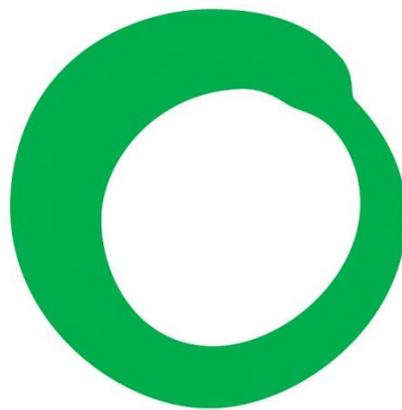


Storm in a Slop Bucket?

What people really
think about food waste
collections



**Friends of
the Earth**

September 2011

Foreword

There's been a lot of rubbish spouted about food waste and bin collections in recent months. Ahead of its review of England's waste policy in June, Ministers considered forcing councils to provide weekly bin rounds – despite evidence that fortnightly collections are cheaper and boost recycling. Some parts of the media claimed householders would not tolerate the hassle of separating food scraps and keeping a smelly slop bucket in their kitchen.

Friends of the Earth commissioned this report to find out what people really think about food waste collections. And the results show the media debate may have been a bit of a storm in a slop bucket.

The researchers found that the overwhelming majority of people who have food waste bins at home don't have a problem with them. It's interesting that 82% say they're not a nuisance compared to 56% who don't have one, strongly suggesting that the actual experience of separating food waste is positive and dispels concerns.

Most people also said they're worried about rising food prices – yet we throw away a third of our food, half of which is edible. It's now more important than ever that we cut waste and recycle the scraps that can't be eaten.

Landfilling food waste generates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, and incineration also causes climate change and is bad for the environment. Anaerobic digestion – composting without oxygen – is a far better solution, producing renewable energy as well as excellent fertiliser. The Government says it wants a 'massive' expansion of anaerobic digestion. A full roll-out of separate food waste collections is vital for this to happen.

The majority of respondents thought all councils should collect food waste. Yet only 143 out of 322 councils in England currently offer the service, with just a handful more planned. All local authorities in Wales offer this as standard – why doesn't England do the same?

So far, when it comes to tackling waste, David Cameron's aim to lead the 'greenest government ever' looks embarrassingly wide of the mark. England's waste policy is perhaps the UK's least green, aiming for a 50% recycling rate by 2020 – the EU minimum – while Scotland and Wales push for 70% by 2025.

We can and should be aiming for a genuinely zero-waste economy. That's why Friends of the Earth is calling for a goal to halve the nation's residual 'black bag' waste by 2020, with a similar ambition for business waste.

Nationwide food waste collections would help us achieve this, generating renewable energy, slashing greenhouse gas emissions and saving households money along the way. Food for thought?

Andy Atkins, Executive Director, Friends of the Earth

Research by Resource Futures for Friends of the Earth

Prepared for Friends of the Earth

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Executive summary

An attitudinal survey was carried out between 2nd and 15th of June 2011 across four different areas. The areas included urban and rural households, and a mix of homes with and without separate kerbside food waste collections. The main purpose of the survey was to establish attitudes towards food waste and food waste collections.

Surveyors carried out doorstep interviews with residents across the four chosen areas, with sample households selected to have corresponding profiles by ACORN category. A total of 1,110 residents were spoken with, 1,056 of whom were in a position to answer the entire questionnaire.

The findings strongly suggested that people with food waste collections have a more positive view of such collections than those without. For all four statements put to the respondents about food waste collections, positive responses were provided more frequently by those with a food waste collection than those without. This suggests that the actual experience of using food waste collections dispels many of the concerns, which may have arisen as a result of negative publicity around food waste collections. This is illustrated particularly in the difference in responses to the suggestion that “food waste collections cause nuisance”. Over 80% of those with food waste collections disagreed with this statement, compared with under 60% of those without.

Overall, just under 30% of respondents consider that they are throwing away less food than they were doing two years ago, with financial reasons cited as a strong driver for reducing the amount of food going to waste. Over 80% of respondents said that they were becoming increasingly concerned about the cost of food, and 41% said that this had caused them to reduce the amount they waste. However there is no significant difference between those with and those without a food waste collection. Changes in household composition – for example children growing up or moving out – were also associated with reported food reduction.

The results from the survey do not suggest a significant difference in the perception of the amount of food thrown away between respondents with a food waste collection and those without. Responses to this question had to be extremely subjective, and it is likely that respondents who separate their food for collection are more aware of the quantity of food going to waste than those who put it in their residual rubbish bin. This finding is consistent with earlier survey work carried out by WRAP in 2006, which established that few consumers say that they waste significant amounts of food¹.

¹ WRAP, Food Behaviour Consumer Research: Quantitative Phase, June 2007.

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1. Introduction

Resource Futures carried out an attitudinal survey of 1,100 households across four different areas in June 2011; one rural area and one urban area in Gloucestershire, and one rural and one urban area in Yorkshire. The survey sample was split between one rural and one urban area that had kerbside food waste collections operating for at least a year, and the remaining two had never had kerbside food waste collections.

1.1 Aims of the project

Friends of the Earth (FOE) commissioned a survey to investigate attitudes and reported behaviour related to food waste and food waste collections. The findings are intended to be useful to local authorities who are currently considering introducing food waste, and who are concerned about participation in such schemes, as well as public responses to their introduction.

1.2 Approach

It was agreed that face-to-face surveys were the best way to collect the data as it enabled a representative sample to be achieved through targeting specific areas and has the ability to achieve relatively high contact rates. The research team travelled from house to house, knocking on doors and carrying out interviews within areas selected to represent the target groups chosen.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sampling

The aim of the sampling design was to enable a comparison of responses between:

- Respondents in areas where there is an established food waste collection
- Respondents in areas without a food waste collection

It was also important to maximise representativeness within the budget available. The sample was therefore selected on the basis of:

- Geographical region
- Socio-economic profile
- Urban / rural location

The sample was broken down as follows:

Table 1: Sample design

Food waste collection	Geographical area	Number of households	ACORN categories
People with an established food waste collection	Rural areas near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire	250	1, 2, 3 and 5.
People with an established food waste collection	Urban Area: Halifax in West Yorkshire	250	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
People without a food waste collection	Rural areas near Stroud in Gloucestershire	250	1, 2, 3 and 5.
People without a food waste collection	Urban Area: Bradford in West Yorkshire	250	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The households for the sample were selected by first identifying areas where food waste collections were well used, in both the urban and rural locations. The profile by ACORN category of each of these areas was then established, and target households selected to visit for interviews. Households in comparable areas were then found, but where no food waste collections were provided. Again a set of households was selected for visits, which had a similar ACORN profile for each area to the respective food waste collection area. In this way, 4 sets of households were selected, which were judged to be sufficient to achieve the profiles shown in the table below. As the survey progressed the profile was monitored against these numbers to ensure the final sample would be as close as possible to these profiles.

Table 2: Detail of profiles

ACORN category	Urban areas	Rural areas
	Halifax and Bradford No of hhs	Tewkesbury and Stroud No of hhs
1	2	115
2	9	6
3	84	80
4	125	0
5	29	49
All	250	250

Since the aim is to compare households with, and without, food waste collections, the profile is effectively of 500 households in each group. These group sizes give a confidence interval of around +/- 4%, so that where 65% of a group give a specific response to a question, we can say that the data suggests that between 61% and 69% of that group would make that response if we were to ask them all that question.

2.2 Survey method and data collection

The introductory part of the survey was crucial in engaging with residents and gaining their attention. The surveyors were trained by Resource Futures to approach the residents in a polite and positive manner. They were also fully briefed on how best to engage with the householder as well as receiving a full explanation of the content and purpose of the survey. In their administration of the questionnaire to respondents, interviewers were instructed to ask the questions without guiding or prompting the

responses, to ensure that the replies were not biased. After completing the questionnaire the surveyor would thank the respondent for their time.

The data were collected on hand-held PDAs using response codes for each of the questions. This enables the surveyors to work more quickly, saves paper and limits the amount of heavy paperwork the surveyors need to carry. Data from each 'door knock' was sent through to the central office, where a live snapshot of the day's progress could be monitored at any time.

The progress of the project was monitored daily by the project manager. The daily totals for completed interviews were sent to the team leaders to enable planning for the following day, and support was provided to help deal with any issues arising. There were two team leaders and they were responsible for keeping track of 'knocks made' relative to the street lists provided and for the overall organisation of their team as well as their health and safety.

2.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was devised in cooperation between Resource Futures and Friends of the Earth. The questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

The survey was designed to take approximately 5 minutes to complete and two open questions were included. The surveyors made it clear to residents in their introduction that, for the purpose of this survey, food is seen to be wasted when it is not eaten, irrespective of whether it goes in the residual bin, or in the food waste container, or is composted or fed to pets.

3. Results

3.1 Survey results

The general sample base was the total number of surveys completed which was 1,110. For each question the overall results will be given, along with a comparison of households that do and those that do not currently have a food waste collection service.

3.1.1 Q1 Do you cook, prepare or shop for food for your house?

The first question was a filter to find out whether the interviewer was speaking to a member of the household who could adequately respond to the survey questions.

Table 3: Q1 Do you cook, prepare or shop for food for your house?

	Yes	No (is there anyone else?)	Total
Count	1,056	54	1,110
Percentage	95.1%	4.9%	100.0%

Of the 1,110 people that the surveyors spoke to, 95% said that they do cook, prepare or shop for food in their house and so went on to complete the survey. The other 5% of people said they were not responsible for this, and no one else was available, so in those cases the survey was ended there.

