

This factsheet provides an overview of the quarterly validation process in England undertaken by the Data Manager Contractor (Enviros).

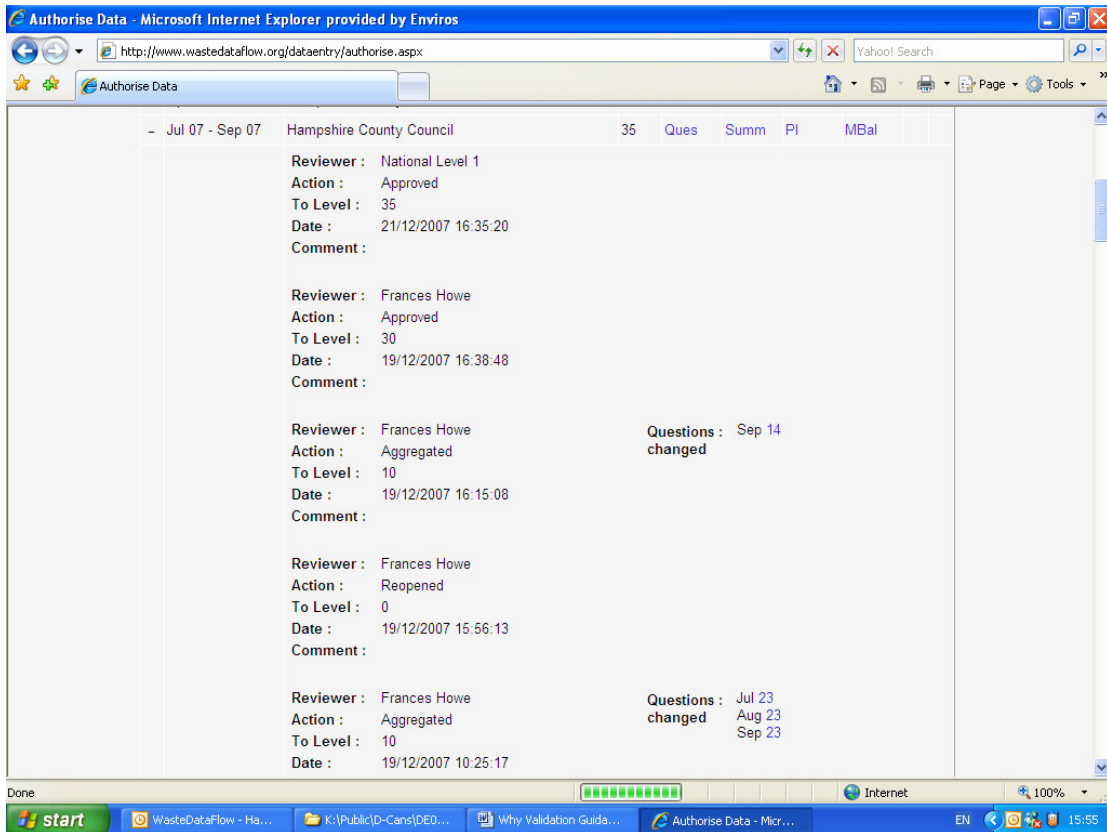
1. BACKGROUND

A basic outline of the validation role of the Data Manager Contractor is listed below and summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: WasteDataFlow validation and authorisation structure (England)

	Levels 0-20	Level 30	Level 35	Level 40
England	Local Authority Entry & Authorisation	Data Manager Contractor Validation	Environment Agency Validation & Authorisation	Defra Validation & Authorisation

- ◆ Each Local Authority (LA) submits data for validation (Level 30). Please note that during data authorisation all monthly data is aggregated and as a consequence the validation team are unable to view your monthly data at level 30.
- ◆ The Data Manager Contractor then validates the data returning it for amendments to the LA as required and then authorises the data to Level 35 to allow the Environment Agency (EA) access to validate. In the initial stages this will involve the Data Manager Contractor going into each authority's return and checking for completeness, data inconsistencies and conducting a thorough review of the comments made by the LA and comparing the current data with the previous quarterly data submission.
- ◆ An audit log relating to data authorisation for each return can be accessed via the WasteData FlowWebsite. This log records information such as the date data was received / authorised by the different users, whether the data had to be rejected back down to the LA and any data amendments made. An example of the audit trail is provided below:



2. VALIDATION

- ◆ *Assigning Quarterly Submissions* – All quarterly submissions received from LAs in England need to undergo first-stage validation. Once a quarterly submission reaches level 30 it is assigned, using an internal validation log (depicted below), to an individual validator and the 'Date validation commenced' is entered. All returns are allocated to the validation team in date order as the Data Manager Contractor has committed to allocating all returns within 5 working days of them reaching level 30.

