

7.7.2023

Potential industrial action: Update and advice

Unite union members working on Somerset waste collections plan to take [industrial action](#) starting from Wednesday 12 July. They intend to strike on Wednesday, Thursday Friday, each week for the four weeks from Wednesday 12 July to Friday 4 August.

We hope industrial action can be avoided and will do everything practical to minimise disruption. **However, if it goes ahead large numbers of missed collections will be unavoidable across all parts of the county.**

*****NOTE: Industrial action could be called off as late as Tuesday 11 July 2023 – if that happens collections would operate as normal*****

We will prioritise collections of **clinical waste, refuse** and waste from **communal properties** and **schools** BUT this is no guarantee these collections will take place on time.

Recycling collections are much more likely to be missed as staff are redeployed. We will do our best to make sure everyone gets at least one recycling collection during the strike.

We do not plan to suspend **garden waste** collections but expect significant delays. We will make a decision about existing subscriptions when we know the full impact of strike action.

Throughout the strike www.somerset.gov.uk/strike will be the best place for the latest information about disruption and advice on how to manage waste when collections are missed. Please check it frequently.

We will email Somerset Councillors an update each morning during disruption and raise public awareness through various channels – media, social media, emails to parish councils etc. Online and digital information does not suit all, but given the fast-changing nature of the situation they will be valuable tools for providing timely updates.

Waste Services will be focussed on limiting disruption and all other work would be delayed. Please limit direct contact with the team to essential and urgent matters only.

All 16 of Somerset's recycling sites will be open as usual and can take almost all the materials collected at the kerbside, as well as refuse as a last resort.

Key messages for the public

- Continue to put your recycling, refuse and garden waste out on your usual collection days throughout the strike period – but expect many missed collections.
- If your collection of recycling or garden waste is missed, bring your boxes, bags and bin back inside and put out again on your next scheduled collection day.
- If your refuse or clinical collection is missed, leave it out and report a missed collection.
- Put your waste out before 7am or the night before, even if your collection usually takes place later in the day - crews may be working routes differently.
- There are three extra possible collection days for residents scheduled to get **recycling** collections on Wednesday 12 July, Thursday 13 July, Friday 14 July and Friday 21 July.

- From 17 July onwards crews will accept one additional black sack of refuse at the side of the bin. Extra recycling will also be accepted, if presented as explained below.
- Please report missed refuse of clinical collections. Do not report missed recycling or garden waste collections.

Service specific messages for the public

Refuse and clinical collections

- **When to present:** put your refuse out on your usual collection day throughout the strike. From 17 July onwards crews will accept one additional black sack of refuse, placed at the side of the bin.
- **If missed:** report a missed collection in the usual way, online using the [My Waste Services](#) feature. A crew will try and return as soon as they can, but long delays are likely.

Recycling collections

- **When to present:** put your recycling out on your usual collection day throughout the strike. However, we expect to see high numbers of missed collections.
- **What to do if missed:** take it in and put it out again on your next scheduled recycling day. There are special arrangements for anyone with a recycling collection due on Wednesday 12 July, Thursday 13 July and Friday 14 July and Friday 21 July only.
- If missed on Wednesday 12 July, put it out again on Monday 17 July.
- If missed on Thursday 13 July, put it out again on Tuesday 18 July.
- If missed on Friday 14 July and Friday 21 July put it out again on Monday 24 July.

We'll do our best to ensure everyone gets at least one recycling collection during the strike.

- **Presenting extra recycling:** during strike disruption only, extra recycling can be put out for collection in the following ways:
 - Plastics and cans in an open bag, like a bag for life, or a cardboard box.
 - Glass needs to stay in your recycling box.
 - Cardboard folded and placed next to your recycling box, please keep to a minimum.

Food waste must stay in your food waste bin. If you are concerned about holding on to food waste for long periods, as a last resort you can double-bag it and put it in your refuse bin.

Garden waste collections (bin and sack)

- **When to present:** put your garden waste bin out on your usual collection day throughout the strike period.
If strike action goes ahead it is unlikely crews will be able to collect it.
- **What to do if missed:** bring your garden waste bin back in and put it back out again on your next scheduled collection day.

Bulky collections and container deliveries:

Both services will be suspended for the strike period.

Existing bulky collection bookings will be rescheduled.

We will do our best to honour existing orders of containers, but they are likely to be delayed.

Advice on managing waste when collections are missed

This is available on the [somerset.gov.uk/strike](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/strike) webpage. It focusses on making the most of space in recycling boxes and bags, and options for food waste if collections are missed for a prolonged period. These are not ideal solutions, but they could help some residents during a difficult time.

Somerset Council Waste Services