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Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for April to June 2024

Department of
Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Depairtment o'
Fairmin, Environment an' Kintra Matthers

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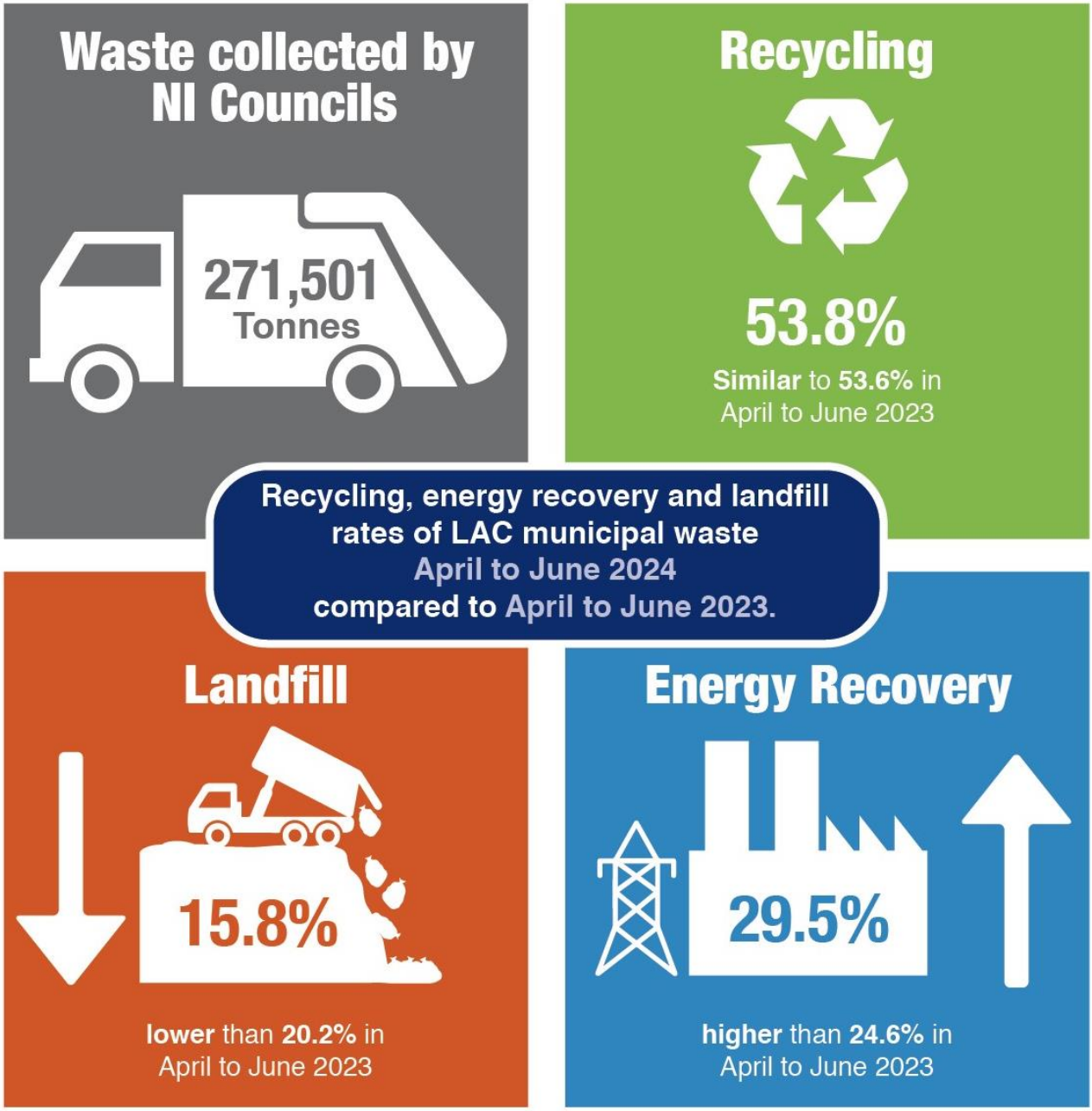
Northern Ireland waste management statistics – April to June 2024



Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 271,501 tonnes of waste during April to June 2024, higher than the 267,107 tonnes collected during April to June 2023.
- During April to June 2024, 53.8 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling, similar to the recycling rate recorded for April to June 2023.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 15.8 per cent in April to June 2024, a fall from both 72.5 per cent in April to June 2007 and 20.2 per cent during April to June 2023.
- During April to June 2024, 29.5 per cent of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery which was higher than the 24.6 per cent reported in April to June 2023. In the longer term, energy recovery rates have increased from 0.1 per cent recorded during April to June 2010.
- Household waste accounted for 86.8 per cent of all Local Authority collected (LAC) waste during this period.
- The recycling rate for household waste only was 54.5 per cent during April to June 2024, an increase from 53.8 per cent recorded during April to June 2023. The landfill rate for household waste was 15.4 per cent, which was lower than the rate of 19.8 per cent recorded in April to June 2023.

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Issued by:
Statistics and Analytical Services Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA),
Clare House
Airport Road West, Sydenham Intake,
Belfast BT3 9ED

Contact: Conor McCormack
Telephone: 028 9016 3343
Email: env.stats@daera-ni.gov.uk

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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 and UK Government to measure progress towards achieving targets from various waste strategies including:

- The revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy
- The Waste Framework Directive

Data on household recycling was a population indicator for the previous Programme for Government (PfG) and has been proposed as an indicator in the forthcoming PfG.

