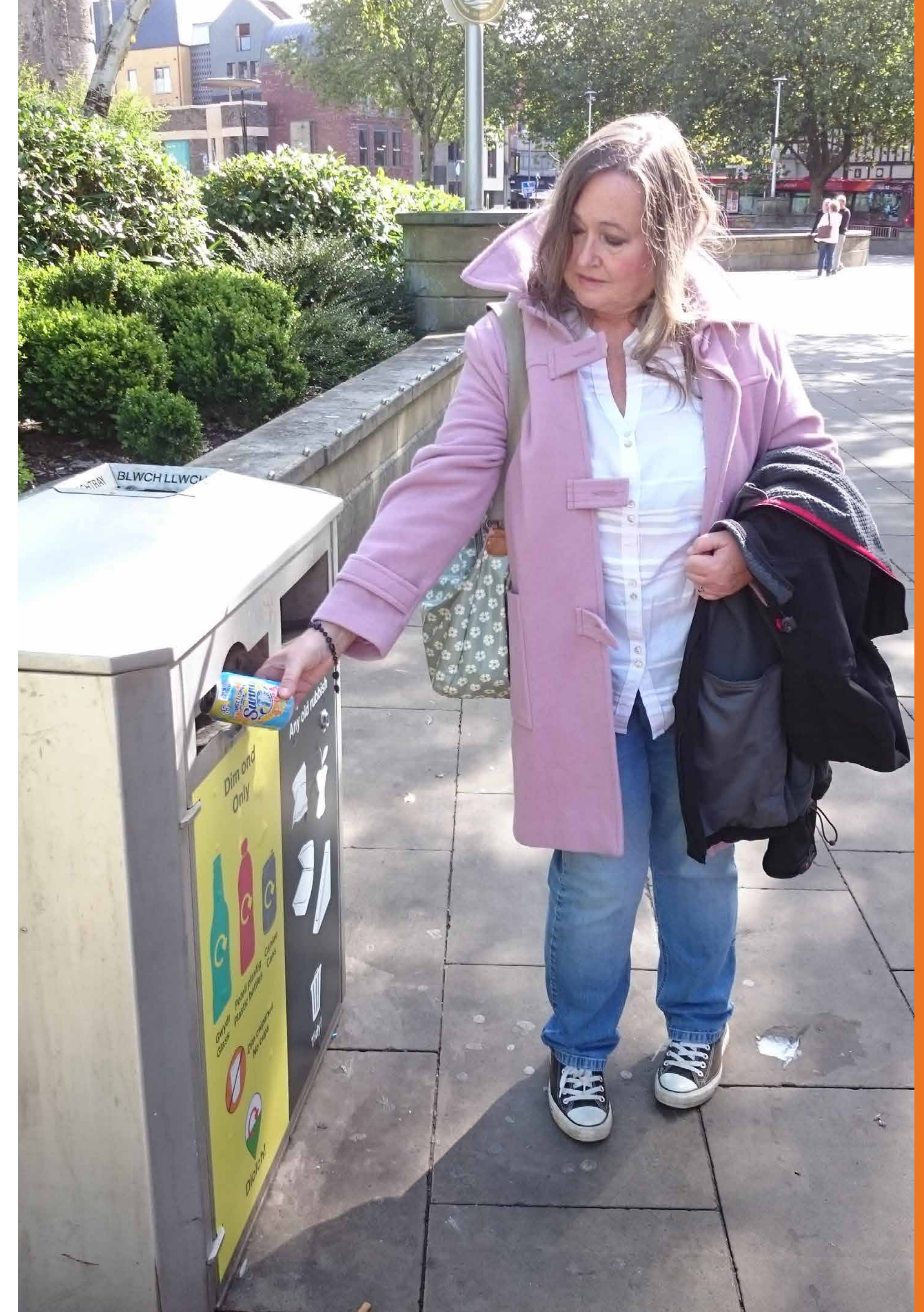
Part-funded by Ecosurety and managed by Hubbub, the #InTheLoop campaign sets out to discover if the successes learnt in Leeds can be replicated in other cities in the UK, each presenting a unique context and population with pre-existing recycling behaviours. In this way a broader picture can be established of how to improve recycling outside the home for any given location.

The first city to take on the #InTheLoop mantle was Swansea in South Wales, launching in September 2019. Whilst Wales ranks second in the world for recycling at home, with figures showing that 63% of general waste collected by local authorities is reused, recycled or composted¹, on-the-go recycling is still an area that can be improved. Importantly, Swansea already had existing on-street recycling facilities, however they were particularly poorly performing. The five-month #InTheLoop trial would work hard to turn this around.

“ 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. We look forward to seeing the results from every new city that joins #InTheLoop as each presents a unique set of challenges and objectives.”

James Piper, CEO, Ecosurety

¹ **Recycling in Wales: Reduction in black bin bag waste, BBC**



The next city to follow Swansea's lead was Edinburgh in October 2019. The five-month 'Our Edinburgh #InTheLoop' trial would enable people passing through the city centre to recycle plastic bottles, cans and coffee cups on the street for the very first time, as Edinburgh had no pre-existing on-street recycling facilities.

The fact that Edinburgh had not previously collected recyclable materials on-the-go is sadly not unusual, as research from RECOUP in 2017 revealed that only 42% of local authorities provide on-the-go recycling². This helps to explain why recycling at home and kerbside collections have improved over the years, yet the rate of recycling while out and about is still low.

A tale of two cities

Swansea

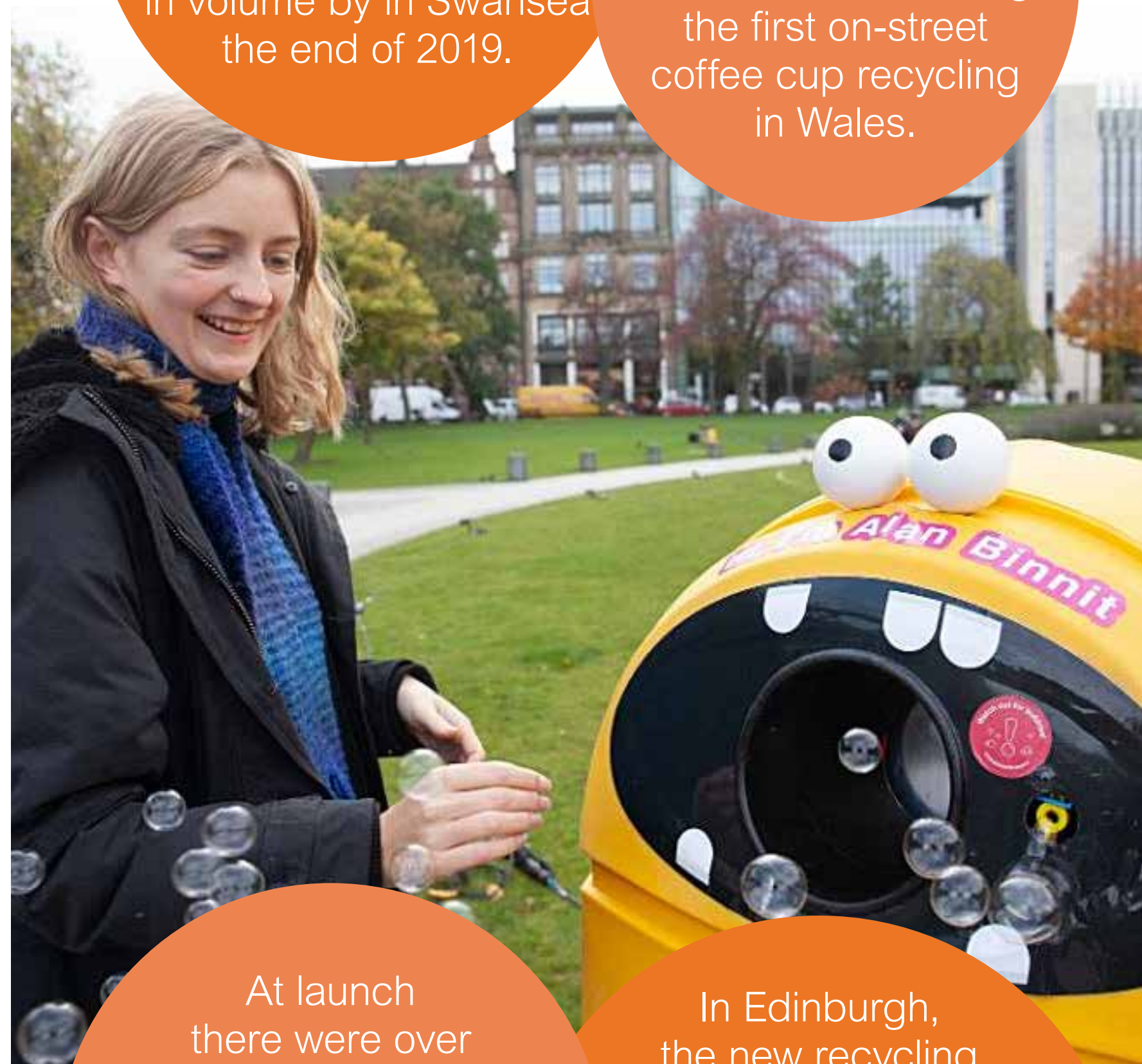
It is fair to say that whilst Swansea had existing on-street recycling facilities, an entirely new system was created as part of #InTheLoop that goes far beyond the actual bins themselves. A total of 113 new or improved recycling points have been installed, including 19 new and 81 re-skinned bins and the first coffee cup on-street recycling facilities in Wales. Importantly, a network of 28 local collaborators have worked in partnership with the campaign including transport hubs, schools, universities, shopping centres and top employers. A growing network of volunteers and ambassadors have also been running workshops focused on recycle, reuse and repair.

Successful engagement activities mean that every Swansea resident should have heard about the campaign at least once. Opportunities to see or hear about the campaign through PR reached over 12 million, whilst social media helped deliver the campaign to 1.5 million people. A sobering art installation called

² **Tightening budgets preventing councils from delivering 'on the go' recycling collections, Resource**

The amount of target materials captured in recycling bins more than doubled and contamination rates fell by **a whopping 40%** in volume by in Swansea the end of 2019.

113 new recycling points have been installed in Swansea, including the first on-street coffee cup recycling in Wales.



At launch there were over **5 million opportunities** to see or hear about the campaign via PR and **2.2 million social media timeline** deliveries.

In Edinburgh, the new recycling bins had a capture rate of target materials of **50% in the first three months** and showed improvements month-on-month.

The Wave by local artist Wren Miller featured the amount of waste thrown away in the UK every 20 seconds. It toured seven city-centre locations and invited viewers to imagine over 4,300 of these waves hitting our cities and towns every single day.

Five public engagement events took place engaging over 3,000 people directly, three large public screens shared the campaign message in the city centre and over 1,800 in-store materials have been displayed across 47 separate locations to promote Swansea #InTheLoop.

“ We already work with many local businesses in Swansea to provide commercial waste recycling services so businesses can recycle more in the workplace. Anything more that can be done to capture more waste for recycling and divert it away from landfill should be welcomed and taken advantage of.”

Cllr Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure Management at Swansea Council

The initial waste audits from the first three months have provided astounding results. The new coffee cup recycling bins so far report a low contamination rate of 19% on average and continue to improve, enabling the cups to be readily recycled into paper by a plant in Cumbria. Other recycling bins have achieved an incredible 40% reduction in contamination by volume between September and December 2019. They are also collecting 2.12 times more target material, compared to before the campaign launch.

Edinburgh

Scotland has also embraced #InTheLoop, with the city of Edinburgh welcoming on-the-go recycling



for plastic bottles, cans and coffee cups for the first time. 58 new recycling facilities were installed as part of phase one of the campaign in 2019, with many more yet to come. An impressively vast network of local collaborators, including 95 organisations, have ensured that the branded bins and promotional messaging are visible everywhere in the city.

A successful PR launch ensured over 5 million opportunities to see or hear about the campaign and social media provided over 2 million timeline deliveries. 67 businesses engaged with the launch, equipped with over 1,400 in-store communication assets and a futuristic art installation brought an innovative angle to the campaign.

Large billboards and advertising panels provided by Edinburgh Council continue to promote the campaign, making it highly visible to anyone passing through the city centre. Public engagement events have been taking place on a weekly basis and many hotels and local businesses have been very vocal in their continued support of Our Edinburgh #InTheLoop.

Although only launched in October 2019, the brand-new recycling facilities have shown a large increase in the amount of recyclable materials captured, month-on-month, to a rate of 50% by the end of 2019. A slight downturn was experienced in December due to increased footfall and the number of visitors during the festive season.

#InTheLoop in 2020

The #InTheLoop campaigns have not yet run their course but already the key results and feedback have proved to be extremely positive, standing testament to the fact that on-the-go recycling can be improved in any city through the right interventions, collaborations and improvements, whether the location has pre-existing on-street recycling facilities or not.

There has been interest from across Wales to roll the scheme out in other locations and Swansea city council and other local stakeholders have committed to keep the scheme, including the new infrastructure and systems, in place after the campaign officially ends in February 2020.



Local partners are also building on the evidence of success by applying for grant funding for a community-led city-wide initiative to champion reuse and recycling, taking Swansea #InTheLoop to the next level.

Meanwhile in Edinburgh, the city council has already been helping to build a legacy for the city beyond the campaign by gradually pulling more resources into the initiative, and committing to continue the waste collection of all materials collected as part of #InTheLoop. Many requests have also been received from stakeholders across Edinburgh eager to join the coffee-cup collection scheme.

“ #InTheLoop has taken the learnings from #LeedsByExample and applied them in new contexts, successfully changing behaviours and introducing brand new infrastructure – #InTheLoop is responsible for the first coffee cup collection scheme in Wales and Edinburgh’s first ever on-street recycling system. Now we look forward to working with Ecosurety to extend #InTheLoop to towns and cities across the UK and Ireland to help make recycling on-the-go a commonplace behaviour.”

Gavin Ellis, Co-founder and Director, Hubbub.

Once the campaigns have completed their planned five-month duration in early 2020, the collective learnings from the three cities involved with #InTheLoop and #LeedsByExample will be collated and shared openly in a blueprint for improving on-the-go recycling. By building on valuable insights and learnings the plan is to create a strong, replicable model elsewhere. Ecosurety plans to renew our financial support towards the future roll out of #InTheLoop to more locations in 2020.



The Wave, art installation by Wren Miller, for Swansea #InTheLoop

Recycle week e-waste amnesty

Trialling free business and consumer collections of e-waste

E-waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the world¹ with each UK resident responsible for creating almost 15kg of damaging e-waste per annum, a collective weight 100 times heavier than the Eiffel Tower².

It is a complex issue with hoarding a common problem. A recent study revealed that 51% of UK households have at least one unused electronic device and of these 82% have no plans to recycle or sell on their devices after they fall out of use³. There are many obvious barriers to recycling, including confusion over what can be recycled and where, fear of personal data theft and a higher perceived value compared to what the waste item is worth.

Ecosurety decided to better understand what would be required to change current behaviour and collection rate trends for e-waste, and where better than our local community on the Aztec West business park in Bristol, home to 100 organisations and over 8,000 employees. According to the latest research, we could estimate that there were potentially 12,000 waste or unused electricals⁴ and 50,000 used batteries⁵ hoarded in Aztec West employee homes alone. Those figures did not even include those stored by the businesses on the park.

¹ **E-waste Rises 8% by Weight in 2 Years as Incomes Rise, Prices Fall, United Nations University**

² **Driving the #FixFirst movement, Circular**

³ **Study hints at 'hoarding' of WEEE by householders, letsrecycle**

⁴ **At least six elements in mobile phones set to run out in 100 years, Circular**

⁵ **#BringBackHeavyMetal, Ecosurety**



Recycle Week is an annual national awareness campaign that has been run by WRAP for the **last 17 years**

A free e-waste collection was offered to **100 businesses and 8,000 employees** over two days

The 8,000 employees on our local business park **could be hoarding 12,000 waste or unused electricals⁶** and 50,000 used batteries⁷ at home.

⁶ **Study hints at 'hoarding' of WEEE by householders, letsrecycle.com**

⁷ **#BringBackHeavyMetal, ecosurety.com**

As part of Recycle Week, a national campaign organized by WRAP for the last 17 years which in 2019 celebrated the rise of the environmental activist, we decided to take some action of our own and organised an e-waste amnesty on our business park. This was a great way to test how we could increase collection rates of batteries and WEEE whilst highlighting that plastics are not the only pressing issue facing our society today.

“The e-waste amnesty was a fantastic opportunity to test ideas that could improve collection rates of batteries and WEEE for consumers and businesses, enabling us to quickly get out there to find out what worked and what didn't on a small scale. The learnings and insights we have gained will be key for any future e-waste campaigns we run, either locally or nationally.”

Ben Luger, e-waste amnesty project manager, Ecosurety

What did we do?

By partnering with the business park manager, we launched a comprehensive e-waste amnesty for the whole business park over two days during Recycle Week in September 2019. This included two separate approaches, one to focus on collections from the organisations and another to focus on the employees and their e-waste from home.

For the organisations we distributed a free battery collection bucket to every office (often to be greeted with something along the lines of “Ah great, we've got a whole drawer full of old batteries we didn't know what to do with!”) and

we offered a free of charge commercial WEEE collection via a simple online request form. For the employees working on the park we organized an e-waste drop off zone at a busy central location where hundreds of people take lunch every day. We hoped this offering would remove many barriers to recycling e-waste as it was free, convenient and secure data destruction was offered at no cost.

The campaign was communicated widely through emails and phone calls to each and every business, 150 posters using the official Recycle Week assets were located at strategic locations around the park and leaflets were handed out during Recycle Week itself. We also undertook some softer activities including social media posts and adding the Recycle Now swoosh to our company logo on our website.



