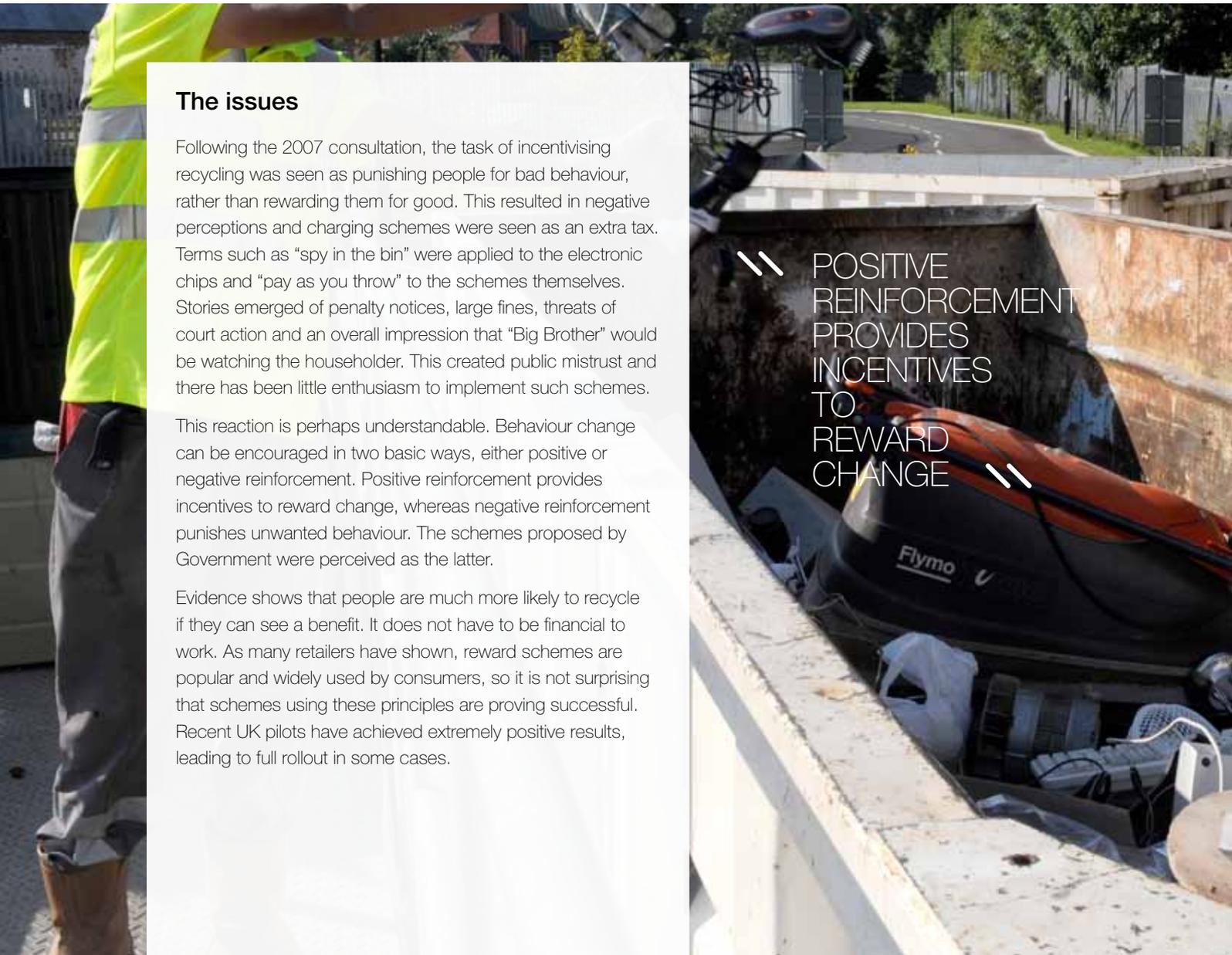

Incentivising HWR

Introduction

There has been substantial progress in reducing waste to landfill, and over 91% of households are now involved with recycling. However, the UK recycling rate for household waste is about 35%. The European Waste Framework Directive requires 50% by 2020, so we have work to do. Encouraging more people to start is still an issue, but even current recyclers have to do more.

Recycling plays a major role in reducing greenhouse gasses by decreasing landfill and avoiding the use of new materials. In 2009, the Climate Change Act gave local authorities the right to implement charging schemes for household waste. Since then there has been a rapid increase of electronically chipped, waste weighing bins.

In 2007 the Government carried out a consultation on incentives to minimise household waste and increase recycling. An invitation for local authorities to express interest in pilot charging schemes followed. No authority submitted a proposal and the Government's initiative appeared to fail. But since then, alternative schemes have been coming forward from private companies that place emphasis on incentivised recycling, and they are producing very positive results.



The issues

Following the 2007 consultation, the task of incentivising recycling was seen as punishing people for bad behaviour, rather than rewarding them for good. This resulted in negative perceptions and charging schemes were seen as an extra tax. Terms such as "spy in the bin" were applied to the electronic chips and "pay as you throw" to the schemes themselves. Stories emerged of penalty notices, large fines, threats of court action and an overall impression that "Big Brother" would be watching the householder. This created public mistrust and there has been little enthusiasm to implement such schemes.

This reaction is perhaps understandable. Behaviour change can be encouraged in two basic ways, either positive or negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement provides incentives to reward change, whereas negative reinforcement punishes unwanted behaviour. The schemes proposed by Government were perceived as the latter.

Evidence shows that people are much more likely to recycle if they can see a benefit. It does not have to be financial to work. As many retailers have shown, reward schemes are popular and widely used by consumers, so it is not surprising that schemes using these principles are proving successful. Recent UK pilots have achieved extremely positive results, leading to full rollout in some cases.

POSITIVE
REINFORCEMENT
PROVIDES
INCENTIVES
TO
REWARD
CHANGE

Incentivising HWR

OUR POSITION

1. Veolia Environmental Services believes that positive reinforcement is the way to encourage recycling. This means first and foremost making recycling easy for people, but can also involve a positive means of encouragement.
2. We favour incentive schemes, but recognise that they work best when:
 - Participants value the rewards on offer
 - Performance required is realistically achievable
 - The reward is worthy of the behaviour change
 - The scheme is easily understood
3. We will work with local authorities and schemes such as Recyclebank to ensure that household recycling is maximised.

JOIN THE DEBATE
www.veolia.co.uk

MAKING
RECYCLING
EASY
FOR
PEOPLE