

Waste and COVID-19 FAQs

Are you still collecting recycling and waste?

Yes- collections are continuing as normal at the moment however there is lots of additional recycling to collect so your collection may be later in the day than normal.

Are the recycling centres open?

No- Following the announcement by the Government on 23 March for everyone to stay at home unless essential, we have taken the decision to close all three of our recycling centres until further notice. Please follow the advice and stay at home to keep yourself and others safe.

What happens if I have a missed collection?

Waste is an essential service and this will continue as normal for as long as possible, however as the Coronavirus impact on staffing increases, services will be prioritised. We aim to collect food waste and general household waste on normal collection day but garden waste collections could be suspended and recycling collections for plastic, tins, cardboard, paper and glass could be delayed. Before logging a missed collection, please check <https://forms.n-somerset.gov.uk/Waste/MissedCollection> to see if your road wasn't able to be collected This will also detail when you can expect your next collection.

For recycling, if it is just your property please check carefully that you do not have incorrect items in your box such as plastic film, carrier bags, paper towels, tissues, nappies, saucepans, anything sharp like knives or broken glass. If you have an incorrect item, please remove this and put your boxes out on your next collection day.

You can report a missed collection on the website: <https://forms.n-somerset.gov.uk/Waste/MissedCollection> but if you can hold on until your next collection please do this as it will help the crews.

We might have Coronavirus. Do we need to do anything differently with our waste?

Yes- please help keep yourselves and crews safe by following the advice from Public Health England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> Waste such as used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths from anyone with, or suspected coronavirus should be double-bagged, tied securely and kept separate from other waste for 72 hours (3 days) before being placed in your black wheelie bin.

We have more recycling as we are all at home- can we put out extra recycling?

Yes- You can put out as many recycling boxes as you need to. If you have extra recycling which doesn't fit in the boxes you have, put it in loosely tied carrier bags but please put all glass into your box and have separate bags for plastic and cans (together), paper, and flattened cardboard. We will not be able to take any bags where the recycling has been mixed. It is a challenging time and if your additional recycling does not get collected we are sorry but please keep it until the following week for collection.

Will you collect extra cardboard boxes?

If you have excess cardboard, please flatten the boxes and remove the tape and fold or cut into pieces which would fit in your recycling box- this is the size which can fit in the compartment on the recycling collection vehicle. Large boxes will be left. Given the current situation with many more people at home creating more recycling than usual, crews may also not be able to collect additional recycling due to capacity on the vehicle. If your extra recycling is left, please take it back in, keep it dry and put this out for collection the following week.

We have made more non-recyclable waste as we are all at home. What should we do with extra black sacks?

Please check you are recycling as much as possible, especially food waste and this is a priority collection. You will need to store your extra sacks until your next collection. We are not able to collect sacks if they are not in your black wheelie bin. If you are using the recycling service fully the waste will not smell if left for a while. Please prioritise bagging nappies separately and putting these in your bin before other household waste as this will ensure they are collected fortnightly.

How can I help crews?

Crews are working very hard during this challenging period. Please wash out your recycling and sort it carefully. Put your glass bottles and jars in one box with flattened cardboard. Put tins and cans mixed with your plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays in your other box with paper and junk mail to one side. Collecting a well sorted box can take just 20 seconds. A mixed box can take up to 2 minutes, so by sorting your boxes you will help speed up collections which will be very important as

there is less staff available. If there is a delay to your collection please keep paper and cardboard as dry as possible.

What should I do with garden waste now recycling centres are closed and I don't have a garden waste bin?

You will need to keep your garden waste in your garden until you can safely dispose of this. This might mean:

- doing less gardening than you usually would
- letting the grass grow into a summer meadow
<https://community.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/homesforwildlife/b/gardeningforwildlife/posts/long-grass-that-looks-great>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/about-the-rhs/publications/the-garden/2018-issues/july/garden-solutions-let-your-lawn-go-wild.pdf>
- doing more home composting or starting a compost heap – you can search online for lots of advice but the RHS website is good: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=444> .
- leaving grass cuttings on the grass known as 'grasscycling'.
<https://www.planetnatural.com/grasscycling/>
- creating a wildlife home in a corner of your garden with branches and other items you would otherwise have taken to the recycling centre <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/no-36-make-a-home-for-wildlife>

Can I put garden waste in my black bin?

No- you should not put garden waste in your black bin. We know that being at home during the day when people are not usually is creating extra waste similar to the Christmas period so it is unlikely that most households will have enough space for this anyway. Please store garden waste in your garden until recycling centres reopen.

Am I still able to register for a garden waste bin?

At the moment we are still doing bin deliveries so you can order and register for a garden waste collection however this is not an essential service so if large numbers of households do this we will not be able to support this.

Garden waste collections are low on the priority list of collections so it is possible at some point due to staff shortages we may have to suspend garden waste collections. It is also important to highlight

that registration and delivery of the bin is £25 but it was confirmed in January that there will be an annual fee of £50 per bin for garden waste collections being introduced later this year. With the current situation this may be delayed however the consultation is still open on the website:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/communityinvolvement/consultations/have-your-say/>

Am I able to request a larger bin?

No. We have suspended applications for a larger waste bin as we are not able to do assessments. Reducing bin deliveries will also allow staff to concentrate on keeping the vital recycling and waste collections going in this challenging time. Please ensure you are recycling as much as possible, especially food waste as this is a priority collection. You can also put out extra recycling in loosely tied carrier bags but please put all glass into your box and have separate bags for plastic and cans, paper, and flattened cardboard.

I need an assisted collection, can you help?

Yes. It is still possible to request an assisted collection, but we will have to complete an assessment over the phone in order to set this up. Please be aware that this service is only for vulnerable people who are unable to put your bins out and have no one else to assist. If you are not able to present your waste due to Coronavirus, please do not request an assisted collection but follow the government guidelines. Please be patient while we complete the assessment, if possible ask family, friends or neighbours for help.