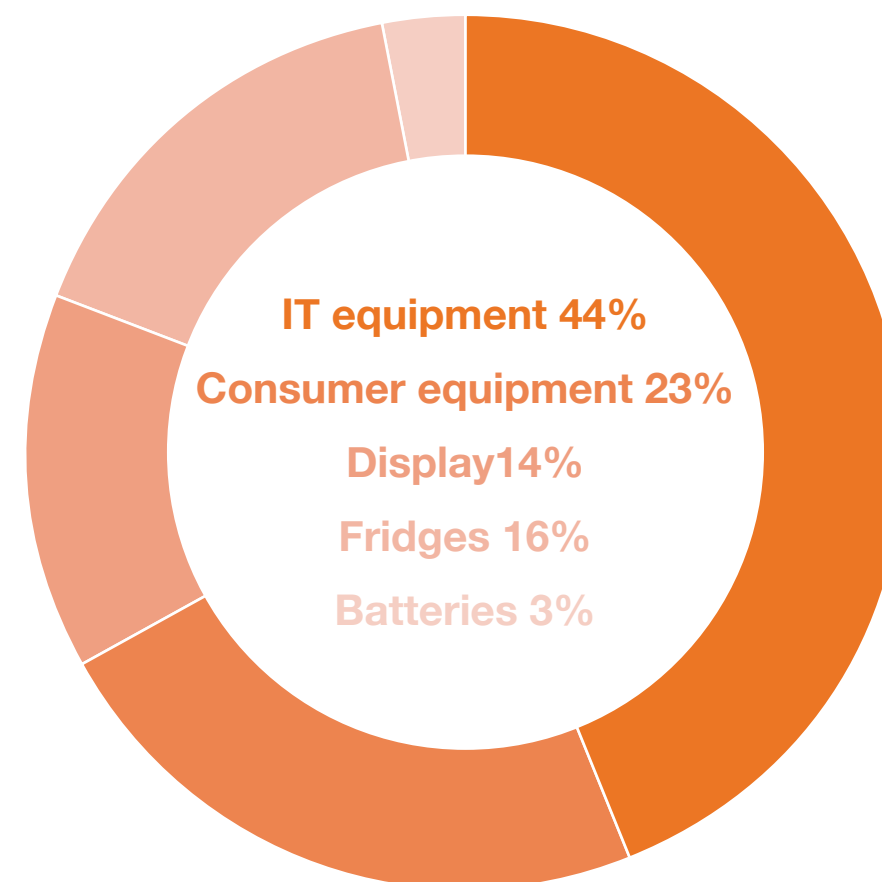
Results of the campaign

Businesses participation was encouraging, with 18% of the business park booking a free collection, resulting in 2,651kg of e-waste collected over two days.

A breakdown of the categories of equipment collected shows that nearly half the collected items were IT equipment, which is to be expected on a business park.



Breakdown of collected e-waste



Disappointingly, only a handful of individuals dropped off e-waste at the drop-off zone over the two days, but due to the type and quantity of consumer equipment collected from businesses (consumer equipment made up nearly 25% of the total waste collected from the businesses) we believe that many individuals used their booked company collection to dispose of their e-waste from home.

“It's vitally important we test and trial new initiatives to encourage households and businesses to increase their recycling rates. By moving away from the traditional methods and providing hassle free and easier solutions, we are not only able to incentivise more people to recycle but also engage with wider groups which previously would not have the facilities to do so.”

Sam Mountain, Operations director, iWaste

Regarding battery collections, this is ongoing as we now have battery collection buckets in every building on the business park and these are collected once full.

Next steps

The cost of running this campaign was expensive due to the number of e-waste collection vans required over the two days. As such it was not a cost-effective campaign in itself, but it was certainly the right thing to do. Crucially it provided a huge amount of critical learning for us – this is where the real value of the amnesty is to be found.

Convenience is key but is not the only barrier to overcome when encouraging businesses and consumers to recycle their e-waste.

Awareness development takes a long time and for behaviour change there is no simple, quick fix. Communication is obviously critical, but we found that alone this is not enough. For example, participation in our own office was relatively low, despite extensive communications to an engaged workforce verbally and via email, posters and team meetings. More work clearly needs to be done to better understand the barriers to recycling e-waste, in order to create more effective behaviour change campaigns.

Despite it not being commercially viable to run this campaign again, especially not at a larger scale, we will continue to experiment and undertake other small-scale campaigns to identify new approaches and techniques, and further discover what does and does not work.



18% of businesses contacted actively took part in the amnesty by booking a free e-waste collection

Every Can Counts

Helping Boomtown Fair to capture those cans!

Set-up just over a decade ago, and financially supported by Ecosurety for a few years now, Every Can Counts is the leading programme to promote metal drink can recycling, with a focus on encouraging consumers to recycle their cans when away from home. Enjoying their busiest summer yet, Every Can Counts had a presence at over 30 UK festivals and sporting events, resulting in an impressive collective audience of over one million people to interact with.

The issue of can recycling has never been so important. With so many festivals and consumers striving to be plastic free, drink cans are often now the single-use container of choice. Importantly, the objective of Every Can Counts is to not only increase can recycling rates at the events themselves, but to help drive longer-term behaviour change when the festival goers have returned home.

“Volunteering at Boomtown with the Every Can Counts team was an incredible experience where we learned a huge amount about behaviour change and made a genuine difference along with the rest of the team. We’d definitely recommend others to get involved too, just be sure you bring buckets of energy!”

Jon Brookes, Head of partnerships

Every Can Counts was launched in 2009 and is operated by Alupro. With the aim of capturing the **1-in-3 cans drunk outside the home**, it has established branded can recycling points in over 7,800 sites around the UK.

At Boomtown Fair our team collectively volunteered 96 hours, walked 286km and **helped to collect over 21,000 cans** and complete 2,370 surveys.





Members of the Ecosurety team happily volunteered for 96 collective hours as Every Can Counts recycling ambassadors at Boomtown Fair in August 2019, an event that welcomes an audience of 66,000 people. Working throughout the day (and partying at night!), our team collected cans in specially designed backpacks and directly engaged with festival goers to spread the good word about recycling and complete consumer behaviour surveys.

Impact

Over 21,000 cans were collected as a direct result of the Every Can Counts team activities at Boomtown. This included giving away popular rewards in return for recycling cans, ranging from temporary tattoos to free money-can't-buy t-shirts. At five festivals alone in 2019 these rewards help generate over 51,000 extra collected cans. Voting bins were also utilised and festival goers were encouraged to fill specially commissioned wire cage letters that spelt out 'Boomtown' with cans.

Survey highlights

We asked: which of the following can recycling facts blows your mind the most?
Our **top three facts** are:

Cans recycle forever.

They can go through the recycling process an infinite number of times.

Place your can into the right bin today, and it can be recycled, filled, and ready to enjoy again in **just 60 days.**

Every can you recycle **reduces the carbon footprint** of the next one made.

A total of 2,370 surveys were completed at the festival which revealed a number of key statistics, including that people were most impressed by the fact that aluminium can go through the recycling process an infinite number of times and they also perceived

plastic and cartons to be the hardest to recycle materials. They also considered recycling points to be most needed on the street.

Learning and next steps

The UK drink can recycling rate is holding steady at 75%, and whilst a strong performer compared to other materials, Every Can Counts is committed to driving that figure up as much as possible.

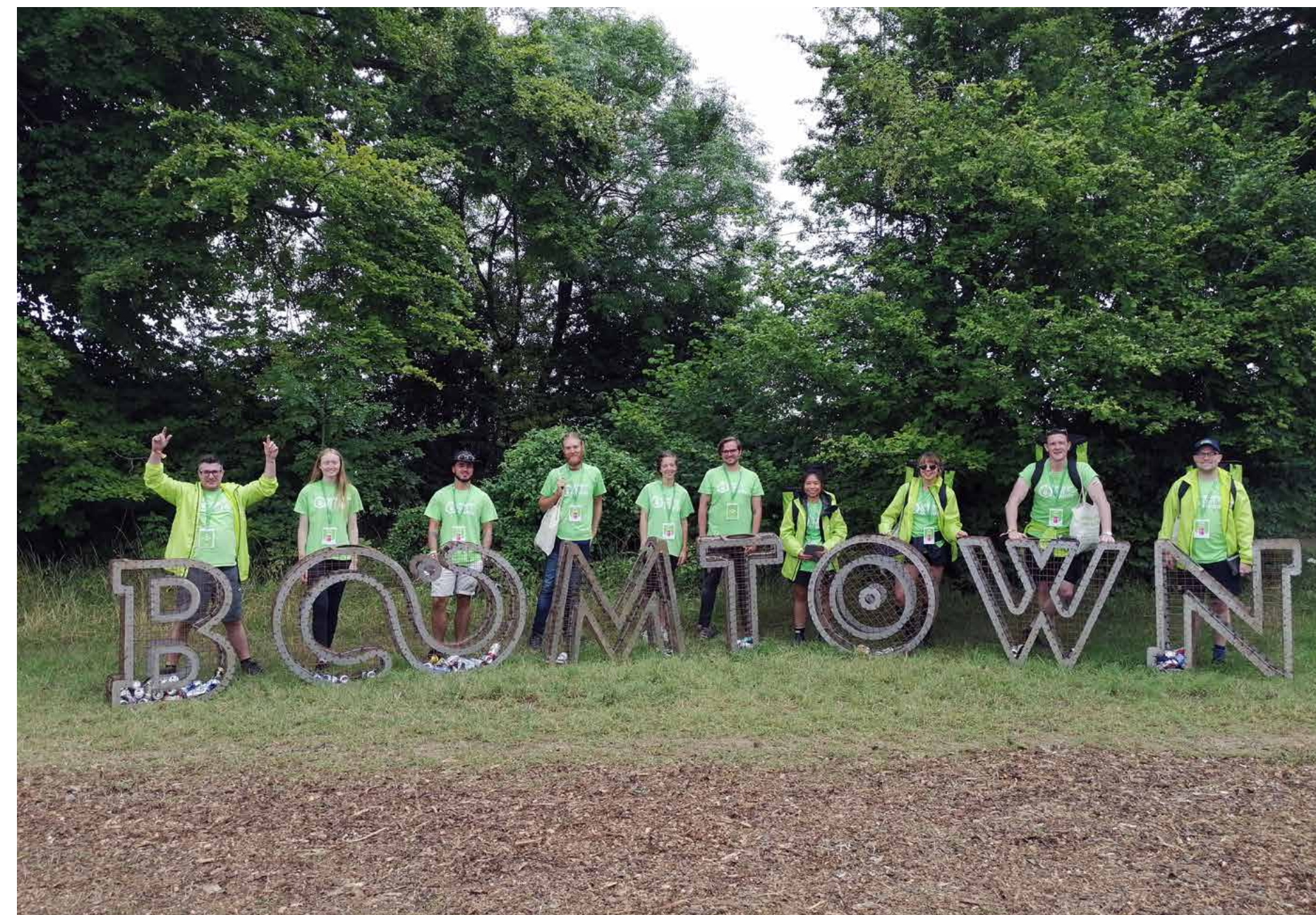
Our team discovered that engaging with so many people about recycling in such a short space of time was a really rewarding, positive and insightful experience, greatly helping them to understand the factors and incentives that effect behaviour change.

Would they do it again? Despite being physically exhausting work and enduring the worst that the British summer weather had to throw at them – yes they would.

Their top advice for others looking to do the same? Bring wellies, don't expect to sleep much and make sure you have as much energy as possible!

“Ecosurety is a funding partner to the Every Can Counts programme, so when the team expressed an interest in joining us at a festival, we were thrilled; they experienced first-hand how their contribution enables us to positively impact people's behaviour when it comes to recycling. Our activation at Boomtown was amongst our most successful of the season.

Rick Hindley, Executive director, Alupro



Boosting kerbside waste battery collections

Initiating a pilot awareness campaign in Bristol

As a nation we have struggled for several years to meet the UK battery collection targets¹. To try and help improve this situation we have tried various awareness campaigns over the years, from a national press and social media campaign in 2017 called #BringBackHeavyMetal² through to promotion of battery collection points via a social media campaign and a trial of home collections with Currys PC World in 2018.

In May 2019 Ecosurety partnered with Bristol Waste Company to undertake a new trial intervention campaign with 4,000 households located in different areas of Bristol. The purpose of the campaign was to assess if we could increase the amount of waste batteries recycled at kerbside, and reduce the number of those disposed of in general waste bins or stored in cupboards and drawers in homes. We believe that reducing the barriers to collection is critical, with kerbside collection being the most convenient method.

The problem of collecting waste batteries, like all other materials, is an important one. If batteries end up in the landfill they can be extremely harmful to the environment due to the toxic chemicals leaking into groundwater and food-chains as they degrade. With certain types of batteries there is also a fire risk when not handled correctly by general waste contractors who are unaware they are

even present in collected waste. Fortunately, if collected in the right streams, batteries can be easily recycled to recover the composite materials which can then be used to create new batteries or other products.

Interestingly, Bristol Waste Company already collected waste batteries put out by residents with their weekly collections, however the amount collected was relatively low indicating

poor levels of awareness. This was most likely because batteries are just one amongst a long list of materials communicated to residents that they can recycle at home, a problem compounded by the fact that batteries are not an item regularly disposed of by consumers. The result is that they end up forgotten in the bottom of drawers and cupboards when used up – clearly a dedicated campaign was required.

“ We are always fascinated to discover how simple interventions and nudges can change consumer behaviour to improve recycling rates. Using the right technique, language and channels, it is possible to realise significant improvements. This trial demonstrates the importance of collaborating across the industry to experiment and improve the status quo.”

Stephanie Housty,
Marketing Manager, Ecosurety

Two areas of the city representing 4,000 households in total, Lawrence Weston and Westbury-upon-Trym, received a reminder through their letter box in the form of a battery shaped leaflet with five brown paper bags (made using recycled stock and all fully recyclable, of course), to encourage them to collect used household batteries and put

An estimated **178 million used batteries** are hoarded in UK homes and less than half of those placed on the market each year are collected for recycling.

The amount of collected waste batteries more than doubled the week after the leaflet drop and after seven months collections were still showing an **increase of 26%**.

¹ **2019 Q3 battery collection figures dampen the mood, Ecosurety**

² **#BringBackHeavyMetal, Ecosurety**



them out for recycling. Coverage in local newspapers and BBC News also helped to amplify the message, not only in the campaign areas but across the city.

The results were closely monitored during the campaign and long afterwards to see how this gentle nudge would influence the collected amount of batteries, with the potential for it to be rolled out city-wide.

Boosting collection rates

The leaflet drop had a significant effect on the next weekly recycling collection in the targeted areas, with Bristol Waste reporting a 117% increase of collected waste batteries, more than double the usual amount³.

Once the paper bags were used up, residents could continue to recycle their batteries as normal using any clear plastic bag instead. Over the seven months after the campaign was delivered, the target areas were still reporting an impressive increase in battery collections of 26% – a fantastic legacy from one leaflet drop.

Of the two areas that participated in the campaign, the more affluent area performed the best with three times more batteries collected two weeks after the leaflet drop.

Key learnings from a small-scale campaign

Bristol Waste Company continue to monitor the collection rates of batteries in the two areas that received the trial campaign. By comparing these results to previous collection data, and data from other areas, it will be possible to calculate the long-term impact of the campaign.

³ Figures calculated from the average weight collected evolution between 2 weeks after the campaign versus the past 13 weeks before the campaign.



A decision will be made in 2020 on what the next steps are, which could include expanding the trial to other areas in the city, the whole of Bristol or experimenting with other communication channels such as social media.

From this small-scale campaign we have learned a lot about the effects of raising citizen awareness. We are looking at initiating similar small-scale campaigns to learn more about how to effectively influence household behaviour with the purpose of sharing publicly our learnings, so that other cities and local authorities can introduce and effectively promote battery collections at kerbside to their citizens. In this way we can make a significant step towards improving the UK recycling rate of batteries, diverting more harmful metals from polluting our environment.

“Working with Ecosurety gave us the opportunity to use the playful and engaging messaging, so intrinsically linked to our brand, and apply it to a national issue. This project demonstrated how collaboration across different industries can increase the capture of a material. By delivering collection bags to the trial area and the initial communication with residents, we saw an increase of 117% in batteries collected. Since then, we have seen a consistent 26% increase of batteries collected in the areas targeted.”

Gwen Frost, Head of Innovation & Sustainability at Bristol Waste Company



Mentoring local school children

Providing essential skills and guidance to the next generation

Every year we select a CSR project for our team to get involved with. This has previously involved a wide variety of activities including creating a journey sharing portal for commuters, raising funds for a micro-loans charity in Africa and getting our hands dirty supporting native wildlife. For our 2019 project we decided to team up with West of England Mentoring, who with government support bring business mentors together with teens as they prepare for their GCSEs.

Getting involved with the next generation was an exciting prospect for our team, not to mention quite a challenge. We decided to get involved because the mentoring program offered an opportunity to benefit the local community whilst providing huge potential for personal growth, both for the children and our team. A real win-win.

We were paired up with a group of Year 8 pupils from Patchway Community School, located a mere 10-minute walk from our office. Our previous interactions with the pupils had extended to nothing more than passing them on the street as they walked through the business park on their way to and from school, so the mentoring sessions were set to be a new experience and fresh interaction for both parties. It was a wonderful opportunity to share our experience and insights with the children, indeed simply inviting them into a professional office environment where they could mix and interact with our team would prove to be an enlightening experience for them, one that was far removed from their school culture.



