

WASTE & RECYCLING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH MY WASTE CORONAVIRUS (Covid – 19) FAQs

Q. Are there any changes to my refuse & recycling collections?

A. Our waste and recycling service is currently operating the following services;

CONTAINER	MATERIAL	COLLECTED
BLACK BOX 55 litre	Dry Recycling	weekly
BLUE BAG 90 litre	Card Recycling	fortnightly
BROWN CADDY 22 litre	Food Recycling	weekly
GREEN WHEELIE BIN 240 litre	Garden Recycling	fortnightly
PURPLE WHEELIE BIN 140 litre	Refuse	fortnightly

Please Note

Green Waste Collections re-commenced 4th May 2020

Household Waste Recycling Centre re-commenced 26th May 2020

Bulky Waste Collections will re-commence on 7th July 2020

Deliveries of recycling boxes and bags have been suspended until further notice

Frequently Asked Questions regarding Bulky Waste Collections

Q. When are the Bulky Collections restarting?

A. Bulky waste collections will restart on the 7th July.

Q. How do I book a Collection?

A. Please contact Call Torfaen on 01495 762200 to book a collection.

Q. Is there a charge for the collection?

A. Yes. There is a charge of £29 per collection for up to 3 items. Extra items are then charged at £7 per item.

Q. What types of waste can be booked for collection?

A. Please visit our Bulky Waste page for further information on what waste can be collected.

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/RubbishAndRecycling/Householdwaste-specialcollectionsforlargeitems/Bulky-Household-Items-Collection-Service.aspx>

Q. Where do I need to place the waste?

A. When you arrange a bulky item collection please make sure that:

- All items are placed on the kerbside for collection. We are unable to offer assisted collections at this time.
- Please disinfect items where possible.
- You should only book a bulky item collection if absolutely necessary.

Q. Will you be able to come into my house to collect waste?

A. No. As a result of the current situation with Coronavirus, we have to protect our staff from any additional risk from contracting the virus. As a result, when making your booking please ensure that you can place the items out for collection. **We will not be able to access your property to remove any items of waste.**

Q. What if I don't put the waste out on the day?

A. We will not be able to collect the waste and we will not be able to provide a refund, **Please ensure the waste is placed outside before we arrive.**

Q. Can I assist you with lifting the waste into your vehicle?

A. Whilst we appreciate you may wish to assist the crew, we request that you do not. Please keep away from our staff whilst they undertake the collections. This is to protect yourself and our staff from the virus.

Q. What if I have Covid symptoms?

A. Do not make a booking if you or anyone else in your household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 such as a new persistent cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell.

Q. What If I have booked a collection and have developed symptoms?

A. Please contact Call Torfaen and we will rebook your collection to when your household is free of infection.

Q. Can I cancel or amend my booking?

If you want to cancel or amend your booking, you will need to contact Call Torfaen on 01495 762200. Bookings may be cancelled up to 3 full working days before the collection takes place.

If you do not cancel within 3 working days of your collection date, you will not be able to provide a refund. You will be given the opportunity to select a later collection day or swap like for like items.

Q. What if my items are not collected?

A. Your items may not be collected if they are not:

- as described at the time of booking
- put out in the way you agreed at the time of booking (e.g. dismantled)

If your item is not collected for one of these reasons you will be responsible for removing the waste from the highway.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Household Waste Recycling Centre

On **Tuesday 26th May 2020** the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Panteg Way New Inn, Pontypool, reopened seven days a week from Monday – Saturday, 7.30am – 4.30pm, and 9am-5pm on a Sunday.

Residents have to pre-book a visit to the site. At this stage only cars will be permitted access to the site to assist in ensuring the greatest capacity for residents can be achieved, No vans or trailers will be allowed on site.

- You should only visit the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home. **Only go if it is essential.**

Q. How do I book a slot to visit the HWRC?

A. Please ensure you have booked a slot to visit the Household Waste Recycling Site.

No booking slot means no entry. Please book online at:

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/Household-Waste-Recycling-Centre-Booking.aspx> or on Call Torfaen on 01495 762200

Please read the following guidance before visiting the site.

