



environmental
services
association

ESA PRESS STATEMENT

UK RECYCLING RATES REMAIN IN THE DOLDRUMS SAYS ESA

LONDON, 22 February 2017: The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the trade body for the resources and waste management industry, today commented on the latest UK waste statistics published by Defra, and welcomed revised estimates of the amounts of commercial and industrial waste arising in England.

ESA's Executive Director, Jacob Hayler, said:

“While the UK’s 2016 recycling rate for waste from households shows an improvement over 2015, partly due to the inclusion of IBA metals, it provides further proof that on current policies, the UK will not reach 50% recycling by 2020, let alone the higher rates provisionally agreed at EU level. As ESA has already pointed out, Defra’s impending resources and waste strategy will need to address the issue of sustainable markets for recyclable materials, as well as the UK’s residual waste capacity gap.”

Turning to the revised estimates of arisings of commercial and industrial waste published today, he continued:

“ESA and its members welcome the revised figures on commercial and industrial (C&I) waste published today in “UK Waste Statistics”. Last year, ESA members raised concerns about the data published by Defra on this waste stream, which in their view significantly underestimated the amount of waste out there.

ESA is pleased that by working with the industry, sharing knowledge, and cross checking against other datasets, this year Defra have been able to come up with a much more transparent and reliable approach to estimating the total amount of C&I waste. The new approach tallies better with industry’s own analysis and other data sets, which gives more

confidence and clarity around the reported figures, and establishes a better platform for understanding future trends and changes.”

“This collaborative work has been particularly important at a time when the UK is looking to develop its own post-Brexit resources and waste strategy and trying to encourage investment in much-needed UK waste infrastructure and services.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK’s resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK’s waste is managed.
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 quintuple the UK’s household recycling rates over the last decade.
4. **The sector at a glance**
 - Total turnover: **£11 billion**
 - Direct Employment: **106,000 people** (*including waste collection, treatment and materials recovery*)
 - Municipal waste handled each year: **27 million tonnes**
 - Energy generated (across landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste) each year: **approximately 11,867 GWh**, which is 3.5% of the UK's electricity
 - **9,083 GWh of that was renewable electricity** (taking out non-biodegradable portion of EfW) which is **11%** of UK’s 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
 - Waste & recycling is the **most highly rated of all council services** by the public (2016 survey)

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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