

## **REDISCOVERING THE CIVIC AND ACHIEVING BETTER OUTCOMES IN PUBLIC POLICY**

### **Policy Briefings Number 1**

**Title:** How to Get Those Recycling Boxes Out: A Randomised Controlled Trial of a Door to Door Recycling Service

#### **Brief Description of the Project:**

- A randomised controlled trial (RCT) in partnership with EMERGE, a not-for-profit organisation which delivers a weekly kerbside recycling service in Trafford. This is the first RCT to examine the impact of a recycling canvassing campaign over time.
- Recycling participation rates for 6580 households were measured by observing bin set out rates over a three week period.
- Half of the streets in the area were randomly assigned to be canvassed. Half of the streets were placed in a control group and received no special attention.
- All households in the canvass group were visited by canvassers who were trained to promote and encourage recycling.
- Recycling participation rates for all households were measured after the canvassing campaign and then again three months later to see if the intervention had been effective in raising participation rates.

#### **Key Findings:**

- Recycling rates overall were lower in the more deprived areas
- A door-to-door canvassing campaign can raise recycling in the short term by 5%, compared to a control group, although the effect drops to 2% three months later.
- The canvassing campaign was more successful in the poorer areas than it was in the less deprived areas.

- The canvassing campaign was particularly successful in areas with a large ethnic minority population.
- Canvassing had less impact on streets where recycling rates were already very high
- The canvassing campaign cost £24.06 for each additional household that started recycling.

### Policy Relevance and Implications:

- A canvassing campaign can successfully raise participation in a kerbside recycling scheme by 5%.
- The effect is still there three months later, but is reduced to 2%. This might suggest that canvassing and other promotional campaigns be repeated regularly to reinforce the recycling message.
- Canvassing campaigns are likely to be most successful if targeted in:
  - streets with low baseline recycling rates, or
  - relatively deprived areas, or
  - areas of high population transience

### Further information available from:

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