NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for October to December 2023

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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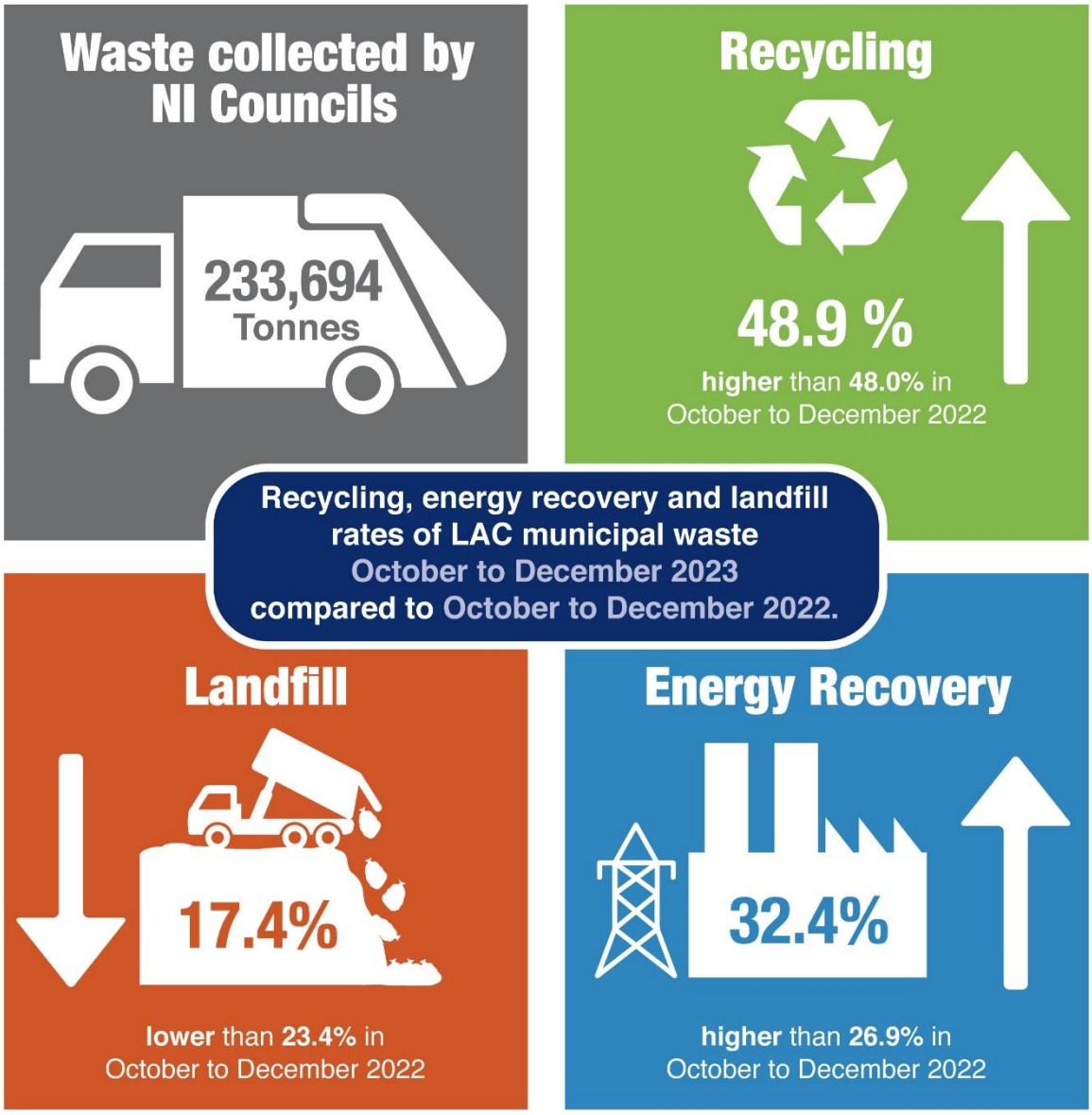
Northern Ireland waste management statistics – October to December 2023



Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 233,694 tonnes of waste during October to December 2023, higher than the 230,709 tonnes collected during October to December 2022.
- During October to December 2023, 48.9 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling, higher than the 48.0 per cent recorded during October to December 2022.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 17.4 per cent in October to December 2023, a fall from both 75.4 per cent in October to December 2006 and 23.4 per cent during October to December 2022.
- Approximately one third (32.4 per cent) of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery in October to December 2023 which was higher than the 26.9 per cent reported in October to December 2022. In the longer term, energy recovery rates have increased from 0.5 per cent recorded during October to December 2009.
- Household waste accounted for 87.7 per cent of all Local Authority collected (LAC) waste during this period.
- The recycling rate for household waste was 49.5 per cent in October to December 2023, similar to the rate recorded in October to December 2022. The landfill rate for household waste was 17.2 per cent, which was lower than the rate of 22.6 per cent recorded in October to December 2022.

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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 January to March 2024 are scheduled for publication in July 2024.
- 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

