

PREPARING FOR **DIGITAL WASTE TRACKING**

A practical readiness guide
for UK waste operations



DEFRA RECEIPT OF WASTE API
Production approval testing passed

For waste receiving sites, carriers,
managers and waste producers

Updated August 2026

wastextracking.com



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY + GUIDE MAP

Digital Waste Tracking is becoming an operational requirement.

The immediate focus is receipt reporting by licensed and permitted waste receiving sites. The practical challenge is making sure the right information is captured, checked, submitted and retained without creating a second disconnected admin process.

MANDATORY RECEIPT REPORTING

England & Wales: 1 October 2026 | Scotland & Northern Ireland: 1 January 2027

Every receipt must be reported within 2 working days from the day after the waste is received.

WHAT THIS SUPER PACK COVERS

01 UNDERSTAND

DWT basics, four-nation dates and what Phase 1 covers.

PAGES 03-07

02 PREPARE

Operational change, reporting routes and receiving-site readiness.

PAGES 08-15

03 OPERATE

Carriers, duty of care and one connected chain-of-custody workflow.

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04 IMPROVE

Why structured waste data can improve visibility, accountability and audits.

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05 BUDGET & TEST

Cost categories plus a practical readiness scorecard.

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06 ACT

Frequently asked questions and Waste X pilot access.

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THE WASTE X PRINCIPLE

Capture once. Validate. Submit. Retain. Audit.

Build reporting into the operational workflow - not on top of it.

DWT 101

What is Digital Waste Tracking?

Digital Waste Tracking is the government's phased programme for recording waste movements digitally. The first live service is 'report receipt of waste', focused on data about waste entering licensed or permitted receiving sites.

FOR RECEIPT REPORTING, DEFRA CURRENTLY PROVIDES TWO SUBMISSION ROUTES

01

API-enabled software

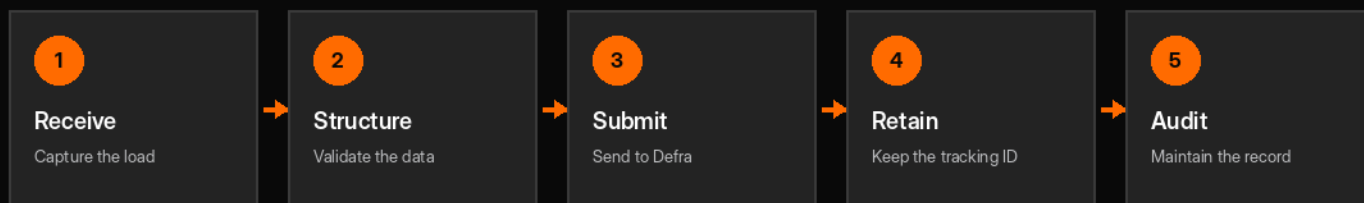
Waste-specific software connects to Defra so receipt data can be sent directly from the operational system.

02

Defra spreadsheet

Sites without compatible software can complete Defra's spreadsheet template and upload the movements.

THE OBJECTIVE



Important:

The new receipt service does not immediately remove every existing waste reporting obligation. Operators should continue following current regulatory requirements alongside Digital Waste Tracking unless official guidance says otherwise.

Waste X focuses on capturing operational data once, retaining an auditable record, and supporting direct submission through the Receipt of Waste API.

FOUR-NATION POSITION

One service. Four nations.
Two mandatory start dates.

Digital Waste Tracking is being delivered across the UK, but each nation has its own regulatory timetable and environmental regulator.

Nation	Mandatory receipt reporting	Regulator	Phase 1 note
ENGLAND	1 OCTOBER 2026	Environment Agency	Licensed / permitted receiving sites. Commercial waste at permitted HWRCs is included in Phase 1.
WALES	1 OCTOBER 2026	Natural Resources Wales	Licensed / permitted receiving sites. HWRC commercial-waste arrangements differ from England.
SCOTLAND	1 JANUARY 2027	SEPA	Licensed / permitted receiving sites move to mandatory receipt reporting from January.
NORTHERN IRELAND	1 JANUARY 2027	NIEA / DAERA	Licensed / permitted receiving sites move to mandatory receipt reporting from January.

