



3 March 2021

Statistics on waste managed by local authorities in England in 2019/20

This release relates to the collection and management of waste under the possession or control of local authorities in England. It covers three principal measures as summarised in the table below. This release was delayed due to reporting difficulties experienced by some local authorities during the Covid-19 epidemic in 2020.

The next update to this National statistics notice and accompanying datasets is scheduled to be in November/December 2021. Defra plan to publish an interim official statistics release of local authority and National estimates covering April to June 2020 within the next couple of months.

What data is confirmed in this release?

Measure	Time Period
Waste from households This is the official recycling measure that was used as the basis for reporting at a harmonised UK level against the Waste Framework Directive when this was in place during 2019/20.	First publication of figures for the 2019 calendar year and for the 2019/20 financial year.
Local authority collected waste This is all waste within the remit of local authorities. It includes household waste plus other non-household waste collected by local authorities.	First publication of figures for the 2019/20 financial year.
Household waste This is broader than 'waste from households', and includes waste from street bins, street sweepings, and parks and grounds. It does not include metals from incinerator bottom ash.	First publication of figures for the 2019/20 financial year.

For more information about what data is included in the three measures listed in the table above, please refer to the section on 'Glossary of terms and measures' and the separate [methodology document](#). A new reference [document](#) giving an explanation of what recycling is and comparing measures across England, Wales, Scotland and N Ireland is available [here](#).

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A National Statistics publication. These statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods, and assured quality, frankness and accessibility. More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

Key points

The changes detailed below are based on unrounded figures.

England Waste from Households: 2019 and 2019/20 (Table 1 and Figure 1)

- The official England 'waste from households' recycling rate was 45.5 per cent in 2019, up 0.9 percentage points from 44.7 per cent in 2018.
- Metal recovered and then recycled from waste that has been through incineration (IBA metal) added approximately 0.9 percentage points to the recycling rate in 2019, compared to 0.8 percentage points in 2018.
- In 2019, total 'waste from households' increased slightly to 22.1 million tonnes from 2018 when it was 22.0 million tonnes. This is equivalent to 392 kg per person, down from 394 kg per person in 2018, a decrease of 0.4 per cent.
- The amount of residual waste treated was 12.0 million tonnes, down from 12.2 million tonnes in 2018, a decrease of 1.5 per cent.
- The total amount of waste recycled increased. In 2019, it was 10.1 million tonnes, up from 9.8 million tonnes in 2018. This was an increase of 2.2 per cent.
- The amount of dry material recycled was 5.9 million tonnes in 2019, up slightly (by 8 thousand tonnes) on 2018.
- The tonnage of separately collected food waste sent for recycling was 437 thousand tonnes, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 414 thousand tonnes in 2018.
- 'Other organic' waste sent for recycling was 3.7 million tonnes, an increase of 183 thousand tonnes or 5.1 per cent on 2018.
- The statistics and the policy measures described here predate implementation of the Circular Economy legislation commencing in 2020. More detail on that can be found in section 6.9 of this release. During 2019/20 there was an EU target for the UK to recycle at least 50 per cent of waste generated by households by 2020. The 'waste from households' figures outlined here for England make a significant contribution to UK estimates, which will be published in the next edition of the [UK Statistics on Waste](#).
- The rolling 12-month 'waste from households' recycling rate was 45.5% at the end of March 2020. This is an increase of 0.4 percentage points compared with the previous 12-month period. These figures include IBA metal.

England Local Authority and Household Waste: 2019/20 financial year (Table 2)

- In 2019/20, total local authority managed waste remained steady at 25.6 million tonnes.

- 8.5 per cent of all local authority waste (2.2 million tonnes) was disposed of via landfill in 2019/20. This was down 0.6 million tonnes (21.3 per cent) from 2018/19.
- Waste sent for incineration increased by 0.4 million tonnes (3.8 per cent) to 11.6 million tonnes in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. It was the disposal method used for 45.5 per cent of all local authority waste.
- There are no changes to definitions or methodology for all local authority and 'household waste' recycling figures; IBA metal is not included.
- 10.9 million tonnes of local authority waste was sent for recycling in 2019/20, a slight increase on 2018/19.
- Amongst the 341 local authorities in England, there is considerable variation in 'household waste' recycling rates, ranging from 19 to 64 per cent in 2019/20.

Datasets for the national and regional data, as well as data at local authority level—including the ex-National Indicator measures—are available at the gov.uk [website](#).

Data Revisions

There are no revisions to historic data presented in this notice.

Recycling Explainer

A new [document](#) giving an explanation of what can be counted as recycling, different national recycling measures and summarising how measures across England, Wales, Scotland and N Ireland differ is available [here](#).

Give us feedback on this notice

To help us understand your information and data needs, please complete the [short survey](#) consisting of 4 questions. (This link opens in google forms).

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1 Waste from households

1.1 Waste from Households (Table 1)

'Waste from households' was the measure introduced by the UK in 2014 to provide a harmonised UK indicator for reporting recycling rates at a UK level on a calendar year basis, complying with the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) in place in 2019/20. It excludes local authority collected waste not considered to have come directly from households, such as street bins, street sweepings, parks and grounds waste, and compost-like output.

For more information, refer to the [Data and Methodology](#) section of this notice.

Table 1: Composition breakdown and recycling rate of 'waste from households' in England, 2015 to 2019, (thousand tonnes)

Waste type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% change 2019 over 2018
Total Recycling of which:	9,849	10,217	10,139	9,840	10,054	2.2%
Dry recycling of which:	5,834	6,042	5,917	5,866	5,874	0.1%
IBA Metal	97	143	181	187	201	7.7%
Separately collected food waste	307	355	386	414	437	5.5%
Other organics recycling	3,708	3,820	3,836	3,561	3,743	5.1%
Total Residual	12,363	12,535	12,266	12,151	11,967	-1.5%
Total waste from households	22,225	22,770	22,437	22,033	22,074	0.2%
Waste from households recycling rate (including IBA metal)	44.3%	44.9%	45.2%	44.7%	45.5%	0.9 percentage points
Waste from households recycling rate (excluding IBA metal)	43.9%	44.2%	44.4%	43.8%	44.6%	0.8 percentage points

Notes

a) **Total waste from households** includes dry recycling/preparing for reuse and organics. It also includes residual waste (or 'black bag' waste) and rejects from recycling. IBA metal is included in the recycling figures from April 2015 onwards; for 2015 it is a slight underestimate as capturing data on IBA metal was only possible from April 2015.

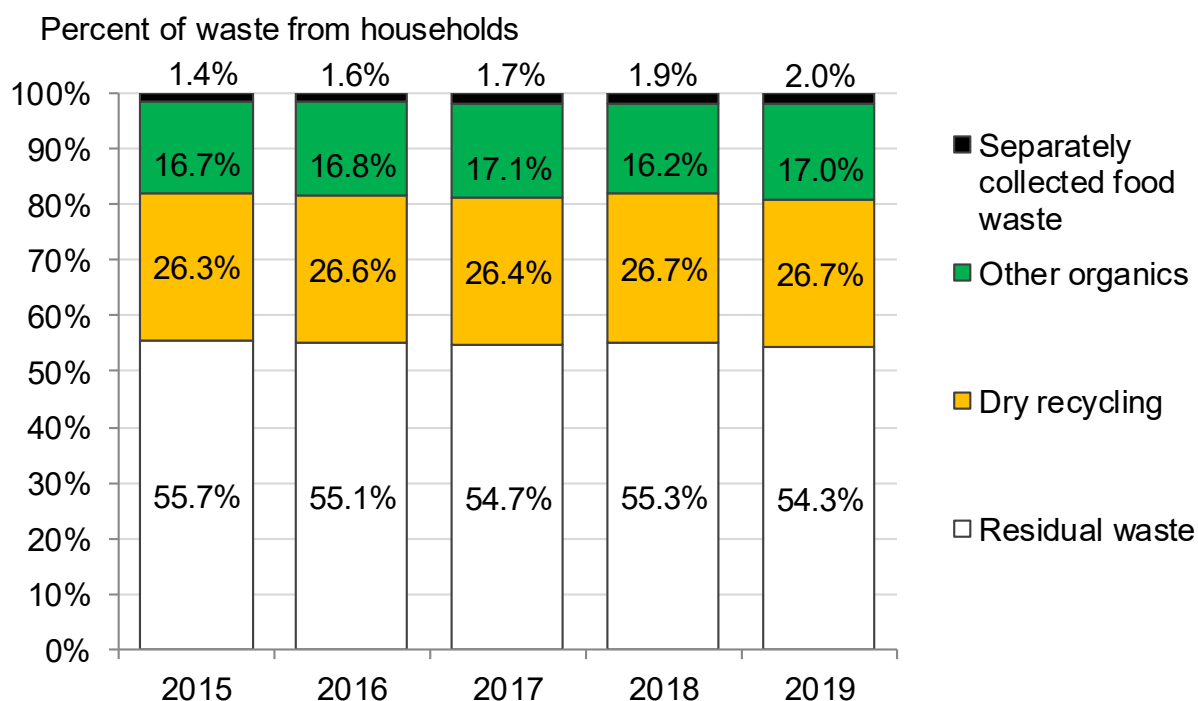
b) **Numbers may not add to exact totals.** This is due to rounding.

- In 2019, the total weight of 'waste from households' in England was 22.1 million tonnes, up from 22.0 million tonnes in 2018.
- The weight of waste sent for recycling was 10.1 million tonnes in 2019, a 2.2 per cent increase from 9.8 million tonnes in 2018.
- Residual waste was 12.0 million tonnes in 2019, down from 12.2 million tonnes in 2017. This was a decrease of 1.5 per cent.

- The 'waste from households' recycling rate was 45.5 per cent in 2019, an increase of 0.9 percentage points from 2018 when the rate was 44.7 per cent.
- The increase in the recycling rate was driven by variations in the tonnage of 'other organics', which is linked to weather conditions. In 2019, 3.7 million tonnes of 'other organics' waste was sent for recycling, an increase of 5.1 per cent from 3.6 million tonnes in 2018.
- Metals that had been recovered from incinerated waste and then recycled (IBA metal) contributed 201 thousand tonnes, up from 187 thousand tonnes in 2018. This was an increase of 7.7 per cent.
- When IBA metal is excluded, the 'waste from households' recycling rate was 44.6 per cent in 2019, an increase of 0.8 percentage points from the 2018 rate of 43.8 per cent.

