

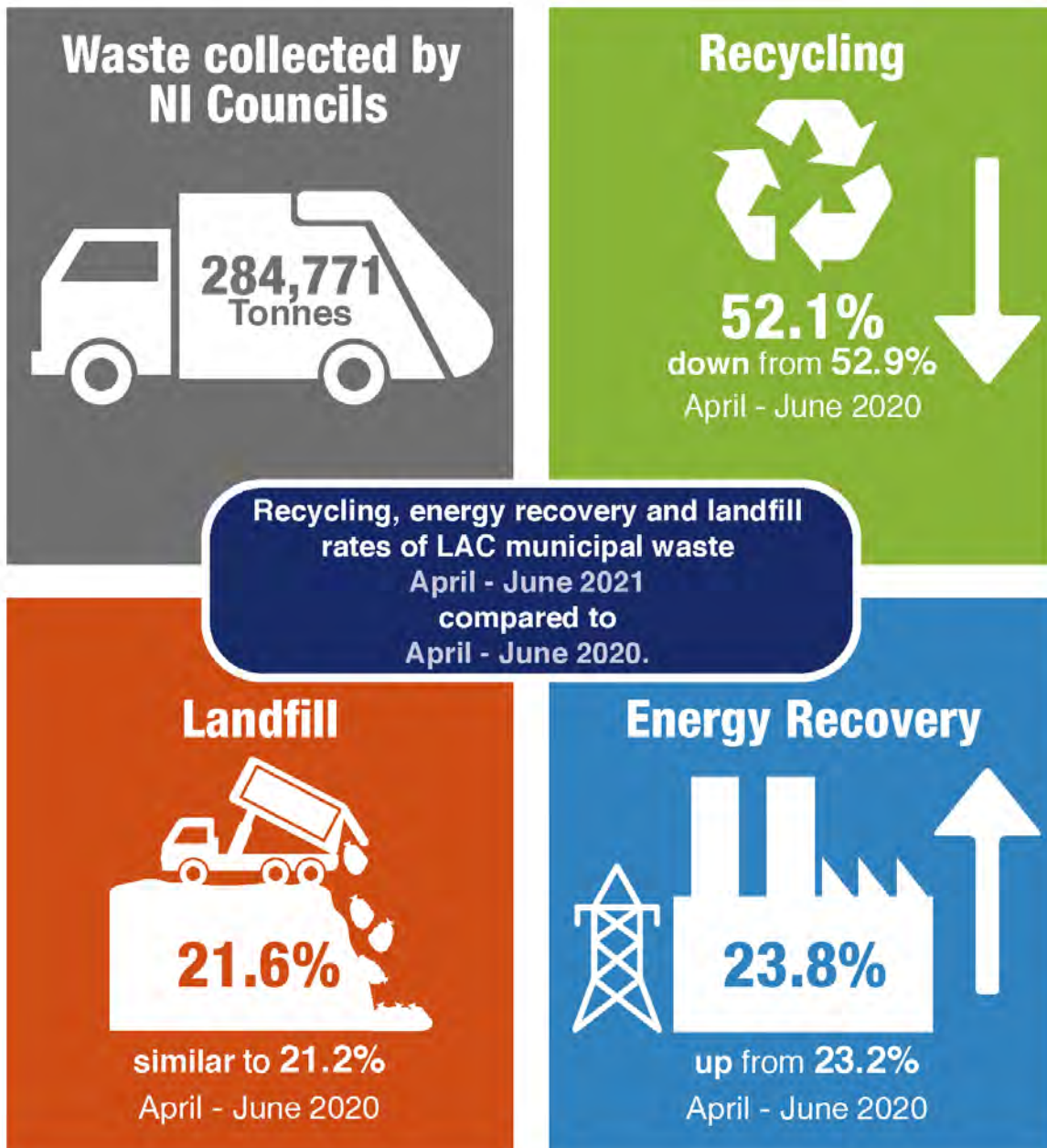
Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for April - June 2021



A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Northern Ireland waste management statistics – April to June 2021



Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 284,771 tonnes of waste during April to June 2021, a 20.4 per cent increase compared to April to June 2020.
It should be noted that measures were introduced during April to June 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the closure of civic amenity sites. The full resumption of these services is primarily responsible for the extent of the increase in arisings reported.
- During April to June 2021, 52.1 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling, 0.8 per cent lower than the recycling rate for April to June 2020.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 21.6 per cent in April to June 2021, a fall from 72.5 per cent in April to June 2006, and similar to the 21.2 per cent recorded during April to June 2020.
- Almost a quarter (23.8 per cent) of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery in April to June 2021, higher than the 23.2 per cent reported in April to June 2020, and the 0.1 per cent rate during the same quarter in 2010.
- Household waste accounted for 88.2 per cent of all waste collected during this period.
- The recycling rate for household waste was 52.1 per cent, down from 54.4 per cent in April to June 2020. The landfill rate for household waste was 21.5 per cent, an increase from 20.7 per cent compared to the same quarter last year.

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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