ONE UK SERVICE

The same Defra receipt service underpins the rollout, but the mandatory start date and regulator depend on where the receiving site operates.

CROSS-BORDER GROUPS

Between October 2026 and January 2027, organisations operating across borders may need to manage different mandatory start dates at the same time.

Public-beta access and local-authority arrangements can change. Check the latest Defra and regulator guidance for your organisation.

SCOPE CHECK

Is your operation in Phase 1?

Phase 1 starts with organisations operating licensed or permitted waste receiving sites. Other parts of the waste chain are being introduced later.

PHASE 1 - RECEIVING SITES

Likely in scope

- 1 Organisations operating one or more licensed or permitted sites that receive waste.
- 2 Receipt information for waste entering those permitted / licensed sites.
- 3 Waste containing persistent organic pollutants (POPs), where applicable.
- 4 Commercial waste received at permitted HWRC sites in England during Phase 1.

LATER / DIFFERENT TREATMENT

Not the Phase 1 core

- 1 Registered waste exemptions - Defra says these are not included in Phase 1.
- 2 Waste collectors: carriers, brokers and dealers - planned for Phase 2.
- 3 Green-list waste exports and imports - planned for a future phase.
- 4 Some HWRC / household scenarios vary by nation and should be checked against regulator guidance.

THE SIMPLE STARTING QUESTION

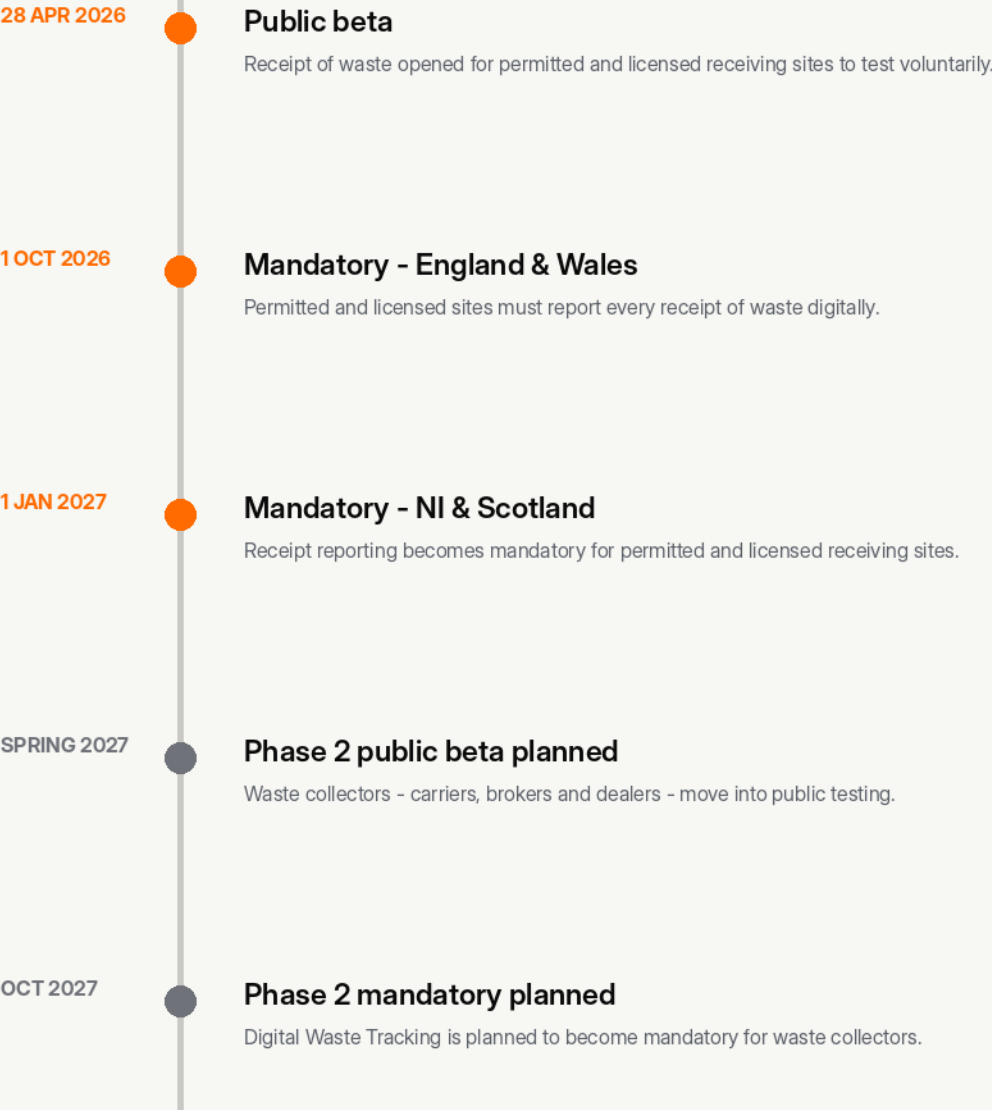
Does your organisation operate a site that must hold a permit or licence to receive waste?

