

Love Food Hate Waste case study: Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester

Reducing food waste through community focussed initiatives



Image: The team working together with Children's Services at the Children's Centre

- **Target area:** Three wards in Worcester City and 8,774 households.
- **Campaign dates:** 1 February – 30 April 2011
- **Campaign partners:** Worcestershire CC, University of Worcester, WRAP, Love Food Hate Waste, Local shops, businesses, pubs, library, sports centre, churches, Worcester Community Housing, community centres, children's centres and 5 local schools.
- **Avoidable food waste per household per fortnight**
 - **pre campaign:** 3.33kg
 - **post campaign:** 2.84kg
- **Reduction in food waste post campaign: 14.7%**
- **Number of people engaged with face to face: 600**
- **Media:** Equivalent Advertising Value of £4,118
- **Campaign monitoring:** pre and post waste compositional analysis focusing on the overall amount of food waste produced.

WINNER of the 2011 LARAC BEST WASTE MINIMISATION OR PREVENTION PROJECT

Many local authorities and waste partnerships have run Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) activities over the last few years.

For budgetary reasons, most do not directly measure the quantity of food waste before and after this activity.

However, Worcestershire County Council did perform targeted compositional analysis before and after their work which showed that there was around 15% less avoidable food waste in the homes sampled, after the intervention (May 2011) compared to before (February 2011). Avoidable food waste per household per fortnight fell from 3.33kg to 2.84kg.

This demonstrates that LFHW campaigns can have a substantial impact on food waste over a relatively short period of time.

Introduction

Worcestershire County Council (WCC) decided to run a targeted LFHW campaign in a small geographical area with the help of nutrition students from the University of Worcester, utilising new community focussed initiatives, communications and promotions; resources were limited. Four students from the University of Worcester joined the project in November 2010 and assisted with the campaign planning and delivery, giving more than 320 hours of their time for free.



A primary school in the target area displayed a LFHW banner for the duration of the campaign. All five primary schools in the target area hosted road shows at collection time.

Activities:

Partnership working

More than 70 shops, businesses, pubs, churches, schools, community centres, medical centres, the sports centre and library all supported the campaign, displaying posters and leaflets. A number supported the campaign by housing unmanned displays. One local butcher donated meat for free for use at the cookery courses.

Cookery courses

Two 3 week cookery courses were held at the University in the food technology teaching room (provided free of charge). Students and council staff worked alongside a cookery teacher to deliver the classes; teaching residents how to cook some simple, healthy meals; reducing waste and saving them money at the same time. The recipes were adaptable and taught new skills, enabling participants to gain the confidence to prepare tasty meals from leftovers and make the most of their food. Feedback from participants was fantastic:

"I would like to say that I enjoyed the cookery course immensely, the only down side was that I missed the first week and that it was only a three week course. I found Monica and the Students Zoe and Jess most helpful the course gets you thinking of creative ways to use food and confidence in cooking and some top tips."

Localised advertising

The campaign was very focussed and utilised localised advertising to access the target audience.

- Parish/ City Council/ community magazines
- Adshels at supermarkets and billboard
- Life Channel - Adverts were played on the screens in the two Doctor's surgeries. The adverts were 60 seconds long and played four times an hour. Leaflets were left in the surgeries for those that wanted further information. These adverts are available on request from LFHW
- Door-drop of leaflets in two collection rounds
- Worcester Community Housing displayed posters and distributed leaflets to their residents in the target area
- 70 local businesses engaged with and displaying posters and/ or leaflets – and unmanned displays. A series of food specific cards were produced covering meat, fish, bread and fruit and vegetables. The leaflets were distributed to butchers, bakers and green grocers in the target area. These idea cards were designed by WCC and can be downloaded for free from www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/partners
- Big vinyl LFHW banners were displayed at the local Household Recycling Centre and on the railings of a local school.

Media Coverage

Regular press releases were issued to publicise various aspects of the campaign, for example road shows, cookery course. The releases have led to an Equivalent Advertising Value of £4,118 – this is the amount it would have cost had the same size adverts been placed in the local press. Three radio interviews were conducted on BBC Hereford and Worcester. Further coverage is expected following on the project winning the LARAC award.



Cookery Course in progress at the University

Zoe - work experience student

"I feel that from personal experience, interacting with the public on a one-to-one level allows for better communication. Although posters, leaflets and other advertising materials are useful aids, by liaising with the public during the road shows and cookery classes, we were able to... learn more about the public's view of reducing food waste. We could obtain opinions of both individuals and those collectively. It was a positive experience, being able to actually discuss the campaign with people face-to-face, allowing them to be actively involved (especially throughout the cookery classes). From observation, particularly during road shows, initial interest from one person, demonstrated through approaching us and asking about the campaign, seemed to spark intrigue in other members of the public, so that they followed suit! The campaign encourages a sense of community and not only enables people to make sensible food choices, but to also save money... All age groups and businesses can benefit from such a movement, as small changes amount to bigger ones."



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Results

The waste compositional analyses conducted to monitor the campaign have illustrated that the campaign was successful. The analyses focused on the overall amount of food waste produced, categorised into: Avoidable, Possibly avoidable, Unavoidable Food type, Packaging state.

Avoidable food waste has decreased from 3.33kg (per household per fortnight) pre campaign to 2.84kg post campaign, a decrease of 14.7%. Multiplied across the population in the target area this is a saving of 111.8 tonnes per year, a financial saving of £10,003.86 in waste disposal costs.

The success of this campaign will assist WCC in planning and implementing future campaigns in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

