

Frequently asked questions

(For specific information related to flats with communal recycling see final questions below).

May 2017

Q. Why did the Council make these changes?

Residents had asked us to bring in weekly food collections, simplify the sorting of recyclables, and collect things like old clothes and batteries. As part of a new waste and recycling contract, we were able to do much of this.

Our aim is to work with the new contractor, Veolia, to raise our recycling rate to over 60%. The new contract with Veolia started from 13 June 2016.

Q. How will the 60%+ recycling target be achieved?

Around a third of the waste in residents' bins at the time of the service change was food. Food is a heavy material and is expensive to send to landfill (over £100 per tonne, paid for by council tax). It is also bad for the environment if it isn't recycled.

Investing in food waste recycling therefore makes sense.

Recycled food waste can be turned into compost and used as a soil improver for farming and gardening.

The Council, in partnership with Veolia, has introduced a separate collection of food waste for houses and flats. This will be collected weekly, rather than fortnightly it was in the green bin.

Rather than putting food waste in with your garden waste, residents have been provided with a new 23lts food waste caddy. Residents should put their caddy out for collection every week at the same place where you currently leave your bins, bags and boxes. As it is collected weekly, there should be ample capacity for food waste.

Food waste should no longer be put in your landfill bin. These changes will help to keep pests away too.

We now collect dry recycling (cans, plastic, foil and glass) mixed together in your existing black bin. This bin is no longer used for your residual waste - more on this later. Paper and cardboard is still collected separately using the existing boxes. The mixed bin provides more space, and should make it easier and more convenient for you to recycle.

We expect all these changes to help increase the amount of recycling in the District. We can't do it without your continued cooperation, of course. We'd like to thank you very much for all your efforts.

Q. Why do I have to use a bin instead of boxes for mixed recycling?

Having all the materials (apart from paper and cardboard) mixed and collected together in one bin is not only easier, it should make recycling more convenient too. You no longer need to separate recyclable materials, and you may find it easier to move the recycling to your boundary for collection.

An additional benefit is that, with a bin, items are less likely to be blown around when it's windy. This will help keep the District clean and tidy.

Q. Why collect cans, plastic and glass together, and paper and cardboard separately?

Paper and cardboard is more valuable when collected separately because it can be recycled into better quality paper and cardboard.

This service is paid for through Council Tax. If we can make savings here, there will be more money available locally to pay for other important things.

We have purchased new recycling vehicles which have two compartments. One is for paper and cardboard and one for cans, plastic and glass (mixed recycling).

This recycling is sent to a materials recycling facility. Once there, the items pass through several types of machinery that sort through all of the different materials. This means less time spent sorting for residents and for crews, meaning more recycling can be collected quicker, and at lower cost.

Q. I will need fewer recycling boxes. What do I do with the others?

Residents are welcome to keep any extra boxes for storage. They are handy for storing items in the loft, in garages, allotments, gardens etc. Alternatively we will collect and recycle them. Just bear in mind though that reusing boxes is much better environmentally than collecting and recycling them. Any broken boxes may be taken to the nearest household waste site for recycling too.

Q. If the black bin is going to be used for recycling, what do I do with my waste?

We have delivered a new bin for waste. It is brown, and slightly smaller. Our studies have shown that food waste was found to make up around a third of waste that was previously in the black bins. Collecting food waste weekly in a separate caddy means residents have less waste to put in the brown bin and therefore it can be smaller.

Q. Did all residents receive the same size brown bin?

The majority of residents received a 180 litre brown refuse bin. We have larger bins for families of six or more. If you were already registered with us as a large family, your larger bin will have been delivered automatically.

Q. Can I still put food waste in my waste (brown) or garden waste (green) bin?

No. Food waste needs to go in the food caddy to be recycled.

Your food waste caddy will be emptied weekly. Using it regularly means there will be more space in your green bin for garden waste, and less waste going to landfill. This will help to save money, keep nasty pests away, and is great for the environment!

Q. I am worried about smells and mess in the caddy if it is just used for food waste. What can I do?

As part of the new service, we provided residents with up to a year's supply of compostable liners. These were used to line the handy kitchen caddy we provided a couple of years ago. You can purchase more compostable liners from larger supermarkets and online retailers. Alternatively the food waste can go in loose or you can use either paper liners or plastic bags to put your food waste in. Then it's just a question of transferring the bagged waste to your new kerbside caddy outside. This has a locking handle so that smells can't escape, and flies can't get in.

