



# Food waste collection and processing

## The situation

It is estimated that we throw away over 7 million tonnes of food in the UK each year. Now more and more food waste is being collected for treatment, something we have championed for a long time.

Collected separately, organic food waste can be transformed into energy and compost or fertiliser. Those of us with gardens can help by doing our own home composting, but as more people choose to live in cities, that's not an option for everyone. And if nothing is done to capture it, that food waste will go to landfill where it will decompose and produce methane; a greenhouse gas that's 25 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>.

**The seven key issues**

- 1. Food waste collection and processing**
2. Mixed material (co-mingled) collections
3. Mixed plastics collections
4. Management of hazardous waste
5. Energy efficiency and incineration
6. Renewable energy and district heating
7. The End of Waste criteria

**7 million tonnes of food waste is thrown away in the UK each year.**

But it can't all be avoided. So let's put those tea bags, banana skins and apple cores to good use.

Where we **Stand.**



At Veolia we believe that collecting food waste should be part of every city's waste management mix. Firstly, it generates **value from organic waste**. Secondly, food has a high moisture content and smells when it decomposes. Separating it from other waste helps to **increase the potential to recycle more dry materials**.

Preventing waste should be the first priority. However, when food waste is collected separately, we believe it should always be treated responsibly. That means in-vessel composting or processing it through an anaerobic digester. The AD process breaks down the biodegradable material to release energy in the form of biogas, which can be used as a renewable fuel. It also produces a nutrient-rich matter (digestate) that can be used as a soil conditioner. For these reasons, anaerobic digestion should be encouraged.

But make no mistake; as a 'one size fits all' solution, anaerobic digestion doesn't deliver a comprehensive waste management solution for sustainable cities.

Where compost or digestate is applied to land, it's imperative that the material has been treated properly. What's more, it should only originate from collections that are separated at source to avoid contaminating our soil bank.

All Veolia Environmental Services' organic sites comply with PAS100 and the ABPR Regulations.



**Where do you stand?**

Join the debate at:

[www.veolia.co.uk/manifesto](http://www.veolia.co.uk/manifesto)