

Advice to Local Authorities in England on Reporting Household Recycling from April 2011

As you are aware, the National Indicators came to an end at the end of March 2011. This means that local authorities now have no annual targets for waste reduction, recycling and landfill diversion, from April 2011, although you will still need to report to Waste Data Flow for the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme.

The UK as a whole continues to have targets on landfill reduction, and under the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, we also have a target on recycling waste from households which we must meet by 2020. It is, therefore, important that you continue to report your data to WDF, not only to enable reporting against EU targets but because the data provides a valuable source of information to understand and report on the impact of national and local policies. We will continue to publish the aggregated data quarterly, and annually by local authority.

Please continue to use the existing National Indicator definitions for reporting data on waste reduction and diversion from landfill (NI 191 and NI 193). Further advice on reporting recycling and composting is given below.

Improvements to Waste Data Flow

Feedback from local authorities has indicated that whilst Waste Data Flow is a useful source of information regarding local authority performance, there are concerns about the burden of actually inputting the data itself. As a consequence Defra is undertaking work, including a survey of users, to look at ways of minimising the input burden whilst retaining the usefulness of data for local authorities.

The following changes will be applied to the questionnaire for English local authorities before 1 May 2011:

Annual Return (2011/12 Year)

- Questions, 22, 28, 29 and 30 will be removed from England Annual return. These questions will only be deactivated so you will still be able to review historical data.

Quarterly Return (from April 2011 onwards)

- Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 15a for WCA and UA will appear in Qtr 4 only (months of Jan, Feb and March). This means that the LA will only complete these questions once a year and this will be within their Qtr 4 return.
- Question 13 for WDA will appear in Qtr 4 only (months of Jan, Feb and March). This means that the LA will only complete this question once a year and this will be within their Qtr 4 return.
- Remove Qu21 from the Qtly return for WCA/WDA and UA. This question will only be deactivated so you will still be able to review historical data.

More detail on the results of the feedback exercise is also published in the 'England User Group' section of the WDF website - <http://www.wastedataflow.co.uk/htm/partners.aspx>. Further areas for potential burden reduction and usability improvements are also identified and these will be developed during the current reporting year.

You will be advised by email when these updates have been finalised.

Reporting recycling and composting

Government needs to work through the implications of the target set in the revised Waste Framework Directive, and in particular the definition of recycling that the Directive includes. We are working with the Devolved Administrations to ensure that we have a common interpretation across the UK for reporting against the EU target.

As we indicated in the consultation on the transposition of rWFD, the new definition will lead to some tightening of rules, particularly regarding biowaste. We are currently waiting for the European Commission to finalise compliance rules for meeting the recycling target, including on the acceptance of bio waste treatments for recycling; once those rules are available, we will issue further information and seek your views on how to apply these in England.

In the meantime, you may continue to use the definitions of recycling and composting given in National Indicator 192, subject to the changes set out below. As previously announced, biowaste recovery operations such as “shred and spread” and biofuel production are not recycling operations.

Changes to the calculation of recycling and composting rates

The new UK recycling and composting target only applies to **waste from households**, whereas NI192 counted all waste meeting our current domestic definition of “household waste”. This means that in future, the figures that Defra use to report to the EU will exclude waste from premises such as schools and hospitals, which may currently form part of your authority’s recycling figure. You will still be able to access this information from WDF if you wish to produce reports on your performance over a period of years for local use.

As previously announced, Defra will be counting **metals recovered from Incinerator Bottom Ash** in recycling figures with effect from 1 April 2011. This will bring England into line with the rest of the UK. The details of this can be located on page 40, paragraph 2.137 in the following document:
<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waste-framework-revised/20100708-waste-consult-doc.pdf>