

Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for April to June 2020



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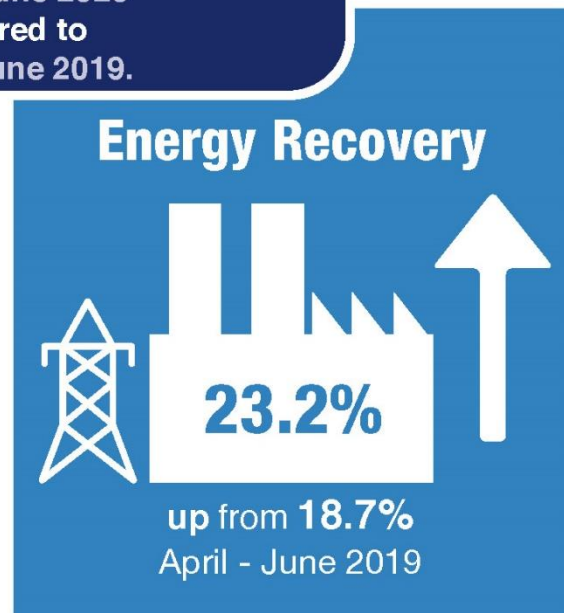
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Northern Ireland waste management statistics – April to June 2020



Recycling, energy recovery and landfill rates of LAC municipal waste April to June 2020 compared to April to June 2019.



Key Points

- This is the first quarterly waste report covering the period when measures were introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Northern Ireland's councils collected 236,560 tonnes of waste during April to June 2020 which was 10.8 per cent lower than the same three months in 2019. This decrease is primarily due to the closure of Civic Amenity sites during the period, although an increase in the tonnage of waste collected at kerbside and bring sites was recorded.
- During April to June 2020, 52.9 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling, 1.3 per cent lower than recycling rate for April to June 2019.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils recorded a new low of 21.2 per cent in April to June 2020, a fall from 72.5 per cent in April to June 2006.
- Almost a quarter of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery in April to June 2020, compared to 18.7 per cent in April to June 2019, and 0.1 per cent during the same quarter 10 years ago.
- Household waste accounted for 92.9 per cent of all waste collected during this period. The recycling rate for household waste was 54.4 per cent. The landfill rate for household waste was 20.7 per cent.

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Reader Information

This document may be made available in alternative formats, please contact us to discuss your requirements. Definitions of key terms used in this publication are available in [Appendix 2 – Glossary](#) of the latest Annual Report.

Purpose

This is a quarterly publication which reports provisional statistics on the key measurements of local authority collected municipal waste for councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland.

The data contained are used by local authorities, waste management groups, Devolved Administrations, UK Government and the EU to measure progress towards achieving targets from various waste strategies including:

- The revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy
- The draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021
- The EU Waste Framework Directive

The data are also used by media, the general public and special interest groups to inform policy and lifestyle choices related to the treatment of waste.

Further details are available in [Appendix 1 – Main Uses of Data](#) of the Annual Report.

Next Updates

- Provisional statistics for July to September 2020 are scheduled for publication in January 2021.
- Finalised data for 2019/20 are scheduled to be published in November 2020 and will supersede previously published data from the four quarterly returns for that financial year.
- The scheduled dates for all upcoming publications are available from the GOV.UK statistics release calendar: www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics

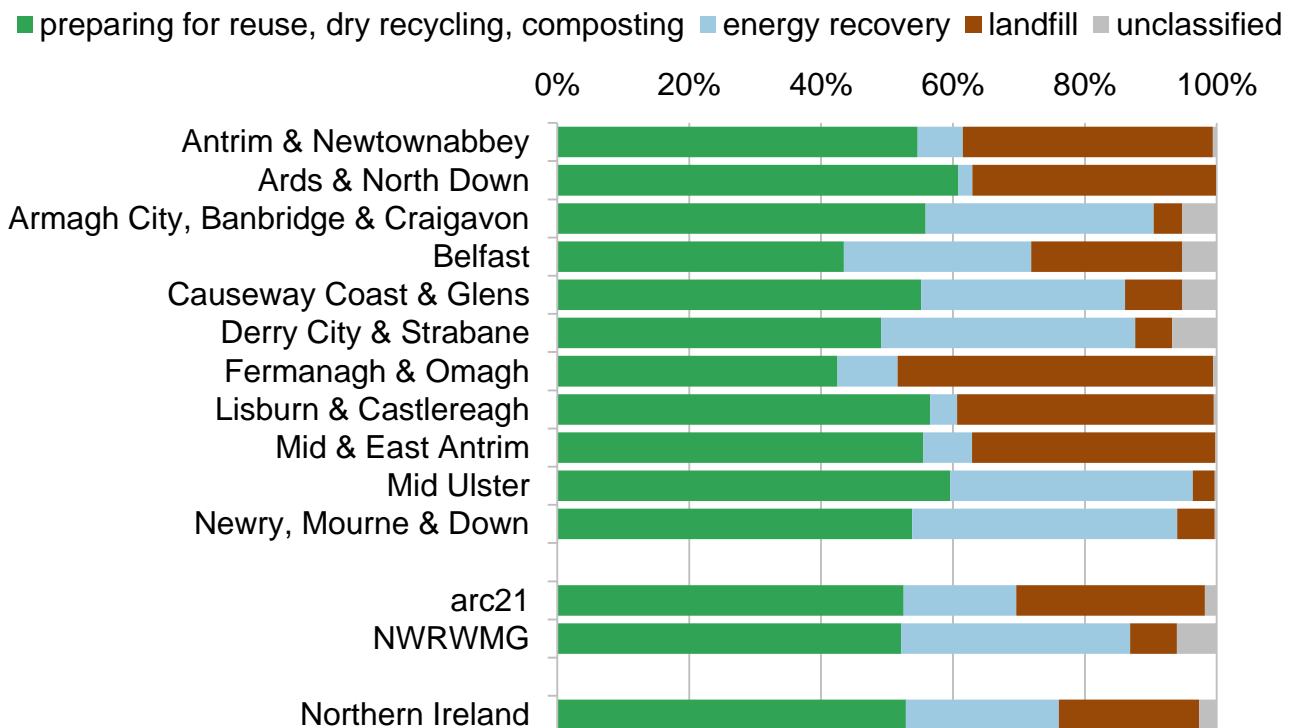
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of local authority collected municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between April and June 2020. This is the first report to cover the period when measures were introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It includes a period of lockdown which put council resources under pressure, initially resulting in the suspension of some bin collections and the closure of civic amenity sites, following on to restricted collection services with the gradual reopening of civic amenity sites for selected waste streams.