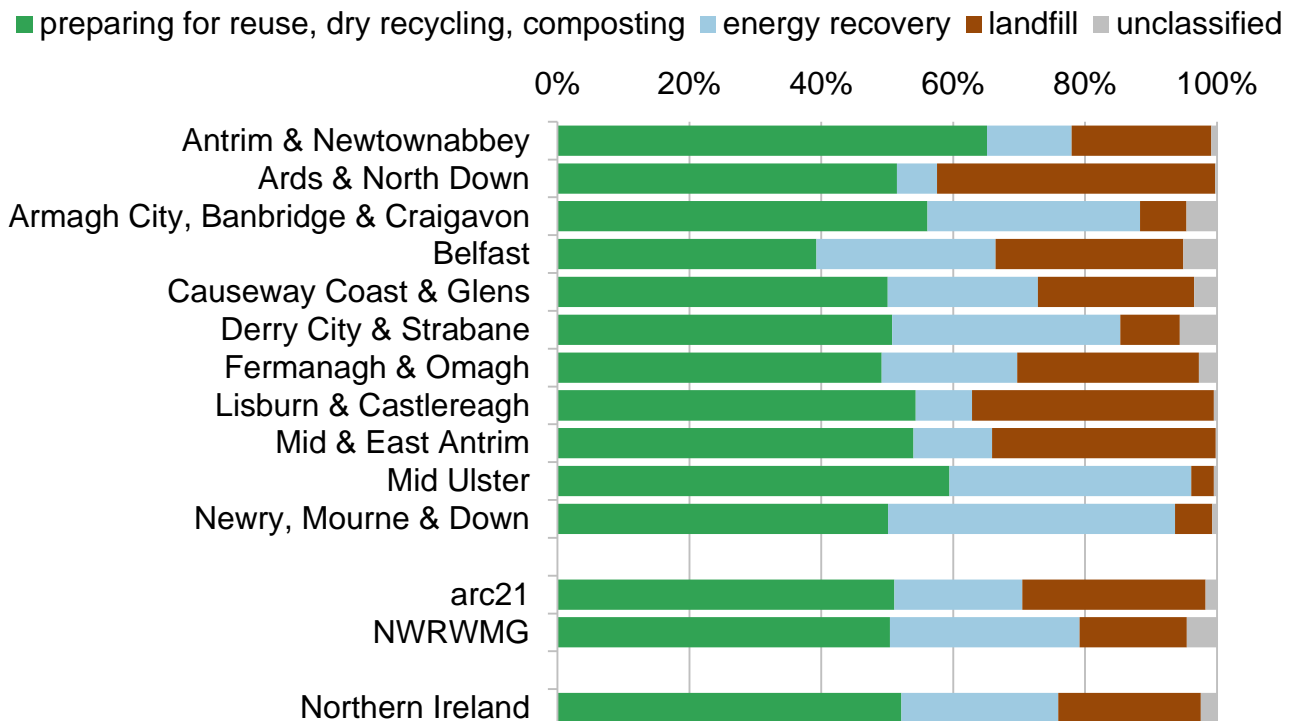
- Provisional statistics for July to September 2021 are scheduled for publication in January 2022.
- Finalised data for 2020/21 are scheduled to be published in November 2021 and will supersede previously published data from the four quarterly returns for that financial year.
- The scheduled dates for 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 2021. 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 2-3),
- recycling (pages 4-5),
- energy recovery (pages 6-7),
- landfill (pages 8-10).

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 2021



At the Northern Ireland level, 52.1 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between April and June 2021. Energy recovery accounted for 23.8 per cent and 21.6 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 2.5 per cent unaccounted for is likely to involve moisture and/or gaseous losses. Each of the rates are 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 0.8 percentage points compared to April to June 2020. The energy recovery rate increased by 0.6 percentage points and the landfill rate remained at a similar rate to April to June 2020. Household waste accounted for 88.2 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

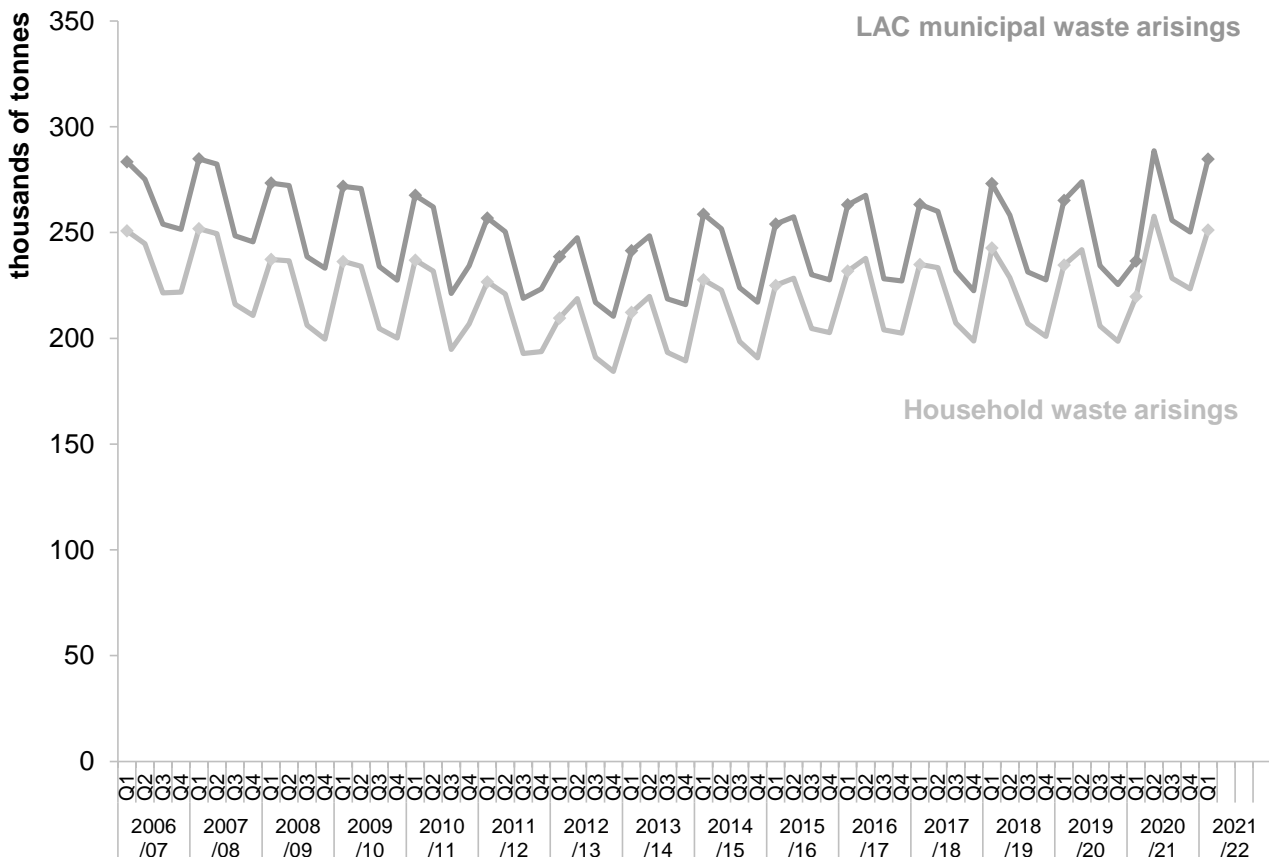
Northern Ireland’s councils collected 284,771 tonnes of waste between April and June 2021. This was 20.4 per cent higher than the 236,560 tonnes collected during the same three months of 2020. The extent of this increase can primarily be explained by an almost threefold increase in the quantity of waste collected at civic amenity sites compared to the same quarter in 2020. In April to June 2020, measures were introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the closure of many civic amenity sites, resulting in a large reduction in the quantity of waste collected during this period.