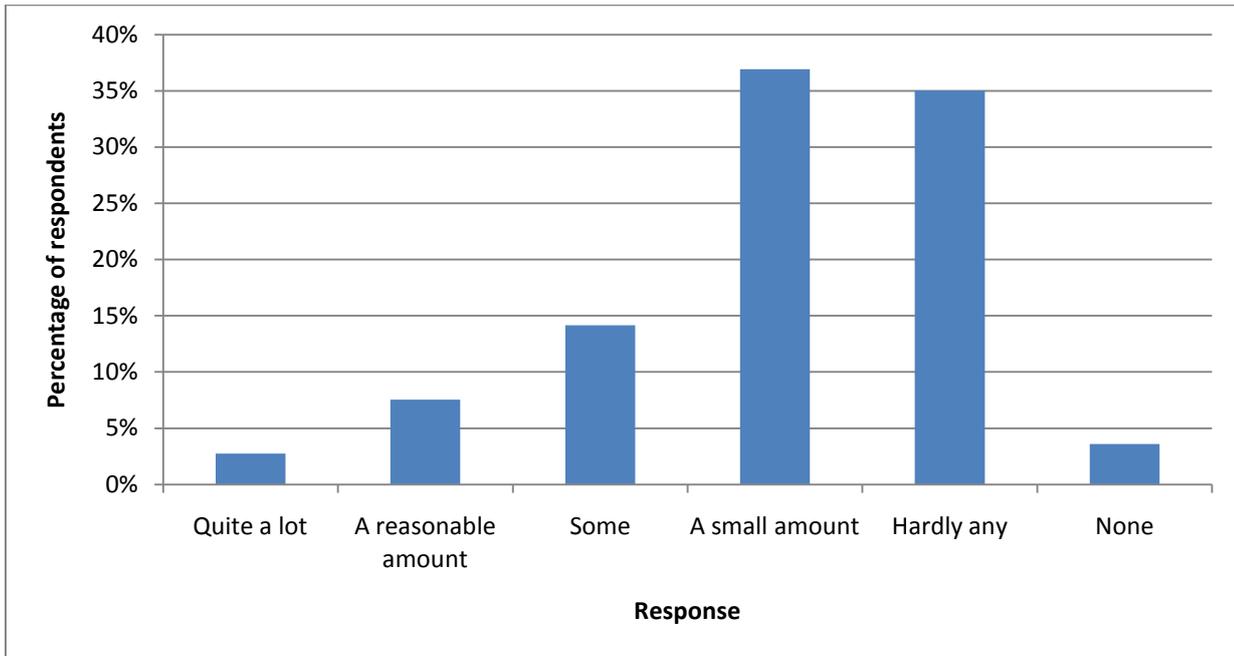
3.1.2 Q2 Thinking about different types of food waste such as these on the showcard, how much uneaten food, overall, would you say you generally end up throwing away?

Firstly, respondents were shown a prompt card with various food types on it, and were asked how much food they think they generally end up throwing away. The respondents were informed prior to this question about what was considered to be food waste for the purposes of this survey – i.e. any food that is disposed of, regardless of whether it is put in the bin, food waste collection, composted etc. The results for this question can be seen below in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 4: Q2 – How much food do you generally end up throwing away?

	Quite a lot	A reasonable amount	Some	A small amount	Hardly any	None	TOTAL
Count	29	80	150	391	371	38	1059
Percentage	3%	8%	14%	37%	35%	4%	100%

Figure 1: Q2 – How much food do you generally end up throwing away?



The majority of respondents said that they throw away “a small amount” or “hardly any” food. Only 4% said that they throw away no food waste at all, and only 3% said “quite a lot”.

Figure 2: Q2 ‘How much food do you generally end up throwing away?’ by FW / no FW collection service

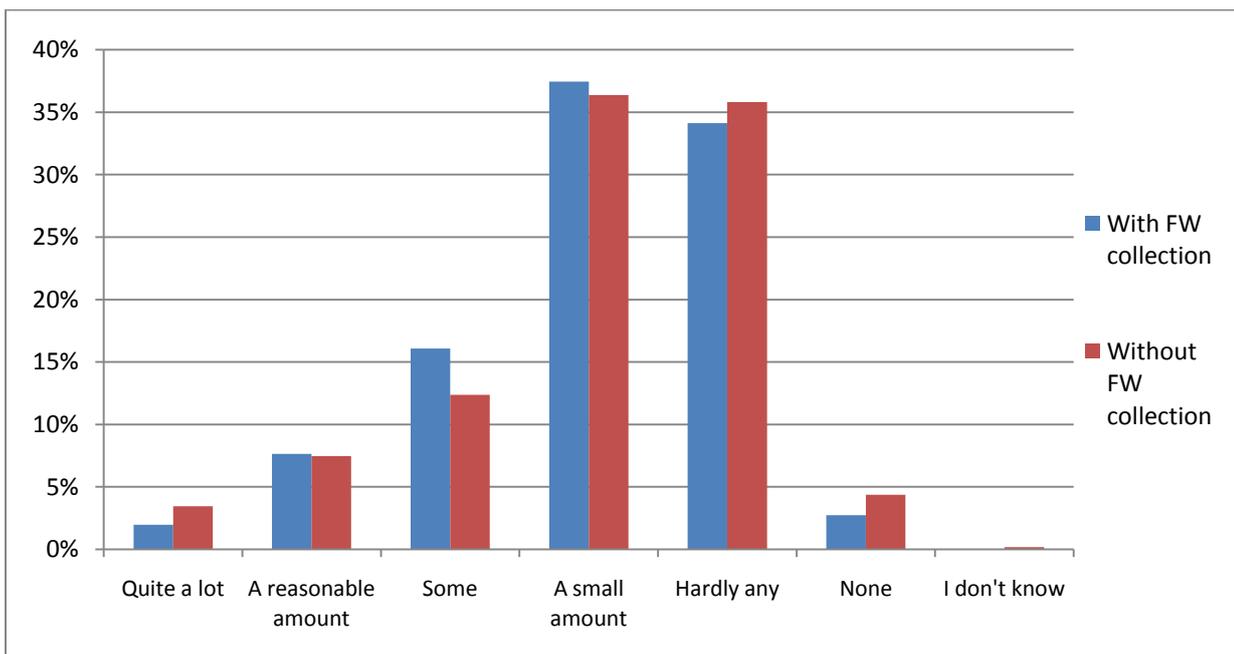


Figure 2 above compares residents that do and do not have a food waste collection service. Residents that do have the service more commonly said “a reasonable amount, some or a small amount” than those without, whereas those without the service said “hardly any” and “none” more frequently, however, these results are unlikely to be statistically significant.

3.1.3 Q3 Compared with 2 years ago, would you say that the amount of food that you buy but does not get eaten has increased, decreased or stayed the same? Do you...

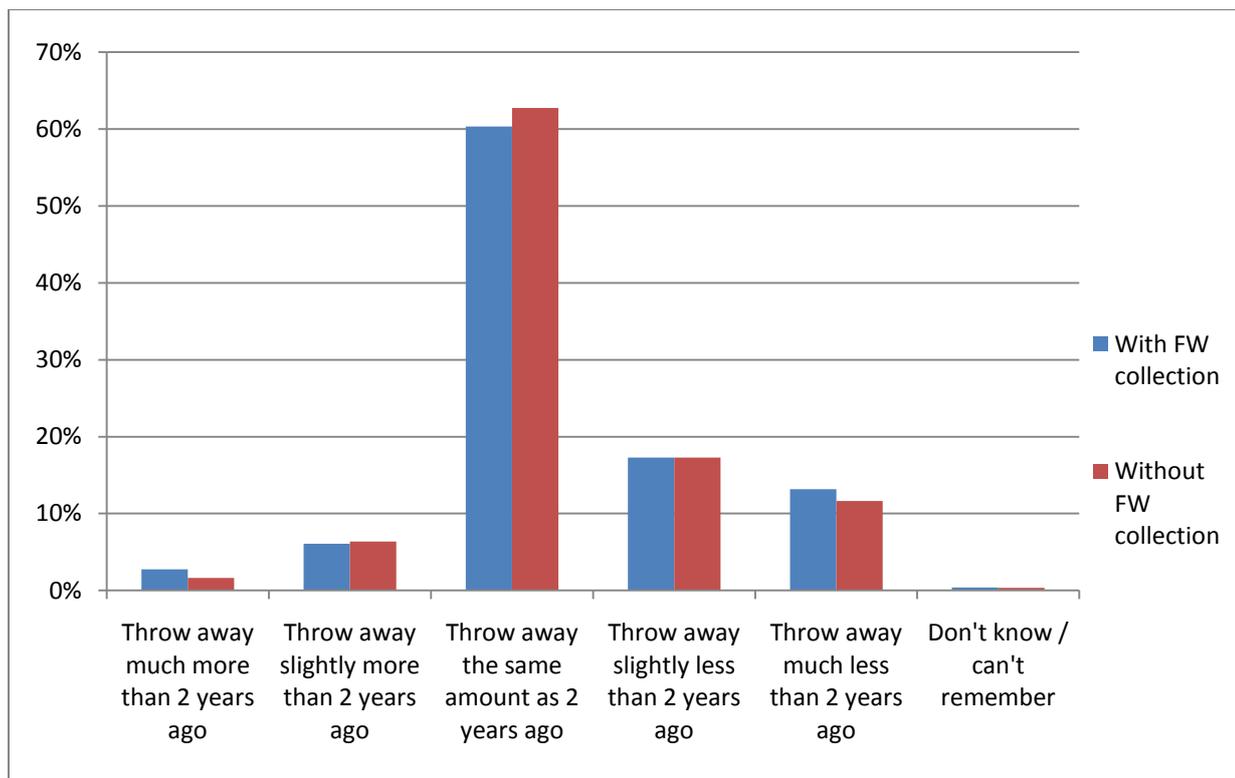
Respondents were then asked about how much food they thought they waste compared with two years ago – much less, slightly less, about the same, slightly more or much more.

Table 5: Q3 – Compared with two years ago, how much food do you throw away?