The report is split into four sections, each of which cover local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste and, where appropriate, household waste:

- waste arisings (pages 3-4),
- recycling (pages 5-6),
- energy recovery (pages 7-8),
- landfill (pages 9-11).

Figure 1: Waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill rates by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2020



At the Northern Ireland level, 52.9 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between April and June 2020. Energy recovery accounted for 23.2 per cent and 21.2 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 2.7 per cent unaccounted for is likely to involve moisture and/or gaseous losses. Each of the rates is discussed in detail in the appropriate section of the report.

The rate of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting decreased by 1.3 percentage points compared to April to June 2019. The energy recovery rate increased

by 4.4 percentage points and the landfill rate fell by 3.3 percentage points. Household waste accounted for 92.9 per cent of total waste collected by councils. Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, material taken to bring sites and civic amenity sites as well as several other smaller sources.

Waste arisings

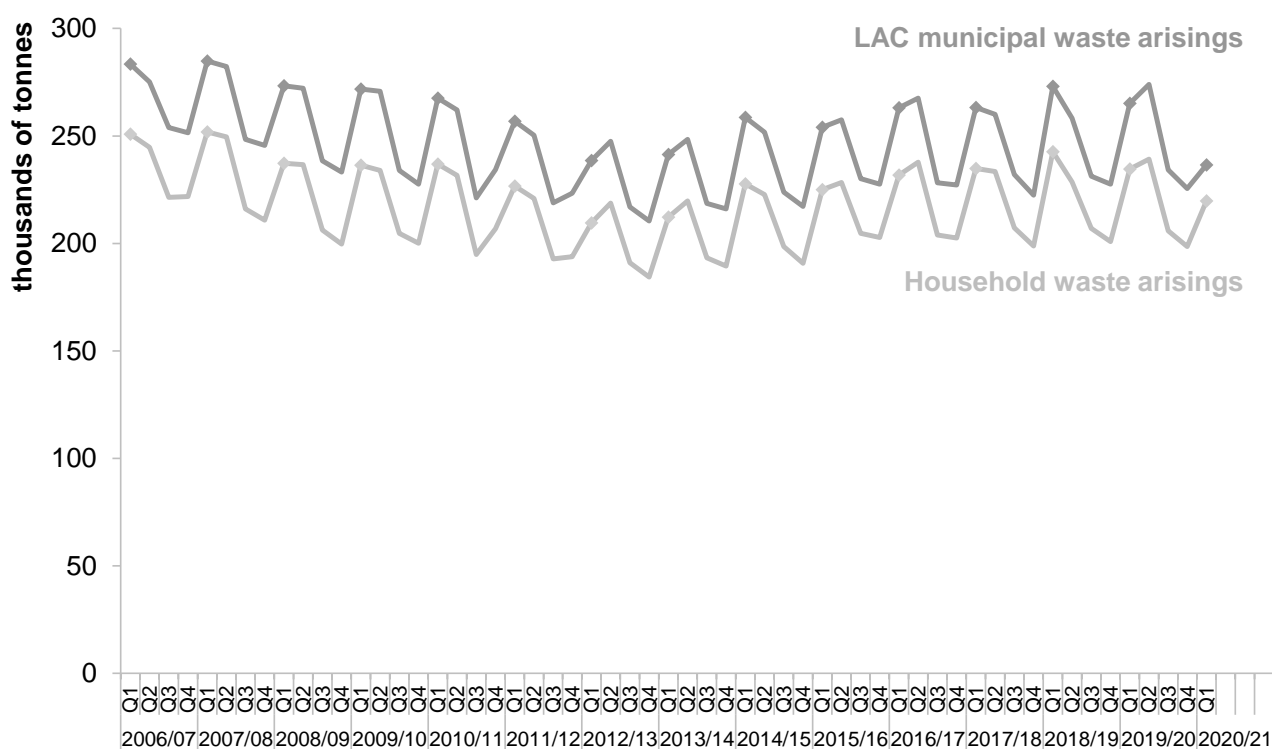
Northern Ireland's councils collected 236,560 tonnes of waste between April and June 2020. This was 10.8 per cent lower than the 265,181 tonnes collected during the same three months of 2019. Whilst the tonnage of waste collected at kerbside and bring sites increased in April to June 2020 compared to the same three months last year, the 63 per cent reduction in waste collected at civic amenity sites outweighed this resulting in a decrease in waste arisings. The extra waste collected at kerbside and bring sites is a consequence of people spending more time at home due to Covid-19 restrictions including lockdown, for example, working from home, closure of schools, bars and restaurants. As civic amenity sites were closed many will have utilised their kerbside collection more fully.

The total quantity of local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste arisings is a key performance indicator, KPI (j). This indicator is also used to monitor performance under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Since 2006/07 household waste has accounted for 86-90 per cent of total waste collected by councils each quarter. However, from April to June 2020 household waste accounted for 92.9 per cent, resulting from an increased tonnage of household waste collected at kerbside and bring sites during this period, along with a reduction in commercial and industrial waste collected. The remaining 7.1 per cent was non household waste such as rubble and soil.