If yes, Phase 1 is likely relevant. Confirm the exact regulatory position with your environmental regulator, especially for unusual waste streams or authorisations.

TIMELINE

The Digital Waste Tracking rollout

The programme is being introduced in phases. Receiving sites are first, followed by waste collectors. Later stages will extend digital tracking across more of the waste chain.



CURRENT PRIORITY

Receiving-site readiness

OPERATIONAL CHANGE

What changes at the receiving site?

The biggest change is not the arrival of one more form. It is the requirement to produce structured, timely receipt data while existing site operations continue.

PROCESS	TODAY	WITH RECEIPT REPORTING
Receipt capture	Paper, local forms or separate software.	A structured digital receipt must also be reported.
Reporting deadline	Timing depends on existing processes and returns.	Every receipt must be reported within 2 working days from the day after receipt.
Submission route	No connection to the national receipt service.	Use compatible API software, Defra's spreadsheet, or a combination of both.
Existing paperwork	WTNs, consignment notes and other current reporting.	These continue initially alongside Digital Waste Tracking.
Auditability	Records can be fragmented across paper, email and local systems.	Digital reporting creates a clearer submission record and makes gaps easier to identify.

THE PRACTICAL SHIFT

The operational record needs to be ready before the reporting deadline arrives.

For high-volume sites, the key questions are who captures the data, who checks it, how errors are corrected, and how the receipt is retained for audit.

OPERATIONAL READINESS

The challenge is bigger than "sending a file".

Digital reporting introduces a data deadline, but the real pressure sits inside existing site workflows: who captures the information, where it is stored, how it is checked, and who fixes errors.

01

Waste receivers

- Can your team capture every incoming load consistently?
- Can you verify carrier, waste and site information before submission?
- Who owns corrections when Defra rejects a record?

02

Carriers & managers

- Can assignment, collection and vehicle information be linked to the same waste record?
- Can teams share load references without duplicating admin?
- How will later DWT phases fit your current process?

03

Waste producers

- Can you demonstrate where waste went and who handled it?
- Are carrier and receiver authorisations checked?
- Can you retrieve a complete chain of custody for audit or dispute?

The readiness question

Can your organisation produce a complete, accurate receipt record within the reporting window without creating a second administrative process?

CHOOSING A ROUTE

Three practical ways to meet receipt reporting

Defra allows receipt data to be submitted through its spreadsheet or through compatible software connected to the Receipt of Waste API. Larger organisations may also build their own integration.

ROUTE	BEST FIT	STRENGTHS	TRADE-OFFS
Defra spreadsheet	Lower-volume operations	No software integration required. Official template.	Manual preparation and upload. Data may still be duplicated across operational systems.
API-enabled software	Sites wanting integrated workflows	Data can flow directly from waste-specific software to Defra.	Requires compatible software, implementation and internal process change.
Internal API integration	Larger technical teams	Maximum control over internal architecture and integrations.	Development, security, maintenance and regulatory change remain your responsibility.

