

Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for January to March 2020



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Northern Ireland waste management statistics – January to March 2020

Waste collected by NI Councils



Recycling



45.4%
down from **46.5%**
Jan - Mar 2019



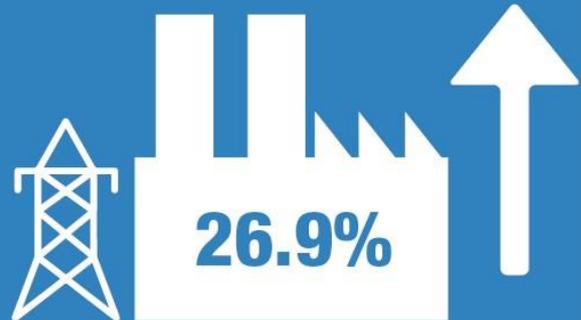
Recycling, energy recovery and landfill
rates of LAC municipal waste
January to March 2020
compared to
January to March 2019.

Landfill



down from **28.6%**
Jan - Mar 2019

Energy Recovery



up from **22.2%**
Jan - Mar 2019

Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 225,476 tonnes of waste during January to March 2020.
- During January to March 2020, 45.4 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling, 1.0 per cent lower than recycling rate for January to March 2019.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils recorded a new low of 24.8 per cent in January to March 2020, a fall from 76.5 per cent in January to March 2007.
- More than a quarter of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery in January to March 2020 compared to 1.2 per cent during the same quarter 10 years ago.
- Household waste accounted for 88.1 per cent of all waste collected during this period. The recycling rate for household waste was 46.0 per cent. The landfill rate for household waste was 24.7 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 April to June 2020 are scheduled for publication in October 2020.
- 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics>

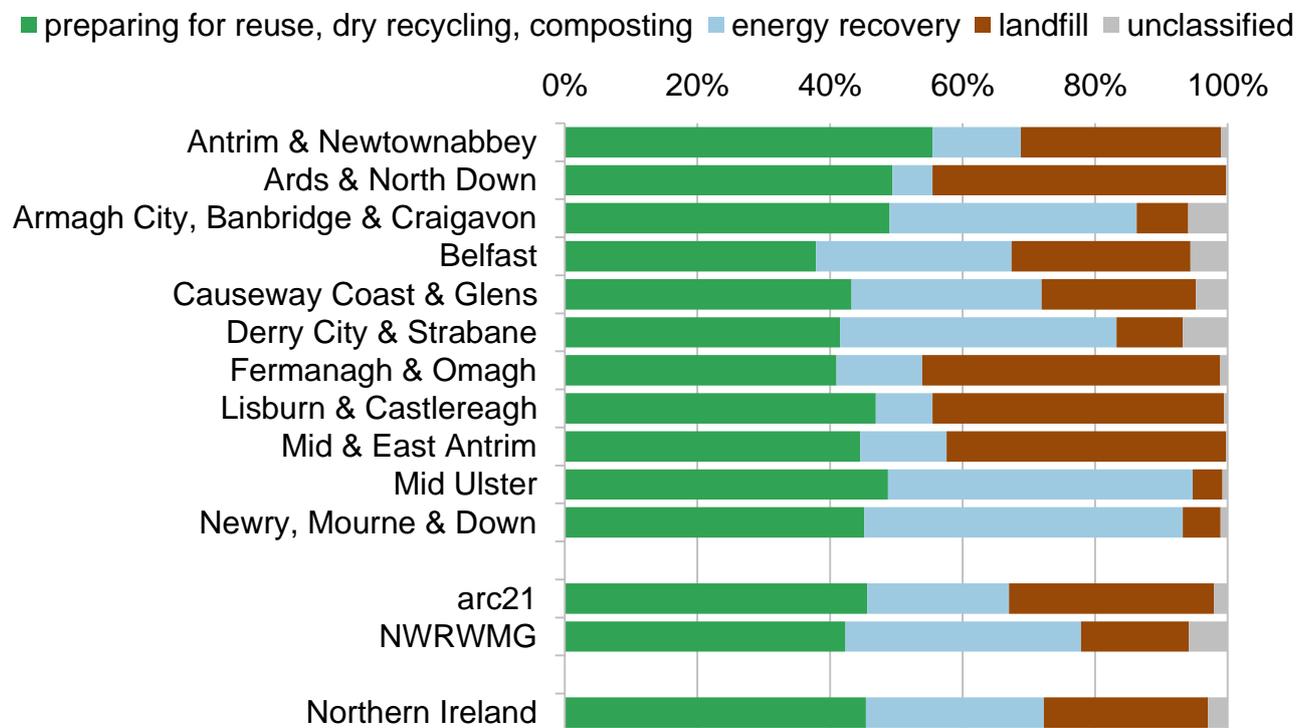
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of local authority collected municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between January and March 2020. The report is split into five 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 8-9), and,
- biodegradable landfill (pages 10-11).

Figure 1: Waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill rates by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, January to March 2020



At the Northern Ireland level, 45.4 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between January and March 2020. Energy recovery accounted for 26.9 per cent and 24.8 per cent was landfilled. This left 3.0 per cent unaccounted for which was 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 1.0 percentage points compared to January to March 2019. The energy recovery rate increased by 4.7 percentage points and the landfill rate fell by 3.9 percentage points. Household waste accounted for 88.1 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.

