

UK survey reveals that a third of us don't care about recycling

- *Poll reveals recycling generation gap, with twenty year olds caring least about recycling and those in their sixties most committed*

London, 20 July 2011: A third of Brits (**34%**) make no effort whatsoever to recycle household waste despite millions of pounds being spent by local councils to promote recycling, according to a recent survey carried out by free classifieds website, Vivastreet.co.uk, which encourages people to buy and sell second-hand goods and services.

The survey revealed that despite local councils actively encouraging residents to recycle and providing a range of initiatives to help them, many people simply aren't interested.

The results of the national survey showed that people's level of commitment to recycling was dependent on their age, gender and geographical location. Residents in their sixties or older were the most eco-conscious, with only **29%** saying they were not committed to recycling. But of those in their twenties, nearly half (**49%**) confessed that they were not as committed to recycling as they could be.

Laziness appears to be a factor for the younger generation, too. **44%** of twenty-somethings said they would be significantly less likely to recycle if they had to sort their recyclable waste themselves, as opposed to the council doing it. Just **14%** of the over sixties said that having to sort out their own recycling was a deterrent.

When it came to comparing the commitment to recycling by gender, **37%** of men admitted they did not recycle regularly, compared to **30%** of women.

Across the UK, there was a large regional variation. According to the results of the survey, bottom of the recycling pile were the residents of Nottingham, with just **53%** admitting that they bothered to recycle regularly, followed by the residents of Derby, where only **55%** of those polled were committed recyclers.

At the other end of the scale, Cambridge and Oxford residents were top of the class, with **81%** and **77%** respectively claiming to be 'very committed' to recycling.

However, it is not just residents who have to bear the responsibility for recycling. Local councils have a large part to play, and the survey revealed some councils were seen as being very proactive when it came to encouraging recycling through various initiatives, while other councils received a thumbs down from residents. Crucially, nearly half of those surveyed (**45%**) felt that their local council could do more to encourage recycling.

For example, only a quarter (**26%**) of respondents polled from Aberdeen were satisfied with their council's recycling programme. This compares to **85%** of those surveyed from Milton Keynes who felt the council did a good job of encouraging recycling.

Interestingly, the survey revealed that giving residents incentives to recycle was more likely to prove effective than punishing them with fines. Of those residents polled, **85%** said that rewards for recycling, such as vouchers or coupons, would be a greater encouragement than fines for not recycling.

With the Government recently admitting it cannot force councils to provide weekly bin collections, the emphasis placed on recycling is going to be stronger than ever, but the poll also discovered that the recycling message is beginning to grate. Two-in-ten (**21%**) confessed that being constantly bombarded by the 'saving the environment' message has made them less enthusiastic about recycling.

The following table shows the top five UK cities/towns in terms of residents' commitment to recycling:

City	% 'very committed' to recycling
Cambridge	81
Oxford	77
Cardiff	76
Norwich	75
Exeter	73

The following table shows the bottom five UK cities/towns in terms of local residents' commitment to recycling:

City	% 'very committed' to recycling
Nottingham	53
Derby	55
Belfast	55
Bristol	56
Reading	57

The following table shows the best councils in the UK for encouraging recycling:

City	% who think local council does enough to encourage recycling
Milton Keynes	85
Stoke-on-Trent	81
Oxford	77
Coventry	76
Bournemouth	68

The following table shows the worst councils in the UK for encouraging recycling:

City	% who think local council does enough to encourage recycling
Aberdeen	26
Cambridge	42
Brighton	46
Leeds	46
Exeter	47

Finally, it appears that nosy neighbour syndrome is rife across the UK, with almost half (**48%**) of those surveyed admitting they judge their neighbours or friends who do not recycle. Women in particular (**52%**) admitted to 'judging', compared to **45%** of men, and **91%** of women compared to **79%** of men said they felt guilty about throwing recyclable goods into the bin.

Karen Hamblen of Vivastreet.co.uk comments:

"The eco message clearly isn't getting through to all of us yet, with a surprising one third of people in the UK showing no interest whatsoever in recycling. But if knowing that you're helping the environment is not incentive enough, the fear of being judged by the local neighbourhood busy-body might provide the extra shock that the recycling-averse among us need!"

– ENDS –

Notes to editor:

Vivastreet.co.uk is a free classified ads site. With over 212,000 buy and sell adverts in the UK, Vivastreet allows users to find useful services, new and used products, properties, cars, events, pets, friendships, love and much more, all in their local area. It's simple, secure and operates in 19 countries across the world. For more information visit: www.vivastreet.co.uk

The recycling poll was sent to Vivastreet's database of **nearly 500,000** people in the UK.