

# Durham County Council Refuse and Recycling Collection Policy

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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....   | 3  |
| Policy 1: Assisted Collections .....                                       | 4  |
| Policy 2: No Side Waste .....  | 5  |
| a) No side waste (refuse) .....  | 5  |
| b) Presentation of side waste (additional recycling).....                  | 5  |
| c) Overloaded receptacles .....  | 6  |
| Policy 3: Putting out receptacles for emptying.....                        | 7  |
| a) Presentation of refuse and recycling receptacles.....                   | 7  |
| b) Frequency of collection.....  | 7  |
| c) Missed collections.....   | 7  |
| d) Servicing of flats/mixed hereditament .....                             | 8  |
| e) Properties with access/storage issues .....                             | 8  |
| f) Servicing of rural properties .....                                     | 9  |
| Policy 4: Bin replacement/repair (refuse, recycling and garden waste)..... | 10 |
| Policy 5: Additional residual/recycling bins to households .....           | 12 |
| Policy 6: Enforcement procedures.....                                      | 13 |
| Policy 7: Services to charities and community organisations .....          | 15 |

# Introduction

Durham County Council's Refuse and Recycling Collection Policy aims to ensure that refuse and recycling services operate effectively and efficiently in order to maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent for treatment and disposal. The Council signed up to the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP), Waste Collection Commitment in November 2009 which states a commitment to "provide waste and recycling services which are good value for money and which will meet the needs of our residents".

This policy document therefore, is designed to support the alternate weekly collection system, and to layout agreed policies and procedures that are clearly defined, so as to avoid any uncertainty for residents, Council Members and Officers of the Council.

Under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990, Durham County Council (the 'Council') is classed as a Waste Collection and Disposal Authority, and as such, under section 45 (1), has a statutory duty to collect household waste from all domestic properties in the County. Under Section 46(4) of the Act, the Council has specific powers to stipulate:

- The size and type of the collection receptacle(s);
- Where the receptacle(s) must be placed for the purpose of collecting and emptying;
- The materials or items which may or may not be placed within the receptacle(s).

This document outlines how Durham County Council is to deliver the refuse and recycling collection service as well as the actions required for householders to participate fully in the service to recycle and dispose of their waste.

The following policies are covered by this document:

1. Assisted collections
2. No side waste
3. Putting out receptacles for emptying
4. Bin replacement/repair
5. Additional residual/recycling bins to households
6. Enforcement procedures
7. Services to charities and community organisations

# Policy 1: Assisted Collections

This policy outlines how householders can access the assisted collection service so they can participate fully in the refuse and recycling collection service.

- 1.1 Residents, who are unable to transport their wheeled bins/box to the required collection point, because of ill health, infirmity or disability, and without other occupants in the household able to assist them (16 years and over), will be placed on the 'assisted collection' register, upon request.
- 1.2 Residents are required to complete a simple application form in order to qualify and cases are considered on their merits. Home visits or telephone contacts may be carried out where necessary. If a person feels they require the service, emphasis is given to self declaration.
- 1.3 Assisted collections are subject to the Council being satisfied that service provision is warranted following approval of the request to the Council.
- 1.4 Alternative receptacles for recycling can be provided if requested and following independent assessment by the Council.
- 1.5 Residents on the 'assisted collection' register will have their wheeled bins/box collected by a collection operative from an agreed location, emptied into the collection vehicle and then returned to that same location.
- 1.6 If the householder's circumstances change, the resident must inform the Council.
- 1.7 The Council will periodically review the assisted collection register.
- 1.8 The decision of the supervising officer will be final.

## Policy 2: No Side Waste

This policy states that the Council will not collect any extra refuse which is placed next to a household's refuse bin for collection or wheeled bins which are over loaded.

### **a) No side waste (refuse)**

- 2.1 The presentation of 'side' waste (extra waste which is placed next to the refuse wheeled bin) does not support waste minimisation principles or encourage residents to maximise recycling. Therefore any excess household refuse left beside the wheeled bin will not be collected.
- 2.2 Residents, who are unable to contain their refuse within the refuse bin provided, are encouraged to recycle as much as possible. If they still have refuse that they cannot contain within their wheeled bin, they may take this waste to their nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).
- 2.3 The Council will provide advice to householders on reducing/recycling their waste upon request, or if issues have been reported via the crews.
- 2.4 Should the householder continue to present residual side waste, the Council will take appropriate enforcement action as defined in policy 6.
- 2.5 Exceptions to this policy apply during inclement weather and the Christmas period.

### **b) Presentation of side waste (additional recycling)**

- 2.6 The Council encourages households to maximise the presentation of materials for recycling.
- 2.7 Residents who have additional recyclable waste, that exceeds the capacity of their recycling container/s should present it in clear bags/carrier bags and place it next to the wheeled bin/box for collection. No black/opaque bags will be collected.
- 2.8 Additional recyclable material will only be collected at the discretion of the operator's judgement for health and safety reasons due to the necessity for it to be safely handled by operatives.
- 2.9 Residents who have extra recyclable material on a regular basis can request an additional recycling wheeled bin/box.

