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Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

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Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for October to December 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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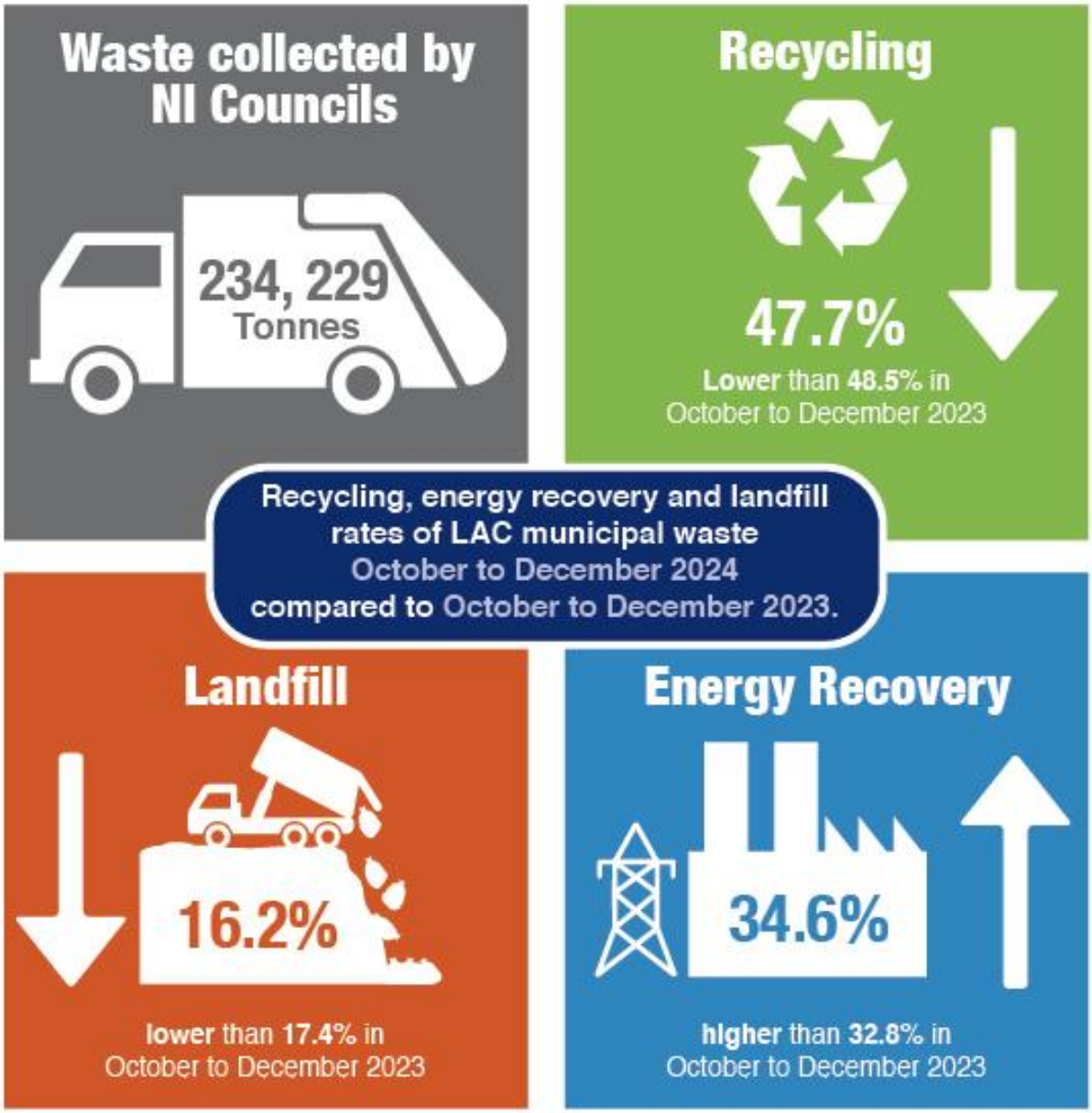
Northern Ireland waste management statistics – October to December 2024



Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 234,229 tonnes of waste during October to December 2024, similar to the 233,694 tonnes collected during October to December 2023.
- During October to December 2024, 47.7 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling which was lower than the 48.5 per cent recycling rate recorded in the same quarter in 2023.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 16.2 per cent in October to December 2024, a fall from both 75.4 per cent in 2006 and 17.4 per cent during October to December 2023.
- During October to December 2024, 34.6 per cent of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery which was higher than the 32.8 per cent reported in October to December 2023. In the longer term, energy recovery rates have increased from 0.5 per cent recorded during October to December 2009.
- Household waste accounted for 87.6 per cent of all Local Authority collected (LAC) waste during this period.
- The recycling rate for household waste only was 48.2 per cent during October to December 2024 which is lower than 49.0 per cent recorded during October to December 2023. The landfill rate for household waste was 16.0 per cent, which was lower than the rate of 17.2 per cent recorded in October to December 2023.

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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 included as an indicator in the current PfG 2024-2027 ‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’.

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 2025 are scheduled for publication in July 2025.
- Finalised data for 2024/25 are scheduled to be published in November 2025 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