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, apart from April to June 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions resulted in a larger than normal proportion of household waste being collected. During April to June 2021 household waste accounted for 88.2 per cent. The remaining 11.8 per cent was non-household waste such as rubble/soil and commercial/industrial waste.

Figure 2: Waste arisings

Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2021/22 KPI (j)

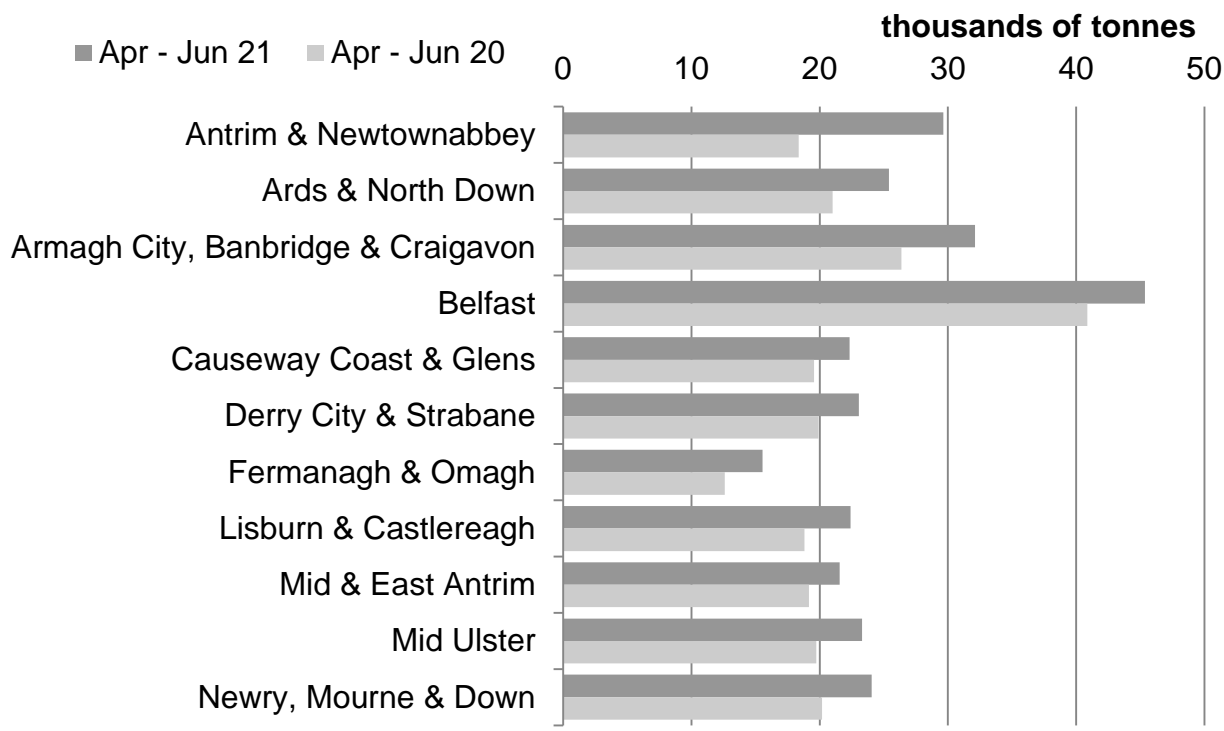


The longer term trend for April to June saw a gradual reduction in waste arisings of 16.2 per cent across five years, from a high of 284,813 tonnes between April and June 2007 to

a low of 238,613 tonnes between the same three months of 2012. Since 2012, arisings have gradually increased, excluding the sharp drop reported in 2020 due to the effects the Covid-19 pandemic had on the provision of waste collection services and facilities.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council

Northern Ireland, April to June 2020 and April to June 2021, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 45,362 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh and Omagh collected the least at 15,553 tonnes.

All councils reported an increase in total arisings in April to June 2021 compared to the same period in 2020, with the largest increase recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey at 61.5 per cent. The quantity of waste collected at civic amenity sites in Antrim & Newtownabbey increased sevenfold compared to April to June 2020, indicating waste collection services for this council were particularly affected by the closure of civic amenity sites during this period.

These statistics can be found in Table 1 accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