	Throw away much more than 2 years ago	Throw away slightly more than 2 years ago	Throw away the same amount 2 years ago	Throw away slightly less than 2 years ago	Throw away much less than 2 years ago
Count	23	66	651	183	131
Percentage	2%	6%	62%	17%	12%

It can be seen that 62% of respondents thought that they throw away about the same amount as they did two years ago. In total, just 8% thought that they throw away more food than two years ago, whilst 29% felt that they throw away less.

Figure 3: Q3 ‘Compared with 2 years ago...’ by FW / no FW collection service

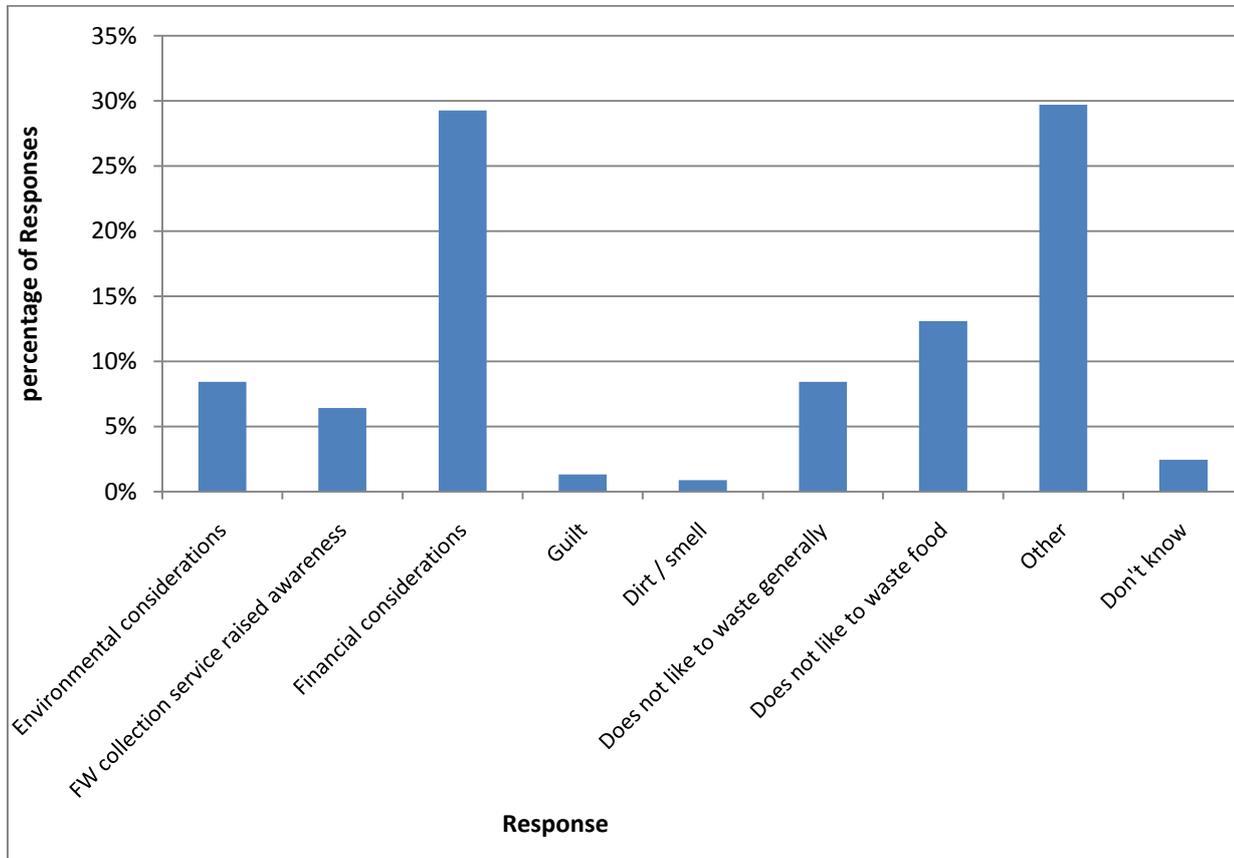


Comparing respondents with and without food waste collections, differences are not statically significant. Overall, 60% of those with a food waste collection say that they throw away about the same amount of food waste as two years ago, 9% throw away more and 30% throw away less. Of those without a food waste collection, 63% throw away the same amount, 8% throw away more, and 29% throw away less.

3.1.4 Q4 Why have your reduced the amount of food you throw away?

Those who said that they throw away slightly less or much less food than they did two years ago were asked why they felt this was the case. Up to three reasons were recorded per respondent.

Figure 4: Q4 – why do you throw away less food?



29% of responses were to do with financial considerations. 30% were classed as “other”. The majority of the explanations given in the “other” category were to do with a change in the household composition. In many cases, there were less people in the house, due to a partner leaving, dying, children leaving home etc. Some respondents said that as their children were getting older they were becoming less fussy about food and so not leaving any on their plate anymore. Some respondents said that they had become more organised which meant less food got wasted, and just a few said that they had changed their shopping habits, so they shopped more regularly for less food.

Figure 5: Q4 'why do you throw away less food?' by FW / no FW collection service

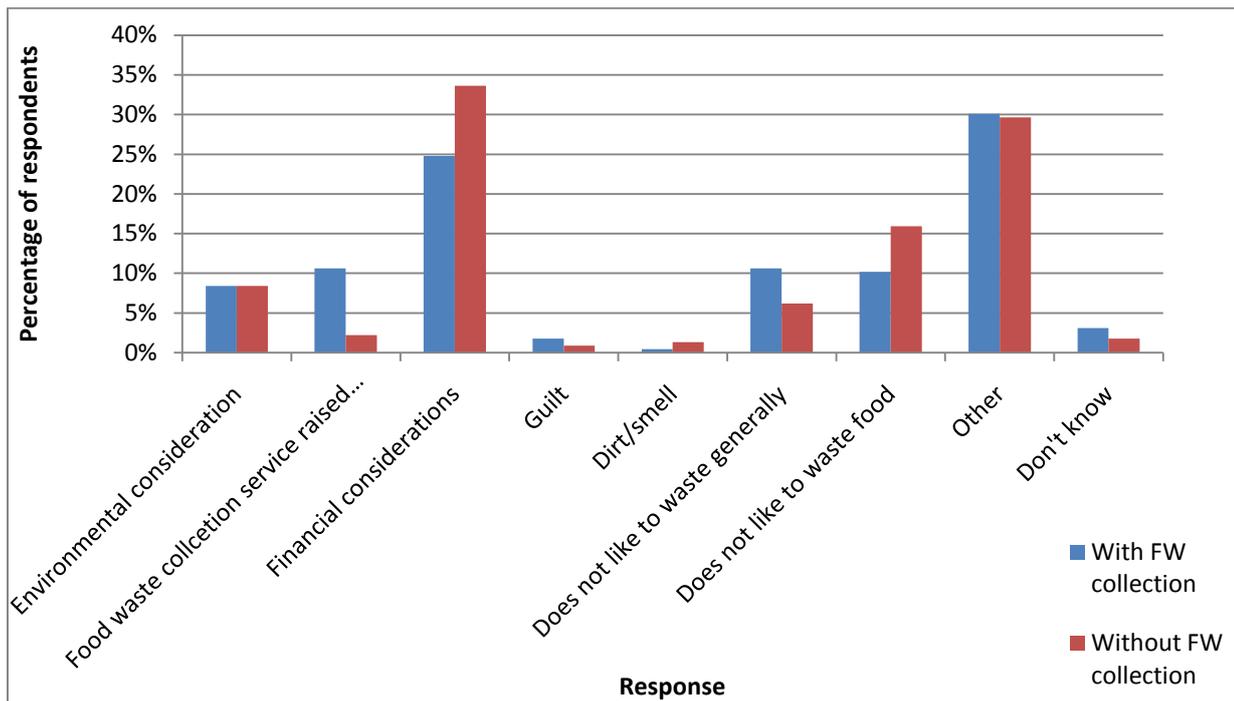
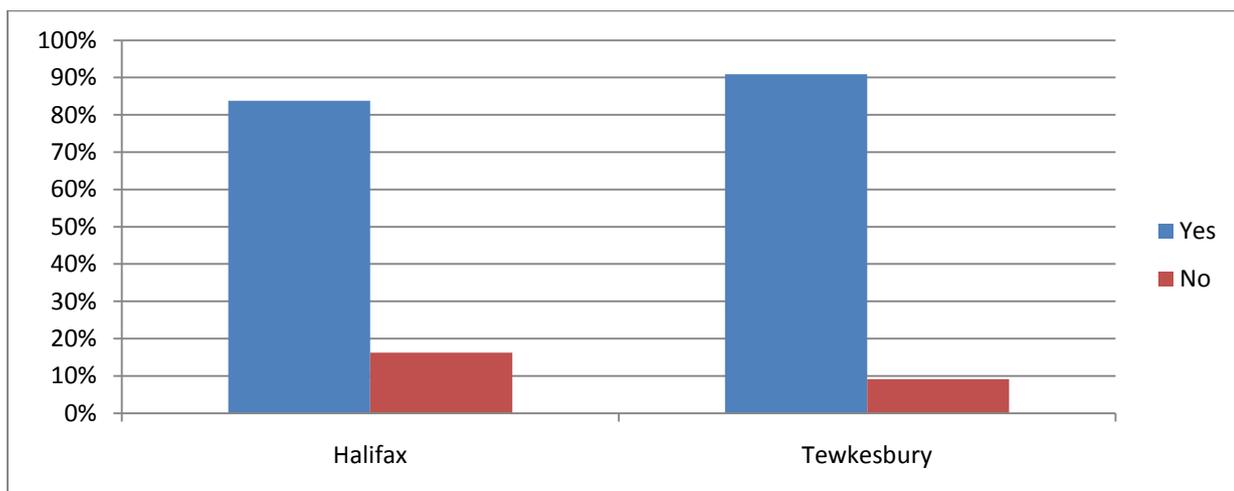


Figure 5 shows that for those with a food waste collection, the strongest driver for wasting less food was “other” – a change in habits or circumstances, followed by financial considerations. However, over 10% of respondents said that the food waste collection service had raised their awareness of the issue. Amongst those without a food waste collection, financial considerations were the strongest driver, again followed by “other”. It is also interesting to see that the data suggest (this not statistically significant) that more people without a food waste collection than those with a collection service said that they did not like to waste food generally.

