



WasteDataFlow Newsletter

ISSUE 5

Welcome to the Winter 2007/8 edition of your WasteDataFlow Newsletter

This is the fifth 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

Performance Indicators (England)

As of April of 2008 a new set of National Performance Indicators are being introduced. At WasteDataFlow we don't have the full specification of these yet but when the definitions are finalised we will be providing the figures through WasteDataFlow as well as continuing to calculate the original BVPIs

In this issue

- Training in WasteDataFlow
- XML upload
- User Group Updates
- Plus the regular features

Do you keep your waste data in an electronic system?

Over the end of 2007 and the start of 2008 we have developed and tested a method to allow the upload of data into WasteDataFlow questions.

The system uses a format called XML (eXtensible Markup Language). XML is nothing special: it is just plain text but was created to structure, store, and transport information. It does this by giving the data in the file tags. The tags are then used by the software reading the XML to know what to do with the piece of data.

For WasteDataFlow the XML tags define the question the data should go into and within the question which row or column.

So you set up your internal waste systems to export your data in the correct XML structure. You 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.

[see the development section for more detail]

HANDY HINTS

- There are lots of useful information and explanation documents on the WasteDataFlow web-site (under the Datasets menu, click on Downloads).
- If you can, get your data in early as this helps spread the workload for everyone involved.
- Did you know you can view previous months answers to a question by clicking the + to the left of the row.

NEWS

- Q1 and Q2 data for England are now validated.
- WasteDataFlow web-based training in England is on-going for this year.
- We have two new people on the helpdesk, Anne and Charlotte.

User Groups

England

The next England user group meeting will be on Wednesday 5th March. The focus is likely to be on

- the development of WasteDataFlow software including feedback on the XML,
- calculating the new national indicators through WDF and
- neighbourhood benchmarking for the reports

For this user group meeting all local authority users will receive an email with details of their User Group contact. The aim would be to get your feedback to your rep by the 27th February.

Scotland

The Scottish WDF User Group met on 2nd November last year and 19 local authorities were invited. Attendance was very successful, with all 19 places being taken very quickly. SEPA will now operate a rota-system that will give all local authorities a chance to attend future User Groups.

All Scottish local authorities were provided with a flowchart for 'self-verification' of their data using the Summary on-line and its newly developed built-in checks. During the User Group, SEPA made a presentation to explain the process. The flowchart was used for the submission of Q2 data and has proven to be a powerful tool for local authorities to simplify the verification and thus submit accurate data.

Local authorities were also very interested in the development of the auto-upload tool and in the presentation about the new reports (using C-variables) available in WDF.

Northern Ireland

The next Northern Ireland User Group is planned for 24th January 2008. The group are focussing on the new reporting functions and the development of an extended civic amenity site question. The user group are also placing an emphasis on data quality with a view to reducing the queries from EHS during the validation process.

Wales

The last Welsh User Group meeting was on the 22nd November. Topics covered included:

- WAG and EAW requesting feedback on content for planned WDF training sessions.
- The new Welsh protocol for reporting to be introduced for 08/09.
- The LAS team visits to Local Authorities.
- The LAS team investigating Other/Exempt and comments boxes on WDF to see if frequently used sites can be included in selection lists.

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

Upcoming Training Sessions

(England only, for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland please contact your local team)

~~Fri 15th Feb: New Users in WDF [Full]~~

Tue 19th Feb: BVPIS in WDF

Wed 20th Feb: LATS in WDF

Thur 21st Feb: BVPIS in WDF

Fri 22nd Feb: LATS in WDF

Tue 26th Feb: Reports in WDF

Fri 29th Feb: Reports in WDF

If you wish to register for a place on one of these sessions please go to

<https://wastedataflow.webex.com>,

Future England Training Sessions

We would like your feedback on sessions to run. As the upcoming training shows we have 4 main courses. If you think other topics would be useful please let us know.

We have 'suggested' dates for further sessions but will be driven by demand.

[The helpdesk can pass suggestions on to the relevant country training team.]



WasteDataFlow Newsletter

Training Courses have started again....

The WasteDataFlow training for local authorities in England is now starting for 2008. We have only scheduled sessions up to the end of June, on the assumption that you are then likely to be on holiday. We will start training again then in September.

The table below shows you the dates and topics we have so far. Each session can have a maximum of 14 attendees but if there is a lot of interest for one date and not another then we could run sessions morning and afternoon or even simultaneously.

The courses marked as P are published, those marked x are still provisional dates. Why provisional? We will publish the training courses to the training web-site (see link below) a few weeks ahead, but in the meantime we may receive feedback that different dates would be better, that different topics would be popular or that some courses need bringing together. In this case we would revise the dates.

If you wish to register for a place on one of these sessions please go to

<https://wastedataflow.webex.com>,

go to the course listing on the relevant date and click on the Register link. If a date is over-subscribed places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Timetable: P = published date, x = provisional date

Date	BVPI	LATS	Reports	New user
Fri 15 Feb				P
Tue 19 Feb	P			
Wed 20 Feb		P		
Thu 21 Feb	P			
Fri 22 Feb		P		
Tue 26 Feb			P	
Fri 29 Feb			P	
Mon 3 Mar	P			
Thu 6 Mar		P		
Mon 17 Mar	x			
Thu 20 Mar		x		
Wed 26 Mar			x	
Tue 1 Apr	x			
Fri 4 Apr		x		
Tue 8 Apr				x
Tue 15 Apr			x	
Wed 23 Apr	x			
Mon 28 Apr		x		
Wed 7 May	x			
Fri 9 May		x		
Tue 13 May				x
Fri 16 May	x			
Wed 21 May		x		
Wed 28 May			x	
Thu 29 May	x			
Tue 3 Jun		x		
Wed 11 Jun	x			
Mon 16 Jun		x		
Wed 25 Jun			x	

Some people have asked if more than one person from the LA can attend. The answer is yes, especially if you are able to sit around the same computer screen and both be on the telephone conference call, then only one of you need register on the session.