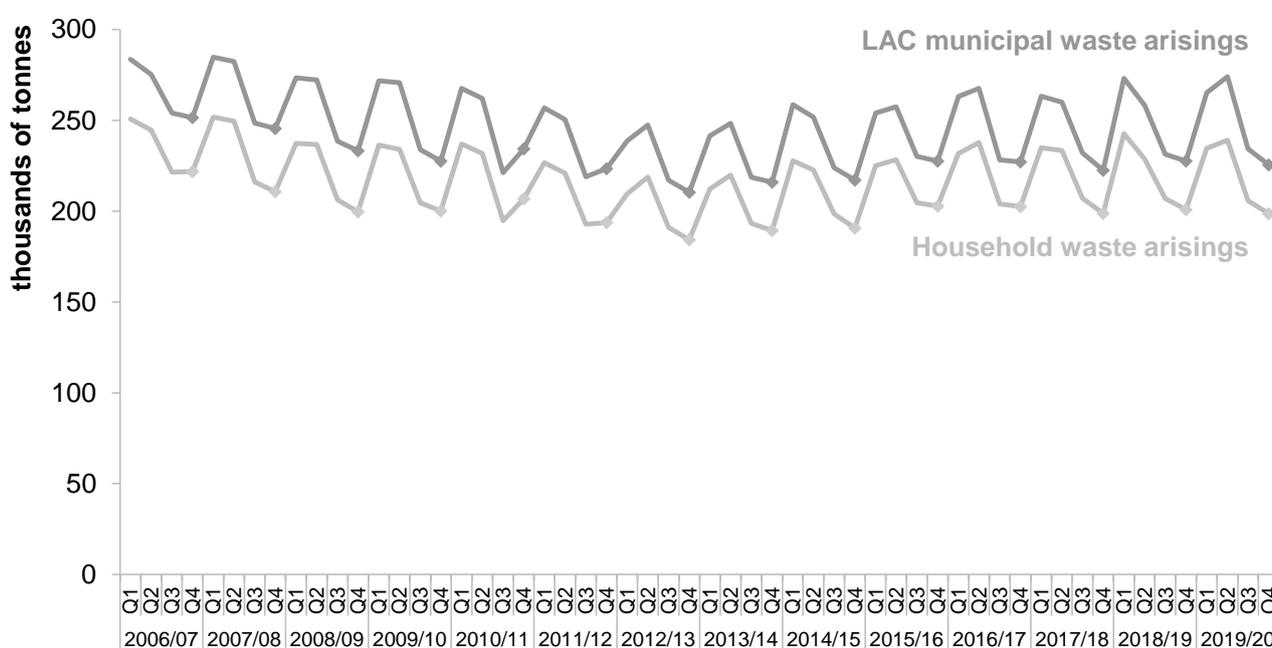
Waste arisings

Northern Ireland's councils collected 225,476 tonnes of waste between January and March 2020. This was 0.9 per cent lower than the 227,597 tonnes collected during the same three months of 2019. 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. From January to March 2020, household waste accounted for 88.1 per cent. The remaining 11.9 per cent was non household waste such as rubble and soil.

Figure 2: Waste arisings

Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2019/20 KPI (j)

