

Charging for garden waste collections FAQs May 2021

1. Why have you introduced an annual charge for collecting garden waste?
2. Is it legal to charge for the collection of garden waste?
3. Isn't this paid for by my council tax?
4. How much does the annual garden waste service cost?
5. How do I pay?
6. Can I sign up part-way through the year and can I have a discount?
7. What does the charge cover?
8. You are currently collecting all bins and sacks even if they don't have a permit – will this continue?
9. I signed up ages ago and my neighbours have been getting a free collection, can I have a discount?
10. What happens if someone puts their garden waste bin out for collection, but they have not signed up to the service?
11. How do you know who has paid?
12. When will I get my new or additional bin?
13. I received a bin hanger, but I have already signed up – what should I do?
14. When will I receive my sticker?
15. What do I do if I don't have a sticker yet?
16. Will my bin be collected if I don't have a sticker?
17. What happens if my sticker gets stolen?
18. What happens if someone has paid for one bin but they put two out for collection?
19. Can I have a garden waste collection if I live in a flat?
20. Can I share a garden waste bin with my neighbour?
21. What can I put in the garden waste bin?
22. How can I stop other people using the bin I have paid for?
23. Can I take the service with me when I move house?
24. If I don't sign up, what can I do with my garden waste?
25. What do I do with my unwanted garden waste bin?
26. What happens to the garden waste collected by the council?
27. How does charging help the environment and climate emergency?
28. How are you promoting home and community composting?

1. Why have you introduced an annual charge for collecting garden waste?

It's not been an easy decision, but council finances are under pressure, even more this year than before and garden waste is not a statutory service. To protect essential services such as care and support for the most vulnerable people in our community, the introduction of an annual charge will cover the costs of the service and make it self-financing.

This will also make a positive contribution towards the council's carbon emissions target to become carbon neutral by 2030 through encouraging more home composting, which is the most environmentally friendly and sustainable way to dispose of garden waste.

2. Is it legal to charge for the collection of garden waste?

Yes. Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, councils can charge for the collection of garden waste. Currently two-thirds of councils charge including all our neighbouring councils.

3. Isn't this paid for by my council tax?

Council tax is part of the national taxation system set by central government. Council tax is not dedicated to the provision of specific services from the council. Garden waste collection is not a statutory service, this means there is no legal requirement to collect it. Instead of not providing a service we are offering a chargeable service where the income from charging for garden waste collections will make the service self-financing, which will free-up finances to protect essential services.

4. How much does the annual garden waste service cost?

Full price is £50 per bin for the garden waste service, irrespective of when you sign up during the year. The service runs from 1 April – 31 March each year.

There are discounts available for those who receive a discount on their council tax. The percentage discount is the same as the discount on your council tax bill. This means that the amount paid is linked to the address and is automatically calculated when you sign up online.



WORKING TOGETHER

5. How do I pay?

You can sign up and pay by following the sign up link on the website www.n-somerset.gov.uk/gardenwaste. If you are unable to pay online, you can phone council connect on 01934 888 802 who will discuss other payment options. We are experiencing high call volumes so if you can sign up online please do so.

6. Can I sign up part-way through the year and can I have a discount?

You can sign up at any point during the year however, it will still cost £50 for the remainder of the year until 31 March 2022.

The early bird discount ended on Friday 16 April 2021.

7. What does the charge cover?

When you sign up and pay you will receive garden waste collections for the period up to 31 March 2022. Collections will be fortnightly for most of the year and monthly during December, January and February (when less garden waste is produced). If you don't have a bin the £50 charge will also include delivery or exchange of a garden waste bin.

8. You are currently collecting all bins and sacks even if they don't have a permit – will this continue?

No, from Monday 24 May 2021 only bins and sacks from households which are signed up to the new service will be collected. You can sign up to the new service at any time online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

9. I signed up ages ago and my neighbours have been getting a free collection, can I have a discount?

We made the decision to collect all garden waste bins while we transition to the new annually charged garden waste collection service. This was to ensure we provided a high level of service to all residents while the new service was rolled out.

10. What happens if someone puts their garden waste bin out for collection, but they have not signed up to the service?

From Monday 24 May 2021 if an address has not signed up but they put out garden waste for collection, the crew will leave the bin unemptied and a record of the bin will be made by the crew.

11. How do you know who has paid?

When you sign up and pay you are posted a letter with a permit sticker for your bin or permit tag for bags. The permit sticker should be stuck to the lid of your bin. Tags should be looped round the handle of one of your white bags. All households which have signed up should have the permit displayed for the crew to easily identify and collect it. The crew will also have a record in their vehicles of all the addresses that are signed up and will only be collecting from these properties.

12. When will I get my new or additional bin?

We are busy delivering bins and sacks, and if you signed up before Friday 16 April, you should have received your bin already. If this is not the case, please contact us.

After signing up a new or additional bin can take up to 28 days to be delivered.

