

# Garden waste collections - frequently asked questions

## What date does the service start and end?

The service runs from 30 March to 19 November 2021. The garden waste will be collected once every two weeks. The service operates Tuesday to Friday, to view collection dates online, see

[www.sunderland.gov.uk/bindays](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/bindays)

## Is this service included in my Council Tax?

It is not included in Council Tax however, we have tried to keep the charges as low as possible.

## Will I pay less Council Tax if I subscribe to the garden waste scheme?

This service is not included in Council Tax. It is a non-statutory service which means the council is not legally obliged to run it.

## Will a charge be introduced in the near future for other recycling and household waste?

There are no plans to introduce a charge for collecting household waste or recycling waste in the blue bins.

## Subscriptions

### Why should I subscribe to the service before 28 February 2021?

If you subscribe before 28 February 2021 you are guaranteed to receive all 17 collections between 30 March and 19 November 2021.

Subscribing before this date also allows us to plan the routes better, reducing fuel consumption and maximising efficiency. It also gives us enough time to deliver the garden waste sticker and any additional bins which have been requested.

### Can I subscribe after 28 February 2021?

Yes, you can subscribe any time during the year, but you will only receive the remaining collections of the service and you will still pay the same price.

### What if I don't want to pay for the service?

If you do not wish to sign up for the new garden waste service, your garden waste bin will not be emptied.

### How do you know if I paid my subscription?

Once you subscribe for the service this will be automatically recorded in our system. Crews have access to the system which identifies all subscribers of the service. You will also be provided with a sticker for your bin to confirm that you have paid for collections, this should be placed underneath the handles of your bin which will help the crews to identify which bins to collect.

## **How can I pay for this service?**

You can sign up online at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/gardenwaste) or by calling us on 0191 520 5550 and making a debit or credit card payment. Lines are open between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

## **If I cancel my subscription, will I get a refund?**

We are unable to offer a refund on this service.

## **Do I pay a lower rate if I join towards the end of the year?**

The price is a fixed charge regardless of when you join the service.

## **Do I have to pay the same garden waste charge as anyone else even though I am on benefits / I am a senior citizen?**

Yes. There are no concessions.

## **Do I get any discounts if I need more than one bin?**

The price is £32.50 per year to have your first bin emptied, and an additional £20 per year per bin for any additional bins, up to a maximum of four. You are entitled to receive your first bin free of charge, however, if you require a replacement or additional bins there is a charge of £25 per bin. This is a service charge for the delivery of the bin, which cannot be collected in person.

## **I have not signed up to this service in the past. How do I know if I can opt in or if I am eligible for this service?**

If you received the garden waste service in the past you can expect to be eligible to subscribe again.

If you have a property with a garden, you are likely to be eligible, unless the property is either too remote or it cannot be accessed by our collection vehicles. Due to these reasons each case will be considered by a Refuse Manager.

## **I do not have much garden waste. Can I share a garden waste bin with a neighbour?**

Yes, the charge is per bin and there are no issues with this practice. You or your neighbour will need to decide who is to register for the service and make the payment.

## **I have a very big garden. How many bins can I get?**

The maximum number of bins we are willing to empty from one property alone is four, as more than that may create logistical problems for the collection crews.

## **I am moving to a new house. Do I need to cancel my service?**

The subscription is for the property only and the garden waste collection service is not transferable. The payment made is not refundable.

## **Can I apply for assisted collection?**

An [assisted collection service](#) is available upon request for eligible households. To receive an assisted collection service, you can apply [online](#) or by calling us on 0191 520 5550. If you are already on an assisted collection for your other bin types, then this should automatically transfer, and you will continue to receive help with bringing your bin to the kerbside and having it returned on your property.

## **Why do I need to have the sticker/my address on the back of the garden waste bin, beneath the handle and what type of pen should I use?**

The sticker and address will make it easier for the crew to identify, collect and return the garden waste bin to the right property.

You must leave the bin at the kerbside with the handle facing the road, as normal, so it is easier for the crews to see the sticker beneath the handle.

A permanent marker is the best type of pen to use, but you can also use a biro.

## **Garden bins and collection**

### **Why is garden waste not collected all year round?**

During the winter months the service is suspended as there is little garden waste. If you would like to recycle your garden waste during these months you can place it in a compost bin yourself or you can take it to one of the [Household Waste and Recycling Centres](#) (HWRCs) at Beach Street, Deptford in Sunderland and Campground at Wrekenton. You must make a booking to use the HWRC at Beach Street.