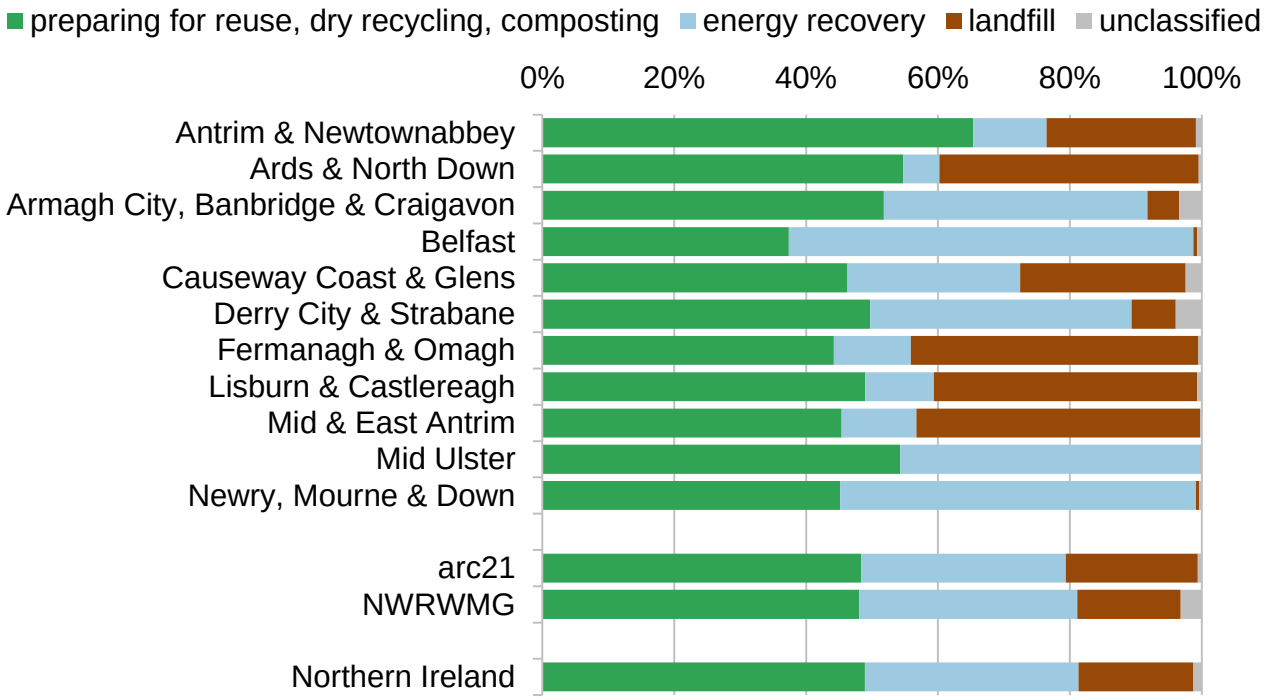
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of Local Authority Collected (LAC) municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between October and December 2023. 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, October to December 2023



At the Northern Ireland level, 48.9 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between October to December 2023. Energy recovery accounted for 32.4 per cent and 17.4 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 1.3 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 higher than that reported in October to December 2022 (48.0 per cent). The landfill rate decreased by 6.0 percentage points whilst the energy recovery rate increased by 5.5 percentage points from October to December 2022. Household waste accounted for 87.7 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.

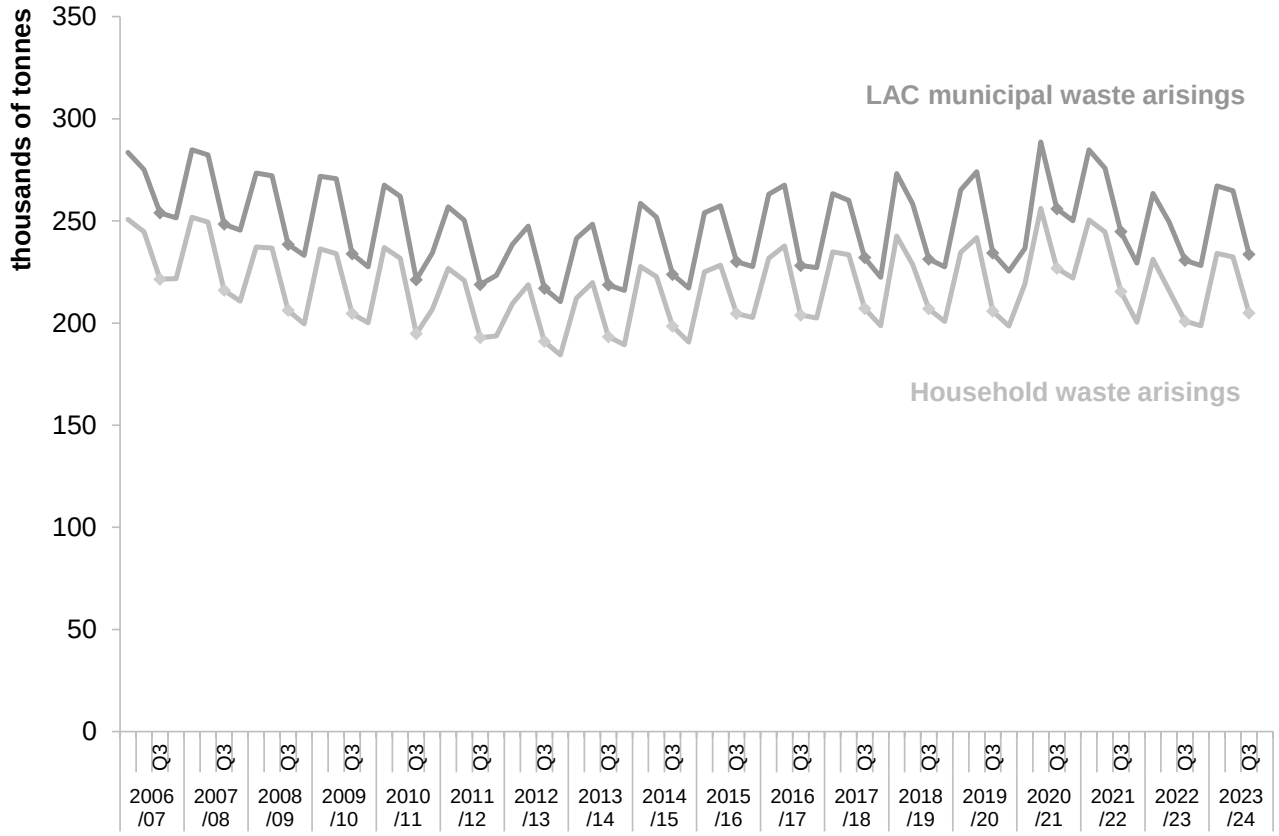
Waste arisings

Northern Ireland's councils collected 233,694 tonnes of waste between October and December 2023. This was higher than the 230,709 tonnes collected during October and December 2022. 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 October and December 2023 household waste accounted for 87.7 per cent. The remaining 12.3 per cent was non-household waste such as rubble/soil and commercial/industrial waste.

