

Waste Reduction & Food

This section looks at how local authorities support sustainable food production on their land and promote sustainable food choices in their schools. Local authorities* also play a key role in supporting local circular economy initiatives, as well as improving waste collection and recycling rates.

2025 average score and 2023 comparison¹

by council type

49% Single Tier ▲ 12

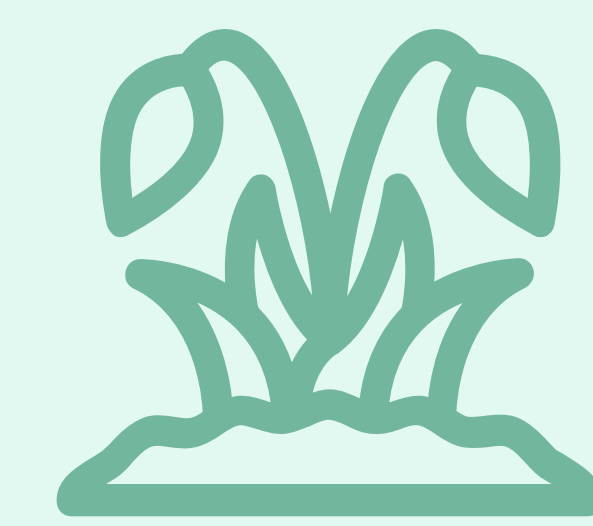
34% District ▲ 11

50% County ▲ 20

51% Northern Ireland ▲ 16

While average scores have increased since 2023, recycling rates have decreased for a number of councils during the assessment period. We also observed councils discontinuing their free food waste collection services due to budgetary pressures, cancelling out progress made elsewhere.

LEADING THE WAY



82% ▲ 25 versus 2023

support community food growing initiatives²



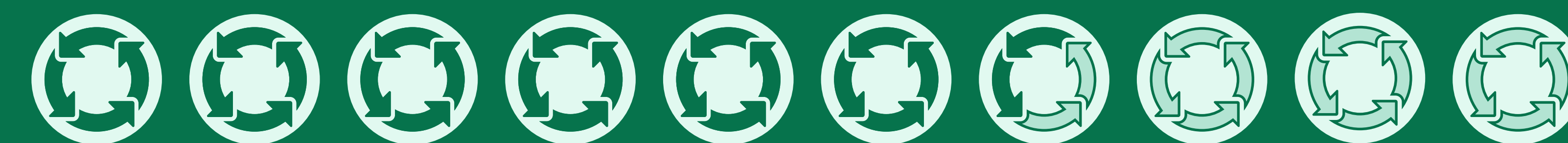
62% ▲ 19 versus 2023

support food surplus redistributions initiatives³

64%

▲ 26 versus 2023

of local authorities support circular economy initiatives⁴



SINGLE TIER AND COUNTY COUNCILS



48% ▲ 24 versus 2023

provide at least one complete vegetarian day in schools each week⁵

60% of local authorities provide kerbside food waste recycling to most homes⁶



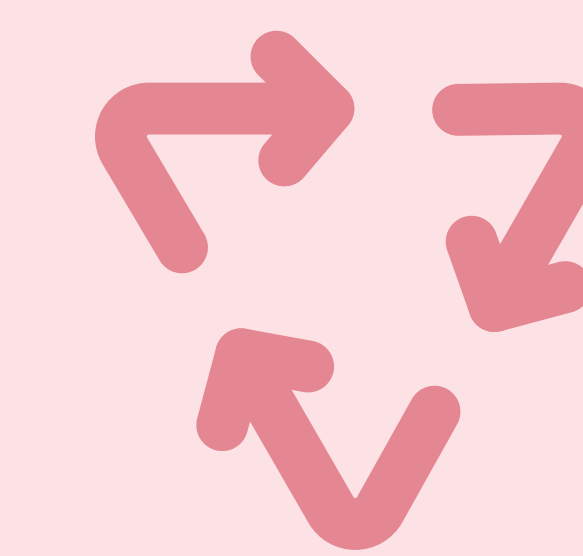
Same as 2023 despite the April 2026 legal deadline for all councils in the UK to recycle food waste.

FALLING BEHIND • LOCAL AUTHORITIES



28% ▲ 16 versus 2023

have a sustainable food strategy⁷



27% ▼ 3 versus 2023

recycle more than half of their waste from residents⁸



93%

send to landfill or incinerate over 300kg of waste per household each year⁹

(*) "local authorities" excludes combined authorities. This section does not apply to Mayoral Authorities, as they have limited powers in relation to 'Waste Reduction and Food'. (1) Average scores here: https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/sections/s7_wr_f/. (2) See Q 7.5: Has the council taken steps to support local food growing? (3) See Q 7.3: Does the council support initiatives to redistribute surplus food? (4) See Q 7.2: Has the council taken steps to support a circular economy locally? (5) See Q 7.6: Do schools in the council area serve less meat in school meals? This question doesn't apply to district councils or to Northern Irish councils. (6) See Q 7.7: Does the council provide kerbside food waste recycling? This question doesn't apply to county councils. (7) See Q 7.4a Question: Does the council have a sustainable food strategy? (8) See Q 7.8 How high is the councils' area wide annual recycling rate? (9) See Q 7.9 How low is the councils' area wide level of household waste produced?