

Simpler Recycling - What is the evidence telling us?

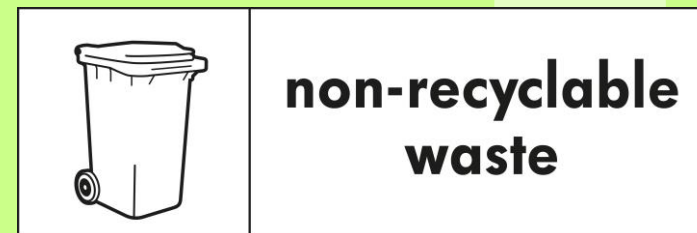
Mike Gardner, Local Authority Technical Consultant

23rd October 2025

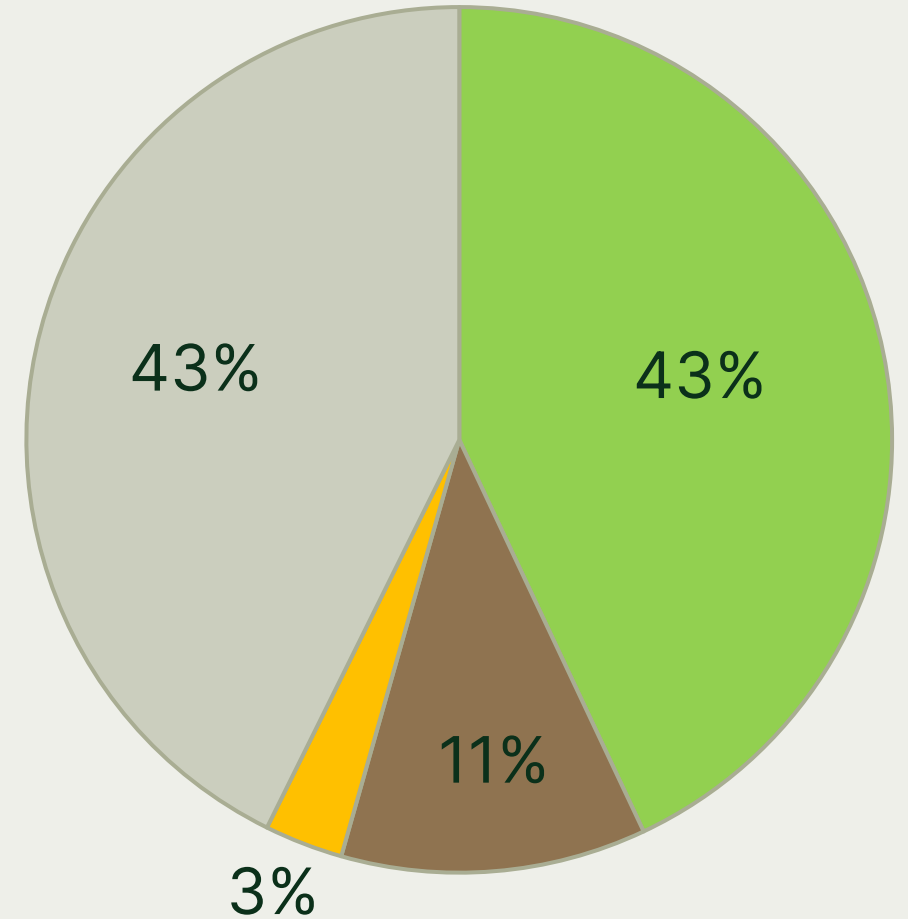
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How prepared are local authorities for Simpler Recycling?