1.2 Waste from Households: Waste Streams (Figures 1 to 4)

Figure 1: Waste composition: Waste stream proportions as a percentage of total 'waste from households', 2015-2019, England



Notes

Residual waste includes residual 'waste from households' regular collections (black bags), bulky waste, residual waste from civic amenity centres, and rejects from recycling. It excludes waste diverted for recycling from residual waste.

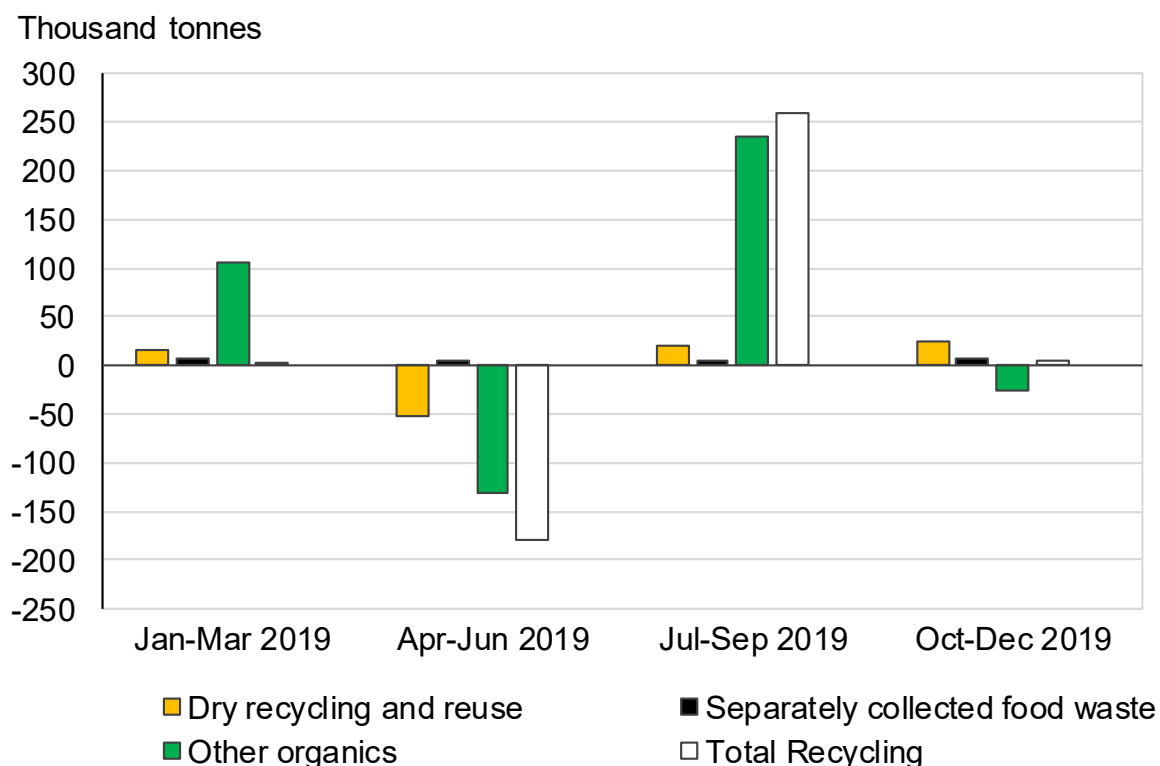
Dry recycling includes paper and card, glass, plastic, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), scrap metals including those reclaimed from incinerator bottom ash as well as other materials.

Other organics includes green garden waste, mixed garden and food waste, wood for composting and other compostable waste.

Numbers may not add to exactly 100. This is due to rounding.

- A total of 22.1 million tonnes of 'waste from households' was treated in England in 2019. Of this, 54.3 per cent was residual waste, 26.7 per cent was dry recycling, 17.0 per cent was 'other organics'—including green garden waste and mixed garden and food waste—and 2.0 per cent was separately collected food waste.
- The majority (58.4 per cent) of 'waste from households' recycling in 2019 was dry recycle.
- The tonnage of dry recycling, which includes paper and card, glass, plastic, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), and scrap metals including those reclaimed from incinerator bottom ash, as well as other materials increased slightly, but remained at around 5.9 million tonnes in 2019. As a proportion of total 'waste from households', it was unchanged from 2018 at 26.7 per cent.
- Separately collected food waste rose by 5.5 per cent to 437 thousand tonnes in 2019 from 414 thousand tonnes in 2018. However, it remained only a small proportion of total 'waste from households,' at 2.0 per cent.
- The weight of 'other organic' waste—including garden waste, mixed garden and food waste, wood for composting and other compostable waste—accounted for 17.0 per cent of total 'waste from households'.
- The tonnage of other organics increased by 0.2 million tonnes or 5.1 per cent to 3.7 million tonnes in 2019. This increase has the impact of increasing the overall recycling rate by around 0.8 of a percentage point.
- As a proportion of total recycling, 'other organics' comprised 37.2 per cent in 2019, an increase of 1.0 percentage point from 2018, when at 36.2 per cent the proportion of other organics was at its lowest point between 2010 and 2019.
- As a proportion of total recycling, separately collected food waste comprised 4.3 per cent. This has increased slightly by 0.1 of a percentage point from 2018. Whilst small this continues the longer trend for incremental increases each year, from 1.3 per cent in 2010.
- Organic waste tonnages are linked to the season and variations in weather. Figure 2, shows quarterly changes in the tonnage of total recycling for 'waste from households' in England between 2018 and 2019, and also the variation in dry and organic recycling.

Figure 2: Quarterly year on year change in weight of recycled ‘waste from households’, 2019 compared to 2018, England (thousand tonnes)



- Comparative to the same periods in 2018, the tonnage of ‘other organic’ ‘waste from households’ increased by 26.6 per cent in January to March, and 23.4 per cent in July to September. It decreased by 9.4 per cent in April to June 2019 and 3.5 per cent in October to December 2019. The comparatively lower tonnage in April to June 2019 was mostly due to cooler weather, compared to April to June 2018, reducing plant growth. The higher tonnage in July to September 2019 reflects more optimal growing conditions compared to the hot, dry weather recorded in the same period in 2018¹.
- Changes in the tonnages of dry recycling were less significant. In April to June 2019 there was a decrease of 3.4 per cent, however this decrease was offset by modest increases during the rest of the year. The amount of separately collected food waste sent for recycling increased in all quarters.

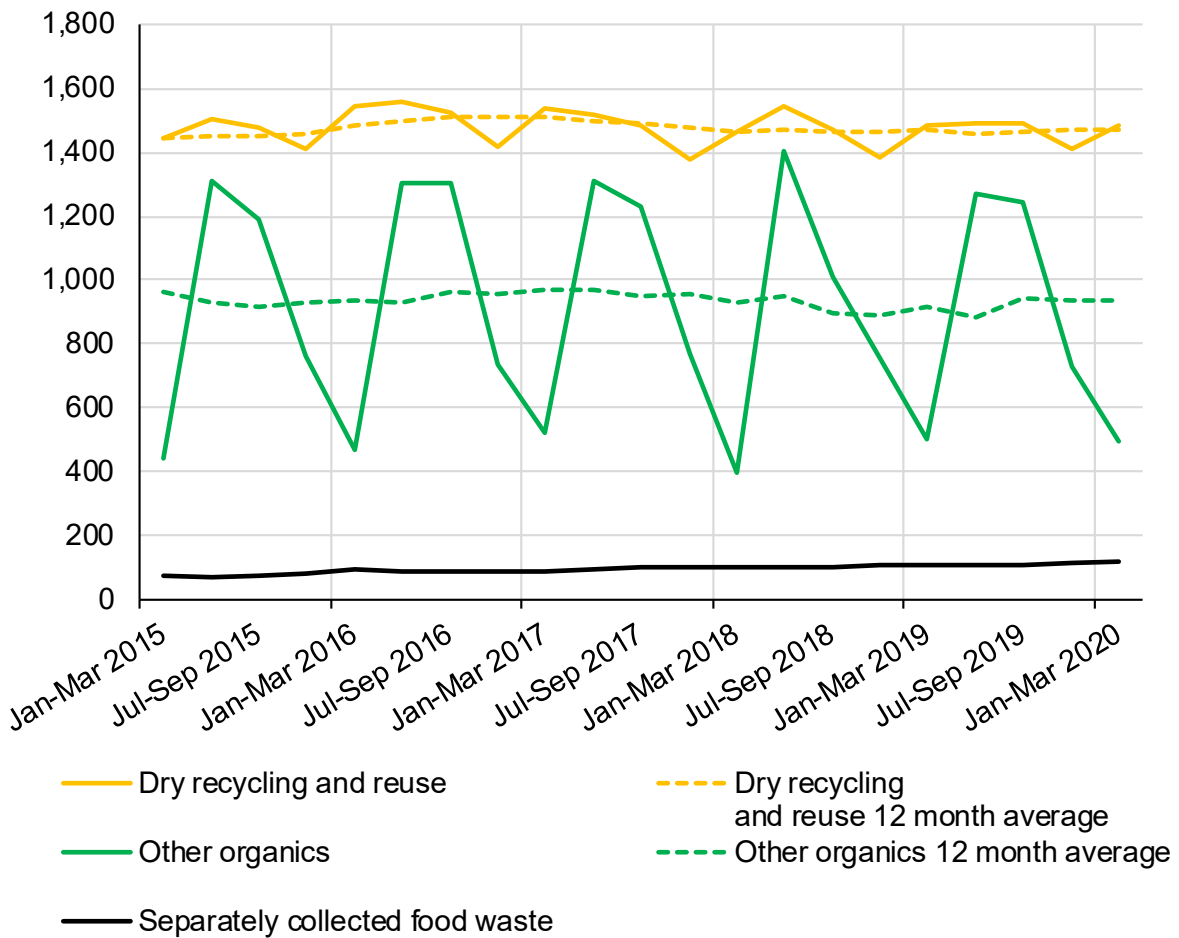
Quarterly trends over a longer time period from January to March 2015, are shown in Figures 3 and 4, which incorporate the data for the latest available quarter, January to March 2020, as well. Figure 4 shows quarterly dry and organic recycling as a proportion of total ‘waste from households’ and a smoothed 12-month rolling average for the overall recycling rate.

The smoothed 12-month rolling average ‘waste from households’ recycling rate has ranged from 44.2 to 45.5 per cent over this time period.