WHERE WASTE X FITS

Waste X is the API-enabled software route: operational waste records are structured inside the platform, receipt data is submitted through Defra's API, and the resulting record remains connected to the wider chain of custody.

PHASE 1 - WASTE RECEIVERS

Receiving sites are first.

From 1 October 2026 in England and Wales, organisations operating licensed or permitted waste-receiving sites must report every receipt of waste through the new service.

2 WORKING DAYS

Reporting window

from the day after receipt

£26 / YEAR

Defra service charge

per organisation, not per site

EVERY RECEIPT

Scope

report each waste receipt

A RECEIVING-SITE WORKFLOW SHOULD BE ABLE TO

- ☒ Capture the date and time the waste was received
- ☒ Identify the waste and record the required classification information
- ☒ Record weight, container and physical-form information where required
- ☒ Record carrier, vehicle and transport information
- ☒ Identify the receiving site and relevant authorisation
- ☒ Submit the record and retain the Waste Tracking ID
- ☒ Identify and correct failed or incomplete submissions
- ☒ Maintain a clear audit trail for compliance teams

RECEIPT DATA

What information needs to be captured?

The Receipt of Waste API contains required, conditional and optional data fields. The exact rules depend on the movement, but sites should make sure their workflows can reliably capture the following categories.

01 Movement details

Receipt date/time, references and consignment information.

02 Waste classification

EWC codes, waste description and physical form.

03 Containers

Number and type of containers where applicable.

04 Weight

Metric, amount and whether the weight is estimated.

05 POPs & hazardous

Presence, source and relevant component/property information.

06 Carrier & transport

Registration, organisation, vehicle and means of transport.

07 Receiver & site

Site name, address and environmental authorisation number.

08 Recovery / disposal

Relevant disposal or recovery codes and quantities where required.

Always check the latest Defra data requirements before implementation.

Field rules may be updated as the service evolves.

WORKED SCENARIO

A digital receipt, step by step.

A realistic workflow shows why Digital Waste Tracking is an operational process, not simply a submission at the end of the day.

08:42

1

Vehicle arrives

Record the receiving site, carrier, vehicle and source details available at arrival.

08:45

2

Confirm the load

Capture waste description, classification, physical form, containers and weight or quantity.

08:50

3

Validate information

Check required fields and make sure the record reflects what was actually received.

09:00

4

Accept or manage an issue

Record acceptance, rejection or an operational incident so the audit trail matches reality.

BY DEADLINE

5

Submit the receipt

Send the structured receipt through API-enabled software or Defra's spreadsheet route.

AFTER

6

Retain the evidence

Keep the receipt status, Waste Tracking ID where returned, and the supporting operational history together.