Recycling

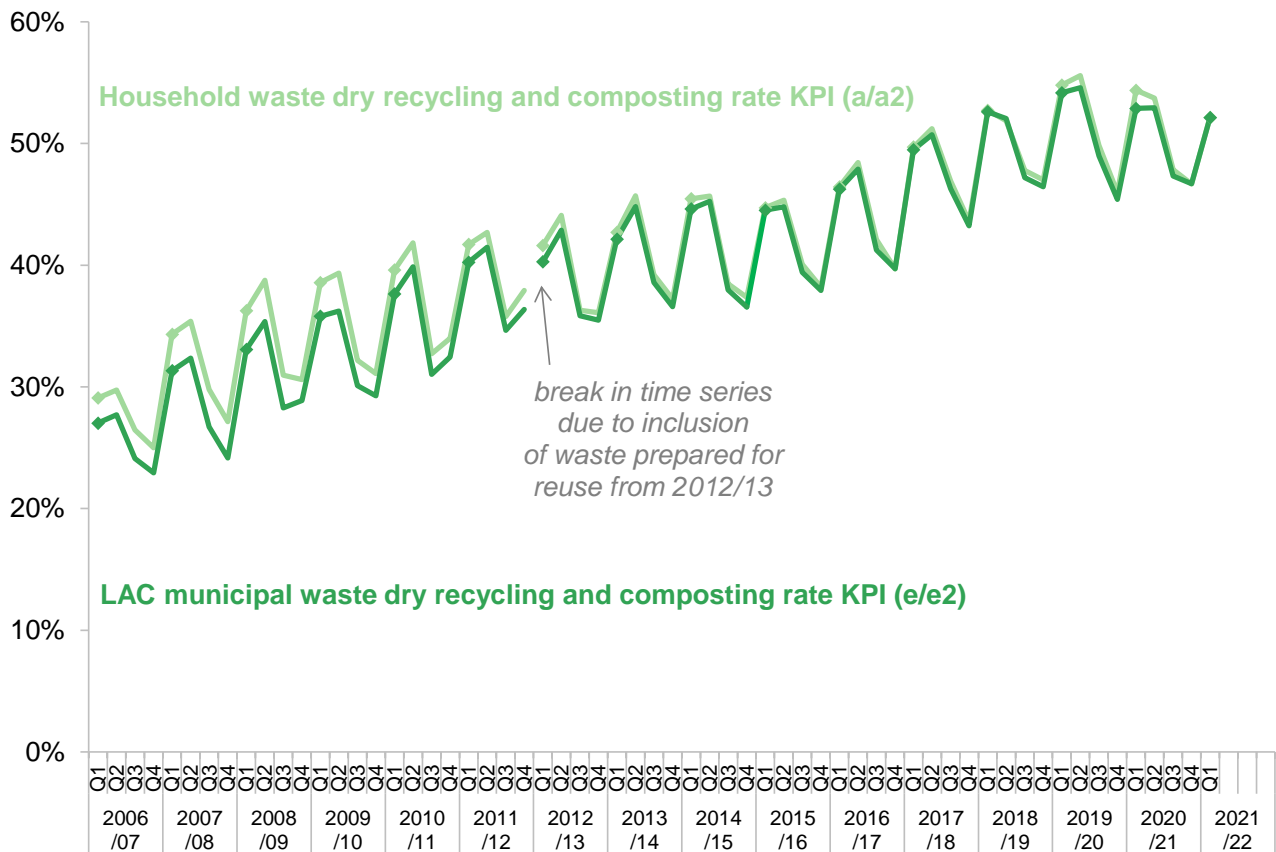
This section of the report looks at local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste and household waste recycling rates, both of which include waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting.

There were 148,449 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 2021. The waste recycling rate was 52.1 per cent. This was a decrease of 0.8 percentage points on the 52.9 per cent of waste sent for recycling between April and June 2020.

The recycling rate for household waste only was also 52.1 per cent between April and June 2021, lower than the 54.4 per cent recorded during the same three months of 2020. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 22.6 per cent, composting 29.3 per cent and preparing for reuse 0.3 per cent. Last year the equivalent rate for preparing for reuse was 0.0 per cent, whilst the dry recycling and composting rates were 22.0 per cent and 32.3 per cent respectively.

Waste sent for recycling is included in a number of key performance indicators, KPI (a), (a2), (e), and (e2). These indicators are used to monitor performance under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. The household waste annual recycling rate was a population indicator for [Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2016-2021](#) and is being proposed as an indicator for the next PfG.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2021/22, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)

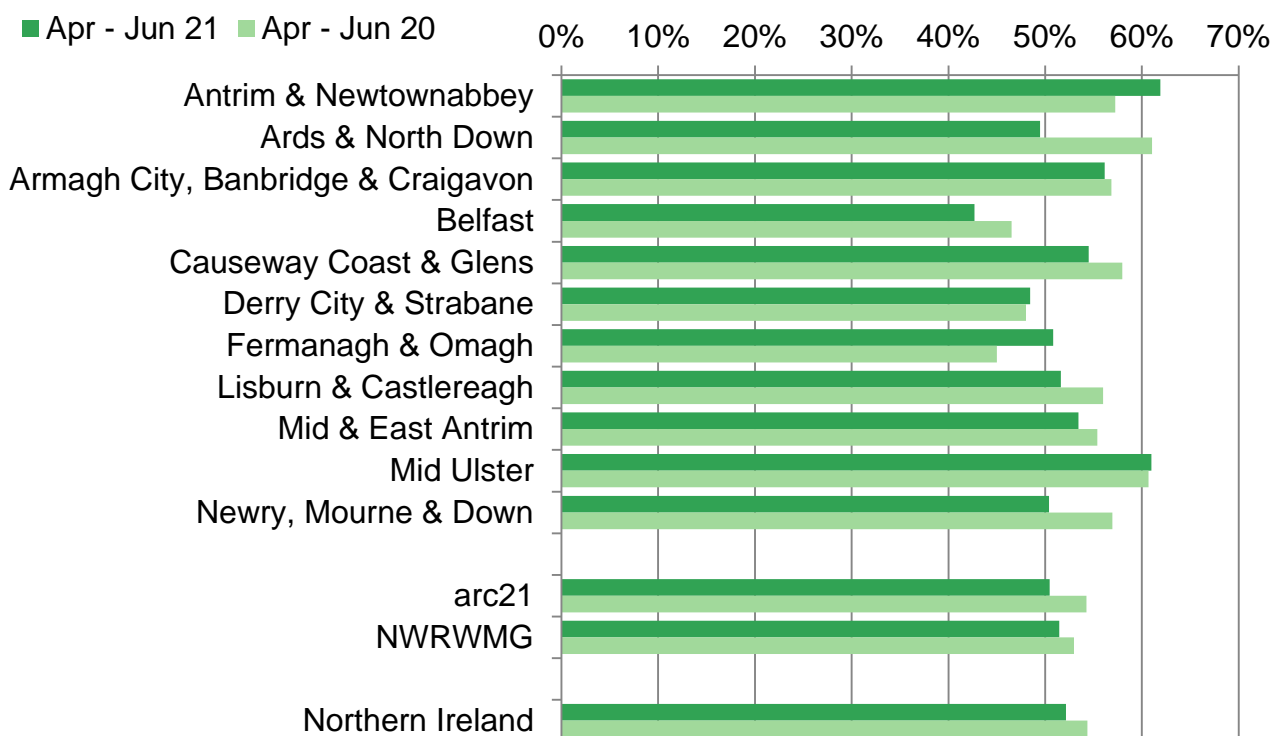


These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend for household waste recycling during this quarter has been a steady increase from 29.1 per cent in April to June 2006 to 54.8 per cent in 2019, however the rate has decreased to 52.1 per cent in 2021. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (655 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13 and adds 0.3 percentage points to the overall household recycling rate in April to June 2021.