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 2024 are scheduled for publication in January 2025.
- Finalised data for 2023/24 are scheduled to be published in November 2024 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

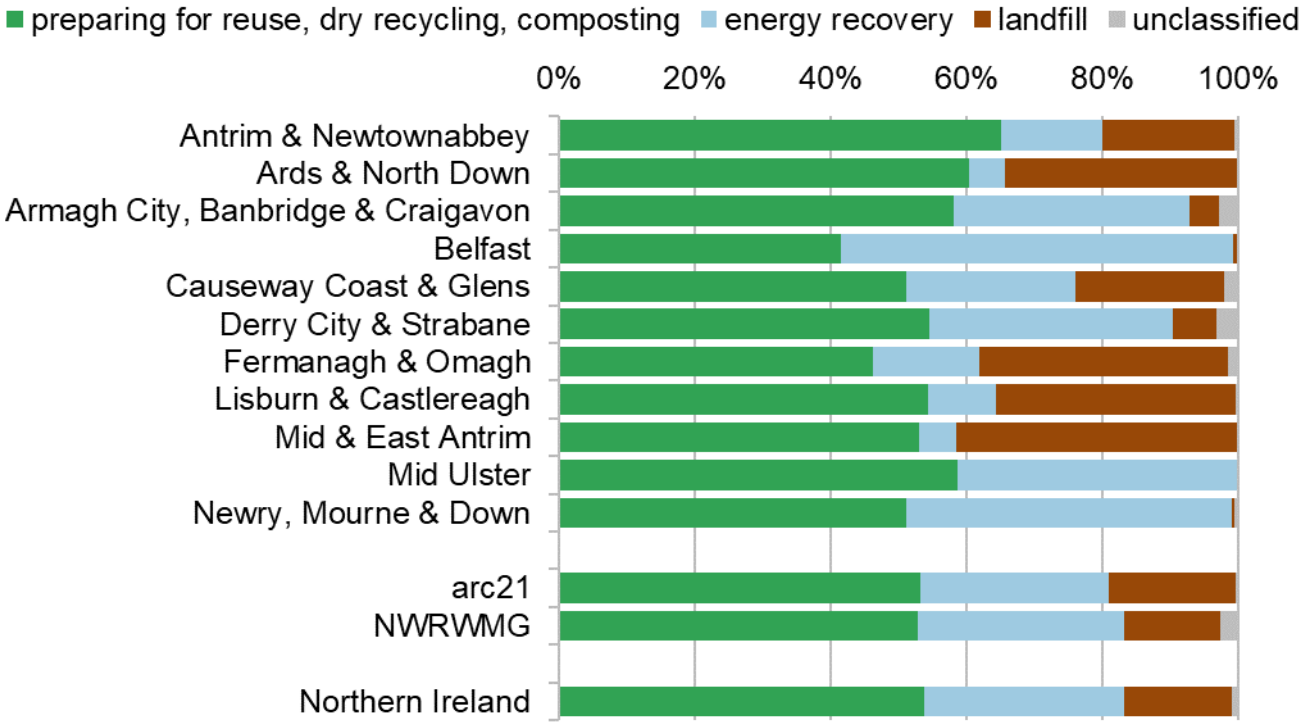
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of Local Authority Collected (LAC) municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between April and June 2024. The report is split into four sections, each of which cover local authority collected 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 2024



At the Northern Ireland level, 53.8 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between April to June 2024. Energy recovery accounted for 29.5 per cent and 15.8 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 1.0 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 was similar to that reported in April to June 2023 (53.6 per cent). The landfill rate decreased by 4.4 percentage points whilst the energy recovery rate increased by 4.9 percentage points from April to June 2023. Household waste accounted for 86.8 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.

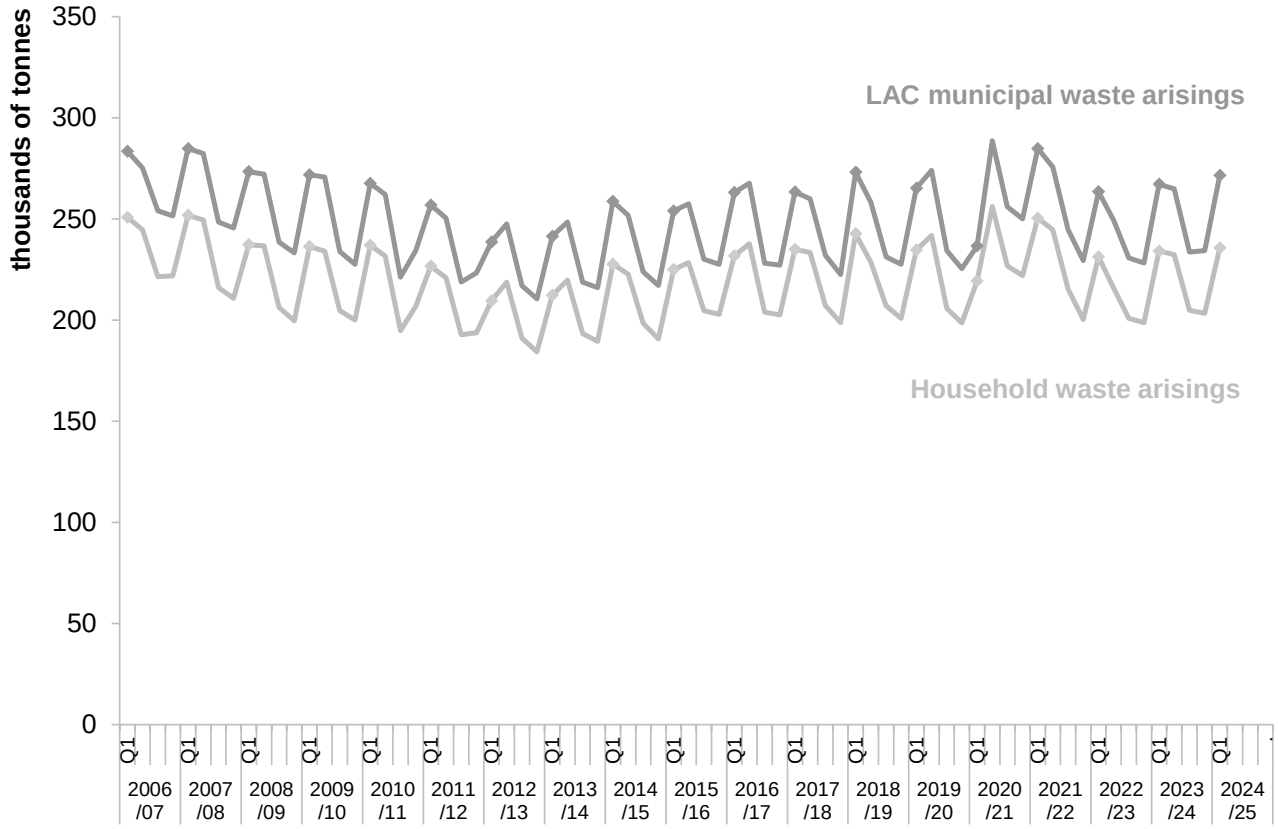
Waste arisings

Northern Ireland's councils collected 271,501 tonnes of waste between April and June 2024. This was higher than the 267,107 tonnes collected during April to June 2023. Factors affecting LAC municipal waste arisings, the majority of which is household waste, include individual household behaviours, the advice and collection services provided by councils, the state of the economy and weather conditions during the specific quarter.