July to September 2007						
Local Authority	Type	WDA for WCA	2007 status	Jul-Sep 2007 status date	Date validation commenced	Validator
35 Oxford City Council	WCA	Oxfordshire County Council	35	24 Jan 2008 08:54	Mon 10 Dec 2007	Vicki H
37 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	WCA	Surrey County Council	35	10 Dec 2007 12:16	Thu 29 Nov 2007	Vicki H
39 Bath and North East Somerset Council	UA		35	10 Jan 2008 10:52	Fri 4 Jan 2008	Vicki H
38 Devon County Council	WDA		35	24 Jan 2008 08:53	Fri 4 Jan 2008	Vicki H
39 Poole Borough Council	UA		30	16 Jan 2008 16:42	Fri 4 Jan 2008	Vicki H
10 Bournemouth Borough Council	UA		0	6 Jan 2008 17:39	Fri 4 Jan 2008	Vicki H
18 Tewkesbury Borough Council	WCA	Gloucestershire County Council	35	10 Jan 2008 10:54	Wed 2 Jan 2008	Vicki H
13 Cheltenham Borough Council	WCA	Gloucestershire County Council	35	21 Dec 2007 16:35	Mon 10 Dec 2007	Vicki H
14 Gloucestershire County Council	WDA		35	16 Jan 2008 14:48	Fri 4 Jan 2008	Vicki H
39 Sedgemoor District Council	WCA	Somerset County Council	0	4 Jan 2008 16:00	Thu 3 Jan 2008	Vicki H

- ◆ *Validating returns* – WasteDataFlow asks questions dependent on the type of waste authority; questions about collected recyclable material/waste, final destinations of materials for recycling/reuse, disposal of residuals etc. Part of the validation process is to ensure that tonnages are flowing through the process, spotting errors and looking for possible explanations e.g. an LA collects 100 tonnes of green glass for recycling (question 10) but only 60 tonnes are sent to reprocessor (question 19). Where has the other 40 tonnes gone?

In order to assist the validator in this process a validation spreadsheet (Excel) has been developed by the Data Manager Contractor to enable the validation of LA responses based on a combination of internal checks using both the current and historical data and comment imports.

Data including LA comments are downloaded from the WasteDataFlow website (www.wastedataflow.org) via CSV downloads (Comma-Separated Values) and incorporated into this Excel spreadsheet, which is made up of the following sections:

- 1. The Material Summary Sheet** – is very similar to the summary sheet available to all LAs in the Authorisation area of the WasteDataFlow website. This sheet summarises the submitted figures and flags any potential errors or anomalies as red.
- 2. The Cross-Check Summary Sheet** – presents the total data submitted in each question, compares the data to the previous quarterly submission and alerts the validator to any potential data anomalies or discrepancies that may require checking. An example section of this summary sheet is provided below.

<i>Miscellaneous Checks</i>				Current	Previous
Q15 - No. of civic amenity sites	OK		3	3	
Q24 - No. of fly-tipping incidents	CHECK		846	442	
Q25 - No. of abandoned vehicles	CHECK		29	10	
Q26 - No. of fridges & freezers disposed of	OK		1992	1928	

<i>Tonnage Checks</i>				Total			Green waste		
	High	Low	Current	Previous	Difference	Current	Previous	Difference	
Qu10	CHECK	OK	13548.8	11096.4	2452.4	5175.8	4294.8	881.0	
Qu11	OK	OK	0.0	0.0	0.0				
Qu12	OK	OK	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Qu16	OK	OK	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Qu17	OK	CHECK	161.4	306.7	-145.3				
Qu18	OK	OK	0.0	0.0	0.0				
Qu33	OK	OK	205.0	198.2	6.8				
Qu34	OK	OK	0.0	0.0	0.0				

In validating returns the Data Manager is looking for errors, anomalies and omissions in LA returns. The cross-check summary sheet was introduced to the validation spreadsheet to enable the validation team to identify errors and anomalies easily. A green 'OK' means there is no problem with the data and an orange 'CHECK' is flagging a potential problem with the data such as exceeding the max/min allowed trigger levels as set by the EA.