¹ Met office [data](#) for England

Figure 3: 'Waste from households' quarterly recycling volumes by waste type, England, with 12 month moving averages (thousand tonnes)

Thousand tonnes

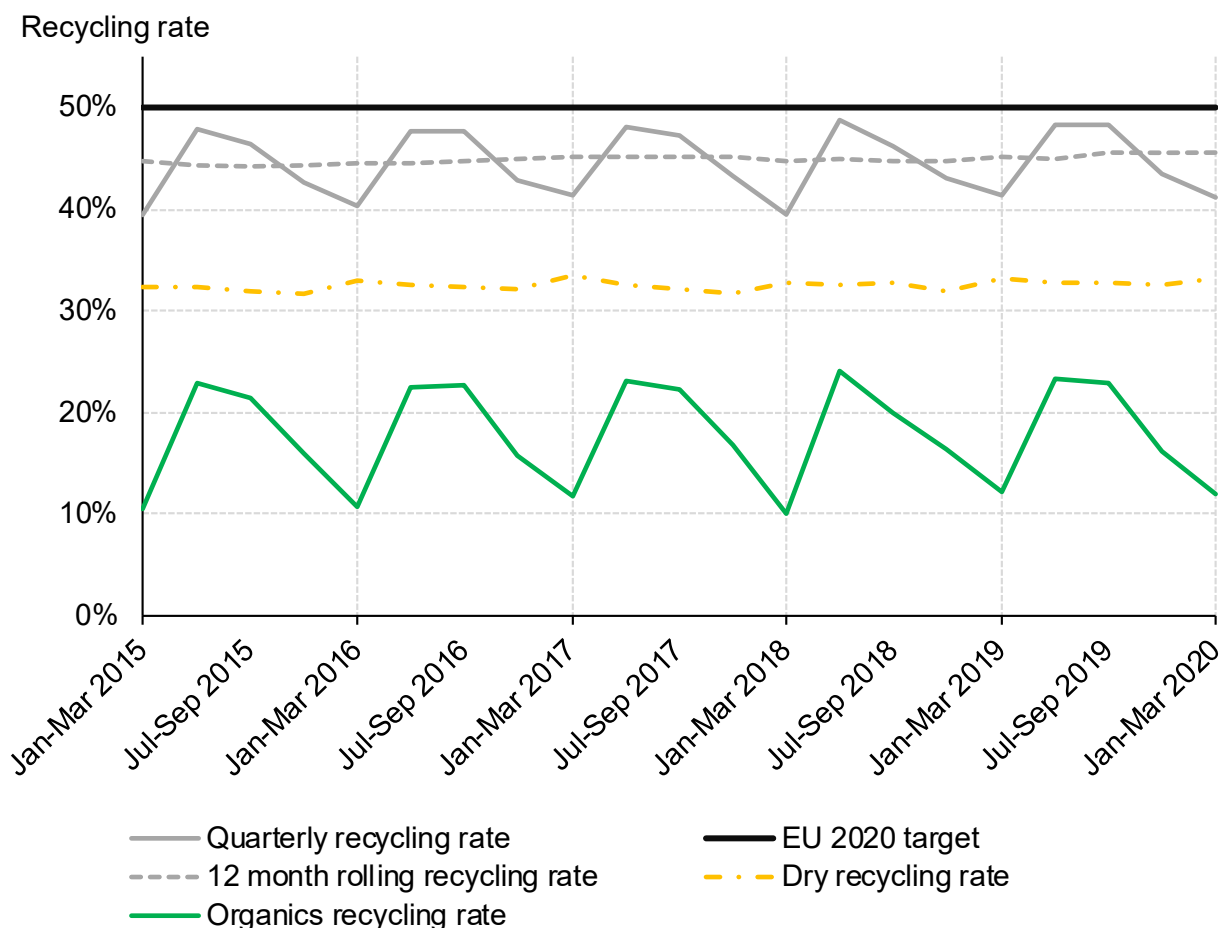


Notes

Dry recycling includes paper and card, glass, plastic, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), scrap metals including those reclaimed from incinerator bottom ash as well as other materials.

Other organics includes green garden waste, mixed garden and food waste, wood for composting and other compostable waste.

Figure 4: 'Waste from households' quarterly recycling rate, England, Jan-Mar 2015 to Jan-Mar 2020



Notes

Recycling is 'recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion, and preparing for reuse.'

1.3 Waste from Households: Dry Recycling Composition (Figures 5 and 6)

- Dry recycling including IBA metals remained at 5.9 million tonnes in 2019. It made up 26.7 per cent of total 'waste from households' and 58.4 per cent of all 'waste from households' recycling.
- In 2019, most dry recycling material groups showed an increase in tonnage compared to 2018, including plastic (an increase of 25 thousand tonnes or 5.3 per cent), metals (an increase of 10 thousand tonnes or 4.3 per cent), IBA metals (an increase of 14 thousand tonnes or 7.7 per cent), other materials (an increase of 20 thousand tonnes or 2.2 per cent), textiles (an increase of 4 thousand tonnes or 3.8 per cent) and glass which increased slightly by 3 thousand tonnes or 0.3 per cent.
- There were decreases in two material groups these were paper and card (a decrease of 58 thousand tonnes or 2.7 per cent) and WEEE and other scrap metals (a decrease of 11 thousand tonnes or 1.9 per cent).
- The largest changes in tonnages were seen in paper and card, plastic, WEEE and other scrap metal, other materials, metals and IBA metals.

The relative proportions of the materials that made up dry recycling in 2019 are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: 'Waste from households' dry recycling composition, England, 2019

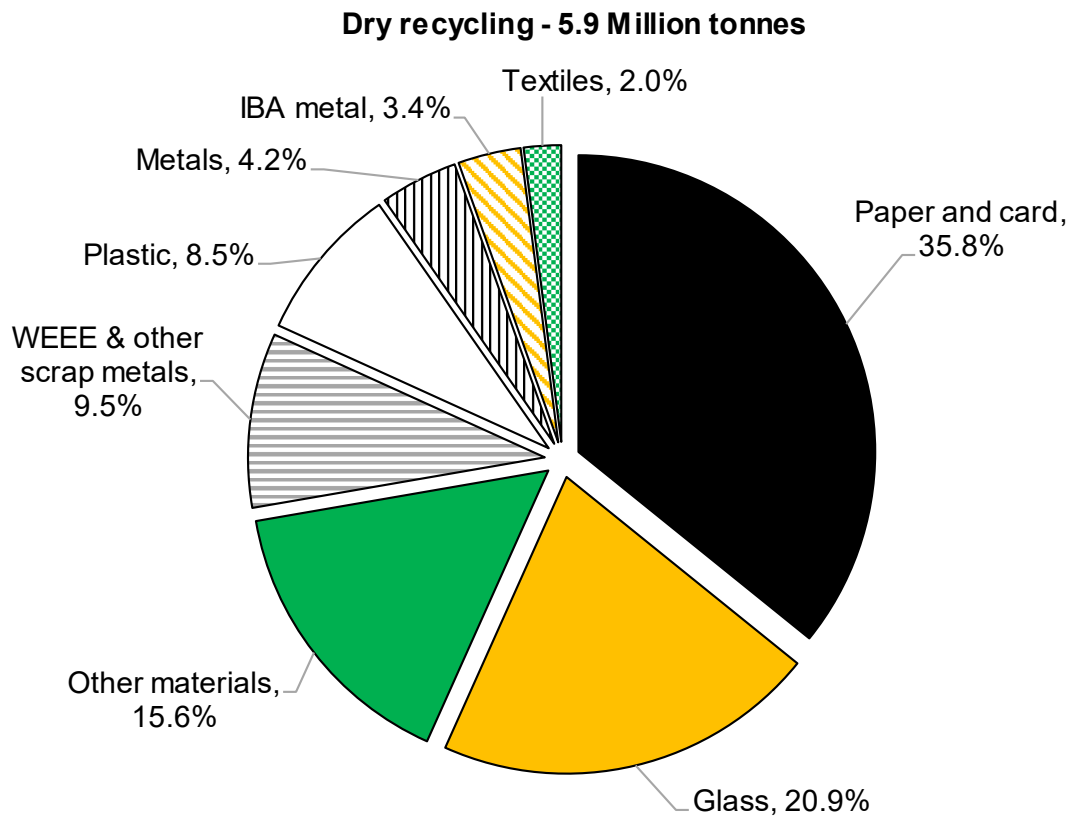
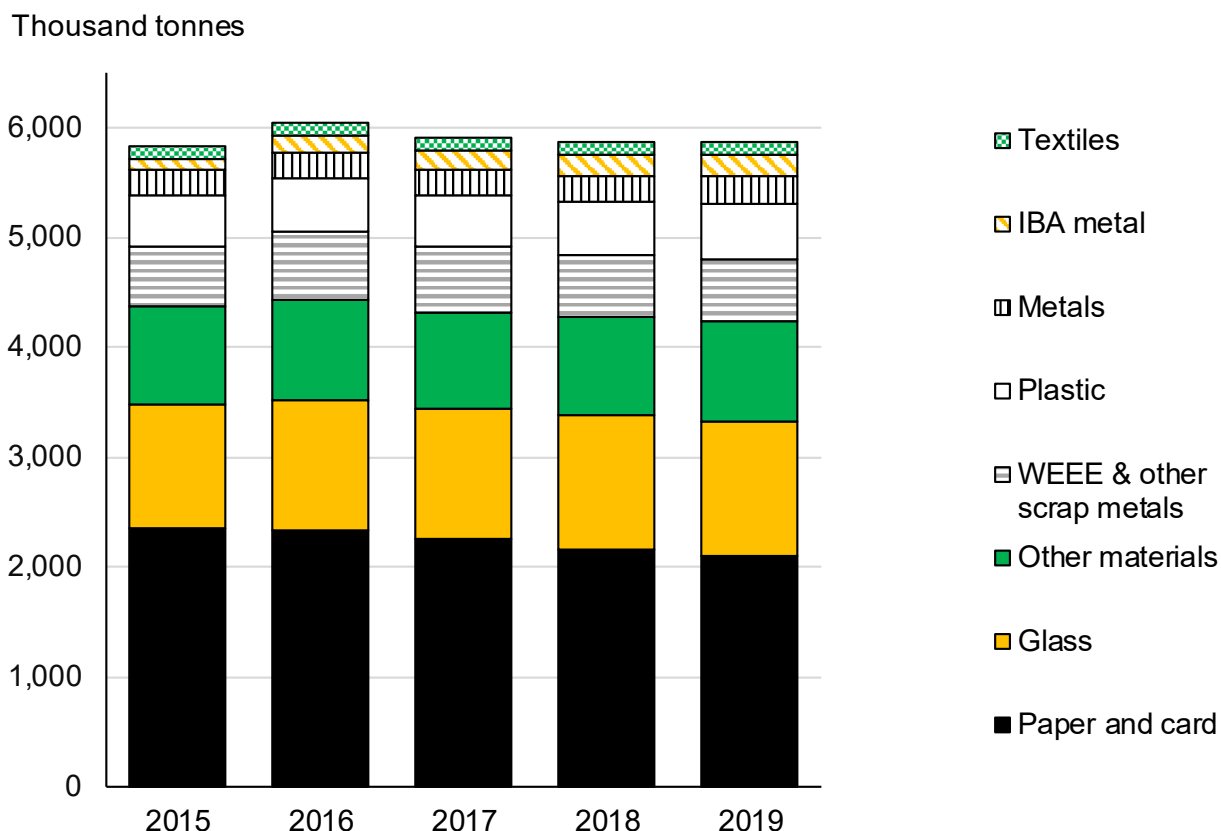


Figure 6 shows the England 'waste from households' dry recycling composition from 2015 to 2019.