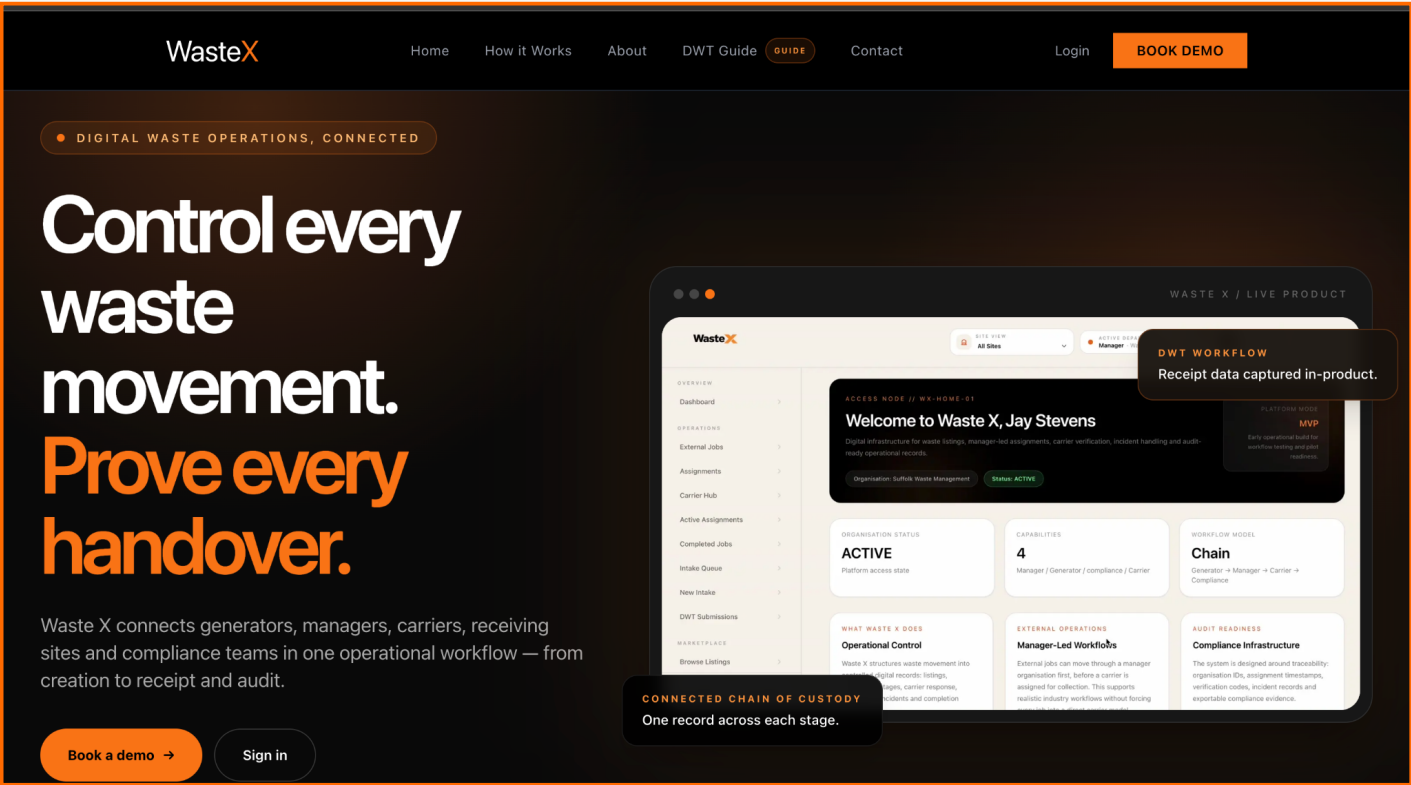
WASTE X PRINCIPLE

The receipt should be part of the same operational history as the movement - not a separate admin task.

WASTE X FOR RECEIVING SITES

From receipt to Defra submission - in one workflow.

Waste X is designed to turn the compliance requirement into part of the operational intake process, rather than a separate reporting task at the end of the day.



- 01

Capture

Structured receipt data
- 02

Validate

Required fields and references
- 03

Submit

Direct API workflow
- 04

Retain

Waste Tracking ID + audit history

The same organisation can also manage assignments, collection activity, incidents, departments and wider chain-of-custody records inside Waste X.

PREPARATION ROADMAP

Your DWT readiness roadmap.

A short, disciplined preparation cycle is more useful than waiting for the mandatory date and trying to fix process, data and training at once.

01 UNDERSTAND

Confirm in-scope sites, receipt volumes, waste streams and who owns the reporting obligation.

02 DECIDE

Choose the reporting route: API-enabled software, Defra spreadsheet, internal integration, or a controlled combination.

03 CONFIGURE

Set up organisations, sites, permit details, users, roles and standard waste data.

04 SIMULATE

Run realistic receipts - including incomplete data, corrections and failed submissions.

05 TRAIN

Train gate, weighbridge, operations and compliance staff on their part of the workflow.

06 GO LIVE & REVIEW

Monitor data quality, submission success and process ownership from day one.

USE THE VOLUNTARY WINDOW

Test people, data and software together before the mandatory date.

Defra encourages permitted receiving sites to start using the public beta so issues can be found before reporting becomes mandatory.

