WasteDataFlow

WasteDataFlow Newsletter

Welcome to the Summer 2008 edition of your WasteDataFlow Newsletter

This is the seventh quarterly newsletter and is aimed at providing Local Authority Users, External Users and other interested parties with an update on the WasteDataFlow system including any new developments and performance.

If there are specific topics that readers would like to see covered in future newsletters, please provide feedback through the User Groups or the WasteDataFlow Helpdesk.

England GO Meetings

Since the 6th December representatives from Defra, the Environment Agency and Enviros have been holding meetings on a regional basis to explain key development plans for the WasteDataFlow system and to provide LAs with an opportunity to feedback WasteDataFlow issues directly. All 9 regions in England were visited. The Q and As from the GO Meetings are now available on the Datasets page of the website. This is a super source of answers to many of the most common questions.

In this issue
- England submission deadlines
- EA investigations into zero MRF rejects
- WDF system update

England Quarter 1 0809 deadline approaching

Please ensure that you have submitted your Quarter 1 return to level 30 by Tuesday 30th September. Failure to meet the deadline can lead to penalties being issued by Defra.

Please inform the WDF team if the Local Authority contact for validation queries has changed since Quarter 4.

New Qu70 added to WDF

An additional question has been added to WDF to give Local Authorities the opportunity to record the waste separated from residual waste and sent for recycling. This question should only be answered by Authorities completing questions 59, 60 and / or 64.

Guidance for completing this question differs by country and can be found on the Datasets page of the website

HANDY HINTS

- Detailed guidance on the calculation of the new National Indicators can be found on the Datasets page of the website

- When entering data you can click on the question mark button in the top right hand corner of the data entry screen for guidance on how to complete the question

- See the Datasets page for a selection of guidance materials covering topics such as recording co-mingled materials, avoiding double counting, recording green waste and back allocations…

- Before submitting your return to WDF you can run a Summary report (accessed via the Data Authorisation page) to check for any tonnage discrepancies prior to validating

NEWS

- The deadline for quarter 1 0809 returns is Tuesday 30th September.

- The Environment Agency are undertaking a review to challenge the reporting of zero MRF rejects

- Question 70 has been added to WDF to record waste separated from residual waste and sent for recycling

- Improvements have been made to the layout of the Data Authorisation page

- **Launch of Northern Ireland Environment Agency.**

  On 1st July 2008 Environment & Heritage Service became the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

User Groups

England

The England User Group met on the 10th September. The papers and results from the meeting will be available on the WasteDataFlow website under "Who's Who" then "Project Management". This was the 7th meeting and was well attended.

There were two Environment Agency updates; on the LATS scheme year and the MRF reject project. The main outcome being that MRF reject rates were between 0% and 25% but that 0% is an unlikely reject rate and so LAs reporting 0% rejects will be asked for a supporting case. The EA did communicate this to WDAs, but the message may not have filtered down to all the relevant WCAs.

There was a discussion on the definition of municipal waste led by Defra policy. Following on from a consultation issued last year it is proposed to change the definition of municipal waste in the WET Act 2003 to reflect closer existing guidance. The current proposal is to change the definition to reflect 'waste collected by and on behalf of authorities', as well as addressing an exclusion for separately collected construction and demolition wastes. The aspiration is to make the legislative change by the end of the year, although co-ordinating the practical change with the start of the next scheme year may be most appropriate.

Validation was discussed and the local authorities reported that the process was generally working very well. It was also mentioned that the validation this year will compare the quarter with same quarter last year, rather than previous quarter.

The development plan was explained to the group. A key feedback request the reps have taken away is for the Local Authorities to propose the materials that they would like to report tonnages against in the material based questions. We will have the ability for LAs to choose a 'my materials' list, so the master list can be longer. Therefore if an authority wants to record plastic bags, plastic bottles and other plastic they can, whilst authorities without that level of detail can continue to simple record 'plastics'.

The web-based training last year went down very well, and the user group reps are going to be requesting feedback from the Local Authorities on any new topics that should form part of the library of course, or which topics should be added into the existing courses.

To find out who your User Group representative is or read the User Group documentation please go to the main web site at: http://www.wastedataflow.co.uk/htm/partners.aspx

Scotland

The latest WDF User Group was combined with the WDF training provided to Scottish local authorities on the 8th , 9th and 10th of July 2008. Three venues were arranged in order to give the opportunity to all local authority representatives to attend the meetings.

SEPA briefed the local authorities on the finalisation of the 2007/2008 verification, happening during the month of August, and on how to complete the new Qu70 and the changes to Qu63a. Further training was provided on the use of the verification flowchart, the XML upload tool and the guidance available to Scottish local authorities.