Figure 2: Waste arisings

Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2020/21 KPI (j)

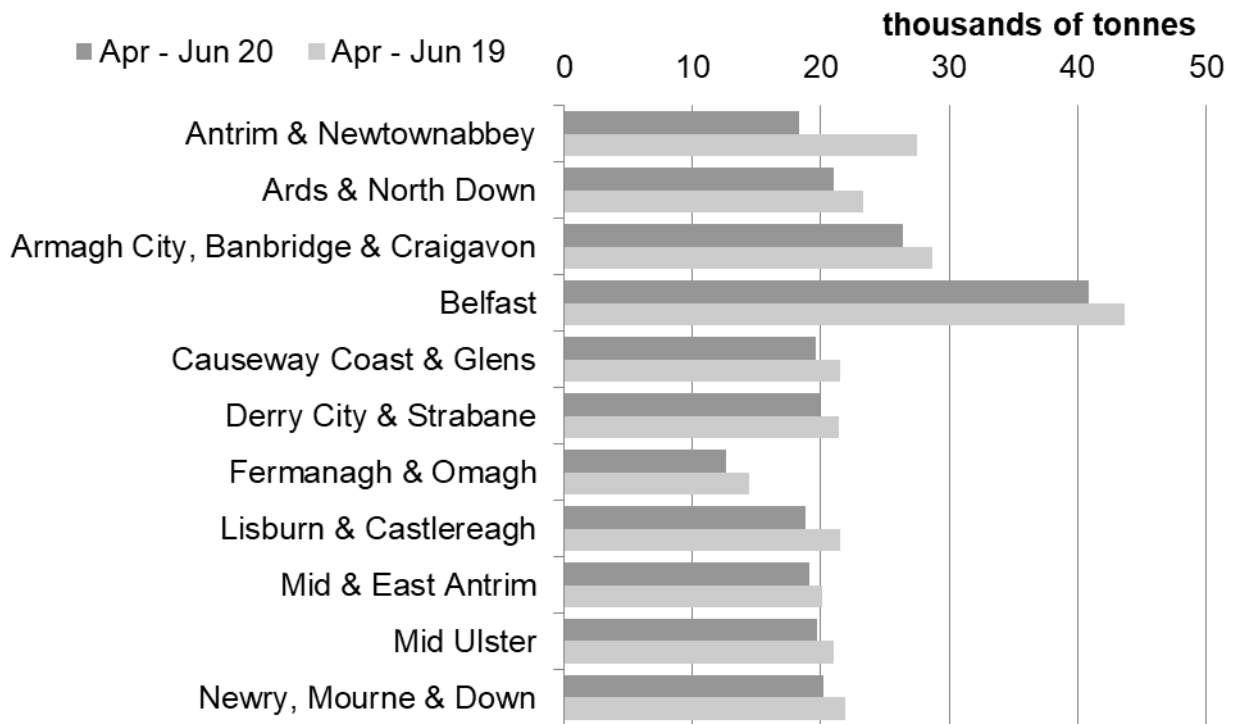


The longer term trend for April to June saw a gradual reduction in waste arisings of 16.2 per cent across five years, from a high of 284,813 tonnes between April and June 2007 to a low of 238,613 tonnes between the same three months of 2012. From 2012, arisings

increased by 11.1 per cent to 265,181 tonnes in April to June 2019 showing a generally increasing trend. However, compared to the same three months last year, arisings have fallen 10.8 per cent to 236,560 tonnes in 2020 which is almost certainly a consequence of the restrictions imposed for Covid-19 as described earlier.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council

Northern Ireland, April to June 2019 and April to June 2020, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 40,865 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh and Omagh collected the least at 12,602 tonnes.

All councils recorded a decrease in total arising in April to June 2020 compared to the same period in 2019 with the largest decrease recorded in Antrim and Newtownabbey at 33.2 per cent.

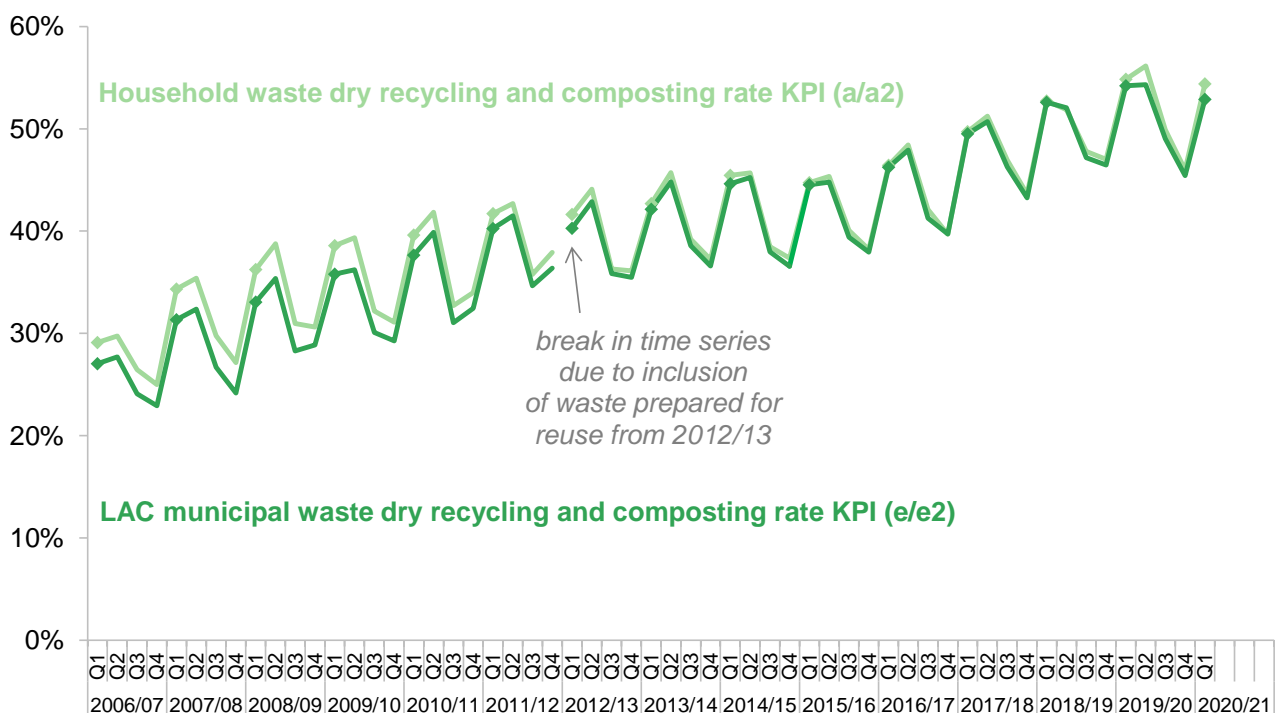
Recycling

This section of the report looks at local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste and household waste recycling rates, both of which include waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting.