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

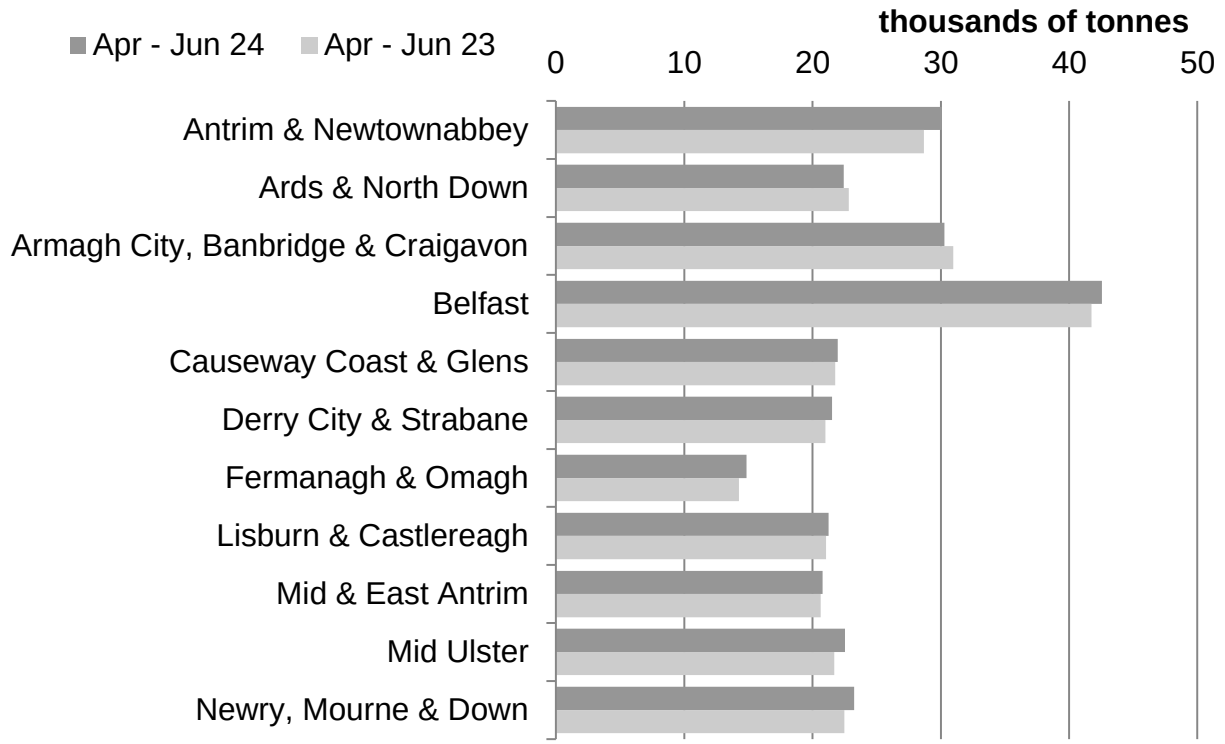
Since 2006/07 household waste has accounted for 86-90 per cent of total waste collected by councils each quarter, apart from April to June 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions resulted in a larger than normal proportion of household waste being collected. During April to June 2024 household waste accounted for 86.8 per cent. The remaining 13.2 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 2024/25 KPI (j)



The longer term trend for April to June saw a gradual reduction in LAC municipal waste arisings of 16.2 per cent across five years, from 284,813 tonnes between April to June 2007 to a low of 238,613 tonnes between the same three months of 2012. From April to June 2012 until a peak for the April to June quarter of 284,776 tonnes in 2021, arisings showed a generally increasing trend. From the April to June peak, arisings fell to 263,416 tonnes in April to June 2022 with 271,501 tonnes collected in the latest quarter.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council
Northern Ireland, April to June 2023 and April to June 2024, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 42,566 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh and Omagh collected the least at 14,855 tonnes.

Nine councils reported an increase in total arisings in April to June 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 with two councils reporting a decrease in total arisings.

Antrim & Newtownabbey reported the largest increase in total arisings in April to June 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, rising by 4.9 per cent. Fermanagh & Omagh, Mid Ulster and Newry, Mourne & Down reported increases from April to June 2023 to April to June 2024 of 4.2, 3.9 and 3.5 per cent respectively.

The total quantity of waste collected at kerbside was 1.2 per cent lower than the amount collected in April to June 2023, while the quantity of waste collected at civic amenity sites increased by 6.0 per cent.

