



Summary of key results: Waste collection by the City of Ekurhuleni in informal settlements
June 2023

No of partner organisations	Total number of settlements	Total number of residents	Male	Female	% of female participants
2	38	453	145	308	67%

Overview

In [June 2023](#) (Asivikelane #37), residents in informal settlements were asked about their access to waste removal and specific questions on how uncollected waste impacts their environment and their quality of life. They were also asked what they would like to see improve regarding waste removal. This included the number of plastic bags they wanted to receive and the frequency of waste removal per week.

The City has Integrated Waste Management By-laws, but no reference is made to informal settlements. However, the 2022 Waste Tariff By-law, states that service is to be rendered once a week and is to be zero-rated. In the performance agreement for 2021/22, the Head of Department for Waste also refers to the provision of bulk-waste containers in informal settlements. There is a draft policy on informal settlements in general, but this policy does not touch on refuse removal at all.

The City of Ekurhuleni has tabled [its budget for the 2023/24 financial year](#). There is no separate budget allocation specifically for the provision of bulk containers to informal settlements in the 2023/24 capital budget. However, there is a new project for the provision of bulk waste containers, but it is unclear how much of this will benefit informal settlements. It should be noted that the allocation of R1 million is less than the R1,5 million allocated in the 2022/23 Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP).

Evidence collected in February 2023 shows that a total of 96% of residents in informal settlements wanted the Metro to budget more money for refuse removal. Residents wanted the Metro to spend more money on refuse removal to provide services where there are none. Residents also requested more money for cleaning communal dumping areas. The evidence supports these asks as 18% of residents said they did not have their waste collected by the Metro in the previous seven days. Some residents have no waste collection services at all, while others said their dumping sites are not cleaned often enough.

Residents have raised waste collection as a major challenge which impacts their quality of life, health and environment. Evidence collected in [Asivikelane #32](#) in October 2022 shows that only 77% of residents received waste removal once a week.

Data collected in June (Table 1) shows that almost 30% of residents received no service in the previous week. 62% of residents who did have waste collection services said their waste

was removed once a week. Those who did not receive the service said they did not have dustbins and often ended up either burning the waste or dumping it behind the settlement.

Table 1: How often was waste collected in your settlement in the last 7 days?

Number of times waste collected in 7 days	Number of residents	%
0	120	26,4%
1	284	62,7%
2	26	5,7%
3	7	1,5%
5	5	1%
6	10	2,2%
7	1	0,22%

More than half of residents said they required three or more refuse bags a week. In the October release, [Asivikelane #32](#), 60% of respondents said they did not receive refuse bags.

Table 2: Number of plastic bags residents want to receive

Number of bags	Number of residents	%
1	63	13,9%
2	154	34,%
3	156	34,4%
More than 3 bags	80	17,6%

Detailed findings

Asivikelane #37 findings tell us what residents require from an adequate refuse service. They could choose multiple options. More than half of the respondents wanted communal skips or refuse containers to be provided; while at least 50% of respondents asked for dumping sites to be cleaned once a week (Table 3). Other responses include: provide communal bins close to communal taps and toilets (24%), collect refuse from my home once a week (18,8%), provide refuse bags every week (19%), provide designated dumping sites within 5 minutes walking distance from my home (10%).

Table 3: What do residents require from an adequate waste removal service?

Asks	Number of responses	%
Provide communal skips or refuse containers	245	54%
Clean dumping sites at least once a week	228	50,3%
Provide communal bins close to communal taps and toilets	110	24,3%

Collect refuse from my home once a week	85	18,8%
Provide refuse bags every week	200	18,8%
Provide designated dumping sites within 5 minutes walking distance from my home.	45	9,9%

The Asivikelane #37 data collection also asked residents about how the uncollected waste impacted their environment and the quality of their lives (Table 4). Residents could choose more than one option.

The majority of residents said that the highest impact of uncollected waste was that it attracts rats, mice and mosquitoes; 67,7% said it created a bad smell, close to 60% said it made the settlement dirty, and close to half said it posed a danger to children who played near or in dumps. More than 30% were concerned about uncollected waste contaminating drinking water. A total of 11% were concerned that it led to blockages of drains and toilets.

Table 4: Health impact

Impact of uncollected waste	Number of responses	%
It attracts rats, mice and mosquitoes	319	70,4%
Uncollected waste creates a bad smell	307	67,7%
It makes the settlement dirty	264	58,3%
It is dangerous because children might play in or near it and get hurt	214	47,2%
It is a health risk because waste pollutes drinking water	147	32,5%
It leads to the blockage of drains	44	9,7%
It leads to the blockage of toilets	8	1,7%