

Summary of HSE's Inspection Initiative of Household Waste and Recycling Services

HSE undertook a phased inspection initiative (2009 to 2014) to evaluate and assess the role of local authorities (LAs) when procuring and managing municipal (household) waste and recycling contracts; and/or (where applicable) delivering and managing in-house waste and recycling services.

There were four key phases to the initiative

- Development and promotion of HSE guidance and the inspection phase
- Phased inspection (October 2010 to March 2014)
- Post inspection feedback
- Interim/final evaluations and communication of findings

Development and promotion of HSE guidance and the inspection phase

During 2009 the Sector in consultation with the industry produced specific guidance aimed at local authorities when procuring and managing waste services.

In early 2010, prior to the inspection phase all LAs were invited to workshops to introduce them to the HSE guidance "[Procuring and managing waste services](#)" developed in 2009.

Phased inspection (October 2010 to March 2014)

The inspection phase took place between October 2010 and March 2014. 99.5% (378 out of 380) of relevant LAs were inspected during the inspection phase. Two LAs were not inspected due to on-going investigations.

50% of these contracted out all or part of their waste and/or recycling services.

Information from each visit was recorded on a proforma which was split into seven main sections, namely:

- (1) Procurement and management of contract/service
- (2) Management (general)
- (3) Workplace transport – refuse and recycling collection vehicles
- (4) Manual Handling
- (5) Health and Welfare
- (6) Personal Protective Equipment
- (7) Other matters

Within each of these sections there were further sub-headings/topic areas. In total there were 59 topic areas to be assessed using a risk control indicator scale of 1-6.

Post inspection feedback

Three online questionnaires were developed to gather the views of LAs, contractors and HSE inspectors following the initiative in early 2014. The response was as following:

- 43% (163 out of 378) of LAs.
- 57% (16 out of 28) of the known companies who were contracted to carry out waste and recycling collections on behalf of LAs. Those companies provided all or part of the waste and recycling services for 253 LAs.
- 65% (76 out of 117) of the inspectors who carried out inspections of LAs. Those that responded were responsible for inspecting 244 of the LAs visited and carried out 136 follow up visits.

Interim/final evaluations and communication of findings

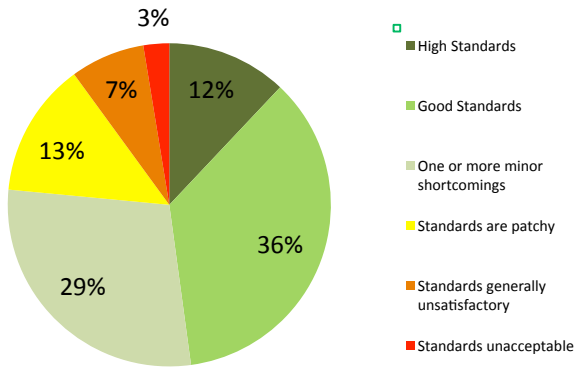
An interim evaluation was carried out at the mid-point of the evaluation and the results were used to identify areas where the LAs were performing well and areas requiring improvement. The primary purpose was to identify the priority areas LAs needed to address and inspectors needed to focus on in the remaining period. These findings were communicated externally through media articles and presentations at relevant LA stakeholder events.

Key findings

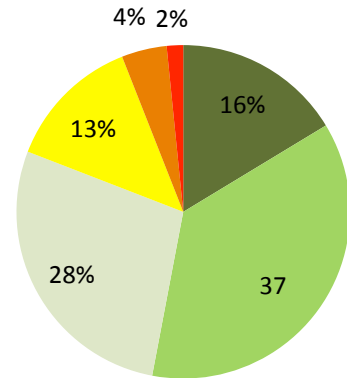
- A high percentage of both LAs and contractors indicated that they were familiar with the procurement guidance which was publicised before and during the initiative.
- Overall 14% of LAs were deemed to be non-compliant¹ in relation to managing and procuring waste services as a whole. A significant proportion (43%), however, indicated they had made significant improvements in the way that they procure and manage their waste and recycling service.
- In general LAs performed relatively better in the “specification” and “evaluation” than in “management” of the contract/service.
- The most commonly identified areas for improvement by inspectors were:
 - Monitoring and review of health and safety performance of service provider
 - Client and contractor monitoring the effectiveness of supervision
 - Risk assessment of activities (including route risk assessment)
 - Elimination/reduction of reversing on routes

