



## **DMA signs Defra agreement to hit green targets by cutting DM waste**

The Direct Marketing Association UK has signed an historic agreement with the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) committing the DM industry to a series of tough green targets to cut physical waste and carbon emissions over the next three years.

The commitment to cutting waste has been set out in a new Voluntary Producer Responsibility (VPR) deal. By 2014 the direct marketing industry will have to achieve a 25 per cent increase on the industry's current use of suppression files, launch an 'all-in-one' consumer preference service for unaddressed mail, maintain public awareness of the consumer preference services and retain established direct mail recycling rates. Forty per cent of all direct mail produced will have to conform to the requirements of a new industry environmental standard that will replace PAS 2020.

The VPR deal is a part of the Coalition Government's long-term strategy for moving towards a zero-waste and low-carbon economy. Key to the VPR deal is the aim of preventing waste being produced by the DM industry. This differs to the aim of the last voluntary producer agreement that the DMA signed with Defra in 2004, which committed the industry to hitting a staggered series of recycling targets for direct mail over the course of 10 years. The industry hit its 2013 target of 75% of all advertising mail being recycled four years ahead of schedule in 2009.

Defra's objectives for cutting waste in the production of printed direct marketing communications focus on waste prevention, sustainable production, and distribution and recycling.

Among other actions, the DMA will lead the way in setting up a simple, single contact point preference service for consumers to opt out of receiving all kinds of direct mail. The DMA will provide guidance to consumers and local authorities on what householders can do to opt out of receiving unwanted advertising mail. The DMA will also produce an annual audited report on the volume of DM cut from production by the use of suppression files.

Commenting on the agreement, Chris Combemale, executive director of the DMA, said: "The deal provides the perfect answer to criticism of direct marketing by demonstrating that we're a responsible industry that's taking positive action to minimise our environmental impact. But there are other benefits too. Cutting out unnecessary direct marketing will help to not only change consumer perceptions but also improve advertisers' return on investment."