There were 125,113 tonnes of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting (referred to as 'recycling' for the rest of this section) between April and June 2020. The waste recycling rate was 52.9 per cent. This was a decrease of 1.3 percentage points on the 54.2 per cent of waste sent for recycling between April and June 2019. Although the tonnage of materials collected for recycling at kerbside and bring sites increased in April to June 2020 compared to the same three months last year, the closure of civic amenity sites resulted in an overall drop in the quantity of materials collected for recycling. These statistics can be found in Tables 5 to 8 of the accompanying [data tables](#).

The recycling rate for household waste only was 54.4 per cent between April and June 2020, similar to the 54.8 per cent recorded during the same three months of 2019. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 22.0 per cent, composting 32.3 per cent and preparing for reuse less than 0.1 per cent. Last year the equivalent rate for reuse was 0.1 per cent, whilst the dry recycling and composting rates were 22.7 per cent and 32.0 per cent respectively.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2020/21, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)

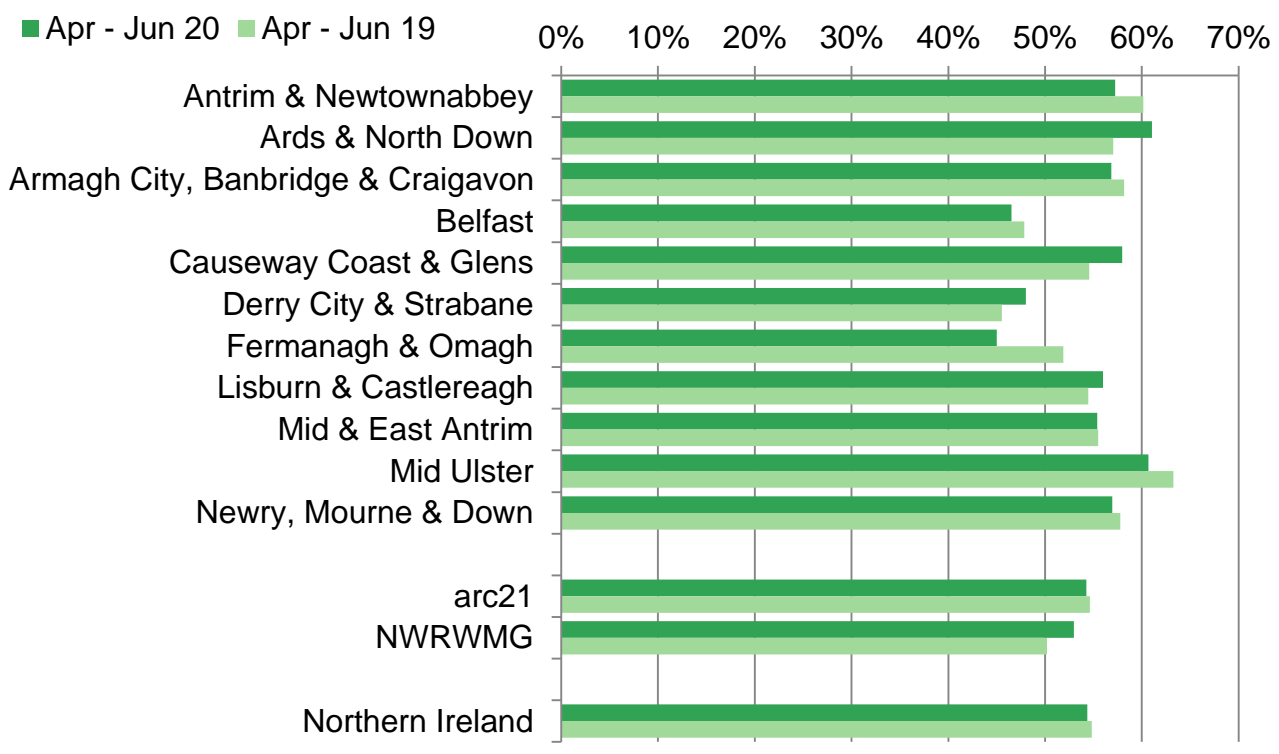


These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend during April to June of each year has been a steady increase in the household waste dry recycling and composting rate from 29.1 per cent in April to June 2006 to 54.4 per cent in April to June 2020. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (reduced to just 23 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13. Reuse facility operations were also severely curtailed due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place and the closure of civic amenity sites during the period. The overall recycling rate, with reuse included, therefore remains 54.4 per cent in April to June 2020.

Figure 5: Household waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting rate by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, April to June 2019 and April to June 2020, KPI (a2)