% of English local authorities providing food waste collections in 2024/25



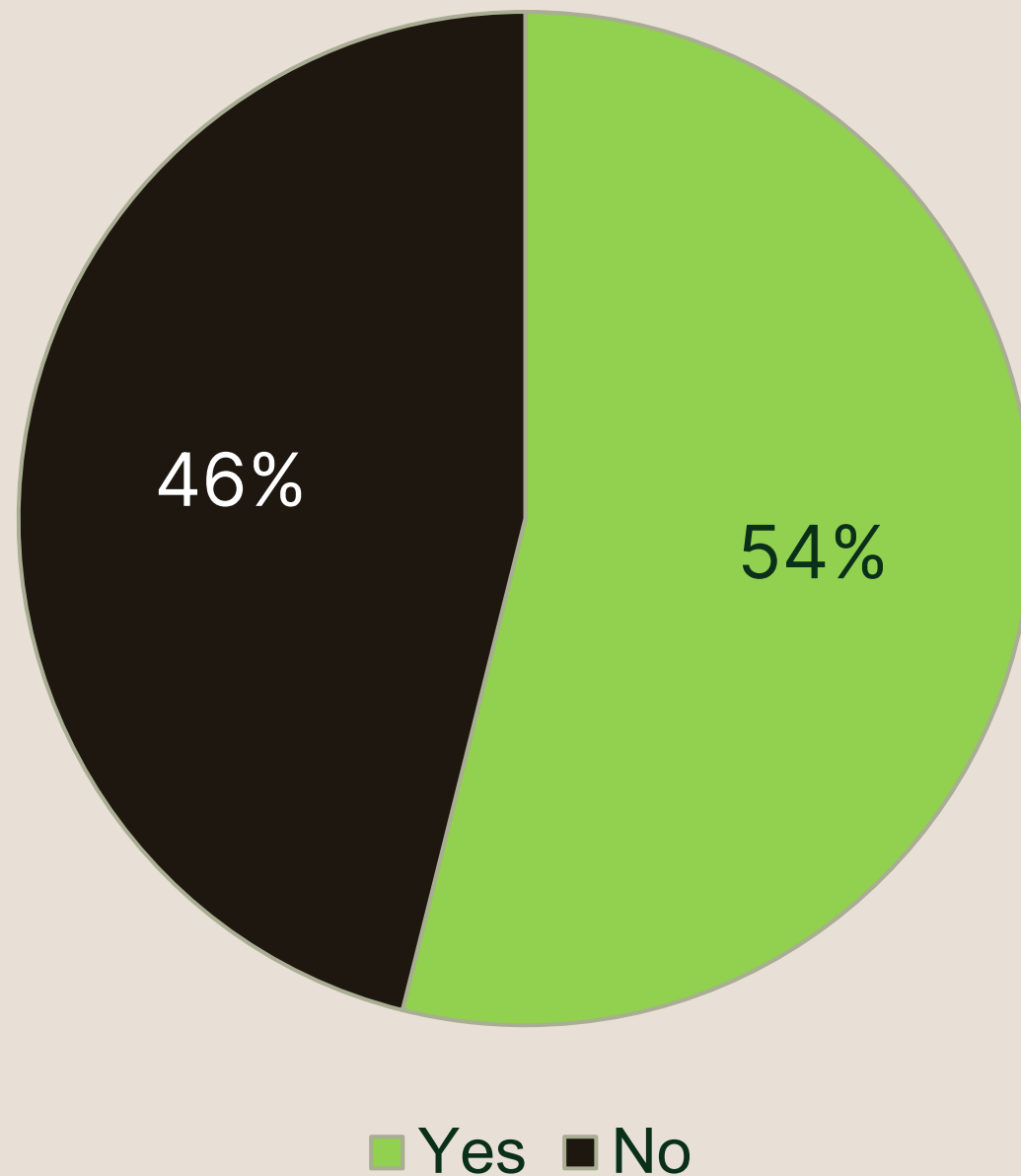
- Separate food waste
- Food mixed in garden
- Both
- None

Is there enough AD capacity?

