

West Berkshire Council: West Berkshire Council: waste service changes to improve resilience

Mandip Bilkhu <mail@westberks.vuelio.uk.com>

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To: Kirsty Lemberger <kirsty@newburybid.com>



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West Berkshire Council: waste service changes to improve resilience

Like most councils in the UK, we have been managing a number of significant challenges to our waste services during the last two years, including the impacts of both the nationwide HGV driver shortage and Covid-19. It is likely that these pressures will continue due to the emergence of new Covid-19 variants, a sustained rise in working from home, home delivery purchases and the increase in waste generated over the Christmas holiday period.

Our waste services have coped well in comparison with many other parts of the country; during October 2021, 40% of councils in England and Wales were experiencing disruptions to their waste collection services ^[1]^[2].

We are now looking to make two changes to ensure that we can maintain a good quality of service for all residents. Firstly, we will temporarily suspend the garden and food waste service for one collection starting at the end of December 2021, and secondly we will re-organise most collection routes in February 2022.

West Berkshire Council has taken the difficult but necessary decision to temporarily suspend the green bin garden and food waste collection service for one collection from Tuesday 28 December 2021 until Saturday 8 January 2022 (inclusive). All services will resume as normal from Monday 10 January 2022.

This temporary suspension will free up more drivers and operatives to ensure your rubbish (black bin) and recycling (green boxes and bag) service continues as scheduled throughout

the busy Christmas period and into the New Year.

We will collect up to 3 open topped bags of excess garden waste in addition to the green bin on your first collection following the resumption of the service. Please note that this is effectively a delayed collection and garden waste customers will not miss out on the usual amount of collections. We are not able to offer refunds, as stated in the [terms and conditions](#) for the chargeable garden waste service.

Some options for what residents can do with food and garden waste during the temporary suspension period, if they cannot wait until when the service restarts, are given below.

Garden Waste and Christmas Trees:

- Garden waste, including real Christmas trees, can be disposed of at Household Waste recycling Centres (HWRCs) free of charge. Please ensure you book an appointment via www.westberks.gov.uk/clickandtip before you visit.
- Residents can also [home compost](#) where possible.
- Real Christmas trees will be collected on your first scheduled garden/food waste collection in January 2022 once the service has resumed. Please keep them close to your property until the collection service restarts and avoid blocking pavements and footpaths with them.

Food waste:

- We are asking residents to try and [reduce food waste](#) generation over the holiday season and beyond.
- Residents can also [home compost](#) where possible.
- We will collect any food waste in your green bin when the service resumes.
- If you would rather dispose of your food waste sooner it can temporarily be taken to our [Household Waste Recycling Centres](#) (HWRCs) for disposal. We have liaised with our contractor for special containers to be placed at the Newtown Road, Newbury and Padworth HWRCs from Monday 20 December 2021 until the suspension period is over. Please ensure you book an appointment via www.westberks.gov.uk/clickandtip before you visit.

As part of our longer term plan to build more resilience into our waste collection operations, we are working with our waste contractor, Veolia, to change collection rounds. This will achieve a more efficient routing pattern, so that vehicles and collection personnel can be used better. This is not a cost saving measure, Veolia will be investing in a new recycling truck with a full crew to add to the service. For most residents, this will result in collection day changes being made in February 2022. It will not affect the frequency of collections or how we collect waste from households. Details will be confirmed in January 2022.

Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter, Executive Member for the Environment at West Berkshire Council, said: "We have not taken the decision to put garden and food waste collections on hold lightly, and I understand that some residents may be frustrated by this service disruption.

“We have listened to feedback from our residents received earlier this year and believe it is more prudent to have a planned and proactive service suspension so that inconvenience is reduced and other key waste collections can be protected.

“In the longer term, our planned reorganisation of routes will strengthen our kerbside collection service and improve the efficient use of available staff and vehicles. We are grateful for our residents continued support and understanding.”

For more information about this temporary service suspension, please read our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

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References:

[1] <https://www.themj.co.uk/Councils-forced-to-suspend-waste-services-due-to-staff-shortages/221022#>

[2] <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA%20Research%20Report%20-%20COVID-19%20Workforce%20Survey%20-%208%20October%202021.pdf>

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