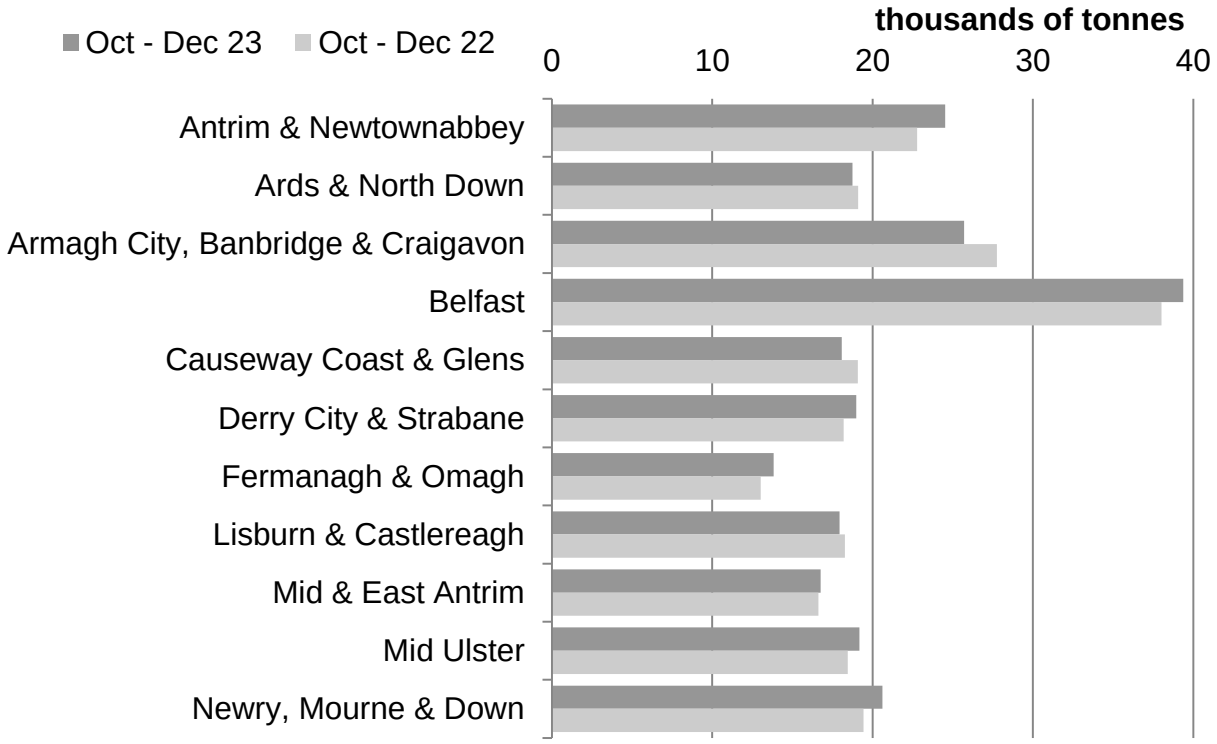
Figure 2: Waste arisings
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2023/24 KPI (j)



The longer term trend for October to December saw a gradual reduction in LAC municipal waste arisings of 14.6 per cent across six years, from 253,956 tonnes between October to December 2006 to a low of 216,987 tonnes between the same three months of 2012. From October to December 2012 until a peak of 255,973 tonnes in October to December 2020 arisings showed a generally increasing trend. From the peak arisings recorded in

2020, arisings have generally trended downwards with 233,694 tonnes collected in October to December 2023.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council
Northern Ireland, October to December 2022 and October to December 2023, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 39,369 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh and Omagh collected the least at 13,823 tonnes.

Seven councils reported an increase in total arisings in October to December 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 with four councils reporting a decrease in total arisings.

Antrim & Newtownabbey reported the largest increase in total arisings in October to December 2023 compared to the same period in 2022, rising by 7.6 per cent. Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon reported the largest decrease compared to October to December 2022, decreasing by 7.4 per cent.

The total quantity of waste collected at kerbside increased by 0.9 per cent compared to October to December 2022, while waste collected at civic amenity sites increased by 5.0 per cent.