We also offer a [bulky waste](#) collection service - a single payment for less frequent, bagged garden waste. For a reasonable one-off fee, we'll take away up to six items of bulky waste.

### **If I don't currently have garden waste bins at all and I want to subscribe, do I have to pay to have the bin delivered?**

If you have not been issued a garden waste bin, then we will deliver your first bin free of charge. You can [apply for a new bin](#) online.

### **Will my collection day change, or will it stay the same?**

We cannot guarantee that your collection day will be the same as your current day. You can also [view your collection day](#) online.

### **My bin sticker is damaged or lost. Can I get another one?**

Stickers will be replaced free of charge. Contact us if you need a new sticker on 0191 520 5550.

### **My garden waste bin is stolen/lost. Can I get another one?**

You will need to contact us so we can arrange a replacement. There is a charge of £25 per replacement bin which pays for the delivery of the bin. Bins cannot be collected in person.

### **Can I get a bigger/smaller bin?**

All bins are of standard size, which is the same size as the recycling bin. If you consider one bin is not enough you can order additional bins at a cost, as explained above.

### **If I have additional garden waste will you collect it if it does not fit in the bin?**

Side waste cannot be taken, therefore if you only have one bin you will need to compost what you can, purchase additional bins from us or take it to one of the [Household Waste and Recycling Centres](#) (HWRCs)

at Beach Street, Deptford, Sunderland or Campground at Wrekenton. You must make a booking to use the HWRC at Beach Street.

We also offer a [bulky waste](#) collection service for the removal of additional waste. For a reasonable one-off fee we'll take away up to six items of bulky waste.

## What should I place in the garden waste bin?

Please do not place garden waste in plastic bags. Place it as it is directly in the bin.

Items which **can** be put in are grass cuttings; weeds and dead plants; twigs and small branches; hedge clippings; cut flowers and houseplants; shrub pruning's; leaves.

Items which **cannot** be put in are food waste including meat, fish, fruit, salad and vegetables; plastic or plastic packaging; any packaging; vegetable peelings and egg shells; tea bags or coffee grinds; large items of garden waste, for example tree trunks; soil, rubble and bricks.

## Do I get a refund if I had a missed collection?

There are no refunds, but we will come back as soon as we can to empty your bin if it has been missed due to a reason which is our fault. Please leave your bin out and we will return to empty it.

## I do not want the service anymore. Can you take my bin away?

You can make a request to have your bin removed, which is free of charge. However, we recommend that you keep your garden waste bin as there will be a delivery charge if you decide you want to subscribe at a later date.

## Disposing of garden waste

### Can I place the garden waste in my green household waste bin?

You can place your garden waste in the household waste bin (green bin), but you must consider that by doing this the rubbish bin will fill up more quickly. We will not remove side waste even if your bin is full. Bins that are too heavy cannot be emptied.

### How can I dispose of garden waste if I do not wish to join the scheme?

- Composting - an alternative is to compost your garden waste. Composting is a natural process that transforms your uncooked vegetable kitchen waste and garden waste into a nutrient rich food for your garden. A home composter can turn around 30% of your total household waste into compost and it is easy to do

You can either make your own compost heap or buy a compost bin. Sunderland City Council has teamed up with [getcomposting.com](#) to provide a range of home compost bins and other green products at reduced prices

- [Household Waste and Recycling Centres](#) – use the centres at Beach Street, Deptford and Campground at Wrekenton for free. You must make a booking to use the HWRC at Beach Street
- [Bulky waste](#) collection service - a single payment for less frequent, bagged garden waste. For a reasonable one-off fee, we'll take away up to six items of bulky waste
- Household waste bin (green bin) - use of your household waste collection bin

## **Can I burn my garden waste?**

Garden waste tends to produce quite a lot of smoke which may amount to an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A smoky bonfire may amount to a nuisance for a neighbour if it limits their enjoyment of their gardens, preventing them hanging out washing or opening windows. Fumes can be damaging to health and affect air quality. Under section 80 of the Environmental Act 1990 an 'abatement order' can be issued and if the activity is not ceased a fine of £5,000 can be imposed.

## **Will there be an increased risk of fly-tipping?**

The council is aware of a possible increase in fly-tipping. Across England, where other councils introduced a charge for this service, there has been no increase in fly-tipping, but we will be monitoring the number of fly-tipping incidents and take action if there will be the need to do so. Fly-tipping is a criminal offence with a maximum fine of £50,000 under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.