- You should only visit the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home. **Only go if it is essential.**
- There will be limits on the number of vehicles allowed on site to allow for social distancing. There may be delays accessing the site and possibly queues outside of the site.
- Social distancing measures are now in place, this also means site staff will not be providing any assistance to unload your vehicle.
- The Council is not operating a van and trailer permit scheme at the moment and access to the site is for cars only through the booking system.
- Please ensure you have booked a slot to visit the Household Waste Recycling. **No booking slot means no entry.** Please book online at <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/Household-Waste-Recycling-Centre-Booking.aspx> or on Call Torfaen on 01495 762200.
- You **must not** visit the Household Waste Recycling Centre if you or anyone you are living with is in self-isolation or showing COVID-19 symptoms.”
- Only one person per vehicle where possible. Recycle what you can from home by using the Councils kerbside collections. **No vans or trailers will be allowed into the site.**

- **Only Cars will be allowed on site.** There are likely to be queues at the HWRC due to limits on the number of people being allowed into recycling centre at any one time. **Please be patient and respect the staff working at the centres.** If it is essential that you go to the HWRC, **remember to observe social distancing** and any other safety messaging in place. If you do not respect social distancing or are abusive to staff you will be asked to leave and the Police may be called.
- You must not dispose of household waste in a way that will cause pollution or harm people's health. This includes burning it - **burning household waste is an offence, liable to prosecution.**
- **Fly-tipping is a crime.** Leaving items on the street or in parks, woodlands and fields is fly-tipping. This is a crime and could mean a fixed penalty of up to £400, or prosecution. Even if you mean well and leave items outside charity shops, or next to full recycling bins, this is still fly-tipping.

Below we have tried to answer some of the questions you may have regarding the reopening of the HWRC;

Q. When did the Household Waste Recycling Centre be open at Panteg Way New Inn, Pontypool and what times will it be open?

A. The Household Waste Recycling Centre re-opened on the 26th May 2020. The site is open to members of the public from 7.30– 4.30pm on Monday - Saturday and 9am – 5pm on Sundays. Residents need to book a slot to visit the site. The quickest and simplest way to do this is via the website <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Forms/Request/Household-Waste-Recycling-Centre-Booking.aspx> Alternatively you can contact Call Torfaen on 01495 762200 if you do not have access to the internet. This has been implemented to endeavour to control the amount of vehicles using the site to aim to avoid significant queues and to manage compliance with social distancing. We ask that residents to ensure that they stick to their time slots. If they do not they will be refused entry. The last vehicle entry will be at the above closing time to allow staff to cleanse and disinfect areas for the following day.

Q. When can I visit the Household Waste Recycling Centre?

A. We ask residents to ensure that they only visit the site if they find it is necessary i.e. they are struggling with their waste and that waste is causing a health and safety issue.. We expect the site to be exceptionally busy so if your journey is not essential and your waste can wait we advise postponing your visit for now. **Please remember you will need your booking time slot to gain access. Please do not turn up at random times as you will be turned away.**

Q. Who is overseeing the new system, and how?

A. FCC Environment have reorganised the layout of the recycling centre and introduced social distancing measures. Only a limited number of cars will be allowed on site at any one time. Staff will not be able to assist residents to offload their waste consequently, residents should leave the site as quickly as possible to allow the next car in.

Council staff will patrol the roads surrounding the recycling centres to guide the public. Traffic management such as traffic lights, cones, traffic signs, diversions and one way systems will be implemented to help the flow of traffic. If the queue becomes too long, residents may be turned away and asked to return at a later time.

Q. How many cars will be allowed on site?

A. There will be restrictions on site and there will only be a few cars allowed on site at any one time. Please follow staff instructions.

Q. What type of vehicles will be allowed access to the site?

A. Only cars will be allowed access to the site in the first instance. This will be kept under review. We will provide further information over the coming few days regarding arrangements for vans and trailers.

Q. I have booked a time slot but turn up in a different car to the one we have booked in.

A. Please ensure that you turn up with the vehicle that you booked the time slot with as if you are not on the list with your vehicle registration you will not be let into the site. Only booked cars will be allowed in.

Q. What will happen if I turn up at the right time with a car that is booked in with the right vehicle but I have a little trailer on. Will I be allowed access?

A. You will be told as you approach the queue that whilst the contents of the car can be emptied, you will not be able to empty the contents of the trailer.

Q. What are the social distancing restrictions in place?

A. You will be directed to a designated space and you will be expected to follow the social distancing rules as instructed.

Q. What can I bring to the site?

A. The full range of household waste and recyclable materials can be brought to the site. However we would not expect a full house clearance. The waste must only be brought in a car and the waste should only be brought to the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home.

Q. What is an essential trip?

A. Residents should only visit the Household Waste Recycling Centre to dispose of waste that is posing a risk of injury or harm to health if left at home. Most waste can be safely stored and we encourage all residents to store waste wherever possible.

