

LARAC Press Release: LARAC has serious concerns over new POPs guidance from the EA



5 Oct 2022

John Coates, LARAC Head of External Affairs

[Blog \(https://larac.org.uk/news-blogs-events?filter=blog\)](https://larac.org.uk/news-blogs-events?filter=blog)

PRESS RELEASE: LARAC has serious concerns over new POPs guidance from the EA

LARAC has serious concerns about the new guidance issued by the Environment Agency on how councils should manage soft furnishings containing Persistent Organic Pollutants or POPs. In a letter sent to councils in early September, new guidance gives councils just four months with a deadline of 31st December 2022, to change their services and processes to be in a compliant position regarding soft furnishing waste from households, either collected from the kerbside as bulky household items or being delivered by residents to HWRCs.

The ban on sending POPs items to landfill after 31st December 2022 will affect one third of LARAC members who responded to a survey on the subject. Many EfW contracts have the use of landfill when the EfW is shut down for planned maintenance or emergency closures.

How do you currently dispose of POPs waste items?

Landfill - not mixed with other wastes	1.56%
Landfill - mixed with other wastes	31.25%
EfW - not mixed with other wastes	0.00%
EfW - mixed with other wastes	53.13%
Other - provide more detail in Q.10 please	14.06%



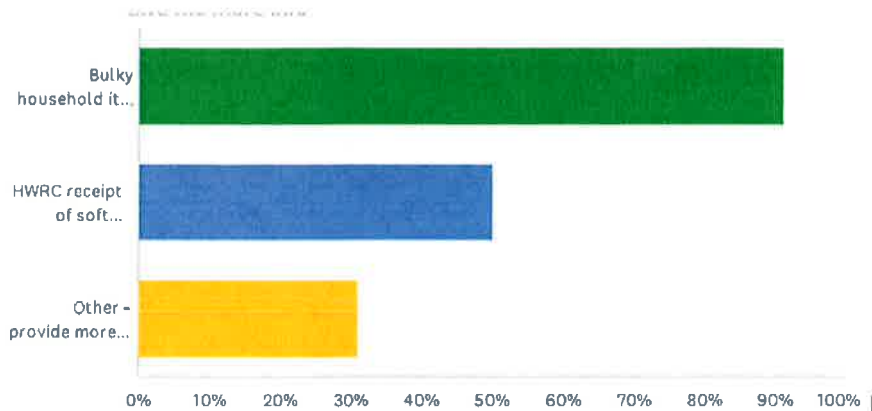
Which of your services will be affected by the POPs guidance?

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

(By clicking any link on this page you are giving your consent for us to set cookies.)

[Give me more info](#)

OK, I agree



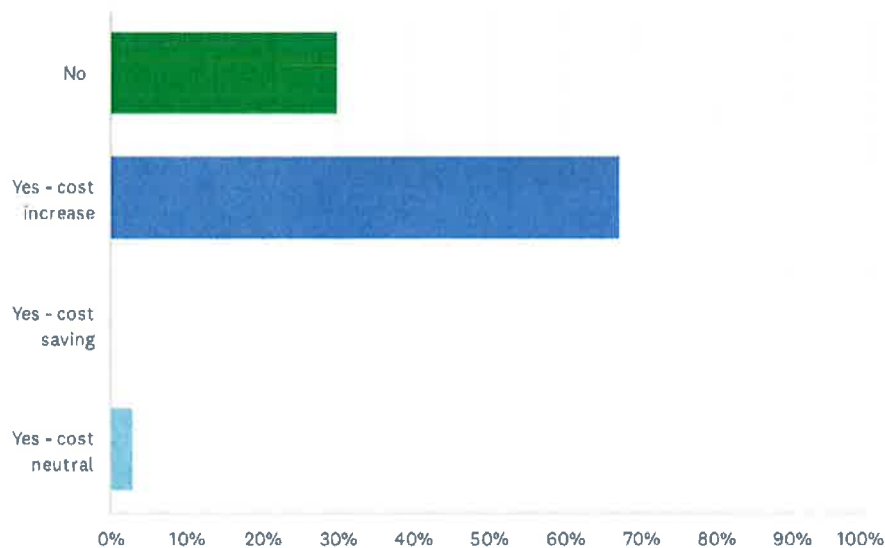
Councils believe the most significant impact will be on bulky item collections, where the requirement to keep POPs items separated from any other items will cause major disruption to council collection systems and their engagement with residents. Over one in four councils see the only way to be compliant will be to operate two collections: one for non-POPs items placed out; and then a second collection vehicle or round to go back specifically for any POPs items. This will be the same for fly tips where the chance of ripped or damaged soft furnishings containing POPs will be higher, meaning the whole fly tip will need to be treated as POPs material. Unlike bulky collections where what is to be collected can be known in advance because the resident books a collection, fly tips can contain any items and the presence of one ripped cushion will cause the entire fly tip to be classified as POPs, under the published guidance. This will increase costs as all fly tipped items will have to go for high temperature incineration, not just the ripped cushion. This does not seem a common-sense approach in these times of strained council finances.

How do you intend to achieve compliance with the new POPs requirements?

