**New Waste Collection Charging Arrangements to further encourage waste prevention and improve recycling of food and other recyclable materials from the waste stream**

**What is a flat rate fee?**

A ‘flat rate fee’ is a charge where a customer pays a single fee for a service which is provided over a period of time (e.g. monthly, quarterly or annually). The fee does not change on the basis of the number of times a person puts the bin out or how heavy the bin is. An example would be where a person pays a once off flat rate fee of €300 per annum for the collection of their waste.Less than half of household waste collection customers are currently on a flat rate fee, so more than half of household waste collection customers are already on an incentivised system.

**When are changes coming?**

The requirement to start phasing-out flat rate fee charges will be introduced over the Summer. Starting in the Autumn and over the following 12 months, the option of people paying a flat rate fee charge will be gradually phased out as people renew their contracts. No new customer will be offered a flat rate fee option. If you are currently on a flat rate fee, this will mean you will be offered an incentivised pricing plan when you go to renew your plan. Your operator should be in touch with you if your contract is due to change.

If you are already on a plan which includes either a pay per lift or a weight based charge, the proposal does not directly affect you. However, it is open to a collector to change the pricing plan within the bounds of consumer and contract legislation.

**Other key points:**

* Mandatory per kilogramme pay by weight charging as planned in 2016 is not being introduced;
* Flat rate fees will be phased out over a 12 month period beginning in the Autumn, 2017;
* An annual support of €75 will be introduced for persons with lifelong/long-term medical incontinence. This support will help people meet the average annual cost of disposal of incontinence products. The details and arrangements of this support will be finalised later this year, after further consultation with the relevant stakeholder groups;
* As a community, we are under pressure to manage the waste we produce. On two occasions in 2016, we were within days of bins not being collected. We must act to stop a return to an over reliance on landfill. Nobody wishes to see a return to a situation where most local authorities have a landfill in their area;
  + The waste collection market is serviced by private companies and the state has no role in setting prices. Setting prices will remain a decision for each collector;
  + Examples of incentivised pricing options include:
* Service fee and pay per kilo charge;
* Service fee, lift fee and per kilo charge;
* Service fee and weight band charging; and
* Service fee including weight allowance plus per kilo surcharge for excess weights;
* In support of the new arrangements, the three Regional Waste Management Planning Offices will implement an information and awareness campaign in the third quarter of the year;
* The phasing out of flat rate fees will not affect contracts currently  in place as the requirement to remove the option of a flat rate fee will only apply to:
  + new customers; or
  + customers as they renew their contracts from the Autumn of 2017; and
* However, it is always open to a collector to amend the terms and conditions of a contract within the limits of consumer and contract legislation.