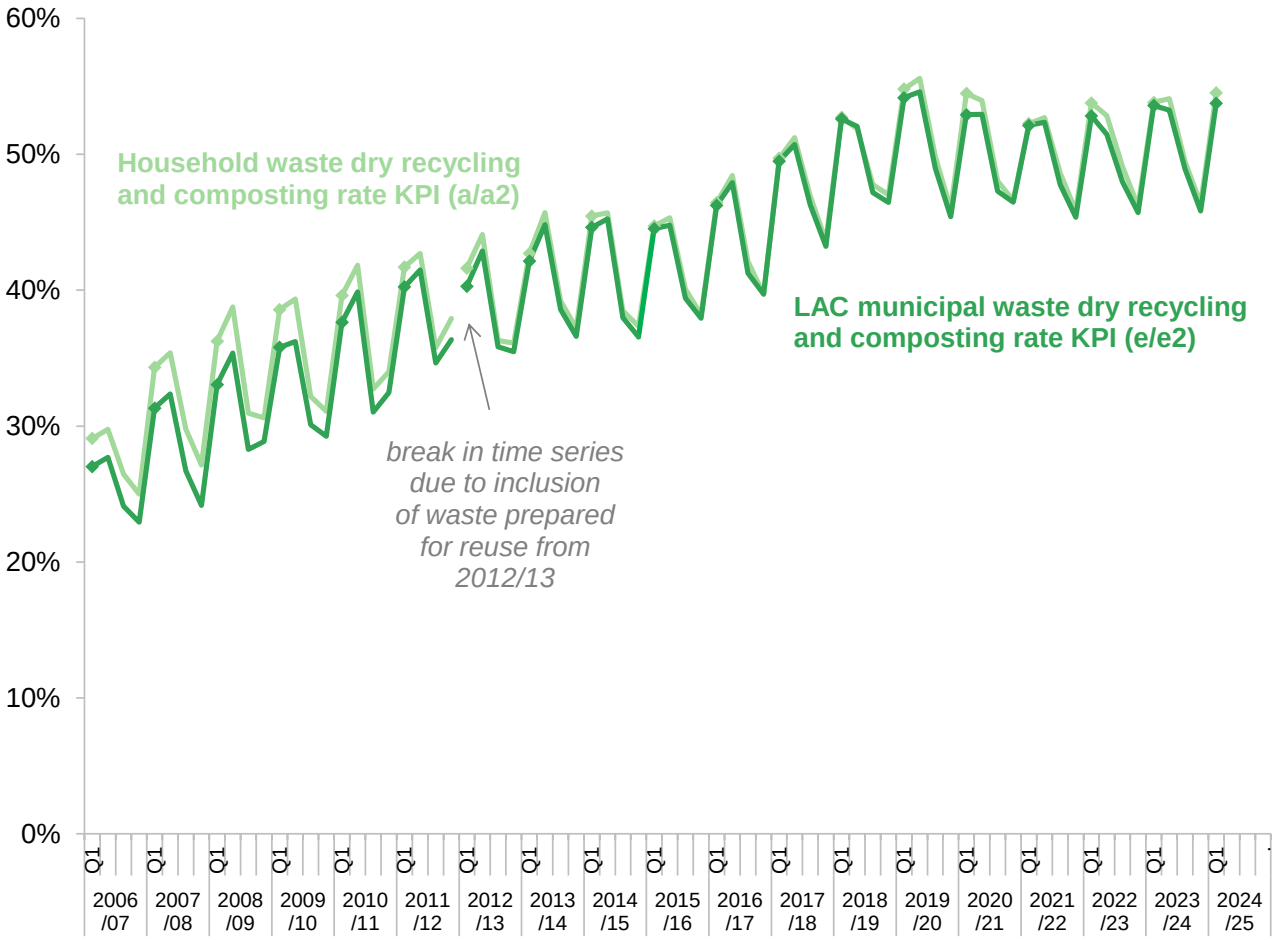
These statistics can be found in Table 1 and Table 2 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the time series dataset.

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 145,978 tonnes of LAC municipal waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting (referred to as 'recycling' for the rest of this section) during April to June 2024. The waste recycling rate was 53.8 per cent similar to the waste sent for recycling during April to June 2023.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2024/25, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)

