



## WasteDataFlow Newsletter

ISSUE 4

### Welcome to the Autumn 2007 edition of your WasteDataFlow Newsletter

This is the fourth 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 topic that readers would like to see covered in future newsletter, please provide feedback through the User Groups or the WasteDataFlow Helpdesk

### Environment Agency (England)

The Environment Agency intends publishing their "Report on the Landfill Allowances and Trading Scheme (LATS) 2006/7" by the 1st November. A pdf of the report will be available on their website.

Note the LATS web pages are in the process of being updated, feed back on their content is welcomed by

[pamela.mardon@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:pamela.mardon@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### In this issue

- EA England LATS update
- Training in WasteDataFlow
- Level 35 Roll-backs for 2007/8
- Plus the regular features

### User Groups

#### England

The next England user group meeting will be on Wednesday 10th October. The focus will be on the development of WasteDataFlow software over the next six to twelve months.

#### Scotland

The Scottish User Group is planned for October/November. The date has been delayed to allow to concentrate on the finalisation of the 06/07 data and to revise the procedures for the verification. The focus is going to be on the checks for looking at the Summary on line and on any other definition issue to be clarified.

#### Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland user group has met for the second time, on 28th September. The next user group meeting is planned for 24th January 2008. The group are focusing on the new reporting functions and the development of an extended CA site reporting question. The user group are also placing emphasise on data quality with a view to reducing the queries from EHS during validation.

### HANDY HINTS

- If you are unsure which questions to put data into for BVPIs check out the pdfs on the main website.
- It is good practice to have a second member of the waste team check the quarterly submission to level 30.
- The online summary and BVPI reports that are launched from the authorisation page are very useful in identifying data errors in the quarterly return.

### NEWS

- Q1 data for England should now be in, validation is underway..
- WasteDataFlow training in England is starting for this year.

### Reporting of municipal waste 2007/08:

The recent consultation on municipal waste has caused a few people to raise questions about the way they report their data now. In a letter sent out recently Martin Meadows of Defra gave an update on the timetable for the review. Martin said "You may be aware that Defra has recently consulted on changes to the definition of municipal waste. We will announce the outcome of the consultation this autumn. Any changes as a result of this consultation exercise will not come into effect until the 2008/9 scheme year."

Martin was then able to confirm it is business as usual at this stage. "It is imperative that you continue to report according to current guidance until any changes to legislation have been implemented and guidance amended accordingly. The Environment Agency will continue to audit your waste data reporting according to current legislation and guidance."

### Training Delivery by Web-Conference

Over the previous two years the training for new and advanced WasteDataFlow (WDF) users has been done in a series of regional face-to-face training days and half-days. This has not always been efficient given the wide geographic spread of the users and the different knowledge levels they have of WDF. To overcome these difficulties we are going live with training via web-conferencing.

The web-conferencing sessions will allow a single WDF trainer to:

- Interact with up to 15 logged-on delegates at a time. This is an improvement on the classroom approach which for practical reasons was limited to 8 computers.
- Deliver quality and appropriate material in shorter sessions, which in itself means we can offer
  - more frequent training
  - training around news or new releases in the software

The approach above also brings significant benefits to you. You will spend less time on the training as

- the sessions are shorter
- you will not have to travel

The tighter focus of the training sessions should also mean that you are surer to be in a session suitable to your needs. And if the session turns out to not be suitable, you won't have incurred travel time and be stuck out of the office.

Upcoming training dates and topics are shown below.

#### Upcoming Training Sessions

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 14:00 to 15:00  
WasteDataFlow Beginners

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October, 10:00 to 11:00  
WasteDataFlow Beginners

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October, 14:00 to 15:00  
WasteDataFlow Beginners

Please email the WasteDataFlow helpdesk if you would like to receive a summary of the course and attend.

#### Future Training Sessions

We would like your feedback on sessions to run.

Dates of sessions would be driven by demand with a morning and afternoon session on the chosen date.

Sessions currently underdevelopment are:

- ❖ On-line Advanced User training
- ❖ BVPIs from WasteDataFlow
- ❖ WasteDataFlow and LATS

### System Developments

We have seen some critical new developments go live recently:

- The user group raised the issue of WasteDataFlow reports from which you can use and analyse data more quickly. They also raised the requirement to have a system to which new reports can be added easily. It was also imperative that the benchmarking capability be expanded beyond just 4 Local Authorities. We have therefore launched an enhanced method of producing Excel based reports. The initial set of available reports is the England BVPIs to be followed soon by the Wales Performance Indicators and Northern Ireland KPIs. In the next few weeks there will also be some new non-PI reports.
- We have often had the feedback that if negative numbers are not accepted at Validation why does WasteDataFlow allow them to be typed in. You are right, this isn't logical and so we have added a check for negative numbers to the process that runs when you press Save on a question.
- Many of you have commented that two transfer stations on a destination in questions 51-65 is not sufficient. But others find two to be sufficient. To cater for all we have added functionality that will allow each Local Authority to choose how many destinations with how many transfer stations each of questions 51-65 will default to.
- We have added functionality that will allow us to add new questions and retire old questions without disrupting the system. The first example of the use of the system will come shortly; many of you, and the validation team, have suggested that Q21 could have the 'number distributed prior to this quarter' column removed. This will be implemented by retiring the current Q21 and starting a new Q21 that just asks for the number of compost bins issues this period. The nature of the question management system means that reports will continue to operate as if there were only one Q21.

Guidance on all these changes can be found on the main WasteDataFlow website, <http://www.wastedataflow.org/htm/datasets.aspx>. Go to the Downloads section and then Guidance Manual and you will find two PDFs you can download.

