

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
RW 32
Inquiry into recycling in Wales
Response from: Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC)



Committee Clerk,
Environment and Sustainability Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.

June 2014

Inquiry into Recycling in Wales

Thank you for the opportunity to present our initial response to the above.

These views are sent on behalf of the Local Authority Advisory Committee (LARAC). LARAC is an association of around 75% of UK local authorities, including 21 from Wales.

Our responses have been peer reviewed by members of LARAC's policy team and executive committee, and all LARAC members have been invited to comment. All contributions have been taken into account in drafting the points below.

We would be happy to give oral evidence to the inquiry, if invited.

If you have any queries on this response please contact me at paulquayle@monmouthshire.gov.uk or telephone 01633 644192.

Yours faithfully

Paul Quayle
LARAC Wales Representative



"Working for our members to be the voice of government on waste minimisation and recycling issues"

LOCAL AUTHORITY RECYCLING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GREEN GLASS

1. Clearly the variations in local authority waste recycling practice is, in part, an inevitable consequence of having 22, relatively small, local authorities – a matter being considered separately. At the inception of the Welsh Government all 22 authorities started from different baselines. However, that variation allows local authorities the flexibility to adjust their service to suit the demographics, and wishes, of their particular area. Given the close cooperation between authorities in Wales (directly and through groups such as Waste Awareness Wales, LARAC, South Wales Regional Group etc.) such diversity enables a greater understanding into what is a common goal – meeting their recycling targets, in these austere times.
2. We do acknowledge that the lack of consistency in container colours may tend to cause confusion to residents moving around the principality.
3. This variation, across Wales, suggests that local authority recycling practises are not fully aligned with the Welsh Government's Municipal Waste Sector Plan Collection Blueprint but LARAC believes the quality of material should be determined by the requirements of the reprocesses. Processing technology continues to develop, which, we would expect to lead to further reductions in the quality gap of the finished product. Furthermore, there has not been an acceptance by LA's that the Blueprint is actually the answer, and the fact that collection systems not aligned to the blueprint are delivering high levels of material that have end markets shows that local circumstances need to influence collection systems.
4. We believe that actually how we do it isn't really the issue. Doing it and meeting the targets in a cost effective manner that residents buy into is what we should be focussed on. Ultimately each Authority has to strike the right balance between quality and participation/capture rate – no scheme can be successful unless it is popular with the public. Communications and education is probably more important than the Bins/Boxes and Lorries.
5. Having been involved in the development of the route map LARAC welcomes it and hope it is used to add clarity to the arguments already put forward.
6. Finally we find it rather interesting that the National Assembly is calling for this inquiry considering how well Wales and Scotland are doing in comparison to England – largely due to the policy context. So we consider the Welsh Government have done a good job setting the policy direction and giving some tools to assist – but they need to stop short of then telling authorities how to do it.