Before taking part in the mentoring
94% of the pupils
said they didn't know the skills needed for work

This
reduced to 14% following the mentoring program



Our team ran a series of regular workshops with the pupils from February through to May, which allowed them to build confidence and a rapport with our team. The workshops explored a number of topics including resilience, role models, aspirations, career choices and pathways, explored through presentations and interactive games, role-play and tasks.

“ It was apparent that the students gained a great deal just from visiting our office and interacting with us, never mind all the activities we did with them! Their feedback at the end confirmed that all of the issues we explored together had certainly sunk in, including all the small bits of advice that can make a big difference to their journey into the future.”

Luke Hutchison, Head of HR at Ecosurety

Impact

The impact of the mentoring on the pupils was quite astounding and our team witnessed their growth with each new session. By the end of the process 100% said they had learned about careers, 86% felt more confident about themselves and their abilities and 72% said they were better at taking part in discussions. Over two-thirds of the pupils said they felt better about taking part in school and nearly half said their plans for GCSE's had changed after the sessions at Ecosurety.

Our team meanwhile felt a huge amount of pride to see the children grow in confidence and skills, but the benefits were not one-sided by any means. Working outside of comfort zones, harnessing skills not normally used during day-to-day work and adapting plans and explanations on the fly were all skills that our team said they developed. The satisfaction of interacting with and benefiting the local community was also a strong theme in the feedback from our team.

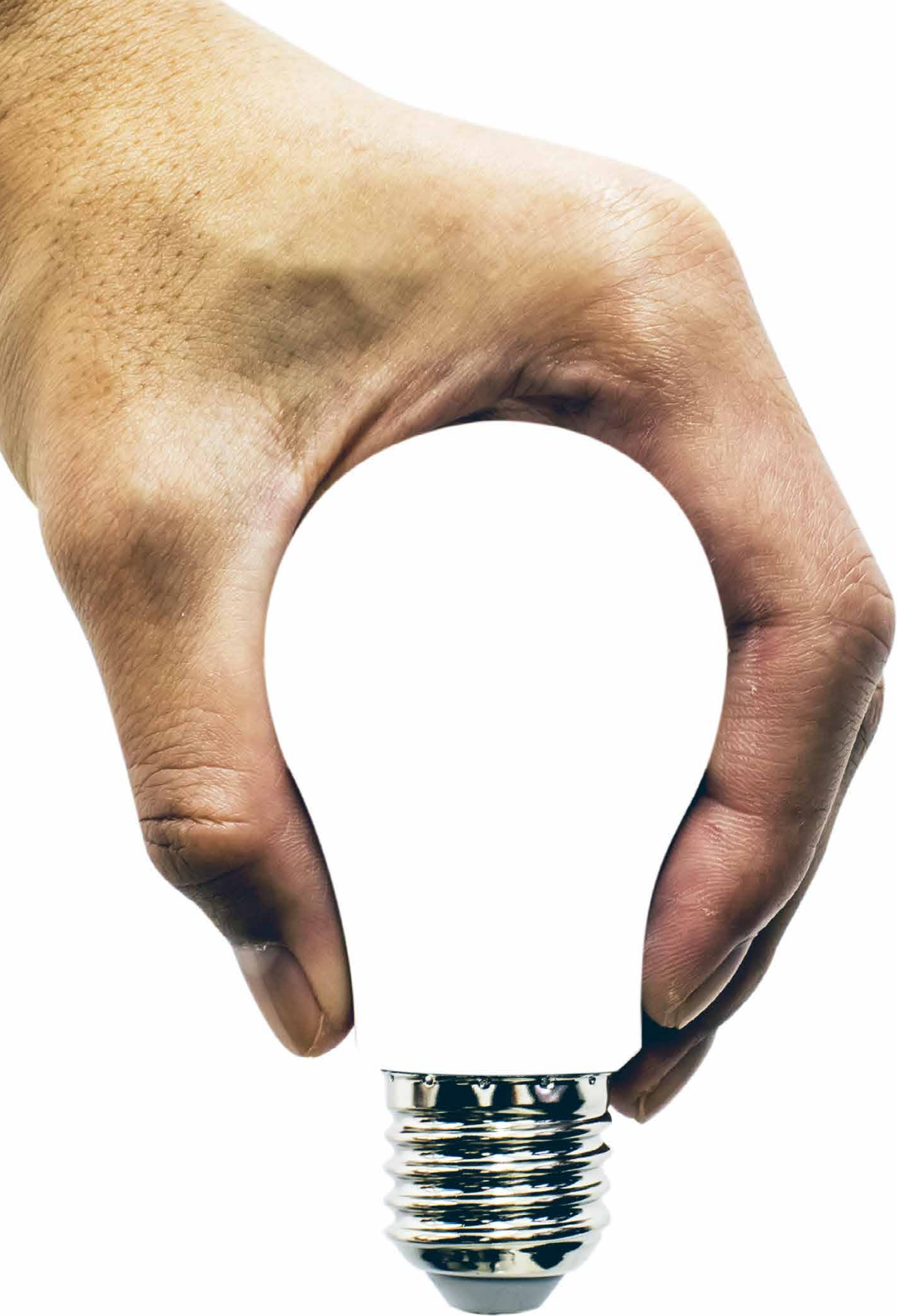
Learning and next steps

The unique benefits and skills that children can gain through exposure to a professional environment beyond the classroom is undeniable, especially at such a pivotal time in their education. The world of work and careers can be made a much less daunting and more exciting prospect, but as we have learnt, business has as much to gain as well. Pairing local businesses and schools can only be a good thing and we encourage other organisations to do the same.

“ The mentoring sessions with Ecosurety have been amazing and an extremely valuable experience for our Year 8 students. Every session was carefully prepared by the team and delivered in such a way that the students really looked forward to going back each time. It has been an experience that the students will not forget. Thank you Ecosurety!”

Sherie Humphreys, Business relationships & careers co-ordinator, Patchway Secondary School





The Ecosurety Exploration Fund

Investing £1m to reduce the impact of packaging, batteries and WEEE

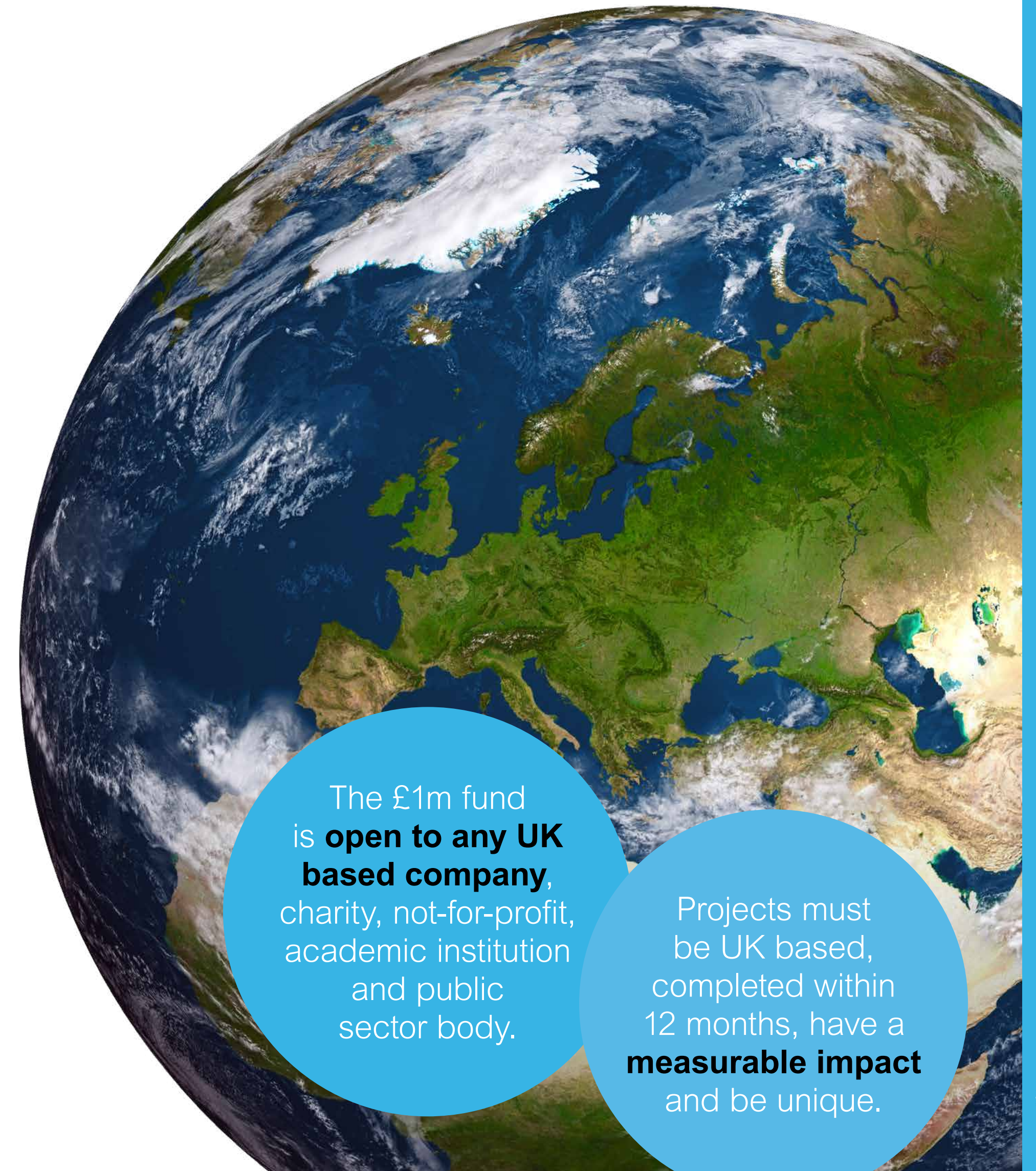
For several years we have worked hard to make an impact on recycling and a change for good, with numerous initiatives centered around education, collaboration, infrastructure and innovation. However, in 2019 we decided that we needed to do more.

This led to the bold decision to ring-fence an impact fund 10 times bigger than we have previously invested in activities that go beyond compliance, to reduce the environmental impact of packaging, batteries and WEEE. The intention was to maximise the chances that we can make a meaningful difference and help the people and organisations who have the ideas, but not necessarily the funds to realise them.

“ The launch of the Ecosurety Exploration Fund is a hugely exciting step for our company. We hope it will provide a vital springboard for projects that offer innovative solutions to the challenges that packaging, batteries and e-waste currently pose to the environment.”

James Piper, CEO, Ecosurety

On November 28 2019 the Ecosurety Exploration Fund was launched, an industry first initiative that commits to invest £1million over the course of the next three years into



The £1m fund is **open to any UK based company**, charity, not-for-profit, academic institution and public sector body.

Projects must be UK based, completed within 12 months, have a **measurable impact** and be unique.

projects that can reduce the environmental impact of packaging, batteries or WEEE through innovation or research.

The fund builds on our experience in supporting innovative projects and new technologies across the waste and recycling sector by providing a visible funding route for UK-based companies, charities, not-for-profits and academic institutions.

With an application deadline of 10 March 2020, individual grant applications of up to £150,000 are being accepted each year. To ensure a robust and impartial selection process, applications will be judged by a panel of ten experts that includes Ecosurety members and independent experts including Peter Maddox, director of WRAP; Libby Peake, Senior policy advisor at Green Alliance; and Mike Barry, Sustainable Change Maker and former Director of Sustainable Business (Plan A) at Marks and Spencer.

“The move to a circular economy for packaging, e-waste and batteries requires innovative and bold new thinking. Harnessing new designs, technologies and ideas will ensure that our own recycling infrastructure continues to develop whilst solutions to minimise the wider environmental impacts of these products are also found. The Ecosurety Exploration Fund provides a much-needed springboard for pioneering ideas in this sector, and I’m excited to be a part of the panel.”

Peter Maddox, Director of WRAP and Ecosurety Exploration Fund judge

Examples of topics that could be funded:

- 1 Improving recyclability through design
- 2 Encouraging re-use of materials and products
- 3 Increasing collection rates
- 4 Reducing contamination of collected materials
- 5 Improving on-the-go recycling
- 6 Recycling of problematic materials
- 7 Dealing with Persistent Organic Pollutants in WEEE
- 8 Improving UK recycling of waste batteries
- 9 Increasing consumer awareness of recycling



The fund focuses on innovation and research to ensure that we support ideas that can go on to have a bigger impact beyond the initially funded project. Successful ideas could reduce the environmental impact across any part of the life cycle – from design, production, use or collection through to reduction, reuse or recycling.

The requirement for innovation could include an innovative awareness campaign, technology, initiative, process, trial or material, for example, whilst research projects could include academic or industry research into improving existing systems, processes, infrastructure, technology, consumer behaviour or material use.

Next steps

Since launching on 28 November 2019, the Ecosurety Exploration Fund gained a huge amount of interest following a successful PR launch, where it featured across the main sustainability press including Lets Recycle, MRW, Circular, Packaging News and Resource. Up to the end of 2019, the Ecosurety Exploration Fund web pages were viewed over 2,000 times and an application guide was downloaded by over 130 people. With an entry closing date of 10 March 2020, these figures were an early indication of the interest that was set to dramatically increase in the New Year of 2020.

“We are just waking up to the problems caused by our throwaway society in the UK and the inadequacy of our recycling systems. It’s the start of a journey that will hopefully see considerable changes in how we think about and use resources. Finding new solutions to the old problems associated with waste packaging, batteries and electricals will prove absolutely vital – and I look forward to seeing what ideas are out there.”

Libby Peake, Senior policy advisor at Green Alliance and Ecosurety Exploration Fund judge

The winning projects will be chosen later in 2020 with funding released shortly afterwards. We look forward to seeing them progress over the following 12 months. The level of interest we received after launching the fund is indicative of the enormous potential for the big problems of today to be tackled head-on, with innovative new ideas and research.

Although our industry-first fund is a huge investment for us and a dramatic step forward in supporting the solutions of tomorrow, it is apparent that other businesses need to follow suit and invest money where it really matters if we are to collectively make progress in reducing our impact on planet Earth. We will be reporting on the development of the winning projects as they progress.

Visit ecosurety.com/impact/exploration-fund to find out more.

Responding to the Defra packaging consultations

Proposing a new governance model for EPR

In December 2018, following an investigation by the National Audit Office that declared the UK's existing PRN system as unfit for purpose, Defra released the Resources and Waste Strategy¹. This was shortly followed on 18 February 2019 by four key packaging consultations, as promised in the strategy. Open for twelve weeks, the consultations provided industry with an opportunity to give detailed feedback to government on proposed changes that had the potential to radically shape the future of packaging producer responsibility in the UK.

A key question in the 'Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system' consultation concerned the future governance of the packaging compliance system. Defra provided four well-considered models for future EPR governance in the consultation, however Ecosurety believed that none offered a significant improvement on the way current system operates – despite each model placing a significant increase in financial obligations on UK producers.

“Great communication this year surrounding the Government consultations on packaging.”

Elaine Barrett, Environmental Manager, Crown Packaging

¹ UK Government Resources and waste strategy for England

The four public consultations released by Defra were:

1

Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system.

This consultation sought views on measures that aim to address the widely recognised problems inherent in the current PRN system, including a lack of transparency, limited financial support for Local Authorities who handle the majority of consumer packaging waste and a lack of a level playing field for domestic reprocessing.

2

Consistency in household and business recycling collections in England.

This consultation sought to address the stagnation in household recycling rates and the fact that some local authorities in England do not collect the full range of recyclable materials or food waste separately.

3

Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The merits of a DRS were considered by this consultation. The aim of such a system is to ensure that it is easy to return drinks containers to increase recycling rates and reduce littering.

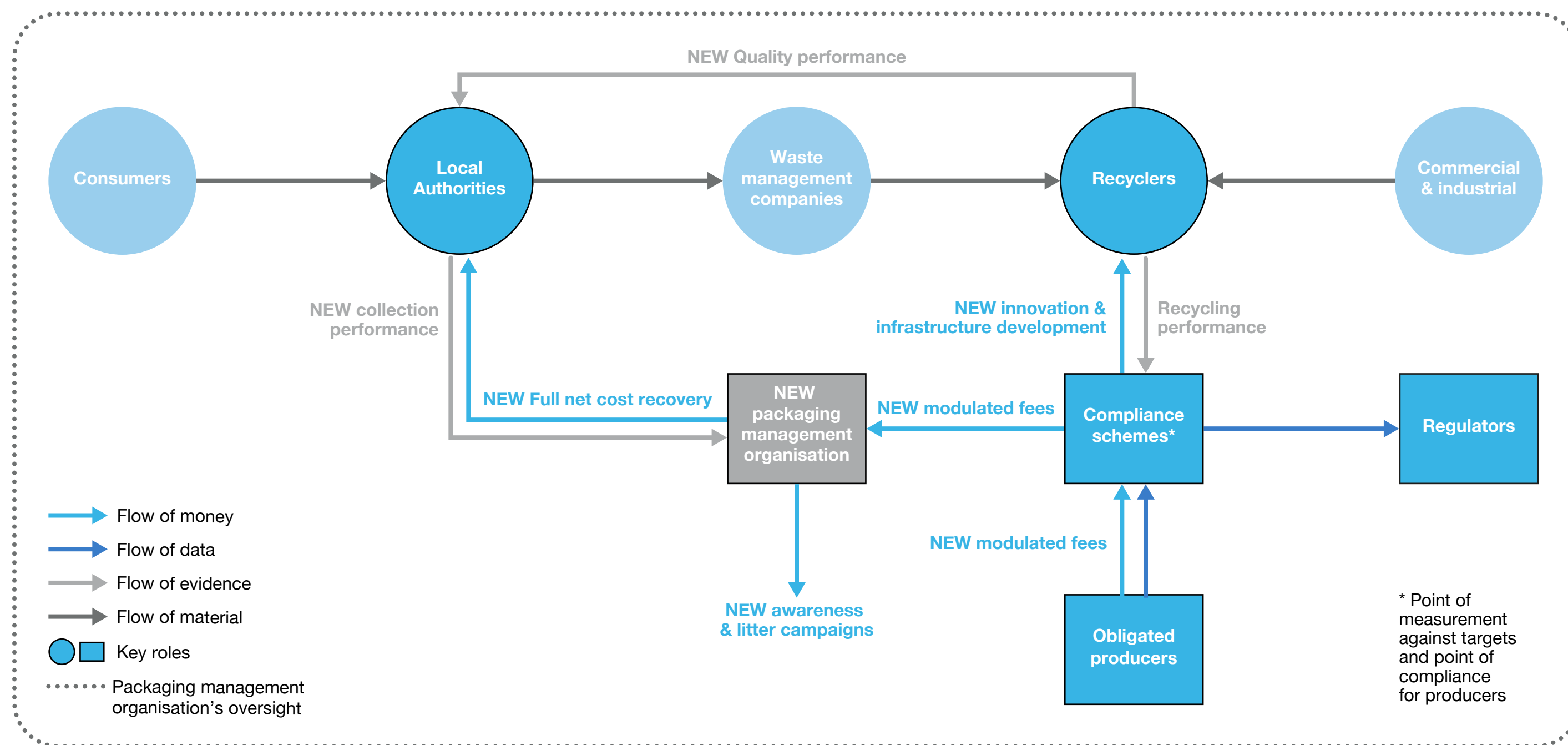
4

Resource and waste and plastic packaging tax consultations.

