

Charging for garden waste collections FAQs March 2021

1. Why are you introducing an annual charge for collecting garden waste?
2. When do I need to pay?
3. How much does it cost?
4. What does the charge cover?
5. How do I pay?
6. Can I sign up part-way through the year?
7. I paid the one-off £25 for my garden waste bin, do I need to pay again?
8. Our household is on a low income. Do we still have to pay £50 if we want to receive the service?
9. Can I have a garden waste collection if I live in a flat?
10. Can I share a garden waste bin with my neighbour?
11. I have an assisted collection for garden waste, will this continue if I sign up?
12. Can I take the service with me when I move house?
13. Will I get a new bin?
14. How will you know who has paid?
15. When will I receive my permit?
16. I've signed up online but not got a confirmation email
17. Is it legal to charge for the collection of garden waste?
18. Isn't this paid for by my council tax?
19. If I don't sign up, what can I do with my garden waste?
20. Won't people just fly-tip or put it in their black bin?
21. How can I stop other people using the bin I have paid for?
22. What will happen if someone puts their garden waste bin out for collection, but they have not signed up to the service?
23. What do I do with my unwanted garden waste bin?
24. I currently put garden waste from council-owned land into my garden waste bin, but I don't want to pay to continue to do this. What can I do?
25. How does charging help the environment and climate emergency?
26. What can I put in the garden waste bin?
27. How are you promoting home and community composting?
28. What happens to the garden waste collected by the council?

1. Why are you introducing an annual charge for collecting garden waste?

It has not been an easy decision but council finances are under pressure, even more this year than before and garden waste is not a statutory service. To protect essential services such as care and support for the most vulnerable people in our community the introduction of an annual charge will cover the costs of the service and make it self-financing.

The changes being made to the garden waste service will also make a positive contribution to the climate emergency by encouraging home composting, which is the most environmentally friendly and sustainable way to dispose of garden waste.

2. When do I need to pay?

You can sign up now to the new service online at:

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

Our telephone lines have been extremely busy due to the exceptionally high volumes of calls we're receiving, so if you can sign up on our website please do, as that's the quickest option.

If you can't sign up online, perhaps there is a friend or family member who could do this for you, using your address. If you do need to ring us, please use the telephone number **01934 888 802**. There's no need to rush as you have until Friday 16 April to receive the 10% discount off the collection cost of your first garden waste bin.

3. How much does it cost?

The full price cost is £50 per bin for collections for one year. The service runs from 1 April – 31 March.

There is an 'early bird' 10% discount on the collection cost of one bin if you sign up and pay by Friday 16 April. This deadline has been extended to help anyone who had trouble signing up during the first few days of the service launching.

If you receive a discount on your council tax you will also qualify for a reduced-price garden waste collection service this year. The percentage of discount applied will be the same as you receive for council tax and will be calculated automatically based on your address when you sign up. These discounts are in addition to the 'early bird' 10% discount.



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4. What does the charge cover?

If you sign up and pay you will receive garden waste collections for a one-year period between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. Collections will be fortnightly for most of the year and monthly during December, January and February (when less garden waste is produced). If you don't have a bin or request to swap the size of your bin, the £50 charge will also include delivery or exchange of a garden waste bin.

5. How do I pay?

You can sign up and pay by following the sign up link on our website at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

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6. Can I sign up part-way through the year?

You can sign up at any point during the year however, it will still cost £50 for the remainder of the year until 31 March 2022

7. I paid the one-off £25 for my garden waste bin, do I need to pay again?

The terms and conditions of the previous garden waste service clearly state that the £25 one-off registration fee was for the administration of the service and customers did not purchase a bin. All bins remain the property of North Somerset Council. If you would like to continue to receive a kerbside garden waste collection, you will need to sign up and pay for the new annual chargeable service.

8. Our household is on a low income. Do we still have to pay £50 if we want to receive the service?

If you receive a discount on your council tax you will also qualify for a reduced-price garden waste collection service this year. The percentage of discount applied will be the same as you receive for council tax and will be calculated automatically based on your address when you sign up. These discounts are in addition to the 'early bird' 10% discount.

9. Can I have a garden waste collection if I live in a flat?

If you live in a flat but you have your own garden, you can still sign up for the service. If you have communal gardens you should contact your managing agent or housing association, as they will be responsible for the removal of garden waste.

10. Can I share a garden waste bin with my neighbour?

You can share a 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.

11. I have an assisted collection for garden waste, will this continue if I sign up?

Yes, if you currently receive an assisted collection for your garden waste and you sign up for the new chargeable service you will continue to receive an assisted collection as before. You do not need to contact us to arrange this.

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

No, the garden waste bin is signed up to one address only. If you move, the new residents will benefit from the remainder of the collections for the year. Please do not take the bin with you as it will not be collected from your new address. If you don't have a collection at your new address but you would like one, then please sign up and pay again.

13. Will I get a new bin?

We will not be delivering new bins if you are an existing garden waste customer. You should continue to use the bin you have wherever possible. If you have a smaller 180L bin you should continue to use this bin if possible although you can swap to a 240L bin by completing the separate order form

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/bins-recycling/order-new-bin>.