If you would like to suggest other topics for training then please let us know, either directly or through the England User Group in March.

Landfill Allowances Schemes

England

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 Reconciliation Report 2007/2008 has been sent by SEPA to the Scottish Government. The Report outlined the results from the Landfill Allowance Scheme 2007/2008.

Of the 32 Scottish local authorities, only five (16%) have exceeded their permitted BMW landfilled, thanks to BMW allowances banked from last year. However, eight of the 32 local authorities have failed to meet their initial allocations. Ten local authorities (31%) have landfilled a BMW tonnage of more than 25% under their permitted BMW allowance for 2006/2007; a further 11 (34%) have landfilled between 25% and 10% of their permitted allowance and seven (22%) have landfilled less than 10% under their permitted allowance.

Northern Ireland

All 26 district councils in Northern Ireland received their final reconciliation of allowances by the 22nd of November. All 26 district councils in Northern Ireland have met the target for the second scheme year, 2006/07, through the diversion of BMW from landfill and the transfer of allowances. The 2006/07 NILAS annual report has been published and is available on the EHS website (<http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/waste/waste-publications.htm>) under "Publications & Reports".

EHS have published quarterly key performance indicator for the first quarter of 2007/08. <http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/waste/waste-publications.htm> *Please note: The data is provisional and will not be revised or finalised until year end verification is complete.

Wales

All Q1 and Q2 data has been rolled up and validated. All of the 22 Local Authorities in Wales were within allowance for both Q1 and Q2. For the 07/08 year so far 18 are under 90% of allowance.

The Welsh LAS Team began to visit all Local Authorities in 2008 to look at the collection, validation and reporting of data on WDF. So far 2 LAs have been visited, with another planned for February. The results will be published online.

Response Rates

England

Quarter 1 2007/8 has been completed and we have just finished the validation period for Quarter 2 of 2007/08.

384 returns for Q2 07/08 had been received by the deadline, this is 97%. By the validation deadline 373 were complete, 95%. By this stage all returns were in but 21 were still to complete validation.

Scotland

The deadline of the 12th November had to be delayed until the 16th due to changes to WasteDataFlow that affected the on-line Summary report and the CSV downloads.

Twenty five local authorities (78%) submitted the data by the new deadline and only one local authority was more than two weeks late in submitting the data.

Northern Ireland

The validation process for quarter 2 was started in mid November by EHS as many district councils had submitted their data in advance of the deadline. 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 spreadsheet. 25 out of 26 district councils submitted data prior to the deadline. All district councils have had their data for the second quarter of 07/08 validated by EHS.

Wales

The deadline for Q3 data roll up was extended by a day to 1st Feb due to WDF being out of action on the 28th January.

Rates have improved every quarter over the 07/08 year. In Q1, 59% were on time, 32% rolled up within 7 days of deadline and 9% after that. In Q2, 77% were on time and the remaining 23% within 7 days of deadline. For Q3 so far 86% have been on time. Validation for Q3 has now begun.

BVPs and National Indicators for England

As of April of 2008 a new set of National Performance Indicators are being introduced. At WasteDataFlow we don't have the full specification of these yet but the key ones are:

- NI 191 Residual household waste per head (or per household), Defra DSO
- NI 192 Household waste (reused) recycled and composted, Defra DSO
- NI 193 Municipal waste landfilled, Defra DSO

When these are finalised we will be providing the figures through WasteDataFlow. We are hoping that this will not involve changes to the questions. We will create some new reports on WasteDataFlow that show your calculated performance on a quarterly basis. We will also, assuming possible question changes allow, continue to provide the original BVPs so that you can do historical comparisons.

If the data required for the new PIs is already collected by WasteDataFlow and requires no question structure or interpretation changes then we may also be able to give you an indicator of what the new PI value would have been for last year.

System Developments

We are currently pulling together a list of developments for the WasteDataFlow system for the next few months. We have brought together the ideas logged by the helpdesk, suggested by the user groups (and the recent regional meetings in England) and suggested by the National authorities. There are also some software and system related suggestions from the development team. Once we have the list in a useable form we will get wider feedback.

In the meantime we are about to go live with the first phase of the XML upload functionality. Over the end of 2007 and the start of 2008 we have developed and tested a method to allow the upload of data into WasteDataFlow questions.

The system uses a format called XML (eXtensible Markup Language). XML is nothing special: it is just plain text but was created to structure, store, and transport information. It does this by giving the data in the file tags. The tags are then used by the software reading the XML to know what to do with the piece of data.

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For those users whose internal system is Excel based we have developed an 'interface spreadsheet'. 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 set-up you can use the "Create XML" button to generate a file in the correct format that you can upload.

We are including this spreadsheet with a definition of the XML and some other support documentation in a 'developer pack' that you will be able to download from the main web-site. The target audience for the developer pack is your IT department, contractor or supplier that has supplied or supported your waste information system(s).

WasteDataFlow management contract review

The development contract for WasteDataFlow as a software system including helpdesk services is let on a contract along with the training and validation support for all England local authorities. Last year a review of the contract performance was carried out. The results are now published on the WasteDataFlow web-site in the News section.

Quarterly Regional Data, England

Previously Defra has only released national waste statistics on an annual basis. However for 2007/8 Defra are going to be releasing quarterly national and regional estimates. The Quarter 1 data were published on 8th February (see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/wastats/index.htm>).

HOW TO CONTACT US

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