This HM Treasury consultation focused on a new tax proposed in the 2018 budget, to be levied on the production and import of plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.



Ecosurety centralised competition model



In April 2019 Ecosurety released an alternative model for Extended Producer Responsibility governance called the 'Ecosurety centralised competition model'² that served the system principles outlined by Defra whilst also delivering the ambitious outcomes the government and country desired.

Impact

Following the release of the Resources and Waste Strategy and the four consultations Ecosurety organised a series of training webinars hosted by Robbie Staniforth, head of policy, that were watched by 391 people. The webinars were organised primarily to ensure that our members and other industry

stakeholders were fully informed of the strategy and consultations, were aware of how they could feedback to government and understood the position that Ecosurety was taking on the various issues, including the alternative model proposed for EPR governance. We also openly shared and published our consultation responses online for all four consultations before the closing date³, to help our members form an opinion and encourage them to submit their own response.

We are pleased to report that the 'Ecosurety centralised competition model' was advocated by many respondents to the 'Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system' consultation. In the official government response to the consultation, Defra confirmed that it

“ In light of the responses received we propose to consider further two governance approaches – a competitive compliance scheme approach and a single scheme administrator approach. In doing so we will consider the alternative models submitted by respondents and the views of stakeholders regarding a ‘hybrid’ approach.”

Official Defra consultation response⁴

would take the alternative model into account when they consider the final two choices of governance system.

Learning and next steps

We have continued to develop the proposed model of future EPR governance with various key industry stakeholders and expect another consultation to be released in 2020 for industry to feedback on a final selection of two refined models.

Our consultation process and the development of our alternative model was made possible by thorough and rigorous engagement with a wide spectrum of industry, ensuring that our response to government reflected the best outcome for the performance of UK recycling and the future of EPR. We continue to work in this manner - actively engaging with government, industry groups, producers, recyclers and competitors - and look forward to the next round of consultations due in 2020.

“ It is pleasing to see that many of our views were echoed by other respondents to the consultations. It seems that consensus is forming on many of the key issues. The consultation response summary released by Defra shows that a more centralised governance model, which retains an element of competition, is a viable option for the next round of consultation in 2020. There are still a great many decisions to be made along the way but government are certainly moving in the right direction for EPR.”

Robbie Staniforth,
Head of policy, Ecosurety



² Ecosurety alternative centralised competition model

³ Ecosurety release responses to all four packaging consultations

⁴ Defra Consultation on reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system, page 13

Regulatory affairs

Collaborating across industry to foster evolution

As an industry leading compliance scheme, it is critical that we have our finger on the regulatory pulse. We continually work hard to ensure that we instigate, contribute and influence improvements to the wider compliance and recycling industry. From making compelling arguments to government that are backed up with clear data, to liaising with industry think tanks and collaborating with compliance scheme forums, Ecosurety is always at the front-line of an industry that has ambitious aspirations to improve.

In 2019 we participated in meetings, workshops and interviews with key industry groups including:

ICER, The WEEE Schemes Forum, the Packaging Scheme Forum, The WEEE Fund, The Resource Association, GAMBICA Environmental Regulatory Group, Green Alliance, Westminster Forum Projects Conferences, the OPRL Recycling Rules Update Group, Defra, the Environment Agency, Policy Connect, LARAC, RECOUP, WRAP, The Foodservice Packaging Association, Environmental Services Association, CIWM, Bio-Based and Biodegradable Industries Association.

“ This year marked a step-change in our relationship with Government officials and we have worked closely with our members, collectors, recyclers, consultants and competitors in the private sector, as well as, local authorities and NGOs, to ensure that we understand all their requirements and they understand the need for compromise. Now is an exciting time to be shaping policy that will be in place for the next few decades so we look forward to further engagement in the coming years.”

Robbie Staniforth, Head of policy, Ecosurety

Our input and influence

In 2019 we are proud to have directly input into and influenced several key regulatory improvements including; the design of the mandatory Producer Balancing System for packaging; contributing to key research undertaken by Eunomia on behalf of Defra and publishing our alternative EPR governance model which was referenced in the government consultation response¹.

¹ Ecosurety launch alternative EPR governance model

Ecosurety contributed to the following research papers in 2019:

PolicyConnect Plastic Packaging Plan

Green Alliance Developing a Holistic Approach to Plastic

Anthesis Waste Sector Deal

Eunomia Successful EPR for EEE (commissioned by Defra)





Case study: WEEE Fund

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Fund was set up to distribute money collected through the WEEE compliance fee, an alternative form of compliance for schemes who are unable to procure enough WEEE recycling evidence to fulfil their obligations. The WEEE compliance fee instead creates a central pot of money that can be awarded to initiatives that directly promote the collection of WEEE. Since launching in 2017 the fund has generated over £10 million to support increased recycling and reuse of waste electricals in the UK.



Ecosurety were selected by the WEEE Scheme Forum to be part of a judging panel on communication and awareness campaign bids to The WEEE Fund. Our participation kicked off with a contribution to the WEEE Fund communication workshop in April 2019, alongside electrical and electronic products manufacturers, retailers, DEFRA representatives and NGOs, to identify and agree on consumer engagement activities that would improve e-waste recycling rates.

Throughout the year we have provided support to the WEEE Fund team by sharing our experience of the WEEE market, as well as our learnings on consumer awareness campaigns and education projects we have initiated over the past few years for various waste streams that could help inform future communication campaigns that target e-waste. We will continue to support the WEEE fund with our time and insights as they finalise their strategy and roll out their communication activities planned in 2020.

Visit www.weeeefund.uk to find out more.

“ Making sure that the WEEE compliance fee funds are used to make a tangible impact on e-waste recycling is vital. I am glad we can share our experience on communication and awareness campaigns to help steer and inform the WEEE Fund actions, so that we can improve recycling rates of the fastest growing waste stream in the UK.”

Stephanie Housty, member on the WEEE Fund panel and marketing manager at Ecosurety



Other standout events from 2019 include presenting at a CIWM member meeting on 'Unpacking the consultations', visiting Norway to learn about their Deposit Return Scheme and how it interacts with Extended Producer Responsibility and attending an Environmental Services Association invitation-only roundtable event on recycling exports and contamination. We also continued to chair the Packaging Scheme Forum, participated in Defra's batteries stakeholder group and were selected to be part of a judging panel for The WEEE Fund.

Ecosurety was also called upon to contribute as an industry expert to various influential research papers in 2019, for topics ranging from plastic packaging to a new EPR system for WEEE and the waste sector in general.

Learning and next steps

2019 was a monumental year for policy, the world of compliance and Extended Producer Responsibility. We are proud to have directly played a significant role by collaborating with key stakeholders, being vocal about our opinions and have been as transparent as possible in doing so. For example, we were the only compliance scheme to openly publish and share our government consultation responses before the submission deadline². We also provided free webinars, online

² **Plastic Packaging Plan, Policy Connect**

roundtables and one-to-one calls to engage hundreds of stakeholders with the government consultations and we regularly published thought-leader articles in leading industry journals including Circular³.

Ecosurety head of policy, Robbie Staniforth, continues to chair the Packaging Scheme Forum which brings together key members of the UK's packaging producer compliance sector to share a wealth of knowledge that will be useful for government as they re-design EPR. On that note, looking ahead to 2020 and beyond, Ecosurety intends to give even more focus to directly helping government with their system design for EPR, a process that has already begun and will feed into the next round of public consultations.

³ **Ecosurety release responses to all four packaging consultations, Ecosurety**



Strategic impact meetings

Enabling collaboration across industry

Building on our activities from the previous year, in 2019 we held four strategic impact meetings, a regular working group of key industry stakeholders from the UK producer responsibility and recycling industry. The purpose was to enable and foster collaboration to tackle the big problems facing producers and recyclers today, to provide critical input into our government consultation responses and to help shape the future of new and existing Ecosurety services. Ultimately to make a bigger collaborative impact.

33 different organisations participated in our 2019 strategic impact meetings including:



During one of the most challenging and eventful years for producer responsibility, due in part to unprecedented evidence cost increases for producers and the release of key government consultations and strategies, our strategic impact meetings have proved to be an essential opportunity to engage with key players who can collectively input and share insights.

“The strategic impact meetings are an essential forum throughout the year. We are thrilled to see the unique cross-industry insights, opportunities and collaborations that arise and will continue to develop this format into 2020. Improving quality UK recycling is always the focus and the steps we have collectively taken towards that goal have been so impactful.”

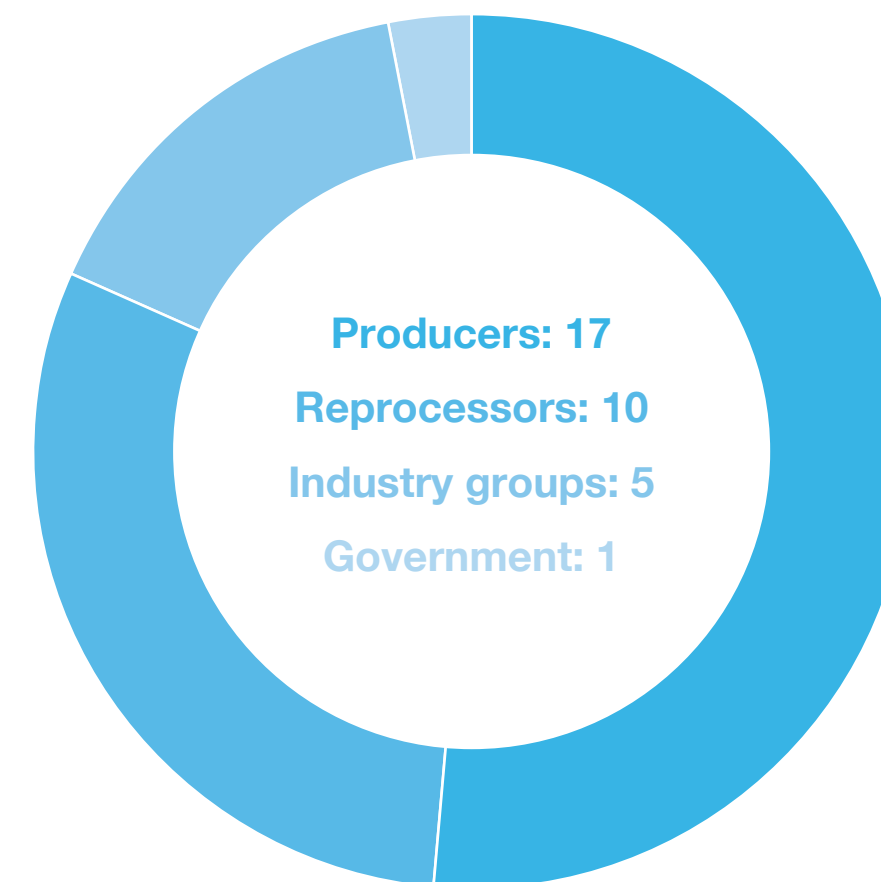
Jon Brookes, Head of partnerships, Ecosurety

Areas of focus

Consultation responses

The meetings provided an essential forum to share vital information and insight to form

2019 Strategic Impact Meeting participating organisation types



a cohesive thought process and response to the first round of the government consultations focusing on the packaging regulations, vital to ensuring DEFRA were provided with the best expert industry intelligence and thinking around how a future system could optimally work.

Producer and recycler collaboration

Exciting connections have been made between key recyclers we have partnered with and our members, who have now developed their own relationships and realised opportunities to further invest and direct their PRN money towards increasing UK capacity and tackling challenging materials.

Encouraging producers to connect design with effective end-of-life treatment resulted in reprocessors sharing detailed insight into the challenges of multi-composite material packaging and the potential solutions producers should consider. As we are keen to foster collaboration and promote more communication between producers and reprocessors, we are pleased that this has led to subsequent site visits from our members to key reprocessors where they could explore this further collaboratively.

Project collaborations

Through the sharing of our involvement in key education and innovation projects such as **#InTheLoop** and **Polytag**, our members, industry experts and reprocessors have all been able to get involved too and many have explored further opportunities that these projects have presented.

Sharing the results from our e-waste amnesty also enabled an insightful discussion around the core challenges within the WEEE industry preventing increased recycling, which has in turn shaped the strategy and planning for a consumer awareness and collections campaign due to launch in 2020.

The **Ecosurety Exploration Fund** also initially took shape via feedback from the cross-industry group at the strategic impact meetings, whose insight and feedback helped shape our thinking and approach.

Commercial insight

During the most challenging year of the PRN market ever, the strategic impact meetings provided opportunity for essential cross-industry discussion and debate, with the opportunity for all present to explore and scrutinise the market forces at play.

Crucially we enabled discussions around how the system should be improved in the short term which informed our lobbying activities and guided the development of our systems to provide enhanced insight tools for our members.

Strategic impact meetings in 2020

Our packaging strategic impact meetings have developed into a critical quarterly meeting, a calendar highlight not only for ourselves but also the many participants from across industry. We are aware of a great many opportunities, partnerships and insights that simply would not have otherwise happened.

Our focus in 2020 is for the strategic impact meetings to continue to bring industry together, including welcoming even more engaged producers, reprocessors and industry experts to collaborate to solve key challenges. Through the meetings we will of course be replicating our approach to grow infrastructure and support innovation and consumer campaigns with even more engaged stakeholders.

As before, the meetings will inform our responses to the next round of government consultations and will provide a platform to explore future EPR opportunities and any potential new regimes. We will also foster the unique insights and holistic approach available to producers through the meetings that enables them to make better decisions around materials that have the least environmental impact and will help consumers to reduce, reuse and recycle.

If you think that you should be attending the Ecosurety strategic impact meetings too, please contact us by emailing info@ecosurety.com.

“The Ecosurety strategic impact meetings provide a great opportunity to talk with like-minded peers on solutions for packaging issues, sharing best practice and having an early sight of industry innovations.”

Paul Irwin-Rhodes, SHE and External Affairs Manager, Greggs

TOGETHER WE CAN



The UK Plastics Pact

Making unnecessary single-use plastic a thing of the past

The UK Plastics Pact led by WRAP, launched in April 2018 with 42 founding members as a unique coalition who were committed to make unnecessary single-use plastic packaging “a thing of the past”. It now has over 140 member organisations¹, including Ecosurety who joined one month after inception of the Pact as a technical advisor.

Delivered by WRAP, the Pact aims to bring together the whole plastics packaging value chain to back a common vision and an ambitious set of targets that will ultimately help create a circular economy for plastics. The targets to achieve by 2025 are:

1. Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (reuse) delivery model.
2. 100% of plastics packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable.
3. 70% of plastics packaging effectively recycled or composted.
4. 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.

In December 2019 the first annual report to be published revealed key insights thanks to UK Plastics Pact members submitting comprehensive data for the first time, giving a clear indication of progress towards the targets².

¹ The UK Plastics Pact members, Wrap

² 1bn single use plastic items to be eliminated by end of 2020, Ecosurety

At the end of 2019
The UK Plastics
Pact reported that:

1 billion problematic and unnecessary single use plastic items are to be eliminated by the end of 2020.

Pact members are over halfway towards making all their packaging recyclable

The UK is over half-way towards recycling 70% of plastic packaging

Members are a third of the way towards an average of 30% recycled content in their plastic packaging

The purpose of The UK Plastics Pact Citizen Engagement action group is to enable brands, retailers, NGOs and the recycling industry to work together to encourage citizens to recycle more and better in order to reach the target of “70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted by 2025”.

Our involvement in The UK Plastics Pact

Collaborative Action Groups

To help drive the delivery of The UK Plastics Pact targets, Collaborative Action Groups regularly meet to bring together the key players who can share and review evidence and agree where work should be focused on. The Collaborative Action Groups have a clear remit to encourage behaviour change, so citizens play their part in reducing, re-using and recycling plastics, ultimately keeping plastic in the economy and out of the environment.

Ecosurety contribute to eight different Collaborative Action Groups and for instance in 2019 we actively participated with the Citizen Engagement Action Group at four events throughout the year.

Whilst government and businesses have a critical role to play to ensure this target is met, citizen engagement is an essential cog in the system. If households do not reduce, reuse and recycle plastics, the Pact targets will not be met. A collective effort is required to ensure that citizens understand their role and contribute so that a 70% recycling rate for plastic packaging can be realised.