13. I received a bin hanger, but I have already signed up – what should I do?

Crews attached a bin hanger to your bin/sacks as you were not displaying a permit on your bin/sacks. If you signed up after Monday 3 May 2021 your permit sticker/tag will be with you soon. If you signed up before Monday 3 May 2021 you should have received your permit sticker/tag, so if this is not the case please contact us.

14. When will I receive my sticker?

It can take up to two weeks from sign up to receive your permit in the post. If you've signed up but haven't received your permit before your next garden waste collection please put out your bin as normal. The crew will also have an electronic record of all addresses signed up.

15. What do I do if I don't have a sticker yet?

If you signed up prior to Monday 3 May 2021 you should have received your permit sticker/tag. If this is not the case, please contact us.

If you signed up after Monday 3 May 2021 your permit sticker/tag will be with you soon.

16. Will my bin be collected if I don't have a sticker?

Your bin will not be collected after Monday 24 May without displaying a permit sticker, tag or the crew being aware through their in-cab device that you have recently signed up. Permits can take up to two weeks to receive from sign up.

17. What happens if my sticker gets stolen?

If your sticker is removed or badly faded, please contact gardenwaste@n-somerset.gov.uk or phone 01934 888 802 who will check and arrange a replacement where appropriate.

18. What happens if someone has paid for one bin but they put two out for collection?

The household will have only received one permit so the crew will only empty the bin which is stickered and leave the other bin unemptied. The crew will make a record of this.

19. Can I have a garden waste collection if I live in a flat?

If you live in a flat but you have your own garden, you can still sign up for the service. If you have communal gardens you should contact your managing agent or housing association, as they will be responsible for the removal of garden waste.

20. Can I share a garden waste bin with my neighbour?

You can share a garden waste bin with your neighbour as an informal arrangement, but payment must be made by one householder and the bin will be assigned to one address only.

21. What can I put in the garden waste bin?

Please check the website for an up to date list but garden waste includes: grass cuttings, prunings, weeds, leaves, hedge clippings, twigs and branches up to a maximum of 10cm in diameter. It does not include plant pots, soil or garden ornaments. If you have branches larger than 10cm in diameter, please take them to your local North Somerset recycling centre and place in the wood container.

22. How can I stop other people using the bin I have paid for?

You should store the bin on your property until collection day, so others do not have easy access to it.

23. Can I take the service with me when I move house?

No, the garden waste bin is signed up to one address only. If you move, the new residents will benefit from the remainder of the collections for the year. Please do not take the bin with you as it will not be collected from your new address. If you don't have a collection at your new address but you would like one, then please sign up and pay again.

24. If I don't sign up, what can I do with my garden waste?

You can home compost which is the cheapest and most environmentally friendly way of dealing with your garden waste. Alternatively, you can take your garden waste to one of our three household waste recycling centres. We will also be encouraging more community composting schemes in the future, like the one in Winford.

25. What do I do with my unwanted garden waste bin?

Unwanted garden waste bins are not being collected in yet. This is to help us ensure we are offering the best service for those who have paid the annual charge. It also allows plenty of time for people to make their decision and does not mean we are doubling up on visits and resources to collect and deliver bins.

We will let residents know what to do with unwanted bins in the future so keep a look out for information, it will be shared in all our usual places including North Somerset Life, eLife, social media, website and via local press. For the time being, if you're not signing up to the new service please just store your bin in your garden as you have been doing.

26. What happens to the garden waste collected by the council?

The vehicles take their load back to the depot at Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare where it is tipped into a garden waste bay. It accumulates until a load is ready to be transported to Enover's composting facility in Gloucestershire. Here it is processed into compost using open windrow composting. The finished compost takes around 10 weeks to produce and is then sold by Enover to commercial and agricultural customers.

27. How does charging help the environment and climate emergency?

Charging for garden waste along with promotion of home composting has encouraged more people to switch to home composting as the cheapest and most sustainable way to deal with garden waste. It provides a free, nutrient-rich soil enhancer to help your plants grow better and less or no bins to remember to put out for collection. This results in fewer vehicles required to collect the garden waste across North Somerset and fewer lorry loads to transport from Weston-super-Mare to be commercially composted in Gloucestershire. This will make a positive contribution towards the council's carbon emissions target to become carbon neutral by 2030.

28. How are you promoting home and community composting?

You can buy a 220 litre discounted home compost bin for just £10 during 2021. This includes access to a free online e-learning course to help you make the most of your bin.. More information is available at

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/composting

Later this year we'll be working with town and parish councils to develop community composting and look at the availability of shredders and other composting accessories to support more garden waste to be home composted.

Find us on Facebook: [nsrecyclingandwaste](https://www.facebook.com/nsrecyclingandwaste) or follow on Twitter: [ns_recycling](https://twitter.com/ns_recycling)



WORKING TOGETHER