Figure 6: 'Waste from households' dry recycling composition, England, 2015 to 2019 (thousand tonnes)



Notes

Other materials includes batteries (both automotive and post-consumer), bric-a-brac, chipboard and MDF, composite food and beverage cartons, composite wood materials, fire extinguishers, furniture, ink and toner cartridges, mattresses, mineral oil, paint, tyres (car, large vehicle, van and mixed tyres), vegetable oil, video tapes, DVDs and CDs, wood, and other.

- Despite some variations in tonnages, the relative proportions of materials have not substantially changed over the last five years. Notable exceptions are paper and card, which has gradually decreased and, in 2019, accounted for 35.8 per cent of dry recycling compared to 40.3 per cent in 2015, a fall of 4.4 percentage points over the 5 years, and is down from 44.9 per cent in 2010.
- Since 2015, the proportion of glass has increased by 1.4 percentage points, WEEE and other scrap metal has fluctuated over the years shown and in 2019 makes up the same proportion of dry recycling as it did in 2015.
- The proportion of IBA metal was 3.4 per cent in 2019, an increase of 1.8 percentage point since 2015— the first year that data was available—when it comprised 1.7 per cent of dry recycling.

2 Waste from Households – Financial Year Figures

- In 2019/20, the total weight of ‘waste from households’ in England was unchanged from 2018/19 at 22.1 million tonnes.
- The amount of ‘waste from households’ sent to recycling increased slightly to 10.1 million tonnes, this was an increase of 0.9 per cent when compared to 2018/19.
- The ‘waste from households’ recycling rate was 45.5 per cent in 2019/20, an increase of 0.4 percentage points on the 2018/19 recycling rate, which was 45.1 per cent.
- Dry recycling was 5.9 million tonnes in 2019/20, this was unchanged from 2018/19. Organic recycling, increased by 2.3 per cent to 4.2 million tonnes. This increase reflected better growing conditions in July to September 2019, compared to the hot, dry weather which reduced plant growth in the summer of 2018/19.
- The tonnage of residual waste in 2019/20 was 0.9 per cent less than in 2018/19, down to 12.0 million tonnes. As a proportion of ‘waste from households’, it decreased by 0.5 percentage points to 54.2 per cent of the total.

3 Management of All Local Authority Collected Waste, 2019/20 (Table 2 and Figure 7)

Local authority collected waste consists of all ‘waste from households’, street sweepings, municipal parks and gardens waste, beach cleansing waste, and waste resulting from the clearance of fly-tipped materials plus some commercial and/or industrial waste. For further information, see the [definition of terms](#) on gov.uk.

As a result of extra granularity of data reported through [Q100](#), it is not appropriate when referring to the management of waste for landfill, incineration or recovery to compare the data for April 2015 onwards too closely to any of the previous annual data. In particular, Q100 allows for more extensive reporting of refuse derived fuel (RDF), incineration, and outputs from incineration.

- Total local authority managed waste in 2019/20 was 25.6 million tonnes, down by just 18 thousand tonnes from 2018/19.
- 8.5 per cent of all local authority collected waste was sent to landfill in 2019/20. This was a total of 2.2 million tonnes, and 0.6 million tonnes lower (a decrease of 21.3 per cent) than in 2018/19.
- 73.9 per cent (1.6 million tonnes) of the waste sent to Landfill was sent direct in 2019/20. This is a decrease from 2018/19, when 76.2 per cent of all local authority collected waste sent to landfill was sent directly.

- 45.5 per cent of all local authority waste was incinerated¹ in 2019/20. This was a total of 11.6 million tonnes, and an increase of 0.4 million tonnes (3.8 per cent) from 2018/19. This increase was more than off-set by reductions in waste going to landfill.
- 69.3 per cent (8.1 million tonnes) of waste sent to incineration was sent direct in 2019/20. This proportion is the same as that seen in 2018/19 when 7.8 million tonnes of local authority collected waste was sent direct to incineration.
- The amount of local authority collected waste sent for recycling in 2019/20 was 10.9 million tonnes, up 23 thousand tonnes from 2018/19. Waste sent for recycling comprised 42.8 per cent of all local authority waste, an increase of 0.1 percentage points from 2018/19.
- Table 2 shows the tonnage of local authority collected waste sent to landfill, incineration, or recycling for the past five years. Figure 7 shows how local authority collected waste has been managed since 2000/01.

Table 2: Management of all Local Authority collected waste financial year figures, England, 2015/16 to 2019/20 (thousand tonnes)

Waste disposal method	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20 % change over 2018/19
Landfill	5,133	4,136	3,213	2,756	2,169	-21.3%
Recycled/composted <i>of which:-</i>	11,065	11,252	10,860	10,926	10,949	0.2%
Household waste	10,075	10,329	9,981	10,007	10,085	0.8%
Non household waste	990	923	879	919	864	-6.0%
Total incineration <i>of which:-</i>	9,259	10,182	10,846	11,205	11,633	3.8%
Incineration with EfW	9,067	9,958	10,632	11,031	11,448	3.8%
Incineration without EfW ¹	192	224	214	174	185	6.1%
Other	668	748	706	699	816	16.8%
Total local authority waste managed	26,124	26,319	25,626	25,586	25,568	-0.1%
Recycled/composted waste as percentage of total	42.4%	42.8%	42.4%	42.7%	42.8%	0.1 percentage points

Notes

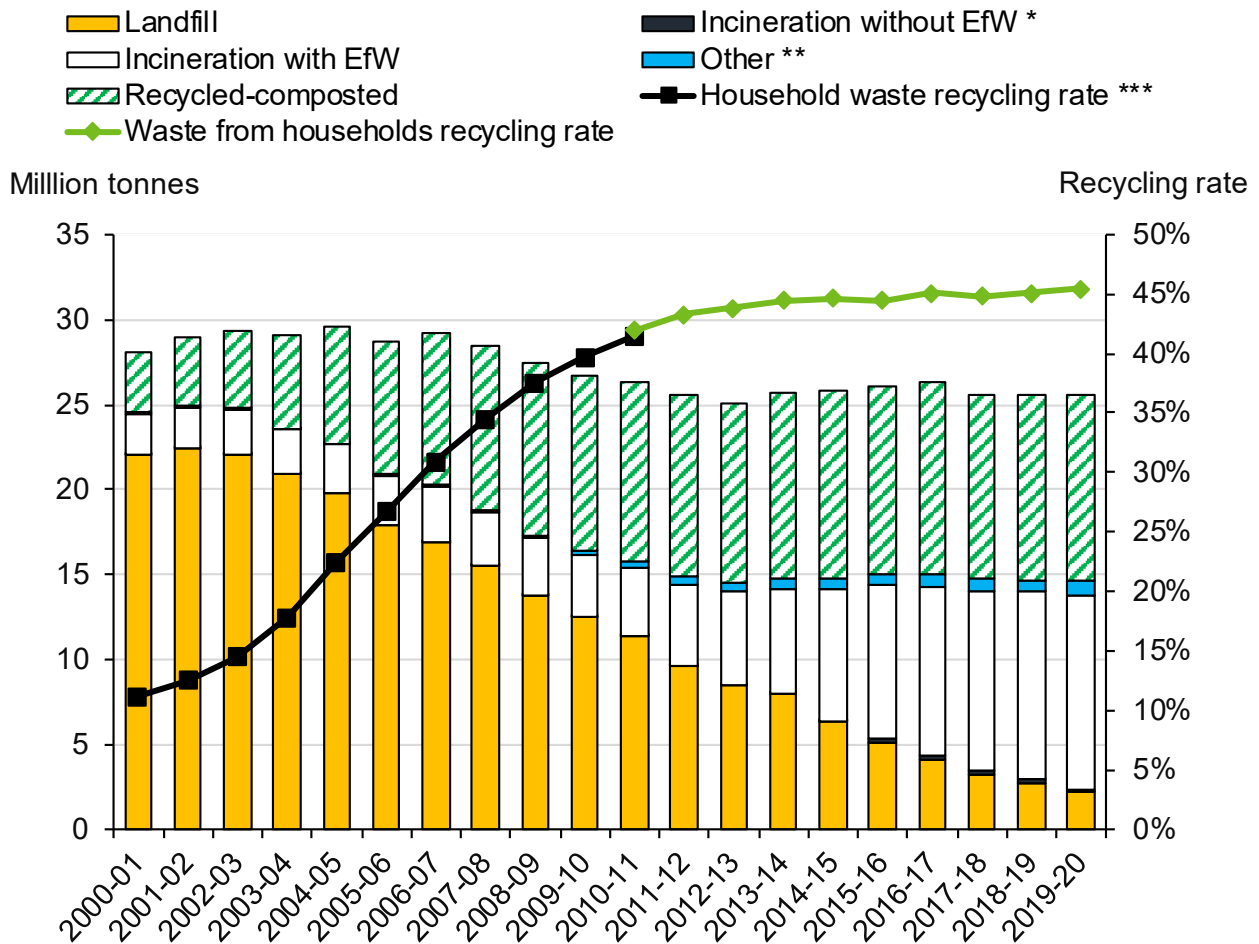
Incineration with energy recovery/without energy recovery includes incineration bottom ash (IBA) and metals from IBA.

Recycling figures in this table do not include metals recovered from IBA.

Numbers may not add to exact totals. This is due to rounding.

¹ Incineration with energy recovery/without energy recovery includes incineration bottom ash (IBA) and metals from IBA.

Figure 7: Management of all local authority collected waste and recycling rates, England, 2000/01 – 2019/20



Notes

* **Incineration with energy recovery / without energy recovery** includes incinerator bottom ash (IBA) and metals from IBA. This is consistent with the existing definition for household waste recycling so is not impacted by the change in ‘waste from households’ recycling definition.