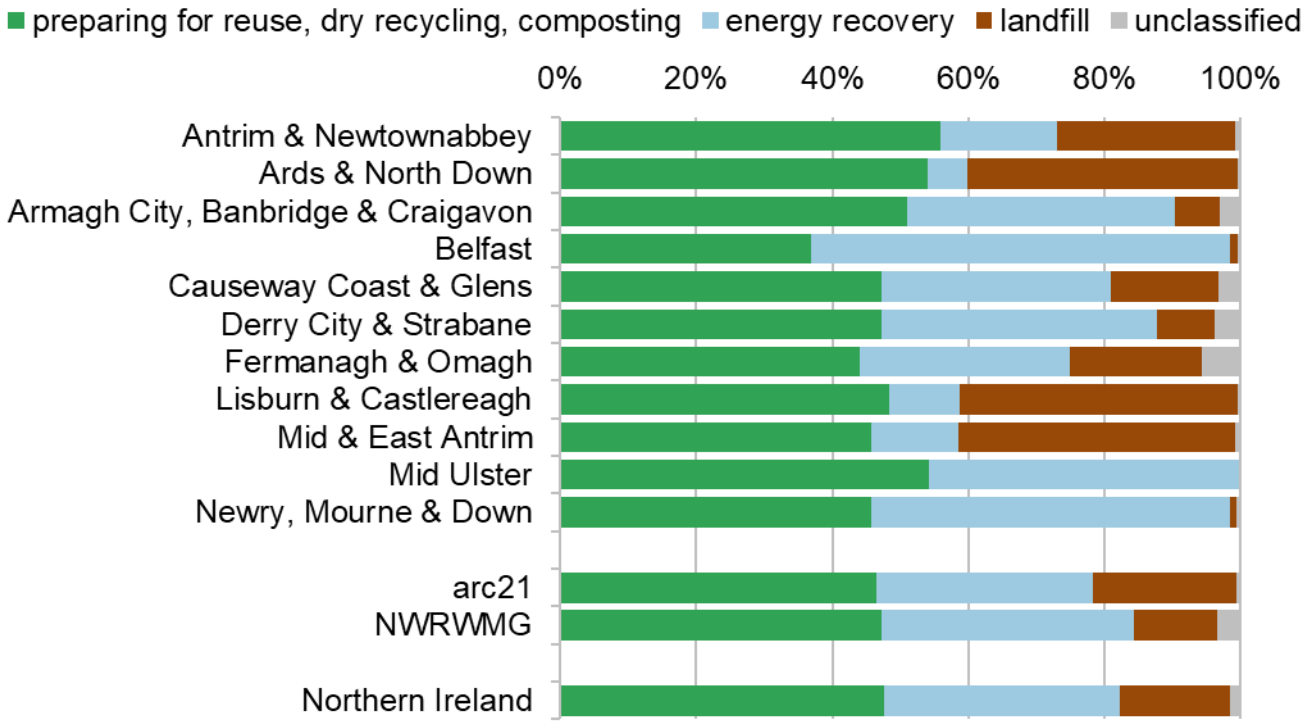
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of Local Authority Collected (LAC) municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between October and December 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, October to December 2024



At the Northern Ireland level, 47.7 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between October to December 2024. Energy recovery accounted for 34.6 per cent and 16.2 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 1.6 per cent unaccounted for is likely to involve moisture and/or gaseous losses from the amount of waste collected. 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 lower than the rate reported in October to December 2023 (48.5 per cent). The landfill rate decreased by 1.2 percentage points whilst the energy recovery rate increased by 1.8 percentage points from October to December 2023. Household waste accounted for 87.6 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.

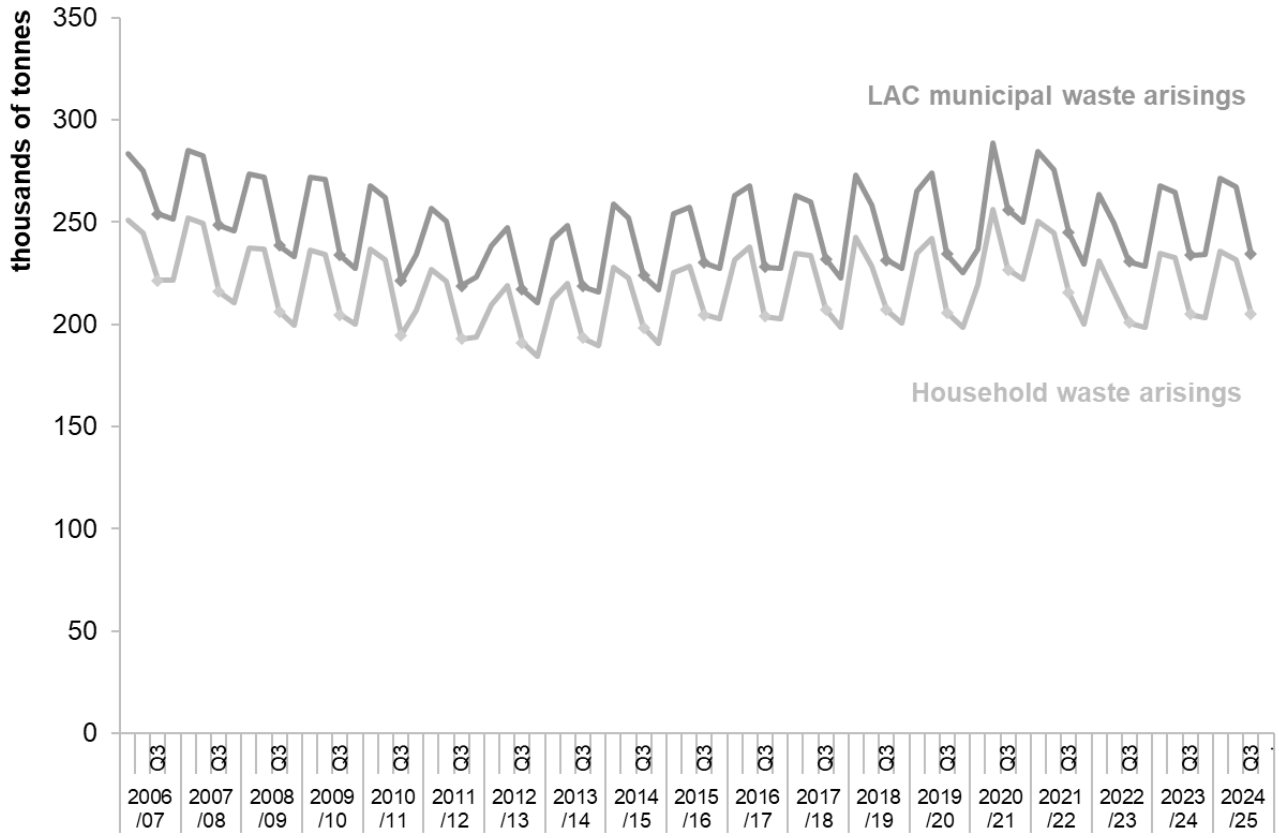
Waste arisings

Northern Ireland's councils collected 234,229 tonnes of waste between October to December 2024 similar to the 233,694 tonnes collected during October to December 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.

