

Three weekly waste collections: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Why are you doing a consultation?

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I already recycle everything possible, but my bin is full. How would you help me manage?

How would those with medical conditions which produce additional non-recyclable waste such as gloves, aprons, wipes and incontinence pads or wound dressings manage?

How would you support those with disabilities such as visual impairments or dementia?

What would I do with all the disposable nappies if my collection changed to three or four weekly?

I have pets and their waste fills up my bin. How would I manage with a collection every three or four weeks?

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Would I see a reduction in my council tax if you reduce my service?



We live in a flat and don't have food waste recycling would you expect us to wait three or four weeks for a collection?

There is not enough space for recycling in our communal bins

Would this include properties which currently still have a weekly collection for waste?

Why are you looking at changing the frequency of black bin collections?

This year we will need to spend about £5million disposing of black bin rubbish. Black bin waste costs £130 per tonne, while our separated kerbside recycling collections result in a high quality of recycling material which we can sell and generate an income of around £30 per tonne.

We know from waste analysis that 45% of the average black bin in North Somerset is made up of items which could have been recycled instead. In particular 27% is food waste. These items could have generated an income to help pay for vital local services. By reducing the frequency of waste collections we'll be able to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste. This will cut emissions from our collection vehicles and reduce the carbon impact of the service, helping to protect the environment. It will ensure we meet government requirements to recycle 65% of household waste by 2035.

Why are you doing a consultation?

We consulted previously as part of our waste strategy and this showed that overall respondents were in favour of three weekly waste collections. The new consultation will expand on the previous one and your feedback will help us understand how these changes might work. By reducing waste we can save money and also help to protect our environment.

We want to understand how we can reduce non-recyclable waste in North Somerset. We particularly want to hear about any concerns around storing and dealing with waste, as we know three-weekly black bin collections may not work for some households. There will also be questions about how much you currently recycle and how the service could be improved to make it easier to recycle more, such as the introduction of soft plastics recycling.

Have any other councils already introduced three or four-weekly collections?

Yes, an increasing number of councils in England, Scotland and Wales have three-weekly collections for general waste, with some in Wales and Scotland having four-weekly collections. In the South-West, Somerset, East Devon and East Devon have successfully implemented a three-weekly waste collection service.

What do you hope to achieve by reducing the frequency of collections?

We want to reduce waste and increase recycling in line with our [Recycling and Waste strategy](#). Targets from the recycling and waste strategy include:

- A reduction in non-recyclable waste of 15% below the level of 2019-20 by 2030.
- A recycling rate of 70% by 2030.

By reducing the frequency of waste collections, we hope to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste. This will cut emissions from our collection vehicles and reduce the carbon impact of the service, helping to protect the environment. It will also help us meet government requirements to recycle 65% of household waste by 2035.

When might changes to collection frequency happen?

The results of the consultation will be reviewed, and a decision will be made in the summer whether the frequency of collections will change. We will know more after this and communicate any decisions to residents.

Would there be changes to recycling to increase the space we have for this?

We would continue to offer a weekly kerbside recycling collection. The consultation will include questions about how much you currently recycle and how the service could be improved to make it easier to recycle more, such as the introduction of soft plastics recycling.

6,000 properties across North Somerset will take part in a trial later this year, using an additional bag for recycling plastics and cans. The trial will see whether an extra container will help reduce non-recyclable black bin waste, and whether it makes it easier for residents to separate recycling by material.

My bin is mostly soft plastics, are we going to be able to recycle these?

We know that soft plastics such as film lids and crisp packets make up around 10% of the average black bin. There is a national target from the government to recycle soft plastics by 31 March 2027.

The consultation will include questions about how much you currently recycle and how the service could be improved to make it easier to recycle more.

We're keen to introduce a kerbside collection for soft plastics ahead of the national target.

Why can't we have one big wheelie bin for recycling?

Our separated kerbside recycling collections result in a high quality of recycling material which we can sell and generate an income of around £30 per tonne.

Some local authorities do have one wheelie bin for all their recycling, what's known as a co-mingled collection. It's very easy with a wheelie bin to put the wrong thing in or even to hide incorrect items at the bottom, resulting in contamination. This means the quality of the recycling from this collection method is much lower than a separated scheme. It results in those councils getting less money back for their recycling or even paying for it to be recycled instead of generating an income to help pay for other vital council services.

What happened with the ‘Quatro’ recycling trial you did last year?

The trial was a great opportunity to look at an alternative system for recycling and much of the feedback was positive. After a full evaluation the decision was taken that Quatro was not a solution which would work for North Somerset for several reasons but mainly due to the very high cost to introduce it.

I have a large family how would we manage?

If you are recycling as much as possible then we believe a three-weekly collection would provide plenty of space for most households. As part of the consultation, we particularly want to hear about any concerns around storing and dealing with waste as we know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households.

We can support larger households through a larger bin assessment and provide a larger bin for these households where appropriate.

I already recycle everything possible, but my bin is full. How would you help me manage?

