

## 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 will be collected separately from garden waste in a newly provided 23 litre brown caddy. This will be collected weekly for no additional charge.

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### **Why are you now charging for garden waste collections?**

Like many Councils we have a reduced budget from central Government and need to save £4.2 million pounds annually by 2021/22. We can therefore no longer afford to subsidise the cost of collecting this additional waste. The decision to charge for garden waste collections is one of many difficult decisions the Council has faced 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. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **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 will bring 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?**

No. The charge of £40 per year applies to all households regardless of personal circumstances. The Council does not offer concessions for other chargeable Council services and other options are available for residents to dispose of their garden waste, such as home composting. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **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. If you sign up and pay for an additional bin(s) to be delivered, they will be delivered prior to 14 May. Please note additional bins will not be emptied if placed out for collection before the new garden waste collection service commences on 14 May. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **Can I sign up part way through the year?**

You can sign up at any point. There is a reduced price for sign ups from 1 November until 30 April (Half Year Collection). [\(back to top\)](#)

### **How much does the service cost?**

The pricing structure is detailed below. Please note there are no concessions for this service.

Payment type	Amount you will pay per bin
Standard collection charge per bin (up to three bins)	£40
Charge for additional bins if you require an additional bin to be delivered	£75 (£40 standard collection charge + £35 bin and delivery)
Winter collection service only- half year collection charge for one bin available from 1 November 2018- 30 April 2019	£20

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### **When will my garden waste be collected?**

The garden waste service will run throughout the year from May to April. 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 new service?**

Collection vehicles will have an electronic record of which addresses have signed up. Clearly numbering your bin(s) will also help to ensure that the crew can easily identify it for collection. [\(back to top\)](#)

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

We will not be collecting any unwanted brown bins until September as other councils have found that residents continue to sign up within the first few months of the service starting. From September you will be able to request an unwanted bin to be collected via an online form on our website. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **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](mailto: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. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **Why can't I sign up for a half year collection for May-October if you do one for Nov-April?**

Whilst the majority of garden waste is produced during the spring and summer, for many residents the green and leafy nature of the district means this is not the case and therefore the garden waste collection being offered is an annual service.

We are able to offer the half year service during the winter period (November to April) as the amount of garden waste collected during this time reduces therefore additional properties can be added to the collection for minimal additional cost to the service; as it does not require any additional resources such as collection vehicles or staff. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **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?**

If you move house within the district, you cannot take the service with you to your new property. You will need to sign up again if you want the service at your new property if the residents at your new property have not already signed up to receive the service. If you move out of the district there is no refund available as you would have already received the service for a period of time before moving properties.

Unfortunately transferring collections to a new address has an administrative cost associated with the process and we do not have the resources available to make the necessary amendments to records. We are operating our service in line with other local authorities which also state there are no refunds or transference of service to a different address available if you move house. [\(back to top\)](#)

### **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 65-80<sup>0</sup>C 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](#))

### **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](#))