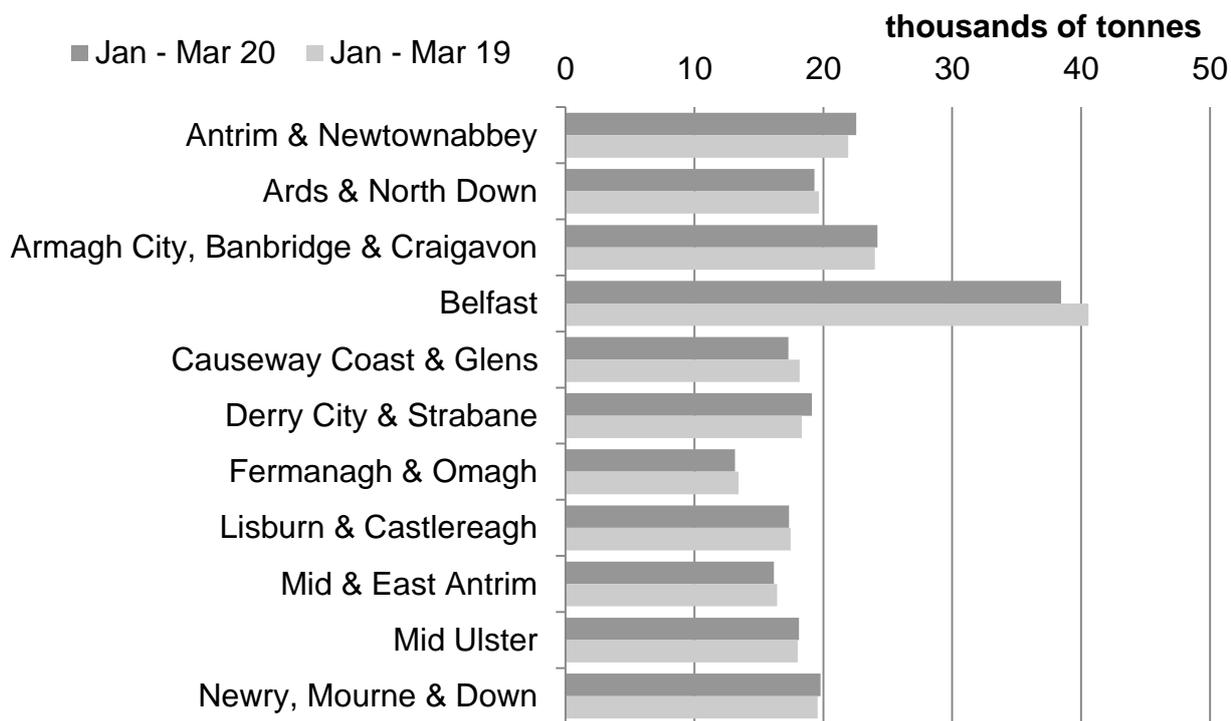


The longer term trend for January to March saw a gradual reduction in waste arisings of 16.3 per cent across six years, from a high of 251,488 tonnes between January and March 2007 to a low of 210,459 tonnes between the same three months of 2013. In the seven years since, arisings have increased by 7.1 per cent to 225,476 tonnes in January to March 2020.

Factors affecting waste arisings, the majority of which is household waste, include individual household behaviours, the advice and collection services provided by councils and to some extent the state of the economy.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council

Northern Ireland, January to March 2019 and January to March 2020, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 38,452 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh and Omagh collected the least at 13,142 tonnes.

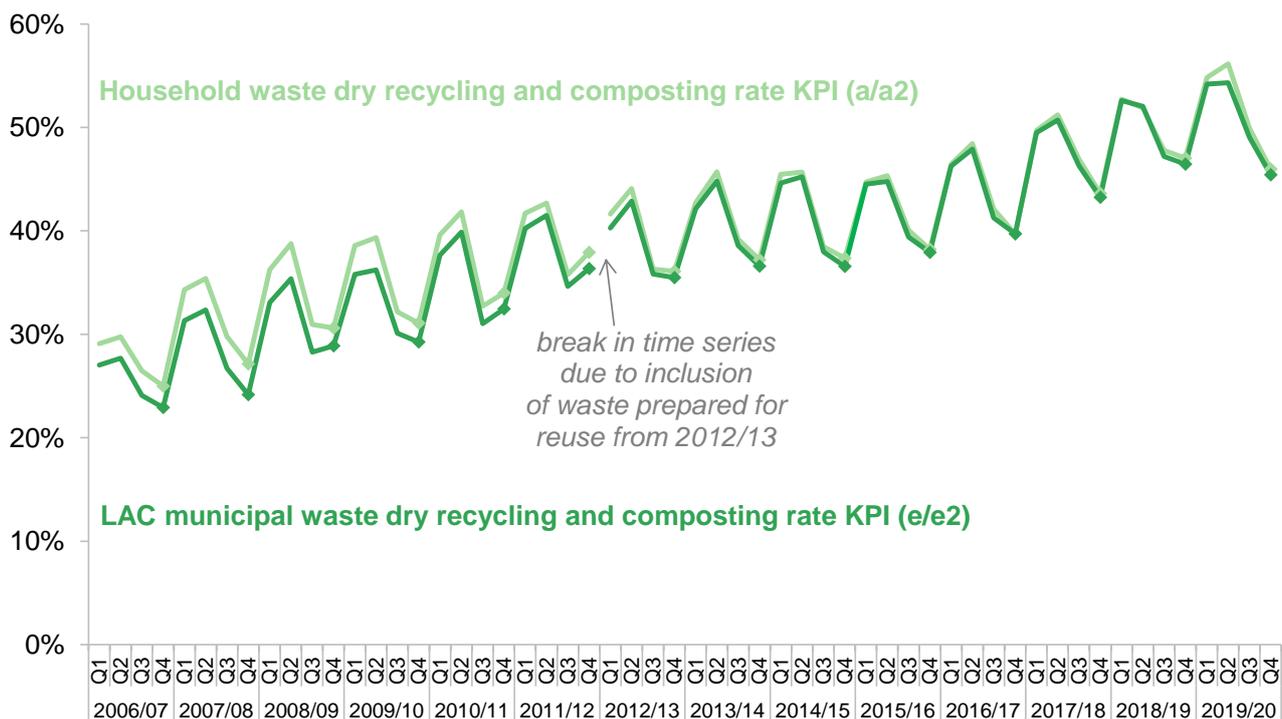
Recycling

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 102,412 tonnes of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting (referred to as ‘recycling’ for the rest of this section) between January and March 2020. The waste recycling rate was 45.4 per cent. This was a decrease of 1.0 percentage points on the 46.5 per cent of waste sent for recycling between January and March 2019.