3.1.5 Q5 Do you use the food waste collection service?

Residents in Halifax and Tewkesbury, where food waste collections are provided, were asked whether they use their food waste collection service. 84% of residents in Halifax (urban sample) and 91% of residents in Tewkesbury (rural sample) said that they do.

Figure 6: Question five – ‘Do you use the food waste collection service?’



3.1.6 Q6 Has using the food waste collection service increased, decreased or not affected the amount of food that you buy but does not get eaten? Do you...

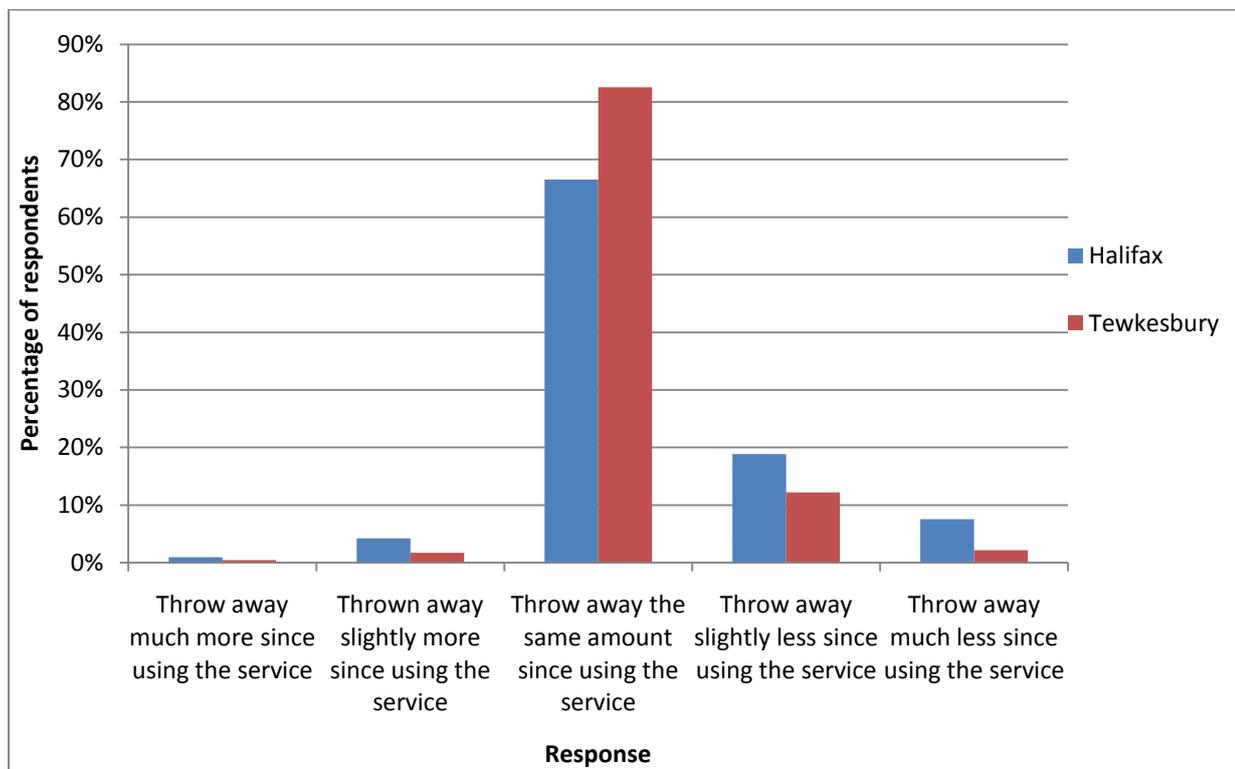
Respondents who used the food waste collection service were then asked whether using the food waste collection service had increased, decreased or not affected the amount of food that they buy that does not get eaten.

Table 6: Q6 – Has using the food waste collection affected the amount of food waste produced?

	Throw away much more since using the service	Thrown away slightly more since using the service	Throw away the same amount since using the service	Throw away slightly less since using the service	Throw away much less since using the service	Don't know
Count	3	13	331	68	21	6
Percentage	1%	3%	75%	15%	5%	1%

Three quarters of respondents said that the food waste service had not affected the amount of food waste that they produce, and they throw away the same amount since they started using the service. However it can be seen that 15% are throwing away slightly less, and 5% much less now that they use the service, and only 4% are throwing away more food waste now. However, many respondents may not have had a strong idea of how much food waste they were throwing away prior to using the food waste collection service, as it would not have been segregated from their residual waste. This may mean that respondents would have had difficulty answering this question accurately.

Figure 7: Q6 – ‘Has using the food waste collection affected the amount of food waste produced?’



The pattern of results was fairly similar in both Halifax and Tewkesbury, with the majority saying the amount they throw away has not changed, but importantly there are more respondents that say they throw away less food waste now than respondents who say they throw away more food waste now. Residents of Halifax appear to have, on the whole, thrown away less food waste since their collection was introduced, with more residents saying that they throw away slightly less or much less food now

compared with Tewkesbury, and fewer throwing away the same amount. A slightly higher proportion of respondents in Halifax also said that they throw away more food waste since they started using the food waste collection service, but the proportions here are low and the difference is not statistically significant.

3.1.7 Q7 and Q8 Thinking about the current ‘credit crunch’ and increasing food prices, please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither with the following statements

We asked the respondents to give their opinions on the following two statements thinking about the current ‘credit crunch’ and increasing food prices;

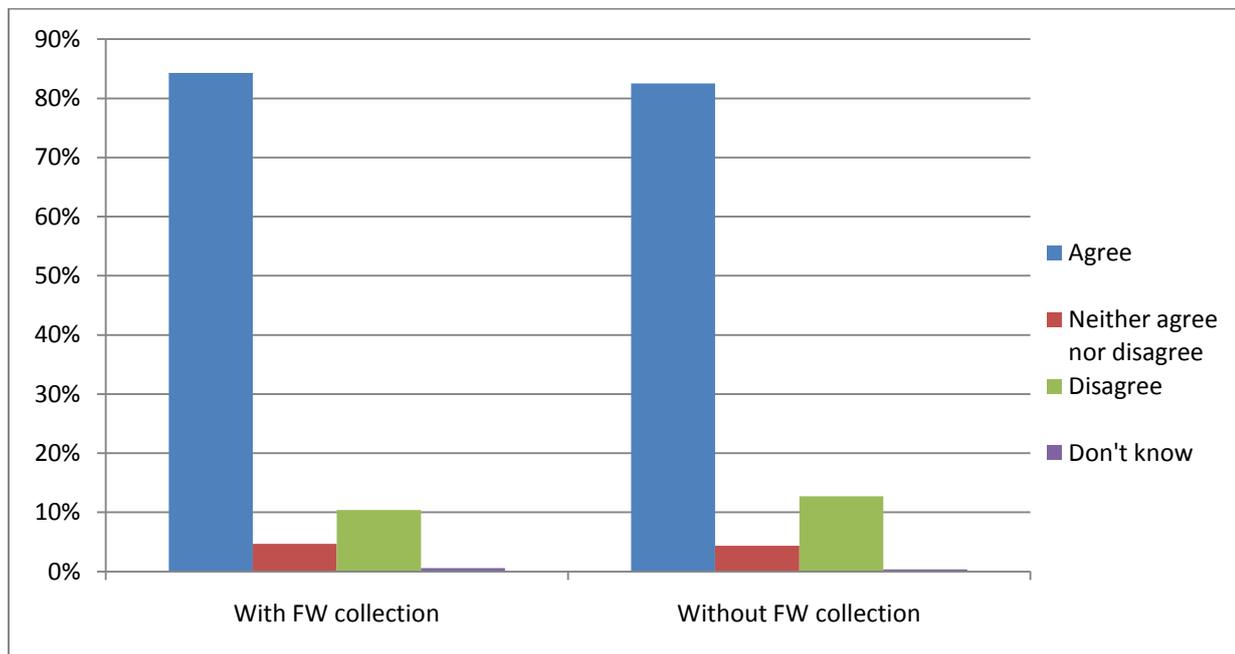
3.1.7.1 Q7 ‘You have become more concerned about the increasing cost of food in the last 2 years’

83% of respondents agreed with the first statement that they had become more concerned about the increasing cost of food over the last two years. 12% disagreed, and 5% neither agreed or disagreed.

Table 7: Q7 – You have become more concerned about the increasing cost of food

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree
Count	883	123	48
Percentage	83.38%	11.61%	4.53%

Figure 8: Q7 responses by FW / no FW collection



Looking at the results by presence of a food waste collection, the figures are very similar. In both cases over 80% agreed with the statement, and just over 10% disagreed with the statement.

