

Waste and recycling collections - New Weekly Food Waste Collection

Frequently asked Questions

What happens to my food waste once it is collected?

The food waste is collected in dedicated food waste vehicles and is taken to Blaise Farm near Kings Hill, West Malling where it is shredded before the composting process starts. During the composting process the food reaches 70 degrees centigrade to ensure all harmful bacteria and viruses are killed. The process takes up to 14 weeks to complete and then the finished compost is given to local farms.

Can I put food waste into my garden waste bin?

Unlike garden waste, food waste has to undergo a specialist composting process to ensure that any harmful bacteria or viruses are killed. Most of the garden waste collected in Maidstone is taken to a composting facility in Sittingbourne, whereas the food waste is taken to the specialist facility at Blaise Farm near Kings Hill. If food waste is put in with your garden waste, it would not be accepted at the composting facility in Sittingbourne. Please put your food waste in the black and orange food waste bin and it will be collected every week.

I saw my food waste being tipped into a green recycling bin / grey refuse bin?

The specialist food waste vehicles carry "slave" bins with them which enable the collection operatives to tip the food bins into their "slave" bins before tipping the waste into the vehicle. This saves time and means more food waste can be collected. The bins now have orange stickers on them to prevent confusion with other bins. Currently over 115 tonnes of food waste is collected every week in the borough and taken to the composting facility at Blaise Farm near Kings Hill.

My kitchen caddy was not returned after collection, please can I have another one?

The silver kitchen caddy has been provided to help you separate food waste in your kitchen, however it is not designed to be put out for collection. The food waste collected in your silver kitchen caddy, whether in a liner, wrapped in newspaper or loose, should be transferred to your outside, black and orange, food waste bin. The silver kitchen caddy should not be placed inside the black and orange food waste bin as it may be accidentally tipped into the food waste vehicle when the black and orange bin is emptied.

A replacement silver kitchen caddy can be collected from the Gateway.

Please can I have another food waste bin?

If you are using the service and are throwing away more than one bin's worth of food waste every week, this is probably costing you a lot of money. Helpful advice on reducing food waste is available at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/ such as taking a shopping list with you to the supermarket and avoiding buy one get one free on fresh produce which is likely to go bad before you use it.

If however you have tried the food waste service and still need an extra container you can request one online by clicking the link below.

[Request a new bin](#)

My bin has not been collected, why?

If your food waste bin is not emptied, a tag should be left on it to explain why. The usual reasons that we can't empty food waste bins are that they contain other waste items such as plastic packaging and plastic bags.

There are a few reasons why your refuse or recycling bin may not have been emptied. A tag may have been left on your bin to explain the reason, such as it contained items which we are unable to collect e.g. paint or builders rubble.

If a tag was not left on your bin it may be out on the wrong week for collection. The grey rubbish bins are now collected every other week. Please refer to your refuse and recycling calendar or enter your address in the property search on the homepage to view your refuse and recycling calendar online.

If you don't have a tag on your bin, it may be that your bin was accidentally missed or was not out for collection in time. You can report your missed collection using the link below.

[Report a missed collection](#)

If your bin was accidentally missed we will return by the end of the following working day to empty it. However if your bin was not out in time for collection, unfortunately we won't be able to return to empty it. Please put it out by 7am on your next collection.

I had extra black sacks next to my rubbish bin which have not been collected, what should I do with them?

If you use your new food waste collection and green recycling bin, there should be plenty of room for all your remaining rubbish in your grey wheeled bin. To encourage residents to recycle as much as possible, we are not able to collect bagged waste next to the grey wheeled bin. If you recycle as much as possible however and are still having problems fitting all of your waste in your grey wheeled bin, please contact us by emailing waste@maidstone.gov.uk and we will be happy to offer you some advice on how to reduce your waste.

If you are having a clear out or perhaps doing some DIY, you can take extra waste and bulky items to Tovil Household Waste Recycling Centre or book a bulky collection by phoning 01622 602162.

I have run out of liners please can I have some more?