The recycling rate for household waste only was 46.0 per cent between January and March 2020, 1.0 percentage points lower than the 47.0 per cent recorded during the same three months of 2019. The proportion of household waste sent for preparing for reuse was 0.1 per cent, dry recycling made up 26.1 per cent and composting was 19.7 per cent. Last year the equivalent rate for reuse was 0.2 per cent, whilst the dry recycling and composting rates were 26.5 per cent and 20.3 per cent respectively.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2019/20, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)



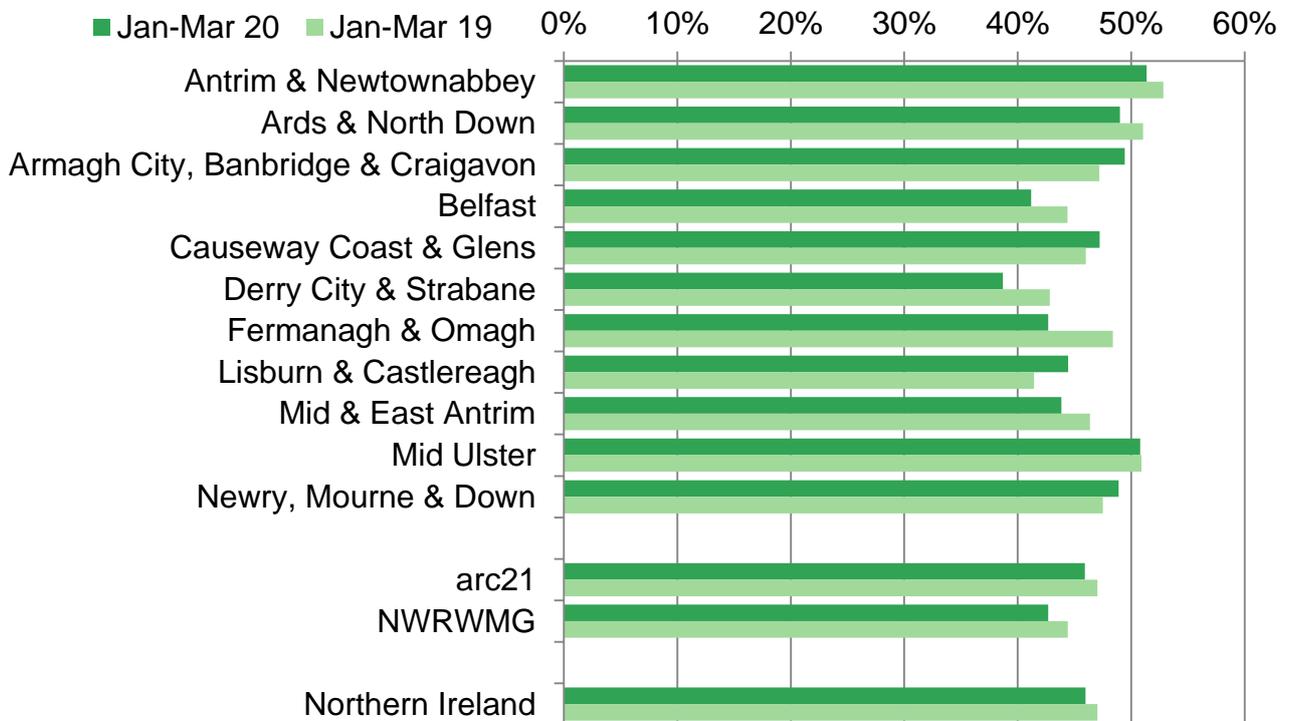
These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend during January to March of each year has been a steady increase in the household waste dry recycling and composting rate from 25.0 per cent in January to March 2007 to 45.9 per cent in January to March 2020. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (216 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13 and brings the reuse, recycling

and composting rate up to 46.0 per cent. This however is a 1.0 per cent decrease compared to the household recycling rate reported for January to March 2019.

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

Northern Ireland, January to March 2019 and January to March 2020, KPI (a2)



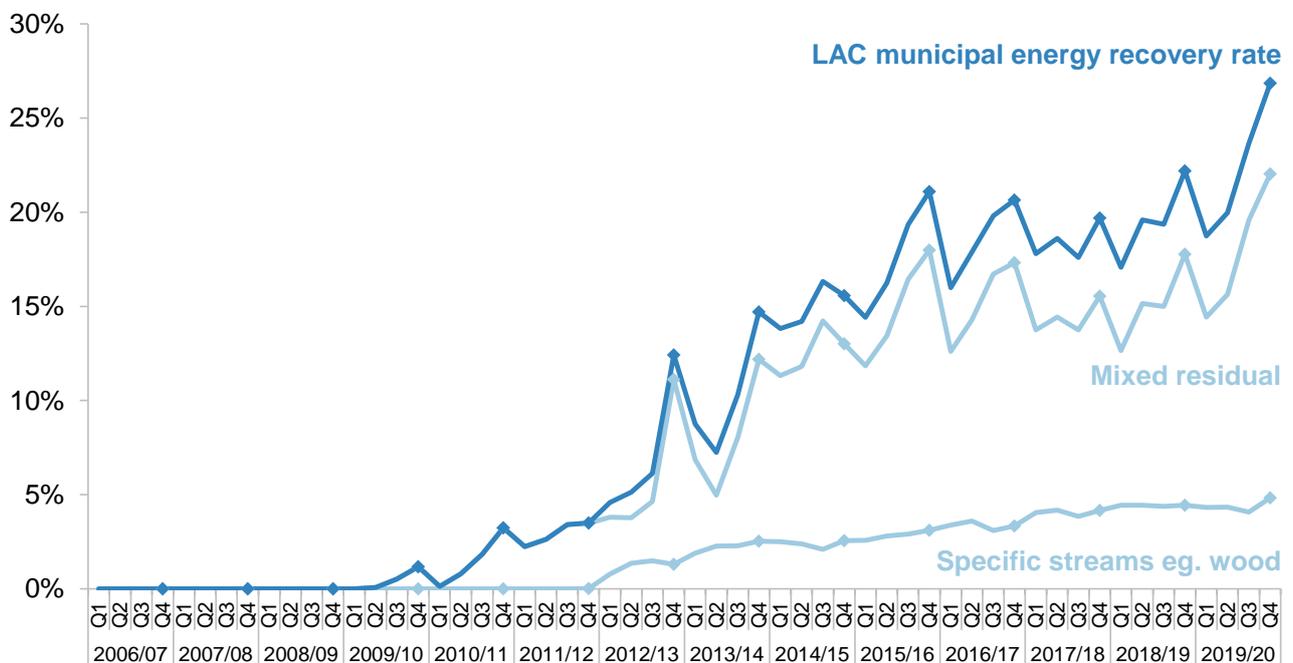
Six of the eleven councils reported decreased household recycling rates compared to January to March 2019, the largest of which were recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh and Derry City & Strabane. Lisburn & Castlereagh reported a 3.0 per cent increase to their household recycling rate.

