

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Factsheet



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Waste



Background

Higher levels of recycling, food waste treatment and energy recovery boost the economy of Wales and help protect the environment and natural resources.

Progress has been made with recycling, particularly from households. However, despite this progress, recyclable materials continue to be landfilled, sent to incineration or in the case of food waste, disposed of to sewer.

Key Features

The Act introduced new arrangements in relation to waste segregation and collection. The provisions act at different points in the waste management chain – at the producer of the waste, at the waste collection company and at the different points of treatment and final disposal or recovery.

The Act operates in conjunction with landfill bans to ensure that valuable materials are recycled.

The diversion of materials from disposal, towards high quality recycling or recovery will help with the transition to a more efficient use of resources derived from waste. Increased recycling and recovery of waste will help to decrease pressure on natural resources whilst also contributing towards positive results for both the economy and the environment.

In short, the aims of the provisions are:

- **Segregation by businesses and other waste producers such as the public sector** ensures that clean, uncontaminated recyclable materials are separated before moving onto the next stage in the process. This will command higher prices in the recycling markets, and businesses that separate their wastes may find that they can reduce their costs of waste collection and disposal.
- **Separate collection** ensures that a full separate collection service for segregated recyclable materials is available to those that produce waste. This will help to improve the quality of materials available for recycling and make sure that materials which could have been recycled are not wasted.

- **Energy from Waste bans** ensures that valuable recyclable materials and resources are not burnt. This protects the environment by ensuring that only residual waste streams are disposed of in landfill or incinerated.
- **A ban on the disposal of food waste to sewer from non-domestic premises** ensures that increased amounts of food waste are available for beneficial treatment and use rather than disposal. The waste will be used as a vital source of renewable energy and high quality fertiliser. Other benefits are likely to include the reduction of the risk of blockages, sewer flooding, environmental pollution, odours and rodent infestations.

Benefits

Making improvements to the current methods of waste management through the Act provides greater certainty for investment in recycling, waste collection and treatment infrastructure.

This will result in:

- Saving costs to businesses through avoided landfill tax.
- Increasing business competitiveness by reducing material costs.
- Increasing employment by creating jobs in collection and reprocessing.
- Supporting increased opportunities for the generation of renewable energy from business waste.
- Giving greater security of supply of resources to our manufacturing sector.
- Helping drive green growth and develop a circular economy for Wales through the use by Welsh manufacturing businesses of recyclable materials collected in Wales.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Reducing the ecological footprint of Wales.

Timeline

It is expected that regulations to implement the provisions in the Act will be made after January 2017

More information

The Act became law in March 2016. You can find out more about the Act on our website at: <http://gov.wales/environmentact>

You can also subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin by emailing us at: NRBulletin@wales.gsi.gov.uk