

# Changes to waste and recycling sacks – questions and answers

6 March 2024

## Black sacks

### Why are you withdrawing free black sacks?

In common with most councils, businesses and households, we have seen significant increases in our costs. In the coming financial year, we faced a £1.3 million budget shortfall, and a significant proportion of this was directly linked to our refuse collections.

The fuel for the freighters and staff wages have all seen above inflationary price increases. Plus, with more people working from home and more reliance on home deliveries since the pandemic, we are collecting much more household waste than ever before.

We know how much our residents value their weekly collections of both waste and recycling, so we had to find cost savings to protect the current frequency of the service. We also believe we are the only council in the country to still be supplying our residents with free refuse sacks.

We therefore took the decision to stop the supply of black sacks at our budget-setting meeting on 20 February 2024. It will come into effect from 1 April 2024.

This change will save £100,000 a year and will allow us to continue to provide a weekly waste collection service for as long as possible.

You can find [out more about the changes](#).

### What bags can I use?

Please use sacks made for household waste (usually the black or dark grey sacks).

To help protect the health of our crews, please do not use any other type of sack or bag, including carrier bags.

### Where can I buy sacks?

Rolls of waste sacks are available from most markets, supermarkets, discount shops and hardware stores.

You can also buy sacks on line, including at most supermarkets.

You can still buy Council black sacks from your usual distributor or your parish or town council up to 31 March 2024, subject to availability.

### Why can't you provide me with a waste bin?

We know our waste collection service is valued and very popular with our residents. In our most recent, independently-run resident survey, 93% said they were satisfied with our waste collection service.

We are therefore committed to, and our resources focused on, continuing to provide our residents with a weekly waste collection service.

Providing residents with bins and adapting our freighters to tip these bins would involve such significant expenditure that it would likely mean we could no longer afford to be able to continue to collect both waste and recycling every week.

### **I want to write in with my comments or concerns?**

Please complete our [feedback form on our website](#).

## **Sacks for life / clear sacks**

### **What can you tell us about the sack for life?**

As part of setting next year's budget, we have decided to provide all households with a reusable sack for life for their dry recycling instead of providing clear plastic sacks.

This will save on single use plastics and delivery costs, helping the environment.

The change will save nearly £200,000 a year, helping us to retain weekly waste and recycling collections for as long as we can.

Around 130 councils already use sacks for life for their recycling. The feedback we have received from other councils has been very positive.

Further details will be available before the sacks are provided to residents in the autumn.

### **Will you still continue to deliver clear sacks?**

You should receive a double delivery of clear recycling sacks from April onwards before your reusable sack for life is delivered in the autumn of 2024.

### **I live in a flat. Will I get a sack for life?**

If you live in a flat and you use communal waste and recycling bins (and you do not put your recycling in a clear sack), nothing will change. You will continue to use the communal bins as you do now, so you will not be given a bag for life for recycling.

### **What will stop my sack from being blown away after collection?**

Each bag has a recycled plastic weight in the bottom. Councils who already use these bags for life assure us that this is not a problem that they encounter.

### **How will I know which is my sack?**

There will be a small panel on the sack where you can write your house number or name using a permanent marker.

### **My sack is dirty, what can I do?**

Your sack can be cleaned with a cloth and water or hosed down.

The sack is for your dry recycling including: paper, cardboard, metal cans, foil and tins, Tetra Paks and plastic bottles, pots and trays.

As always, we recommend giving cans, tins and trays a quick clean before they go in your sack.

### **Can the bag for life be sealed to avoid items from spilling out?**

The bags can be sealed with a Velcro strip. They are animal proof and water resistant.

### **I don't have a lot of room, where will I store my sack for life?**

The sack folds up and is water resistant so you can store it inside or outside your home. You may be able to store it in the same place you currently store your clear sacks.

### **Will you collect glass in the sack for life?**

No, but you can continue to use one of the 40 recycling sites for glass, textiles and cardboard across the District. View the [location of our recycling sites](#).

### **We create a lot of recycling and one sack may not be enough. Can we get additional sacks?**

Households can request extra sacks.

### **I've lost my recycling sack. Can I get another one?**

Households can request a replacement bag for free.

### **Will the rounds take longer if the collectors have to empty the sacks into the freighters?**

From benchmarking with other councils that use bags for life, there are only marginal differences.

### **How will you cope at Christmas when more recycling is put out?**

We will deploy additional resources to collect all the recycling residents put out.

Bank holiday waste collections will operate as they do now with some collection days likely to change. But no household will miss a collection day.

**Can I use my clear sacks once I have my recycling sack for life?**

Yes, you can continue to use clear sacks until you run out of stock. Please place them next to your bag for life on your collection day.

**Will I need to put my recycling in a clear sack, which is then placed in the recycling sacks for life?**

No. Please put your recycling straight into your recycling sack for life.