We're pleased that you're using the food waste collection service but unfortunately we were only able to provide an initial supply of liners to get you started when the scheme was first introduced. If you would like to continue to use liners you can buy them from your local supermarket. Details of liners are available on the website <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/Compostable%20Caddy%20Liners.pdf>. Alternatively you don't have to use liners, you could use newspaper or kitchen roll to line your kitchen caddy or put the food in loose.

Where can I get compostable caddy liners?

Compostable liners are available from most supermarkets including – Asda, Morrisons, Sainsburys, Waitrose and Wilkinson – and we are encouraging smaller retailers to stock them.

Please use compostable liners. Not biodegradable ones because they contain plastic which can not be composted.

My kitchen caddy is broken so the lid does not shut, can it be replaced?

If you have difficulty closing the lid on your silver kitchen caddy, try pushing down with your thumb and push up with your fingers to pinch the lid shut. This will get easier with use; however it is not always necessary to snap the lid shut as air circulation helps to keep the contents dry. If your lid is broken you can exchange your kitchen caddy, as long as it's clean, in the Council's Gateway if you wish.

What about disposable nappies?

Disposable nappies should be put in your grey waste/refuse wheelie bin. Experience elsewhere shows that this won't be a problem if you double bag the nappy. To make absolutely sure there's no problem put any solid waste down the toilet first.

To avoid throwing away nappies why not consider using 'Real Nappies' which are better for the environment and cost effective. For more information about Real Nappies, as well as practical parent to parent advice, please visit the Go Real website www.goreal.org.uk

A larger bin is already available for families with two children in nappies.

What about pet litter and bedding?

Rodent (rabbits, guinea pigs, rats and hamsters, etc) bedding can be:

- Composted at home - remove any leftover food or you might attract other animals.
- Put in a garden waste bin – But please do not put animal bedding or waste into compostable garden waste sacks as this will speed up the composting process and might cause the bag to split.

Cat litter should be put in your grey waste/refuse wheelie bin. It should be double bagged to prevent smells. But please don't put large quantities in the bin or it will be too heavy to collect. Please take large quantities to the household waste recycling centre at Burial Ground Lane, Tovil.

What about dog/cat waste?

Dog and cat waste should be bagged and put in your grey waste/refuse bin.

What about sanitary waste?

Sanitary waste should be put in your grey waste/refuse wheelie bin. It should be double bagged to prevent smells. If possible squash the air out of the bags to reduce the space taken up in your bin and to prevent smells.

What about incontinence pads?

Incontinence pads should be put in your grey waste/refuse wheelie bin. They should be double bagged to prevent smells.

You don't have to arrange for a special clinical collection for this waste unless it is infectious. (Clinical collections are available for needles and infectious items.)

If you need a larger bin because of these items please contact us by clicking the link below.

[Request a new bin](#)

My residual waste bin is full/will be full

You might not be recycling everything you can. Please make sure you recycle:

- paper, cardboard, tins, cans, foil, empty aerosols, plastic bottles, yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and ice cream tubs – in your green bin or black box.
- all your cooked and uncooked food waste in your food caddy.

(Did you know you can recycle glass bottles and jars, textiles, books and shoes at your local recycling site? Visit www.maidstone.gov.uk for details.)

Large families and those with two children in nappies are entitled to a larger wheeled bin. We are asking everyone to see how they get on with their existing bins before we deliver the larger ones because many families will find that they do not need a larger bin.

A member of the waste team would be happy to help you with personal advice to help you recycle more and waste less. Please contact us by emailing

waste@maidstone.gov.uk

How do I use my kitchen caddy and how do I keep the new bins clean?

Use your kitchen caddy to store food waste. To get you started the council provided 20 compostable kitchen caddy liners **free**. Additional compostable liners can be purchased from local supermarkets and some smaller retailers. However, you don't have to use liners. You could use newspaper or kitchen roll to line your kitchen caddy or put the food in loose if you don't mind washing your caddy as you do not need to line it. The caddies are dishwasher safe.

Please do not use plastic bags to line it. If plastic bags are placed in the external caddy the food waste WILL NOT be collected. Plastic bags cannot be included with the material sent to be composted!

The 23 litre caddies are much smaller than our standard wheelie bins. Please wash them frequently to keep them clean. If you use compostable kitchen caddy liners it will help to keep your outside 23 litre caddy clean.