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 January and March 2020, 60,554 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This gave a waste energy recovery rate of 26.9 per cent, higher than the 22.2 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 2019/20

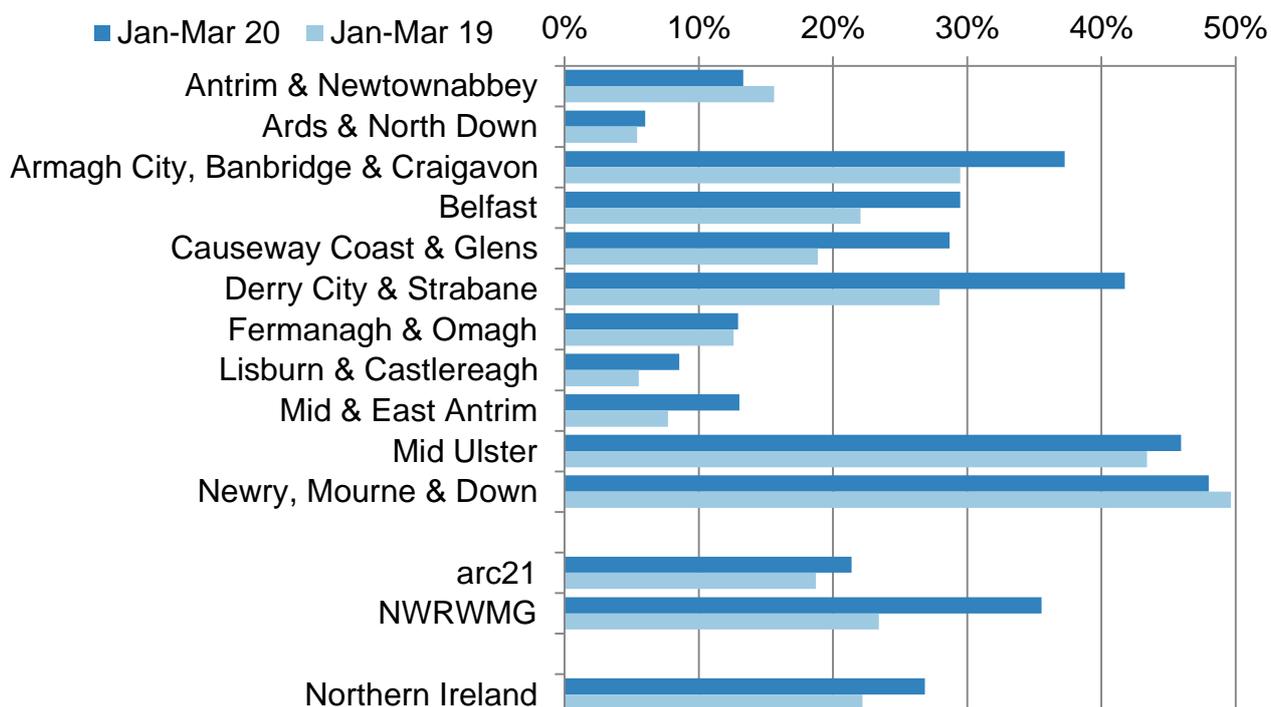


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth followed from 2009/10 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 1.2 per cent during January to March 2010 to a high of 26.9 per cent for the same three months of 2020. Most of the growth since 2009/10 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 1.2 per cent during January to March 2010 to 22.0 per cent in January to March 2020). The specific stream proportion was 4.8 per cent in January to March 2020.

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, January to March 2019 and January to March 2020



The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Newry, Mourne & Down at 48.0 per cent, down from 49.6 per cent between January and March 2019. The lowest rate recorded was 6.0 per cent in Ards & North Down, although this council was one of nine which reported increased waste energy recovery rates compared to last year, the largest of which was a 13.8 per cent increase in Derry City & Strabane.