¹ Compliant is where they have achieved a rating score of 1-3 for at least 21 out of 23 questions in Section 1 (i.e. 91%) - it does not cover other compliance issues

Risk assessment of activities - including route risk assessments

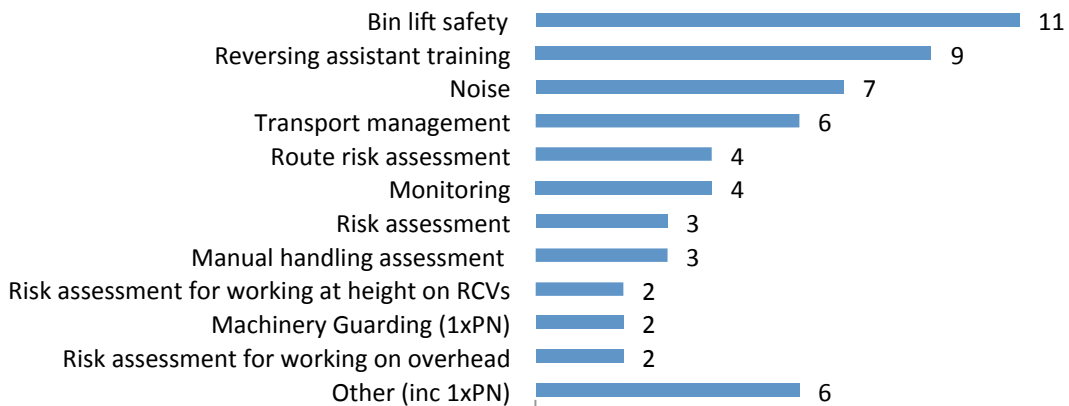


Robust framework for the monitoring and review of health and safety performance



- These findings were supported by questionnaire responses from LAs and contractors which indicated that route risk assessment, transport safety and monitoring were the areas where the most significant improvements were made as a result of the inspection.
- 59 enforcement notices were issued covering 14 topics. The most common topics were risk assessment (including route risk assessment), bin lift safety, noise (assessment and control), reversing assistant training, transport safety and monitoring.

Improvement and Prohibition Notices Issued



- The final evaluation showed that of all the 59 topic areas assessed, 90% of them either remained the same or improved in the latter half of the initiative.
- Of particular note was the improvement in compliance in areas which were the focus of the key messages at the interim stage. In particular those relating to
 - Monitoring health and safety performance
 - Risk assessment of activities, including route risk assessment
 - Hearing protection provided and worn.
- Feedback from the LA questionnaire indicates the initiative has influenced:
 - Positively the way some LAs procure other services in their authority (43%).
 - How council members engaged with health and safety (55%).
- 60% of LA respondents indicated that accident rates had dropped since their inspection and 31% identified that sickness rates had dropped.
- The initiative has prompted some group working and sharing of good practice between LAs.
- Although the initiative focused on LAs and the procurement process, feedback from the inspection visits and contractor questionnaire demonstrates it also had a significant impact on waste management companies contracted to carry out the service in terms of improved:
 - health and safety standards, and
 - working relationships between LAs and contractors.
- Contractors also indicated that the initiative has had a significant impact when new contracts are being tendered for in terms of the importance of health and safety when specifying the contract and assessing the bids.
- There was common consensus by inspectors, LAs and contractors alike that the initiative was a useful and valued exercise and was worth repeating.

Next steps

- HSE will communicate the findings of the report through media articles and stakeholder forums
- Stakeholders to consider the findings of the report and work together to find ways of raising standards in the areas identified within the report.
- HSE will carry out another programme of inspection interventions with LA waste and recycling collection services in 2015/16.