

Garden Waste Collection Service FAQs

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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. Food waste is collected separately from garden waste from your 23 litre brown caddy. This is collected weekly for no additional charge. ([back to top](#))

Why are you now charging for garden waste collections?

Like many Councils we have a reduced budget from central Government and needed to save £4.2 million pounds annually by 2021/22. We could therefore no longer afford to subsidise the cost of collecting this additional waste. The decision to charge for garden waste collections was one of many difficult decisions the Council has had to face to help reduce the costs of providing services. (See minutes of Cabinet meeting 16.10.17) 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. Over half of all Councils in England charge for this service and have done for many years. Not all properties in North 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. ([back to top](#))

Will my garden waste be collected over Christmas?

Garden waste will continue to be collected fortnightly apart from one collection in the period immediately after Christmas, where you will not receive a collection. This is to enable crews to focus their resources on the recycling and refuse services which experience high volumes of tonnage at this busy time. [\(back to top\)](#)

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 has bought NHDC in line with some of our neighbouring councils who have a charged service, such as Welwyn Hatfield, Broxbourne and Three Rivers. [\(back to top\)](#)

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 North 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 [\(back to top\)](#)

Are concessions available?

Yes, if you are in receipt of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme benefit with a valid benefit number you can have the garden waste service for £25.50 instead of £49. However, this only applies to your first subscription. Further bins will be £49 each. [\(back to top\)](#)

I have already paid for my subscription but now I am receiving Council Tax Reduction scheme benefits, can I claim back a refund?

No, as per the terms and conditions no refunds can be given for a change of status once the subscription has been paid for (subject to the 14 day cooling off period) [\(back to top\)](#)

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. [\(back to top\)](#)

Can I sign up part way through the year?

You can sign up at any point before we close the payment portal for the next year's subscription service however the cost will be £49 irrespective of how many months are left of the subscription period. [\(back to top\)](#)

Can I pay via Direct Debit?

Your garden waste collections can be paid via a Direct Debit, 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 how this will work and what to do should you wish to cancel your Direct Debit in the future. Insert details of the renewal date selected. ([back to top](#))

Can I pay via cash or cheque?

We are not able to accept cash or cheques for the garden waste service. The service is administered via an online portal and as such cheque and cash payments cannot be accepted. Urbaser our contractor is responsible for taking payments for the service and they are not able to accept cash or process cheques. If you believe this will prevent you from subscribing to the service as a result of this, please do contact us to discuss ([back to top](#))

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

£89 (£49 standard collection charge + £40 bin and delivery)

Concessions are charged at £25.50 with a valid Council Tax Reduction scheme claim number. ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

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

Collection vehicles will have an electronic record of which addresses have signed up. 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 on your bin to ensure your brown bin is emptied. Please allow up to 14 days for your sticker to arrive after you subscribe. ([back to top](#))

When will I receive my sticker for my brown bin?

Please allow up to 14 days for your sticker to arrive. If you have not received it within three weeks of payment please **contact us** wasteandrecycling@north-herts.gov.uk ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

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([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

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 September. You do not need to tell us you are not re-subscribing as the service will be removed from your property automatically. If you decide that you would also like to return the brown bin to us then you need to email northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk requesting that the bin is removed. ([back to top](#))

How do I cancel my direct debit?

To cancel or amend your direct debit you will need to contact Urbaser northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk who will arrange this for you. You can also contact them if you wish the amend your direct debit. ([back to top](#))

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

You can contact Urbaser on northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk with your name, address and your request. As per the terms and conditions any cancellations need to be within 14 days of payment([back to top](#))

Can I pay by instalments?

No, we are unable to accommodate payment by instalments in our payment system. The cost of doing this would increase the cost of providing the service overall. ([back to top](#))

Why isn't the charge pro-rata?

We cannot offer a pro-rata charge as it is necessary for us to plan resources, ensuring we have sufficient vehicles and staff throughout the year. Having a fixed sign up period allows for administration of the service to also be contained in a short period. Having a pro rata service would likely result in a higher overall charge requiring 'just in case' resources to manage changes in sign up volumes. ([back to top](#))

My payment has gone to Urbaser, is this right?

Yes. Urbaser carry out the Garden Waste Service on behalf of North Herts Council. ([back to top](#))

I haven't received my receipt; how do I know my payment has worked?

It is worth initially checking the 'junk' folder of your emails. It's possible your receipt is there. If you still have any concerns, you can log back into the website and check your order history. Your orders will show as 'completed' if your payment was processed successfully. ([back to top](#))

I have met the password criteria, but it is still not working?

To ensure the security of your details, we have criteria that need to be met for a successful password. If yours is meeting the criteria; but isn't being accepted, the system may have identified it as being too weak. You should create a more complicated password. Examples of weak or bad passwords are Passw0rd! or Qwerty100! ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

Can I put garden waste in my purple bin?

We strongly discourage residents from placing garden waste in the purple 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 purple 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 purple bin on your general waste collection day. Additional side waste won't be collected and neither will overfilled bins. ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

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

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

You can email our contractor Urbaser at Northhertsenquiries@urbaser.co.uk with your name, address and your request. As per the terms and conditions any cancellations need to be within 14 days of payment. [\(back to top\)](#)

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. However, pet bedding from vegetarian animals such as rabbits is compostable and if you choose to sign up for the service and then place this material in your brown bin, it will be collected by the crew. [\(back to top\)](#)

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. [\(back to top\)](#)

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

Yes, if you move to a new house within the district, you can take the service with you to your new property. You will need to inform us that you have moved and give details of both the old and new addresses. If you move out of the district, there is no refund available as you would have already received the service for a period before moving properties. [\(back to top\)](#)

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. [\(back to top\)](#)

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 both the garden waste and the separate food 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. Food will continue 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. [\(back to top\)](#)

Why has the council changed the subscription period from 12 months to 18 months?

This is a one-off, partly as a way of assisting residents through the current cost of living crisis and also to allow us to align our subscription period with East Herts Council, as we operate a shared waste collection service with them. [\(back to top\)](#)

Why has the council increased the cost of the garden waste subscription?

Although the price has increased from £40.80 to £49, we have also increased the collection period from 12 months to 18 months. This means a reduction in the cost per collection. This is a one-off, partly as a way of assisting residents through the current cost of living crisis and also to allow us to align our subscription period with East Herts Council as we operate a shared waste collection service with them. ([back to top](#))

Will my sticker last for 18 months?

New stickers will be valid from the 1 October 2023 to the 31 March 2025 regardless of when you sign up for the service. ([back to top](#))

Do I need to change my direct debit?

If you are a direct debit customer. This will automatically renew you do not need to do anything. You will get an email advising you of the change in payment and to notify you of the extended collection period. Please notify us via email if you wish to cancel the service or if you need to make any changes. ([back to top](#))

Will I receive a new sticker?

Yes, a new sticker will be ordered once a payment has been received. Stickers can take up to 14 days to arrive. ([back to top](#))

My advance notice says my next direct debit date will be March 2025, is this correct?

Yes, this is correct as the new subscription period is running for 18 months from the 1 October to the 31 March 2025. This is a one-off, partly as a way of assisting residents through the current cost of living crisis and also to allow us to align our subscription period with East Herts Council, as we operate a shared waste collection service with them. ([back to top](#))

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. ([back to top](#))