Bulky item collections - collect POPs items separate from other items via separate collection vehicles	26.47%
Bulky item collections - continue mixed collections but consign entire load as POPs waste	17.65%
HWRC - require separation of POPs items by residents before disposal on site	11.76%
HWRC - accept POPs items in mixed skip and consign entire skip as POPs waste	4.41%
Bulky kerbside or HWRC - collect separately then dismantle to remove POPs waste so remaining metal, wood, plastic can be recycled	0.00%
Other - provide more detail in free text box at Q.10 below	39.71%

Regarding the potential cost of this change, none of the respondents to the LARAC survey saw any good news in the new requirements.

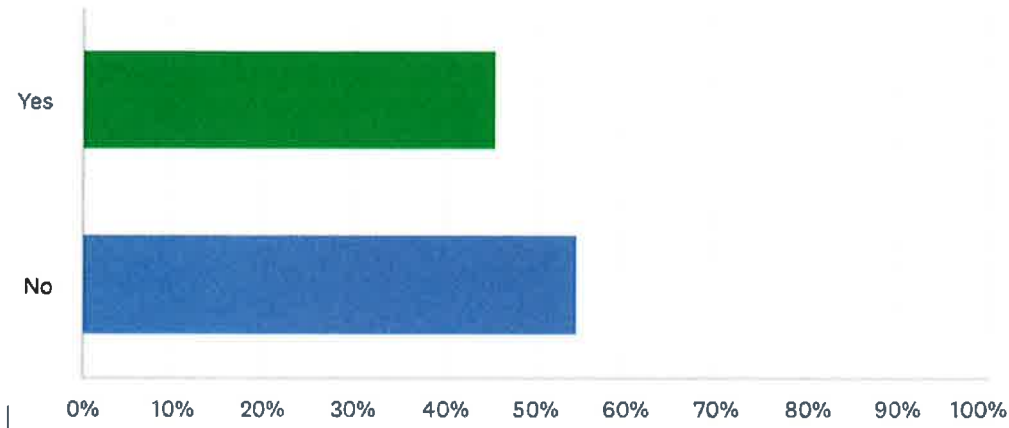
Can you assess the financial impact of any changes required to be POPs compliant by 31st December 2022?



The end result is that the majority (55%) of those surveyed did not believe they could be compliant by the Environment Agency's deadline of 31st December 2022. The cost of modifying transfer stations or depots for the deposit of separated POPs waste from bulky item collections, or for extra skips to be placed at HWRC sites if space allows, or for particulate control in compaction activities, elicited a range of costs from survey

respondents from several hundred thousand to over a million pounds per authority. This is understandable given the very short notice given to councils and their contractors, as the letters were only sent out in early September.

Do you believe you can be compliant by 31st December 2022?



LARAC questions how the EA can assert that their new guidance reflects what has been the legal situation since 2016 but has not challenged any of the current practices by councils and their contractors in the many thousands of inspections that will have been carried out over the last six years. LARAC wants to know why it has taken six years to suddenly decide that waste sofas and settees present such an urgent danger to human health. The poor communication on this issue from the EA could mean that some services will stop, as many landfill operators are saying they will not accept POPs waste in the near future to protect against any breach of their environmental permit.

LARAC urges the Environment Agency to enter into urgent discussions on this matter to ensure that the disruption to councils and residents can be minimal and with the continuation of services whilst a solution can be found.

Ends

For further information please contact John Coates, Head of External Affairs on john.coates@larac.org.uk (mailto:john.coates@larac.org.uk)

Twitter: @LARACspeaks

(<https://larac.org.uk/blog/larac-press-release-larac-has-serious-concerns-over-new-pops-guidance-ea#>)

(<https://larac.org.uk/blog/larac-press-release-larac-has-serious-concerns-over-new-pops-guidance-ea#>)

(<https://larac.org.uk/blog/larac-press-release-larac-has-serious-concerns-over-new-pops-guidance-ea#>)

(<https://larac.org.uk/blog/larac-press-release-larac-has-serious-concerns-over-new-pops-guidance-ea#>)

Partners

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

(By clicking any link on this page you are giving your consent for us to set cookies.)

[Give me more info](#)

OK, I agree

DS Smith is the expert
in source segregation.

**We can increase the
value of your local
authority's recycling.**



(https://www.dssmith.com/recycling/offering/solutions-by-sector/public-sector?utm_source=Referral%20LARAC&utm_medium=Banner%20vertical&utm_campaign=LARAC%20%20&utm_source=Referral%20LARAC&utm_medium)

>> About Our Partners [see](https://larac.org.uk/supporters/our-supporters) (<https://larac.org.uk/supporters/our-supporters>)

>> Become a Partner (<https://larac.org.uk/advertise-us>)

Twitter

Tweets by @LARACspeaks (<https://twitter.com/LARACspeaks>)

>> Follow us on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/LARACspeaks>)

Our Partners



Green Power

(<https://www.smurfitkappa.com/uk>) (<https://www.stgreenpower.co.uk/>)

(<https://www.bartecmunicipal.com/>)

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience.
(By clicking any link on this page you are giving your consent for us to set cookies.)
[Give me more info.](#)