

Summary of key results: waste collection by the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality in informal settlements
June 2023

Number of partner organisations	Total number of settlements	Total number of residents	Male	Female	% of female participants
3	141	1730	691	1033	59,7%

Overview

In [June 2023 \(Asivikelane #37\)](#), residents in informal settlements were asked about their access to waste removal as well as specific questions on how uncollected waste impacts their environment and quality of life, and 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 they would like per week.

According to the Metro, a weekly refuse removal service is provided to informal settlements and there is no service delivery backlog. However, informal settlement residents continue to report that waste is not collected regularly and in some settlements they receive no service at all.

Evidence collected in [Asivikelane #32](#) (October 2022) shows that 13% of residents do not have access to a waste removal service. In cases where residents do receive a waste removal service from the metro, 86% said their waste is collected once a week. However, many residents indicated that a weekly service is not enough to keep their settlement clean.

The evidence collected in Asivikelane #37 (see Table 1) shows that waste collection continues to be irregular, with 22% of respondents having had no refuse collection in the previous seven days, while 70% said that their waste was collected once in the previous week.

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

Number of times waste collected in 7 days	Number of residents	%
0	387	22,4%
1	1219	70,5%
2	106	6,1%
3 or more times	17	0,99%

Residents who receive the service have indicated that one of the biggest challenges is that they do not receive refuse bags.

The Cleansing and Solid Waste Unit uses community-based contractors to collect refuse and pick up litter. The Metro’s 2023/24 budget provides estimates for the allocations to these contractors and for the provision of refuse bags. Both allocations are 3% higher than in 2022/23, but this is still well below the current rate of inflation; in February 2003, the National Treasury estimated an inflation rate of 5,3% for 2023. The budget also doesn’t specify how much of these two budgets has specifically been set aside for refuse removal in informal settlements. More importantly, how such small budget increases will significantly improve waste removal in informal settlements, as well as ensure that all residents receive enough refuse bags, is not clear.

Evidence from Asivikelane #32 indicates that 35% of residents who received a waste removal service during that data collection round also received refuse bags from the Metro, but more than 90% of residents said that they do not receive enough bags; over half of residents require two bags, while 36% require three or more refuse bags a week (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of refuse bags required

Number of bags	Number of residents	%
1	201	11,6%
2	897	51,9%
3	458	26,5%
More than 3 bags	174	10%

Detailed findings

The findings of Asivikelane #37, where residents could choose from multiple options, tell us what they require in an adequate refuse removal service. Table 3 below shows that 60% of respondents want to be provided with communal skips and refuse containers, close to 60% also want refuse bags every week, close to half of the respondents want dumping sites cleaned weekly, and 31% want bins close to communal taps and toilets to dispose of sanitary wear and baby nappies.

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

Asks	Number of responses	%
Provide communal skips or refuse containers	1051	60,8%
Provide refuse bags every week	1026	59,3%
Clean dumping sites at least once a week	826	47,8%
Provide communal bins close to communal taps and toilets	551	31,9%
Collect refuse from my home once a week	156	9%

The Asivikelane #37 data collection round also asked residents how uncollected waste impacts their environment, health and their quality of life (Table 4). Residents could choose more than one option. The majority of the residents said that it attracts rats, mice and mosquitoes (78%), 55% said uncollected waste created a bad smell, more than half said it posed a danger to children who played near or in dumps or made the settlement dirty, 41% said they were concerned about contamination of drinking water, and 34% 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	1365	78,9%
Uncollected waste creates a bad smell	954	55,1%
It makes the settlement dirty	903	52,2%
It is dangerous because children might play in or near it and get hurt	868	50,2%
It is a health risk because waste pollutes drinking water	722	41,7%
It leads to the blockage of drains	436	25,2%
It leads to the blockage of toilets	163	9,4%