By identifying the barriers to recycle and better understand citizens we are working together to develop and use clear and consistent messages and communications through marketing channels to better inform consumers about which plastics can be recycled and how. For instance, we actively supported the national Recycle Now Recycle Week campaign in September 2019 that achieved a reach of 59 million through PR activities and media coverage.

To help spread the message we changed the logo on our website and social media platforms and promoted the campaign heavily on Twitter and LinkedIn. **See more about other activities Ecosurety undertook to promote Recycle Week.**

Data analysis and reporting

During 2019 we worked directly with our members who were required to report on their packaging portfolio as part of their commitment to The UK Plastics Pact. This included assessment of the recyclability of the various materials used, from tubs and trays through to film and wrappers and the quantities placed on the market. This can be a complex task for large producers with multiple groups of companies and an extensive supply chain for the raw packaging materials.

By crunching the data and presenting it in bespoke dashboards, we enabled members to not only easily submit their data to The UK Plastics Pact, but to use it to drive change within their organisation. Visualising across the whole organisation and product range where problematic materials are being used, we have enabled producers to efficiently identify where to remove plastic or make it recyclable.

Interestingly, this has in turn prompted potential investment by a leading producer into new UK recycling facilities that can process the problematic materials they are using that are difficult to replace with more recyclable materials. It is fantastic to see positive change and impact driven directly by the data insights gained via UK Plastics Pact reporting.

2020 and beyond

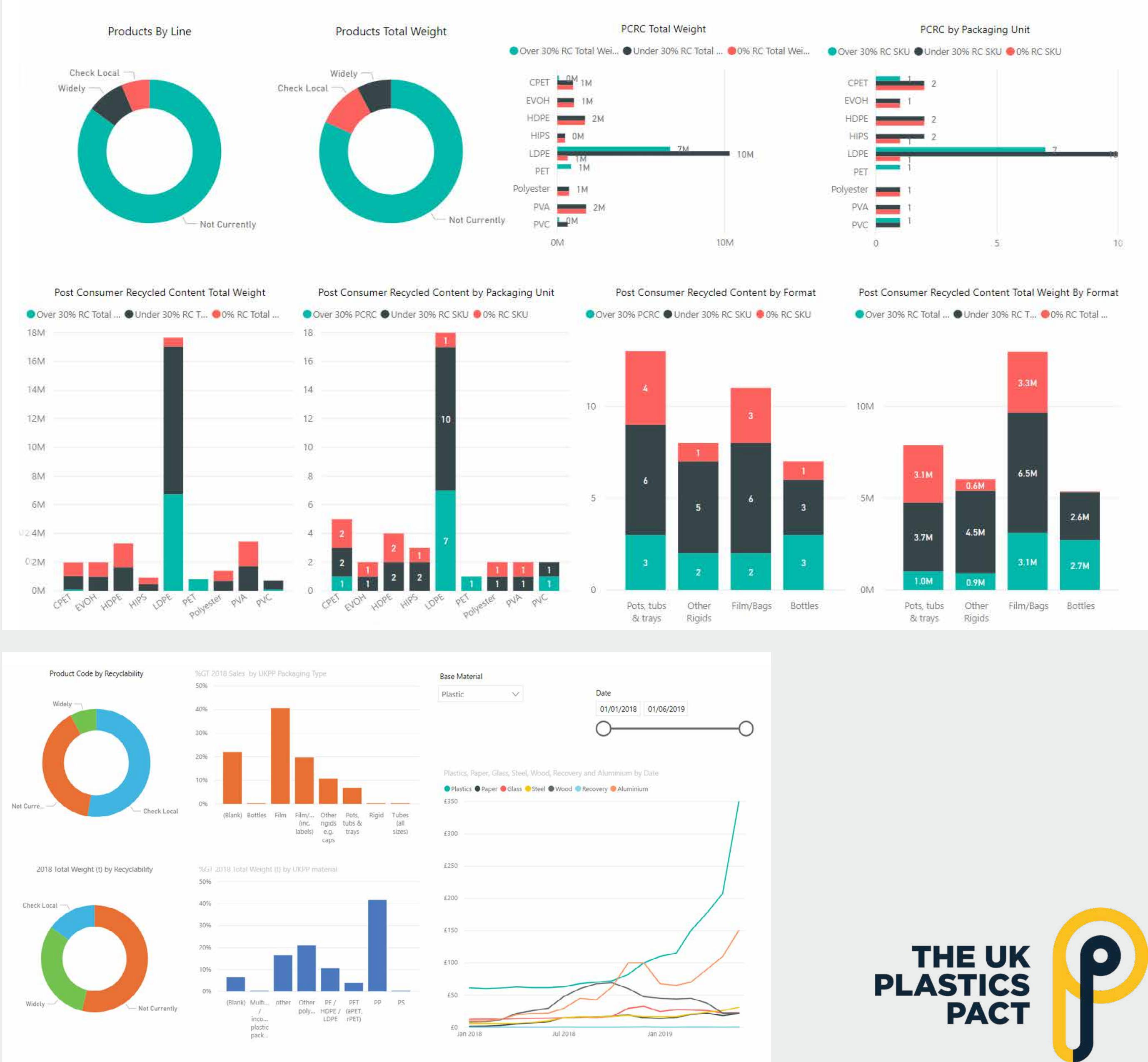
Since we began assisting members with UK Plastics Pact reporting in 2018, it has become clear that data sets are improving in clarity as we progress year-on-year along the pathway to the targets, building on efficiencies and realising more opportunities. For those starting out on the journey, our advice is to start with fixing the known problems and work on the gaps as you find them to ensure steady progress is made.

We will continue to contribute to the Collaborative Action Groups, sharing our insights on the recycling industry and our learnings from the many awareness campaigns we have initiated over the years. We will also continue to support and promote WRAP consumer campaigns, such as Recycle Week and the consumer facing recyclenow.com website, not to mention the new Clear on Plastics campaign and other UK Plastics Pact communications that will help consumers make better decisions regarding their plastic use and disposal.

“As The UK Plastics Pact has such clear targets, using members’ data we can track their progress against the targets. We can highlight problem packaging that members should focus their efforts on, and create dashboards that can help internal teams visualise the best and worst performing packaging categories. These tools are here to help UK Plastics Pact members create the change that the Pact aims to bring.”

Anna Ford, Client Data Analyst at Ecosurety

Bespoke reporting dashboards created for Ecosurety members



Public speaking

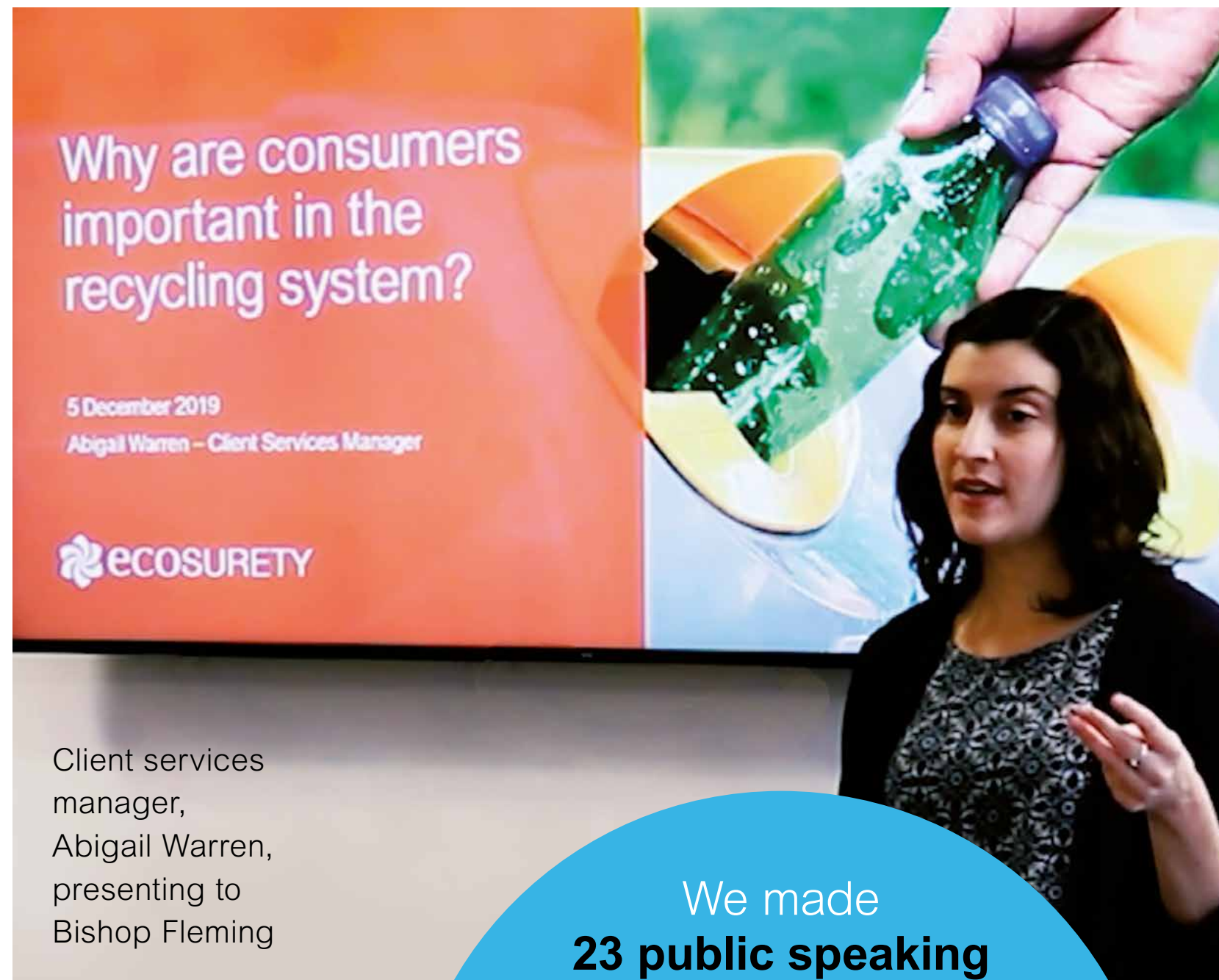
Sharing our views and inspiring other people to act

We have always been committed to drive best practice, question the status quo and inspire others to take positive action. This is why we embrace the many opportunities that arise to speak at industry events throughout the year. In 2019 we have naturally continued this commitment, but stepped it up a gear, reaching new audiences with more members of our team.

From our CEO and head of policy, all the way through to our account managers and procurement team, it is important for us to recognise the experts across our team. We try our best to harness their enthusiasm and passion to share knowledge, promoting change for the greater good of the industry, in front of new audiences. Here is a summary of what they got up to.

Influencing our industry to think differently

Our team participated in seven panel discussions and delivered 13 talks at industry events, covering a breadth of topics including Extended Producer Responsibility, the future of the PRN System, Deposit Return Schemes, a packaging compliance fee and the future of WEEE and batteries compliance. The events themselves included a range from CIWM Resourcing the Future, RWM and LetsRecycle Live through to a LARAC conference and the House of Commons event to celebrate the success of the **#LeedsByExample** campaign.



Client services manager, Abigail Warren, presenting to Bishop Fleming

We made **23 public speaking appearances in 2019**, double the number of those made in 2018. They ranged from industry events and sustainability festivals to invitations to speak to employees within other businesses.

Our objectives? To share our views with a wide audience about how we can improve the system we work in, to inspire stakeholders in the industry to take action now rather than wait for legislative change, to foster collaboration and influence government, including testing ideas that can go on to inform future government decisions.

Inspiring our community to act and make an impact

In 2019 we also delivered talks outside of the resources and waste industry. Why? To inspire citizens in our community to think about their role in the recycling system and help them realise that they are an important cog in the system – without their contribution the system could not work. Following practical training, it was also a great opportunity for members of our team who had not spoken at external events before to debut their speaking skills and knowledge in front of a new audience.

In September, client data specialist Anna Ford presented the talk 'Making an impact on recycling: Increasing quality, quantity & trust' as part of a Circular Economy and Behaviour Change seminar at the Festival of Sustainable Business in Bristol. This was a huge success and resulted in local accountancy business Bishop Fleming approaching us, with a request to present talks around sustainability issues to their employees in Bristol and Bath, which were successfully delivered by client services manager Abigail Warren and key account manager Dan Boyle.

“Just wanted to say thank you Abigail for your time yesterday. It was a really interesting presentation, feedback from everyone has been really positive and we hope to circulate it to the rest of our offices in due course.”

Joe Hillman, Bishop Fleming

The objectives of these talks were to make people think differently, to challenge pre-conceptions and explain the role of citizens in the recycling system and circular economy. By raising awareness of the importance of continuing to recycle, despite the horror stories of UK recycling being dumped in Malaysia or Poland, we hope that our team inspired and empowered others to think and act more circular.

The main messages of the talks included the importance of the waste hierarchy, how every time you shop you are casting your vote on sustainable products and packaging, and how little tweaks can have a big impact on your carbon footprint.

“The external speaker training that we had throughout the year was really useful and gave me the confidence to go and speak on the wider-topic of recycling to a completely different audience. Bishop Fleming were great hosts and we had a lot of discussion on the impact consumers can have on recycling”

Dan Boyle, Key account manager, Ecosurety

Small steps, big impact

Every talk our team gave is just another small step on our journey to influence citizens and industry stakeholders, whether it is about how individuals can be more sustainable, why industry needs to act now or how legislation should change in the future. Small steps can lead to big change however, and they are certainly steps in the right direction.

Our team will continue to engage audiences in 2020 and if you would like to request a talk from us, please do get in touch.



Recycling evidence procurement

Examining the evidence: our journey towards increased traceability and transparency

Ecosurety's main objective as a producer responsibility compliance scheme is to ensure members remain compliant under UK law. However, we've not stopped here. For many years we have called for increased transparency in the recycling sector. With this in mind, we have worked to ensure the evidence that we source for our members is as traceable as possible in the current market.

This is particularly true for packaging evidence, secured through the PRN system. In 2017 we pledged to increase by 5% year-on-year the percentage of PRNs that we procure from UK reproprocessors. We did this on the basis that UK PRNs offer better traceability and transparency. They support the UK economy and help to grow domestic recycling infrastructure. Working with this target, we managed to accelerate from a 50% UK PRN figure in 2017 to an amazing 61% in 2018. However, significant changes in the PRN export market were to make our target to maintain 60% in 2019 far harder to achieve.

From 2018 onwards a series of major events shook up the UK and global recycling sectors. China – recipient of a significant proportion of our plastic waste - closed its doors to all recycling imports. This was followed by a number of undercover investigations into aspects waste and recycling sector, all providing uncomfortable but much needed awareness that our recycling export system was rife with fraud and error.

These events created a genuine fear for the future supply of PRNs. Due to fears about

Case study: Yes Recycling

Providing Buckinghamshire-based Yes Recycling with £100,000 of financial support has enabled them to purchase a wash process line which will increase its recycling capacity by 2,000 tonnes per year. This net contribution to the UK

recycling system will create thousands of new PRNs, thereby helping to address issues of supply and price that the entire recycling sector have been contending with over the last year.



“ We are all on the same page, trying to achieve the same things. Yet having one of our partners ask us “what do you need and how can we help?” was, nevertheless, still unexpected. Not only did they really mean that, James and the team then set about thinking up and delivering innovative solutions to remove growth roadblocks in our way. We are thrilled that Ecosurety, and the producers they represent, are enabling us to build significant and desperately needed UK recycling infrastructure.”

Omer Kutluoglu, Director, Yes Recycling

Case study: **Viridor**

Through the purchase of new PRNs from resource management company Viridor, Ecosurety supported the construction of the UK's largest multi-polymer plastic recycling plant in Avonmouth. When operational, the plant is expected to process 81,000 tonnes plastic in its first

year alone, providing a vital increase of traceable PRNs to UK producers. The project, as well as being a vital boost for recycling capacity in the UK, demonstrates the collective impact that compliance schemes can have when prioritising the purchase of UK-based evidence.



“ Viridor is investing £65m in the UK's largest multi-polymer plant at the Avonmouth Resource Recovery Centre near Bristol. This investment is underpinned by the demand for recycled plastic which is directly linked to the sustainability targets of manufacturers and consumer brands. This demand will also see Viridor replicate this innovation, infrastructure and expertise elsewhere in the UK in order to meet the increasing preference for recycled plastic in place of virgin material.”

Larisa Tabacaru, Commercial Manager Analytics & PRNs, Viridor

supply, prices soared. Plastic, for instance, which cost £40 per tonne in 2017 reached a peak of nearly £500 per tonne in 2019. Aluminium suffered similar price hikes. Competition for UK-based PRNs intensified as brands, keen to show the effort they were making to tackle the lack of transparency in the recycling sector, started to demand them. Coupled with the acquisition of new members pushing our PRN obligations higher, our UK PRN average dropped; in 2019 we sourced 54% of our PRNs from UK suppliers. While this figure still sits above the national UK PRN average of 47%¹, it is undeniably lower than the target of 60% which we had set for ourselves.