Q. What happens if I put the wrong things in the food waste caddy?

Veolia can only empty the caddies if they contain food waste. Non compostable items cannot be processed. Therefore, caddies will be contaminated if they contain non-compostable items, and will be not emptied until the contamination is removed. Most people understand that we need to be firm about this, so we don't contaminate all the other food waste collected too.

Q. What if I live in an area that is not suitable for wheeled bins?

If you live in a house, such as a terraced property, which is not currently serviced by wheeled bins, continue to present waste and recycling materials in the same way as before (using your recycling boxes). There is no need to separate your plastics and glass any longer, but please continue to separate your paper and cardboard. You will also have been provided with a new 23lts caddy for the separate weekly collection of food waste.

Q. Will the Council be collecting additional materials as part of the new service?

Yes. We introduced a **weekly** collection service for small electrical items (including batteries) and textiles. Please keep them separate in plastic bags and put them out next to your bins on collection day.

By textiles we mean clothing, sheets, linen, curtains and material, rags, blankets and towels. Any other items such as duvets, pillows and shoes, can be taken to your local household waste and recycling centre, details of which can be found here:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/recycling-and-waste.aspx

Q. What do I do if I have larger electrical items or large quantities of textiles.

You can take these to your local household waste and recycling centre (see: www.wasteaware.org).

The Council offers a Bulky Waste Collection Service too. As part of this service, we will collect and dispose of up to 6 items (washing machines, TVs etc). The fee for this is currently £45. See details at: <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environmentandwaste/rubbish-waste-and-recycling/bulkywaste.aspx>

Q. Can the Council collect Tetra Pak materials for recycling?

Tetra Pak materials can be taken to various recycling banks located around District. Please see our website for further details.

Unfortunately, Veolia cannot currently accommodate Tetra Pak cartons at its materials recycling facility. This is something that the Council and Veolia are working on to see if these materials can be recycled in the future.

Q. When were the new brown waste bin and new food waste caddy delivered?

Veolia delivered the brown bins to residents from the week beginning 4 July 2016 and were completed by the middle of August.

The new kerbside food waste caddy, and a starter pack of compostable liners, was delivered at the same time.

Q. Did my collection day change?

If you live in a house, your collection day stayed the same. For flats with communal recycling, your collection day may have changed to align with houses in your area. However, you will have been notified of any changes in advance.

Q. Where do I find out more information?

When the new brown bin and new food waste caddy were delivered, they had a leaflet with them which explains what goes in each container. At the same time, we put a sticker on the inside of the lid of your black bin to advise what recycling items now go in there.

Veolia operate a dedicated customer service centre which is housed at the Council's St Albans depot. This means all enquiries are dealt with locally and customer service advisors will be employed from the area.

You can also find out more by visiting our website or contacting us by email or phone: www.stalbans.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling wastemanagementservices@stalbands.gov.uk, 01727 809019.

Frequently Asked Questions - Flats

Q. I live in a flat, what changed for me?

Where there was space in your bin area, we provided communal food waste bins. These are 240lts in capacity and emptied weekly. We also delivered a kitchen caddy to your own front door along with a year's supply of compostable kitchen caddy liners. Use these to collect your food waste in the kitchen, and then carry it down to your bin area to empty it into the food waste bin. You should no longer use the landfill bins for food waste.

Q. Does everything else stay the same?

If there is a separate recycling bin for cans and plastics, and a separate recycling bin for glass, carry on recycling as you normally do.

Veolia will be updating the stickers on the bins to show any changes, but this may take some time due to the number of bins in the area. Once the stickers on the bins have been updated, residents no longer need to separate cans, plastic and glass into the individual bins. They can all go in together. The recycling will be sorted at Veolia's materials recycling facility.

Only paper and cardboard need to be put in the separate marked bin

Q. Will the collection day change for my flats?

In some cases collection dates may have changed to bring recycling collections in line with those for houses in the area. You will have received notification of any changes if they affect you.

