

Waste and recycling Q&A

Why are you making these temporary changes?

We've taken the difficult decision to change the frequency of our recycling box collection service due to a combination of staff shortages and the recent rapid rise in the number of people needing to self-isolate when alerted by the NHS COVID-19 app.

This is a situation which is affecting a number of councils and businesses across the country and has been compounded by the current UK-wide shortage of HGV drivers meaning we are unable to recruit agency drivers to replace our own staff who are currently unable to work.

We would like to assure residents that all our other waste and recycling services (i.e. black wheelie bin, blue bag, plastic recycling, food waste, garden waste and clinical waste collections) are continuing to run as normal.

Up to this point, our hard-working and dedicated team have kept recycling collection services fully operational since the first lockdown in March 2020 with the exception of a short (two week) pause on the garden waste collection service. However, in the current exceptional circumstances, we have had to switch to a **temporary** four-weekly **recycling box** collection.

We aim to get back to our usual recycling box collection schedule as quickly as possible.

What collections are affected by these temporary changes?

Black wheelie bin	Normal service – collection every 2 weeks
Blue bag	Normal service
Clinical waste	Normal service – collection as scheduled
Food waste	Normal service – collection every week for those who receive the food waste service
Garden waste	Normal service – collection as per subscription
Plastic recycling	Normal service – collection every 2 weeks
Household Waste Recycling Centre	Normal service – 4000 slots available per week, pre-book a slot here
Recycling boxes	Temporarily reduced service – collections every four weeks

How long will these changes remain in place?

These changes came into place on Monday, 19 July and we'll keep the situation under regular review with the aim to return to our normal service as quickly as we can. If anything changes we'll let you know on this page and through our communication channels as soon as we can.

How do I know when I should next put my recycling boxes out?

If your recycling box collection was due to take place on week commencing 19 July, you can check when your collection is due [here](#).

If your collection is due to take place on week commencing 26 July, your collection information will be added to the website shortly and we'd encourage you to keep checking back for the latest updates.

Can I put extra recycling out for collection on my collection day?

Yes, during this period the recycling crews will be collecting additional recycling, providing it is sorted correctly and presented in sturdy containers, for example:

- Large plastic storage tubs
- Cardboard boxes (for paper and card only)
- Large buckets
- Bags - as long as materials are separated (e.g. glass in one bag and metal in another bag). Please also ensure bags aren't too heavy or overfilled.

Excess cardboard must be broken down into manageable pieces and bundled neatly next to recycling boxes ready for collection.

I don't have any sturdy containers, what should I do?

If you don't have any sturdy containers, there are a number of options available to you:

- You can store your excess recycling and put it out when you next have space in your recycling boxes
- You can [book an appointment at the HWRC](#), new slots are added regularly
- You can purchase additional recycling boxes [here](#)
- You can purchase storage tubs from most local supermarkets

What should I do if my recycling box collection was missed before Monday, 19 July?

If we missed your recycling box collection prior to Monday, 19 July please report it and our team will investigate the matter further.

Are there going to be more slots available at the HWRC?

In response to feedback from residents, and to try and meet demand, we are currently looking at extending the number of slots available at the HWRC to include evening appointments. We will provide more information as and when we have it. There are currently 4000 slots available each week and you can book a slot [here](#).

Have all residents been informed? Is there a plan for contacting those who don't use social media and email?

The temporary changes have been widely reported in the local media and we have used the Council's website, resident e-newsletters, as well as social media to communicate information. Our Customer Services Team are also providing advice to any residents who get in touch.

We are encouraging all residents to share information on the temporary changes with their friends, family and neighbours in Swindon Borough, particularly those they know don't have internet access.

Is there a limit to how many recycling boxes a household can have or how much recycling a household can generate for collection?

There will be no limits on the number of boxes or the amount of recycling your household can put out for collection.

Who is deciding which areas are having to wait an additional two weeks for their recycling to be collected, and what was the process behind that decision?

Each week we complete 13 different recycling collection routes. To ensure we have enough crew members to carry out the collections, we will be completing routes 1 to 7 first and routes 8 to 13 will be picked up on the next collection day two weeks later.

Has the option of temporary HGV drivers been investigated?

Yes, but unfortunately due to a national shortage of HGV drivers there are currently no additional agency workers who can help out at this time. Private sector businesses and other local authorities are also experiencing similar issues.

Will the Council's recycling rate be affected by this decision, and will all recycling put out for collection get recycled as usual?

Since the first lockdown in March 2020 and with many residents spending more time at home, the tonnages of recycling collection from through our kerbside service has increased. That has been as much as a 25% increase in some weeks.

We are urging residents, where possible, to store their recycling ready to put out for their next collection. This will help limit the short-term impact of this temporary change on the Borough's recycling rate.