

Eighty per cent of households in Wales can now see how much food they throw away thanks to separate collections of food or food and green waste. All 22 Welsh councils provide the service to at least some of their residents, and the number of households covered continues to grow.

Food waste is a priority in Wales' waste strategy *Towards Zero Waste*. Throwing it away in the general rubbish means sending it to landfill where it produces methane, which is 23 times more dangerous as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. By collecting food waste separately, local authorities can send it to processing plants that turn it into a valuable compost, that then can be used to grow more food. In the future the food waste will also be used to generate biogas that can be used to generate electricity or that can be used as a green transport fuel.

Separate food waste collections also give people the chance to see exactly how much food ends up in the bin, and take steps to cut back. The typical family throws away £12 worth of unwanted food every week.

Today's figures relate to December 2010. The number of households with separate food or food waste collections is increasing all the time, with several councils offering the service to all residences in their area, and others planning to roll it out to cover all homes in the near future.

Environment Minister Jane Davidson, who launched *Towards Zero Waste* in June 2010, has welcomed Wales' milestone, saying:

"I believe that if you want to boost recycling rates you cannot afford to ignore food waste. That's why we were the first country in the UK to adopt the Landfill Allowances Scheme to keep food out of landfill, and that's why we're the only country in the UK where every council runs a separate food or food and green waste collection service.

"This is something I'm tremendously proud of, and it isn't just about being green. When people have separate food waste collections they can see just how much - and what kind of - food they throw away, and change their shopping and cooking habits accordingly. This can mean a real difference to the household budget.

"I'm delighted that four out of five Welsh homes now have a separate food waste collection. I want to thank our councils for their hard work in making food waste collections such a success,

and urge everyone to make the most of them.”

Waste Awareness Wales' Andrew Osborne added:

“We believe that separate food waste collections are one of the best ways to help people reduce the amount of food they throw away and prevent food waste going to landfill. Of course it’s better not to waste any food at all, but for those foodstuffs which can’t be eaten – things like potato peel or apple cores – separate food waste collections make real sense.”