

Garden Waste Collection Service FAQs

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1. What is the Garden Waste Collection Service?

It is an opt in, chargeable service to have garden waste (including: grass and hedge cuttings, leaves, flowers, prunings, twigs, small branches and fallen fruit) collected fortnightly from your existing 240L brown bin.

2. Why are you now charging for garden waste collections?

Like many Councils we have a reduced budget from central Government and need to save million pounds annually by 2022/23. We can therefore no longer afford to subsidise the cost of collecting this additional waste. The decision to charge for garden waste collections is one of many difficult decisions the Council has faced to help reduce the costs of providing services.

Unlike household waste and recycling there's no legal requirement to collect garden waste and councils can charge for collections. The income from charging for garden waste collections will make the service self-financing. Well over half of all Councils in England charge for this service and have done for many years.

Not all properties in East Hertfordshire require a garden waste collection service as they do not have a garden. Introducing a charge is fair as the service will only be paid for by those households that choose to use it. This is similar to bulky waste collections where only households requesting the service have to pay.

3. Is it legal to charge for the collection of garden waste?

Yes. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, councils can charge for the collection of garden waste. Charging for the collection of garden waste will bring EHC in line with some of our neighbouring councils who have a charged service, such as North Hertfordshire District Council, Welwyn Hatfield, Watford, Broxbourne and Three Rivers.

4. Why can't the charge be added to Council Tax?

There is no legal requirement to collect garden waste this means that it is not required to be covered by your council tax payment and therefore many Councils charge for this service in order to continue to be able to offer collections of garden waste. The alternative was that East Herts removed collection of garden waste as a service completely.

Councillors agreed that it was important to continue to offer a garden waste collection service for residents who wish to use it. Council tax itself is a mandatory payment which covers a variety of services such as fire, police, adult social care and children's services including education. You may not use all these services but you still have to pay your council tax.

This change brings the garden waste collection in-line with other not legally required, pay for services, such as bulky waste collections, which is a service only paid for by people who use it.

5. Can I have more than one brown bin?

Yes. You can sign up to receive a collection for up to a total of three brown bins. You can sign up and pay for an additional bin(s) to be delivered.

6. Can I sign up part way through the year?

You can sign up at any point before the end of January 2022 however the cost will be £49

7. Can I pay via Direct Debit?

Your garden waste collections can be paid via a Direct Debit, this is cheaper if you sign up before 15th March 2021 and this means your payments will renew each year without you having to re-subscribe. When signing up for Direct Debit you will be given additional information about the Direct Debit Guarantee and how this will work and what to do should you wish to cancel your Direct Debit in the future.

8. How much does the service cost?

The pricing structure is detailed below. Payment type Amount you will pay per bin

Standard collection charge per bin (up to three bins) £49

Charge for additional bins if you require an additional bin to be delivered £84 (£49 standard collection charge + £35 bin and delivery)

9. When will my garden waste be collected?

The garden waste service will run throughout the year. If you sign up to the garden waste service, your brown bin(s) will be collected on the same day as your other recycling bins.

10. How will collection staff know if I have signed up to the new service?

Collection vehicles will have an electronic record of which addresses have signed up. Clearly numbering your bin(s) will also help to ensure that the crew can easily identify it for collection. You will also receive a sticker through the post to place on your bin to identify it as part of the service. This sticker needs to be displayed to ensure your brown bin is emptied.

11. How can I stop other people putting their waste into the garden waste bin(s) that I am paying for?

You should store your bin within your property boundary until collection day in the same way that you would with your other containers.

12.Can I have an assisted collection for the Garden Waste Collection Service?

If you sign up to the new service and you already have an assisted collection this will continue. If you don't currently have an assisted collection and you would like one then please apply online.

13.What do I do if I don't want a garden waste collection?

If you decide not to sign up to the garden waste service, you do not need to contact us to tell us. The brown bin service is 'opt-in' which means you only need to contact us if you do wish to sign up.

14.What do I do if I don't want re-subscribe to the garden waste service?