All new addresses signing up to the service will receive a 240L garden waste bin as standard. This is the largest of the bin sizes previously offered.

Properties with access or storage issues for a bin are provided with garden waste sacks. Three sacks are equivalent to one bin.

14. How will you know who has paid?

When you sign up and pay you will be posted a letter with a permit sticker for your bin or tag for bags. All bins which have been paid for should have the permit displayed for the crew to easily identify and collect it. The crew will also have a record of all the addresses signed up to the new service and will only collect from those properties.

15. When will I receive my permit?

We're sending them out in bulk by royal mail. Don't worry if you've signed up but haven't received your permit yet. The crew will also have an electronic record of all addresses signed up and we will continue collecting all bins at the start of April to make sure no one misses out. Please put your bin out as normal.

16. I've signed up online but not got a confirmation email

If you don't receive a confirmation email straight away, please check your junk or spam mail folder first. If you don't find it here, please check your bank account to see if the money has been taken. If no payment has been made and you do not have a confirmation email, your sign up did not go through and you will need to try again.

17. 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. Currently two-thirds of councils charge including all our neighbouring councils.

18. Isn't this paid for by my council tax?

Council tax is part of the national taxation system set by central government. Council tax is not dedicated to the provision of specific services from the council. Garden waste collection is not a statutory service, this means there is no legal requirement to collect it. Instead of not providing a service we are offering a chargeable garden waste collection service where the income will make the service self-financing, which will free-up resources to protect essential services.

19. If I don't sign up, what can I do with my garden waste?

You can home compost which is the cheapest and most environmentally friendly way to deal with your garden waste. Alternatively, you can take your garden waste to one of our three household waste recycling centres. We will also be encouraging more community composting schemes in the future, like the one in Winford.

20. Won't people just fly-tip or put it in their black bin?

The evidence from our neighbouring councils is that this is not the case. We all have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment and fly-tipping is illegal. Our Waste Enforcement Team actively pursue all reports of fly-tipping and we encourage residents to come forward should they witness any acts of fly-tipping.

Garden waste should not be placed in the black bin and crews may not collect.

21. How can I stop other people using the bin I have paid for?

You should store the bin on your property until collection day, so others do not have easy access to it.



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22. What will happen if someone puts their garden waste bin out for collection, but they have not signed up to the service?

During the start-up period of the service the crew will initially collect all bins. Then crew will be leaving a hanger to remind people of the change to the service and the need to pay. After this, if the property has not signed up, the crew will leave the bin unemptied.

23. What do I do with my unwanted garden waste bin?

Unwanted garden waste bins will not be collected in straight away. This is to help us ensure we are offering the best service for those who have paid the annual charge. It also allows plenty of time for people to make their decision and does not mean we are doubling up on visits and resources to collect and deliver bins.

We will let residents know what to do with unwanted bins in the future so keep a look out for information, it will be shared in all our usual places including North Somerset Life, social media, website and via local press. For the time being, if you're not signing up to the new service please just store your bin in your garden as you have been doing.

24. I currently put garden waste from council-owned land into my garden waste bin, but I don't want to pay to continue to do this. What can I do?

Thank you for caring for your local environment and helping to keep it tidy. You may want to look at alternative free options for managing this waste such as home or community composting, making leaf mould, or taking the waste to a recycling centre. We are unable to provide free or discounted bins if you choose to put garden waste from the surrounding area in your bin.

25. How does charging help the environment and climate emergency?

Charging for garden waste along with promotion of home composting will encourage more people to switch to home composting as the cheapest and most sustainable way to deal with garden waste. It also provides a free, nutrient-rich soil enhancer to help your plants grow better and less or no bins to remember to put out for collection. This results in fewer vehicles required to collect the garden

waste across North Somerset and fewer lorry loads to transport the waste from Weston-super-Mare to be commercially composted in Gloucestershire. This will make a positive contribution towards the council's carbon emissions target to become carbon neutral by 2030.

26. What can I put in the garden waste bin?

You will still be able to put all the same garden waste items in your green garden waste bin or bags as before. This includes all grass cuttings, prunings, weeds, leaves, hedge clippings, twigs and branches up to a maximum of 10cm in diameter.

If you have branches larger than 10cm in diameter, please take them to your local North Somerset recycling centre and place in the wood container.

27. How are you promoting home and community composting?

You can buy a discounted home compost bin for just £10 this year. This includes access to a free online e-learning course to help you make the most of your bin. We are also running a series of free training sessions via Zoom, at various times. These will be hosted by a composting expert. More details of the sessions and how to book is available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/composting

Later in the year we hope to work with Town and Parish Councils to develop community composting and look at the availability of shredders and other composting accessories to support more garden waste to be home composted. Shredders make woody material smaller and break down better in a home compost bin.

Find us on Facebook: [nsrecyclingandwaste](#) or follow on Twitter: [ns_recycling](#)

28. What happens to the garden waste collected by the council?

The vehicles take their load back to the depot at Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare where it is tipped into a garden waste bay. It accumulates until a load is ready to be transported to Enovert's composting facility in Gloucestershire. Here it is processed into compost using open windrow composting. The finished compost takes around 10 weeks to produce and is then sold by Enovert to commercial and agricultural customers.