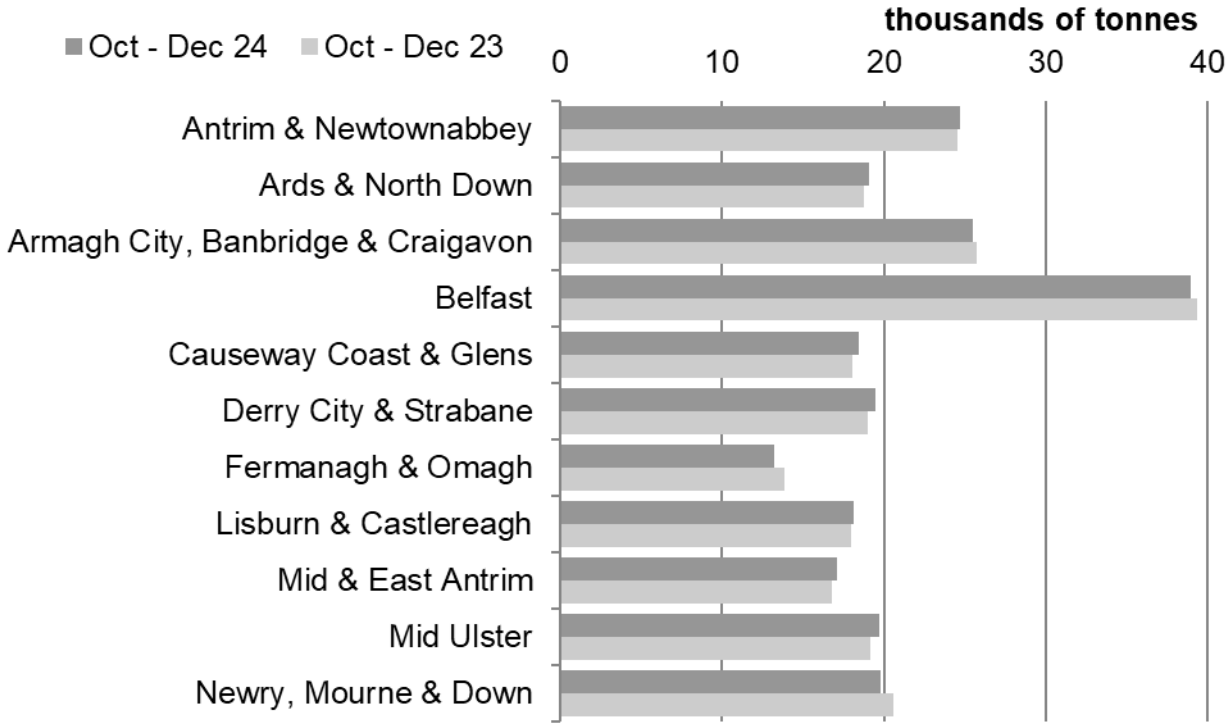
Since 2006/07 household waste has accounted for 86-90 per cent of total waste collected by councils each quarter, apart from April to June 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions resulted in a larger than normal proportion of household waste being collected. During October to December 2024 household waste accounted for 87.6 per cent. The remaining 12.4 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 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 for the October to December quarter of 255,973 tonnes in 2020, arisings showed a generally increasing trend. From the October to December peak, arisings fell to 234,229 tonnes collected in the latest quarter.

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



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 39,003 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh & Omagh collected the least at 13,212 tonnes.

Seven councils reported an increase in total arisings in October to December 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 with four councils reporting a decrease in total arisings[1].

Derry City & Strabane reported the largest increase in total arisings in October to December 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, rising by 2.7 per cent. Fermanagh & Omagh and Newry, Mourne & Down reported decreases from October to December 2023 to October to December 2024 of 4.4 and 4.0 per cent respectively.

The total quantity of waste collected at kerbside was similar to the amount collected in October to December 2023, while the quantity of waste collected at civic amenity sites increased by 1.4 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.