**c) Overloaded receptacles**

2.10 Where a wheeled bin is presented and is considered to be overloaded, either by weight or volume of material, it will be rejected at the discretion of the operator's judgement and not emptied based on health and safety reasons. The wheeled bin will only be emptied when deemed 'manageable' by the collections crews.

## Policy 3: Putting out receptacles for emptying

This policy sets out how the Council operates the refuse and recycling collection service across the County and provides information to residents on how, where and when their refuse and recycling should be presented.

### **a) Presentation of refuse and recycling receptacles**

- 3.1 Refuse and recycling receptacles must be presented at the kerbside by 7.00am and taken back within the property boundary the same day of collection.
- 3.2 Bins which are not taken back into the boundary of the property following a collection, may be identified as 'abandoned' and removed by the Council (also see section 6.7).
- 3.3 Any variation of this policy will be at the discretion of the supervising officer. The decision of the supervising officer will be deemed to be final, but will be well communicated in a timely way.

### **b) Frequency of collection**

- 3.4 The Council will collect household refuse and segregated household recyclables on an alternate weekly basis with refuse one week and recycling the following week.
- 3.5 The collection day will normally be the same day of the week for refuse and for recycling.
- 3.6 During Bank Holiday weeks, collections will usually be made a day later. For example if the normal collection day is a Friday, then the collection will be made on a Saturday instead. The Council have the right to make exceptions to this rule i.e. during the Christmas period, where collection dates will be advertised to householders.
- 3.7 The Council will advise of collection arrangements throughout the year and over bank holiday periods.
- 3.8 Detail of collection arrangements will always be made available on the Council's website at [www.durham.gov.uk](http://www.durham.gov.uk) and may also be presented in other formats.

### **c) Missed collections**

- 3.9 Refuse and recycling receptacles are to be presented for collection by 7.00am on the designated day of collection.
- 3.10 If receptacles are not presented by 7.00am on the day of collection, bins reported as missed will not be considered a 'missed' collection for reporting reasons. Responsibility for disposal of the waste will then become that of the householder, we will not return to empty the bin.

- 3.11 Refuse and recycling receptacles not presented for collection at the time the collection operatives arrive at the property will be recorded on the round sheet/Bartec system (electronic information recording system) used for record purposes, which will be submitted to the supervising officer & customer service team at the end of the working day.
- 3.12 If a receptacle is recorded on the round sheet/Bartec system as 'not presented', responsibility for disposal will become that of the householder and therefore the Council will not be required to return to collect the bin.
- 3.13 Should a missed collection be reported on the designated day of collection, and subject to the record sheet failing to show the receptacle as not being presented for collection, the Council will be required to go back and collect the waste within 3 working days, excluding Monday.
- 3.14 Where householders do not present their refuse or recyclables for collection in accordance with Council requirements, the householder will have the following options:
- take the waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre;
  - store the waste until the next collection day;

If there is excess recyclables presented safely and suitably at the next collection day the operatives will collect all materials set out.

#### **d) Servicing of flats/mixed hereditament**

- 3.15 For the servicing of flats/mixed hereditaments, the Council will usually supply 1100-litre wheeled bin(s) for recyclables and 1100-litre bin(s) for refuse.
- 3.16 Some residents may be requested to present their recycling material in other receptacles including clear plastic/carrier bags for collection.
- 3.17 Where residents of flats/mixed hereditaments do not segregate their waste for recycling in an effective manner, the Council will endeavour to work with residents to encourage recycling. If appropriate the Council will use its enforcement powers to achieve improvement in recycling performance from multiple-occupancy properties.
- 3.18 The Council will assess the servicing of flats/mixed hereditaments on an individual basis and cases will be considered on their merits. Home visits or telephone contacts may be carried out where necessary.

#### **e) Properties with access/storage issues**

- 3.19 The Council will assess properties identified with access or storage issues on an individual basis and cases will be considered on their merits. Alternative recycling provision will be considered following an independent assessment made by the Council. Home visits or telephone contacts may be carried out where necessary.

**f) Servicing of rural properties**

3.20 Rural properties should present their refuse and recycling receptacles at the safest/nearest point to the highway. Collection vehicles will not drive on an unmetalled road (of a road not having a hard surface). Home visits or telephone contact may be carried out where necessary.

## Policy 4: Bin replacement/repair (refuse, recycling and garden waste)

This policy sets out what receptacles the Council provides to residents and how they can replace missing or stolen bin/box or have their wheeled bin repaired.

4.1 The County Durham alternate weekly collection scheme provides each household with the following:

4.2 1 x wheeled bin for general 'black bag' refuse (either 140litre, 180litre or 240 litres). Only waste produced by a householder on a normal day to day basis should be placed in this wheeled bin (i.e. it should not contain non-standard items such as bulky waste, excessively heavy or hazardous items or commercial waste).

4.3 1 x 240 litre wheeled bin for household recycling including

- tins, cans and aerosols
- plastic bottles and tubs
- paper, cardboard and cartons

4.4 1 x recycling box including

- glass bottles and jars

4.5 1 x wheeled bin for green garden waste (where the scheme operates within the County).