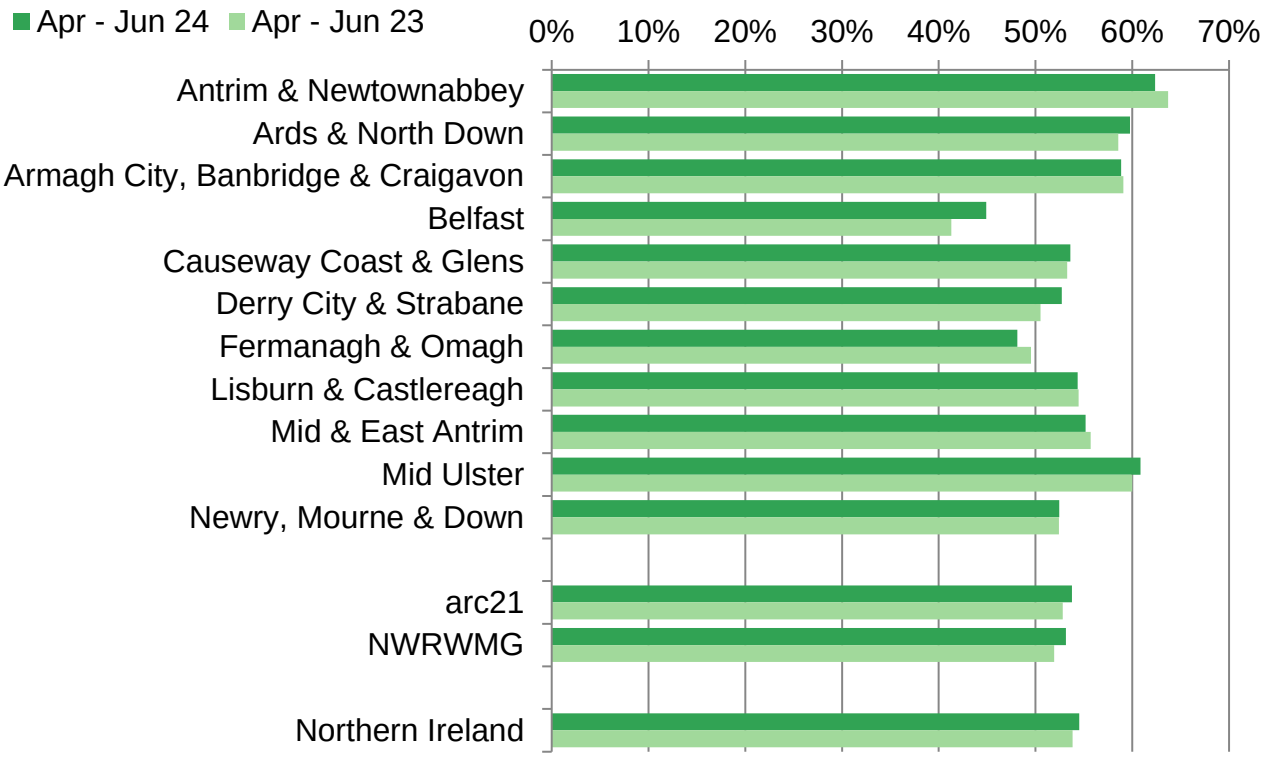


These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend for Local Authority Collected municipal waste recycling for the April to June quarter has been a steady increase from 27.0 per cent in April to June 2006 to 54.2 per cent in April to June 2019. Since then, the local authority collected municipal waste recycling rate has remained similar with a recycling rate of 53.8 per cent recorded in April to June 2024. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (713 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13 and adds 0.3 percentage points to the overall LAC recycling rate in April to June 2024.

The recycling rate for household waste only was 54.5 per cent during April to June 2024, an increase from 53.8 per cent recorded during April to June 2023. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 21.8 per cent, composting 32.5 per cent and preparing for reuse 0.3 per cent.

Figure 5: Household waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting rate by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2023 and April to June 2024, KPI (a2)



Belfast reported the largest increase in their household recycling rate compared to April to June 2023 at 3.6 percentage points, with an increase in waste sent for composting the largest contributory factor in this rise. Derry City & Strabane, Ards & North Down and Mid Ulster councils also recorded an increase in their household recycling rates in April to June 2024 compared to April to June 2023. The household recycling rate decreased in three councils with the largest decrease recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh council[1].

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.

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

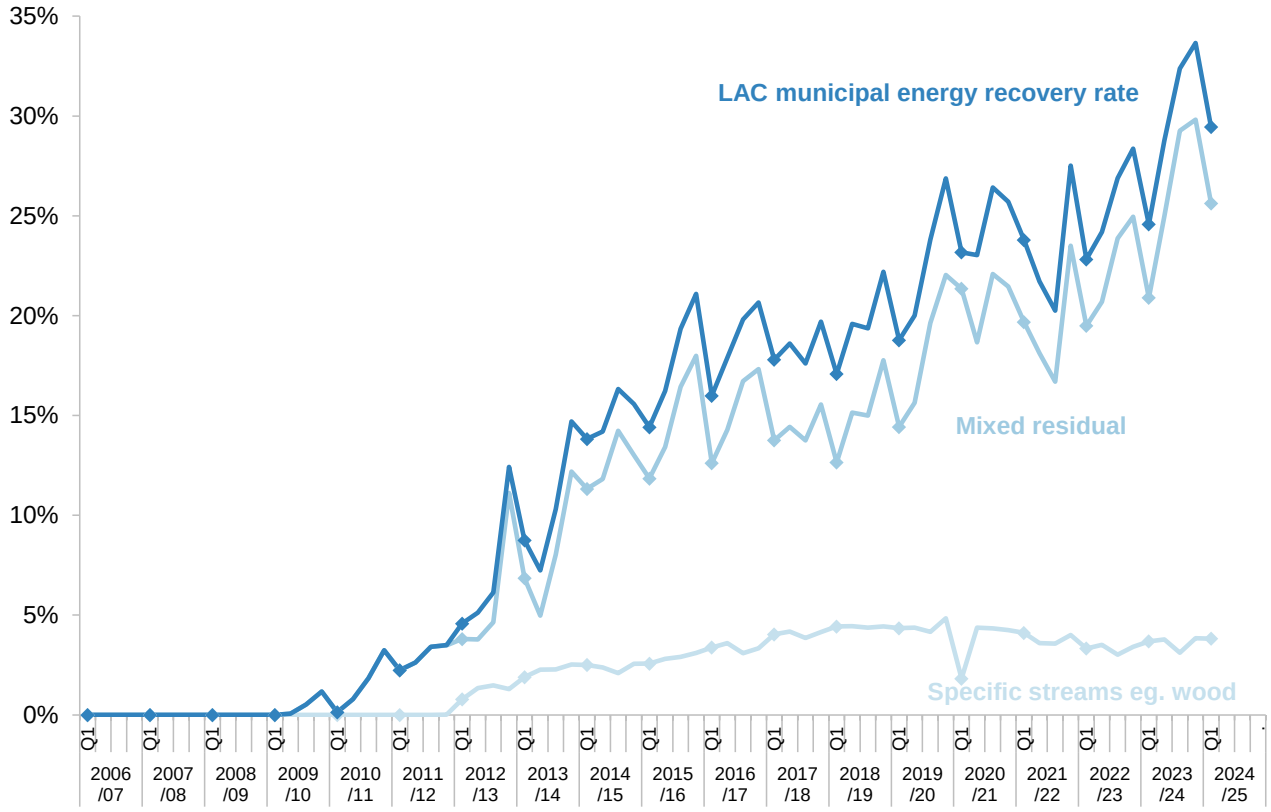
[1] Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary.

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/gasification, 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.

From April to June 2024, 79,957 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced a waste energy recovery rate of 29.5 per cent, the highest April to June quarterly energy recovery rate ever recorded for Northern Ireland. The majority of energy recovery comes 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 2024/25