The attendance was very good and the input to the WDF User group was very positive. SEPA is intending to host an annual WDF training session every year, before the start of Q1 reporting.
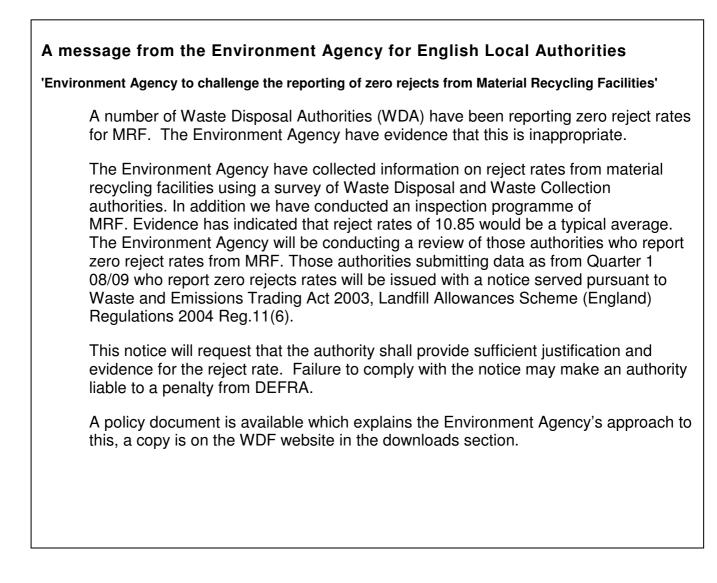
Northern Ireland

The most recent Northern Ireland User Group was the 25th September 2008. The group are currently focussing on the development of new reporting functions, and the extended civic amenity site questions. The User Group are also placing an emphasis on improving data quality with a view to reducing the queries from Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) during the validation process. Minutes from the meetings are published on the NIEA website:

www.ni-environment.gov.uk/waste/municipal_data_reporting.htm

Wales

The meeting of the Welsh User Group took place on the 24th June 2008. Discussions focused mainly on the proposed developments to WasteDataFlow, the final data for year 2007-08 and the LAS Audits currently in progress. Members were asked for feedback on the proposed developments and these were passed on to Defra/Enviros.

The next user group meeting has not been scheduled but will be organised to follow the next Operations Group Meeting in October.

A message from the Environment Agency for English Local Authorities

'Environment Agency to challenge the reporting of zero rejects from Material Recycling Facilities'

A number of Waste Disposal Authorities (WDA) have been reporting zero reject rates for MRF. The Environment Agency have evidence that this is inappropriate.

The Environment Agency have collected information on reject rates from material recycling facilities using a survey of Waste Disposal and Waste Collection authorities. In addition we have conducted an inspection programme of MRF. Evidence has indicated that reject rates of 10.85 would be a typical average. The Environment Agency will be conducting a review of those authorities who report zero reject rates from MRF. Those authorities submitting data as from Quarter 1 08/09 who report zero rejects rates will be issued with a notice served pursuant to Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003, Landfill Allowances Scheme (England) Regulations 2004 Reg.11(6).

This notice will request that the authority shall provide sufficient justification and evidence for the reject rate. Failure to comply with the notice may make an authority liable to a penalty from DEFRA.

A policy document is available which explains the Environment Agency's approach to this, a copy is on the WDF website in the downloads section.

Landfill Allowances Schemes

England

Environment Agency's LATS web site is: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ click on Waste > Local Authority > Landfill Allowance Schemes. You can contact us at: The National Customer Contact Centre: 0870 850 6506.

Please see the notice above; also there are some notes on LATS in the England User Group. The notice letter mentioned in the EA message above is available on the WDF website.

Scotland

Following the finalisation of the verification of 2007/2008 data, SEPA prepared a draft reconciliation of BMW allowances, which was inputted in the LATS Register on the 1st September. The accounts will be frozen on the 3rd October and the headlines figures will be published on the 7th October. Further information can be found on http://www.sepa.org.uk/nws/data/returns.htm.

The Landfill Allowance Scheme for Scotland is still under review. The Scottish Ministers made an announcement on the 24th January setting new targets for Scotland and the review of the Landfill Allowance Scheme is a result of this. The Scottish Government is involving CoSLA and SEPA in the consultation.

Northern Ireland

All 26 district councils, and waste management groups, in Northern Ireland were issued with the draft NILAS reconciliation as required under NILAS Regulation 13 on 13th August. The draft reconcillation based on the figures reported in WasteDataFlow indicate that Northern Ireland's district councils had utilised 79.57% of available allowances for the scheme year. One council has exceeded its available allowances and therefore has obtained a transfer of allowances to enable it to meet the target.

NIEA will shortly be issuing the final reconcillaition for the scheme year (2007/08) to all district councils and waste management groups.

NIEA have published quarterly key performance indicators for the fourth quarter of 2007/08. www.ni-environment.gov.uk/waste/municipal_data_reporting.htm

*Please note: The data is provisional and will not be revised or finalised until year end verification is complete.

NIEA have revised guidance to district councils

(www.ni-environment.gov.uk/nilas_guidance_to_dcs_august_2008.pdf) and to landfill operators (www.ni-environment.gov.uk/guidanceforlandfilloperators.pdf) in its role as Monitoring Authority for NILAS.

Two district councils have had audits undertaken of October to December 2007 data; and two district councils have been audited for January to March data.

Wales

The 2007-08 data has now been finalised and reported. The Welsh LAS Annual Report was made available on the 1st September and can be found here http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/wales/816243/868002/1166665/?version=1&lang=_e.