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

Northern Ireland, April to June 2020 and April to June 2021, KPI (a2)



Ards & North Down reported the largest decrease in their household recycling rate compared to April to June 2020 at 11.5 per cent, with a decrease in waste sent for composting the main contributing factor for this fall. Six other councils reported decreases in their household recycling rates, whilst the rate increased in Fermanagh & Omagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey by 5.8 and 4.7 percentage points respectively.

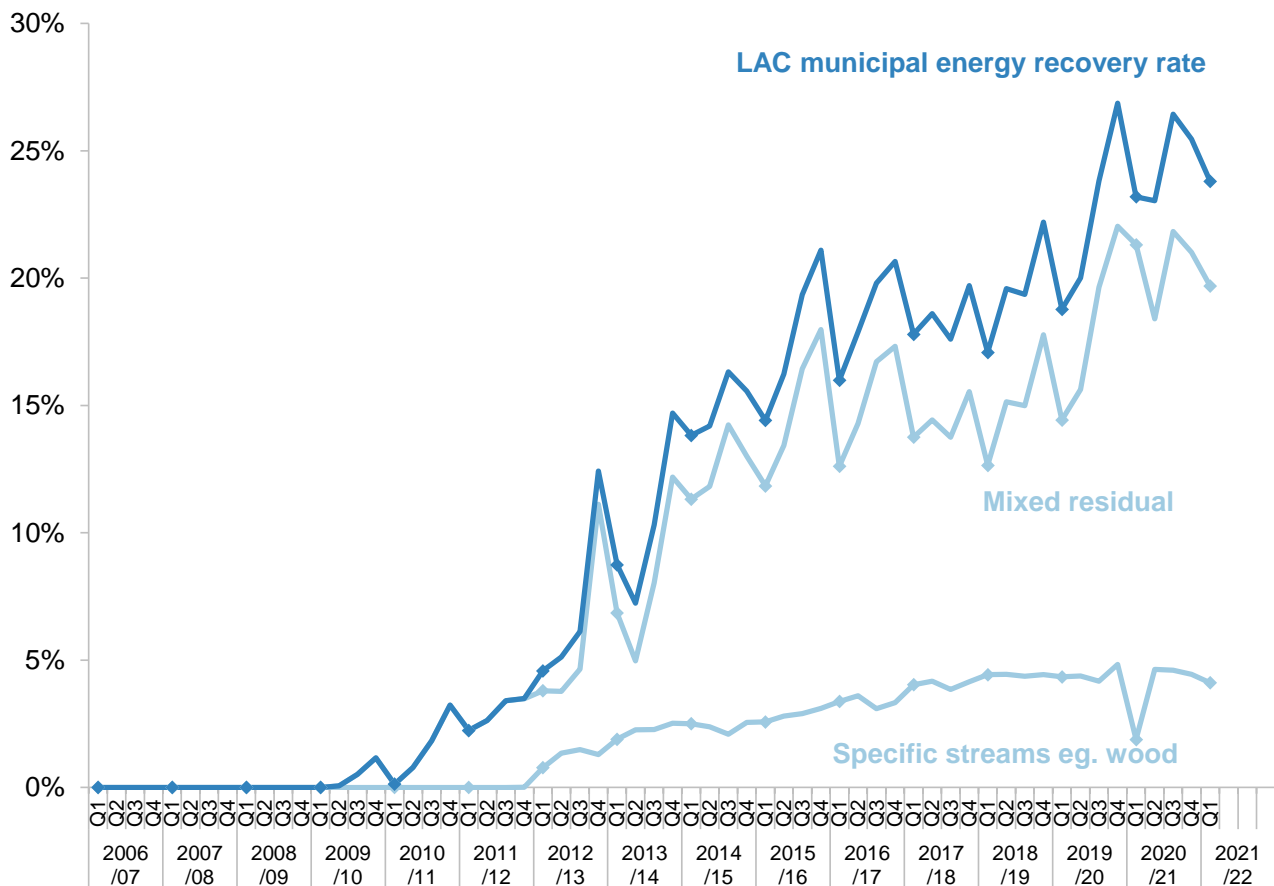
These statistics can be found in Tables 4 and 12 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

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 2021, 67,766 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced a waste energy recovery rate of 23.8 per cent, higher than the 23.2 per cent rate reported for the same period in 2020. For each period, the majority of energy recovery was from mixed residual waste, with a smaller proportion from specific streams, e.g. wood.