** **Other** includes waste treated/disposed of through other unspecified methods as well as process and moisture loss.

*** **The Household waste recycling rate** is based on a broader measure of waste and is not directly comparable to the ‘waste from households’ recycling rate. For further information on definitions, refer to the glossary.

IBA metals are included within the ‘waste from households’ recycling rate shown on this chart from April 2015/16 onwards but is not included in household waste recycling.

4 England and the Regions Local Authority Collected Waste Destinations (Table 3 and Figure 8)

- There are regional differences in the management of local authority collected waste, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 8.

Table 3: Management of all local authority collected waste, England by region, 2019/20 (thousand tonnes)

Region	Landfill		Incineration*		Recycled/Composted**		Other***		Total
	Thousand tonnes	% of total	Thousand tonnes	% of total	Thousand tonnes	% of total	Thousand tonnes	% of total	Thousand tonnes
East Midlands	347	14.9	913	39.2	1,023	44.0	43	1.9	2,327
Eastern	422	14.6	869	30.1	1,372	47.6	222	7.7	2,886
London	99	2.7	2,295	63.3	1,088	30.0	146	4.0	3,627
North East	72	5.6	729	56.9	464	36.2	16	1.2	1,282
North West	326	9.2	1,481	41.7	1,626	45.8	119	3.4	3,553
South East	256	6.3	1,806	44.3	1,937	47.5	80	2.0	4,080
South West	365	14.0	886	34.1	1,281	49.3	66	2.5	2,598
West Midlands	177	6.4	1,455	52.7	1,087	39.4	42	1.5	2,760
Yorkshire and the Humber	105	4.3	1,198	48.8	1,070	43.6	83	3.4	2,456
England	2,169	8.5	11,633	45.5	10,949	42.8	816	3.2	25,568

Notes

* **Incineration includes incineration with energy recovery / without energy recovery.** This includes incinerator bottom ash (IBA) and metals from IBA.

** **Recycled/Composted** refers to the proportion of all local authority collected waste sent for recycling/composting.

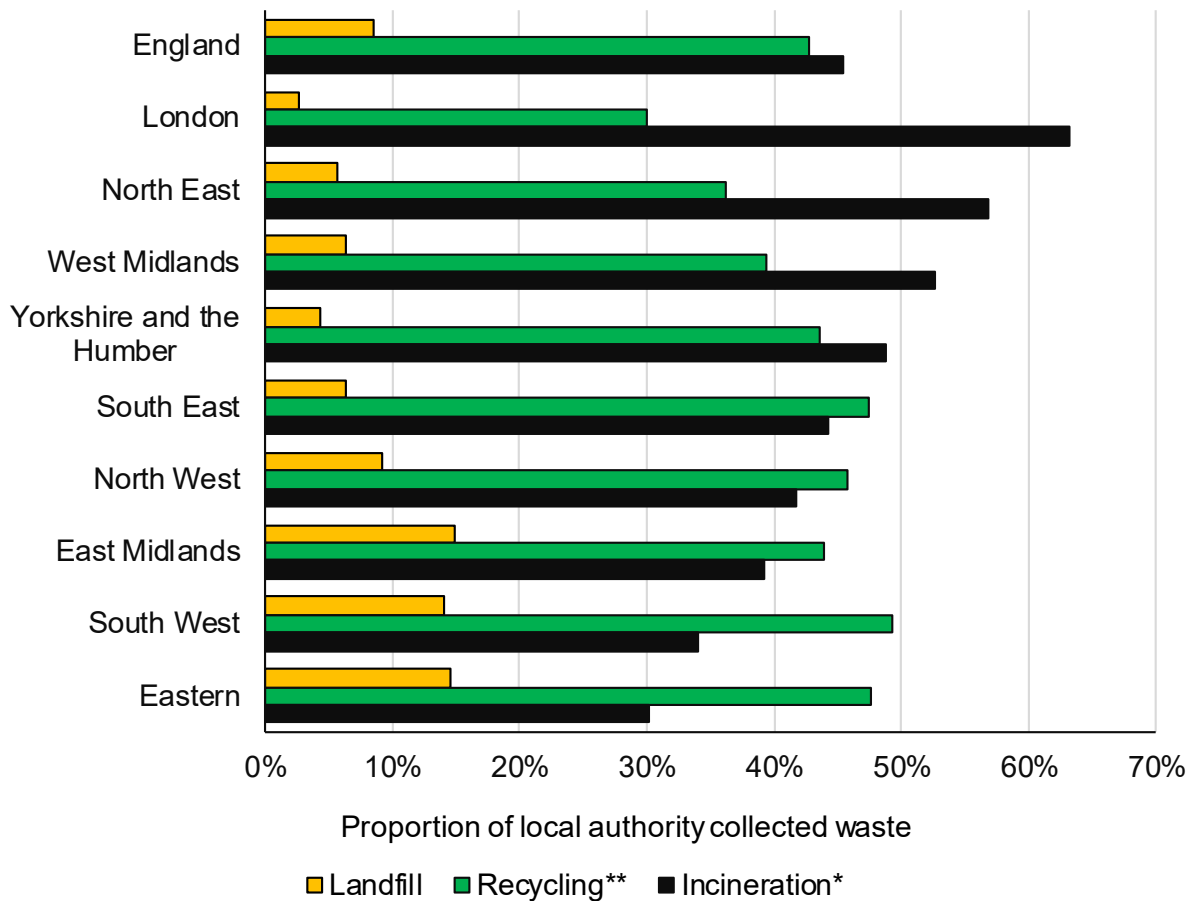
*** **Other** includes waste treated/disposed of through other unspecified methods as well as process and moisture loss.

Numbers may not add to exact totals. This is due to rounding.

- The South East managed the largest tonnage of local authority collected waste in 2019/20 at 4.1 million tonnes. This was 16 per cent of all local authority collected waste in England. The North East managed the smallest tonnage in 2019/20 at 1.3 million tonnes, or 5.0 per cent of the total for England.
- The East Midlands sent the largest proportion of their total local authority collected waste to landfill at 14.9 per cent (0.3 million tonnes). London sent the smallest proportion at 2.7 per cent. At a national level, 8.5 per cent of all local authority collected waste in England was sent to landfill in 2019/20. This was 2.2 million tonnes.
- London sent the largest proportion of their total local authority collected waste to incineration in 2019/20 at 63.3 per cent (2.3 million tonnes). Eastern region sent the smallest proportion at 30.1 per cent. Overall, 45.5 per cent of all local authority collected waste in England was sent to incineration in 2019/20. This was 11.6 million tonnes.

- In England, 10.9 million tonnes (42.8 per cent) of local authority collected waste was sent for recycling in 2019/20. The region that sent the largest proportion of local authority collected waste to recycling was the South West, which sent 1.3 million tonnes (49.3 per cent). The region that sent the smallest proportion of waste to recycling was London, which sent 1.1 million tonnes (30.0 per cent).

Figure 8: Management of all local authority collected waste, England by region, 2019/20 (proportions of total local authority collected waste)



Notes

* **Incineration includes incineration with energy recover/without energy recovery**. This includes incinerator bottom ash (IBA) and metals from IBA.

** **Recycling** refers to the proportion of all local authority collected waste sent for recycling, composting, anaerobic digestion or reuse.

5 Household Waste Recycling

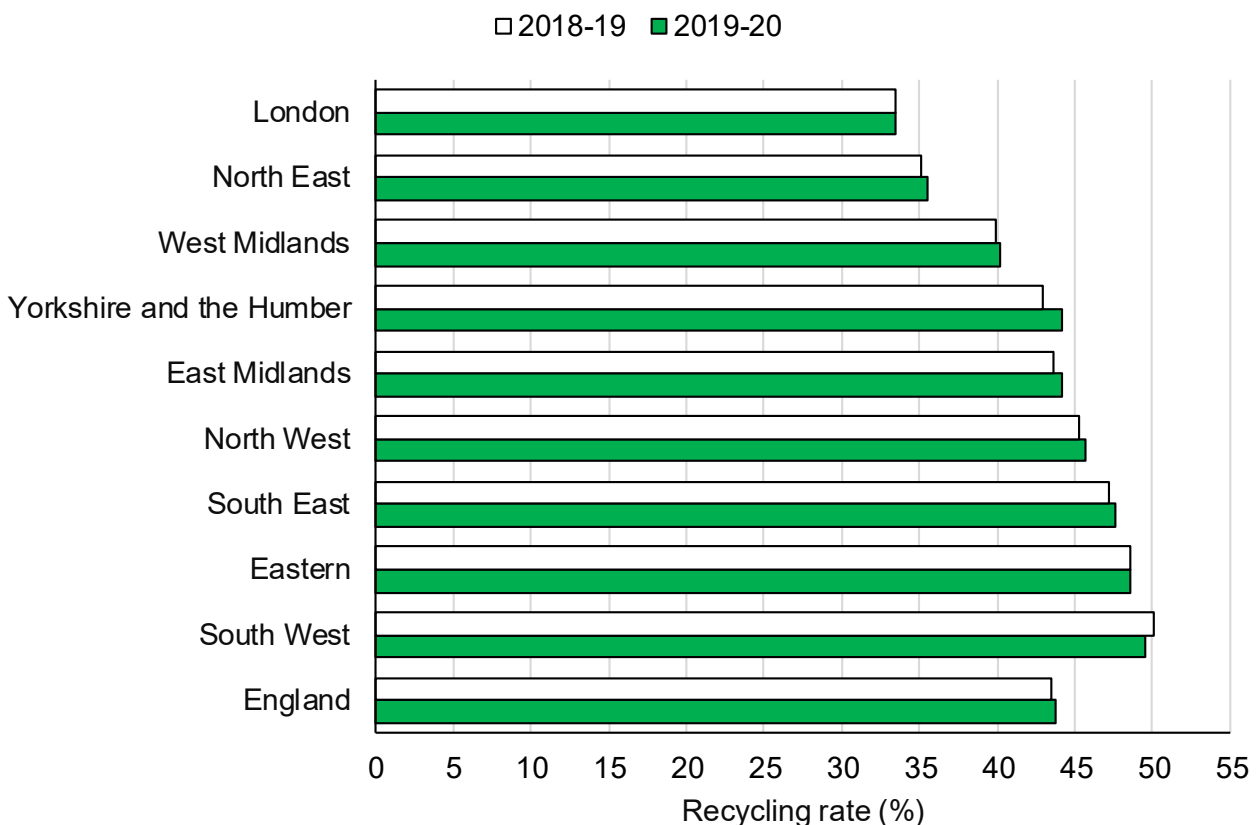
5.1 Household Waste recycling rates for England and the Regions (Figure 9)

The 'household waste' (ex-NI 192) measure is a broader definition of waste than the 'waste from households' measure. It includes street bins, street sweepings, gully-emptying, parks and grounds waste, soil, and compost-like output, as well as separately collected healthcare waste and asbestos. It does not include IBA metals.