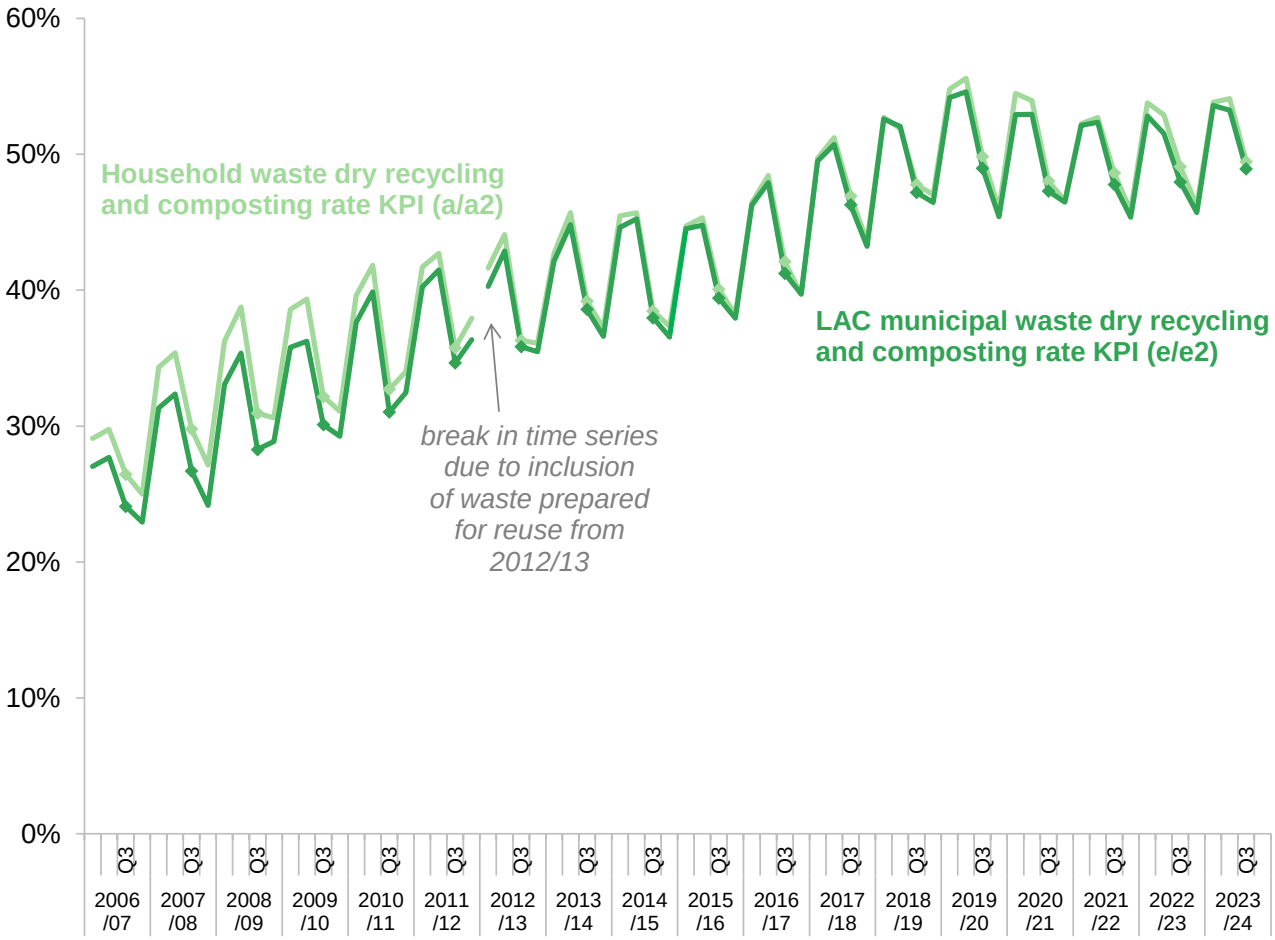
These statistics can be found in Table 1 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the time series dataset.

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 114,327 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 October to December 2023. The waste recycling rate was 48.9 per cent, higher than the 48.0 per cent of waste sent for recycling during October to December 2022.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2023/24, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)

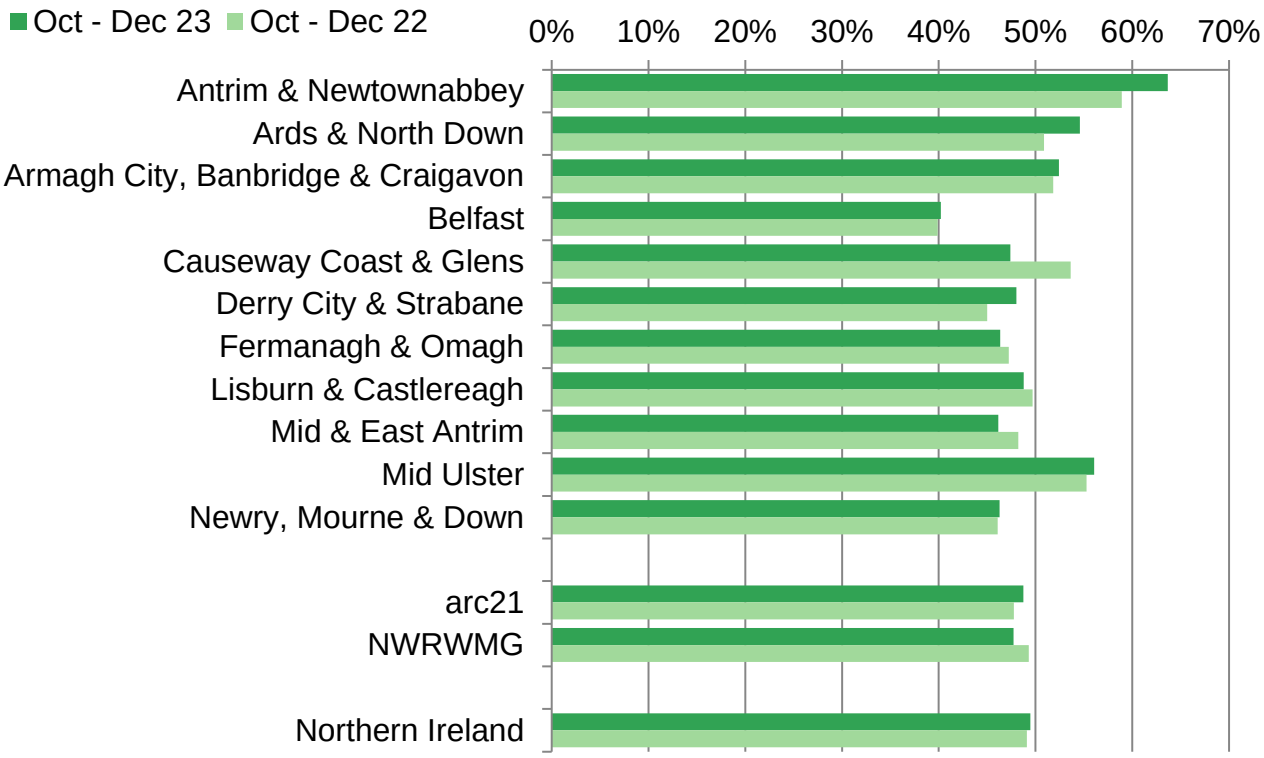


These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend for Local Authority Collected municipal waste recycling has been a steady increase from 24.1 per cent in October to December 2006 to a peak of 49.0 per cent in October to December 2019. Following a drop in the recycling rate in 2020, the local authority collected municipal waste recycling rate has gradually increased to 48.9 per cent in 2023. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (626 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13 and adds 0.3 percentage points to the overall LAC recycling rate in October to December 2023.