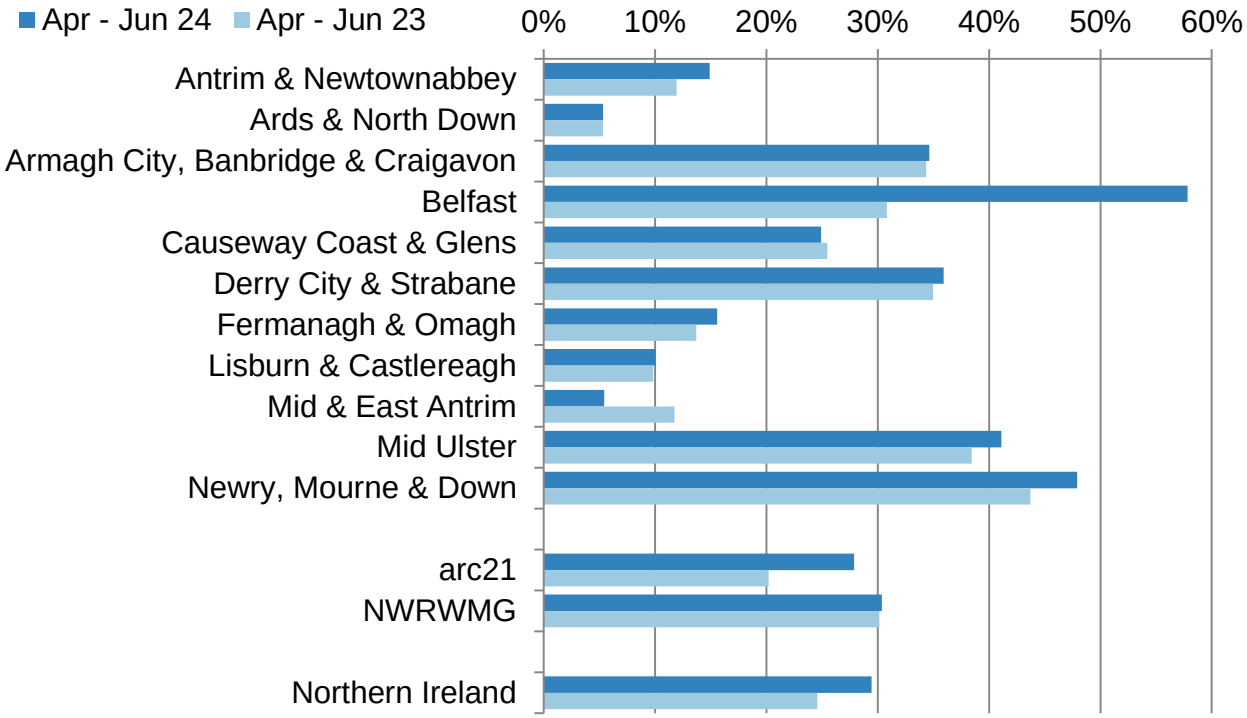


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth began during 2010/11 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.1 per cent during April to June 2010 to 29.5 per cent for the same three months of 2024. Most of the growth since 2010/11 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 0.1 per cent during April to June 2010 to 25.6 per cent in April to June 2024). The specific stream proportion was 3.8 per cent in April to June 2024.

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.

Figure 7: Waste energy recovery rate by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2023 and April to June 2024



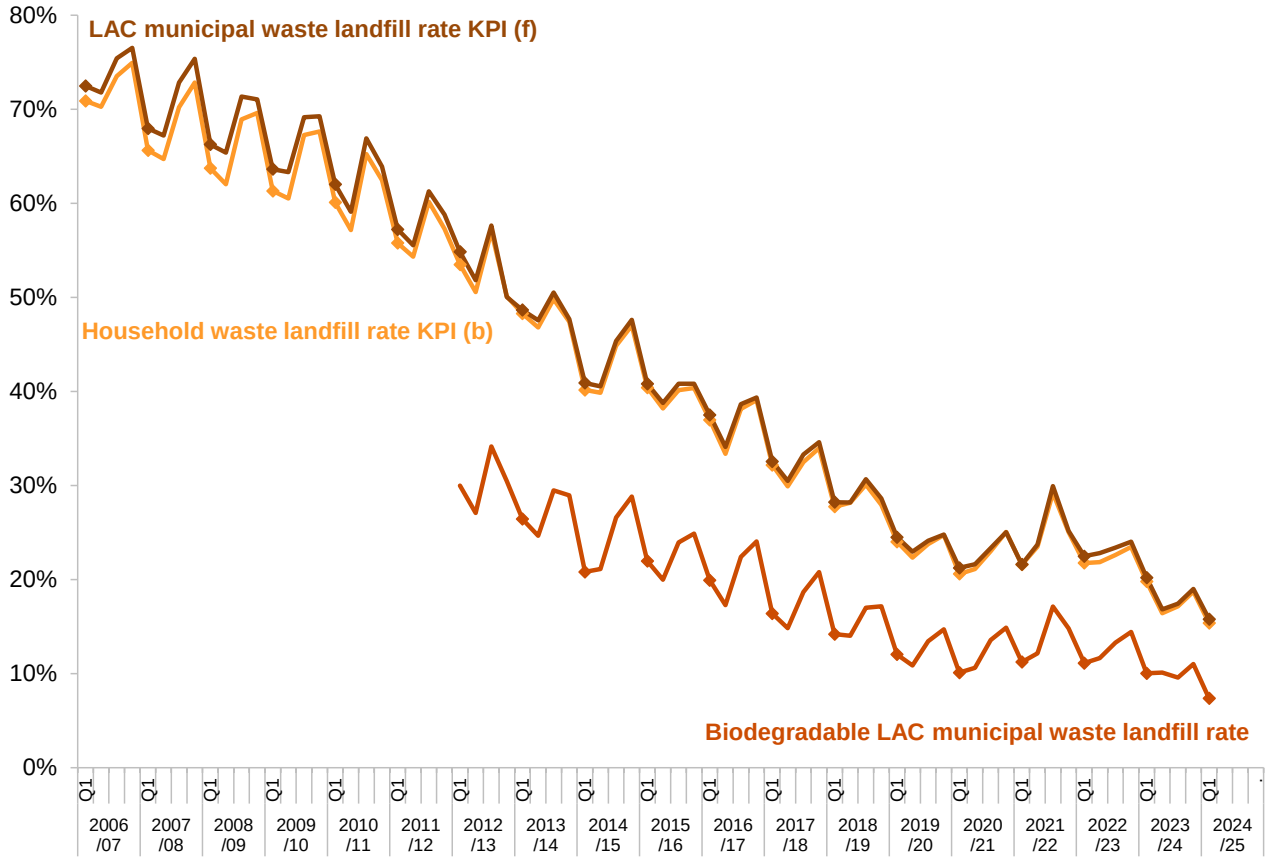
The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Belfast at 57.8 per cent, an increase of 27.0 percentage points compared to April to June 2023. Smaller increases were observed in five other councils, with Newry Mourne & Down, Antrim & Newtownabbey and Mid Ulster reporting increases of 4.2, 2.9 and 2.7 percentage points respectively. Two councils recorded a decrease in the waste energy recovery rate in April to June 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023 with the largest decrease of 6.3 percentage points recorded in Mid & East Antrim. The remaining councils reported similar energy recovery rates in April to June 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023.