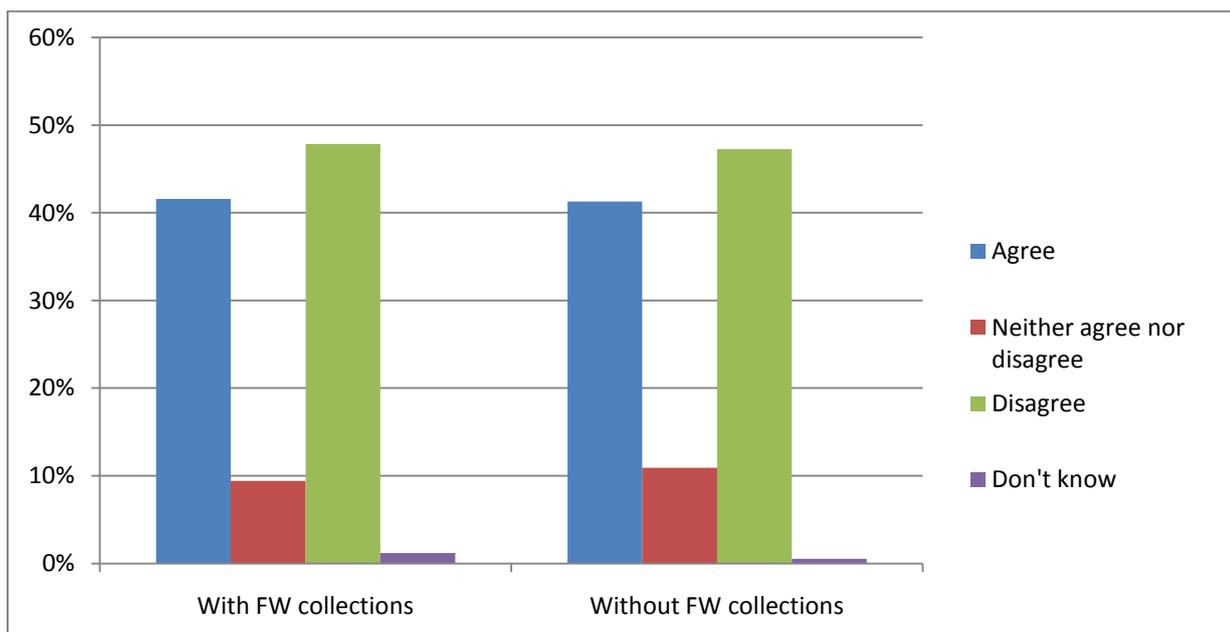
3.1.7.2 Q8 ‘In the last 2 years you have reduced the amount of food you buy but does not get eaten because of the cost’

Responses to the second statement were much more mixed, with 41% saying that they agreed with the statement, 48% disagreeing, and 10% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Table 8: Q8 – ‘You have reduced the amount of food bought but not eaten because of cost’

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Count	439	504	108	9
Percentage	41.42%	47.55%	10.19%	0.85%

Figure 9: Q8 – ‘You have reduced the amount of food bought but not eaten because of cost’ by FW / no FW collection



Comparing respondents with and without food waste collections, it can be seen that there is very little difference in attitude to this statement between the two groups.

3.1.8 Q9 to Q12 Now, thinking about food waste collections, please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither with the following statements.

The respondents were then read four statements regarding food waste collections, and again asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements. These results are particularly interesting to see when it comes to comparing attitudes towards food waste collections of those who do and do not already have the service provided.

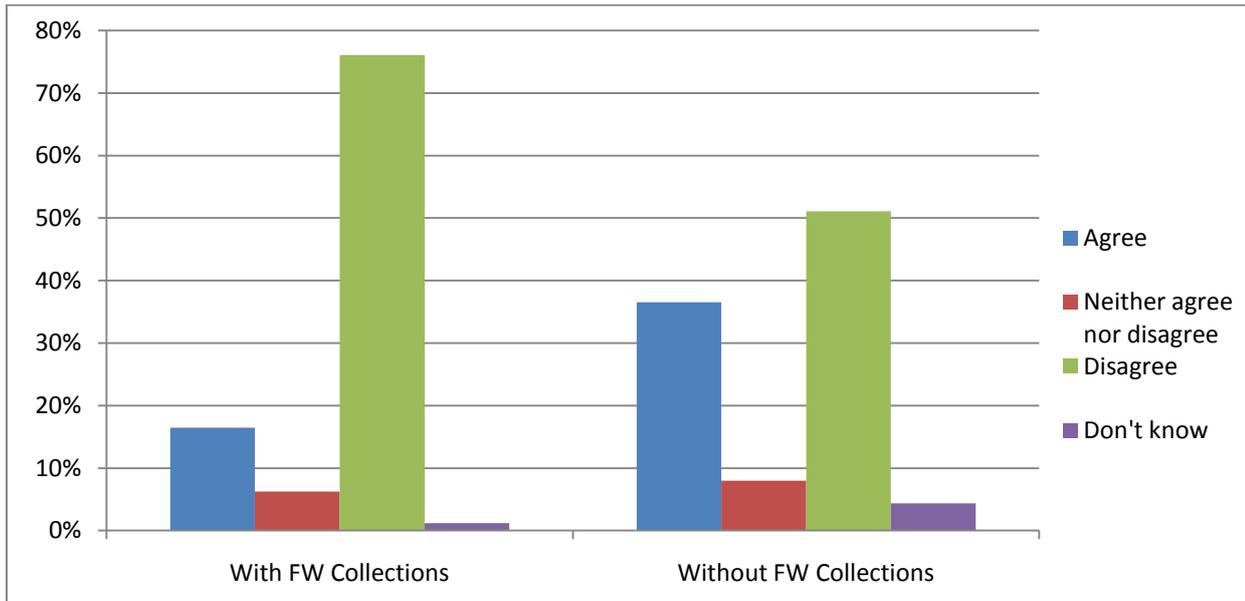
3.1.8.1 Q9 ‘Food waste collections are unnecessary’

Table 9 shows the overall results, with 63% of respondents disagreeing with the statement, and 27% agreeing.

Table 9: Q9 – ‘food waste collections are unnecessary’

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Count	285	669	76	30
Percentage	26.9%	63.1%	7.2%	2.8%

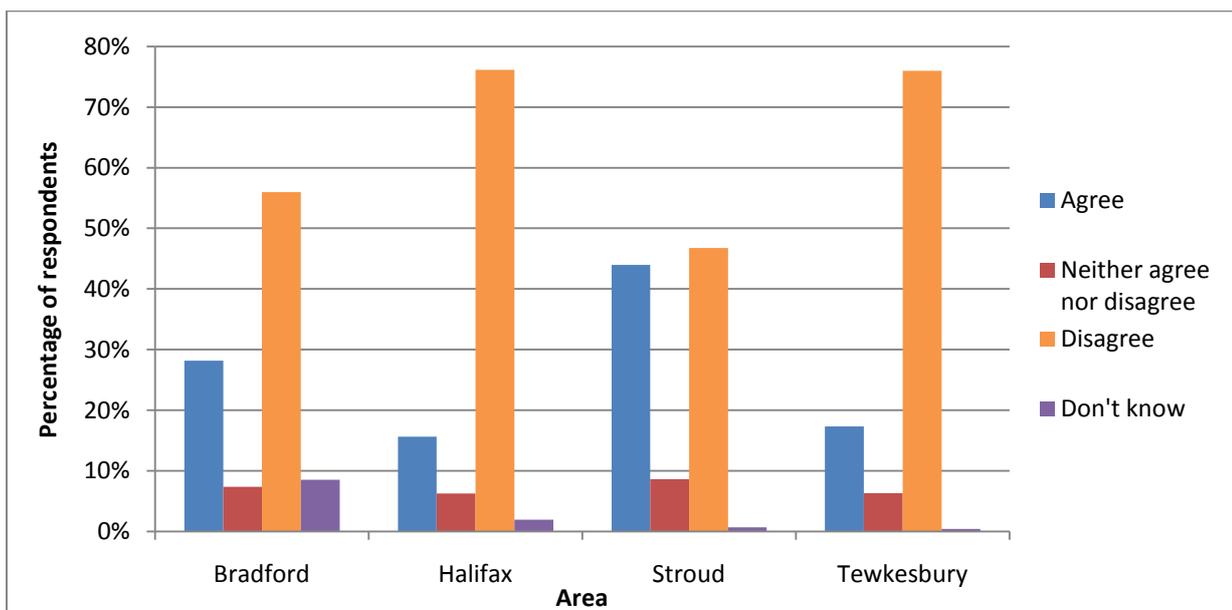
Figure 10: Q9 – ‘food waste collections are unnecessary’ by FW / no FW collection



It can be seen from Figure 10 that those respondents that already have a food waste collection were more inclined to disagree with the statement that “food waste collections are unnecessary”. In fact, 76% of respondents that were already provided with a food waste collection disagreed that food waste collections are unnecessary and only 16% agreed with it. Of the respondents without food waste collections provided, 37% agreed and 51% disagreed with the statement.

It is also interesting to compare the response to this question across the four areas. The two areas that already have food waste collections, Halifax and Tewkesbury, have the highest proportion of respondents that disagree with this statement with 76% of respondents in both areas saying that they disagree. In Bradford, 56% disagreed with the statement. However, in Stroud, which is a much more rural area than Bradford, the opinion on food waste collections was much more split, with 47% disagreeing and 44% agreeing with the statement.