At a regional level, there is considerable variation across authorities, influenced by how heavily populated an area is, the kind of housing present, and the level of other organic or garden waste collected. As an example, in built-up areas with a higher proportion of flats, residents may find it difficult or be unwilling to store waste for recycling; and will not be producing garden waste for collection. This will reduce recycling rates for these authorities. Similarly, authorities with higher recycling rates are likely to be advantaged by good householder response to recycling schemes and a higher tonnage of organic or garden waste being collected.

Regional differences are illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9: 'Household waste' recycling rates, England and regions, 2018/19 and 2019/20



- London had the lowest 'household waste' recycling rate in 2019/20 at 33.5 per cent. The region with the highest 'household waste' recycling rate in 2018/19 was the South West at 49.5 per cent.

- The region with the largest increase in their 'household waste' recycling rate was Yorkshire and the Humber, with an increase of 1.3 percentage points. All other regions had modest increases ranging from 0.1 percentage point to 0.6 percentage points, except for the South West which had a decrease of 0.6 percentage points.

5.2 Household Waste Recycling Rates for Individual Local Authorities (Table 4)

- At an individual local authority level, 'household waste' recycling rates ranged from 18.8 per cent to 64.1 per cent. The overall average figure for England was 43.8 per cent, a 0.5 percentage point increase from 2018/19.
- 'Household waste' recycling is often similar in adjacent authorities, though there is a wide range between the highest and lowest recycling rates in all regions of England and even within a region. Figure 10 shows the geographic distribution of 'household waste' recycling rates in 2019/20.
- Table 4 shows the authorities with the highest and lowest recycling rates in each region as well as the proportion of their total recycling that consists of organic waste. Generally, an authority in which a smaller proportion of their total recycling is accounted for by organic waste will have a lower recycling rate, though this is not always the case (for example, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and County Durham in the North East).

Table 4: Local authorities with the highest and lowest household recycling rates in each region in 2019/20

Region	Position	Authority	Recycling Rate	Percent of Total Recycling that is Organic
East Midlands	Lowest	Bassetlaw District Council	25.0%	36.5%
East Midlands	Highest	Derbyshire Dales District Council	61.9%	56.7%
Eastern	Lowest	Great Yarmouth Borough Council	30.0%	31.1%
Eastern	Highest	Three Rivers District Council	64.1%	52.2%
London	Lowest	Newham LB	20.3%	15.4%
London	Highest	Bexley LB	54.2%	40.6%
North East	Lowest	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	26.5%	34.8%
North East	Highest	County Durham	41.2%	29.8%
North West	Lowest	Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	18.8%	43.8%
North West	Highest	Stockport MBC	58.5%	60.6%
South East	Lowest	Slough Borough Council	24.0%	42.9%
South East	Highest	South Oxfordshire District Council	64.0%	55.9%
South West	Lowest	Exeter City Council	26.1%	35.8%
South West	Highest	North Somerset Council	60.6%	44.6%
West Midlands	Lowest	Birmingham City Council	23.6%	34.2%
West Midlands	Highest	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	60.5%	63.2%
Yorkshire and Humber	Lowest	Kirklees MBC	26.7%	40.1%
Yorkshire and Humber	Highest	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	63.3%	52.3%

- Across the different regions, the range (or difference) in recycling rate between the highest performing local authority and the lowest performing local authority varied between 15 and 40 percentage points.
- The regions with the widest ranges were the North West and South East (both 40 percentage points), the East Midlands, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber (each 37 percentage points),
- The region with the smallest range was the North East, with a range of only 15 percentage points. In the North East, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had the lowest recycling rate in 2019/20 (26.5 per cent), and County Durham had the highest recycling rate (41.2 per cent). Notably, County Durham had a lower proportion of organics waste (30 per cent) contributing to its recycling than Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council where organic waste formed 35 per cent of total recycling.
- Overall in England a total of eleven authorities had 'household waste' recycling rates greater than 60 per cent. Eighty-four authorities had recycling rates greater than 50 per cent.
- Three Rivers District Council had the highest 'household waste' recycling rate in England in 2019/20 at 64.1 per cent. Organic waste made up 52 per cent of their total household recycling tonnage. South Oxfordshire District Council, had the second highest recycling rate at 64.0 per cent. The proportion of household recycling that was organic in South Oxfordshire District Council was 56 per cent. East Riding of Yorkshire Council had the third highest recycling rate in England at 63.3 per cent with 52.3 per cent of their recycling tonnage being organic.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council has been in the top three authorities with the highest 'household waste' recycling rates in England since 2015/16. South Oxfordshire District Council has been in the top three for the last six years. This is the first year Three rivers District Council has had the highest recycling rate, having only been in the top three for the first time in 2018/19.
- Over the last 5 years, South Oxfordshire District Council has had an average 'household waste' recycling rate of 64 per cent; East Riding of Yorkshire Council has had an average recycling rate of 65 per cent; and Three Rivers District Council has had an average recycling rate of 62 per cent.
- Three authorities have similar or higher five-year average recycling rates to Three Rivers District Council. These are Rochford District Council (63 per cent), Vale of White Horse District Council (63 per cent), and Surrey Heath Borough Council (62 per cent).
- In 2019/20, Chelmsford Borough Council had the highest proportion of organic/green waste comprising 71 per cent of their total recycled 'household waste'. Their overall 'household waste' recycling rate was 46.0 per cent.

- Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council had the lowest 'household waste' recycling rate in England in 2019/20 at 18.8 per cent, with 44 per cent of the authority's recycled 'household waste' being organic/green waste. The second lowest 'household waste' recycling rate was Newham LB (20.3 per cent; 15 per cent organic), and the third lowest was Westminster City Council (20.4 per cent; 1 per cent organic).

5.3 Household Waste Recycling Rates Local authority performance by region (Table 5)

Table 5: Recycling rates - overall number and percentage of increases and decreases of authorities in each region in 2019/20.

Region	Total number of authorities in region	Number of authorities with an increase in their recycling rate		Number of authorities with a decrease in their recycling rate	
		Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
East Midlands	44	31	70%	13	30%
Eastern	48	33	69%	15	31%
London	37	21	57%	16	43%
North East	12	10	83%	2	17%
North West	43	27	63%	16	37%
South East	73	46	63%	27	37%
South West	29	15	52%	14	48%
West Midlands	33	17	52%	16	48%
Yorkshire and the Humber	22	17	77%	5	23%
England Total	341	217	64%	124	36%

Table 5 shows the number and proportion of authorities in each region showing an overall increase or decrease in their recycling rate for 2019/20 compared to 2018/19.

- In total 217 (64 per cent) of the 341 local authorities in England showed an increase in their recycling rate in 2019/20. 124 authorities or (36 per cent) showed a decrease.
- Both the South West and the West Midlands had a fairly even split between authorities with an increase (52 per cent) and those with a decrease (48 per cent).
- The North East was the region with the highest proportion of its authorities showing an increase at 83 per cent, followed by Yorkshire and the Humber (77 per cent), East Midlands (70 per cent) and Eastern region (69 per cent).
- The North East was the region with the lowest proportion of its authorities showing a decrease at 17 per cent, followed by Yorkshire and the Humber (23 per cent), East Midlands (30 per cent) and Eastern region (31 per cent).

Tables 6 and 7 show detail on the number of increases and decreases in the recycling rates seen across each region.

As observed earlier in this publication recycling rates are subject to significant variation each year as a result of changes in the tonnage of organics collected and this is in turn heavily influenced by climatic conditions. This should be noted particularly when considering changes of between plus and minus 1 percentage point change, where a change to the weight of organics within recycling tonnages may obscure other effects such as a change of service, or contractor.

Table 6: Recycling rates- Number of local authorities in each region with an increase in 2019/20 shown by percentage point range

Region	Total number of authorities in region	Number of authorities with a percentage point increase in their recycling rate of			Percent of authorities with an increase in their recycling rate
		0 to 1	1 to 5	over 5	
East Midlands	44	11	20	0	70%
Eastern	48	18	14	1	69%
London	37	11	10	0	57%
North East	12	5	5	0	83%
North West	43	12	15	0	63%
South East	73	23	22	1	63%
South West	29	7	7	1	52%
West Midlands	33	11	6	0	52%
Yorkshire and the Humber	22	5	11	1	77%
Total	341	103	110	4	64%

- Table 6 shows that in England in 2019/20 4 authorities (1 per cent of the total) had increases of over 5 percentage points in their recycling rate, 110 (32 per cent) increased by between 1 and 5 percentage points and that 103 (30 per cent) authorities had an increase in their recycling rate of less than 1 percentage point.
- Local authorities with increases in their recycling rate of over 5 percentage points were the Council of the Isles of Scilly (South West region) which had an 11.2 point increase to give a recycling rate of 38.5%. Wokingham Council (South East) increased by 9.8 percentage points to 50.3%. Tendering District council (Eastern) increased by 7.8 percentage points to 35.1% and Calderdale MBC (Yorkshire and the Humber) increased 6.2 percentage points to 55.8%.
- The South East had the most authorities with an increase of between 1 and 5 percentage points (22 authorities or 30 per cent), followed by East Midlands with 20 authorities (45 per cent), and the North West with 15 authorities (35 per cent).

Table 7: Recycling rates - Number of local authorities in each region with a decrease in 2019/20 shown by percentage point range

Region	Total number of authorities in region	Number of authorities with a percentage point decrease in their recycling rate of			Percent of authorities with a decrease in their recycling rate
		0 to 1	1 to 5	over 5	
East Midlands	44	7	6	0	30%
Eastern	48	7	8	0	31%
London	37	8	7	1	43%
North East	12	0	2	0	17%
North West	43	10	6	0	37%
South East	73	13	14	0	37%
South West	29	7	7	0	48%
West Midlands	33	10	5	1	48%
Yorkshire and the Humber	22	3	2	0	23%
Total	341	65	57	2	36%

- Table 7 shows that in England in 2019/20 2 authorities (1 per cent of the total) had a decrease of over 5 percentage points in their recycling rate, 57 (17 per cent) decreased by between 1 and 5 percentage points and 65 (19 per cent) authorities had a decrease in their recycling rate of less than 1 percentage point.
- The two local authorities with decreases in their recycling rate of over 5 percentage points were Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council with a decrease of 5.4 percentage points to 38.0% and Camden LB (London) with a decrease of 5.2 percentage points to give a recycling rate of 25.9%.
- At 14 authorities the South East had the highest number (19 per cent of authorities in that region) with a decrease of between 1 and 5 percentage points in their recycling rates.
- Eastern region had 8 authorities (17 per cent of authorities in that region) with a decrease of between 1 and 5 percentage points, South West region 7 authorities (24 per cent) and London 7 authorities (19 per cent).