Q. What waste can I bring?

A. You can bring the normal waste you would normally bring to the HWRC. However the waste that you do bring should only be the waste that cannot be stored safely and/or poses a risk of injury or harm to health to you at home. Staff at the entrance will be asking residents about their waste to make sure residents are only making essential journeys.

Q. Is it safe to open?

A. Yes. We have put in place measures to keep staff and residents safe on site. However, residents should still be staying at home and only visiting the site when absolutely necessary.

Q. What if people don't follow the new rules?

A. They will be asked to leave the site. The sites will only remain open whilst it is safe to do so, and we of course take that seriously. If residents are acting in an irresponsible manner then we may have to close the site and/or change the way we work.

Q. Will you relax the rules if the queues get too big?

A. No. These new measures are in place for everyone's safety. If the queues are too big then it is likely that some residents are making non-essential journeys and may be turned away.

Q. Why shouldn't vulnerable residents visit?

A. Public Health Wales guidance states that vulnerable residents, including those over 70 should be strictly limiting interactions with other people, and so therefore should not be visiting the Household Waste Recycling Centre. We will not be asking for proof of age and rely on residents taking Public Health Wales advice seriously.

Q. Why are you only letting a few cars into the site at a time?

As with many shops and businesses we have implemented strict social distancing measures to protect residents and staff when on site. We have limited the number of vehicles allowed on site so we can safely manage this. This may mean we operate a "one in one out" approach, just like a visit to the supermarket. We hope residents understand and will remain patient.

Q. Is there extra cleaning on site?

A. Yes. The sites will be cleaned regularly and staff will be wiping down surfaces that are regularly used. We would ask that residents wear gloves wherever possible as they would normally when coming to sites.

Q. Will staff be keeping 2m apart?

A. Yes, wherever possible. Staff have been trained in new social distancing measures. National guidelines recognise it is not always possible in the waste sector to remain 2m apart, extra precautions are advised in such circumstances. We will review the current safety guidance regularly and have measures in place to increase their safety.

Q. Why aren't trailers or vans allowed?

A. Residents should not need to bring more waste than can fit inside a vehicle. The Household Waste Recycling Centre is opening for essential trips only, where the waste cannot be stored safely at home. Visits by vans and trailers would significantly reduce the numbers of visitors the site could handle. This could prevent other

householders from undertaking essential journeys. However we will be reviewing access to the site after the first few days of operation and plan to introduce specific arrangements for vans and permits.

Q. Why should vehicle windows be closed?

A. The safety of our staff and residents is important and keeping windows closed is a vital barrier to stop spread of infection. Staff can talk to and advise residents with the window shut.

Q. What about residents with disabilities, will you offer assistance?

A. We strongly advise against visiting the site if you are unable to unload your vehicle. Someone who lives in the same home could visit instead.

Q. Will the reuse shops be open?

A. No. Visiting a reuse shop is currently not identified as essential travel. We do not want to encourage non-essential travel

Q. Will traders be allowed to visit?

A. No. The service is prioritising residents from Torfaen and will not have capacity to allow traders in. This will be reviewed regularly.

Q. Why didn't you open earlier?

A. We closed the sites as a trip to the HWRC was not classed as essential, so residents wouldn't be making trips to the HWRC as it would be against Public Health guidance. The Welsh First Minister announced on the 7th May that he would be changing the Welsh Regulations to allow visits to recycling and waste sites. These have now been changes so visits are now permitted in Wales. Prior to the change in regulation a visit to the site was not viewed by the Police as an essential journey and could have resulted in the driver of the vehicle being fined. Since the change in regulation, we have been working with other Welsh Local Authorities, Police and site staff to ensure we had measures in place to ensure it was safe to open.

Q. What if I have waste relating to coronavirus infection?

A. If any households have had COVID-19 symptoms the residual waste should be double bagged and left for 72 hours before being putting in your residual bin or brought to the site.

Q. Can I walk waste into the site?

A. Walk in access with waste will not be allowed.

Q. Will anyone on site be able to help to unload?

A. Unfortunately due to staff having to comply with social distancing they will be unable to offer assistance to unload items.

Q. Is the Van Permit Scheme in operation at the site?

A. The Van Permit Scheme is temporarily suspended and vans and trailers will not be able to access sites. If your vehicle would normally need a permit, please assume that it will not be allowed on site and will be turned away. This will be kept under review.

Q. Can I come to site in a van or bring a trailer?

A. Vans, trailers and commercial vehicles **will not be allowed** onto the site. We are keeping this decision under review and hope to be able to start to provide access for these types of vehicles through our Permit Scheme in the near future.