Aligning our objectives

The events that unfolded over 2019 forced us to recognise our 5% year-on-year UK PRN proportion target is no longer an achievable or relevant objective. As our scheme grows,

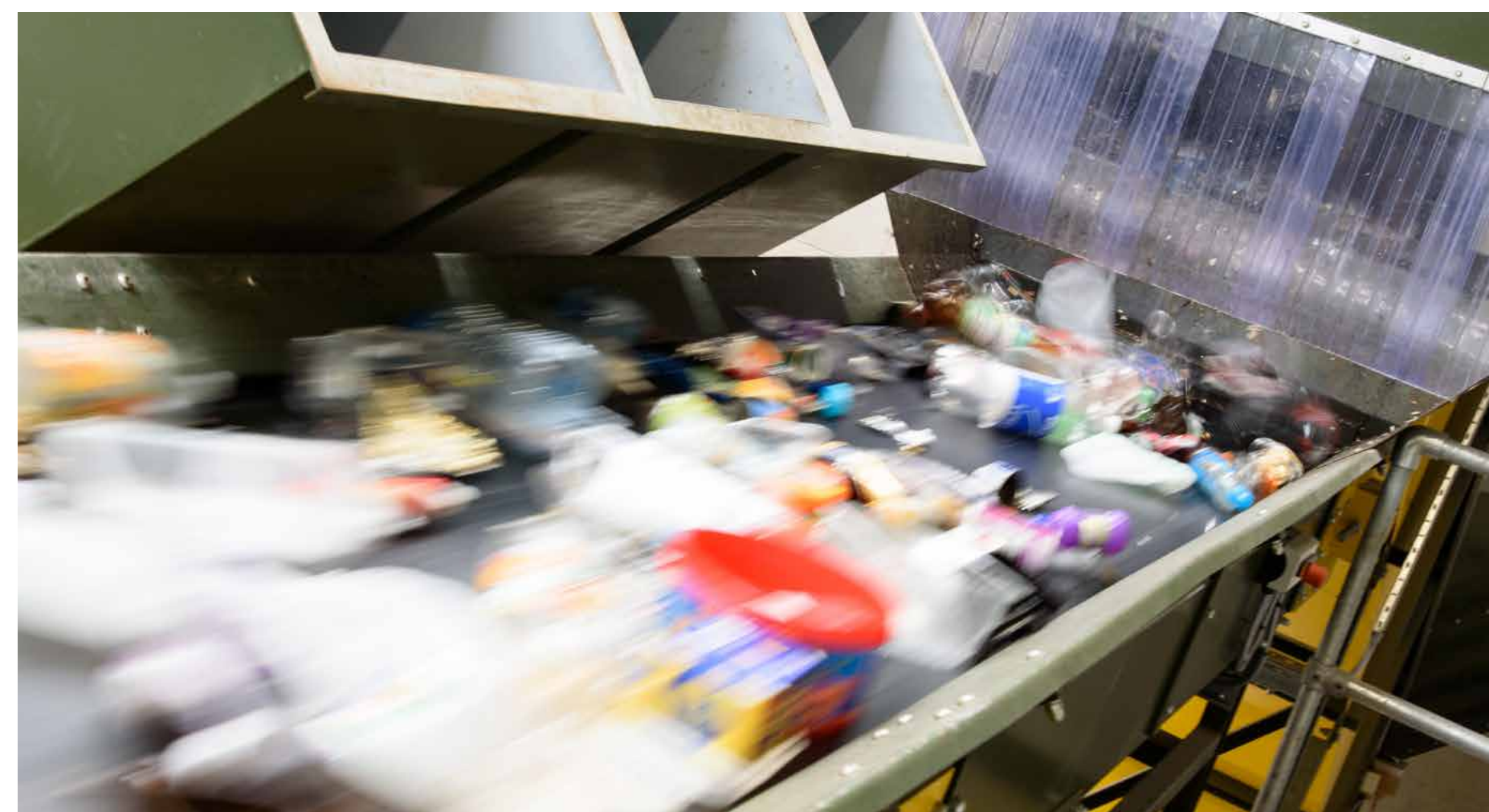
¹ *Figures provided by the **Environment Agency** (published 31.03.2020) omitted three packaging categories; glass remelt, wood and general. By removing these three categories from our own PRN procurement figures, our average drops to 52% UK PRNs - slightly lower but still sitting above the national average of 47%.

our ambition to deliver increasing proportions of UK evidence becomes more complex to achieve. This is largely down to the fact that the number of UK PRNs produced each year does not grow as fast as our members' obligations. There are simply not enough new UK PRNs available in the market to match the increase in demand for domestic evidence.

Going forwards we will continue to prioritise traceable and transparent recycling evidence, building lasting relationships with reprocessors in the UK, but also abroad. We also remain committed to supporting our own economy and sector, and will continue to work with innovators and reprocessors that are building capacity and improving traceability here in the UK.

Supporting innovation and growth

This commitment is already underway. In 2019 Ecosurety supported a number of UK projects working to increase the amount of PRNs available. This includes Yes Recycling, a Yorkshire based complex polymer waste plant. We also purchased PRNs to support



Viridor's new plastic recycling plant in nearby Avonmouth.

The sky-high PRN prices we have experienced in 2019 illustrate the flaws in our existing EPR system. Over the last two years we have worked with key industry stakeholders to lobby the Government for EPR reform. In 2019 we saw results; the Government launched a consultation on the reform of the packaging producer responsibility system in the UK. Ecosurety responded to this consultation, proposing a new governance model that enables the UK to address the limitations of its existing EPR system as part of a transition to a more circular economy. Changes to our EPR system are expected to be introduced in 2023. Until then, we remain a vocal supporter for reform so that a fairer, more transparent recycling system can be created for all.

Finally, in November 2019 we launched the Ecosurety Exploration Fund. Designed to provide essential financial support for research and innovation projects that are tackling the negative impact of packaging, batteries or e-waste on the environment, the Ecosurety Exploration Fund will run for three years, with a total of £1million being ring-fenced for original, brilliant and impactful projects being developed by companies across the UK, including reprocessors - but also charities, not-for-profits and academic institutions. **Read more about the Ecosurety Exploration Fund here.**

We're on a journey

2019 has been a journey for us. We've had to adjust our understanding of how impactful change can be achieved in the recycling sector. We've been forced to reflect on the genuine positive impact our procurement targets will have. While we will continue to assess the impact that our targets have, we're confident the new course we set for ourselves in 2020 will be bold and ambitious with increased traceability and transparency in the whole recycling sector at its heart.

joinmyjourney

Sharing our journey sharing platform with a whole city

joinmyjourney started out life as a local CSR project delivered by our team in 2015, an online journey sharing platform that we developed and shared with our local business park for free, making it available to 8,000 employees and 100 businesses. It couldn't have happened without the support of South Gloucester Council, who also helped us share it with more organisations and Local Authorities across the South West.

Since 2015 it gained the support of four Local Authorities and now boasts over 30 hub sites across the South West of England that hundreds of organisations are signed up to, making it accessible to nearly 100,000 commuters – an increase of 1150% since it first launched. Ecosurety members across the UK are also taking advantage of joinmyjourney, especially as it is available for free to our gold members.

The premise is simple. Once an organisation signs up and their dedicated joinmyjourney site is created, employees register using their workplace email address. Next they simply enter the starting location of their commute and select the destination from a list of present locations of their employers sites. They are then instantly shown their commute on a map, with all the other commuters they could be sharing with displayed as pins along their route. Clicking one of these pins enables the employee to message the potential journey sharer to start the conversation about how they could be sharing a journey. Based on Google Maps, the system is reliable, accurate and can be used anywhere in the world.

Journey sharing does not necessarily mean car sharing either. joinmyjourney allows cyclists and walkers to partner up too, encouraging nervous first-time cyclists to buddy up with someone more experienced and to encourage those who are put off walking home in the dark on their own to find others to share their commute with.

In 2018 we added an admin area so organisations could track the number of employees who have signed up and their potential CO₂ savings and access marketing materials to help drive user engagement.

Making a city-wide impact in Bristol

In June 2019 we were thrilled to have struck a deal with Bristol City Council to create a network of 15 joinmyjourney hub-sites across the city, at a cost that delivers very substantial savings for Bristol City Council, compared to using a commercial car share scheme. Each new hub-site will be available for free to every organisation in the local vicinity and they will start launching in 2020. Based in strategic locations, the aim is that the hub-sites will benefit as many organisations and employees as possible in Bristol.

Aware of the problem that not all employees have a workplace email address that is used to register for joinmyjourney, for example staff working in warehouse or factory environments, we have again collaborated with Bristol Council to develop a solution. Kicking off at

the end of 2019 and due to roll out in early 2020, this new feature of joinmyjourney will enable organisations to whitelist specific, non-workplace email addresses. This will allow joinmyjourney to be used by even more organisations and employees and is due to be trialed in the Avonmouth area of Bristol soon.

“As project manager for joinmyjourney it is heartening to see the continued support for the platform many years after it launched, enabling it to develop and ultimately to reach and benefit thousands more commuters. It all adds up to more sustainable journeys being taken and less CO₂ in the atmosphere.”

Ben Luger, Marketing communication specialist, Ecosurety

Can you join our journey?

Looking ahead, we are excited to see the new hub-sites roll out across our home city and the impact that will bring. We are also keen to share joinmyjourney with our own members - indeed joinmyjourney is available for free for any Ecosurety member on our gold membership package and several have taken advantage of this in 2019. If you would like to find out more, simply ask your account manager for more details.



A new deal with Bristol Council in 2019 is set to launch **fifteen new joinmyjourney sites** across the city at no cost to local businesses or commuters.

joinmyjourney is available to nearly **100,000 commuters** across the South West for free

A new feature being developed will **enable employees without workplace email addresses** to access joinmyjourney.

joinmyjourney is available for **free to all Ecosurety members** on the Gold membership package – ask your account manager for more details.



Polytag

Trialing the future of a packaging circular economy

In 2019 we backed a real-world trial of a new, cutting edge 'tag and trace' household recycling technology called Polytag. Put simply, it is an enabling technology which facilitates brand owners to move into the Circular Economy through greater engagement with consumers, regulators and recyclers. The technology has the potential to limit the brand owners' packaging recycling liability and allow them to increase the use of recycled materials in their packaging whilst collecting rich datasets.

How does Polytag work?

Using a unique printing system, a unique Product Assigned Code is placed onto pre-identified packaging when it is manufactured. Much like a fingerprint, this code is completely

unique to the specific item of packaging. If the brand decides to engage with the consumer (via a bespoke app on a smartphone) the code can be printed on the visible spectrum. If the code is only to be used for recycling purposes, it can also be printed in the UV spectrum.

When consumers have finished with the packaging, they clean it and scan the code using a Polytag mobile app, enabling the brand to track the item of packaging. The packaging is then returned via an arranged collection by Polytag and sent to a Polytag-enabled reprocessor who can batch similar waste packaging thanks to the UV spectrum code, allowing same-batch processing of identical materials. Why does this matter? By batching identical items of used packaging, the reprocessor can output high-grade plastic pellets of specific, uncontaminated types to

be returned to the original participating brand for manufacture, which we hope could help limit exposure to future Extended Producer Responsibility for the brand.

The unique system allows for brands to communicate directly with their consumers about the lifecycle of their products and even allows for incentives to be given to the consumer to recycle. For recyclers meanwhile, working with pure feedstocks means a reduction in reprocessing processes and CO₂ emissions and brands can embrace a circular model for their plastic and aluminium packaging.

“With this trial, we have proven that the Polytag tag and trace data platform works at all levels, for the manufacturer, in a consumer environment and at recycling facilities. This encourages us to work on the next steps to develop the system to a commercial scale”.

Phil Sutton, Managing Director, Polytag.

The Ecosurety backed trial of the Polytag system had two objectives. Firstly, to test the Polytag platform through a consumer facing mobile app in the home environment and secondly, to collect qualitative and quantitative data on household recycling patterns and behaviours to assess the technology's potential.

A dedicated mobile app allows consumers to scan and track their recycled packaging and **has the potential for manufacturers to directly communicate** with them.

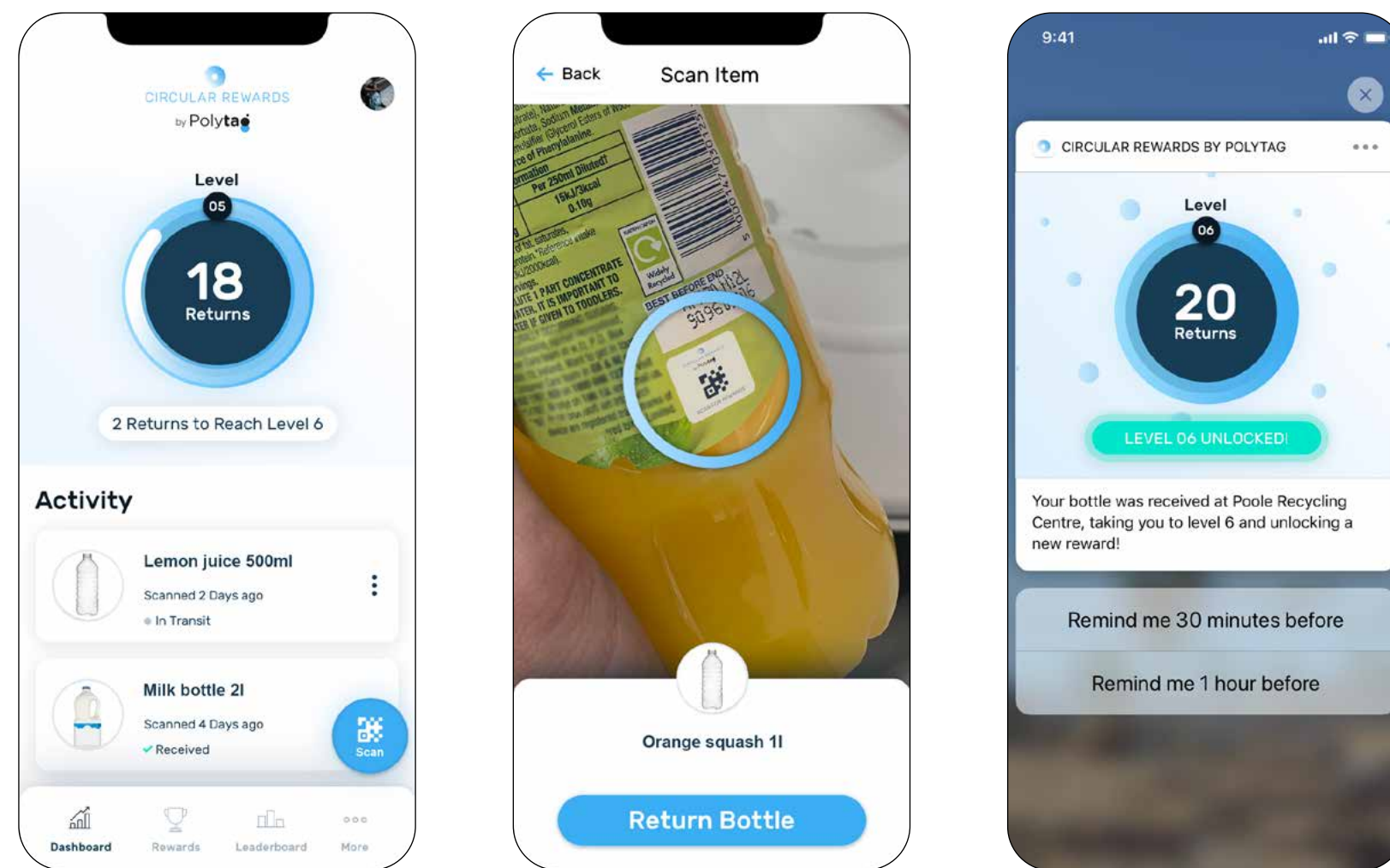
Polytag enables packaging to be **easily scanned and traced** throughout its life cycle, from production to recycling.

91.4% of items scanned by the consumers successfully reached the Polytag facility.

How was the trial set up?

Between 25 October and 7 December 2019, a 50-day community trial part-funded by Ecosurety tested the real-world viability of the Polytag technology. In total 50 households in South Wirral and Greasby received two “Polytagged” new standard care products to use, one shower cream in a plastic bottle and one deodorant in an aluminium can. They were also given a Polytag reusable collection bag, an Android phone loaded with the Polytag app, as well as a leaflet with instructions on how to participate to the trial. The incentive to participate was a £500 donation to Greasby Infant School on behalf of participating households.

Over 50 days,
50 households participated in the trial, each receiving two tagged products to use, scan and recycle.



The Polytag app was used to scan the used product packaging before they were placed in the designated bag and left out for collection by Polytag. All other plastic and aluminium packaging from the household could also be placed in the bag.

The Polytag team collected the bags on a weekly basis during the trial with the collected materials photographed and recorded for analysis. Once received by the Polytag Deeside facility and scanned again, the app informed the consumer the Polytag items were ready to be recycled.

The results

By the end of the 50-day trial, 70% of the tagged products were consumed and scanned by participants via the app. The remaining 30% of products not scanned can be attributed to the fact that they were either still in use and not ready for collection, or the household did not fully participate in the trial.

Of the tagged products that were successfully scanned at home, 91.4% successfully reached the Polytag facility to be scanned by the recycler. The 8.6% leakage rate could

be attributed to several reasons, most likely because the householder did not place the item out for collection after scanning it.