RISK & RESILIENCE

When reporting is treated as an afterthought.

Digital reporting makes gaps and weak data easier to identify. The main risk is not the API itself - it is a process that cannot consistently produce a complete receipt record.

01 MISSED OR LATE RECEIPTS

If reporting ownership is unclear, loads can fall outside the required reporting window.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Visible gaps, chasing and avoidable compliance pressure.

02 INCOMPLETE OR INVALID DATA

Missing carrier, site, waste or quantity information can block or delay a clean submission.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Rework, correction activity and slower operations.

03 DISCONNECTED EVIDENCE

The submission may sit separately from the movement, incident or operational notes.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Harder audits and weaker accountability.

04 GATE / WEIGHBRIDGE BOTTLENECKS

Teams can be forced to collect new data without a clear workflow or training plan.

BUSINESS IMPACT

Queues, duplicate entry and staff frustration.

THE CONTROL POINT

Build a repeatable receipt process before you rely on the reporting deadline to expose the gaps.

Regulatory consequences depend on the circumstances and applicable law. This guide is general information, not legal advice.

FUTURE PHASES

Carriers, brokers and dealers are next.

Defra currently plans Phase 2 of Digital Waste Tracking for waste collectors - carriers, brokers and dealers - with public beta from spring 2027 and mandatory use planned from October 2027.

01**Autumn 2026**

Private beta planned for an invited group of waste collectors.

02**Spring 2027**

Public beta planned for waste collectors.

03**October 2027**

Mandatory Digital Waste Tracking planned for waste collectors.

WASTE X ALREADY STRUCTURES THE OPERATIONAL SIDE

01**Assign**

Route work internally, directly, or through controlled external workflows.

02**Collect**

Carriers receive assignments and record collection activity.

03**Confirm**

Verification and status changes become part of the audit history.

04**Extend**

Future regulatory submission steps can be added as Defra publishes later-phase requirements.

Later-phase details are still evolving. Waste X will follow published Defra requirements as they mature.

WASTE PRODUCERS & MANAGERS

Digital tracking does not replace duty of care.

In England and Wales, duty of care already applies to businesses that produce, carry, keep, treat, dispose of, import or control waste. Organisations must take reasonable steps to ensure waste is handled lawfully throughout its journey.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE

01

Authorised parties

Check that carriers, brokers and receiving sites have the correct authorisations.

02

Accurate description

Provide enough information to enable lawful and safe handling of the waste.

03

Traceability

Take reasonable steps to understand where the waste is going and whether it reaches the intended destination.

04

Record keeping

Keep appropriate documentation and evidence of the checks and transfers made.

WHERE WASTE X HELPS

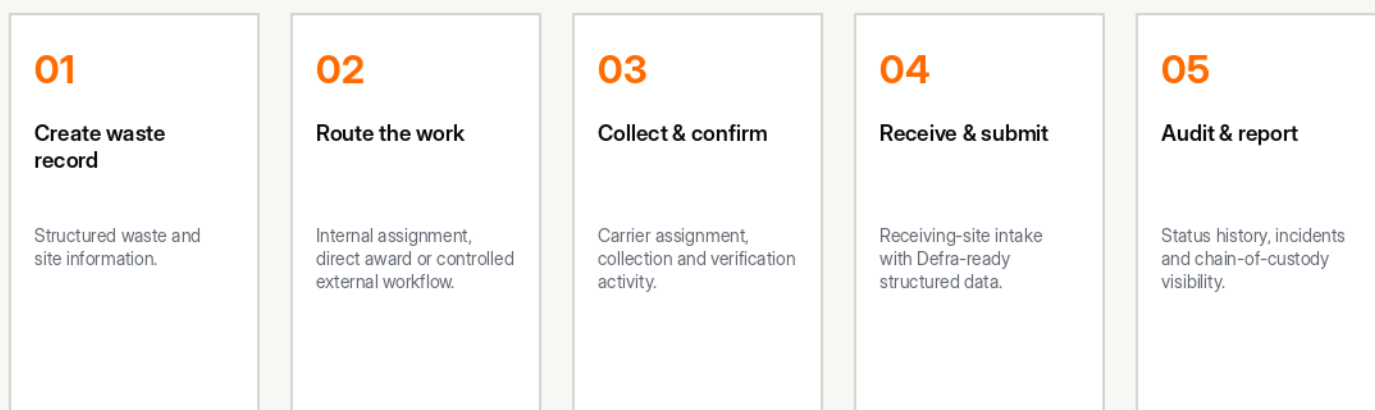
Waste X creates a connected operational record across waste creation, assignment, collection, receipt, incidents and compliance review. That does not remove legal responsibility - it gives teams a clearer evidence trail for meeting it.