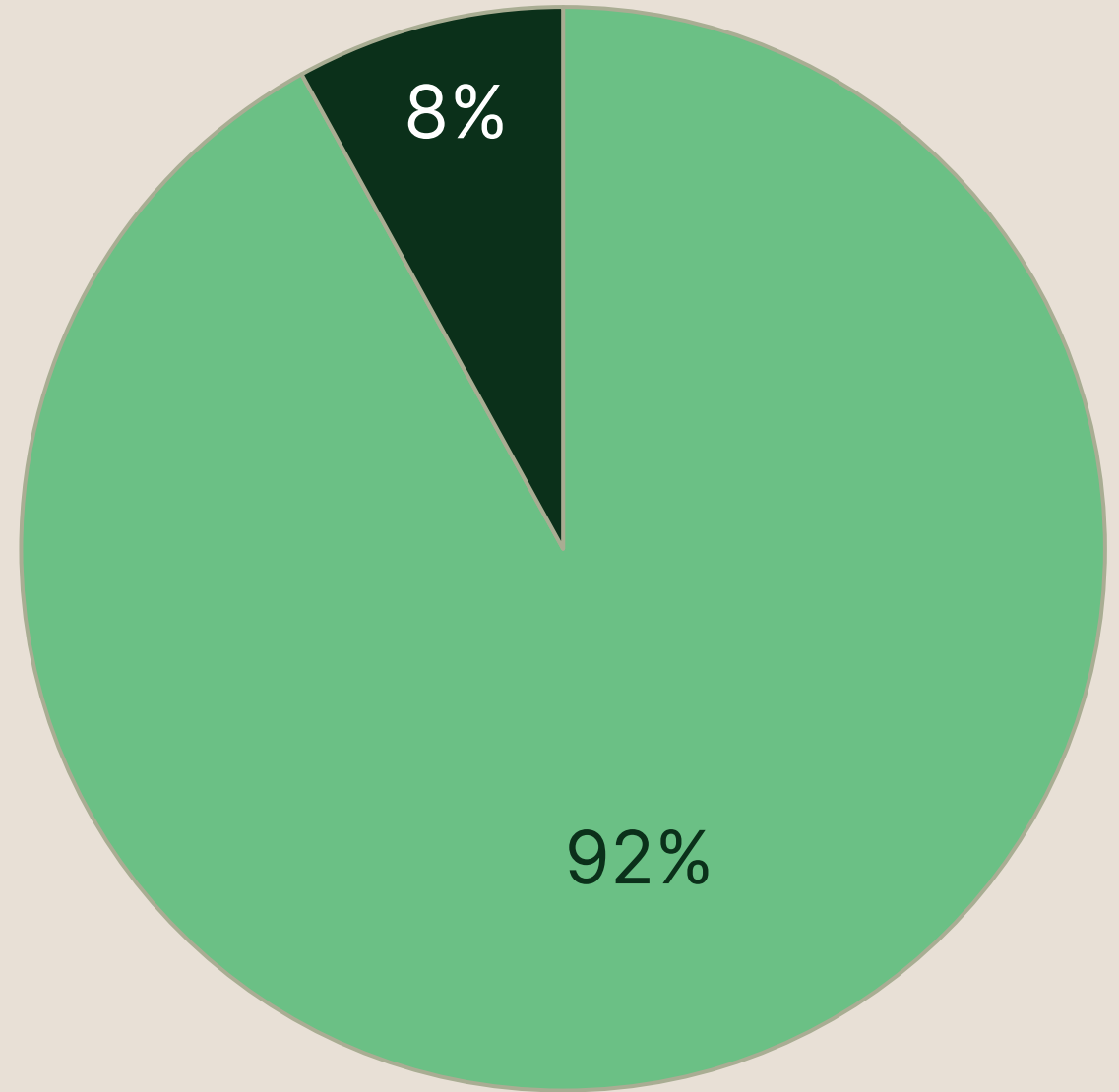
- Following the introduction of Simpler Recycling, WRAP forecasts that separately collected food will increase by 100% to 4.8Mt by 2035*. If IVC facilities cannot provide an extra capacity outlet for separate food waste (e.g. through mixing at front gate), then there is a potential forecast investment opportunity for AD facilities of 1.375Mt/pa from 2035.
- 20 local authorities have 'transitional provisions' to delay the introduction of food waste collections beyond 2030.

