

Appendix 1 – Summary of report into health impacts of extended residual waste collections

The laboratory analysis findings demonstrate that certain characteristics of non-recyclable waste are affected by collection frequency. Although householders, collectors and staff at tipping facilities could theoretically be affected by these factors, the conclusion is that the lower exposure of householders and the availability of simple precautions mean the risk for them is little changed from that experienced with existing weekly and fortnightly collections. The repetitive nature of the occupational exposure to waste collectors and staff at tipping facilities suggests that the risk could be more significant for operatives albeit if properly controlled and a precautionary approach adopted, these issues are unlikely.

The priority for local authorities planning extended frequency collections should be to try to prevent exposure at source by reducing concentrations of microorganisms and gases. Examples discussed in this report include:

- Capturing biodegradable waste (e.g. absorbent hygiene products (including nappies) and food waste) through separate, frequent collections.
- Promoting good practice measures for storage of waste. Encourage residents to bag waste, rather than placing it loose in bin.

If exposure can't be prevented, local authorities should put suitable measures in place to control it adequately; ensuring that control measures are used and regularly updated. Examples discussed in this report include:

- Undertake occupational and environmental monitoring and if necessary identify further controls at tipping facilities to reduce emissions, e.g. improved ventilation and odour control.
- Promote good hygiene practices and provide health and safety training to staff. Ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided (e.g. hand wash facilities on the vehicle) and that personal protective equipment is provided and used.
- Implement health screening and monitoring to identify staff with respiratory illness or sensitiveness.
- Develop and implement working practices to control exposure e.g. collectors should stay in the vehicle cab or in a designated area away from the vehicle when non-recyclable waste is tipped.
- Develop policies for missed collections to limit collection delays, particularly when the service is bedding in and residents may have difficulty remembering their collection schedule.
- Advise contractors of extended frequency collections to allow risk assessments to be updated.