THE WASTE X MODEL

One digital record across every stage of the movement.

Waste X is built around the full operational chain, not only the final regulatory submission. Each organisation sees the workflows relevant to its role while the platform maintains a connected audit trail.



WasteX Home How it Works About DWT Guide **GUIDE** Contact Login **BOOK DEMO**

PRODUCT TOUR

One platform. Every stage of the movement.

Create the record, assign the work, manage the movement and keep the evidence connected from start to finish.

Scroll through Waste X to see how each part of the operation connects.

01 / OPERATE

Run the waste operation from one live workspace.

See sites, departments, assignments, marketplace activity and digital waste tracking without

OPERATOR IMPLICATIONS

Different operations. Different readiness questions.

Phase 1 has one core requirement, but the operational impact depends on site type, volume, waste streams, contracts and how many organisations participate in the movement.

TRANSFER STATIONS

High intake volumes make fast, consistent capture and correction workflows important.

MRFs / RECYCLING

Multiple material streams increase the importance of standard waste descriptions and classification.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Where operations are contracted out, clarify reporting ownership, data access and contractor responsibilities.

AD / EfW

Separate in-scope controlled waste receipts from feedstocks or inputs that may be treated differently under regulation.

LANDFILL / TREATMENT

Auditability, permit controls and accurate receipt data are central to an already highly regulated operation.

MULTI-ROLE ORGANISATIONS

One organisation may generate, carry, manage and receive waste - connected workflows reduce hand-off gaps.

WHERE WASTE X FITS

Generator, carrier, manager and receiving workflows can sit in one connected operational record.

That matters most for organisations that perform more than one role or need visibility across internal and external hand-offs.

BEYOND COMPLIANCE

The value is not "sending data to Defra".

The strongest Digital Waste Tracking implementation should improve the operation before it improves the report.

01 Less fragmented admin

Move away from disconnected emails, spreadsheets and paper handovers.

02 Better visibility

See who created, assigned, collected and received each movement.

03 Clear accountability

Role-based workflows make ownership of each stage easier to understand.

04 Faster audit preparation

Keep movement history, incidents and receipt records in a structured system.

05 Scalable operations

Support organisations acting as generator, carrier, manager or receiver without separate systems.

Build compliance into the workflow - not on top of it.

BUDGETING

What should you actually budget for?

The Defra service charge is only one part of readiness. The larger cost question is how your organisation will capture, validate, submit and retain the information operationally.

01 DEFRA SERVICE

£26 per legal entity per year once the service is mandatory. The fee is based on organisations, not number of sites.

02 SOFTWARE

Subscription or internal-system cost for the route you choose. Compare functionality, support and operational fit.

03 DATA & SETUP

Time to clean site, permit, user, carrier and waste data before go-live.

04 TRAINING

Gate, weighbridge, operations and compliance teams need clear responsibilities and correction procedures.

05 INTEGRATION

Where existing weighbridge or waste software needs to exchange data, integration effort may be required.

06 ONGOING CONTROL

Allow time for failed submissions, data-quality review, support and future Phase 2 changes.

THE BETTER COMPARISON

Don't compare software only against the cost of a spreadsheet.

Compare it against duplicate admin, correction effort, weak visibility and audit preparation.

READINESS SCORECARD

What is your DWT readiness score?