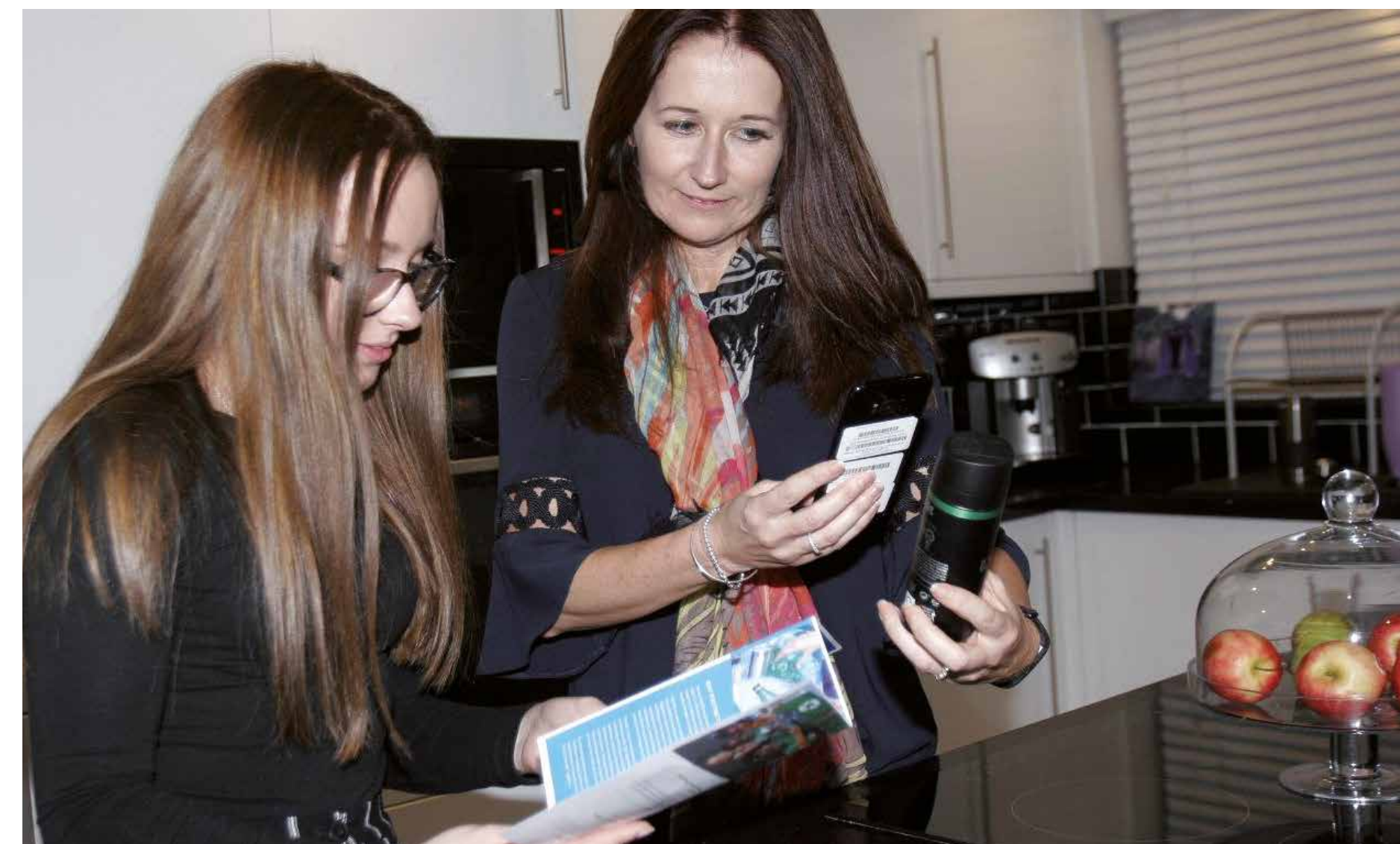
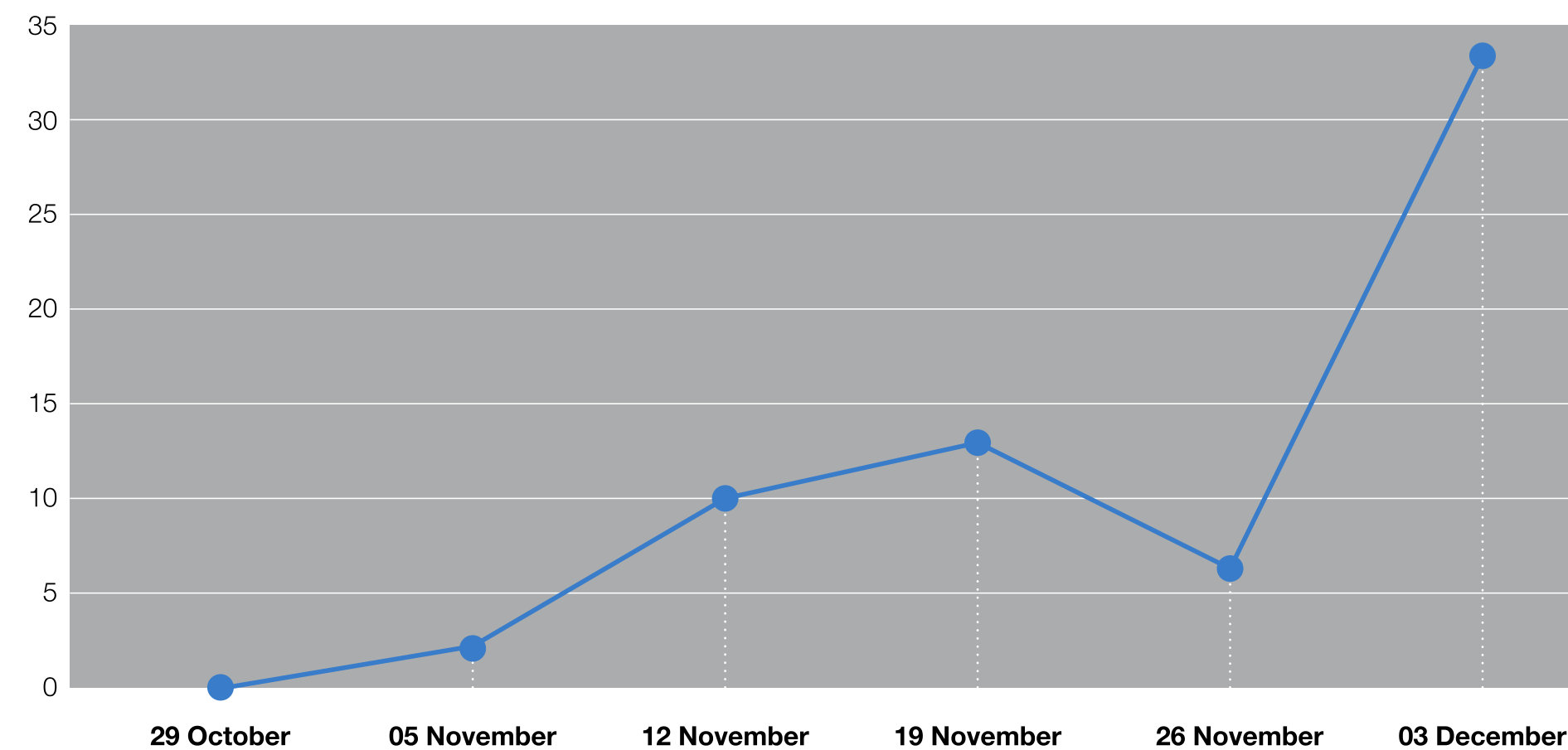
In addition to the tagged items, 998 other non-tagged items of packaging were also collected as part of the trial at the same time, gathering qualitative and quantitative information on recycling patterns and showing what sort of data the system will be collecting once it's operative.

Learning and next steps

Overall the trial has been a success as it has validated the technology and has provided real-world proof-of-concept and additional analysis will help to clarify further the reasons for the collection and leakage rates. Polytag is now sharing the results with manufacturers and is embarking on a funding campaign to scale up the platform to take it to a commercial scale.

In future tests, the app will be an open one, so that participants can use their own phone in order to avoid people missing notifications or forgetting to scan the product before collection.

Polytagged products returned by week



“After seeing the Blue Planet series, as a family we really started to consider what happens to our packaging after use, the Polytag app helped us to better understand how to recycle more efficiently and how we could all contribute to a healthier environment”.

The McKellar family, participating household to the Polytag trial.

PolyMet

Transforming low-value coloured plastic into high-value recyclate

The PolyMet project is a collaborative two-year study into the commercialisation of technology that can remove the pigment from coloured plastic recyclates, without destroying the original polymers. Led by project lead Impact Solutions and with contributors including recycling specialists Impact Recycling, injection moulder McLaren Plastics and Ecosurety, the project attracted £0.8m funding from Innovate UK at the end of 2018.

Waste coloured plastic traditionally has a low market value due to several factors, including problems detecting it using automated sorting equipment and the fact that mixed coloured recyclate will produce a dull brown/grey end-product that is unsuitable for new packaging. For this reason, in the UK an estimated 1 million tonnes of low-grade coloured waste plastics end up in landfill or incinerators every year¹, with more virgin plastic material used instead of its recycled counterpart.

The holy grail has been to find a solution that can strip the colour from used plastic packaging without altering the integrity of the plastic material, enabling it to be sold on and used as high-grade recyclate, equal in quality and application to virgin plastic. Incredibly, removing the colour and producing a colourless raw material through this process has the potential to increase its value five times over.

¹ DS Smith: Closing the loop on black plastic ready-meal trays

The PolyMet process is planned to be commercialised **by the end of 2020**



Removing the colour from waste plastic can make it a **viable alternative to virgin material** and could increase its value five-fold.

It is estimated that over **1 million tonnes** of coloured plastic packaging are landfilled or incinerated every year¹.

A variety of pigments have been **successfully removed from PP and PE plastics** using a cheap and non-toxic environmentally friendly solvent.

The PolyMet project set out to develop a commercially scalable, low-cost process to remove the pigment that could be easily incorporated into virtually any existing reprocessing facility. In 2017 Ecosurety backed the initial proof-of-concept research that led to this current two-year project, and is now acting as a key consultant to build up a network of partners who wish to ensure their packaging is compatible with the new technology, along with reprocessor partners who will be involved in the initial field tests.

“The PolyMet project presents a unique opportunity to transform the value of waste coloured plastic, by returning it to a colourless state with minimal environmental impact. In 2020 we are exploring ways to scale up our technology and bring it from the lab bench to a commercial scale.”

Emmeline Aves, Impact Solutions

Exciting results in year one

With the first half of the two-year project now complete, the results have been extremely encouraging. Initial research identified the key plastic types and target pigments for the project to prioritise, to ensure maximum industry impact. This was followed by research into end user and regulatory requirements to ensure the PolyMet process would output usable, high-value and optimal quality material. Next, research into pigments and solvents was undertaken, including solubility, thermal stability and recovery tests, and a bespoke laboratory test rig was designed and constructed.

In the initial trials that followed, the process successfully removed a wide range of pigments, each with their own specific chemical composition, qualities and behaviour, from Polyethylene (PE) and Polypropylene (PP) plastics, two of the most common plastics used today. Many mechanical processes and solvent types have been carefully trialled and assessed, with a cheap, non-toxic and readily available solvent now identified as the optimal chemical to use.

Looking ahead to the final year of the project

In the final half of the project in 2020, the focus for testing will be shifting to Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) plastic, the most common thermoplastic polymer resin commonly used for food and drink containers. Treatment of the resultant pigment sludge extracted from the plastics will also be investigated, including applications for it to be reused rather than disposed of. Coupled with solvent recovery, the aim is for the process to be as low-impact and high-yielding as possible.

Efforts will also be applied to scale up the process from the existing small-scale laboratory test-rigs to a demonstration pilot test rig and partner McLaren Plastics will start trials using the master batches produced by the tests, exploring if there are any detrimental effects on their moulding materials.

Ecosurety meanwhile will be playing a key role in 2020 to liaise with a variety of producer and reprocessor partners, offering them early insights and access to the process whilst requesting key data that will enable the project to be commercialised. If you would like to be involved in this exciting breakthrough project, please **contact our team for more information**.

PRN market tracker

Providing full visibility to Ecosurety members of unprecedented market performance

In March 2019 we launched a new online tool for members of the Ecosurety packaging compliance scheme, a PRN market tracker that is updated daily and displays year-to-date average prices across all materials.

Giving our members as live a feed as possible on the market performance of the eight packaging materials has been critical in 2019, more so than for any other year. 2019 was a year that saw plastic PRN prices peak from a low of £100 to a high of nearly £500, whilst aluminium PRNs easily broke through the £500 barrier, from a low of less than £90 at the beginning of the year.

The PRN market had never been so volatile and producers placing aluminium or plastic packaging on the market were suddenly faced with unprecedented compliance costs, around 4.5 times higher than the previous year, exceeding the amount their business had budgeted for many times over.

What was driving this escalation in the market? Plastic in particular fell victim to China shutting their doors to waste exported by other countries, exported waste that was all too often low quality and contaminated. Quite rightly, China decided that whilst quality plastic feedstock is a valuable resource, shipping containers of mixed-rubbish purporting to be quality material ready for recycling, is not. Due to the UK's long-reliance on exporting our waste (approximately 50% of our recycling is shipped abroad), our domestic infrastructure did not have enough capacity to process all our own waste after China shut the door, indeed the debate continues around how the UK can increase its own capacity to a sufficient level.

This caused the market to succumb to a level of worry that there would not be enough supply of recycling evidence for producers to meet the demand. It caused a spike in PRN prices to £500 in September 2019 as panic really

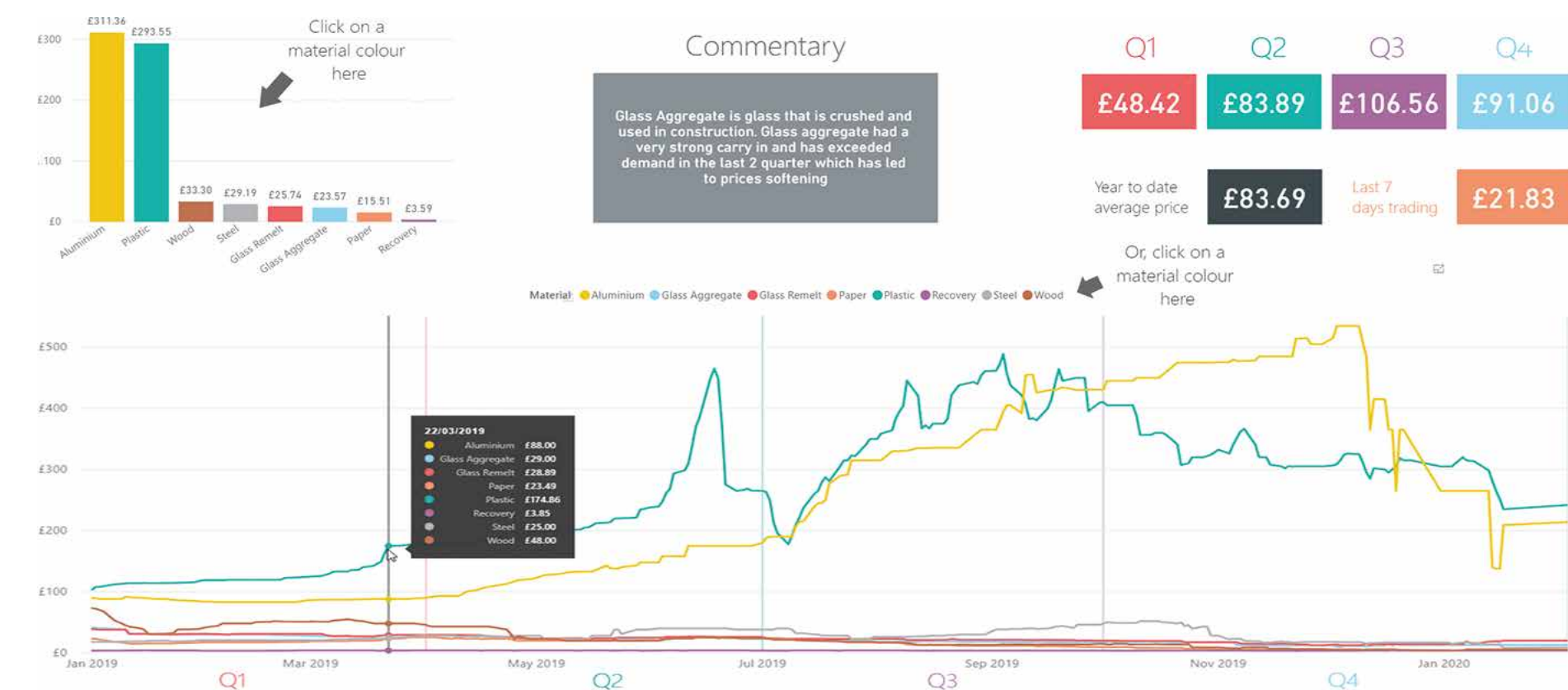
took hold, fuelled by industry commentary that non-compliance for the UK was now considered a real risk.

Aluminium meanwhile saw an increase in packaging placed on the market leading to higher producer obligations, which coupled with a significant slowdown in the amount of material being recycled led to a perfect storm of price increases. This continued through to early December when prices finally tumbled. Ultimately the UK reached compliance in all materials in 2019, but it was an unwelcome and bumpy ride for many, a ride that reached unprecedented heights and for the first time caused the issue of compliance costs to take centre stage in the board room of a great many producers.

Impact

Hosted in the Ecosurety members' area and visible to all packaging scheme members 24/7, the PRN market tracker received over 2,700 visits in 2019, with some large producers visiting daily to monitor the rise and fall of PRN costs.

Commentary in the PRN market tracker was regularly updated by the Ecosurety procurement team, providing our members with the background behind the market performance of every material. Altogether, the tracker enabled compliance contacts within producer organisations to have full visibility of the PRN price trends, including daily prices and average year-to-date costs, allowing them to provide tangible evidence to their senior management for an explanation of price increases whenever requested.



“ I have been using the tracker regularly and it has been a valuable tool to support my understanding and knowledge of the market activity. It has aided discussions across Co-op and allowed me to share information in an easy to read format, I can now ‘pick out’ the challenge areas (i.e. plastic, aluminium pricing) and mould the topics of discussion appropriately with my stakeholders on a much more proactive basis. This has driven improved forecasting and budgeting into 2020. I plan to continue to use the tool and look forward to additional functionality Ecosurety plan to build.”

Nadeen Roe,
Procurement category manager, Co-op

For our client services team the impact was equally beneficial as the tracker aided transparent and honest conversations with our members about their increasing compliance costs.