The recycling rate for household waste only was 49.5 per cent during October to December 2023 similar to the rate recorded during October to December 2022. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 24.4 per cent, composting 24.8 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, October to December 2022 and October to December 2023, KPI (a2)



Five councils reported an increase in their household recycling rate in October to December 2023 compared to October to December 2022. The household recycling rate decreased in Causeway Coast & Glens, Mid & East Antrim, Fermanagh & Omagh and Lisburn & Castlereagh council areas[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.

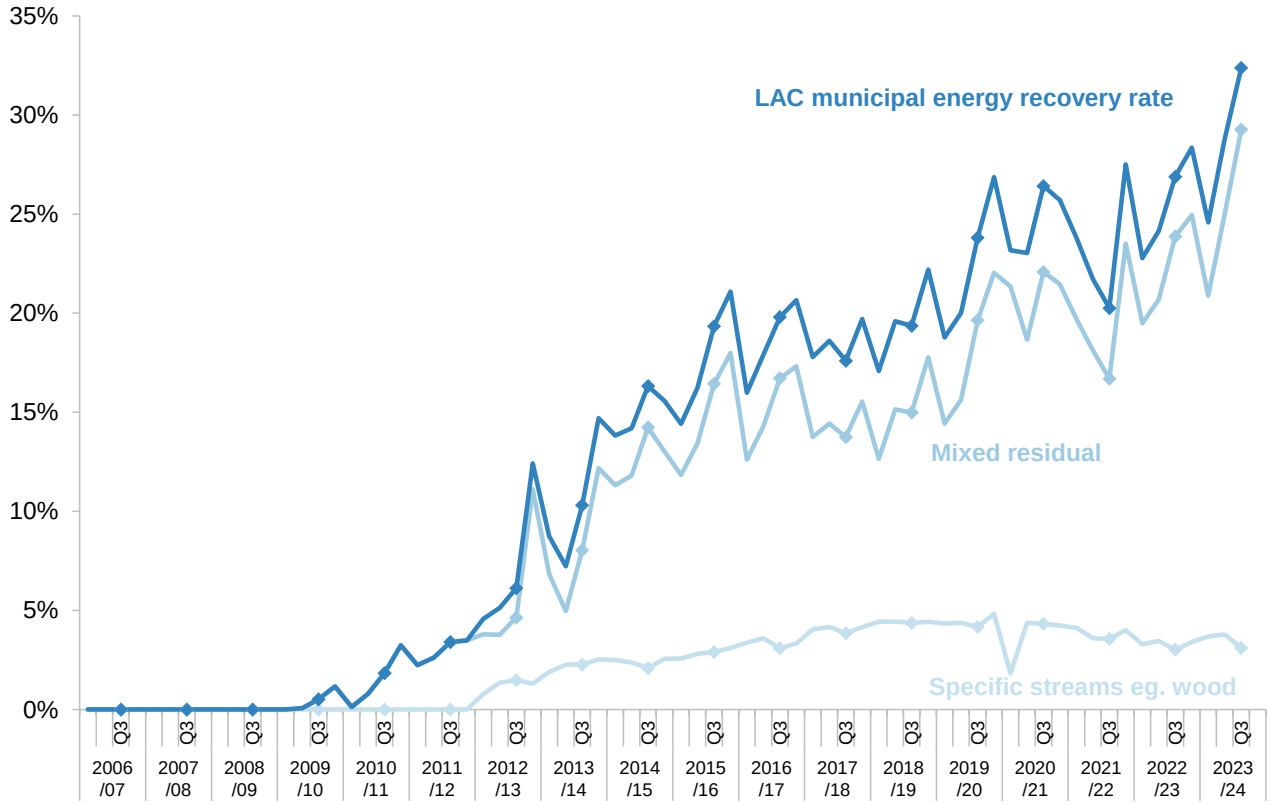
[1] Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary.

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 October to December 2023, 75,663 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced a waste energy recovery rate of 32.4 per cent, the highest 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 2023/24