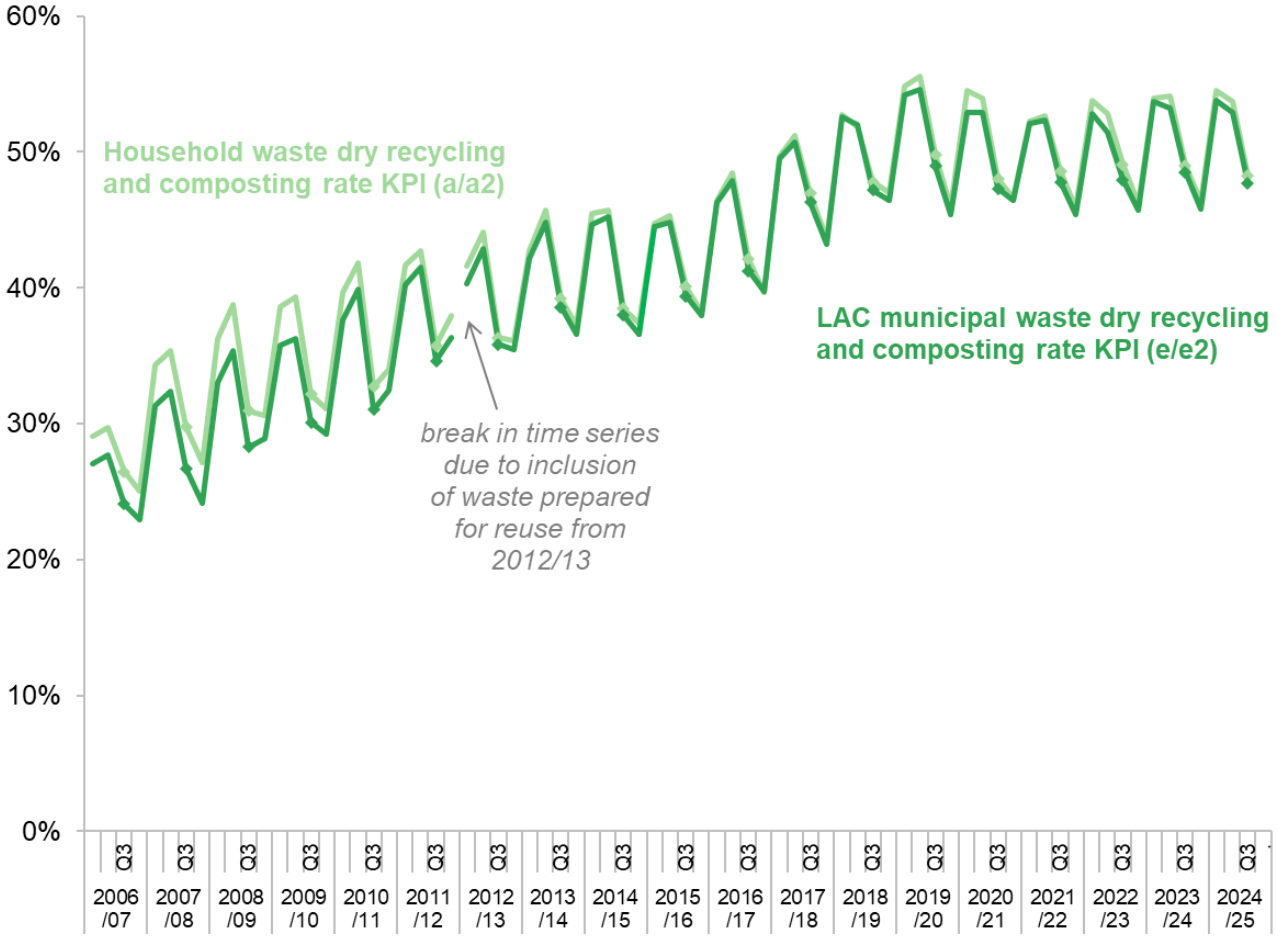
[1] Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary.

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 111,618 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 2024. The waste recycling rate was 47.7 per cent, lower than the rate of waste sent for recycling during October to December 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)

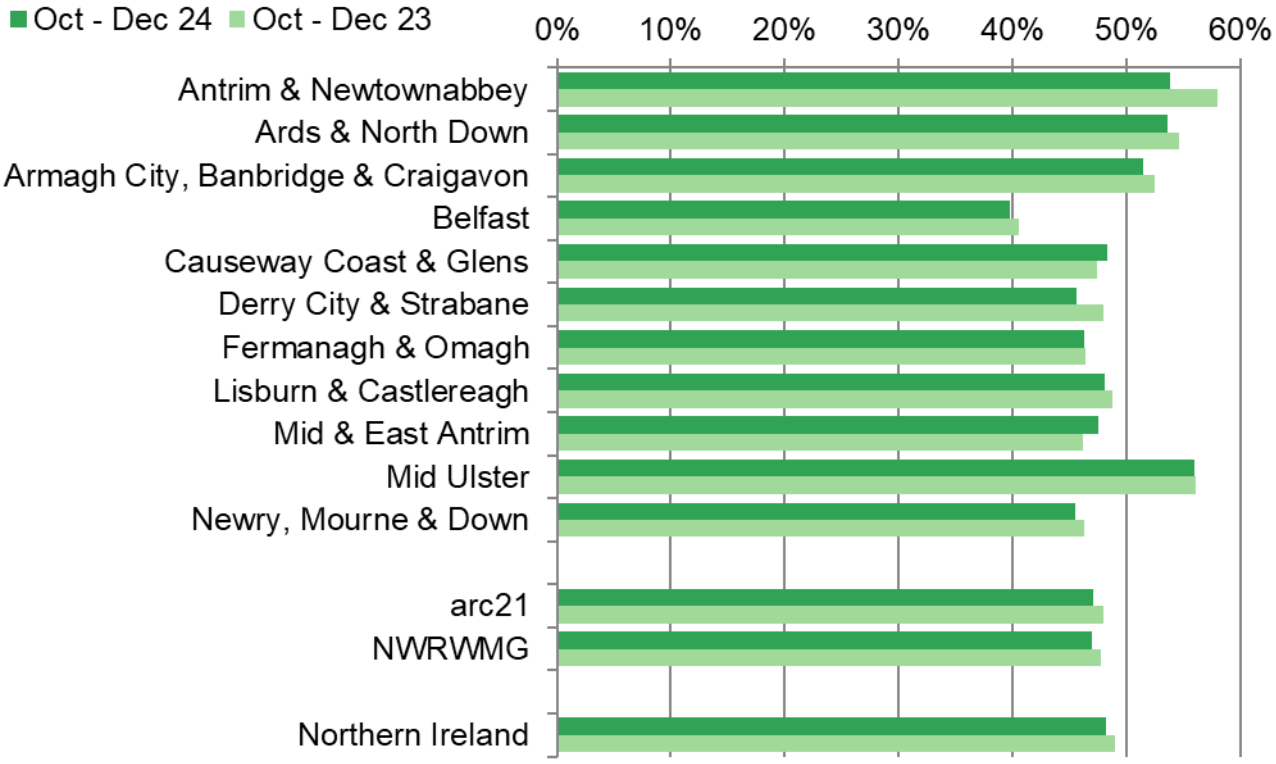


These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend for Local Authority Collected municipal waste recycling for the October to December quarter has been a steady increase from 24.1 per cent in October to December 2006 to 49.0 per cent in October to December 2019. Since October to December 2020 the local authority collected municipal waste recycling rate has remained relatively similar with a recycling rate of 47.7 per cent recorded in October to December 2024. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (612 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 2024.