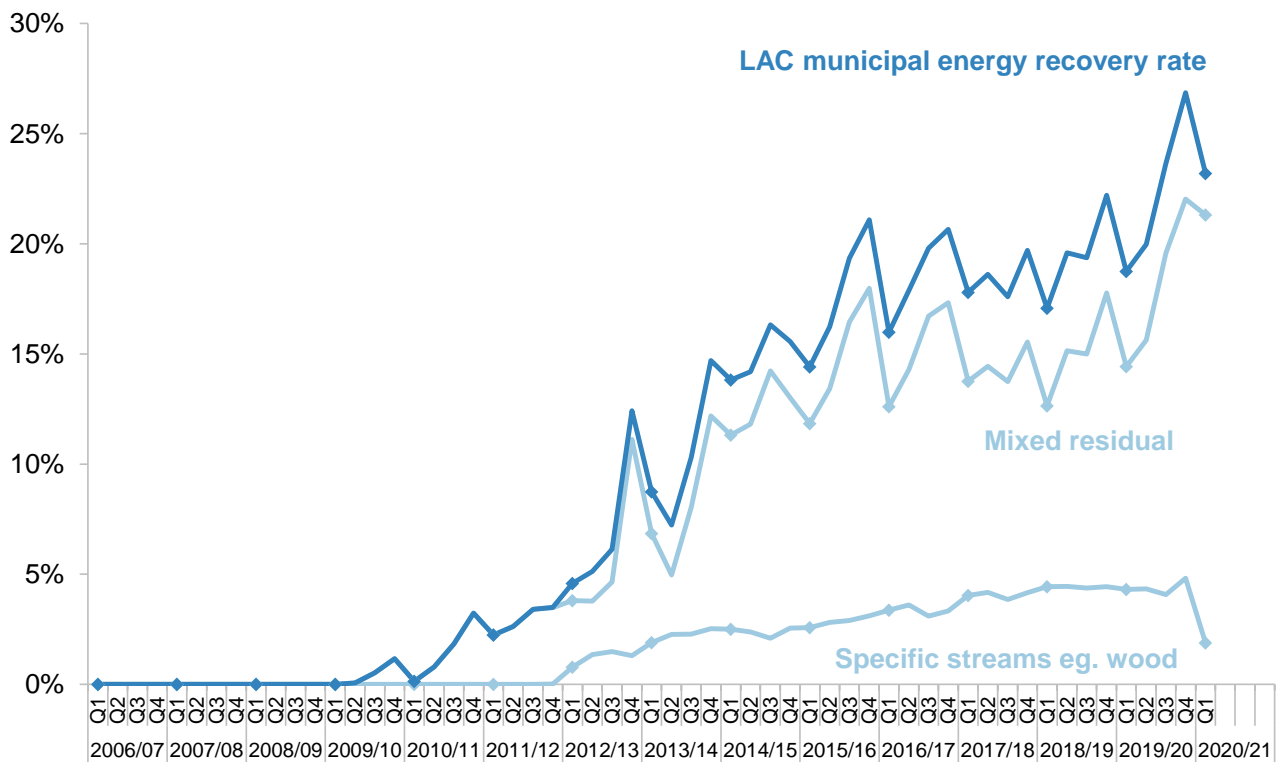
Six of the eleven councils reported decreased household recycling rates compared to April to June 2019, the largest of which were recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh at 6.9 per cent.

Energy recovery

This quarterly report includes statistics on energy recovery, which is the term used when value is gained from waste products by converting them into energy. All energy recovery statistics reported in this section are derived from material sent for energy recovery via incineration, although other technologies exist. Energy recovery via anaerobic digestion is not included in this section and is explained further in [Appendix 1 – Limitations of Data](#) of the latest Annual Report.

Between April and June 2020, 54,867 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This gave a waste energy recovery rate of 23.2 per cent, higher than the 18.7 per cent rate reported for the same period in 2019. In each year, the majority was mixed residual waste with a smaller proportion from specific streams, e.g. wood.

Figure 6: Waste sent for energy recovery via incineration
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2020/21

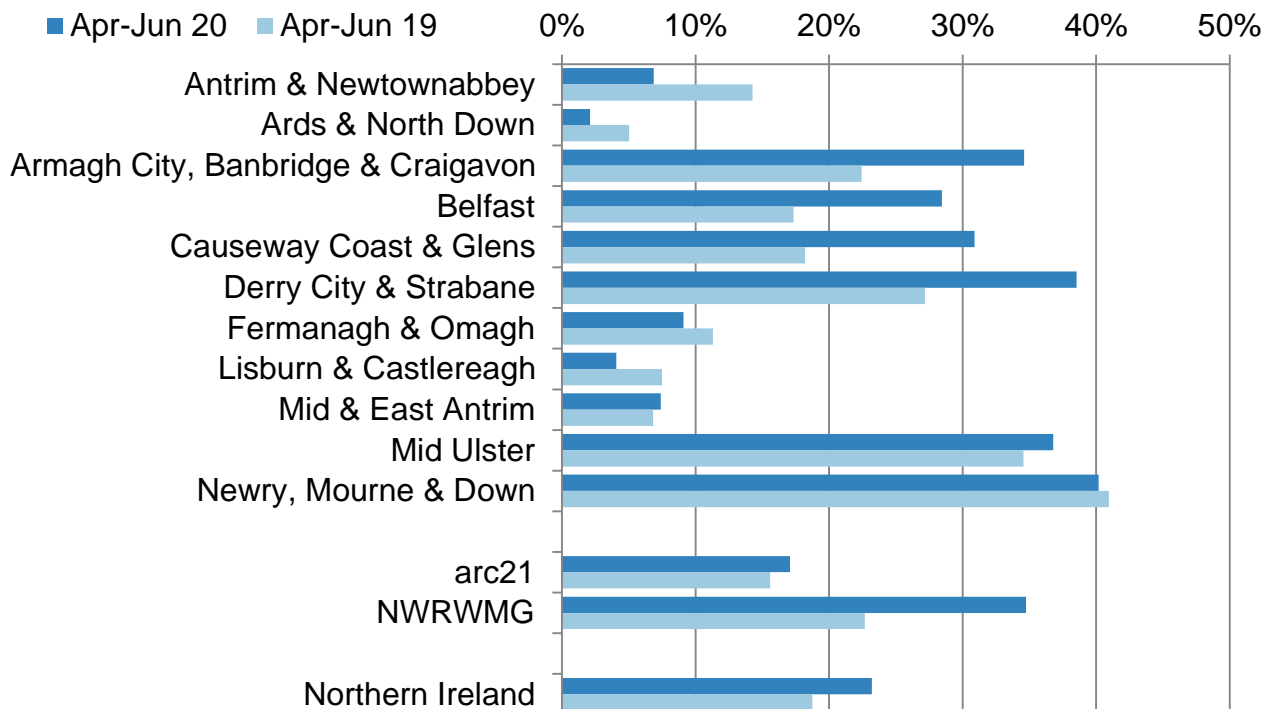


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth began during 2009/10 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.1 per cent during April to June 2010 to a high of 23.2 per cent for the same three months of 2020. Most of the growth since 2009/10 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 0.1 per cent during April to June 2010 to 21.3 per cent in April to June 2020). The specific stream proportion was 1.9 per cent in April to June 2020, a drop from 4.3 per cent in April to June 2019, with the closure of civic amenity sites a major contributing factor in this decrease.

Mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery is combustible residual waste collected from the kerbside and from civic amenity sites and processed into refuse derived fuel at material recovery facilities. The specific streams element of energy recovery is mostly

wood but also includes furniture, carpets and mattresses, mostly collected from civic amenity sites.

Figure 7: Waste energy recovery rate by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2019 and April to June 2020



The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Newry, Mourne & Down at 40.2 per cent, down from 40.9 per cent between April and June 2019. The lowest rate recorded was 2.1 per cent in Ards & North Down. Four councils reported increases in their energy recovery rates of between 11.1 per cent and 12.7 per cent.

For most councils, energy recovery for mixed residual waste accounted for a greater proportion of total energy recovery than specific streams such as wood.

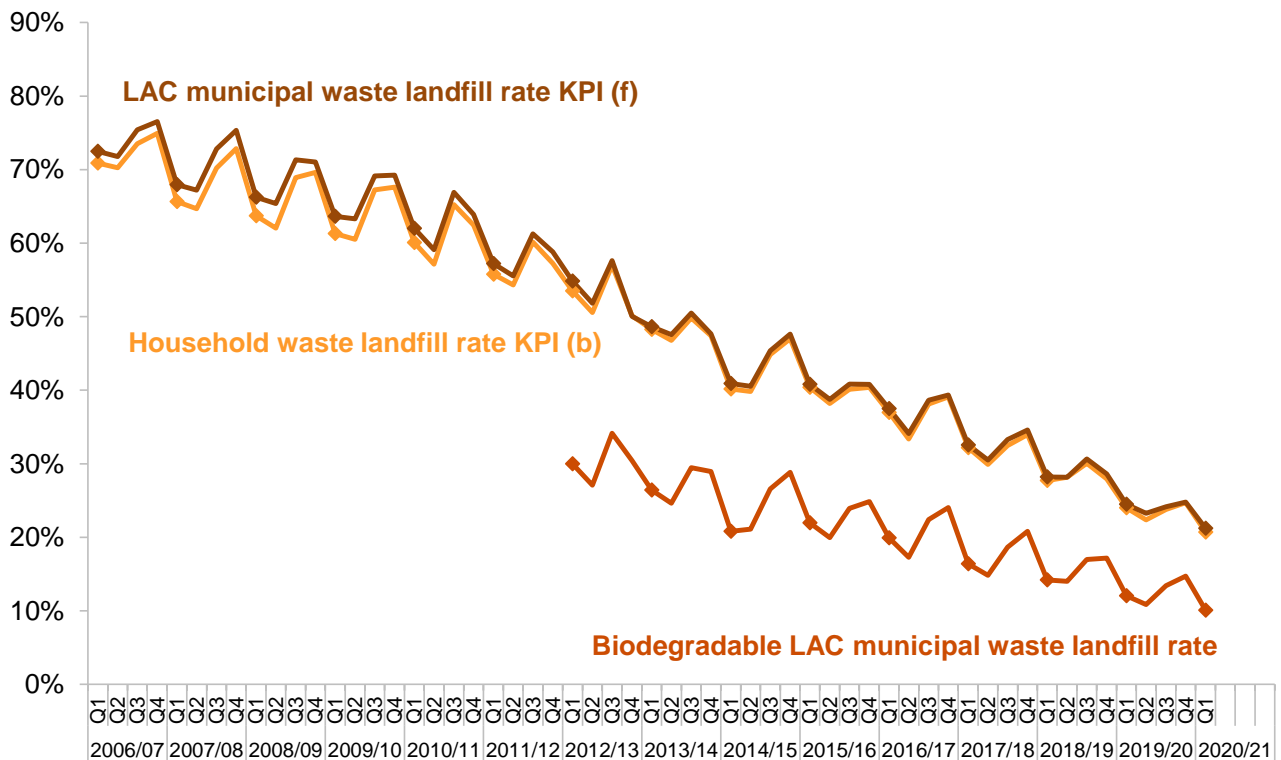
These statistics can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

Landfill

The quantity of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill decreased by 22.7 per cent, from 64,959 tonnes during April to June 2019 to 50,224 tonnes between April and June 2020. This gave a quarterly landfill rate of 21.2 per cent for April to June 2020 which was lower than the 24.5 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2019. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 20.7 per cent, a further reduction on the 24.0 per cent recorded during the same three months of 2019.

Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill

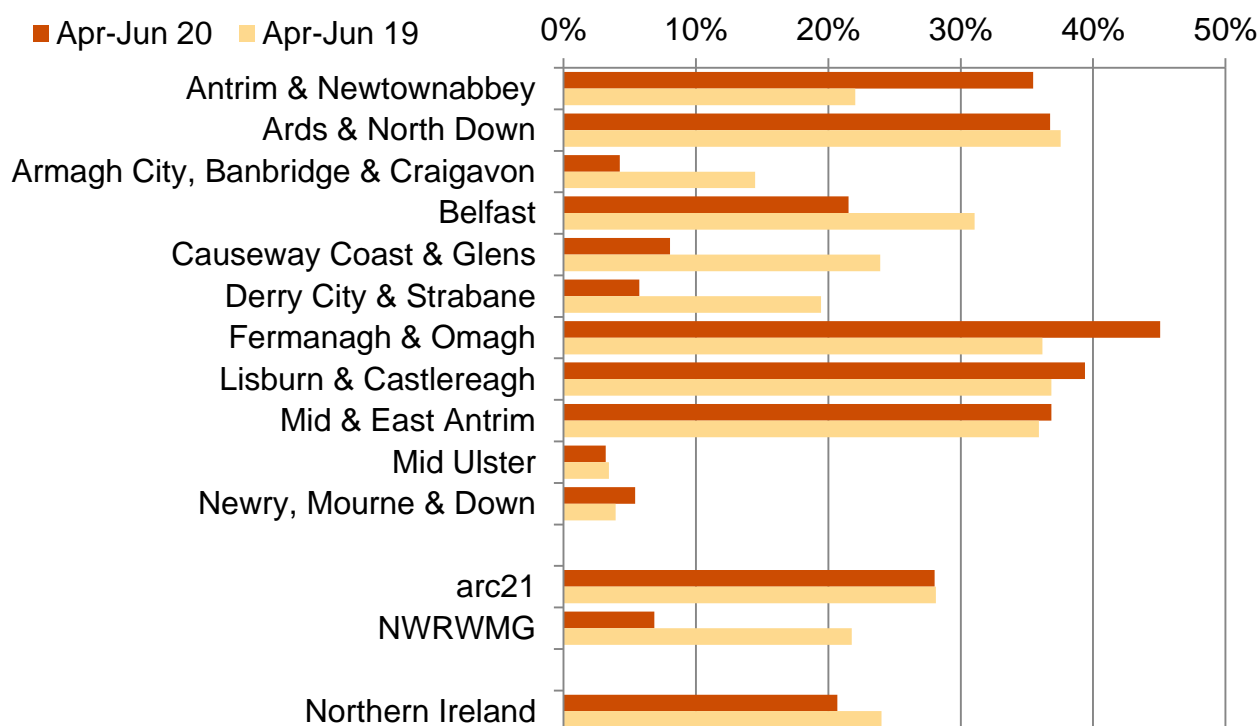
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2020/21, KPIs (b) and (f)



The landfill rate has now reached its lowest ever level for April to June. The long term trend has seen the April to June household waste landfill rate fall consistently from 70.9 per cent in 2006 to the 20.7 per cent recorded in 2020. Note that the landfill rate exhibits seasonality and the April to June and July to September quarters tend to have lower rates than October to December and January to March. The seasonality stems from the higher level of compostable garden waste arising during spring and summer.

Figure 9: Household waste landfilled by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, April to June 2019 and April to June 2020, KPI (b)



The household waste landfill rate increased for five councils in April to June 2020 compared to the same three months in 2019, with Antrim & Newtownabbey reporting a 13.4 per cent increase. The two councils in the North West Region Waste Management Group reported the largest decreases to their household waste landfill rates, falling by 13.7 per cent in Derry City & Strabane and 15.9 per cent in Causeway Coast & Glens.

The statutory requirement for all councils in Northern Ireland to provide households with a container for food to enable its separate collection has contributed to a drop in landfill rates, though increasing energy recovery rates for some councils have also contributed.

Biodegradable waste to landfill

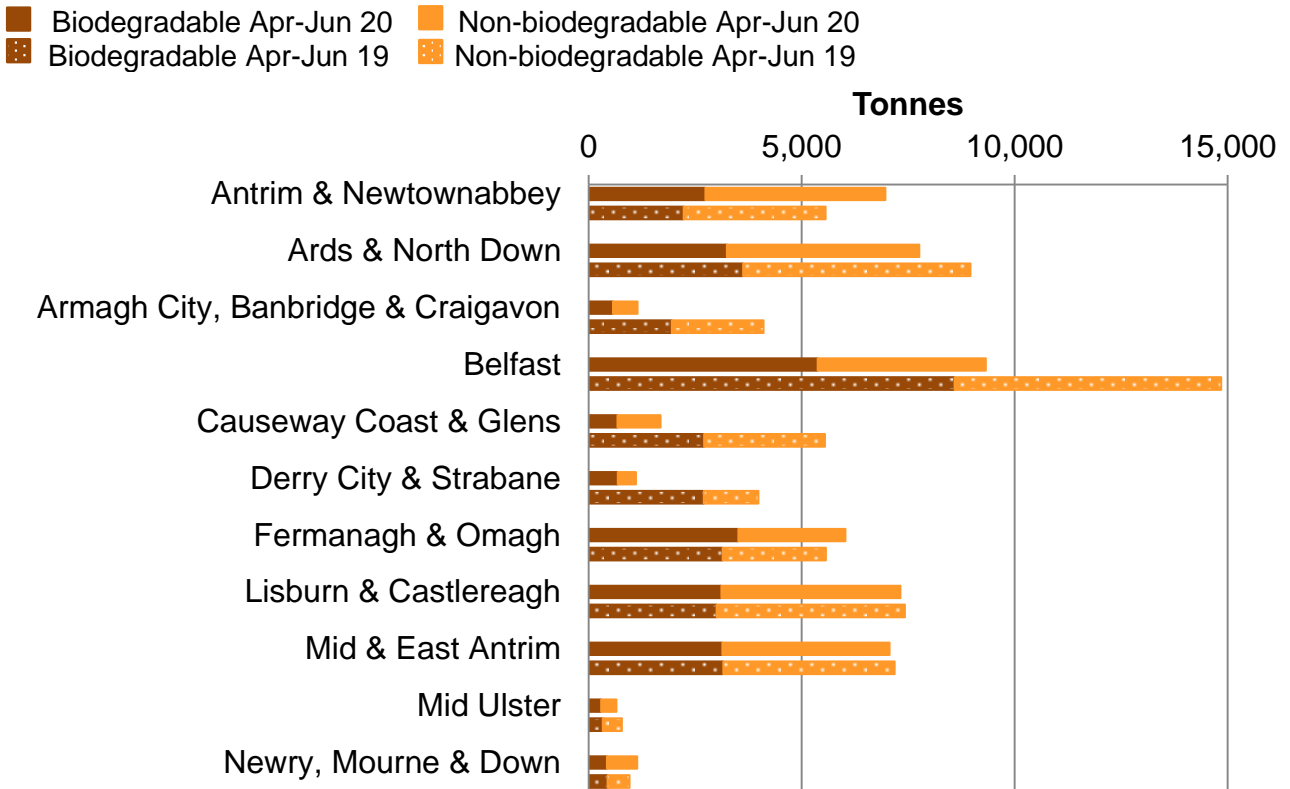
The Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004 (as amended) placed a statutory responsibility on councils, in each scheme year, to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable waste for which they had allowances. The scheme concluded at the end of the 2019/20 financial year with Northern Ireland’s councils expected not to exceed a combined annual allowance of 220,000 tonnes of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. 2019/20 finalised totals for each council will be published in the NI Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Annual publication to be released in November 2020.