4.6 Any request to provide a new wheeled bin or recycling box e.g. damage/lost or stolen, or a newly built property and where there is genuine need, shall be made either in writing or contacting the Council through the contact centres.

4.7 A charge will be made for the replacement of any bins that are;

- Damaged beyond repair (unless reported by crew)
- Worn out through wear & tear beyond repair
- Lost or stolen

Second wheeled bins lost/stolen within the same calendar year will be provided free of charge by the Council.

4.8 Any damage to wheeled bins caused by the collection crews during the collection process will be replaced free of charge.

4.9 Replacement wheeled bins or recycling boxes shall be delivered to householders as soon as practicable after the request has been made.

4.10 All refuse and recycling receptacles supplied to householders shall always remain the property of the Council.

- 4.11 When householders move home they must leave all wheeled bins and recycling boxes at the property ready for the new occupant to use.
- 4.12 Householders are responsible for the storage, safe keeping and cleaning of refuse and recycling receptacles provided by the Council.
- 4.13 The cost of providing receptacles for the refuse, recycling and garden waste services will be transferred to the developer for new build properties, where applicable.

## Policy 5: Additional residual/recycling bins to households

This policy outlines how households of 6 or more persons can request additional residual and/or recycling wheeled bins to assist with recycling or disposing of their waste.

5.1 Where a household produces excess residual waste which cannot be accommodated in a 240 litre wheeled bin collected on a fortnightly basis and arises from a large number of persons permanently residing in the house the provision of additional capacity will be considered.

5.2 A larger household is considered to have 6 or more persons residing on a permanent basis.

5.3 Residents are required to complete an application form. Where additional capacity is granted additional recycling capacity will take precedence.

5.4 Additional recycling wheeled bin/box capacity will be provided free on request for households with 6 or more occupants, or where there is other demonstrable need.

5.5 Additional refuse and recycling wheeled bin capacity are subject to the Council being satisfied that service provision is warranted following approval for the request by the Council.

5.6 The Council will periodically review households who have additional wheeled bin capacity.

## Policy 6: Enforcement procedures

This policy outlines the enforcement procedures for the Refuse and Recycling Collection service. Building awareness and having an educational approach is important to help residents understand their role and assist with improving recycling and operating efficient services. Enforcement activities will be in accordance with the Council's 'enforcement policy' and as such, any enforcement will follow these principles and be used as a staged approach.

6.1 All waste must be presented in Council approved receptacles to ensure it can be safely collection from the kerbside.

6.2 The Council will reject for collection, refuse and recyclable receptacles for the following reasons:

- Overloaded wheeled bin or box or other container (by weight or volume)
- Wrong receptacle presented e.g. recycling bin presented on refuse week
- Wheeled bin is too heavy to lift, due to it containing heavy waste e.g. construction, DIY or soil waste
- Contamination of recyclable materials.

6.3 Repeated presentation of residual side waste will be dealt with by the Council in the same manner as 'contamination of recyclable materials – see section 6.4 & 6.5.

### **Contamination of recyclable materials**

6.4 Recycling wheeled bins/boxes containing major contamination of the recyclable material will not be emptied. A notice will be left on the bin/box stating why it has not been emptied and a stage one letter issued to the property. It is the responsibility of the householder to remove the contamination and dispose of it in the correct manner. The recycling bin will be emptied on the next scheduled recycling collection day. A recycling information leaflet will be provided, and a Council Officer may visit the property to offer recycling advice.

6.5 The householder will be given two sticker/letter notifications for two separate occurrences of contamination of the recycling/garden waste wheeled bin/box, the second incident, within a 12-month period of the advisory letter being issued; will result in a notice (stage two letter) being served to the householder, under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and will allow a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to be issued on the next occasion or for the recycling bin to be removed. A recycling information leaflet will be provided, and a Council Officer may visit the property to offer recycling advice.

6.6 The third incident will result in a third letter referring to arrangements for a Council Officer to visit the householder and under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 the removal of the recycling wheeled bin/box and the potential of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to be issued. There will be a two-week period before the recycling bin may be returned on condition the householder shows commitment by signing a written agreement to recycle properly in the future and accepting the Council's recycling advice. Should a further contamination incident occur following the receipt of the signed agreement the recycling bin will be removed and not

returned.

6.7 Residents must not leave contaminated recycling bin(s) outside of the property until the next collection day. Contaminated recycling bins may be removed at any stage of section 6 by the Council. Bins(s) must be brought back into the boundary of the property (also see 3.2).

## Policy 7: Services to charities and community organisations

This policy sets out the refuse and recycling collection service which the Council provides to charities and community organisations within County Durham.

7.1 Registered 'not for profit' charities and community organisations will be provided with two 240 litre wheeled bins and a box.

7.2 In order to promote recycling, there will be a 240 litre wheeled bin and box for recyclable materials and a 240 litre wheeled bin for refuse, both to be emptied on an alternate weeks with no collection charge.

7.3 The Council will make a charge for providing extra bin capacity greater than that described above, where additional capacity, refuse and recycling bins are requested.