Learning and next steps

The message has been loud and clear from our members - providing full transparency of compliance market costs is key for them, especially when those costs are so volatile. The alternative is a shock invoice arriving with little warning or insight about the higher costs, something that simply does not make good business sense.

The PRN market tracker continues to be developed to add greater value for our members, with new features set to be rolled out in 2020.

“ To be able to demonstrate the volatility of 2019's prices in a visual and interesting way has been invaluable from a communications perspective. The PRN market is a complicated one. Using tools like this helps us upskill our membership base and keep them informed and as up to date as possible. It's very easy to make things complex, it's much harder to keep things simple.”

Kester Byass,
Key account manager, Ecosurety

Compliance costs for some packaging producers increased on average **4.5 times** in 2019, compared to 2018.

The Ecosurety PRN market tracker has for the first time enabled **daily monitoring** of evidence costs and has made **transparent communications** about PRN prices possible for producers.



Poly Roger is the second punt in the world to be made from **99% recycled plastic**. Poly-Mer was the first!

[Click here](#) to find out more



In 2019 Ecosurety achieved its highest **employee satisfaction rate of 85%**

The Ecosurety team

Making an impact through our workforce

Our staff are our greatest asset who ensure that day in and day out, Ecosurety leads the field with a fresh and disruptive approach. We work hard to develop and nurture our team and have been accredited with Investors in People Gold since 2016, but that is only the start of the story.

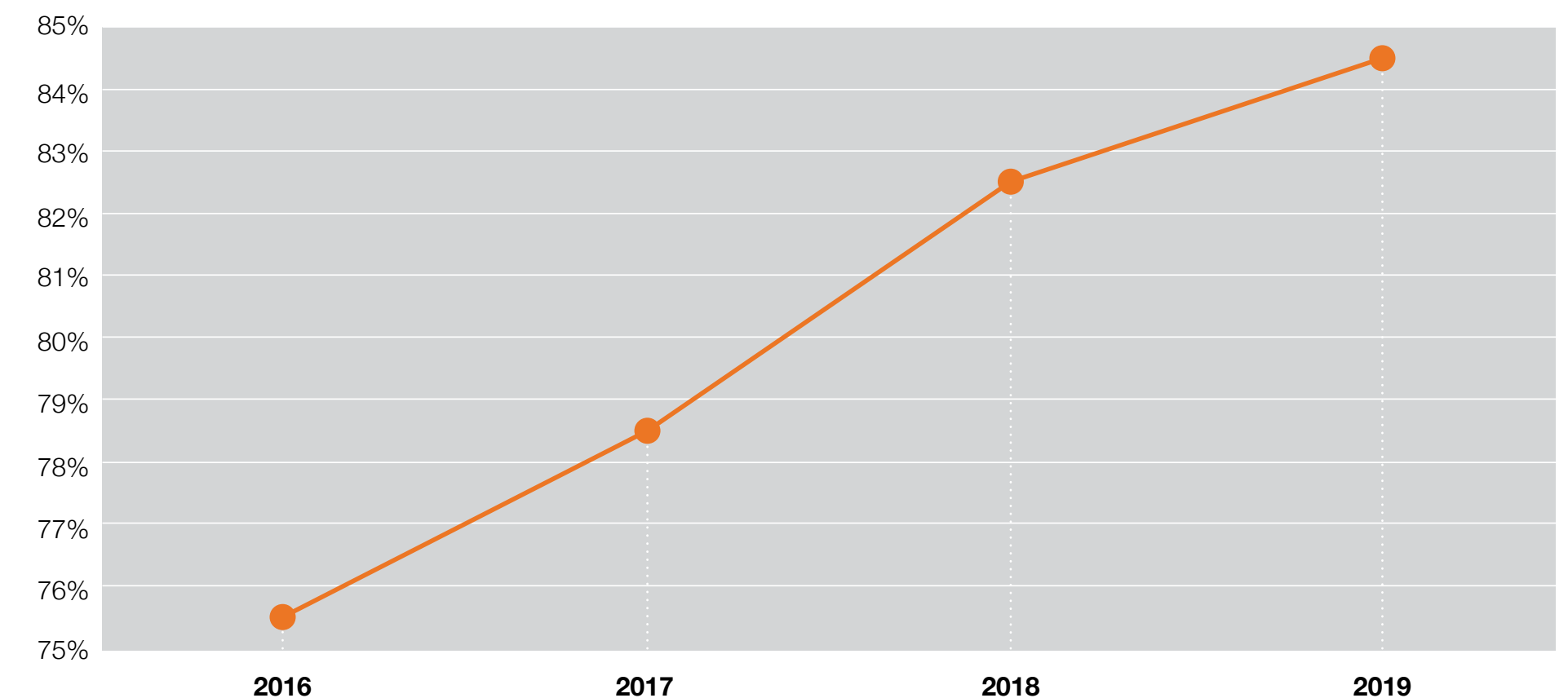
A huge amount of effort is made to provide an environment and culture that enables our team to perform at their best. Flexible working, self-directed access to training and development and volunteer days are just some of the reasons why our team value working for Ecosurety. A high level of engagement with our impact activities is also the key to our success, to both attract and retain the best employees.

“At Ecosurety we realise the key to an engaged workforce are the little things. Flexible working, a collaborative culture and enabling people to find a purpose in their work are all factors that make a huge difference to our team, ensuring we build and retain an industry leading, high performing workforce.”

Luke Hutchison, Head of HR at Ecosurety

Every year we run a comprehensive employee satisfaction survey that enables us to monitor

Employee satisfaction score



where we are succeeding, and most importantly, where we need to improve. Our overall employee satisfaction score has improved year on year since 2016 and we are pleased to say that we achieved our highest ever score in 2019 of 85%.

Digging a little deeper we can reveal how each area of assessment was ranked by our employees. The ranking of the mission and purpose of Ecosurety has increased year-on-year with our team, achieving a high score of 88% in 2019, demonstrating the high level of engagement by our staff to make a 'change for good' and a positive impact on UK recycling. Quality of life, job satisfaction and management style also all ranked with respectively 91%, 88% and 88%.

For the first time we have also decided to publish our employee gender balance statistics (shown on the next page). With less than 100 employees, percentage results inevitably make any gender imbalance very visible. This is particularly true of our board where the number of positions is limited. However, we are keen to transparently report on our journey to date.

Learning and next steps

We will continue to offer high quality support for all our employees to ensure we attract and retain the best talent in the industry and will continue to monitor our progress towards a balanced workforce, identifying room for improvements wherever possible.

“ Taking part in the plastic fishing trip aboard the Poly-Roger was a real eye-opener. You think you know all about the problems of litter and plastics in the environment, but to personally fish it out of our waterways was sobering, in terms of the quantity and the many types of material that would not breakdown for decades.”

Erika Bunao,
Account manager, Ecosurety



Making an impact beyond our day-to-day jobs

It is Ecosurety policy that members of the team can spend up to three days per year volunteering for a cause or organisation of their choice. Here’s a selection of what our team chose to support in 2019.

Poly-Roger plastic fishing trip

In 2017 environmental charity Hubbub and Canary Wharf College launched **Plastic Fishing** to raise awareness of litter and remove items of plastic waste from London’s Docklands. The waste collected was used to manufacture a new boat dedicated to the cause called Poly-Mer, the world’s first punt

made from 99% recycled plastic. In the first 12 months alone Poly-Mer has taken over 1,000 people on fishing trips to collect over 1,250 plastic bottles.

In April 2019 a second plastic fishing boat was launched called the Poly-Roger which toured waterways around the UK including Manchester, Birmingham, Scotland and our home city of Bristol. Of course, our team had to get involved, so ten lucky volunteers set sail around Bristol docks to see what plastic litter they could catch.

The most common types of rubbish retrieved from the water included polystyrene (generally fast food trays and boxes), plastic bags, wrappers, cans, bottles and cigarette butts, resulting in buckets full of waste rescued

from the water. It was evident that not only consumer behaviour and a lack of care when eating and drinking on the go was to blame - even the rubbish that was disposed of in bins was causing a problem. Unfortunately, many bins were often full after a weekend, resulting in the waste deposited falling out and blowing into the street before eventually finding its way into the watercourse.

Catalyse Change

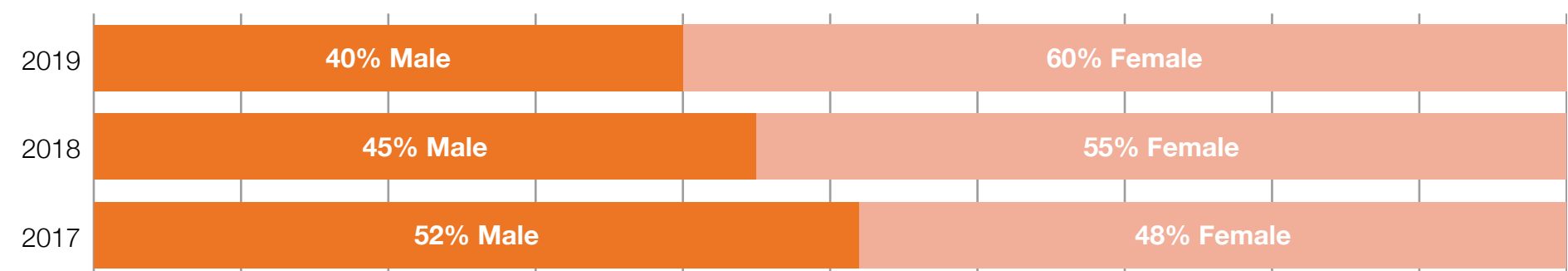
Our procurement manager Sue was busy in 2019 volunteering with a Bristol-based social enterprise called Catalyse Change, that supports girls and young women to develop sustainability skills and knowledge for healthy, happy and green communities, careers and planet.

Catalyse Change runs workshops and provides **mentoring to support girls and young women develop sustainability skills** for careers, communities and the planet.

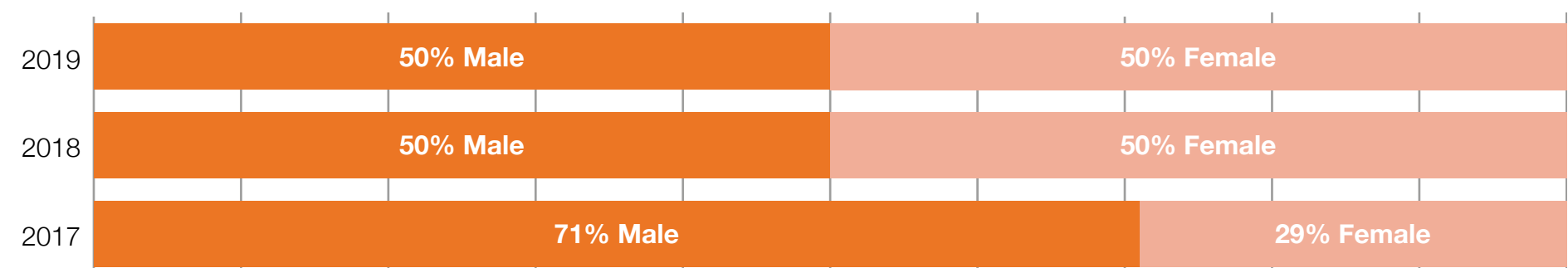
[Click here](#)
to find out more



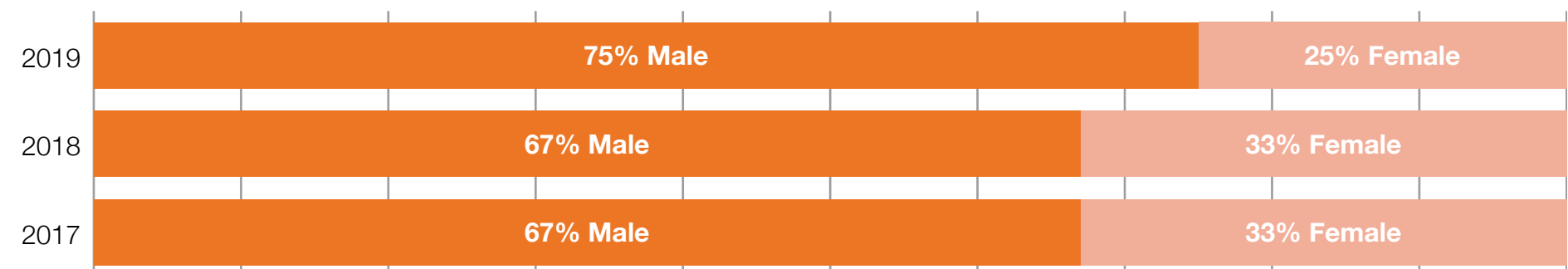
Gender balance of all employees



Gender balance of managers



Gender balance of directors



“ I believe it is important that females starting careers in sustainability have role models and support as gender inequality remains a key challenge. The one take away I gained from this volunteering is that we all have something to offer - it is essential that we nurture and support the future generation.”

Sue Nolan,
Procurement manager, Ecosurety

Why the focus on girls and young women? Gender inequality remains a challenge in Britain, and women continue to be under-represented in leadership roles, especially ones that influence policy. To pave the way to a more equal future, Catalyse Change run

Bootcamp, an inspiring and empowering programme for women aged between 14 and 24 years old. The aim is simple, to provide those that attend with the inspiration, confidence, skills and mentors to make a positive difference. It is aimed squarely at those who are interested in a career in sustainability but who aren't sure how to achieve it.

As part of her volunteering, Sue attended a training course and is now mentoring one of

the course attendees, putting into practice her belief that females starting careers in sustainability should have role models and the support they require to succeed.

Marine Conservation Society - Beachwatch

Client data analyst Anna spent a day with the Marine Conservation Society Beachwatch event at Clevedon near Bristol, undertaking

a thorough beach clean and survey. In 2019 alone, the Marine Conservation Society organised 437 beach cleans and litter surveys across the UK, with over 10,800 volunteers.

Being a seasoned beach clean volunteer, Anna highly recommends these events as they are really well organised and you gain the satisfaction of making an immediate impact on the environment, not only in terms of litter but in gathering key data too. As part of a quarterly clean-up, in two specific 100m²

areas of Clevedon beach front the volunteers recorded everything that was collected, as part of the ongoing beach clean survey that measures the health of the water and beach over time. For the remainder of the beach front, the volunteers simply collected any non-natural items that littered the water or land.

“ We are seeing the effects of litter and poor waste management many, many years after the litter enters the environment. On a positive note, it is great to hear that participation in beach-cleaning is oversubscribed every time and that the average amount of litter found on UK beaches fell in 2019 compared to the previous year.”

Anna Ford,
Client data analyst, Ecosurety

Clevedon Food Bank

Katie, our international projects coordinator, spent three days volunteering with her local foodbank, to help families with children and the elderly who are struggling to obtain healthy food. Many of these people are faced with tough decisions on where to spend their money on a low-income budget. By volunteering at a food bank, it is possible to help families use their money to pay bills and other essential expenses, whilst still having access to healthy foods.

Katie spent two days in November and December 2019 sorting donations into product types and date order, weighing and documenting donations to report to the Charity Commission, helping to work through

Clevedon and District Foodbank provides **emergency food to people in crisis** and lunch for children from low-income families during school holidays

[Click here](#)
to find out more



a considerable backlog. Her final day was spent making Christmas hamper deliveries via churches and community centres.

“ Lending my time and organisational skills meant that the food bank was able to sort through a considerable backlog of donations, and my sorting enabled subsequent volunteers to pack parcels which made their way to those who needed them. Nobody is immune from financial hardship and I'd like to think a helping hand would be available if I ever needed it. It is important to give back if you can.”

Katie Nairne, International projects coordinator, Ecosurety

The Marine Conservation Society reported a **7% average decrease** in beach litter in 2019, compared to 2018

[Click here](#)
to find out more



What's next? Our 5 commitments for 2020

Throughout 2020 we will continue our focus on supporting collaboration, infrastructure, education and innovation projects that can bring tangible benefits to recycling and the environment. This has never been so critical as now, as society and the wider industry navigates the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis which has impacted every aspect of our lives.

We are in uncharted and challenging territory, but our commitment and resolve to make a tangible change for good is stronger than ever.

If you would like to find out more about **working with us to make a change for good in 2020**, please get in touch with our team by calling **0333 4330 370** or emailing **info@ecosurety.com**



1

We will
act now

Waiting for the regulations to instigate change is a truly wasted opportunity – we can all act now. We will continue to **test, showcase and support new ideas, concepts and projects** that can be scaled up to a wider level.

2

We will
work with policy makers

Central to our purpose is ensuring that the regulations, including the PRN system, are fit for purpose and that **compliance as an investment in recycling is the norm**, not an exception.

3

We will
initiate and support new recycling schemes

Whether the focus is on textiles, construction waste or nappies, we will **support new voluntary schemes that can have a meaningful impact** on how we deal with our resources, before EPR reform makes this mandatory.

4

We will
continue to raise awareness and inspire others to act

Initiating and supporting both small and large-scale awareness and behaviour change campaigns is critical to **ensure that citizens are empowered** to act sustainably.

5

We will
support and amplify innovation projects

The Ecosurety Exploration Fund is investing £1m over three years to support UK based innovation and research projects **reducing the impact of packaging, WEEE and batteries** on the environment.

AZTEC WEST

**RECYCLES
~~LATER~~
~~TOMORROW~~**

Now!

#RECYCLEWEEK 23 — 29 SEPT
#RECYCLEWEEK

Visit www.tiny.cc/ewaste-amnesty to make a difference this Recycle Week.
Recycling. It's in our own hands.

Aztec West recycles

Campaign powered by ecosurety

Aztec West
Business Park

Buildings 100 - 190 →

Building 300 →