- 3. The Comments Sheet** – presents all the comments made by the LA in relation to each of the questions. An example section of this sheet is provided below. Further investigation of this sheet can provide justifications for some of the checks, differences and anomalies present in the submission.

Q015a	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q016	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	recycling - other electrical goods: 0047.99 - small WEEE021.24 - Large WEEE0000Reuse - other ma
Q017	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q018	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	Fly tipped waste and electrical good from estate services (housing estates and housing association)0000
Q019	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	Plastic -Grosvenor and Coral/CPL00Card - Newport and Maggie00cans - magpie00glass - magpie00bc
Q023	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	regular collection - 005627.641 - to non-haz landfill0861.569 - to Energy from Waste
Q024	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q025	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	no recycling or tonnage figs available
Q026	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q033	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q034	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made
Q035	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	other -gas bottles to Jefferson
Q052	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	other facility is horton
Q053	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	non sent in July
Q054	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	Portsmouth ERF00Total to facility0435.89200recycled (metal)011.33300BU (bottom ash)091.53700
Q055	Jul 07 - Sep 07	Jul-07	No Comment Made

- 4. The Raw Data Summary Sheets** – contain the raw data for both the current submission and the historical submission which have been used to populate the front sheets. Further investigation of the data in these sheets can provide justifications for some of the checks present in the submission.

Please note that the threshold values associated with each of the tonnage checks have been determined by the EA who also request that the validation team reconcile all differences or provide an explanation for all the flags and discrepancies. In order to make a judgement the validation team try to consider the full picture and make a judgement based on all the data available to them within the validation summary sheet; however on occasion further clarification on certain issues may be required from the LA.

The list of checks required to be undertaken by the validation team is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: WasteDataFlow Validation Checks

Applicable to:			Query
WCA	WDA	UA	
✓	✓	✓	Review LA comments/explanations alongside data.
✓	✓	✓	Compare variances between the current quarter and previous quarter.
✓		✓	Check number of households in Q5,6,7 or 10 don't exceed no. of households in Q4..
✓		✓	Check households in Q7 have not been double-counted
✓		✓	Compare current and previous Qu7
✓		✓	Check hh numbers in Qu10 if tonnages recorded
✓		✓	Check Qu10 with Qu7
			Check Qu10 Green Waste with Qu6
✓		✓	Check Qu10 Other Compostable with Qu6
✓		✓	Check hh arisings against Q4
✓	✓	✓	Check that the number of Civic Amenity sites have been recorded in Q15 or that an appropriate comment has been made
✓	✓	✓	Check that the number of fly-tipping incidents have been recorded in Q24 or that an appropriate comment has been made
✓	✓	✓	Check that the number of abandoned vehicles have been recorded in Q25 or that an appropriate comment has been made
✓	✓	✓	Check that the number of fridges and freezers have been recorded in Q26 or that an appropriate comment has been made
✓	✓	✓	Check destinations been specified in Q19, 35, 51+.
✓	✓	✓	Check that the material-specific tonnages collected in Q10, 11 etc been sent under the relevant material type in Q19 & 35 (exception co-mingled). Check to make sure not all been placed under 'Other' as material type.
✓	✓	✓	Check that the other/exempt destination is only being used when the facility is not on the selection list.
✓	✓	✓	Check that the collected recycling/reuse tonnages (Q10, 11 etc) match sent for tonnages (Q19 & 35). Check that the destinations been specified for voluntary tonnages.
✓	✓	✓	Check that collected co-mingled material tonnages (Q10, 11 etc) correlate with tonnage input to MRF (Q58).
✓	✓	✓	Check that a MRF reject has been recorded (Q58).
✓	✓	✓	Check that collected co-mingled material has been apportioned into individual material types in Q19 & 35.
✓	✓	✓	Check that reject tonnages are not being double counted. All reject tonnages should stop with the question and not be duplicated in further questions.
✓	✓	✓	If rejects occur at point of collection or at MRF make sure net tonnages (Total collected – collected/MRF rejects) have been recorded in Q19 & 35.
✓	✓	✓	Figures will only be calculated in data fields; are there tonnages in comments that need to be incorporated into data fields of individual question?