*[Recycling Infrastructure Roadmap](#)

**% of English local authorities
currently meeting the 2026
Simpler Recycling requirements
for dry recycling**

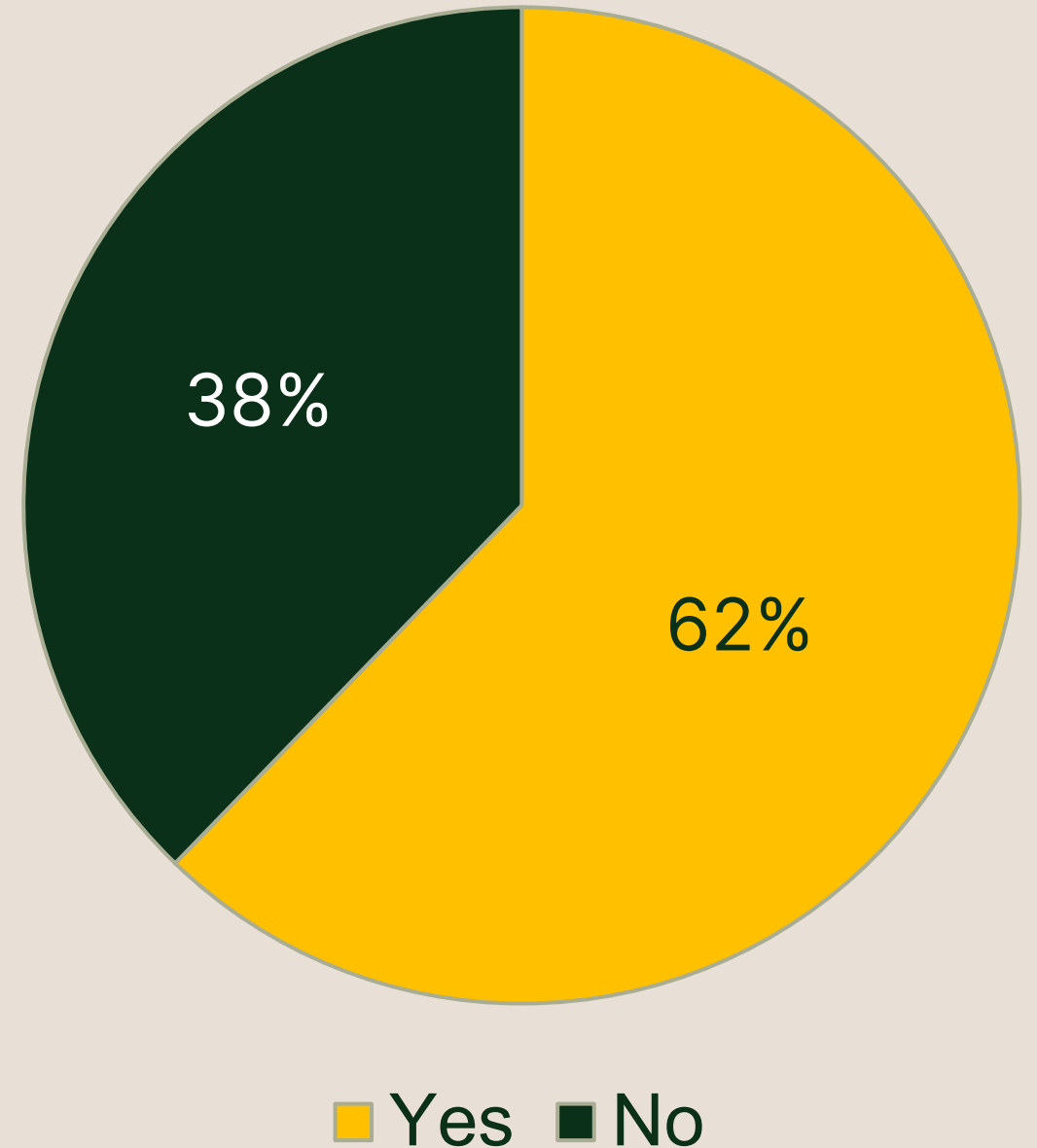


