



**PRESS
RELEASE**



For Immediate Release

20, March, 2020

Help and patience called for as garden waste collections suspended

Somerset Waste Partnership is calling on the public's help and patience as it announces that all Garden Waste collections will be suspended from Monday.

Reduced staffing due to Coronavirus has led to collections being dropped in several areas this week. With pressures highly likely to increase, the Partnership is suspending garden waste collections until further notice so staff can focus on collecting recycling, refuse and clinical waste.

Around 50,000 people pay for garden waste collections and the suspension comes at a time when subscriptions are being renewed. To make sure customers don't lose out, SWP is extending all subscriptions to take account of the disruption, however long it lasts.

So, if disruption continues until the end of April 2020, annual subscriptions will last until the end of April 2021.

And the public is being asked to play its part in keeping waste collections services moving with fewer staff.

Putting out your recycling properly – with the right items in the right boxes – makes it much quicker for crews to collect. That means rounds can be completed quicker, and staff deployed to help elsewhere.

For information about what goes where in your recycling, visit <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Kerbsideservicespring2019web.pdf>

Councillor Sarah Dyke, Chair of Somerset Waste Partnership, said: "It's unfortunate that we've had to make this decision and apologise for the inconvenience, but we've been able to make sure nobody paying for garden waste collections loses out financially.

"We're doing our very best to keep services running and hope everyone understands that we have to prioritise those that are most important.

“Please take a little extra time to sort through your recycling. It can make a real difference to the speed of collections which improves our chances of keeping services running smoothly”.

So far, other services have continued as largely normal, but they too could be hit in the coming weeks, depending on how staffing numbers are affected.

Cllr Dyke said: “We don’t know exactly how staffing will be hit in the coming days, so it’s impossible to say that other services won’t be affected, though of course we’ll avoid that if we can.

“In these difficult times we’d appeal for everyone to be patient and bear with us.”

Somerset’s 16 recycling centres remain open as usual, though people are asked to follow the guidance around social distancing when taking rubbish and recycling.

Staff at the sites will no longer be able to help the public remove large or weighty items from their vehicles.

Other SWP service disruption:

- Suspended - new requests for bins, recycling boxes and food waste caddies. Teams will try to deliver those already ordered, but no new requests will be accepted for the time being.
- Suspended – Bulky waste collections that involve going inside properties. Standard bulky waste collection service continues at present.
- Paused – Slim My Waste, Feed My Face campaign. This is so support staff are available for priority work. A decision on delivering the campaign to the remaining areas of Sedgemoor and West Somerset will be taken at a later date.

Please follow the latest Government guidance on disposing of personal waste. It’s for anyone with symptoms, including those diagnosed with the infection who must remain at home until they are well. It also applies to people in households with someone showing symptoms that may be caused by coronavirus - a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature.

Personal waste, such as tissues and disposable cleaning cloths, should be stored securely in disposable rubbish bags. These should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your home.

This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual rubbish outside your house, which will be collected as part of the usual fortnightly collections.

Other household waste can be disposed of as normal. Full guidance can be found on the Government’s website here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-people-with-confirmed-or-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

For the latest information about SWP services and Coronavirus, visit somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus and follow @somersetwaste on Twitter and Facebook.

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Notes to editors

Somerset Waste Partnership manages waste services for all councils in Somerset.

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