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 20.6 per cent, from 53,949 tonnes during April to June 2023 to 42,837 tonnes during April to June 2024. The quarterly landfill rate for April to June 2024 is 15.8 per cent, the lowest quarterly landfill rate ever recorded. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 15.4 per cent.

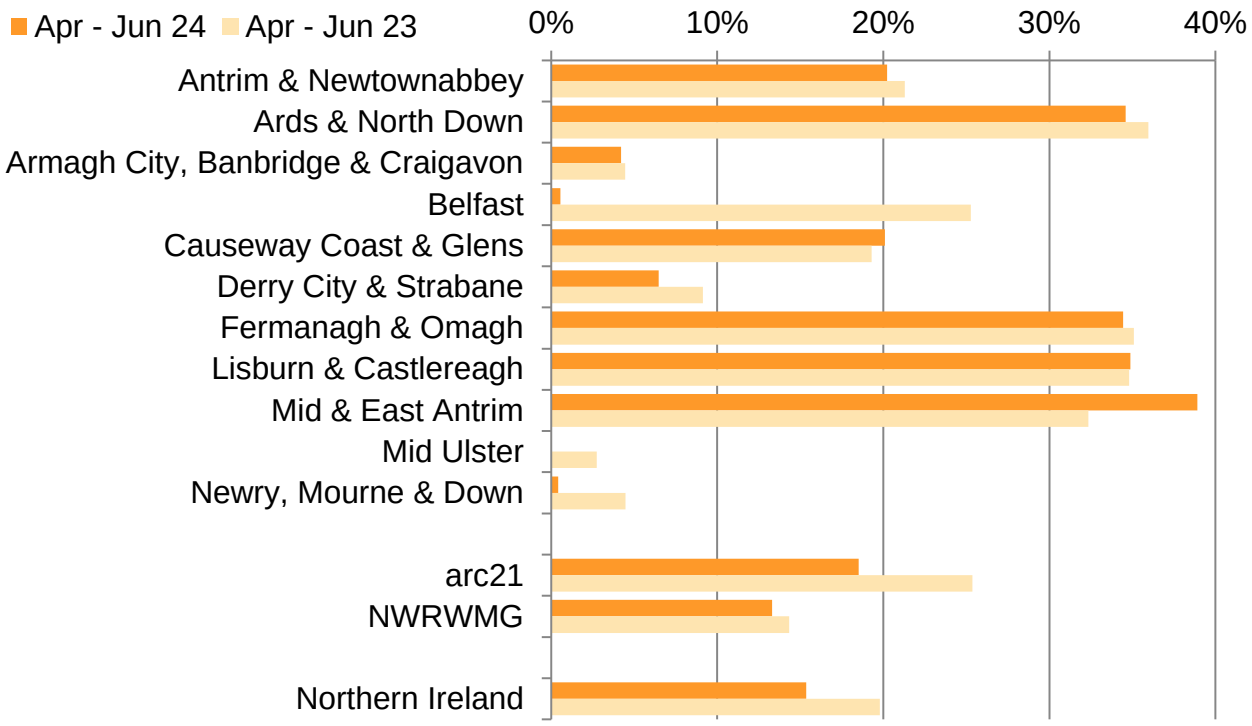
Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2024/25, KPIs (b) and (f)



The longer term trend has seen the April to June household waste landfill rate fall from 70.9 per cent in 2006 to a low of 15.4 per cent in 2024. 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.

Increasing energy recovery rates, a tax on landfill and the statutory requirement for all councils in Northern Ireland to provide households with a container for food to enable its separate collection have all contributed to the long-term reduction in landfill rates.

Figure 9: Household waste landfilled by council and waste management group
Northern Ireland, April to June 2023 and April to June 2024, KPI (b)



The highest household waste landfill rate was recorded in Mid & East Antrim at 38.9 per cent, whilst Mid Ulster recorded an almost zero landfill rate in April to June 2024. The household waste landfill rate decreased in seven district councils in April to June 2024 compared to the same three months in 2023, with the largest decrease recorded in Belfast at 24.7 percentage points. Two councils recorded an increase in the waste landfill rate in April to June 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023 with the largest increase of 6.6 percentage points recorded in Mid & East Antrim.