% of local authorities that collected glass at the kerbside in 2024/25

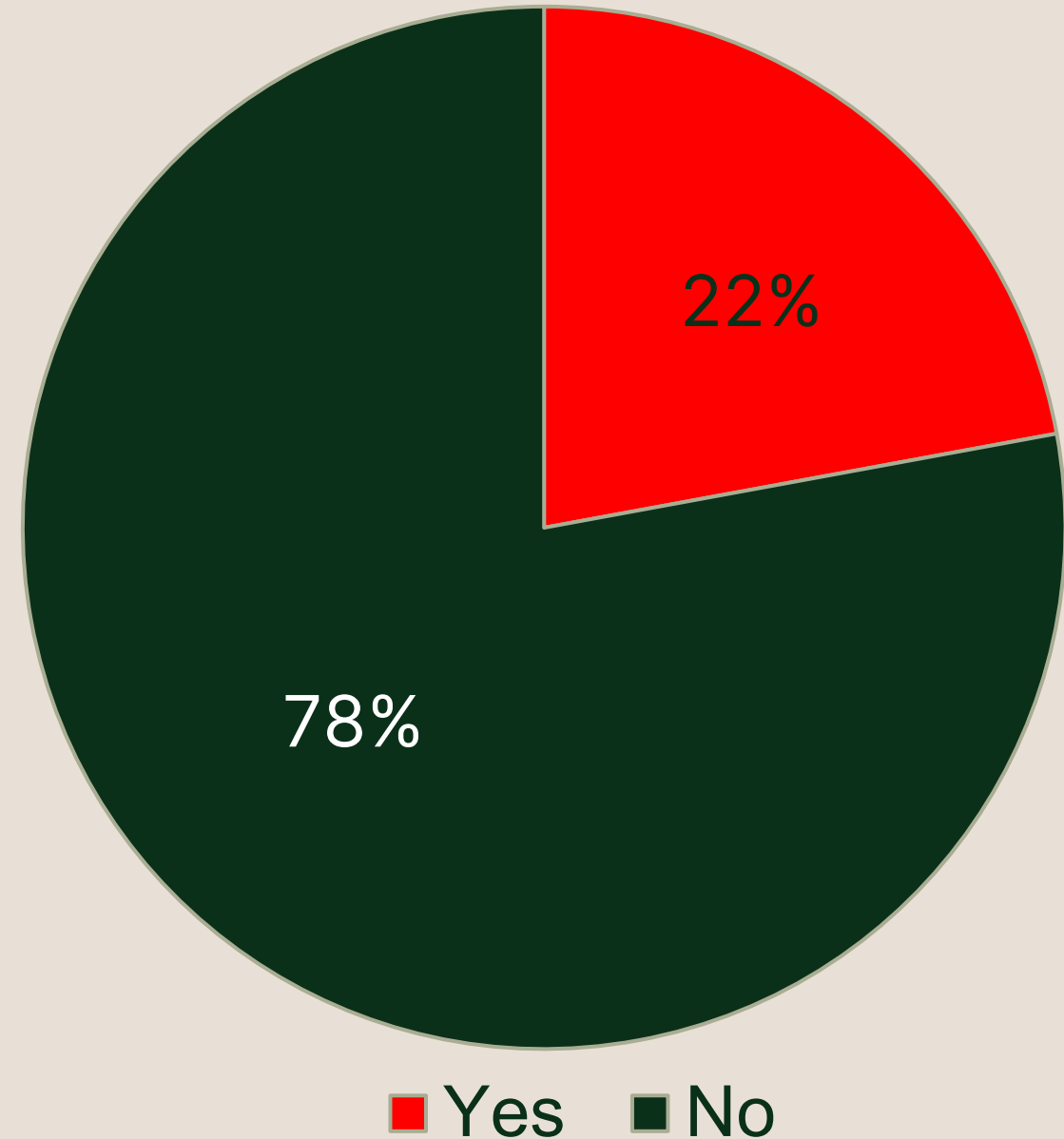


■ Yes ■ No

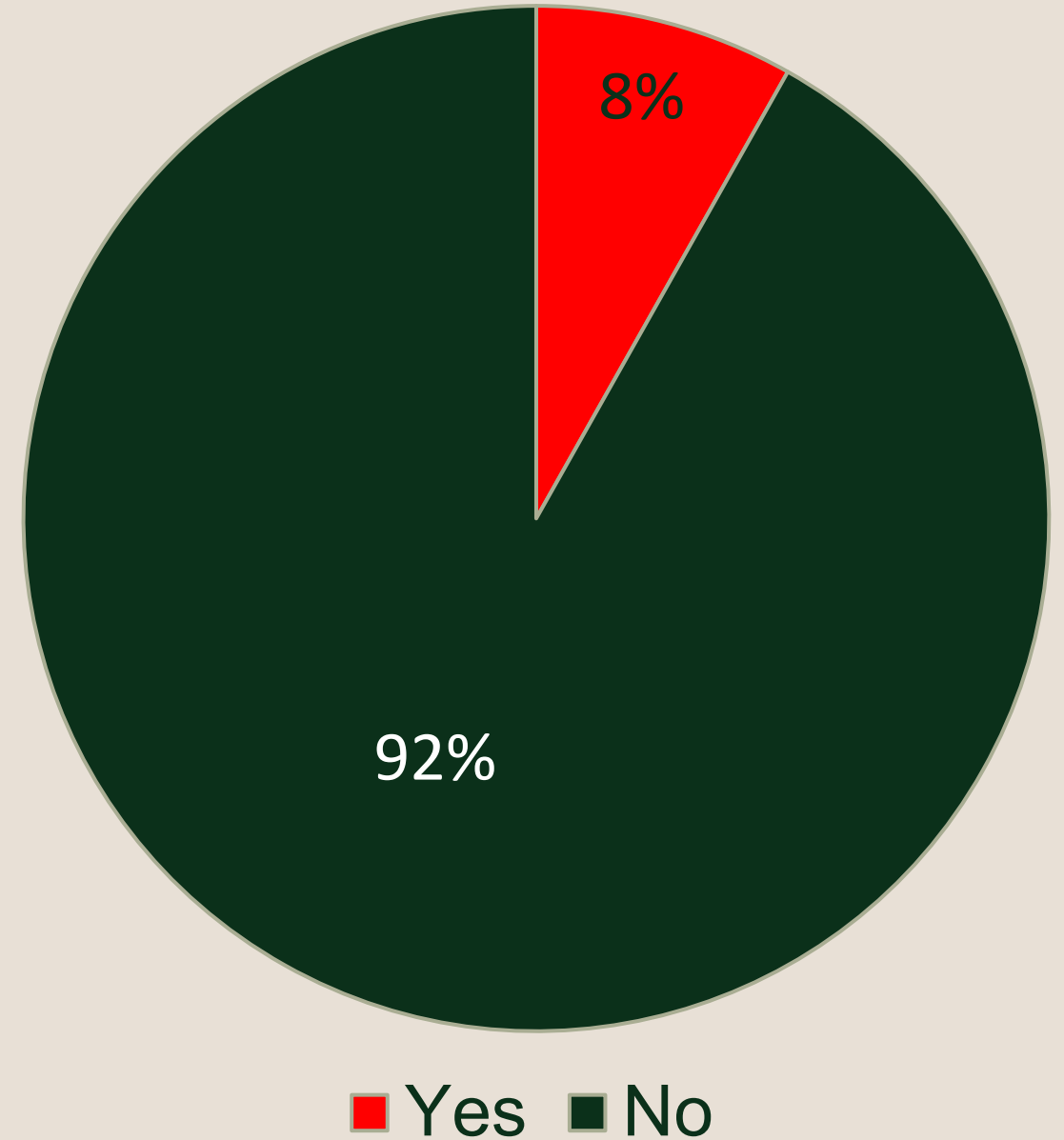
% of local authorities that collected cartons at the kerbside in 2024/25



% of local authorities that collected PTT and tubes at the kerbside in 2024/25



% of local authorities that collected mixed plastic film at the kerbside in 2024/25



How ready are MRFs for Simpler recycling ?

