

PRESS RELEASE

14th November 2022 – for immediate release

Survey results write sector a clean bill of health and safety

A survey of nearly 1,700 people across the recycling and waste management sector has returned encouraging results that suggest the industry's health and safety culture is in good form.

As part of its *Health and Safety Strategy*, the ESA commissioned an independent survey earlier this year to better understand individuals' perception of health and safety culture across the industry.

The online survey, which collected responses over the summer months, comprised nine questions and covered matters including whether people feel safe at work or feel confident that incidents are reported and investigated. It was conducted for the ESA by *Snap Surveys* and received 1634 responses from across a diverse range of public and private sector organisations.

The majority of responses were positive about the industry's approach to health and safety, and 95% reported that they felt able to raise health and safety concerns if they had any, while most (86%) agreed that they felt safe working in the waste industry. There was also strong consensus that safety is improving in the waste industry (88% agreed).

However, the survey did reveal a couple of areas that, while positive, received less unequivocal support, with fewer respondents convinced that mental health is given the consideration that it deserves, while only 74% agreed that welfare facilities were adequate.

ESA Policy Advisor, Stephen Freeland, said: *"The overall results of this survey are very encouraging and perhaps reflect a concerted effort made by many in the industry in recent years to improve health and safety. Particularly, ESA Members have reduced RIDDOR reportable injuries by eighty-five per cent since the launch of our first H&S Strategy in 2004 and, year on year, have achieved an injury rate consistently below that reported by HSE for the waste sector as a whole.*

Looking at a few potential areas of improvement arising from the results, we recognised that mental health support is an area in need of additional attention and, prior to the survey, the ESA had already established a Mental Health Task Group which produced and distributed guidance to operators. The survey results also suggest that more work needs to be done on welfare facilities and ESA will work to promote the good work already produced by the Waste Industry Safety & Health (WISH) Forum in this area.

H&S culture is known to play a key role in reducing injuries and we therefore intend to repeat this survey biennially to help keep track of progress."

The ESA has published the full findings and subsequent recommendations in a short report released today (14th November) available from www.esauk.org

ENDS

Notes to editors:

A. The Environmental Services Association (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK's resource and waste management industry. Our members are directly delivering the UK's transformation to a more circular economy and are leading the sector's efforts to decarbonise recycling and waste management operations.

The ESA works with government, regulators and the public to deliver sustainable and high-performing waste and resource management solutions for the UK. Our strategic priorities are to set high operational standards for the sector; to deliver more recycling and focus on up-stream interventions to eliminate waste; and to decarbonise our sector by 2040. You can find out more about the ESA and our members' work in our Annual report for 2020/21.

B. A copy of the report is appended to the press release for ease of reference. Please do not republish this release. If you would like to guide people to this release, it is available to view at www.esauk.org

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