We have a team of experienced waste minimisation officers who can offer information and support to households needing to reduce their waste.

We know from waste analysis that 45% of the average black bin in North Somerset is made up of items which could have been recycled so there may be more items you can recycle than you think.

The consultation will include questions about how much you currently recycle and how the service could be improved to make it easier to recycle more, such as the introduction of soft plastics recycling.

Weekly recycling collections will continue, and additional recycling boxes are available free of charge to allow for maximum recycling. If you are recycling as much as possible most households will manage.

Households may be eligible for a larger black bin following an assessment which includes a waste diary and a waste minimisation visit.

How would those with medical conditions which produce additional non-recyclable waste such as gloves, aprons, wipes and incontinence pads or wound dressings manage?

As part of the consultation, we particularly want to hear about any concerns around storing and dealing with waste as we know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households. We can support households which produce non-clinical waste as a result of a medical condition by providing a larger 240L bin where appropriate.

How would you support those with disabilities such as visual impairments or dementia?

We know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households. All households with disabilities can be assessed on an individual basis and solutions for

promoting waste reduction and recycling will be supported first, however we can also support by providing a larger bin where appropriate.

What would I do with all the disposable nappies if my collection changed to three or four weekly?

As part of the consultation, we particularly want to hear about any concerns around storing and dealing with waste as we know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households. We promote reusable nappies and for some families this is a great way to reduce their waste. Following an assessment, we can also support households with young children in nappies by providing a larger bin where appropriate.

I have pets and their waste fills up my bin. How would I manage with a collection every three or four weeks?

As part of the consultation, we want to hear about any concerns around storing and dealing with waste. Some pet waste such as dog poo could be disposed of in a litter or dog waste bin on your dog walk. Pet bedding from vegetarians such as rabbits can be mixed in with garden waste and composted. As 45% of the average black bin in North Somerset is made up of items which could have been recycled, by recycling everything possible there should be space within the black bin for pet waste which is non-recyclable.

Will you provide larger bins if the collections frequency reduces?

No, households would keep the bin they currently have to reduce waste. By reducing waste, we can save money and also help to protect our environment. Some households with special circumstances can apply for a larger bin by completing a larger bin application and assessment.

Would any changes to collection frequency impact the assisted collection service?

No. There would be no changes to the assisted collection service, this would continue to operate as normal.

How do I recycle food waste?

If you live in a house, you should already have access to a food waste collection service, if you don't currently use it because you don't have a bin, you can [request](#) a kerbside and kitchen caddy and start recycling food waste straight away.

If you live in a flat, we are gradually introducing a food waste collection service to as many properties as is feasible based on layout of bin stores and space. We know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households so responding to the consultation will give us a better idea of those areas where a less frequent waste collection may not be suitable, and these would remain with their current frequency.

Will you stop missed collections from happening?

North Somerset has grown considerably since the last review of our collection routes. As part of any changes to collection frequency we will be undertaking a re-route of our

collection vehicles to improve efficiency of collections. This re-route would help to improve the reliability of the service.

We know it's frustrating when a collection does get missed whatever the reason. If you do experience a missed collection you can report this and a crew should return within two working days. www.n-somerset.gov.uk/missedcollection

Would there be an increase in fly tipping if you do this?

Items most commonly fly-tipped are bulky items or trade waste, neither of which are collected as part of our kerbside collection service. We are confident that with information to encourage recycling, and support in place for larger households and others who need it, residents will continue to dispose of their waste responsibly.

Won't a three or four weekly collection encourage rats, flies and bad smells?

There is no evidence to suggest that residents would see an increase in vermin or other pests, especially as food waste should be collected every week in a separate food caddy. We would have support in place for households that need it, such as those living in larger households, those with multiple children using nappies or people with other special waste needs.

Would I see a reduction in my council tax if you reduce my service?

No, like all councils across the country, North Somerset is facing unprecedented demand for services at a time of rising costs and the absence of significant additional funding from central government.

Costs are rising, especially in adult's and children's social care, and we struggle to keep pace with demand. Just £7 out of every £100 of your council tax goes to collection and getting rid of waste and recycling. By reducing waste, we can save money and help to protect our environment.

We live in a flat and don't have food waste recycling would you expect us to wait three or four weeks for a collection?

If you live in a flat you may get a weekly communal food waste collection service prior to any changes in black bin frequency. We are rolling out a flats food waste collection service this year to as many properties as possible based on the layout of bin stores and space available.

We know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some households so responding to the consultation will give us a better idea of those areas where a less frequent waste collection will not be suitable. These would remain with their current frequency.

There is not enough space for recycling in our communal bins

You can contact our recycling and waste team directly to request a capacity assessment from a waste minimisation officer who can provide advice and arrange for more bins where possible.

We know that a lack of space for bins would be one of the reasons not to change the collection frequency for some communal properties.

Would this include properties which currently still have a weekly collection for waste?

All our collections would be reviewed before any changes were introduced. We know a less frequent waste collection may not work for some properties. Properties not suitable for a less frequent waste collection would remain with their current frequency.