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

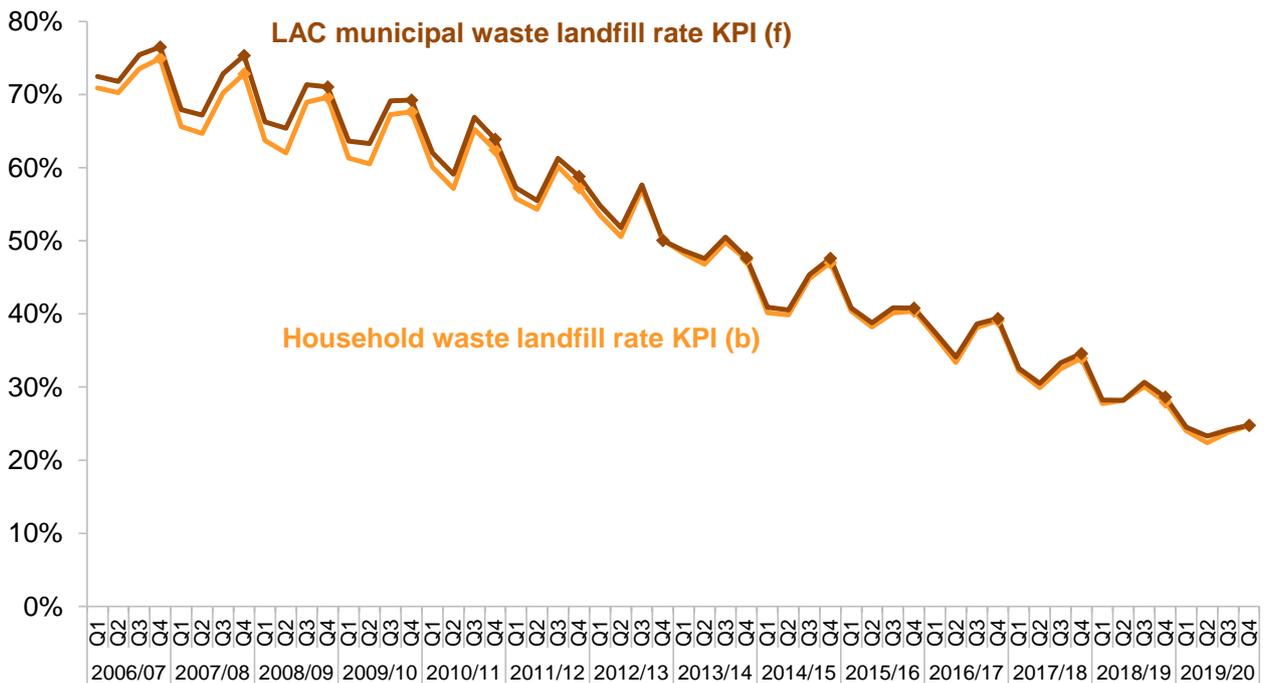
These statistics can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

Landfill

The quantity of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill decreased by a 14.3 per cent, from 65,141 tonnes during January to March 2019 to 55,849 tonnes between January and March 2020. This gave a quarterly landfill rate of 24.8 per cent for January to March 2020 which was lower than the 28.6 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2019. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 24.7 per cent, a further reduction on the 27.9 per cent recorded during the same three months of 2019.

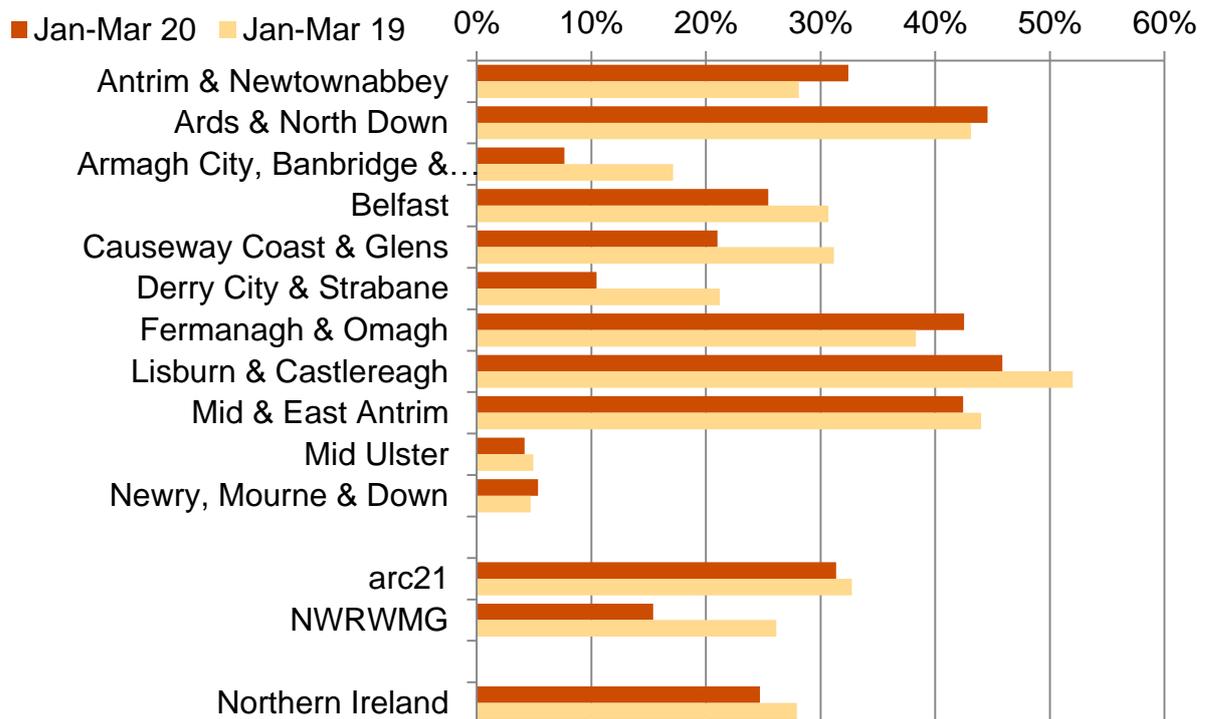
Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill

Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2019/20, KPIs (b) and (f)



The landfill rate has now reached its lowest ever level for January to March. The long term trend has seen the January to March household waste landfill rate fall consistently from 74.9 per cent in 2007 to the 24.7 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, January to March 2019 and January to March 2020, KPI (b)



The household waste landfill rate increased for four councils in January to March 2020 compared to the same three months in 2019. The two councils in the North West Region Waste Management Group reported the largest decreases to their household waste landfill rates, falling by 10.8 per cent in Derry City & Strabane and 10.2 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 contributed to the drop in landfill rates, though increasing energy recovery rates for some councils have also contributed.

Biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste to landfill

There were 33,150 tonnes of biodegradable waste sent to landfill between January and March 2020. This was 15.1 per cent lower than the 39,041 tonnes sent during the same three months of 2019.

The Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004 (as amended) place a statutory responsibility on councils, in each scheme year, to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable LAC municipal waste (BLACMW) for which they have allowances. In order to ensure compliance with these targets, the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, KPI (g), is monitored. This indicator is also used to monitor performance under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Under the Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme (NILAS) regulations councils have been allocated a number of allowances (each allowance represents 1 tonne of BLACMW) for each year until 2019/20.

The 33,150 tonnes of biodegradable waste sent to landfill between January and March 2020 accounted for a lower proportion of the annual allowance (15.1 per cent) compared to the equivalent quarter of 2019 (16.7 per cent). The 2019/20 NILAS allowance (220,000 tonnes) is 6.1 per cent lower than the 2018/19 NILAS allowance (234,284 tonnes). If comparing the extent to which allowances have been used against last year, it is important to note that there has been a reduction in the allocations.

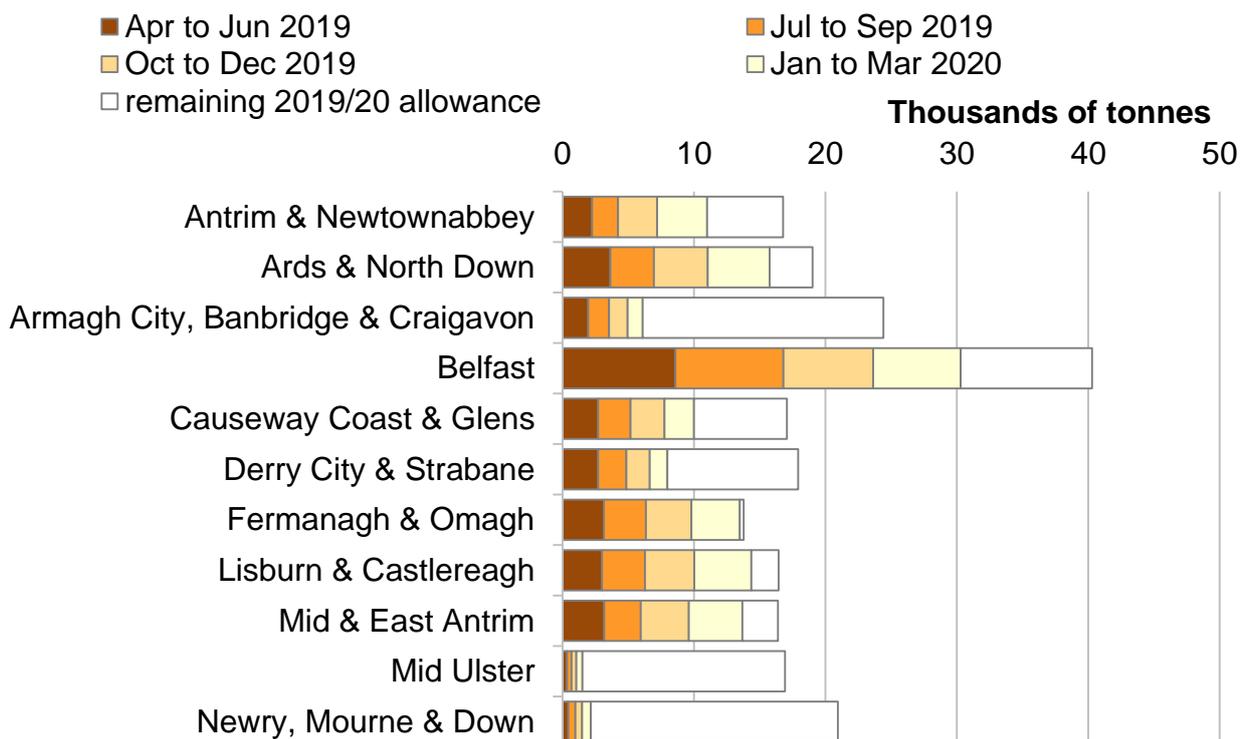
At the waste management group level, the councils in the arc21 group used 18.7 per cent of their 2019/20 allowance between January and March 2020 whilst those in NWRWMG used 10.3 per cent.