Figure 10: Map of 'household waste' recycling rates for individual local authorities, England, 2019/20

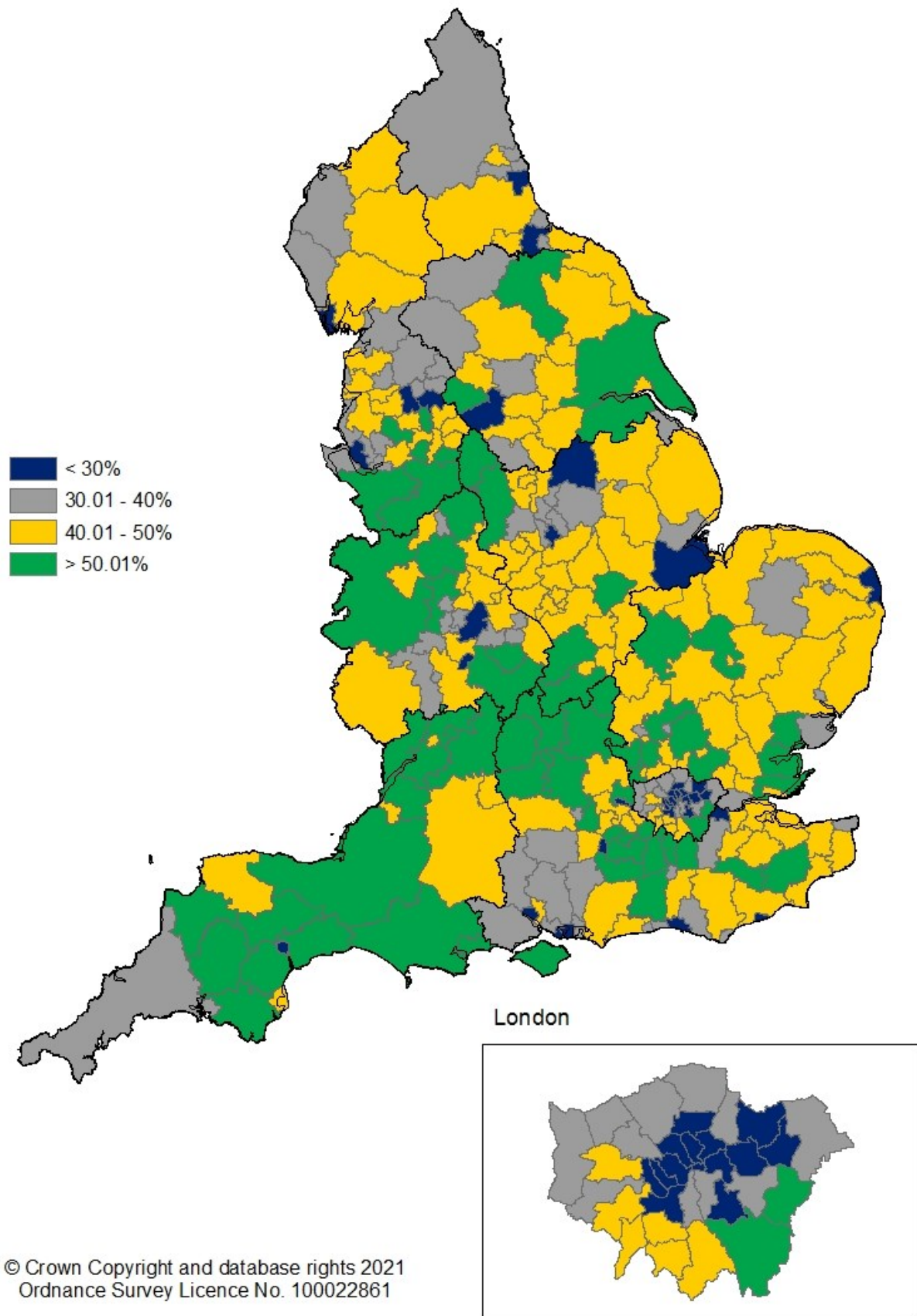
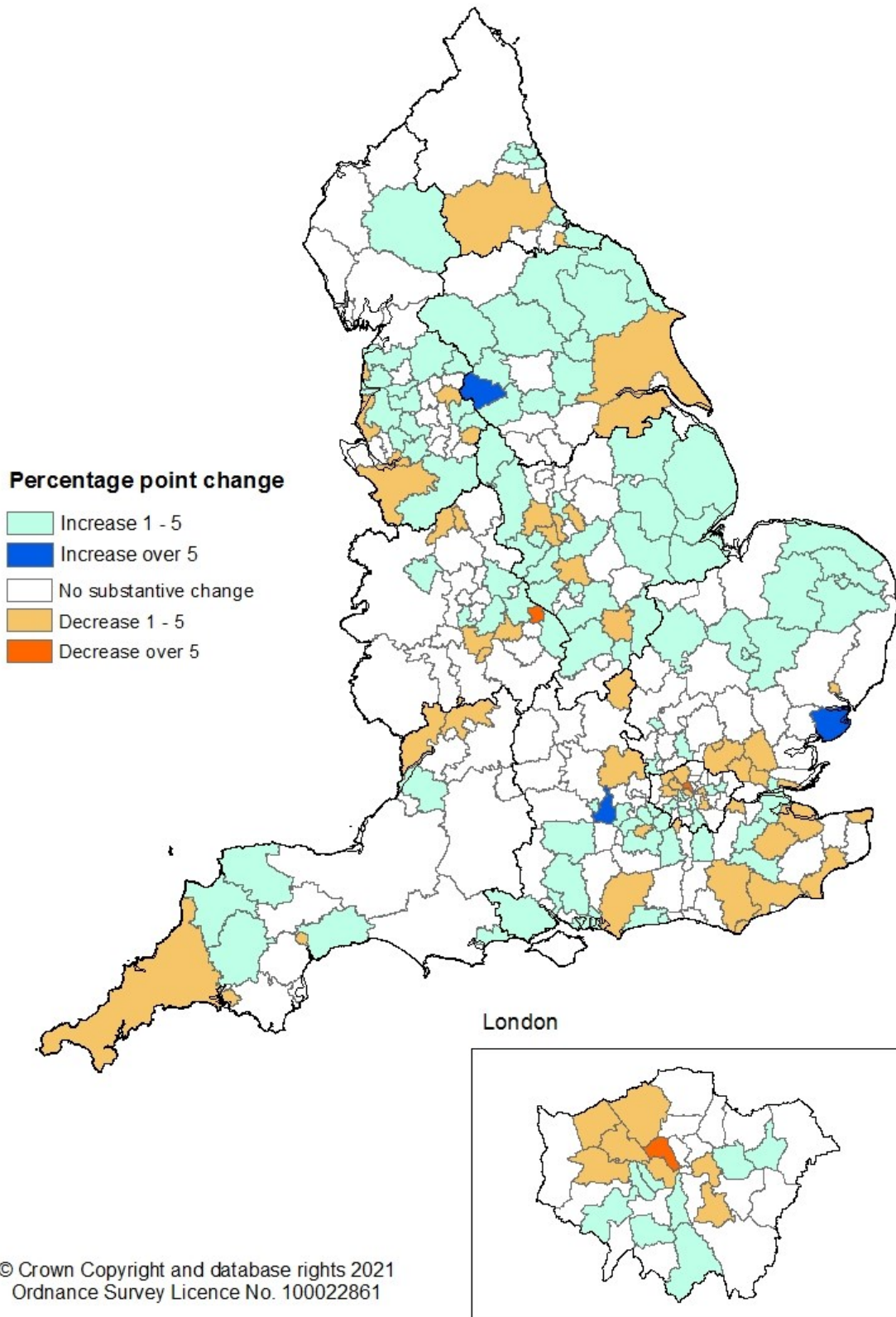


Figure 11: Map of change in 'household waste' recycling rates for individual local authorities, England, 2018/19 compared to 2019/20



Notes

White areas in this map indicate a local authority where the increase or decrease in the recycling rate was less than 1.0 percentage point.

6 Data and Methodology

Including information on data uses, feedback, revisions policy, methodology, glossary of terms and measures, and references. There is an accompanying [methodology document](#) for this release.

6.1 Covid-19 – The impact of the epidemic on these statistics.

The latest data shown in this publication covers the 12 months from April 2019 to March 2020. Only the last week of the 2019/20 reporting period coincided with the national lockdown commencing on 23rd March 2020. Therefore, we would not expect to see a noticeable impact of Covid-19 in the 2019/20 local authority waste statistics.

At the local authority level there are likely to be some impacts in data, mostly due to closure of HWRC's at the start of lockdown, and lower tonnages of local authority collected commercial waste. This may have a small impact on overall waste and recycling tonnages in the period January to March 2020.

Covid lockdown and the demands on local authority services due to staff absence or redeployment had a major impact on the ability of some authorities to report their waste data. Whilst there were some difficulties reported by local authorities e.g. obtaining data from smaller businesses e.g. such as charity shops (who provide reuse outlets for clothes etc) many local authorities reported that the quality of the data reported for this period was unaffected by the situation.

The biggest impact on the statistics presented here was as a result of staff resource shortages with many authorities submitting data much later than usual and this had the impact of pushing back publication of the National Statistics release by 2 to 3 months.

6.2 Data Uses

Data on waste management is used to monitor policy effectiveness and to support policy development in the context of the recycling target set out in the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC). The underlying data held in WasteDataFlow is also used extensively by local and central government, the waste industry, and the public. Data is reported by all local authorities, often from management information supplied by their waste management contractor.

Factors affecting household waste recycling range from individual household behaviours, the advice and collection services provided by local authorities, the cost of waste treatment and disposal, and to some extent, wider issues such as the state of the economy. Some quarterly waste data shows a clear seasonal fluctuation. For example, the generation of garden waste is highly seasonal, increasing sharply and pushing up recycling rates in the spring and summer months. For this reason, comparisons should be made with the same quarter in previous years or using full 12-month periods.