Score each statement: 0 = not started, 1 = in progress, 2 = ready. Maximum score: 20.

READINESS CHECK		0	1	2
01	We have confirmed every licensed / permitted receiving site that is in scope.	☐	☐	☐
02	Our organisation registration / access route for the Defra service is understood.	☐	☐	☐
03	We have chosen our reporting route: API software, Defra spreadsheet or controlled combination.	☐	☐	☐
04	Our site and permit information has been checked and standardised.	☐	☐	☐
05	Our regular waste descriptions and EWC codes have been reviewed.	☐	☐	☐
06	We can capture the required carrier, vehicle, quantity and receipt information consistently.	☐	☐	☐
07	Someone owns failed, rejected or corrected submissions and knows what to do.	☐	☐	☐
08	Gate / weighbridge / operations staff know their role in the process.	☐	☐	☐
09	We have tested realistic receipt scenarios before the mandatory date.	☐	☐	☐
10	We can retrieve a complete receipt and supporting audit history quickly.	☐	☐	☐

16-20

READY

Core controls are in place. Keep testing and monitoring data quality.

10-15

ACTION REQUIRED

You have a workable base, but gaps should be closed before go-live.

0-9

PRIORITY GAPS

Treat DWT readiness as an immediate operational project.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Digital Waste Tracking - quick answers.

A concise reference for the questions receiving sites and wider waste-chain organisations are asking now.

Q01 When does receipt reporting become mandatory?

1 October 2026 in England and Wales; 1 January 2027 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Q02 Who reports in Phase 1?

Organisations operating licensed or permitted waste receiving sites. Phase 2 is planned for waste collectors - carriers, brokers and dealers.

Q03 How long do I have to submit?

You have 2 working days from the day after receiving the waste to submit each receipt.

Q04 API or spreadsheet?

Defra allows both. You may use API-connected software, Defra's prescribed spreadsheet, or a combination.

Q05 Can I use my own spreadsheet?

No. If using the spreadsheet route, Defra says you must use its Receipt of Waste spreadsheet without changing the format.

Q06 Does DWT replace WTNs and consignment notes immediately?

No. The Environment Agency says current reporting methods continue initially alongside Digital Waste Tracking.

Q07 What about exemptions?

Waste exemptions are not included in Phase 1. Defra plans to include exemptions in Phase 2 and will provide more detail.

Q08 What does the Defra service cost?

£26 per year for each legal entity / organisation using the service once the charge becomes due.

Q09 Is Waste X connected to Defra?

Waste X has integrated with the Receipt of Waste API and successfully passed Defra production approval testing.

This guide provides general information and does not constitute legal or regulatory advice. Requirements can change.

ABOUT WASTE X

Built for every role in the waste chain.

Waste X is a UK digital waste management platform helping waste producers, carriers, managers and receiving sites manage waste movements, assignments, receipt records and chain-of-custody workflows in one place.

THE WASTE X INFRASTRUCTURE APPROACH

The useful record should be created by the operation itself.

The system should not ask somebody to rebuild the story at the end. It should preserve the story as teams create, route, move, receive and manage the work.

OPERATIONS

Capture activity where it happens.

Creation, assignment, collection, receipt and incidents should be recorded as operational events rather than left for somebody to reconstruct later.

CONNECTION

Keep the stages tied to the same movement.

Digitising five separate processes is not enough. The useful part is preserving the relationship between each handover, decision and update.

OVERSIGHT

Give every team the view it needs.

Operational teams need action. Managers need control. Compliance teams need evidence. The platform should support each without creating separate realities.

DEFRA INTEGRATION

Receipt of Waste API integrated. Production approval testing successfully passed.

PILOT PROGRAMME

We are inviting receiving sites and waste operators to test realistic workflows and help shape the wider launch.

READY TO TEST WASTE X?

Explore the demo or book a pilot conversation.

demo-wastetracking.com • wastetracking.com • tino@wastetracking.com

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information and does not constitute legal or regulatory advice. Digital Waste Tracking requirements can change. Always check the latest guidance from Defra and your environmental regulator.