Whilst waste collectors and waste producers have a legal duty to ensure that dry recyclable materials (plastics, metals, glass, paper and card) and food waste are collected separately from non-recyclable waste, **recycling treatment operators** (i.e. MRFs) have no legal duty to accept and sort all core dry recyclable materials.

Insights from WRAP's engagement with MRF operators

Investment & change

- Slow MRF capital expenditure (capex) investment/ activity due to:
 - Uncertainty of future material composition and volumes due to scale of Collection and Packaging Reforms
 - Slow LA decision making on collection methodology changes and associated impacts on MRF contracts - preventing return on investment (ROI) surety for operators
 - Adaption or upgrades to facilities being demand/ contract led
 - Inclusion of plastic films and wrappings from 2027



Insights from WRAP's engagement with MRF operators

Upgrades & closures

- Operators prefer to upgrade facilities once not incrementally
- Works will vary per facility - could take up to 12 months (worst case scenario)
- Potential reduction of national processing capacity of ~20% in next 3 -5yrs
- Upgrades will be challenging for all operators:
 - Supply chain bottlenecks are expected
 - Sole facility operators - rely on others for contingency needs
 - Multi-site operators – need to mitigate impact across all contracts
 - Costs implications - redirection and storage whilst facility is offline

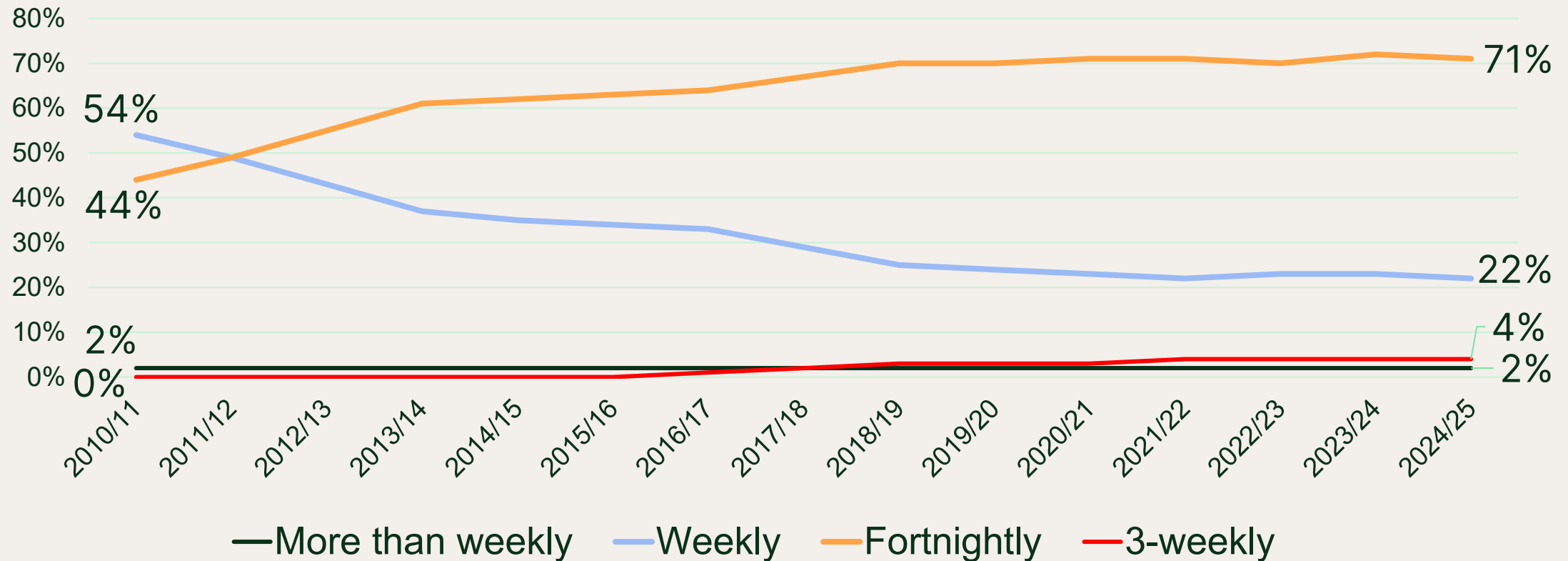


Residual waste collection

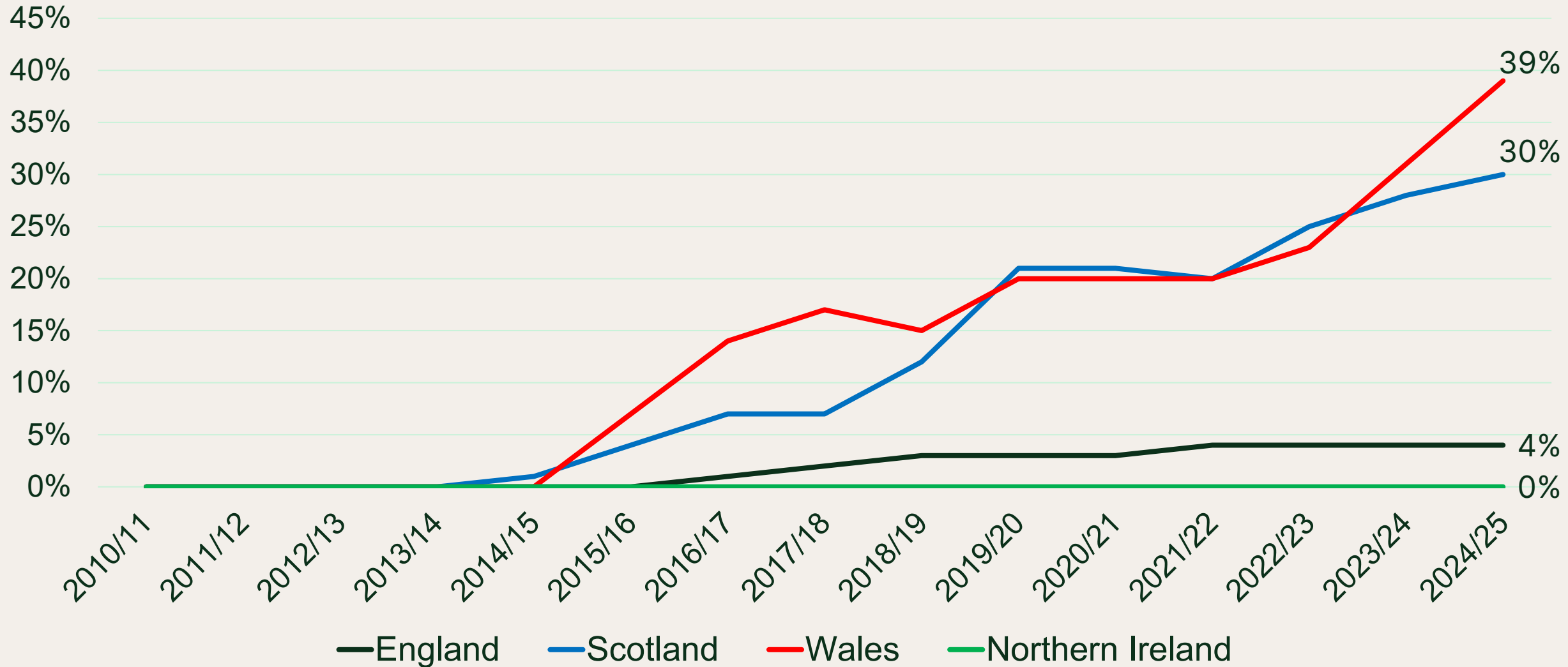
‘As is currently the case, waste collection authorities should continue to decide **collection frequency** and methodology for collecting the **residual (non-recyclable waste)** and dry recyclable waste streams, and do so in a way that meets local needs and provides value for money for the taxpayer’.

DEFRA Simpler Recycling policy update 29th November 2024

% of households in England over time by frequency of residual waste collection



% of households over time receiving a 3-weekly residual waste collection



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SIMPLER RECYCLING: TOOLKIT

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- [Simpler Recycling: Toolkit | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)
- [eTEEP tool | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)



Thank you

WRAP - The Global Environmental Action NGO