Figure 11: Q9 – ‘food waste collections are unnecessary’ by area



3.1.8.2 Q10 'Food waste collections are good for the environment'

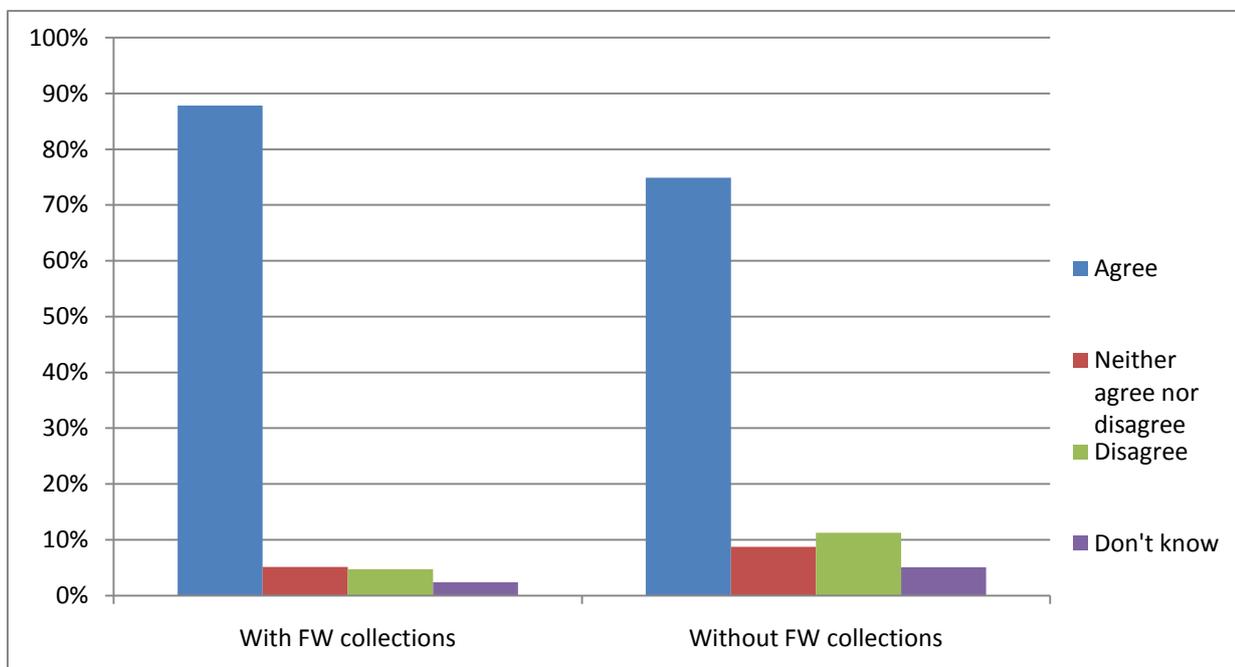
The second statement was "food waste collections are good for the environment". Overall, 81% of respondents agreed with this statement and just 8% disagreed.

Table 10: Q10 – 'food waste collections are good for the environment'

	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Count	859	86	74	40
Percentage	81.1%	8.1%	7.0%	3.8%

The results are shown by areas with and without FW collections in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Q10 – 'food waste collections are good for the environment' by FW / no FW collection



Again, this figure shows that the residents that already have a food waste collection have a more favourable view of them, with 88% agreeing that they are good for the environment compared with 75% of those without food waste collections in their area.

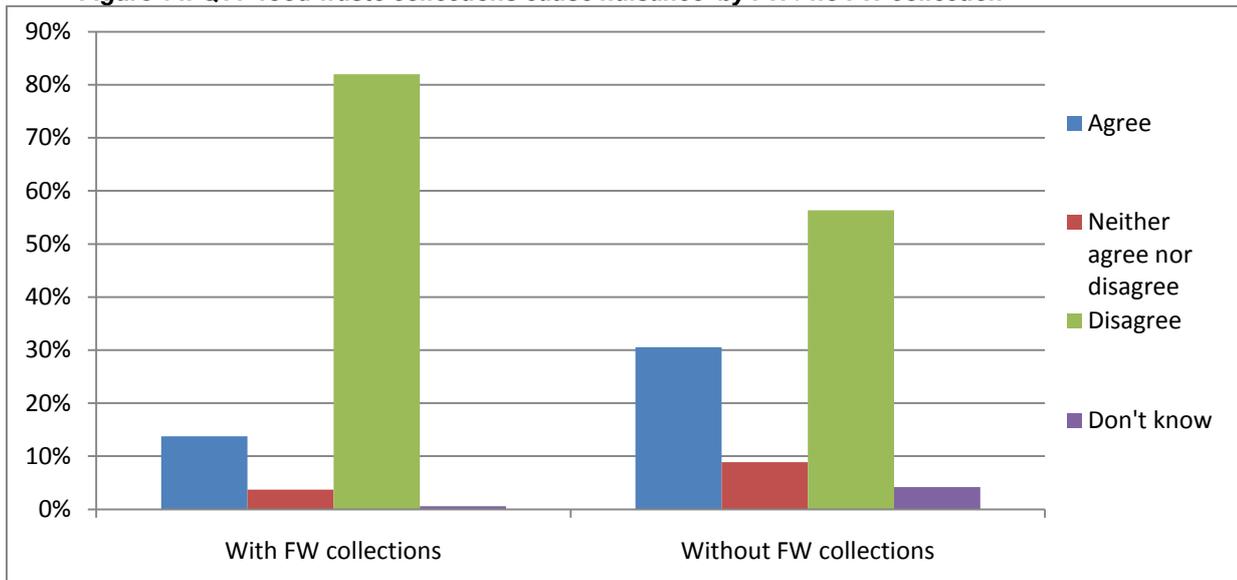
3.1.8.3 Q11 'Food waste collections cause nuisance'

The next statement was "food waste collections cause nuisance". 23% of respondents agreed with this statement, and 69% disagreed.

Figure 13: Q11 'food waste collections cause nuisance'

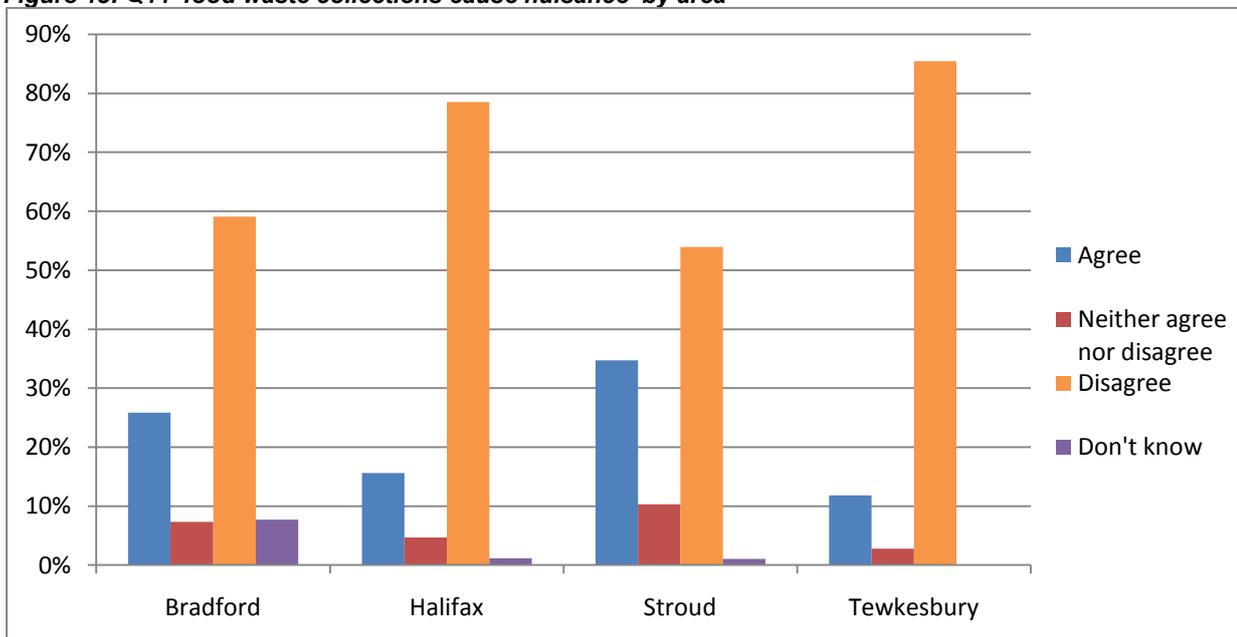
	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Count	238	728	68	26
Percentage	22.5%	68.7%	6.4%	2.5%

Figure 14: Q11 'food waste collections cause nuisance' by FW / no FW collection



Again, the most positive response comes from residents that already have food waste collections, with 82% disagreeing with the statement “food waste collections cause nuisance” compared with 56% of those residents without a collection. Just over 30% of residents without food waste collections agreed with the statement, compared to 14% with. A larger proportion of residents without food waste collections said that they did not agree or disagree with the statement, or did not know if they cause nuisance, compared with respondents receiving a food waste collection service.

Figure 15: Q11 'food waste collections cause nuisance' by area



Again, looking at the results by area, Halifax and Tewkesbury had the most favourable view with the highest proportion of respondents disagreeing that food waste collections cause nuisance; in Tewkesbury 85% disagreed with the statement, and just 12% agreed. Stroud had the highest percentage of residents that agreed at 35%. Opinions in Bradford were much wider ranging with 26% agreeing and 59% disagreeing with the statement.