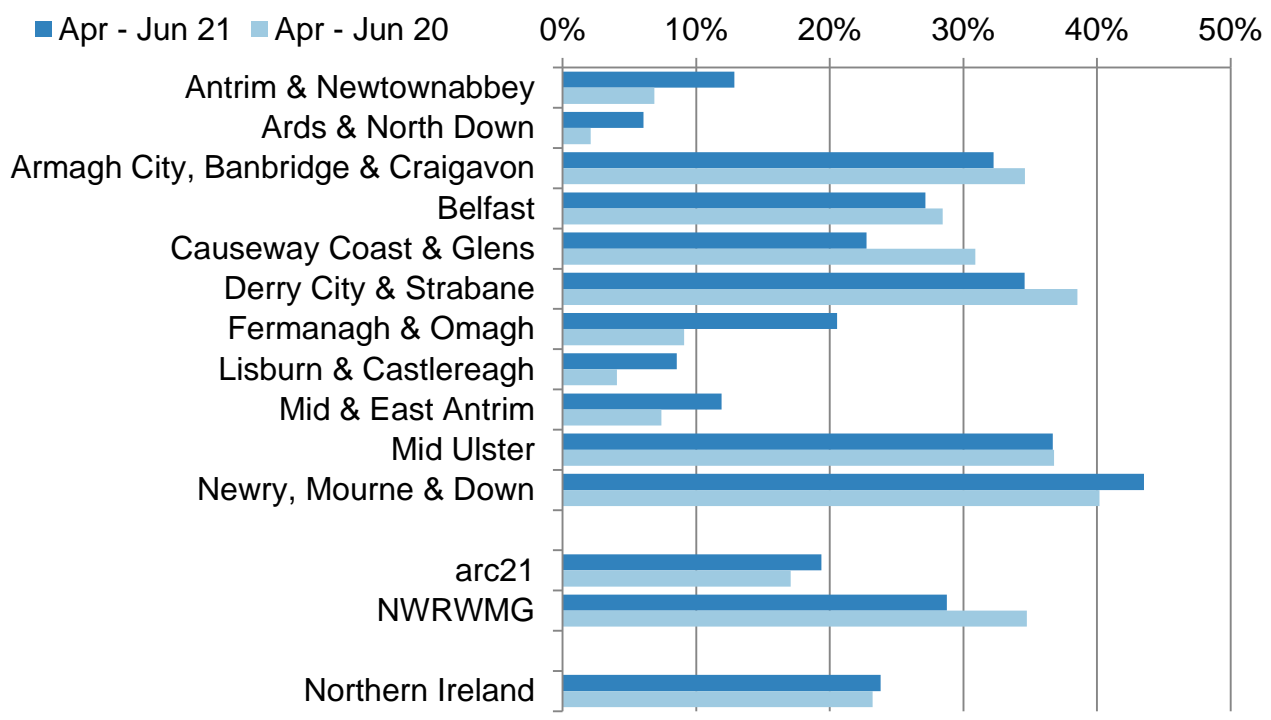
Figure 6: Waste sent for energy recovery via incineration
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2021/22



There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2010/11. Strong growth began during 2010/11 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.1 per cent during April to June 2010 to a high of 23.8 per cent for the same three months of 2021. 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 19.7 per cent in April to June 2021). The specific stream proportion was 4.1 per cent in April to June 2021.

Mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery is combustible residual waste collected from the kerbside and from civic amenity sites which is 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. The widespread closure of civic amenity sites in April to June 2020 explains the sharp drop in the specific streams element of energy recovery during that quarter.

Figure 7: Waste energy recovery rate by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2020 and April to June 2021



The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Newry, Mourne & Down at 43.5 per cent, up from 40.2 per cent between April and June 2020. The lowest rate recorded was 6.0 per cent in Ards & North Down. A large increase in the waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh, increasing by 11.5 percentage points to 20.6 per cent, whilst the rate fell by 8.1 percentage points in Causeway Coast & Glens.

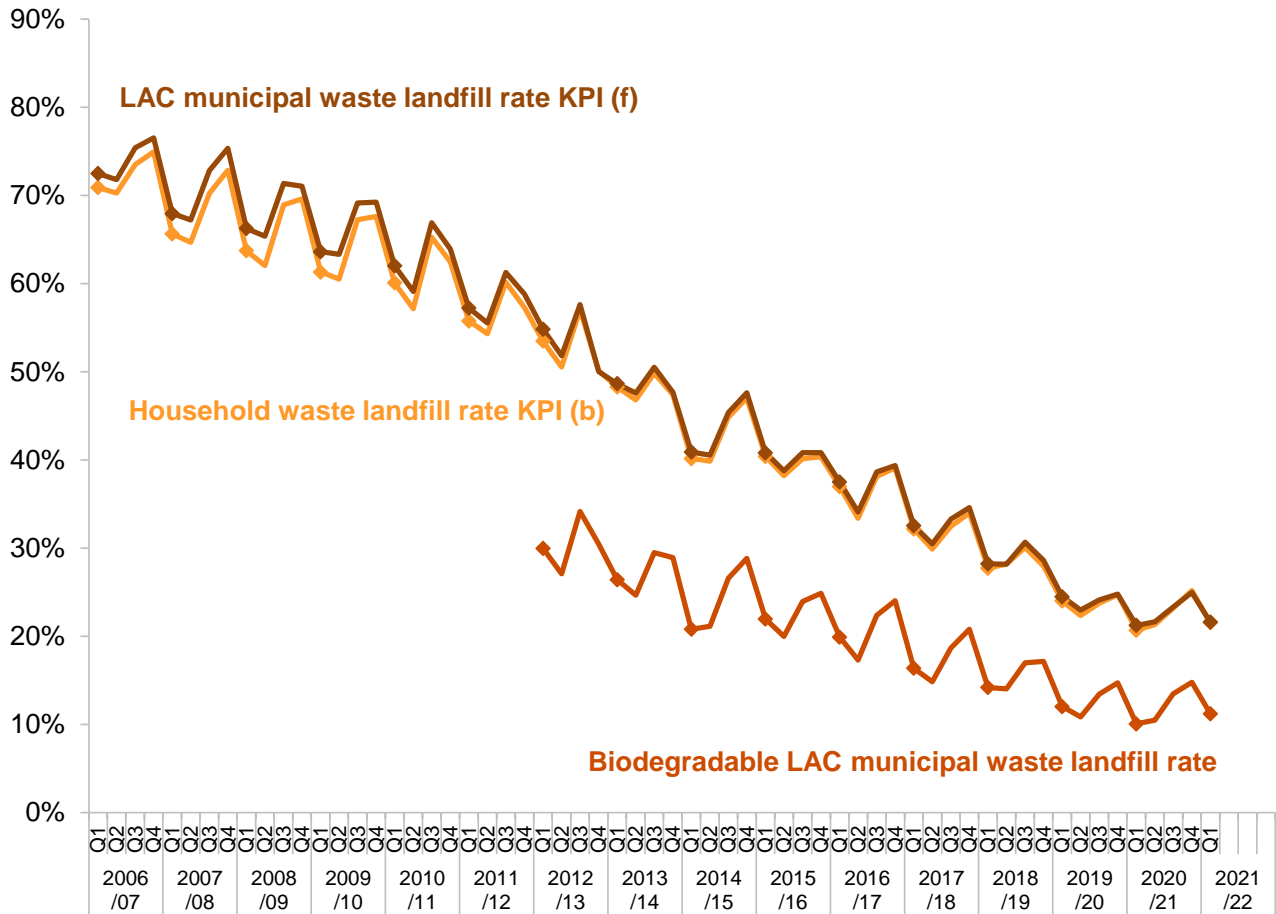
These statistics can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

