

CASE STUDY:

Waste Prevention Programme (WPP)

Working towards a more resource efficient economy

The challenge

Defra set out the Waste Prevention Programme (WPP) for 2013-19 in December 2013, detailing the key roles and actions required in working towards a more resource efficient economy, including actions being taken by government to support this transition. Winning Moves, having already evaluated many individual activities delivered by WRAP on behalf of Defra that contribute to the WPP, reviewed the Programme in 2019.

The approach

In reviewing the Programme, Winning Moves described the work undertaken to prevent waste in 2013-19 and assessed their impact and effectiveness based on existing evaluation evidence. In addition, the overall performance on waste prevention, as indicated by Waste Prevention Metrics, was reviewed. Interviews with stakeholders were also undertaken to fill knowledge gaps, especially with regards to the effectiveness of activities which there was limited data/evidence for.

The result

All metrics, despite their limitations, indicate that, overall, the UK economy has been capable of slowing down the growth rate or even decreasing waste arisings, material consumption and Greenhouse Gas emissions from landfill, despite the GDP growth in recent years. It is clear from the evaluation of individual activities encouraged by the WPP, that, between 2013 and 2019, 727,000 tonnes of waste was or is projected to be prevented as a result of these activities. Previous evaluations, based on both monitoring and interview data, have estimated that effective attribution rates, i.e. impacts that would not have existed in the absence of government interventions, range from 23% to 40% of total impacts.



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Being a very large organisation itself, Government led by example, taking action towards reducing its own waste. However, the bulk of waste reduction achieved was brought about by private initiative, which was the key to success for many activities. This was especially the case of voluntary agreements, which brought together Government and industry, and made a significant difference in reducing waste in England. On the other hand, the review also found that some of the activities had suffered from a lack of sufficient funding, and therefore the work had had to stop. Much more could be achieved with legislative support setting clear standards, best practices, and KPI targets, especially with regards to reuse, which many stakeholders viewed as increasingly important for waste prevention.

The full findings of this review were pulled together into a report, which was published and can be found in the following link:

<https://wrap.org.uk/sites/files/wrap/Final%20WPP%20Summary%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf>