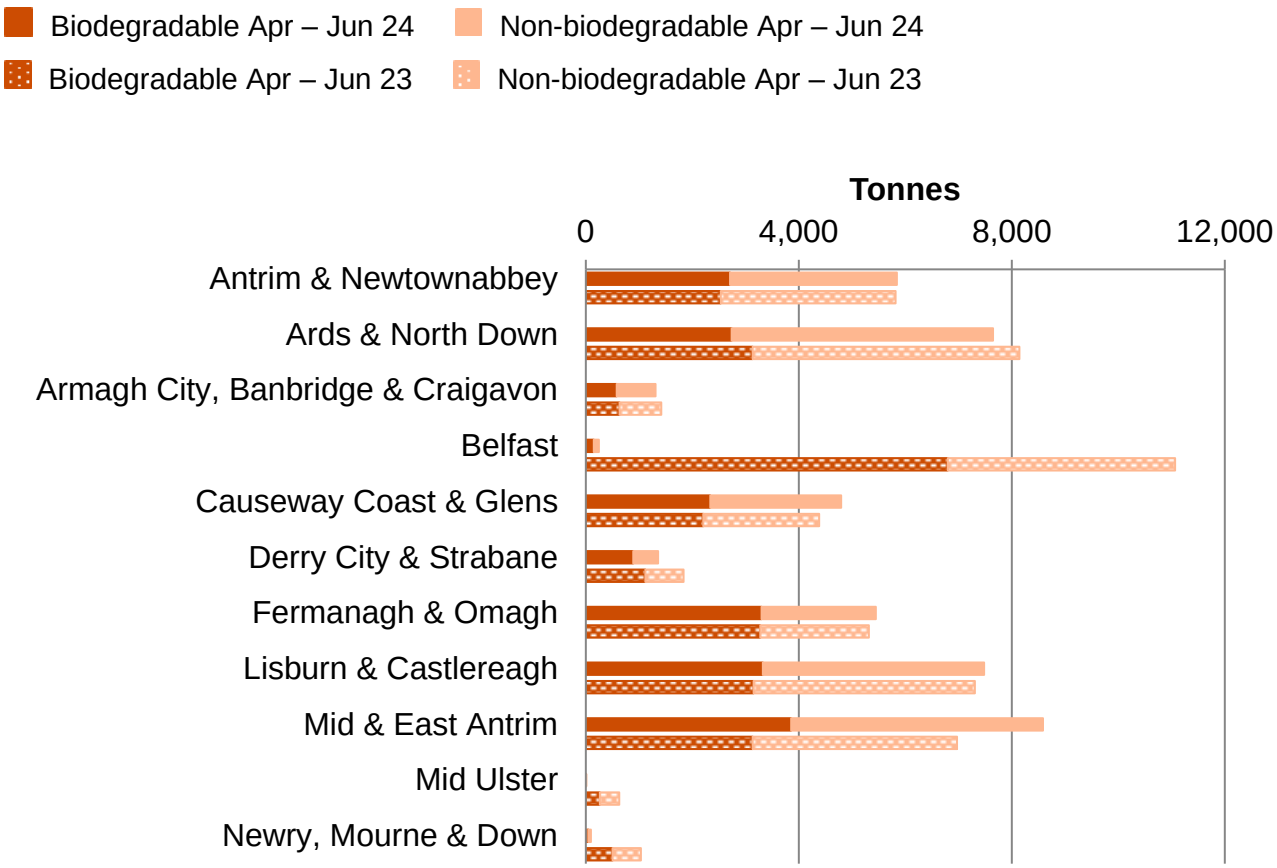
Biodegradable waste to landfill

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 19,979 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill during April to June 2024, which was 46.6 per cent of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill. During the same quarter last year, 26,769 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill which was 49.6 per cent of all LAC municipal 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 2023 and April to June 2024



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 Derry & Strabane, 65.9 per cent (895 tonnes) of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill was biodegradable, whilst in Ards & North Down, 35.8 per cent (2,742 tonnes) of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill was biodegradable.

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These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in October 2020. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled ‘accredited official statistics’.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

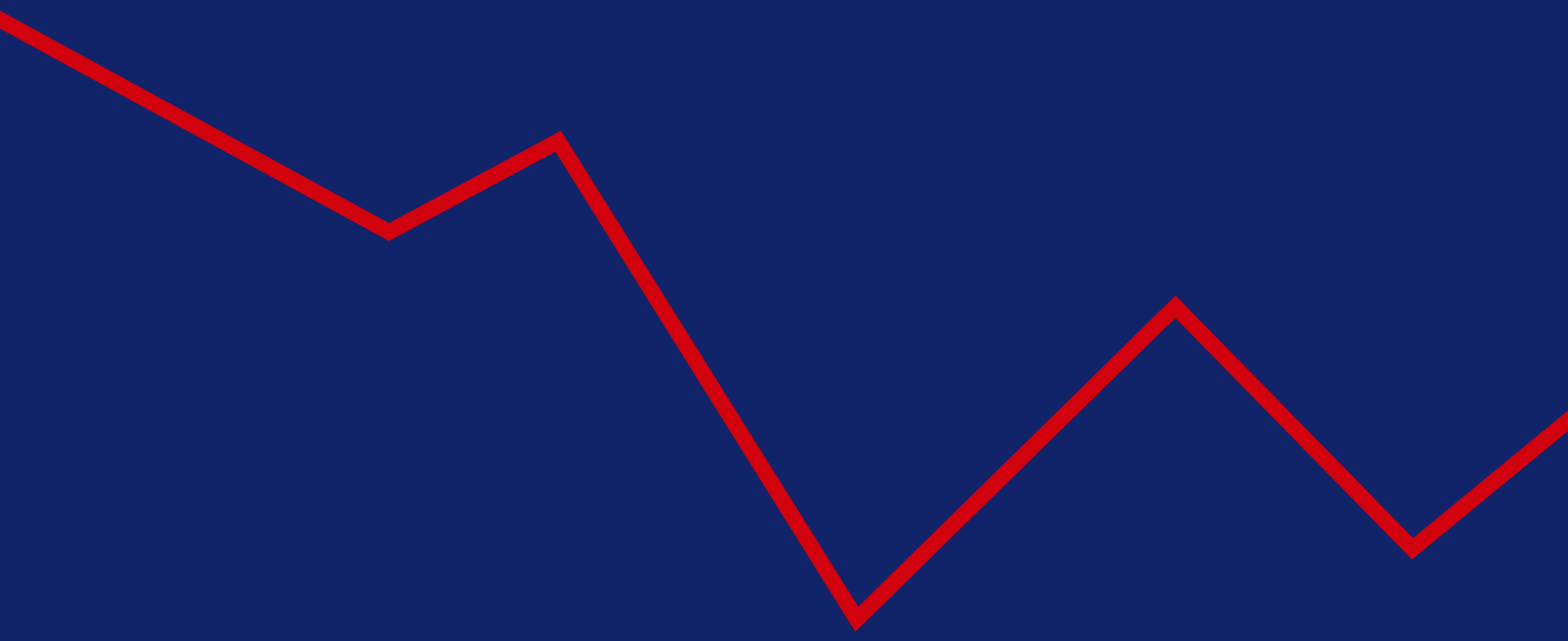
OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

[2] Accredited Official Statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

Policy, Economics and Statistics Division
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED



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