Landfill

The quantity of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill increased by 22.5 per cent, from 50,224 tonnes during April to June 2020 to 61,525 tonnes between April and June 2021. This gave a quarterly landfill rate of 21.6 per cent, similar to the 21.2 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2020. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 21.5 per cent, an increase of 0.9 percentage points on the same three months of 2020.

Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill

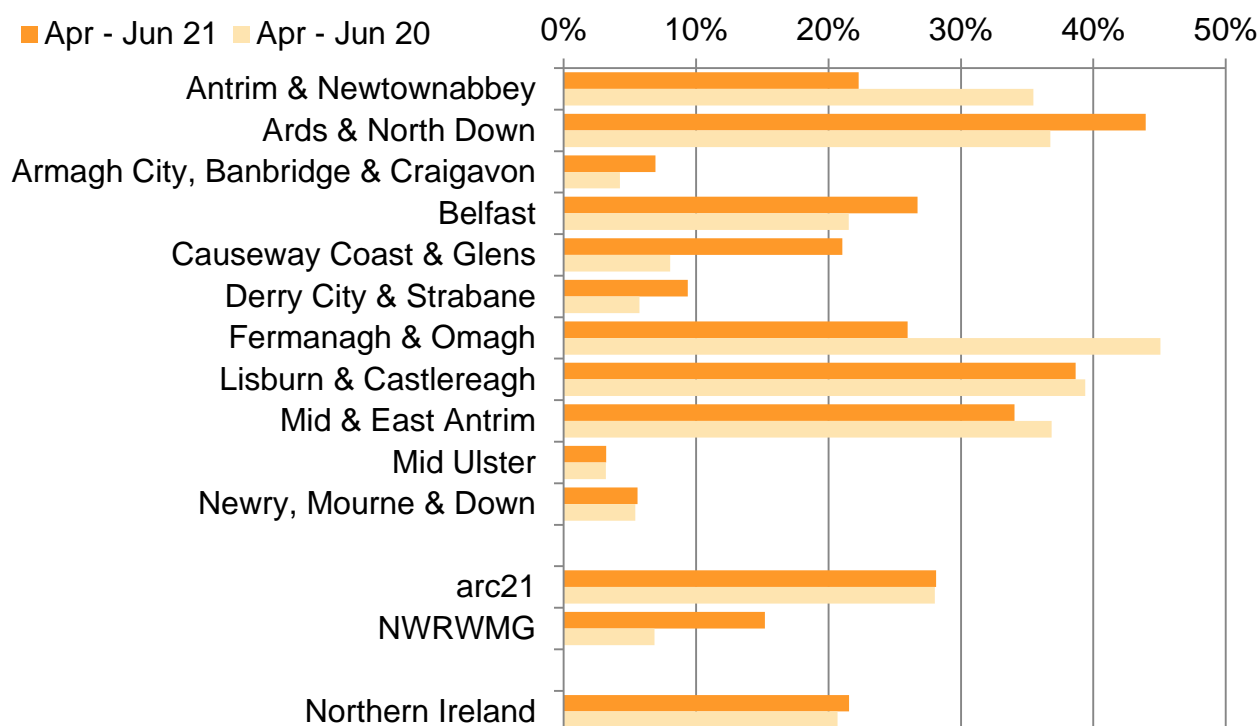
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2021/22, KPIs (b) and (f)



The long term trend has seen the April to June household waste landfill rate fall from 70.9 per cent in 2006 to the 21.5 per cent recorded in 2021. 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 2020 and April to June 2021, KPI (b)



The household waste landfill rate increased for five councils in April to June 2021 compared to the same three months in 2020, with Causeway Coast & Glens reporting an increase of 13.0 percentage points. A reduction in waste sent for energy recovery is the main contributing factor for this increase. Four councils reported a fall in the household waste landfill rate whilst the remaining councils showed a similar rate to April to June 2020. Fermanagh & Omagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey reported the largest decreases to their household waste landfill rate of 19.1 and 13.2 percentage points respectively.

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.

