

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Proposal to introduce an annual charge for  
collecting garden waste**

**To help explain why the chargeable garden waste service changes are being proposed and how it will work, please read our frequently asked questions below.**

**1. What is garden waste?**

Garden waste includes grass clippings, weeds, dead flowers, old plants, dried leaves and twigs.

**2. How is garden waste collected?**

Households are provided with a green wheeled bin which is emptied every two weeks throughout the year. Currently, there is no separate charge for this service.

**3. What changes are you proposing?**

Bolton Council is consulting on a proposal to start charging an annual fee from Spring 2025 to households who chose to use our garden waste bin collection service.

**4. Why are you proposing this change?**

Due to the continued financial challenges and the need to deliver a balanced budget, we are required to contribute £1 million towards the Council's ongoing savings objectives. We are therefore proposing that from Spring 2025, we'll start charging households who want us to collect their garden waste.

**5. If the proposal was brought in, what would it mean for people who have a green wheeled bin for garden and food waste?**

It would mean that those who want their garden waste collecting would have to pay an annual charge from April 2025, so that those who use the service contribute directly towards the cost of collecting their garden waste. Green bins could still be used for food waste and will not be impacted by the proposal.

**6. How would a chargeable green garden waste service work?**

Stickers on bins would be used to indicate which households are subscribed to the chargeable garden waste collection service. Households that do not subscribe will only be able to use their green wheeled bin for fortnightly food waste collections. If householders continue to use it for garden waste without subscribing, the wheeled bin would be removed and replaced with a small 23-litre green food caddy. The refuse collection vehicle will also have a digital record of properties that have paid for a subscription.

**7. Are you going to start charging for collecting food waste? Or bring in charges for emptying other household bins / containers?**

No, the government only allows us to charge for emptying garden waste bins.

**8. How would people sign up to a chargeable garden waste service?**

Sign-up would be online, in advance for the year, by card or by creating an annual direct debit.

Help would be offered to anyone who wanted to subscribe but couldn't complete the form themselves.

To avoid excessive admin and other service costs, subscribers would pay the full annual fee no matter when they signed up in the year.

**9. I'd like to subscribe but can't do it online.**

If you can't subscribe online, you will be able to ring or call into our One Stop Shop, who can complete the form for you. Your local library or UCAN centre may also be able to help.

**10. Can I pay by instalments / cash / PayPal / ApplePay etc?**

We offer two payment options. Residents can either make an online payment for the first year, or setup annual direct debit payments online. All payments have to be made in advance for the year.

**11. I currently have a green wheeled bin. If you introduce a charge for collecting garden waste and I don't subscribe, what will happen?**

Your green wheeled bin can be used for food waste, which will be collected free of charge. Any green bin presented containing garden waste and without a valid subscription will not be collected and the resident will be required to remove the waste or subscribe before the green bin can be emptied.

**12. Will my collection day change if I sign up? / Would it change if I decide not to sign up? / Will the collection frequency change?**

No, your collection day will stay the same as it is now. Your green bin will continue to be collected every two weeks throughout the year, with the exception of the Christmas holiday season when we tend to have an interruption to services.

**13. Can charities, voluntary groups or places of worship have a free garden waste collection service?**

No, at this point in time, we cannot offer the service for free to such groups.

**14. I have a lot of garden waste, could I have an extra bin?**

Yes, households could have the option to subscribe for more than one green bin. Each bin would be subject to an individual annual subscription. You'd also have to pay a one-off charge for any extra bins to be delivered. The amount you might have to pay is part of the consultation proposal.

**15. I don't have a lot of garden waste; can I pay less for a smaller garden waste bin / for a less frequent collection?**

No, everyone who signs up would pay the same annual charge. It would be too complicated and unmanageable to have different levels of service.

**16. If I pay for the service, can I have a lockable bin to stop other people adding their waste on collection day?**

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide lockable bins.

**17. If I pay for the service what happens if someone steals the sticker off my bin?**

The stickers will be very difficult to remove. In addition, our in-cab system will tell us which properties have subscribed. The labels will have the address on so cannot be easily transferred between properties.

**18. If the proposal is brought in and I don't want to subscribe, what can I do with my garden waste?**

The best option would be to compost at home. Subsidised bins are available through Bolton Council <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling/composting>. Households could also take garden waste to one of [Bolton's Household Waste Recycling Centres](#) on Salford Road or Raikes Lane without charge. You could also make your own arrangements with a neighbour to share a green bin and share the cost.

**19. Why don't you just take the green wheeled bins off people who don't subscribe, and give them a food caddy instead to save messing about with stickers and inspections?**

This would increase the cost of the service. Also, if householders change their minds at a later date and decide to subscribe, they would need to pay the delivery and admin fee to have a green bin delivered.

**20. If I don't want to subscribe, can you take my green bin away and give me a caddy?**

No, we do not have the resources to do this.

**21. If I don't subscribe why won't my food waste be collected weekly?**

Only one-third of households in Bolton have a small food waste caddy collected weekly. We do not have the resources to increase the collection schedule for thousands of households.

**22. How many households have a garden waste collection service?**

Over 80,000 households in our borough currently receive a garden waste collection service. There are over 128,000 households in Bolton.

**23. Instead of charging, why not just collect garden waste less often? You could collect monthly rather than fortnightly, or for less months of the year?**

Unfortunately, a less frequent collection of garden waste would not make the savings needed. In addition, please remember we collect food waste in the same bins - we would not want to leave decomposing food waste for longer than 2 weeks.

**24. Can I have an assisted bin collection if the chargeable service is introduced?**

The assisted bin collection is for residents who can't put their bins out themselves and have no-one to help them. If you're already on an assisted bin collection you don't need to do anything, this will carry on. If you're not already on the assisted bin service, please visit our website to see if you are eligible: <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling/assisted-bin-collection>

**25. What happens to the money you make from selling composted waste?**

Any income gained by selling the compost product helps to bring down the cost of the wider waste disposal contract.

**26. Charging will just encourage fly tipping won't it?**

We have discussed this with other local authorities that have been operating a chargeable garden waste collection for a number of years. There is no evidence of an increase to fly tipping directly resulting from a chargeable garden waste collection service.

**27. Why should I have to pay when I already pay Council Tax and get very little for my money?**

Currently, one-third of Bolton households do not have a garden and they are making a contribution to this service as part of their council tax.

**28. People with big gardens probably pay more Council Tax than many other householders. How is charging for garden waste fair?**

Council Tax covers a wide array of services across the Council and is not just to fund bin collections. Currently, one-third of Bolton households do not have a garden and they are making a contribution to this service as part of their council tax. Due to the continued financial challenges and the need to deliver a balanced budget, we are required to contribute £1 million towards the Council's ongoing savings objectives.