What food waste can be recycled?

All items of cooked and uncooked food can be recycled, including meat, fish, dairy products, bread, rice, pasta, fruit, vegetables, tea bags, bones and any leftovers.

Should I still use my home compost bin?

Yes. Maidstone Borough Council still encourages home composting for garden waste, uncooked fruit and vegetable peelings, tea bags, coffee granules, egg shells, vacuum cleaner contents, herbivorous animal bedding and shredded paper. To order a subsidised home compost bin please call 08445 714444 or visit www.maidstone.getcomposting.com.

How do I find out my next collection day?

You should have received a calendar which shows your rubbish, recycling and garden waste collections.

You can check online at www.maidstone.gov.uk - enter your postcode in the 'Living in Maidstone' search box on the right hand side of the homepage and select your property for:

- information about your next refuse, recycling and garden waste collections
- details of the containers you should have
- your nearest recycling site and
- bulky collection days.

Food waste will be collected every week on your current collection day.

Your recycling will be collected every other week. In most cases recycling will be collected one week and waste/refuse the next week. We will tell you if your recycling day is going to change.

But some properties which are difficult to reach and require a narrow access collection will have their recycling and refuse collections made by the same vehicle on the same day every other week. The recycling collection will still be recycled.

Waste/refuse will be collected every other week. In most cases waste/refuse will be collected one week and recycling the other.

In Maidstone up to 40% of waste in bins is food. So it doesn't make sense collecting waste/refuse every week. By collecting recycling one week and waste/refuse the next, along with food waste every week, we can increase recycling rates and be more efficient and environmentally friendly.

But some properties which are difficult to reach and require a narrow access collection will have their recycling and waste/refuse collections made by the same vehicle on the same day every other week.

The recycling collection will still be recycled.

Why did the service change?

The current service was introduced to reduce waste, to increase recycling and save money.

We hope to increase recycling in Maidstone Borough from 30% of all household waste to 45-50% by 2015.

We estimate that we could save more than £100,000 a year from 2013 when we go out to tender for the next recycling and waste collection contract.

Why is Maidstone Borough Council going against Government advice and changing to fortnightly rubbish collections?

Maidstone Borough Council is still offering weekly collections for food waste which causes residents the most concern. However now that cooked and uncooked food is collected separately for recycling and residents have a fortnightly collection of paper, card, food and drinks cans, aerosols, foil, plastic bottles, yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and ice cream tubs, there is very little left in the grey rubbish bins. Government advice is that local councils should offer the most appropriate and cost effective services for the local taxpayer. Continuing to collect the grey rubbish bins every week is not an efficient use of resources and does not offer value for money for Maidstone residents.

How much did it cost? /How much did the new caddies etc cost?

With grants of up to £500,000 from WRAP (the Waste and Resources Action Programme) and the Kent Waste Partnership the set up and operating changes were cost neutral.

And we estimate that we could save more than £100,000 a year in 2013 when we go out to tender for the next recycling and waste collection contract.

My food waste bin/recycling is full

If you want to reduce the amount of food you throw away visit

www.lovefoodhatewaste.co.uk for advice on how to reduce food waste including recipes for leftovers, smart shopping and how to keep food fresh for longer. You

could save money - on average, households in the UK waste over £50 worth of food every month!

If you are unable to reduce the amount you throw away or perhaps you have a large family, you can ask for a second food waste bin by clicking the link below.

[Request a new bin](#)

If you have extra recycling which you cannot fit into your bin, you can put it out for collection next to your bin in a cardboard box or paper carrier bag.

Please flatten large cardboard boxes. ***If you often have extra recycling you can ask for a second recycling bin or black box by clicking the link below***

[Request a new bin](#)

I have a black sack collection – can I have a food waste collection?

Yes – so long as you have enough room to store and the food waste caddies.

If you would like to take part in the new food waste scheme please click the link below.

[Request a new bin](#)

I live in a flat – when will I get a food waste collection?

Flats and properties with communal collection arrangements are not included at present. Many do not have enough storage space to operate the service but we do want to introduce the service to those that have the space. We will look at this in Summer 2011.

If you would like to be considered for the service and you think there is enough room to store the bin use this link [Request a new bin](#)