Applicable to:			Query
WCA	WDA	UA	
✓		✓	If Q18 has been completed please ensure that the LA has confirmed what the materials in Q18 are and check that the material is recorded correctly
✓		✓	If Q16 has been completed please ensure that the LA has completed Q15
✓	✓	✓	Check if overall waste arisings for a quarter are approximately 30% of no. of households in area (1 household generates approximately 1.2 tonnes of waste/year).
✓	✓	✓	If the LA is affected by back allocation please ensure that the data within the return is recorded as detailed in the issued guidance note.
	✓	✓	Check if residual collected tonnages (Q23) match sent for tonnages (Q51+).
	✓	✓	If green waste tonnage is recorded in collection Q's 10 etc. ensure the LA is also reporting green waste tonnages in Q19 (WCA/WDA/UA) & 61-63.
	✓		Check that WDA is not recording WCAs' dry recyclables. However note that if the WDA takes organic material from the WCAs this may be recorded in Question 61-63.
✓	✓	✓	Check that comments have been provided concerning what other materials are e.g. other materials equal tetra pak and tyres.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q54 – Q55 have been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of Incinerator Bottom Ash recycled and landfilled and that the quantity of metal recovered has been recorded or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q56 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of RDF produced and the tonnes of material rejected and / or recycled or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q57 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of Char / Slag recycled or landfilled or the quantity of material diverted for recycling or that an appropriate comment has been made.
✓	✓	✓	Check that if Q58 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of material recycled and rejected.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q59 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity sent for recycling, biological treatment, thermal treatment or landfill or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q60 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity sent to compost / fertiliser, landfilled or the quantity of material diverted for recycling or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q64 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of material sent for recycling, recovery or landfill or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check that if Q65 has been completed that the LA has inputted details of the quantity of material sent for recycling / composting, recovery or landfill or that an appropriate comment has been made.
	✓	✓	Check if Q69 has been completed that the total input equals the total collected and matches the inputs into the disposal questions.

- ◆ *Communication with the Local Authority* – After the initial validation has been completed and in the event that further explanation or amendments are required from the LA the validator will contact the LA directly. Any dialogue, dates etc. will be recorded in a validation form established by the validator for the LA. In the event that the submission needs to be rejected to level 0 to allow the LA to make the required amendments the LA will be informed of this via e-mail. Please note that the Data Manager Contractor aims to get all amendments made and the return back to level 30 within 7 working days.
- ◆ *Quality Assurance Procedure* – Once a validator is happy that all issues with a return have been resolved it is placed on an internal QA log for a validation quality check before being rolled up to level 35 to ensure that the data presented to the EA and Defra is as accurate as possible. All returns are QA-checked, not just a sample.

The QA is conducted by a Technical Team Advisor within 1 week of the return being placed on the log; any comments regarding the return are recorded on the log. If the LA return has not met the quality standard required the validator will be asked to carry out further investigations. Validators must action this further investigation within 24 hours of e-mail notification and emphasise to the LA that they have only a week to complete the amendments and roll back up to Level 30.

Once the return has been QA-approved the Technical Team advisor will authorise the roll-up of the data to level 35 on the WasteDataFlow system. This should be actioned within 24 hours to ensure the flow of information to the EA.

In total the Data Manager Contractor is committed to making all efforts to bring a level 30 return to level 35 with 30 days of submission. Following a return reaching level 35 the EA will make all efforts to validate the return to level 40 within one month, subject to there being no further queries with the submitted data.