



**PRESS  
RELEASE**



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Managing with missed collections as Covid adds to pressures**

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is warning residents they may need to look after more recycling for longer as delays to collections continue.

Rising Covid self-isolations on top of the national driver shortage and mean more recycling collections will be missed this week.

Although most of the 400,000-plus SWP weekly kerbside pick-ups will still happen without a hitch, some people will need to wait two weeks for a recycling collection if they are missed.

Recycling missed in parts of Mendip (including Evercreech, Nunney and Witham Friary), South Somerset (including Hinton St George and Ilminster) and West Somerset (Williton and Stogursey) last Thursday and Friday (15 and 16 July) will not be returned for until this week's scheduled collection days (22 and 23 July).

Collections missed yesterday (19 July) in various parts of the county – including parts of Taunton, Bridgwater, Tatworth and Frome – will not be returned for until Monday 26 July.

Please check SWP's website [somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://somersetwaste.gov.uk). and follow for updates @somersetwaste on Facebook.

SWP and its collections contractor SUEZ apologise for the disruption and are sharing some ideas for coping with extra recycling if your collection is delayed.

From squashing and crushing materials to make more space, to keeping food waste in the shade, they are small steps that can make a difference if you have to wait longer.

SWP Managing Director, Mickey Green, said: "This is an unprecedented situation putting enormous strain on crews and collections up and down the country.

"Sadly, there will be some unavoidable delays to recycling collections and in some cases people having to wait two weeks until we can return.

“This is not where anyone wants to be and we sincerely apologise, but there are no quick fixes and we still do not know what impact the ‘Pandemic’ is going to have.”

SWP is confident that missed rubbish and garden waste collections will be returned for within two days.

For missed recycling collections, crews will do their best to get back in two days. But if they cannot return in that time they will not get back until the new scheduled collection day.

If your recycling collection is delayed, there are some things you can do to help you manage until the crews can come back.

- Food waste – keep containers in the shade and lid closed. Home compost what you can. Some people even keep fresh food waste in a closed compostable liner their fridge or freezer until collection day.

If you cannot wait, it can also be double-bagged and go to any recycle site or in your rubbish bin. It will generate electricity at the Avonmouth energy-from-waste plant.

- Squash, crush and flatten plastic bottles, tins and cans, and cardboard to make more space in recycling containers.
- Use a makeshift container, such as a cardboard box, for extra recycling (for all the materials except glass).
- Offer space in your recycling container to neighbours if yours is not full.
- All kerbside recycling is taken at our 16 recycling sites (except cartons\*)

\* Cartons (including Tetra Paks) are collected as part of the new Recycle More service in Mendip and South Somerset. These are also taken at 12 of SWP’s 16 recycling sites (not Castle Cary, Cheddar, Dulverton or Somerton).

For more detail visit [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk)

Residents are urged to report missed collections online using the My Waste Services menu at [somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://somersetwaste.gov.uk) Available 24/7 it is the quickest and easiest way to make contact.

The national driver shortage is affecting businesses and waste authorities around the country. It is a long-term issue made worse by Covid, which has delayed driver training and testing, and the departure of many EU drivers.

Crews work on ‘bubbles’ and increasing numbers are needing to self-isolate as the rate of Covid infections climb.

Somerset's hard-working crews have been collecting around 20% more waste throughout much of the year. That makes it harder to complete rounds and means they have been working extended hours for a long time to keep up.

Progress is being made, but the reopening of non-essential retail has increased demand for drivers and recruitment is especially difficult in Somerset because it is home to many distribution centres.

Crews are also coping with new routes for the Recycle More service in South Somerset, temporary depot arrangements in Taunton and some congestion hotspots.

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## **Notes to Editors**

SUEZ is the Somerset Waste Partnership's contractor providing waste collections.

Related background articles:

Road Haulage Association: [RHA gives the Government 12 actions they must take as the driver shortage hits 'catastrophic proportions'](#)

Federation of Wholesale Distributors: [HGV driver shortage could threaten food supply – FWD - FWD](#)

**Somerset Waste Partnership** is the local authority team managing waste services for all Somerset councils.

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