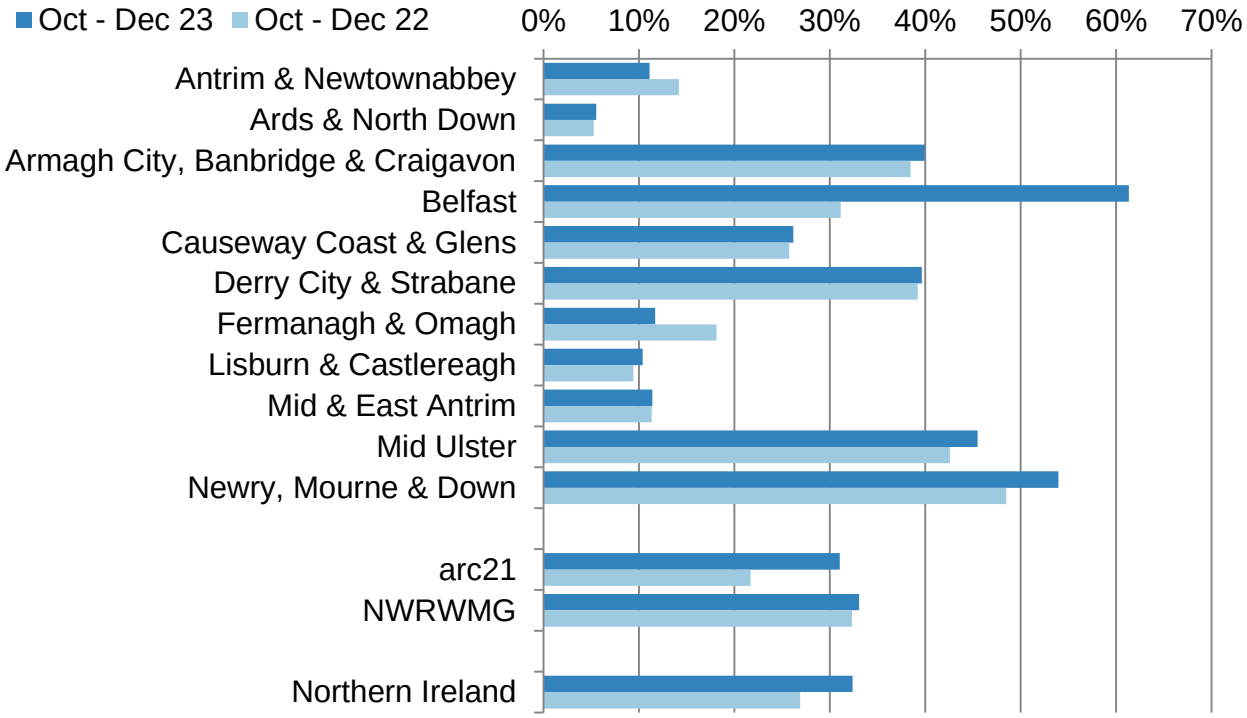


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth began during 2009/10 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.5 per cent during October to December 2009 to 32.4 per cent for the same three months of 2023. Most of the growth since 2009/10 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 0.5 per cent during October to December 2009 to 29.3 per cent in October to December 2023). The specific stream proportion was 3.1 per cent in October to December 2023.

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, October to December 2022 and October to December 2023



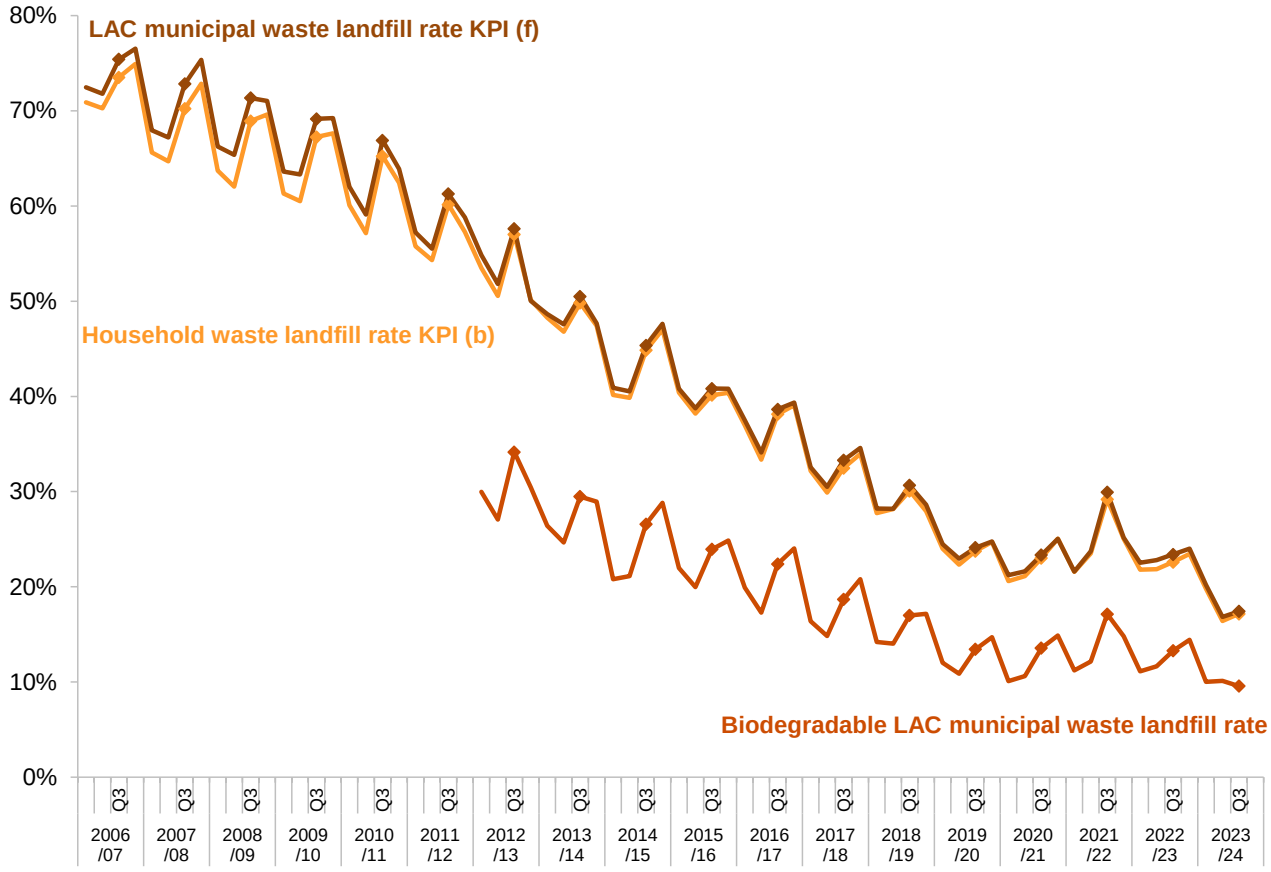
The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Belfast at 61.3 per cent, an increase of 30.2 percentage points compared to October to December 2022. Smaller increases were observed in four other councils, with Newry Mourne & Down and Mid Ulster reporting increases of 5.4 and 2.9 percentage points respectively. Two councils recorded a decrease in the waste energy recovery rate in October to December 2023 compared to the same quarter in 2022 with the largest decrease of 6.4 percentage points recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh. The remaining councils reported similar energy recovery rates in October to December 2023 compared to the same quarter in 2022.