The recycling rate for household waste only was 48.2 per cent during October to December 2024 which is lower than 49.0 per cent recorded during October to December 2023. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 24.3 per cent, composting 23.6 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 2023 and October to December 2024, KPI (a2)



Mid & East Antrim reported the largest increase in their household recycling rate compared to October to December 2023 at 1.4 percentage points. The only other council to record an increase in their household recycling rates in October to December 2024 compared to October to December 2023 was Causeway Coast & Glens. The household recycling rate decreased in seven councils with the largest decrease recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey followed by Derry City & Strabane. The remaining councils reported similar household recycling rates in October to December 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023.

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 is included as an indicator for the current Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'.

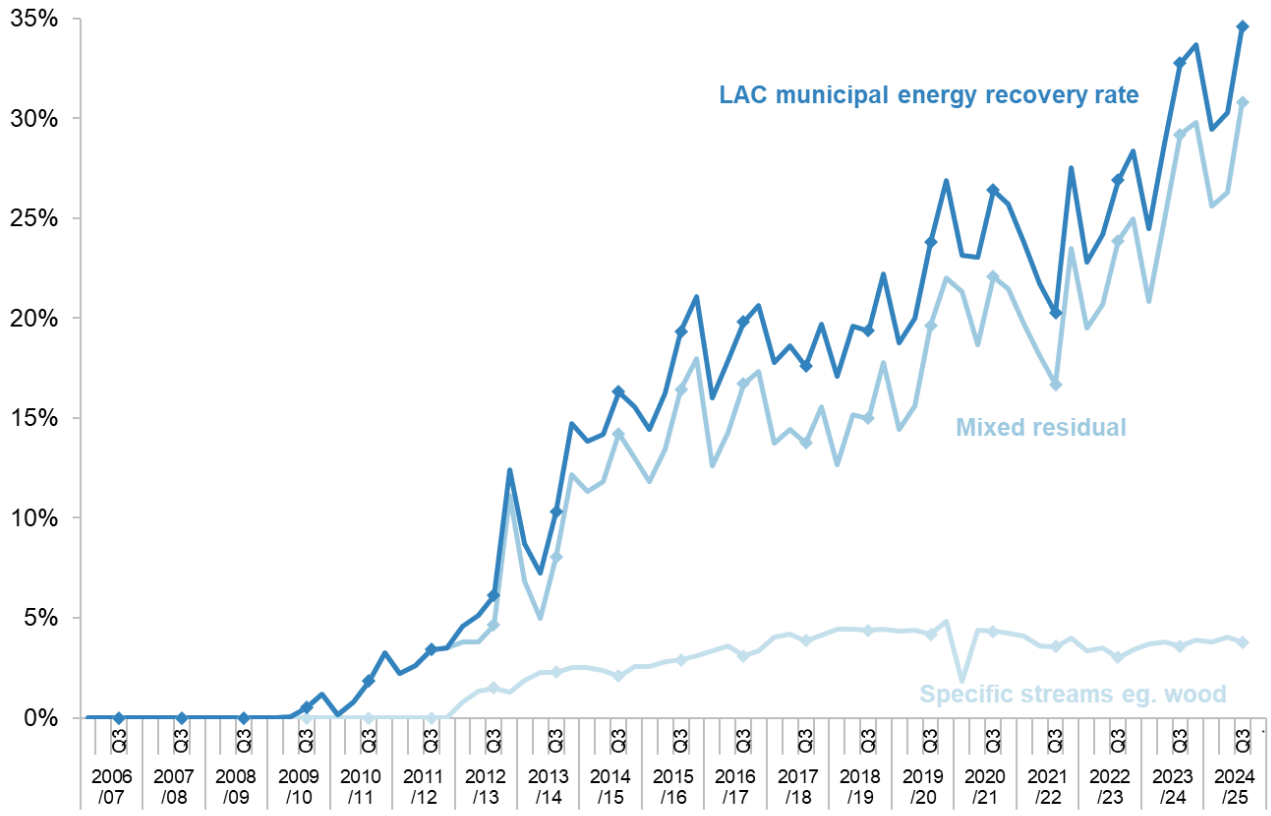
These statistics can be found in Tables 4 and 12 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the time series dataset.

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/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 2024, 81,036 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced a waste energy recovery rate of 34.6 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 2024/25