The continued monitoring of Biodegradable waste is required for targets set in the [EU Council Directive on the Landfill of Waste](#) which specify that it must be reduced to 75 per cent of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995.

Northern Ireland’s councils sent 23,800 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill between April and June 2020, which was 47.4 per cent of all waste sent to landfill. Both figures compare favourably to the same quarter last year when 31,899 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill, 49.1 per cent of all waste sent to landfill.

Figure 10 displays the tonnages of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste sent to landfill by each council, comparing them with other councils and to the same quarter last year.

Figure 10: Biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste to landfill by council
Northern Ireland, April to June 2019 and April to June 2020,



There is considerable variation between councils in the quantities of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, as well as the proportion of biodegradable waste in total landfill. Fermanagh & Omagh, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey reported increased tonnages of biodegradable waste sent to landfill compared to April to June 2019.

National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics were first designated as National Statistics, and underwent a full [assessment](#) against the Code of Practice, in January 2014 by the UK Statistics Authority.

A compliance check [assessment](#) was completed for the waste statistics produced by each of the UK regions in 2020 with the results of the finding published in October 2020.

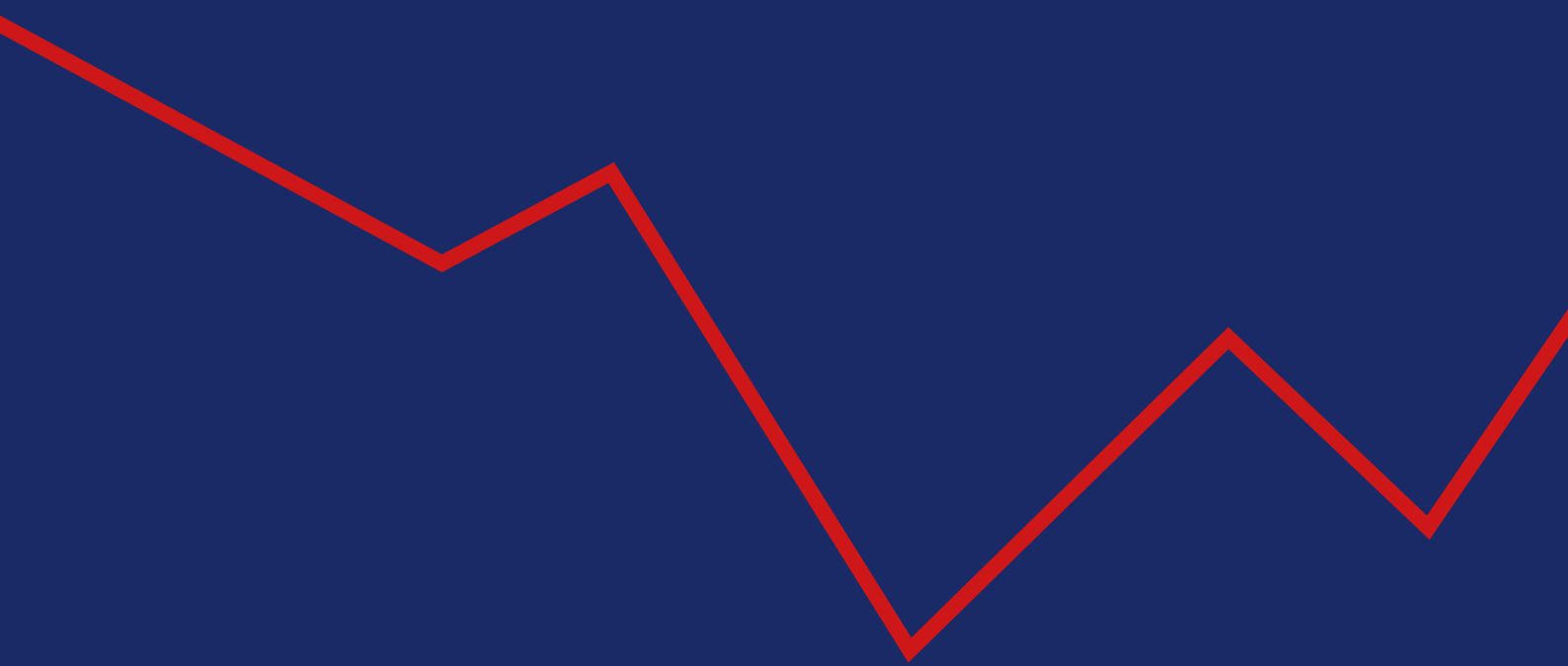
The trustworthiness, quality and value of the statistics, including the coherence of the data source, methods and quality assurance (QA) arrangements, and the presentation of the statistics were reviewed with a final outcome that the statistics can continue to be designated as National Statistics.

The conclusion of the compliance check cited the following actions as strengths:

- Ongoing quality assurance of the data contained within the report by reviewing methods on a quarterly basis.
- Improved statistical output by creating a [time series](#) of Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics to accompany the report and tables. This [dataset](#) is also available on Open Data NI along with a [time series](#) of materials collected at Northern Ireland local authority waste management sites.
- Improved statistical output by creating [infographics](#) to accompany the report and tables.
- Improved statistical output by creating an [interactive dashboard](#) to accompany the report and tables.
- Hosted a workshop with users in February 2020 to review publications and statistical outputs.
- Sought and implemented recommendations from GSS good practice team to improve the publication.

Some areas for minor improvement were also suggested and these will be addressed as we continually improve the statistical output.

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