



environmental  
services  
association

## **ESA PRESS COMMENT**

# ***ESA comments on reports of a rise in contamination of recyclables***

**LONDON, 23 August 2016:** The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice for the UK's resource and waste management industry, has commented on today's media reports of a rise in contamination of recyclables.

ESA's Head of Regulation, Sam Corp said:

*“Contamination of recyclates costs Local Authorities, and therefore the taxpayer, money and wastes valuable resources that could be recycled. Local authorities and waste companies are working with householders to address this issue, but it is important to keep in context that 338,000 tonnes represents less than 3.5% of the amount of household waste collected for recycling.*

*Whilst efforts should and will continue to be made to reduce contamination, we should not forget the progress that has been made to increase recycling in the UK - from near zero in the early 1990s to almost 45% today. Overall, the amount of household waste recycled rose from 9.1 million tonnes in 2010 to 10.0 million tonnes in 2014, while over the same period the amount landfilled or incinerated fell from 13.0 million tonnes to 12.3 million tonnes. The reports in the national press are about the much smaller quantities of material which, although collected for recycling, cannot in practice be recycled because it is contaminated.*

*However, this increase in contamination does still highlight the need for a long-term framework from the government to help drive recycling and reuse, and reduce the levels of contamination that have been shown in these figures.”*

---

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

1. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association for the UK's resource and waste management sector. We work with our members to transform waste and resource management across the country. This work helps enable our members to turn Britain's waste into valuable resources, whilst continually protecting the environment.
2. We work with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. ESA's recent Circular Economy report '*Going for Growth – A practical route to a circular economy*', which outlines how a Circular rather than a linear economy can help manage resources sustainably, can be downloaded [here](#).
3. ESA's Members manage waste on behalf of the whole of society and we are recovering more than ever before. For example, the industry has helped quadruple the UK's household recycling rates over the last 10 years.
4. **The sector at a glance**
  - Total turnover: **£11 billion**
  - Direct Employment: **95,000 people**
  - Municipal waste handled each year: **over 26 million tonnes**
  - Energy generated (from waste combustion and landfill gas) each year: **approximately 6,700 GWh**, 1.5% of the UK's total electricity supply and around 20% of our renewable electricity.
  - Greenhouse **gas emissions down by 70% since 1990**.
  - The **top seven companies account for approximately 40% of turnover**. Many hundreds of SMEs provide either localised or more specialised services

For further details please visit [www.esauk.org](http://www.esauk.org)

### Press Contact

**Toni Waters – Communications and Membership Officer**

ESA Press Office - (0207) 591 3219 (DD - (0207) 591 3206)

Mobile - (07841) 572 834

Email - [t-waters@esauk.org](mailto:t-waters@esauk.org) / [press@esauk.org](mailto:press@esauk.org)