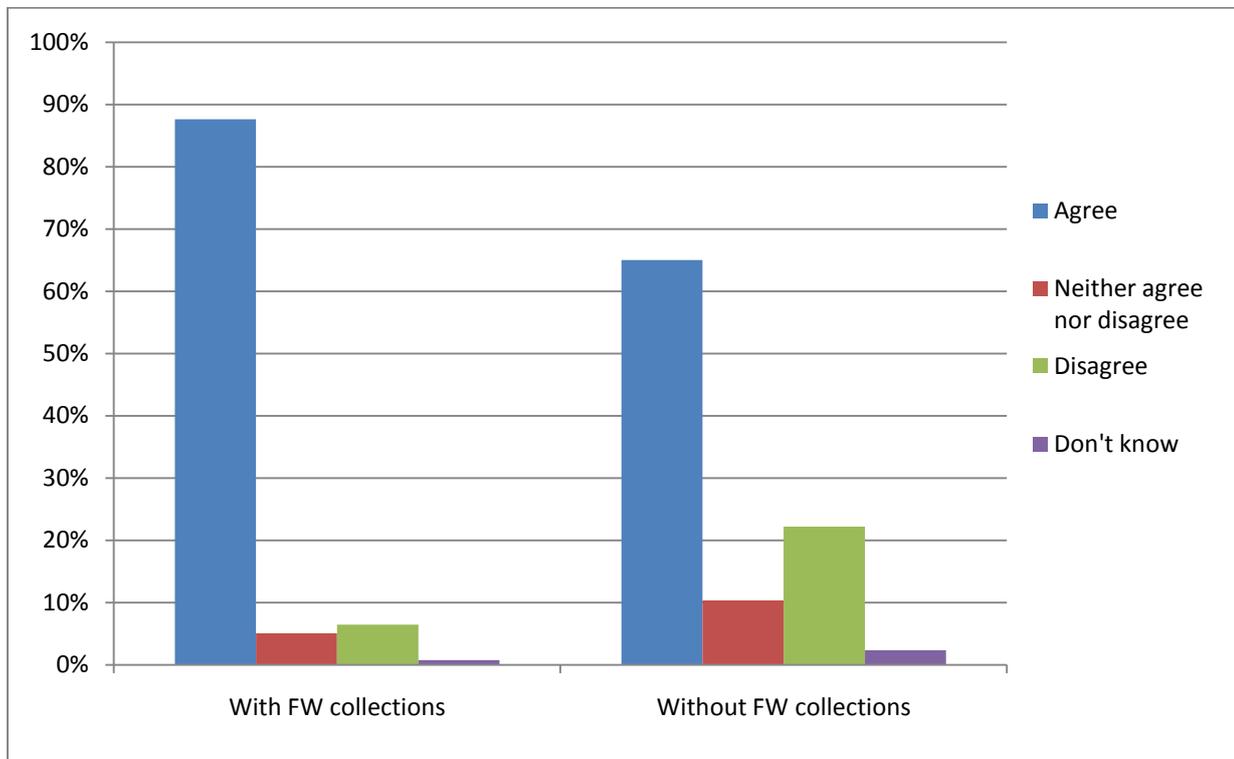
3.1.8.4 Q12 'All councils should provide food waste collections'

The final statement was "all councils should provide food waste collections". The full results are shown in the table below; 76% of respondents agreed that all councils should provide food waste collections, and 15% disagreed with the statement.

Table 11: Q12 – 'All councils should provide food waste collections'

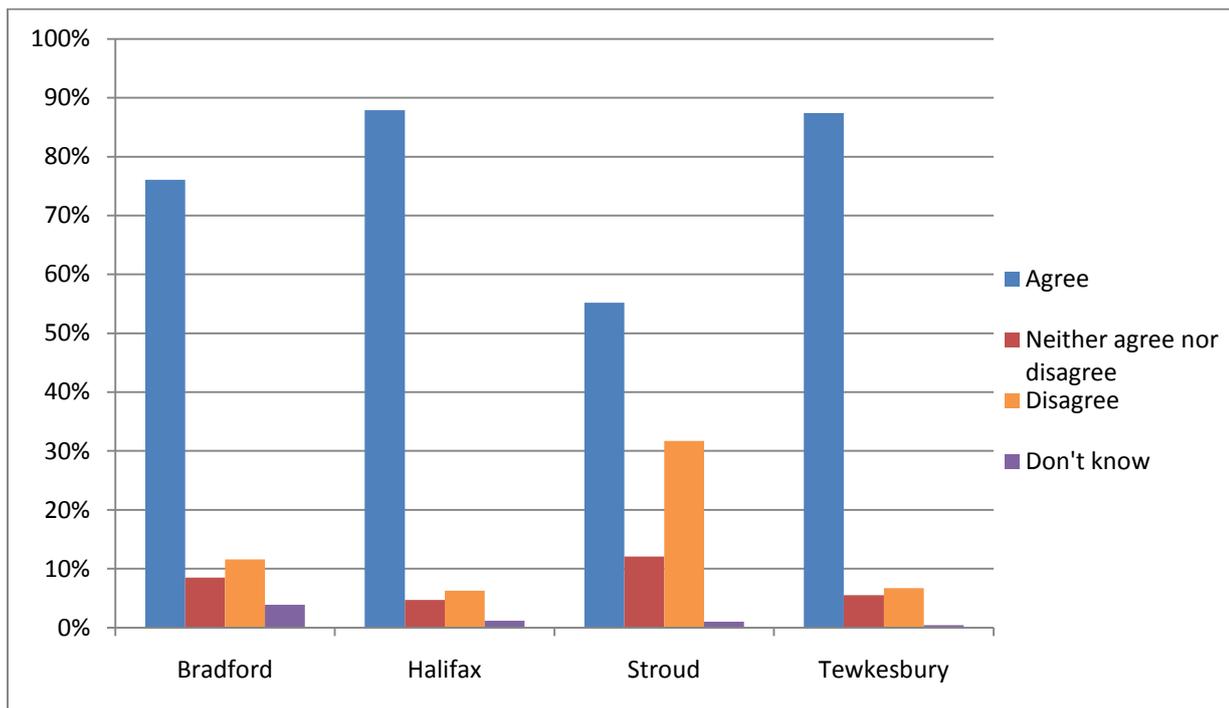
	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Don't know
Count	804	155	83	17
Percentage	75.9%	14.6%	7.8%	1.6%

Figure 16: Q12– 'All councils should provide food waste collections' by FW / no FW collection



Almost 90% of the respondents that are provided with food waste collections agreed that all councils should be providing such collections, and only 6% disagreed. In contrast, just 65% of residents without a food waste collection agreed with the statement, and 22% disagreed.

Figure 17: Q12 – ‘All councils should provide food waste collections’ by area



Responses to this statement also exhibit interesting area differences. A greater proportion of residents in areas with a service (Halifax and Tewkesbury) agreed with this statement and responses did not differ from urban and rural samples. In Bradford a large proportion of residents also agreed with the universal provision of food waste collections. Again, Stroud stood out, with a significantly higher proportion of residents disagreeing with the statement compare with other areas.

3.1.9 Q13 ‘What is your main method of getting rid of food that does not get eaten?’

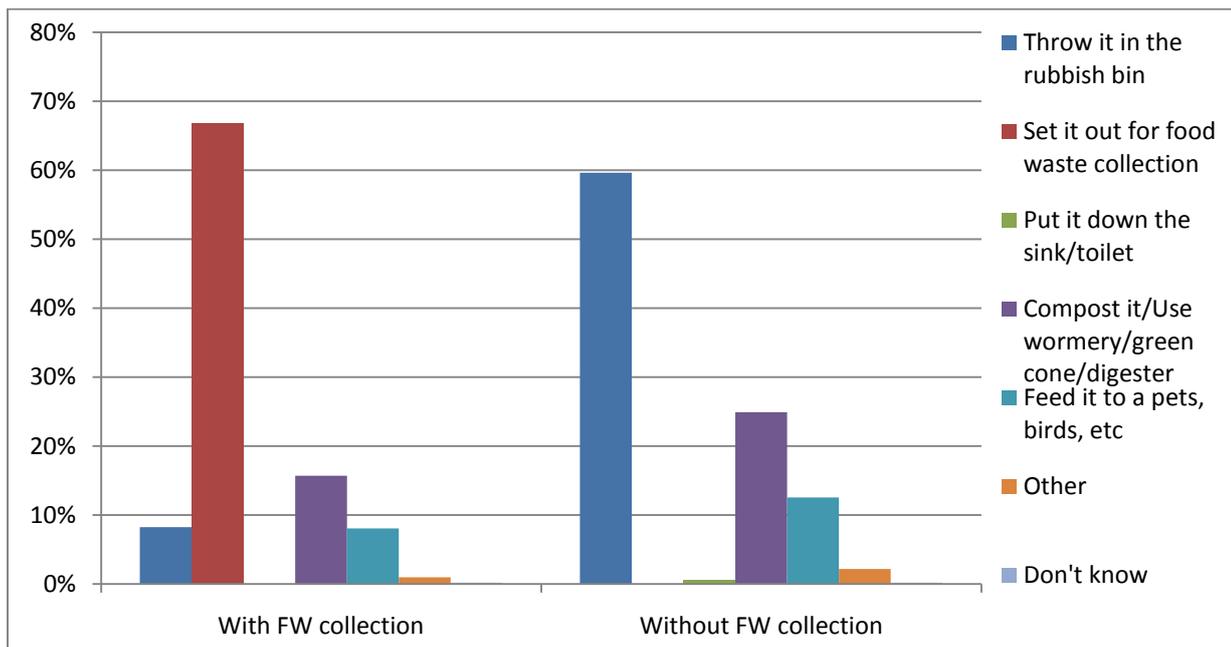
Finally, residents were asked what their usual means of throwing out food waste is. Overall, 35% throw food waste in the rubbish bin, and 32% use the food waste collection. 20% compost food, and 10% feed it to birds, pets etc.

Table 12: Q13 – ‘what is your main method of getting rid of food waste?’