Q. How many people can be in the car?

A. One person per car to visit our site – If you need someone else to drive the car or need help with your waste, one person from your household can accompany you. However only one person will be allowed out of the car to dispose of the waste.

Q. Can I bring my children or my pets with me?

A. Do not bring children or pets to site unless you really have to. If you do bring children or pets they will not be allowed to leave the car.

Q. Are there any traffic restrictions at the site or on the surrounding roads?

A. There will be queues and there may be restrictions on the highways and roads leading up to the sites, there will be traffic marshals at the site and we ask people to be patient, polite and adhere to any advice they may give. Staff are working under unprecedented circumstances and will be trying their best to provide a service to you.

PLEASE NOTE RESIDENTS SHOULD ONLY VISIT THE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE TO DISPOSE OF WASTE THAT IS POSING A RISK OF INJURY OR HARM TO HEALTH IF LEFT AT HOME. MOST WASTE CAN BE SAFELY STORED AND WE ENCOURAGE ALL RESIDENTS TO STORE WASTE WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding other Waste Issues

Q. How can we make sure waste and recycling is collected during the COVID-19 crisis?

A. We aim to keep providing waste and recycling services while protecting the health of all our workers and the general public.

But now most of us are staying at home we will create more household waste. This will put pressure on our waste and recycling services.

We need your help to make sure we can continue to deliver the service as efficiently and safely as possible.

Q. How can I help?

A. There are a number of ways you can help your collection crews which are outlined below:

- Check our website for updates about waste and recycling collections where you live. The council also has a dedicated covid-19 webpage where any changes to the waste and recycling service will be placed. Take a look here
<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/AboutTheCouncil/Homepage-Stories/Coronavirus/Bins-and-Recycling/Bins-and-Recycling.aspx>
- Don't take any of your waste and recycling to your local tip or recycling centre. This is not defined by the Government as an essential journey. Our Household Waste Recycling Centre at Panteg Way, New Inn, is now closed.
- Try to minimise the amount of rubbish, recycling and food waste you produce. Every bit you can reduce will make a real difference to maintaining a good service for everyone.
- If you're self-isolating and feeling ill, put any personal waste like used tissues or cleaning cloths into separate plastic bags and double-bag them. Put these bags aside for at least 72 hours (3 days) before you put them into your external bin (purple lidded bin).
- Avoid doing clear-outs, which create more rubbish and recycling. Hold onto large items such as furniture and mattresses until the outbreak is over. Do not dispose of waste on a bonfire because the smoke causes air pollution and has potential health effects for you and your neighbours.
- Wash your hands regularly and maintain good hygiene when handling your rubbish and recycling. Ensure you wash your hands after handling your waste bins, bags and boxes.
- Please maintain at least 2 meters and don't approach collection crews
- Please avoid putting out additional waste for collection. If every household puts out more waste than usual, the collection vehicles will fill up quicker. This could result in some households not having their waste collected as well as placing additional strain on collection crews. Please continue to treat collection crews with respect.
- Please place your bins, boxes and bags at the kerbside ready for your collection. Please be mindful where you park your car on collection day. With more people at

home, residential roads are busier with parked cars making it harder for collection vehicles to get through.

Q. Are there any changes to my waste and recycling collection?

A. Torfaen County Borough Council are trying as hard as we can to keep our waste collection services running as normal and are prioritising domestic waste (purple lidded bins), brown food caddies, cardboard and recycling (black boxes).

Please put the relevant bin out for collection on your normal day and, with exception of customers that receive an assisted collection, place them at the roadside for ease of collection. This requirement extends to owners of isolated properties and those with private drives.

In all cases, please leave your bin out for collection all day as our crews may be arriving later than usual. We will do all we can to collect your waste but if this is not possible please keep hold of it and present it on your next normal fortnightly collection day.

Please have patience with our crews they are doing their best to collect all of the waste and recycling on time. However, there may be occasions due to staffing or vehicle issues that collections may be later than usual.

Q. I'm producing more waste now I'm at home all day. Do you have any tips on reducing waste?

A. WRAP Cymru has guidance on reducing food waste;
<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Q. I am currently self-isolating. Can I dispose of my waste as normal?

A. If you think that you or a member of your household might have coronavirus, and are self-isolating, please make sure:

1. Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths are stored securely within disposable rubbish bags
2. These bags should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste.
3. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external household waste bin

Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.

Recycling Materials – dry recycling, food and cardboard

Please follow the same precautionary measures for the dry recycling materials, food waste and cardboard. These should still be separated out into the receptacles as you normally would do for recycling, food and cardboard.