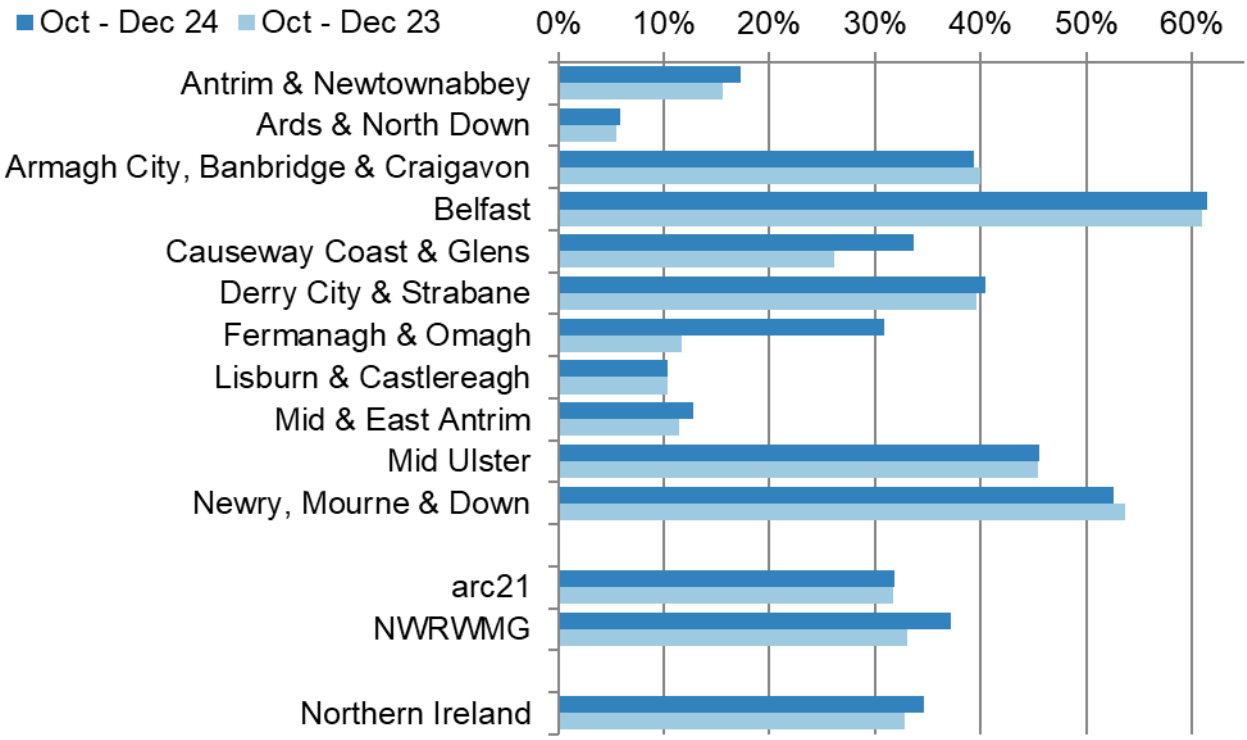


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth began during 2009/10 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.5 per cent during October to December 2009 to 34.6 per cent for the same three months of 2024. Most of the growth since 2009/10 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 0.5 per cent during October to December 2009 to 30.8 per cent in October to December 2024). The specific stream proportion was 3.8 per cent in October to December 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, October to December 2023 and October to December 2024



The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Belfast at 61.5 per cent followed by Newry, Mourne & Down with 52.6 per cent. Six councils recorded an increase in the waste energy recovery rate in October to December 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023 with the largest increase of 19.2 percentage points recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh followed by Causeway Coast & Glens reporting an increase of 7.6 percentage points.

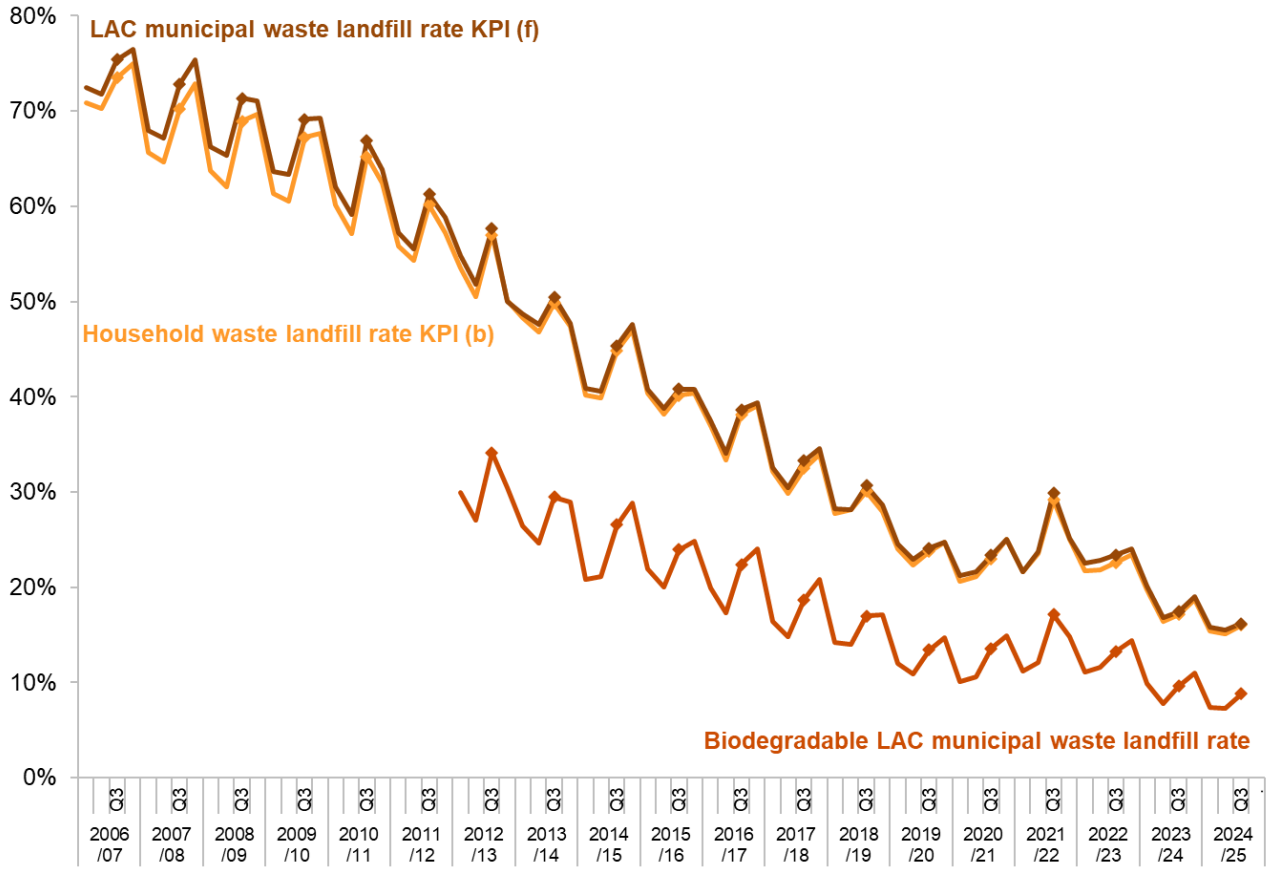
Only Newry, Mourne & Down and Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon recorded a decrease in their waste energy recovery rate in October to December 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023. The remaining councils reported similar energy recovery rates in 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023.

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 6.9 per cent, from 40,712 tonnes during October to December 2023 to 37,898 tonnes during October to December 2024. The quarterly landfill rate for October to December 2024 is 16.2 per cent, lower than the 17.4 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2023.