### England: Level 35 Roll-backs

Towards the end of the last reporting year there were many requests for data at level 35 to be rolled back down to data-entry level for corrections to be made. The guidance for these 'level 35 roll-backs' for this year is to be issued soon. The broad procedure looks like being:

- Only one roll-back will be allowed during the financial year, and this roll-back must only relate to one quarters submission.
  - Roll-backs must be made, using the appropriate forms, the deadline for completed roll-back requests are:
    - Q1 15 November
    - Q2 15 February
    - Q3 15 May
    - Q4 15 July\*
- \* Only authorities with Q4 data at level 35 by 14 July will be eligible
- To fit Level 35 roll-backs into the main validation period completed requests must be received by 15 July, and close liaison with Enviro is needed to ensure that the return is at level 35 by 31 July.

The Environment Agency is preparing the review of the reporting and penalty guidance and a revised Level 35 roll-down application form. These will be published shortly.

### Landfill Allowances Schemes

#### *England*

The Environment Agency intends publishing their "Report on the Landfill Allowances and Trading Scheme (LATS) 2006/7" by the 1st November. A pdf of the report will be available on their website. Note the LATS web pages are in the process of being updated, feed back on their content is welcomed by [pamela.mardon@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:pamela.mardon@environment-agency.gov.uk).

#### *LATS Local Authority Visits*

The Environment Agency plan to visit all Local Authorities over the next 18 months. The text below is from an Environment Agency Newsletter that is posted on the WasteDataFlow website.

We will be visiting 43 local authorities between October and April as part of our ongoing commitment to improving data consistency and accuracy. We are now in the third year of LATS.

Local authorities have a good understanding of reporting requirements and use of WasteDataFlow. We now want to work more closely with individual authorities to improve consistency and accuracy of data.

We will visit all 121 Waste Disposal and Unitary Authorities by May 2009 to look at the processes and systems in place to collect, quality assure and report LATS data. Last year we visited 24 local authorities throughout England. This year we will visit another 43 authorities.

In February, we used a risk-based approach to rank all 121 local authorities so that we could prioritise individual visits. This was done as a desktop exercise using 20 criteria. The criteria included:

- reporting and validation compliance
- training and succession planning of staff to use WDF
- communicating with the WDF helpdesk
- varying quantities of municipal waste reported year or year
- recycling and diversion rates
- exporting municipal waste
- using MRFs

Reports from our first round of visits, with specific recommended actions for individual Authorities, were published on our website in July. We are currently putting together 'Frequently Asked Questions' as another outcome of the visits. This includes FAQs on the definition of municipal waste for LATS. We have also adapted our programme in response to feedback from authorities who took part in the first visits.

Between now and the end of November we will contact the 43 local authorities that we want to take part in visits during this scheme year. We will explain to these 43 authorities the purpose and content of our visits and also what information and records we will need to see.

### *LATS Local Authority Visits (continued)*

We will need help and support from local authorities to achieve our timetable and to produce meaningful recommendations.

In summary, our aim is to:

- Identify best practice
- Share common issues
- Look at possible ways of improving consistency and accuracy

If you do not hear from us, and have not already had a visit, then we plan to visit you sometime between 2008/2009.

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

### **Scotland**

The deadline of the 31st August for providing a draft Reconciliation of allowances was met, despite all the challenges of the first year of using WDF for the provision of Landfill Allowance Scheme data. The target for the 06/07 year of 1.5 M tonnes of BMW was met, and the results show that 5 local authorities have exceeded their permitted BMW landfilled, however without considering the banking from last year, 13 local authorities would have exceeded their initial allocation.

### **Northern Ireland**

All district councils in Northern Ireland received their draft reconciliation of allowances before the end of August. All 26 district councils in Northern Ireland have met the target for the second scheme year, 2006/07, through diverting BMW from landfill and transferring allowances..

## Response Rates

### England

Quarter 4 2006/7 has been completed and we are into the validation period for Quarter1 of 07/08.

The 06/07 year is complete. By the Quarter 4 validation deadline (31<sup>st</sup> July 2007) all but seven returns had reached Level 35. The final return reached Level 35 on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2007, over a month early than in 2005/06.

376 returns for Q1 07/08 had been received by the deadline, this is 95%. 127 have been validated to level 35, with the difference due to the time taken to validate and the fact that the bulk of returns were received in the last week.

Of the missing 18 at the deadline, 16 were in progress and 2 had not been started.

### Scotland

The internal deadline of the 10 August was met by 18 local authorities (56%) and we are currently still waiting for one local authority to submit their data. The quality of the information supplied was much better than in precedent quarters showing that local authorities have learned how to use the system and have addressed most of the issues arising during the first year of using WDF.

### Northern Ireland

All returns have been received for quarter 4, with 25 out of 26 district councils submitting data on time. All district councils have rolled up their data for the first quarter of 07/08.

### Wales

1. The deadline for Q1 07/08 rollup was the 31 July. All Authorities have now rolled their data up. Validations are on ongoing but at this stage all but one are within their landfill allowance for Q1. The authority that is over their allowance still has some outstanding data entry issues that may bring them back with allowance.

2. Data reporting for Q1 07/08 saw 59% of authorities roll up data on time, 32% within 1 week of the deadline and 9% over a week of the deadline. Those authorities over 1 week were late rolling data up due to staff turnaround and WDF training issues.

3. The annual report for Wales has now been finalised and can be found on the following website:

[http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/wales/816243/868002/1166665/?version=1&lang=\\_e](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/wales/816243/868002/1166665/?version=1&lang=_e)

All Authorities in Wales were within their Landfill Allowance for 2006-07.

4. The annual report highlighted some issues with data timeliness and accuracy when rolling up. The EAW and WAG are working on set procedures for meeting deadlines as well as looking to provide validation training to authorities to improve data accuracy.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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