To help our crews, please where possible separate recyclables into different materials in separate boxes. For example glass in one, plastics in one, cans in one.

If displaying symptoms please set aside your recyclables for at least 72 hours before placing out for collection.

Q, Why are waste collection operatives still in work when everyone else is closing?

A. You will probably have heard the Government speak about “Critical” or “Key” workers during the coronavirus outbreak, this is reference to an “Essential Service” meaning extremely necessary and important in keeping the country running, and safe. Waste collection is an essential service, we need to remove waste and ensure it is disposed of properly.

The crews are working hard to ensure you receive these services but please bear with us, as we have limited resources and it may take us longer than usual to complete collect rounds due to reducing staffing numbers. If you could refrain from reporting missed collections on the day or the next day, as it is likely that the service will encounter some disruption.

Q. I am producing more waste with everyone at home – How can I cope?

A. We would be most grateful if you could make full use of our recycling scheme

Remember:-

- Black recycling boxes are collected weekly
- Brown food caddies are collected weekly
- Blue cardboard bag is collected fortnightly

By fully using our kerbside recycling scheme the purple lidded bin can be used for any non-recyclable waste. For more information please take a look at our web page <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/RubbishAndRecycling/Householdwaste-domesticbins/BlackBox/Black-Box.aspx>

To reduce food waste and ensure you are getting the most from what you are purchasing, consider making a meal plan and a use this to write a shopping list. Check what you have in your fridge and cupboards before you go shopping, note which foods need using first and remember “best before” is not an expiry date. For more information on reducing your food waste and ideas for using up leftovers visit <https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>

Your co-operation in this matter would be gratefully appreciated.

Q. Can I put out extra black bags of recycling?

A. No, we will not collect black bags of recycling due to health and safety issues. We will collect recycling in carrier bags but they must be sorted into individual streams i.e. plastic, cans etc.

Q. Can I take any additional waste now the Household Waste Recycling Centre is open?

A. Please could we ask at this difficult time that you limit the amount of waste put out for collection? The council are operating essential waste collection services on limited resources and to enable the crews to collect the residual and recycling waste. We cannot cope with extra waste at this time.

The council would ask that residents put any additional waste to one side or avoid clearing out any cupboards and sheds etc. as we are unable to collect or dispose of this waste at present. It would be better to avoid having any clear outs at this time, and this would help ensure you do not accumulate quantities of waste at home.

- You should only visit the site if you cannot safely store your waste at home. Only go if it is essential.

Q. What should I do with my green waste?

A. Green Waste collections have now been resumed and residents are advised to place their green bin out on the day of collection as normal.

We still encourage residents to home compost where possible. Please remember that you should not put cooked food waste into the home composting, only fruit and vegetables. Cooked food waste could attract vermin.

Top tips for composting can be found on our website at

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/RubbishAndRecycling/Composting/Composting.aspx>

If you would like to start composting at home the council offers subsidised compost bins. For more information call 0845 1306090 or visit www.torfaen.getcomposting.com.

Q. Can I put out side waste?

A. No, the council are unable to collect any side waste or extra waste at this time. Our crews are under significant pressure and resources are becoming more limited.

We would ask residents to reduce as much of their waste as possible during this difficult time and utilise the recycling services as much as possible. We appreciate we are in unprecedented times and you may generate more waste than normal, however we would encourage you to prioritise waste that needs to be removed such as non-recyclable waste in your black purple lidded bin, and food waste in your brown food waste caddy. We ask that you continue to squash and crush your recyclable waste to ensure you make use of all the space in your black boxes.

Q. Can I put some of my rubbish in street litter bins?

A. No, because these bins are provided for items that people need to dispose of when out and about. They don't have the capacity for household waste and if people fill them up in this way, they cannot serve the purpose for which they are intended.

Q. Can I burn my rubbish in my garden?

A. No, because the burning of rubbish in your garden can be both unpleasant and a risk to health; bonfires are illegal if they cause a nuisance to others (offence under

the Environmental Protection Act 1990). Smoke from burning can contain carbon monoxide as well as other noxious, irritating and carcinogenic compounds.

Q. What about people who don't have access to the internet how will they know?

A. We are asking that people in the community to please inform elderly neighbours, or others who might not have access to the internet, of this service change. We have also notified local press and radio stations.

Q. What to do with your waste if you're having a clear out?

A. Many of us are using the opportunity of being at home to have a clear out. If you're sorting out unwanted items, please keep good quality items to one side ready for when charity shops or furniture projects reopen. Store any items that can't be passed on, until recycling centres reopen or special collections restart.