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 24.6 per cent, from 53,971 tonnes during October to December 2022 to 40,704 tonnes during October to December 2023. The quarterly landfill rate for October to December 2023 is 17.4 per cent, lower than the 23.4 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2022. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 17.2 per cent.

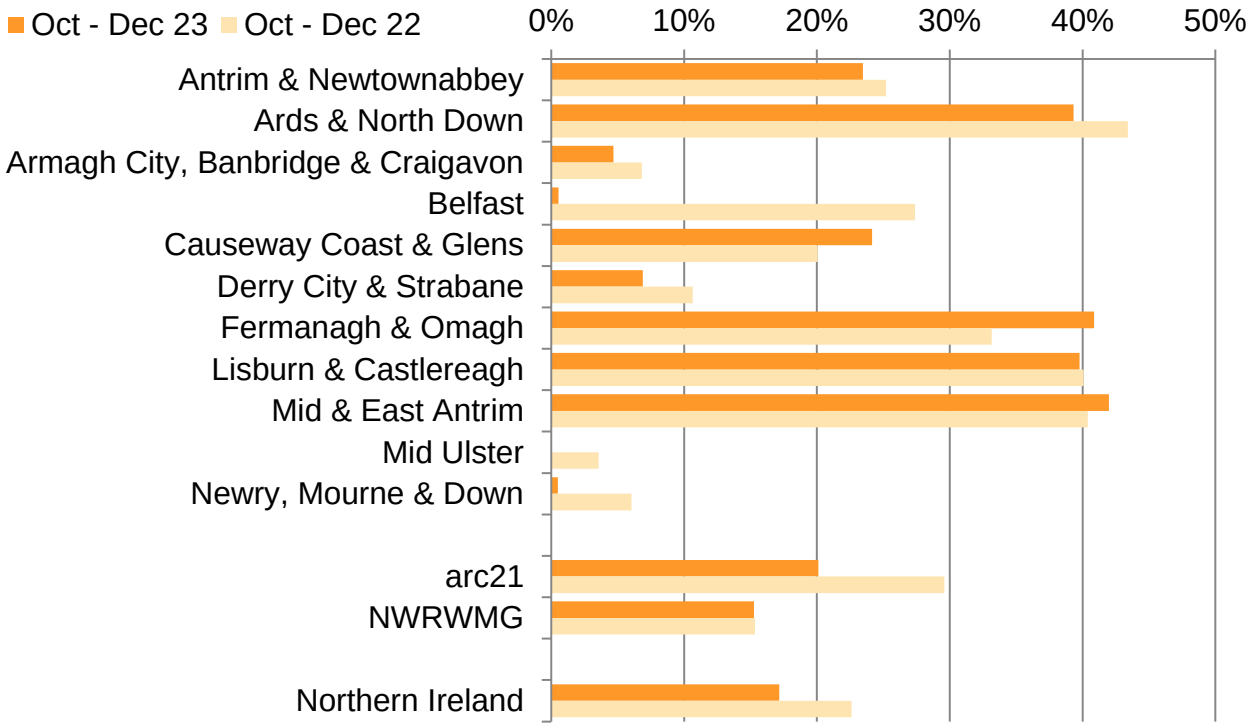
Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2023/24, KPIs (b) and (f)



The longer term trend has seen the October to December household waste landfill rate fall from 73.5 per cent in 2006 to a low of 17.2 per cent in 2023. 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, October to December 2022 and October to December 2023, KPI (b)



The highest household waste landfill rate was recorded in Mid & East Antrim at 42.0 per cent, whilst the lowest was recorded in Mid Ulster at 0.1 per cent. The household waste landfill rate decreased in seven district councils in October to December 2023 compared to the same three months in 2022, with the largest decrease recorded in Belfast at 26.8 percentage points. Newry, Mourne & Down and Ards & North Down reported decreases of 5.5 and 4.1 percentage points respectively. Three district councils recorded an increase in landfill rate compared to the same quarter in 2022.