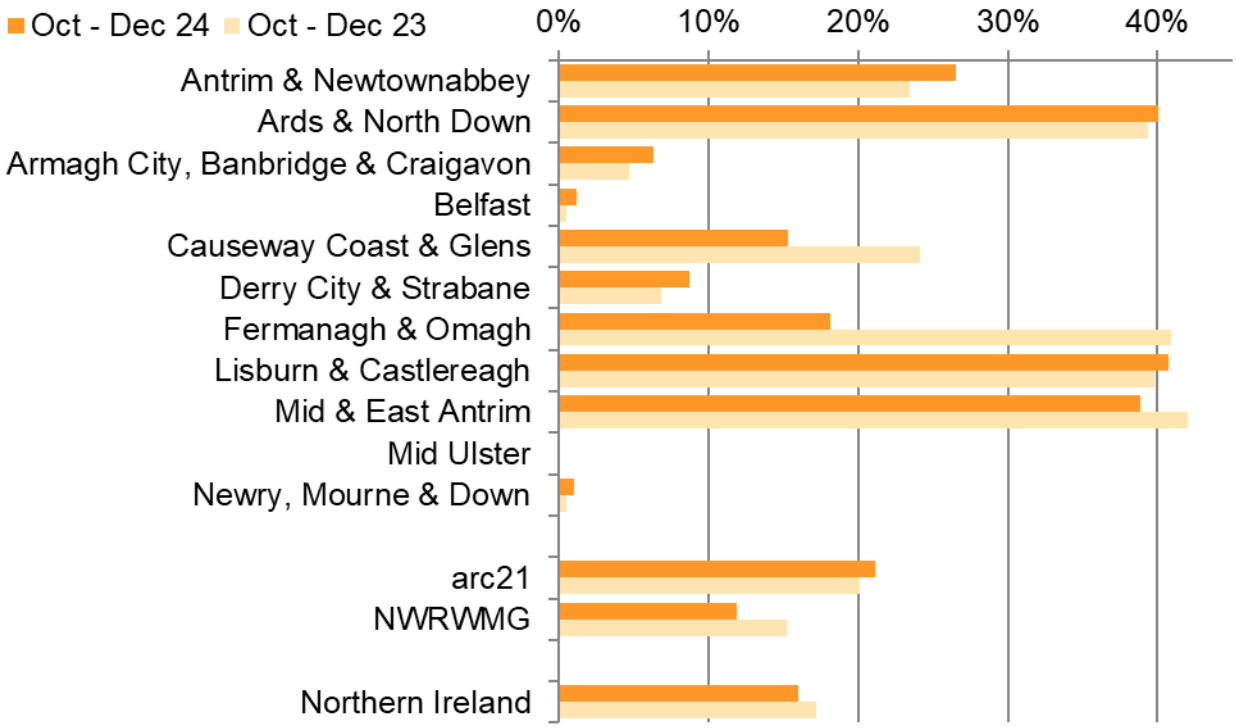
Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2024/25, KPIs (b) and (f)



The longer term trend has seen the October to December LAC municipal waste landfill rate fall from 75.4 per cent in 2006 to a low of 16.2 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. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 16.0 per cent.

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 2023 and October to December 2024, KPI (b)



The highest household waste landfill rates were recorded in Lisburn & Castlereagh, Ards & North Down and Mid & East Antrim at 40.7, 40.0 and 38.9 per cent respectively. In contrast, Mid Ulster, Newry, Mourne & Down and Belfast recorded a close to zero landfill rate in October to December 2024. The household waste landfill rate decreased in three district councils in October to December 2024 compared to the same three months in 2023, with the largest decrease recorded in Fermanagh & Omagh at 22.7 percentage points followed by Causeway Coast & Glens with an 8.8 percentage points reduction. Seven district councils recorded an increase in the waste landfill rate in October to December 2024 compared to the same quarter in 2023 with the largest increase of 3.1 percentage points recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey.