If you do not re-subscribe then your brown bin collections will stop at the end of March. You do not need to tell us you are not re-subscribing; as the service will be removed from your property automatically.

15.How do I dispose of my garden waste if I choose not to sign up to the Garden Waste Collection Service?

You could compost your garden waste at home. Information about home composting and how to purchase a reduced price home compost bin is on the website. You could also look into a private waste collection, although remember to check that any company has a waste carriers licence.

16.Can I put garden waste in my black bin?

We strongly discourage residents from placing garden waste in the black bin as there are alternative, more environmentally friendly ways to dispose of it. Residents can sign up to the garden waste collection service or compost at home.

However, if you do not produce a large amount of garden waste and have sufficient space in your black bin, then garden waste can be placed in there. This is providing that the bin is not over filled and that you do not place additional side waste out next to your black bin on your general waste collection day. Additional side waste won't be collected and neither will overfilled bins.

17.Can I have garden waste collections if I live in a flat?

If you live in a flat but you have your own garden you can still opt into the service. If you have communal gardens you should contact your managing or housing association as they will be responsible for the removal of garden waste.

18. Can I share a brown bin with my neighbour?

You can share a brown garden waste bin with your neighbour as an informal arrangement, but payment must be made by one householder and the bin will be assigned to one address only. (

19. What is accepted in the brown bin garden waste service?

Garden waste only including:

- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Hedge clippings
- ✓ Small tree prunings, branches, bark and twigs
- ✓ Tree branches (up to 3cm in diameter),
- ✓ Moss, weeds (excluding controlled weeds such as Japanese Knotweed)
- ✓ Flowers
- ✓ Plants with excess soil removed
- ✓ Fallen fruit
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Real Christmas trees without decorations and pot

20. How do I receive a refund if I have changed my mind or accidentally ordered more bins than I need?

You can email XXXX with your name, address and your request. As per the terms and conditions any cancellations need to be within 14 days of payment.

21. Can I put pet bedding from vegetarian animals in the garden waste bin?

Pet bedding is not garden waste and therefore would be classed as general household waste. Strictly, the brown bin is only for garden waste and all other household waste should be placed in bins as specified by the Council.

22. Can I put cat litter, even if it is compostable / biodegradable, in my brown bin?

From a legislative point of view, we are only able to charge residents for removal of their garden waste, and cat litter – even if it is biodegradable, does not fall into this category. However, you may wish to compost it at home.

23. Can I take the service with me when I move house?

If you move house within the district, you cannot take the service with you to your new property. You will need to sign up again if you want the service at your

new property if the residents at your new property have not already signed up to receive the service. If you move out of the district there is no refund available as you would have already received the service for a period of time before moving properties.

Unfortunately transferring collections to a new address has an administrative cost associated with the process and we do not have the resources available to make the necessary amendments to records. We are operating our service in line with other local authorities which also state there are no refunds or transference of service to a different address available if you move house.

24. What will happen if someone puts their brown bin out for collection but they have not signed up to the service?

We will not be emptying any brown bins which have not been signed up and paid for so if this happens the bin will remain unemptied. Where possible, crews will place a sticker on the bin to advise the reason for the bin not being emptied. Residents will need to sign up to the garden waste service and wait until their first collection.

25. Why can I no longer put food waste in the brown bin with my garden waste?

Your brown wheelie bin is now for garden waste only. Although garden waste will continue to be sent to Cumberlow Green to be processed, the goal is for there to be no food waste mixed with the garden waste so they can be processed in different ways. Mixed food and garden waste has to be processed by In Vessel Composting. This material falls under the Animal By Product Regulations and must be tipped indoors in the barn and is processed in In Vessel clamps where oxygen is blown through and it must reach 65-800C for a minimum of 4 days to be sanitised. However the pure green garden waste which goes to Cumberlow is tipped in an outside bay and is open windrow composted. This is what we hope will be able to happen to your garden waste once there is not food waste contaminating the garden waste. Therefore please ensure there is not food waste in your brown wheelie bin.

26. What should I do if my question has not been answered?

Please check the terms and conditions document available to download from the website as this contains further information.