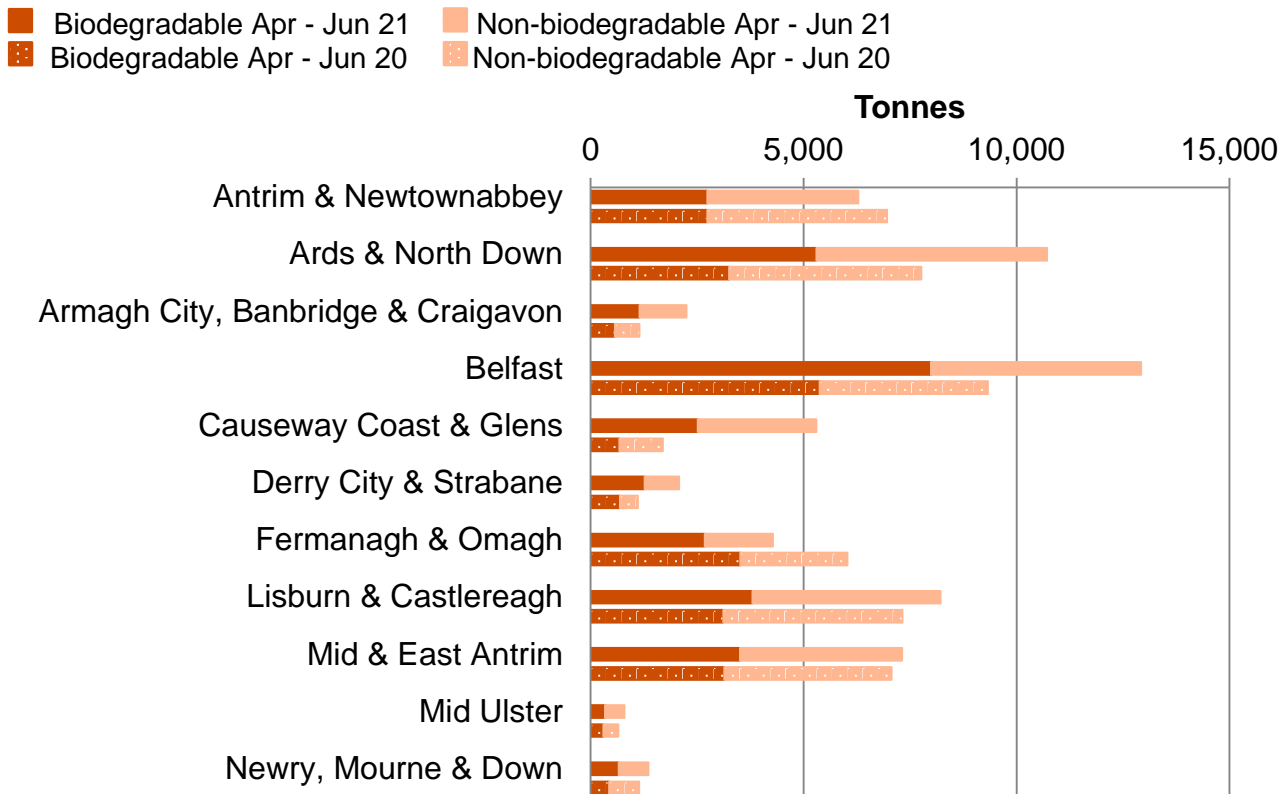
Biodegradable waste to landfill

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, however the continued monitoring of Biodegradable waste is required for [existing target commitments](#) which specify that it must be reduced to 35 per cent of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995.

Northern Ireland's councils sent 31,940 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill between April and June 2021, which was 51.9 per cent of all waste sent to landfill. During the same quarter last year, 23,800 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill which was 47.4 per cent of all waste sent to landfill.

Figure 10 displays the tonnages of LAC 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 2020 and April to June 2021,



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. In Fermanagh & Omagh, 62.5 per cent of all waste sent to landfill was biodegradable, the highest figure reported.

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.

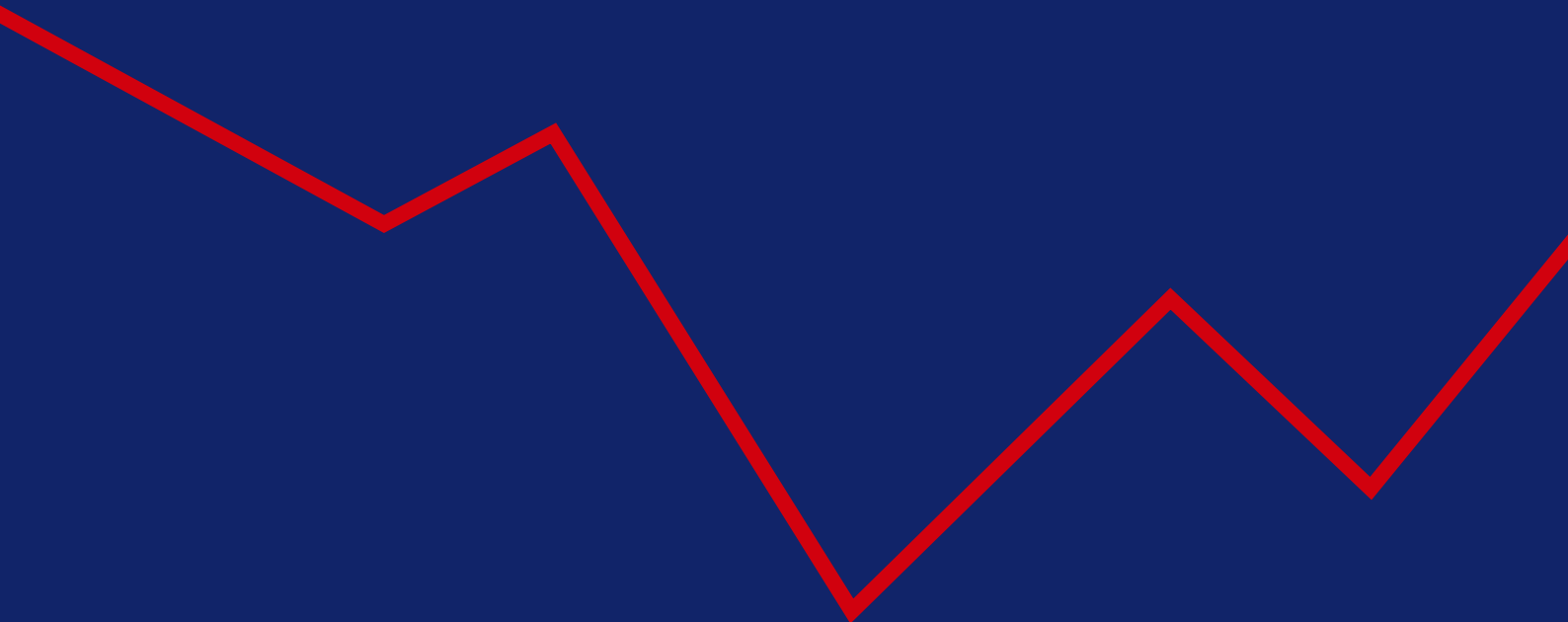
The conclusion of the compliance check cited the following actions as strengths:

- 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.

One suggestion was to liaise with the other UK regions to produce a guide on how waste is defined as recycled and explain the main definitional differences in recycling rates between countries. The recycling explainer is now available at the following link: [Recycling Explainer](#)

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