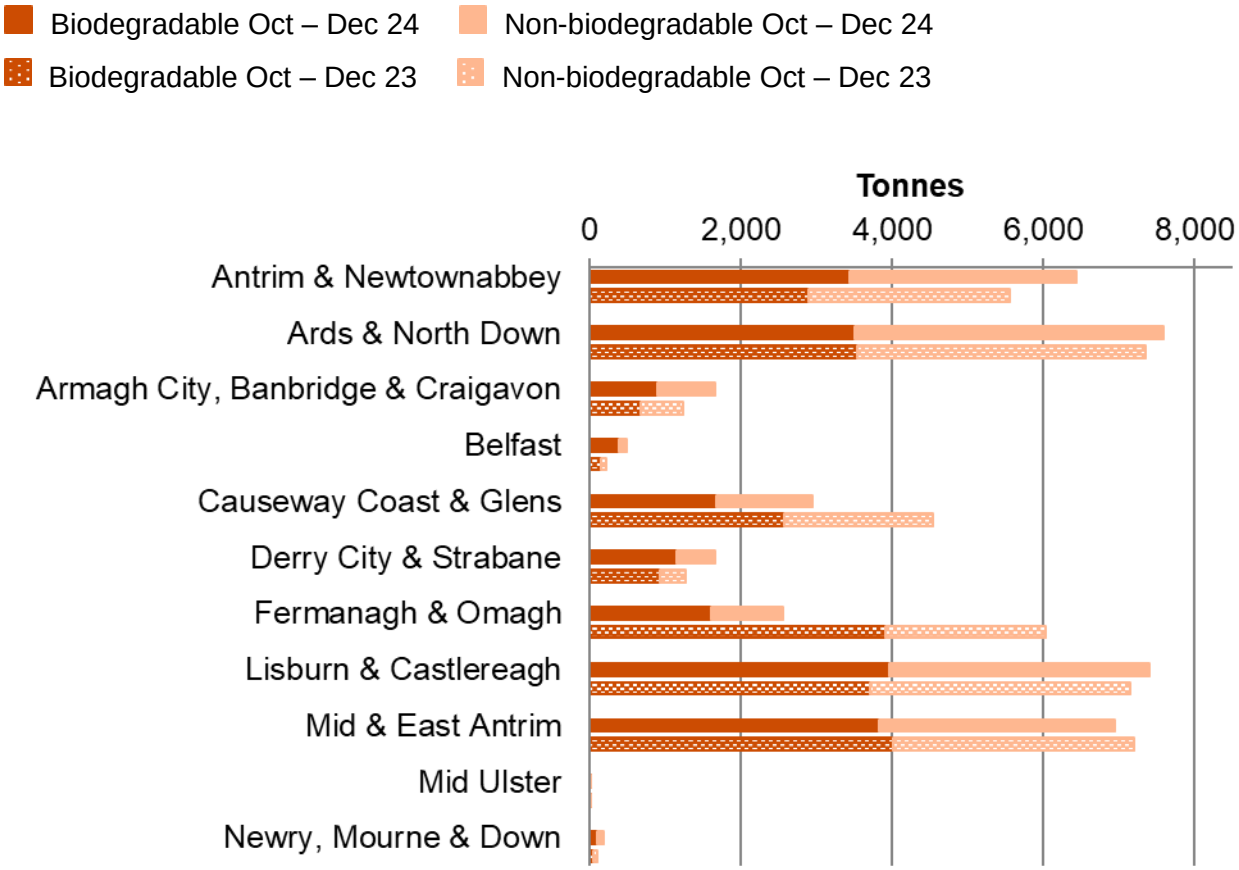
Biodegradable waste to landfill

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 20,589 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill during October to December 2024, which was 54.3 per cent of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill. During the same quarter last year, 22,467 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill which was 55.2 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, October to December 2023 and October to December 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 Belfast, 78.9 per cent (386 tonnes) of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill was biodegradable, whilst in Ards & North Down, 46.2 per cent (3,509 tonnes) of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill was biodegradable.

Accredited Official Statistics

Accredited Official Statistics are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and confirmed to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. Producers of accredited official statistics[2] are legally required to ensure they maintain compliance with the Code.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by OSR in September 2013 in the Assessment Report 263 Statistics on the Environment and Waste Management in Northern Ireland, with accreditation confirmed in January 2014. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice and should be labelled National Statistics (or 'accredited official statistics').

In October 2020, a compliance check was completed for the waste statistics produced by each of the UK regions and confirmed that the designation (or 'accredited official statistics' labelling) should continue. 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 (or 'accredited official statistics').

Our Statistics Charter provides further details of how we apply the principles and practices of the Code in the production and publication of our official statistics.

Our statistical practice is regulated by OSR. They set 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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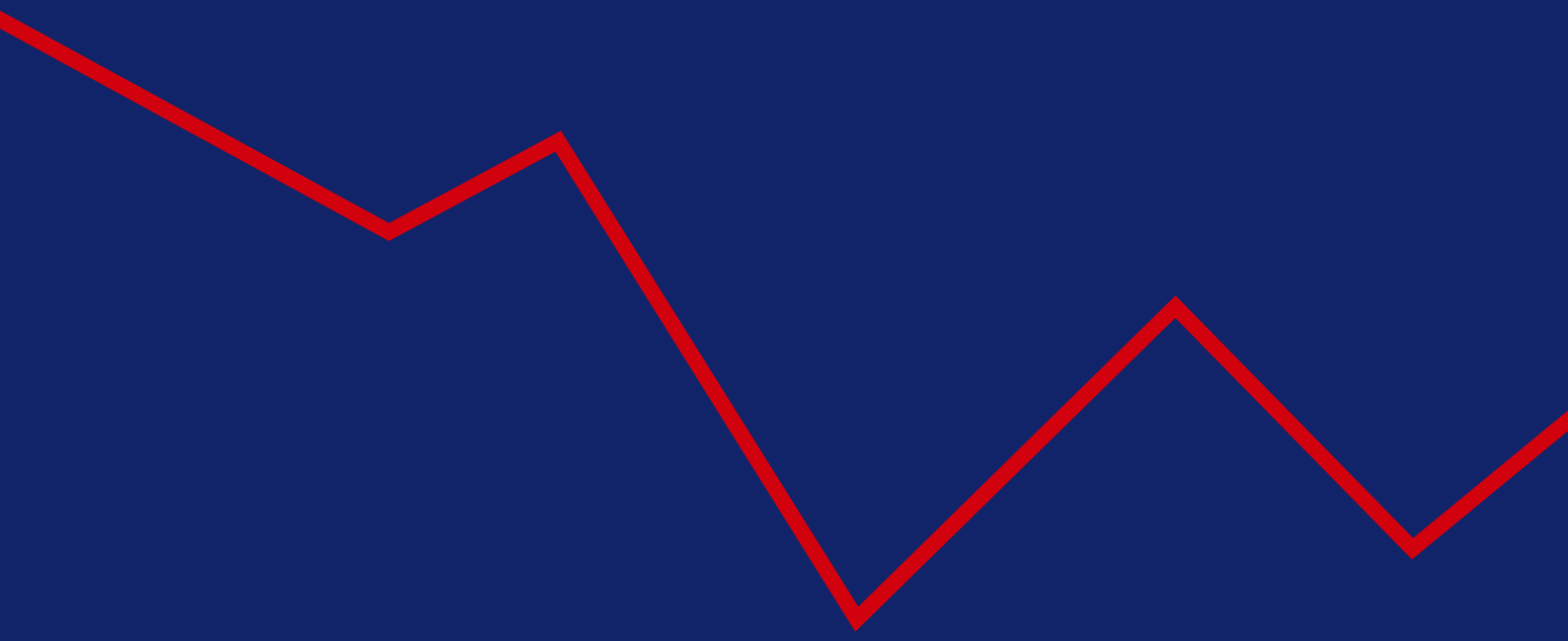

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