	Throw it in the rubbish bin	Set it out for food waste collection	Put it down the sink/toilet	Compost it/Use wormery/green cone/digester	Feed it to a pets, birds, etc	Other	Don't know
Count	370	341	3	217	110	17	2
Percentage	34.9%	32.2%	0.3%	20.5%	10.4%	1.6%	0.2%

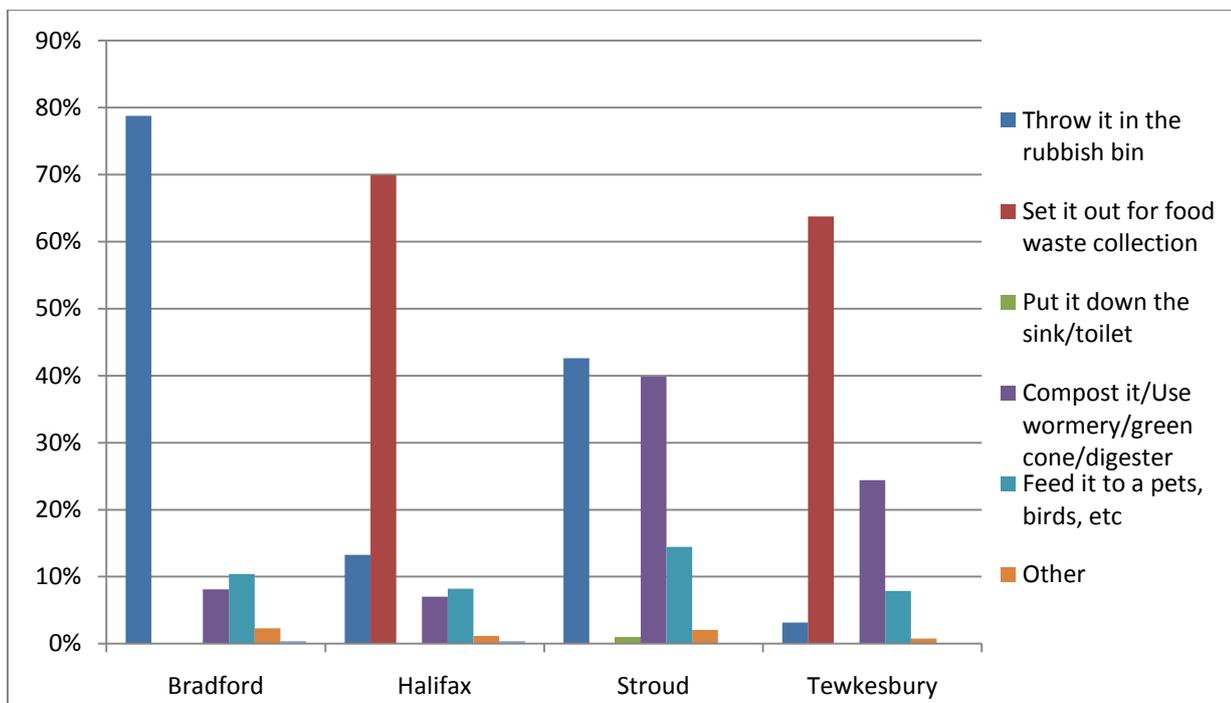
The figure below shows the results by residents with and without a food waste collection service in their area.

Figure 18: Q13 'what is your main method of getting rid of food waste?' by FW / no FW collection



As would be expected, in areas where there is a food waste collection service provided, the largest percentage of respondents stated that this is their usual way of getting rid of food waste, with 67% saying that they would usually set food waste out for collection separately. Just 8% would normally use the general waste, which includes those that do not participate in the food waste collection scheme as seen in Q5, and 16% compost (or similar) at home. In the areas without a food waste collection service, again as would be expected, the highest percentage of respondents said that they put food waste out with the general waste, with just under 60% saying that they would usually do this. A larger proportion of this group do home composting, with a quarter of respondents stating that they do this. More residents without food waste collections also feed waste food to birds, pets etc., with just 13% doing this compared to 8% of residents with a food waste collection.

Figure 19: Question 10 'what is your main method of getting rid of food waste?' by area



It is again interesting to look at this question by area to compare urban and rural households. In Halifax and Tewkesbury, where residents are provided with a food waste collection service, the majority of respondents said that they use this method. In Stroud, where there is no food waste collection but the area is fairly rural, home composting is very high, with 40% claiming to use this method to dispose of their food waste. The ability of many of these residents to compost at home may go some way towards explaining their less positive views of food waste collections evident in previous questions. Use of the rubbish bin for food waste disposal was by far and away highest in Bradford, where almost 80% of respondents used this route: a result reflecting the lower access to alternative options associated with an urban environment.

4. Conclusions

In total, the surveyors spoke to 1,056 residents who were responsible for cooking, preparing or shopping for food in their household. These residents were spread across areas that do and do not have a food waste collection service, and across rural and urban areas.

The key finding related to attitudes to food waste collections. Responding to statements about food waste collections, there is an important and significant difference in responses between those already with food waste collections, who on the whole have a more positive attitude towards them, and those without. More respondents with food waste collections disagreed that the collections are unnecessary and agreed that they are good for the environment than those without. Much fewer respondents with food waste collections than without them thought that they cause nuisance, and a larger proportion of this group thought that all councils should provide food waste collections.

Overall, the results do not show any significant difference in the perceptions of the amount of food wasted between those with and those without food waste collections. It may well be that those who have a food waste collection have in fact been made more aware of the amount of food that they are throwing away, compared with those who do not have to separate their food waste from the rest of their residual rubbish. This finding is consistent with earlier survey work carried out by WRAP in 2006, which established that few consumers say that they waste significant amounts of food².

Both the areas with food waste collection had had the scheme in operation for at least one year. When asked whether they thought they threw away more or less food waste than two years ago, over 60% of all respondents thought they threw out about the same amount of food waste now compared with two years ago, while 29% of respondents felt that they throw away either slightly or much less food waste than two years ago. These results did not vary significantly when comparing the respondents with and without a food waste collection.

When respondents who said that they now throw away less food than two years ago were asked why, financial reasons, and changes within the composition of the household were the most common responses. Over 10% of those with a food waste collection service said that the introduction of this service had raised their awareness of food waste issues. Since they started using the service 75% of respondents have not changed the amount of food waste that they throw away, but 20% throw away less.

Respondents on the whole have become increasingly concerned about the cost of food waste in the last two years, although this has not necessarily translated into the respondents reducing the amount of food that they waste.

Finally, as would be expected, the largest proportion of those with food waste collections use this as their usual route for disposing of food waste. Respondents without food waste collections on the whole used their rubbish bin, although more of this group composted their food waste or fed it to pets compared to those with a food waste collection.

² WRAP, Food Behaviour Consumer Research: Quantitative Phase, June 2007.

Appendix 1 - The questionnaire

Food waste survey

2011

Interviewer Name:		Date of Interview:	
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Area ref:		Respondent ref:	
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Good morning / afternoon, I'm carrying out a survey – it's about the food we throw away. It will take less than 5 minutes. Can I ask:

QQ1 Do you cook, prepare or shop for food for your house? [SINGLE CODE ONLY]	
Yes	Go to question 2
No	Ask if there is anyone else available. If not, end of survey

When we talk about food waste, or throwing food away, we are thinking about food that is purchased and not eaten. In this sense it is wasted even if it is composted, set out for food waste collection, or fed to a pet.

Q2 Thinking about different types of food waste such as these on the showcard, [SHOWCARD A], how much uneaten food, overall, would you say you generally end up throwing away? [READ OUT, SINGLE CODE ONLY]	
1	Quite a lot
2	A reasonable amount
3	Some
4	A small amount
5	Hardly any
6	None
7	Don't know [DO NOT PROMPT]

Q3	Compared with 2 years ago, would you say that the amount of food that you buy but does not get eaten has increased, decreased or stayed the same? Do you... [READ OUT OR SHOW CARD, SINGLE CODE ONLY]	
1	Throw away much more than 2 years ago	Go to filter 1
2	Throw away slightly more than 2 years ago	Go to filter 1
3	Throw away the same amount 2 years ago	Go to filter 1
4	Throw away slightly less than 2 years ago	Go to Q4
5	Throw away much less than 2 years ago	Go to Q4
6	Don't know/can't remember DO NOT PROMPT	Go to filter 1

Q4	Ask only if option 4 or 5 for Q3 Why have you reduced the amount of food you throw away? [DO NOT PROMPT, SELECT UP TO THREE ONLY. PROBE: is there anything else?]	
1	Environmental considerations	
2	Food waste collection service raised awareness	
3	Financial considerations	
4	Guilt	
5	Dirt/Smell	
6	Feeling of incompetence	
7	Does not like to waste generally	
8	Does not like to waste food	
9	It makes respondent feel like they've wasted their time	
10	Other (specify)	
11	Don't know DO NOT PROMPT	

Q4 Other:

FILTER 1 Is this a food waste collection area? [DO NOT ASK RESPONDENT]	
Yes	Go to question 5
No	Go to question 7

Q5	Ask only in food waste collection areas. Otherwise go to Q7		
	Do you use the food waste collection service? [SINGLE CODE ONLY]		
Yes	Go to question 6		
No	Go to question 7		

Q6	Has using the food waste collection service increased, decreased or not affected the amount of food that you buy but does not get eaten? Do you... [READ OUT OR SHOW CARD, SINGLE CODE ONLY]		
1	Throw away much more since using the service		
2	Throw away slightly more since using the service		
3	Throw away the same amount since using the service		
4	Throw away slightly less since using the service		
5	Throw away much less since using the service		
6	Don't know/can't remember DO NOT PROMPT		

I am going to read you some statements. Thinking about the current 'credit crunch' and increasing food prices, please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither with the following statements. SINGLE CODE ONLY		A	N		
		g	e		
		r	i		
		e	s		
		e	a		
		e	g		
			r		
			e		
			n		
			o		
			w		
Q7	You have become more concerned about the increasing cost of food in the last 2 years				
Q8	In the last 2 years you have reduced the amount of food you buy but does not get eaten because of the cost				

Now, thinking about food waste collections, please tell me whether you agree, disagree, or neither with the following statements.		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Q9	Food waste collections are unnecessary				
Q10	Food waste collections are good for the environment				
Q11	Food waste collections cause nuisance				
Q12	All councils should provide food waste collections				

Q13	What is your main method of getting rid of food that does not get eaten? (DO NOT PROMPT, SINGLE CODE ONLY)
	Throw it in the rubbish bin
	Set it out for food waste collection
	Put it down the sink/toilet
	Compost it/Use wormery/green cone/digester
	Feed it to a pets, birds, etc
	Other
	Don't know (DO NOT PROMPT)

Q13 Other:

End of survey