Proposed changes to bin collections
Frequently asked questions

What is the proposal?
As part of wider budget proposals we are proposing to collect your black bin every three weeks from every two weeks.

We are also proposing to change the frequency of the green bin collection to three weekly for the period of November-March each year when there is less demand for this service. During the period April to October the green bin collection will continue to be collected on a two weekly basis.

Why is this being proposed?
Our recycling rate has fallen to 45% and if we don’t hit 50% by 2020 we may be significantly fined from central government which could result in cuts to local services.

By making important changes to the service the council will be able to save £2m a year - helping to protect services such as school crossing patrols and continue to invest in its libraries, vulnerable people and community groups.

By residents recycling more and recycling right, through The Deal, we can continue to protect these services and keep Council Tax low.

Why does it matter what recycling rate we have?
In 2014 the borough was recycling 50% of its waste. This year that figure has gone down to 45% which is not good for our environment and results in more black bin waste, which has much higher waste disposal costs. We have to meet a target of at least 50% recycling by 2020 or we may face significant fines from the government. As a borough we must do what we can to recycle more and recycle right.

Will the size of my bin increase?
No, your bin size will remain the same, the current bin size is sufficient for most households if they are recycling correctly.

What if I still have too much waste?
We will be flexible with large families who recycle everything they can but still have too much non-recyclable waste or households that produce excessive healthcare waste.

What are you going to do with the £2m this will save?
By going to a three weekly collection and recycling more we can protect vital services such as school crossing patrols and keep libraries open. We can also keep Council Tax low.
A minimum of £1m would be saved on the disposal costs the council pays each year sending waste to landfill. Also if we are achieving the 50% recycling target by 2020, we will avoid significant central government fines.

When would the change be introduced?

The changes to your bin service will begin to be implemented around September 2017.

What will the new household waste collection service look like?

- **Black bins** - to be emptied less often - once every 3 weeks instead of 2.
- **Blue bins** - no change to current collection frequency – empty once every 4 weeks.
- **Brown bins** – empty once every 2 weeks.
- **Green bins** - to be emptied once every 2 weeks except for the period **November to March** when it will be emptied – every 3 weeks.

I think three weeks is too long between black bin collections, I won’t manage.

If you recycle more and recycle right you should have enough capacity in your black bin. You can find out more about what you can recycle at [www.wigan.gov.uk/whichbin](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/whichbin)

Recycling your food waste is an easy way to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste in your black bin. Food waste should be put into your green bin.

If you have concerns about your recycling our recycling team can visit your property and work with you to identify how you could recycle more.

Would it not be better to have slim bins?

This would give residents less bin space each week. By keeping the existing black bins and collecting these less often (once every three weeks instead of two) we will avoid additional spending of £1.9m to buy approximately 140,000 new smaller bins. Swapping everyone’s full size bin to a smaller one would also be a huge and difficult task.

Won’t this increase fly tipping?

Evidence from other councils who have implemented a 3 weekly black bin collect indicates they have not experienced any significant increase in fly tipping. Fly tipping is an offence and we prosecute and fine people who do it. The vast majority of our residents are responsible and law abiding and are keen to recycle more.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge that fly tipping can be an issue in some areas of the borough. Robust enforcement action will be taken against anyone found to be fly tipping. You can report street cleansing issues to us online or by using our councils Report It app.

If we're only having the black bin emptied once every three weeks, won't this cause a health hazard?

If you are recycling your waste correctly then there should not be any health hazard resulting from reducing the frequency of your black bin collection.

Good practice for disposing of your waste:
- Recycle as much waste as possible.
- Put all used disposable nappies in a tied bag before placing them in the black bin.
- Put any animal waste in a tied bag before placing it in the black bin.
- Don’t overfill your bin and keep bin lids fully closed.
- Put all food waste in your green bin, so that this is collected more frequently in the summer.
- Wrap any food waste in a compostable caddy liner or put in the green bin loose.
- Wash your bin every now and again with washing up liquid and water to avoid a build-up of waste stuck to the inside.

I currently get an assisted collection service, would I still get this?

Yes – there would be no change to the assisted collection service.

If I recycle everything but can’t manage, can I get another black bin?

We would provide more capacity to properties that recycle everything but have too much non-recyclable waste. These will typically be large families or homes with healthcare waste.

I currently have a small recycling bin; can I get a large one?

Yes, you can order a larger recycling bin online at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

I don’t currently have a recycling bin: can I get one?

Yes, you can request a recycling bin online at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling nearer the time.

What about the people that don’t bother recycling, what are you going to do about them?

In the run up to the changes we will be encouraging anyone that doesn’t currently recycle to make sure they get ready for the changes ahead and have the recycling bins they need.

Our Recycling Education and Awareness team will be visiting areas across the borough where we know some people struggle with recycling. The team will work with these communities to help them to recycle more and recycle right and to make recycling an everyday habit.

Our bin collection crews regularly check bins to see if they are contaminated and to make sure residents are recycling correctly. Where residents are persistently not recycling we will use our powers of enforcement, you can be issued with a fixed penalty (fine) for contaminating your bins.

Where can I find out what goes in each bin?

You can find out online at www.wigan.gov.uk/whichbin or information is also printed on the back of your recycling calendar.

Where can I take extra waste?

Residents can take extra waste or recycling to the household waste recycling centres in the borough. You can find the locations of our three centres and local recycling points on our website at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling
How can I avoid flies and maggots?

To avoid flies and maggots it is important that your food waste is not left uncovered before it is put in your outside bin. We therefore recommend that you always:

- Try not to leave food standing around in the open for too long, use your kitchen caddy to contain your food waste.
- Store your kitchen caddy away from windows and doors.
- Ensure the lid of your kitchen caddy, and your outside kerbside caddy/green bin is always fully closed to ensure flies can’t get in.
- Line your kitchen caddy with a compostable liner.
- Empty uneaten pet food frequently and ensure it is always wrapped in a compostable bag.
- Try and minimise the amount of food your throw away. Use your Freezer.

Flies are less likely to be attracted if you empty the caddy frequently, drain away any excess liquid from the food to prevent smell that may attract flies, and keep your kerbside caddy/green bin in a shady area.

What should I do if I get flies and maggots?

- If you get flies or maggots then simply wash out your bin with boiling water which will kill them.
- An effective alternative which is safe to the environment is to use white vinegar.
- Some oils like citronella, tea tree and eucalyptus are natural insect repellents that can be smeared on caddies and bin lids if flies are a problem.

I’m concerned about nappies in my bin for a longer period of time.

Households that have children in nappies may be understandably concerned about their waste. To avoid smells then please put all used nappies in a tied bag before placing them in the black bin. If you are still concerned then you may wash your bin occasionally with washing up liquid and/or boiling water.

We appreciate that households with children in nappies may also produce a larger quantity of waste. If you have one or two children in nappies then the size of your standard black bin should be adequate if you are fully recycling your other waste. However, if you have several children in nappies and you think you will struggle with the size of your bin then we can assess individual households and provide details on how you can apply for additional capacity.