Note that in any scheme year a council may transfer allowances to other councils in order to ensure that each council does not exceed the amount it is permitted to send to landfill. Transfers of allowances are not included in the provisional quarterly statistics but are included in the finalised annual statistics. The finalised 2019/20 statistics are scheduled to be released in November 2020. More information on the NILAS regulations can be found on the DAERA website:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-landfill-allowance-scheme-nilas>

Figure 10: Biodegradable waste allowance sent to landfill by council

Northern Ireland, 2019/20, KPI (g)



Note: Figure 10 does not include allowance transfers between councils.

There is considerable variation between councils in the proportion of the 2019/20 allocation used between January and March 2020. Mid Ulster used the lowest share of its annual allocation at 2.7 per cent during the quarter, followed by Newry, Mourne & Down where 3.0 per cent of the annual allocation was used. Fermanagh & Omagh used the highest share during January to March 2020 at 26.7 per cent, bringing the total annual allocation used by the council to 97.8 per cent in the year-to-date.

Councils are permitted to transfer allowances to other councils in order to ensure that they do not exceed the amount they are permitted to send to landfill. Transfers of allowances are not included in the provisional quarterly statistics but will be included in the finalised annual statistics, scheduled to be released in November 2020.

National Statistics Status

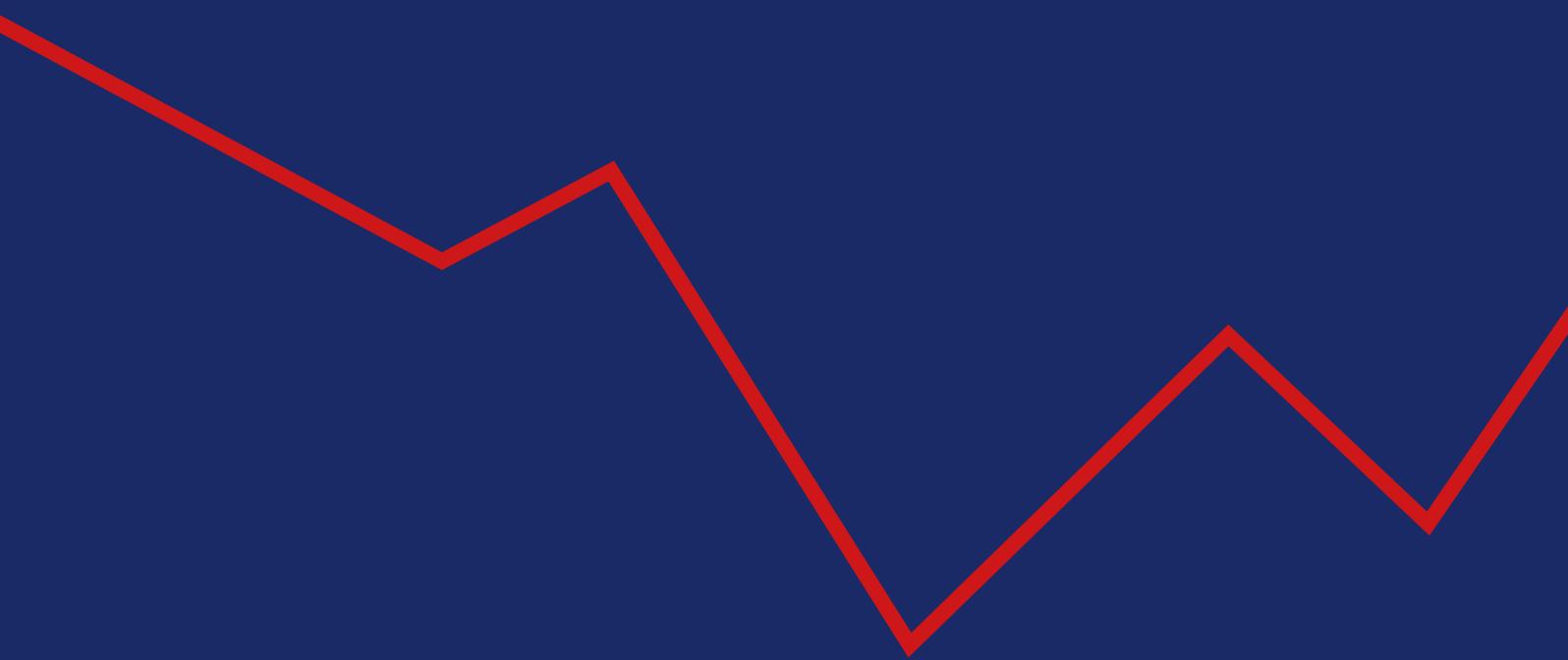
National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

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.

No official compliance checks have been completed since, however, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice since designation and have made the following improvements:

- Added more value by [consulting](#) on the report in 2015 prior to the 26 councils covered being reorganised into 11 new councils.
- 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.

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