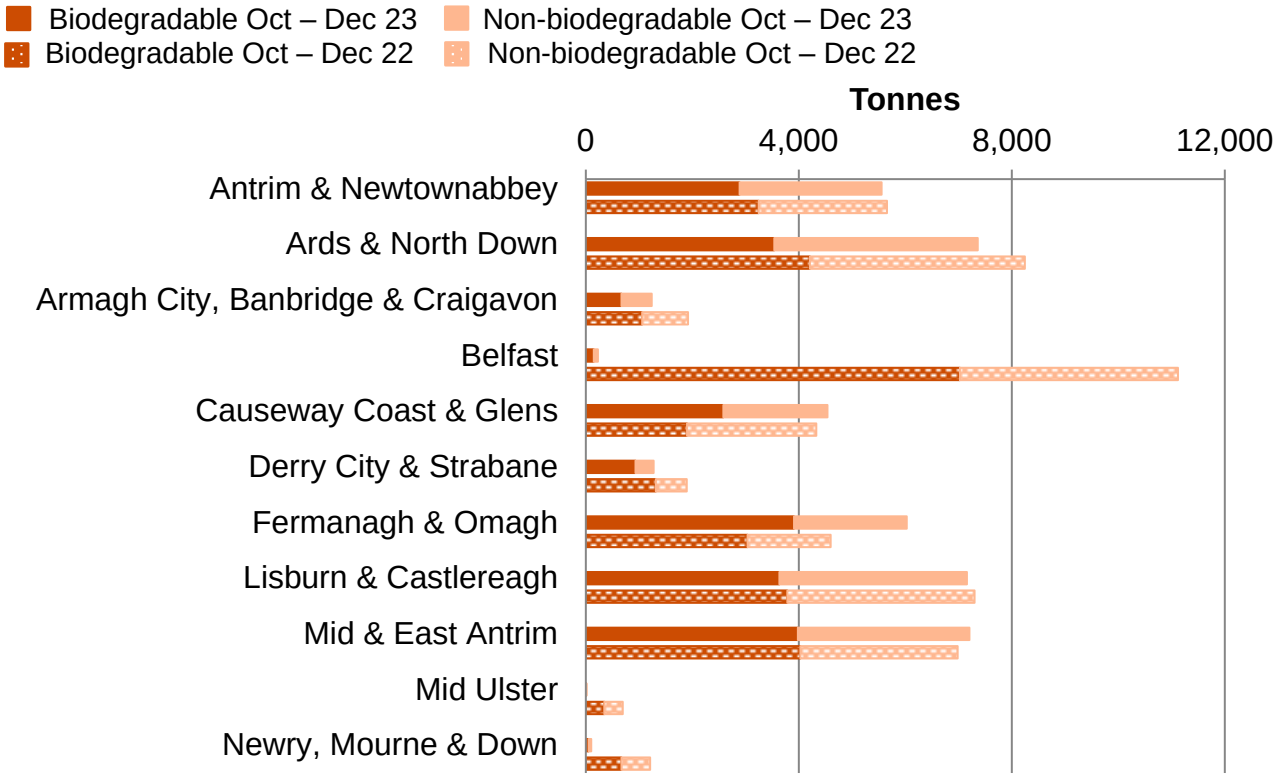
Biodegradable waste to landfill

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 22,373 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill during October to December 2023, which was 55.0 per cent of all waste sent to landfill. During the same quarter last year, 30,649 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill which was 56.8 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, October to December 2022 and October to December 2023



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, 73.5 per cent (937 tonnes) of all waste sent to landfill was biodegradable, whilst in Ards & North Down, 48.1 per cent (3,541 tonnes) of waste sent to landfill was biodegradable.

National Statistics

National Statistics are accredited official statistics[2]. This accreditation confirms that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

Further information on accredited official statistics can be found on the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) website.

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

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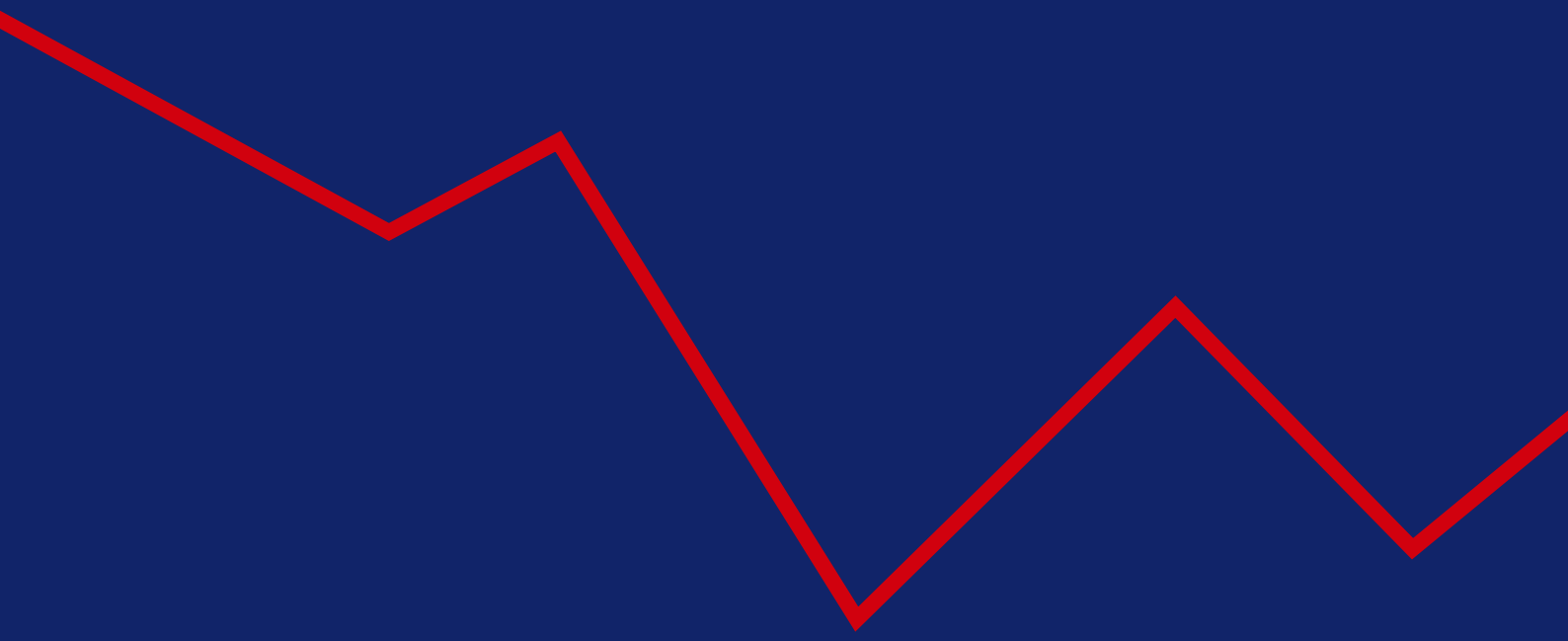

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