All 22 authorities in Wales were within allowance for 2007-08 and 19 were under 90% of their allowance. The amount of Biodegradable Waste sent to landfill in 2007-08 was within allowance allocations set for 2009-10.

All data for April-June 2008-09 has been rolled to level 30 and currently being validated.

WDF Online Training Sessions for England

Since October 2007 the WDF team have run 28 online training sessions which have been attended by 291 Local Authority WDF users.

Online training courses are run free of charge covering the following topics: New Users, Reports, LATS and Performance Indicators.

More training sessions are due to be scheduled for the 0809 reporting year. Local Authorities will be informed of the training details by email.

For more information on the content covered in the sessions or to be added to the training waiting list please contact the helpline.

WDF system updates

- The authorisation page now has clear 'tick' and 'cross' icons to accept and reject a return. Behind the scenes changes have made the page more manageable for users with many items on the 'My Actions' selection.

- National Indicator values have been added to the PI report that you pull up from the authorisation screen

- Selecting a facility in Qu19 has been made easier by the addition of a 'Select' button which navigates to the facilities selection list

Response Rates

England

We are now receiving and validating the quarter 1 returns for 2008/9 year. The deadline for submission is the 30th September. The deadline for the returns to then be validated and approved is 31st October.

All returns for the 2007/8 scheme year are submitted, validated and currently being used for LATS and BVPIs. This was the last year that BVPIs were to be generated. For 2008/9 the performance measure will be NI191,192 and 193.

Accordingly we have added the NI figures to the KPI spreadsheet you run when authorising your quarterly return. We have left the BVPIs on the spreadsheet as many people will continue to find them a useful guide to possible errors in the submission.

Scotland

The deadline for submission of Q1 2008/2009 was the 13th August. Nineteen local authorities (59%) submitted the data by the deadline. Three further local authorities submitted data within a week and eight within a month.

Northern Ireland

The validation process for quarter 1 of the fourth scheme year of NILAS (2008/09) was started in August by NIEA. The waste management groups assisted in ensuring that data returns were submitted promptly and in encouraging district councils to make use of the validation summary spreadsheets. 23 out of 26 district councils submitted data to level 35 prior to the deadline at the end of August. The remainder were received by 5h September. All district councils are in the process of having their data for the first quarter of 08/09 validated by NIEA. The quarterly data will be published on the NIEA website:

 www.ni-environment.gov.uk/waste/municipal_data_reporting.htm .

*Please note: The data is provisional and will not be revised or finalised until year end verification is complete.

Wales

The response rates for 2007-08 were - 74% on time, 20% within seven days of deadline and 6% over seven days of deadline. This is a significant improvement on 2006-07 where just 49% were on time.

The deadline for April-June 08-09 data was the 31st July. 68% of authorities were on time and none rolled up over seven days of deadline.

WasteDataFlow Newsletter

System News

This section gives an overview of the features of WasteDataFlow that you may not be fully aware of.

XML news

The XML functionality is now up and running on WDF.

To recap, the XML upload facility enables Local Authorities to upload data into WasteDataFlow questions. The system uses a format called XML (eXtensible Markup Language) which is a worldwide standard created to structure, store, and transport information. By setting up your internal waste systems to export your data in the correct XML structure, you can then import the file into WasteDataFlow instead of keying in the data. From then you continue with the WasteDataFlow as normal, completing the comments and question complete box and rolling up the quarter and authorising the return.

An 'interface spreadsheet' has also been developed for users whose internal system is Excel based. The spreadsheet has tabs that are laid out like the WDF questions. You can put links into these that reference your own spreadsheets. When the spreadsheet is populated with data use the "Create XML" button to generate a file in the correct format for upload.

There are guidance documents on the Datasets page of the website with information on how to use the XML Excel tool and how to use the XML upload functionality. If you are interested in using the upload functionality please consult your IT department, colleagues, contractor or supplier that has supported your waste information system(s).

XML hints / tips

- This functionality is only compatible with Excel 2003, although this will be reviewed.
- The sheets on the XML generator spreadsheet are protected to avoid accidental editing, the password is *wastedataflow*
- The XML generator spreadsheet is not designed to be used as a replacement for the data entry screens for simple manual data entry.
- If you have data in Excel and are copying and pasting (rather than linking) into the XML generator then you would probably find it quicker to simple copy and paste it into WasteDataFlow.
- If you are typing numbers into the XML generator then you would probably find it quicker to simple type it into WasteDataFlow.

In-question facility picker

Selection lists is an area of WasteDataFlow that can sometimes cause confusion. We are working more broadly on this, but in the meantime you will now find you are able to see more information about the facilities you have on your lists prior to selecting them for use in a question. When you are in data-entry at a question (eg Qu19) you will see a new button next to the facility drop-down selector. The button is labelled 'Select'. When you click on this you will open a new window with a list of the facilities, unlike the drop-down, this list will show you a full set of information about the facilities; you can then choose the 'select' hyperlink from the right-hand end of the row for the facility you want. We will be adding a better overall lists management screen in the weeks to come.