About 87 per cent of all waste managed by local authorities is 'waste from households' with the remainder coming from street cleaning, parks and grounds, business and construction. Only a small proportion of the total waste from businesses and construction are covered in these statistics, with most being managed privately.

6.3 Feedback

We welcome feedback on the data from all users, including how and why the data is used. This helps us to understand the value of the statistics to external users. Please take a minute to complete this [short survey](#) (this opens in google forms). Alternatively you can email the Waste Statistics team at WasteStatistics@defra.gov.uk.

6.4 Revisions Policy

Defra will provide information about any significant revisions made to information published in this statistics release and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for a variety of reasons, including backdating to reflect methodological improvements or the finalisation of data from third parties that was unavailable or provisional at the time of publishing. Occasionally, local authorities request revisions after this point where it is generally not possible to take the changes into account without risking the delay of publication. These typically do not have a significant impact on the headline figures, particularly at an England level.

The figures in this statistical release were extracted in January 2021 from data reported by local authorities during 2019 and 2020.

6.5 Methodology

Data from this release comes from a snapshot of the WasteDataFlow database taken in January 2021. [WasteDataFlow](#) is a UK-wide system managed by Defra in collaboration with Devolved Administration partners that is used to record the collection, treatment and disposal of local authority waste. First results using this database were produced for 2004/05 with earlier estimates of waste available from the Municipal Waste Management Surveys.

The tonnage of waste 'sent for reuse, recycling and composting' is that which is accepted by the re-processor. As such, it excludes any recycling rejects that occur during collection, sorting or further treatment. Waste diverted for recycling from the residual (or 'black bag waste') stream by further processing is included in the recycling tonnages.

6.6 Inclusion of Incinerator Bottom Ash Metal (IBA Metal) in Waste from Households Recycling

In December 2017, a change in how metal recovered and recycled after incineration of waste (IBA metal) is treated and reported for the 'waste from households' dataset only was introduced. The tonnage of IBA metal is now included within recycling rather than being reported as 'recovery'. The amount varies depending on the amount of residual waste being incinerated and the metal content of the residual waste.

Inclusion of IBA metal has been facilitated through the new Q100 reporting structure for waste treatment, which all local authorities have been using since April 2015 (see below). This has provided the opportunity for more complete recording of waste treatment, including outputs from incineration. Therefore estimates were produced for 2015, but it was not possible to backdate figures in a consistent manner prior to 2015 due to changes

in the question structure and reporting that were introduced from April 2015 through Q100. The majority of local authorities are reporting more fully, but not all. Whilst reporting and associated quality assurance are developing and being refined, the figures need to be regarded as more indicative until it is fully-established and embedded. As such, the figures need to be taken as indicative estimates and this is why this has only been applied at the England level and not to individual local authorities.

This methodological change for IBA metal has been applied to the 'waste from households' measure only. It has been applied to data from April 2015—it is not possible to apply the change to data before then as the question structure used to report waste treatment was different and, therefore, the reporting of IBA metal was not as consistent or as complete. At an overall England level, this change in methodology raised the recycling rate for 2016 by 0.7 percentage points (equivalent to 143 thousand tonnes). For 2015, the 'waste from households' recycling rate was increased by 0.4 percentage points (equivalent to 97 thousand tonnes). This is a slight underestimate for the impact on 2015 as data for January to March 2015 was collected using the old question structure and, as such, did not fully-capture IBA metal for this quarter; estimated to be around 23 thousand tonnes. Overall, this change in methodology results in 'waste from household' recycling rates being slightly higher than where IBA metal would previously have been reported as 'recovery'.

There are no such methodological changes to the dataset for all local authority waste or 'household waste' recycling. There are no changes to the household (NI 192) household recycling figures that are reported for England, nor at a regional and individual local authority level where existing methodology and definitions have been retained.

6.7 Question Structure for Treatment and Disposal Questions (Q100)

"Question 100" (Q100) was introduced on a voluntary basis from April 2014, and used by all local authorities in England from April 2015. This question replaced a number of treatment questions.

Q100 provides a more flexible structure that has enabled local authorities to report a more complete and transparent representation of the more complex waste treatment practices that occur, which could not be accurately captured under the old question structure. It also provides the opportunity for local authorities to report, in more detail, the further treatment and disposal of certain waste types such as refuse-derived fuel (RSF), which would have previously been a final output. This is highly specific to the local authority and the facilities and practices used for treatment and disposal.

6.8 Data Quality Assurance

All local authorities provide data into WasteDataFlow. Several stages of data validation are carried out by the local authority submitting the data, the WasteDataFlow contractor and Defra, with input from the Environment Agency.

The WasteDataFlow contractors check each return for completeness and data consistency against key standardised validation checks. Data is checked against appropriate threshold values specified, which take into account the expected level of variance. There is an online

validation process that compares the data for the current quarter against the data for the equivalent quarter in the previous year.

Once the data has been validated by the contractor, further validation checks are carried out by Defra, who may also refer some to the Environment Agency on any specific data queries raised, particularly related to the appropriate recording of treatment and facility sites. The Defra checks include trend and outlier analysis on key measures at an aggregate and individual local authority level. Details of the validation process carried out by the contractor are available on the WasteDataFlow website.

The introduction of Q100 provided scope for local authorities to report more fully on the treatment and final destination of waste. This is particularly the case for incineration of waste and subsequent outputs and their final treatment and disposal. Gathering such information can be challenging, especially where waste goes through multiple different sorting and treatment processes at different facilities. In most cases, local authorities are able to supply this information, but in some cases full final destination treatment is not given or is stated as 'unknown'. This may have a small impact on the final figures. Defra will continue to monitor this and work with local authorities to enhance data quality assurance, consistency, and completeness of reporting.

6.9 EU Recycling Target

During 2019/20 an EU recycling target was in place for the UK. Commission Decision 2011/753/EU allowed a choice of four options and calculation methods for the calculation of the target to recycle at least 50% of household waste and similar by 2020. Each Member State could use the calculation method that corresponded to the re-use and recycling option that they have chosen to apply the target to. The UK applied the target to the third option: "the preparation for reuse and the recycling of household waste." This means that the UK used calculation method 3 set out in the Commission Decision, and used national data to report on the recycled amount of household waste. "Household waste" is defined in Article 1(1) of the Decision as "waste generated by households."

The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) [Regulations 2020](#) require Waste Management Plans to include measures to be taken to ensure that the preparing for re-use and the recycling of municipal waste is a minimum of 65% by weight by 2035.

6.10 National Statistics Accreditation

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.

In 2020 these local authority waste & recycling statistics together with those published by the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland underwent a compliance review by the "Office for stats regulation" (OSR), who monitor government statistical quality.

National statistics accreditation for these statistics was maintained at this review. The OSR made a number of [recommendations](#) around the statistics and publications. Since the review Defra has made progress in meeting the recommendations highlighted in the report. These are:-

- Publication of a recycling explainer [document](#), giving background to recycling, the different local authority measures published and how they compare across the UK.
- Improvements have been made to the layout of the waste statistics landing pages.
- User feedback on academic use of these statistics has been sought from Defra Waste & recycling working group.
- Feedback on this Statistical notice and datasets is being gathered by a linked google forms questionnaire (opens a link to google forms).

Work on remaining points made by the OSR will continue during 2021.

7 Glossary of Terms and Measures

‘Waste from Households’

The ‘waste from households’ measure was introduced to statistical publications by Defra in May 2014. It is used to construct a harmonised UK indicator for reporting recycling rates at a UK level on a calendar year basis, providing comparable calculations across each of the four UK countries. This provides a consistent approach with which to report household recycling rates at the UK level under the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC).

‘Waste from households’ is a narrower version of the **‘household waste’** measure that was used previously. The difference is that ‘waste from households’ excludes local authority collected waste types not considered to have come directly from households, such as street bins, street sweepings, parks and grounds waste, and compost-like output (CLO) from Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) plants. As explained above under ‘Methodology’ and ‘Data Notes and Development’, we have introduced a change to the ‘waste from households’ recycling calculation to now include metal recovered after incineration (IBA metal). For further information on the calculations and differences between measures has been published on the gov.uk website and is summarised in the table below.

Recycling (including composting and reuse)	Waste from Households recycling	Household waste recycling
<i>from households and other premises similar to households, CA sites, Bring banks</i>	Y	Y
<i>from street bins</i>	N	Y
<i>from household-related parks and grounds</i>	Community skips only	Y
<i>from soil</i>	N	Y
<i>from rubble and plasterboard</i>	N	N
<i>from compost-like output from MBT plant</i>	N	Y
<i>from incineration bottom ash (IBA)</i>	N	N
<i>From metal recovered and recycled from incinerator bottom ash</i>	Y*	N
<i>other, from residual streams</i>	Y	Y
recycling rejects	N	N

Residual waste	Waste from households residual	Household waste residual
<i>from regular household collection</i>	Y	Y
<i>from civic amenity sites</i>	Y	Y
<i>from bulky waste</i>	Y	Y
<i>from other household waste</i>	Y	Y
<i>from street cleaning/sweeping</i>	N	Y
<i>from gully emptying</i>	N	Y
<i>from separately collected healthcare waste</i>	N	Y
<i>from asbestos waste</i>	N	Y

Notes

* Revised to include IBA metal in 2017 and applied to data from April 2015.

We have continued to report the 'household waste' recycling measure in our annual publication on a financial year basis to maintain continuity with the existing data series and in order to meet the wider needs of users. However it is no longer reported in the quarterly releases on recycling, which will report the 'waste from households' measure only. Full data on 'household waste' is available and can be downloaded on the gov.uk website.

The local authority recycling rate is based on the **NI 192 National Indicator** recycling calculation. The National Indicator calculation has been widely used by local authorities for many years for local strategic planning purposes, discussions with contractors and for benchmarking against other authorities and captures a broader scope of household waste than 'waste from households', e.g. it includes street sweepings and compost like output. This calculation will be made available as the NI 192 report on the WasteDataFlow [portal](#)

and also on gov.uk [website](#). This is reported on a financial year basis to meet the needs of local authorities.

8 Recycling rates across the United Kingdom

As detailed above the 'Waste from households' recycling rate provides a consistent measure across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and allows reporting at UK level. However it should be noted that other National measures for Household recycling or recycling of all local authority collected waste differ across the devolved administrations. A [document](#) detailing these differences can be found here.

Useful links

[Scottish Government Statistics](#)

[Welsh Government Statistics](#)

[Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Statistics](#)

[Eurostat](#)

[WasteDataFlow Portal](#)

A National Statistics publication

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