

Food Waste Recycling Collections Service



Stakeholder Communications Toolkit

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LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

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Introduction

Lancaster City Council is reintroducing a weekly food waste collection service to households across the district to comply with the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms.

This national initiative requires all councils in England to collect household food waste separately by 31 March 2026 with an ambition to half all residual waste sent to landfill or incineration by 2042.

When food waste is sent to landfill it doesn't harmlessly breakdown. It has a big impact on the environment as it rots and releases methane – a harmful greenhouse gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Likewise, as food waste is 70% water, sending food waste for incineration requires more energy to burn so recycling is a more efficient method of disposal.

In the Lancaster district, roughly 28% of waste thrown away in the general rubbish is food waste. Not only is this a waste of money and resources, but it is estimated to contribute 8-10% of global man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

About the new food waste collection service

During February and March 2026, residents will receive everything they need to get started directly to their homes, including:

- A seven-litre kitchen caddy
- A 23-litre external food waste bin (or a communal bin where appropriate)
- Two rolls of kitchen caddy liners
- A leaflet with instructions on how to use the service
- A printed waste and recycling collection calendar

All food waste can be recycled, including raw and cooked foods; leftovers; peelings; dairy products; fruit and vegetables; rice, pasta and beans; baked goods; meat; fish; bones; and tea and coffee grounds.

Starting the week following delivery, all collections will take place from the front of each property on the same day as waste or recycling collections — so it should be easy to remember.

Once collected, the waste will be taken to Lancashire County Council's anaerobic digestion facility at Farington Waste Recovery Park in Leyland. Here it is processed into renewable biogas, which generates electricity, and nutrient-rich digestate used as fertiliser by farmers.

Whilst supporting national efforts to cut carbon emissions by making use of this valuable resource, residents will also have more space in grey bins and notice what waste is being produced and ways to reduce it — which could save them money.

Lancaster City Council has received around £1.46million in funding from the government to support the roll-out of food waste collections, which includes new vehicles, the creation of 33 new roles, and caddies for each household.

To help households get familiar with the new service, waste officers will host drop-in sessions across the district, offering demonstrations and answering questions.

To help elevate awareness about the service, the waste team will place golden tickets in selected food caddies, with prizes including a £200 Love2shop voucher.

Funding for more liners is yet to be determined. The initial provision comprises two polythene rolls, each with 52 liners. Residents can subsequently purchase liners from retailers, use alternative plastic bags for their kitchen caddies, or opt to utilise their caddy without a liner. Our liners are made of polythene, making them non-biodegradable, but they are made of recycled materials.

It is not essential to use biodegradable liners in kitchen caddies because once the bags are mechanically split open, they are separated and turned into refuse-derived fuel — instead of being processed with food waste, which requires a different process.

External food waste bin



Kitchen caddy



How do I recycle my food waste?

			
<p>1 Put a liner in your kitchen caddy and put your food waste in it.</p>	<p>2 When you need to empty your kitchen caddy, remove the liner, tie the top and put it in your outdoor food waste recycling bin.</p>	<p>3 Lock your outdoor food waste recycling bin by bringing the handle to the front.</p>	<p>4 Put your outdoor food waste recycling bin out the front of your property for collection by 7am every week on the day we collect your waste or recycling.</p>

How to get involved

We appreciate your dedication and strong ties with the community, and therefore we're seeking your help to share our campaign widely for the best possible outcome.

This toolkit provides some initial resources on communicating effective messages that will help inform residents about this new service, so they feel empowered to make educated choices to participate.

Additionally, our engagement officers would appreciate your support in hosting events in your community to help residents with the new service. This could be a specific drop-in session or a stall at an event or busy marketplace. If you have any suggestions, please email wastechanges@lancaster.gov.uk with the subject 'Food waste event suggestions'.

Key messages

Our key messages for the campaign are:

- Collections will be easy and convenient
- Residents will have more space in grey bins for non-recyclable waste
- Food waste will no longer sit in bins waiting to be collected for two weeks, so there will be less smell from grey bins and outdoor food waste bins are easier to clean if they get grubby.
- Residents will notice how they are producing waste and ways to eliminate it, such as purchasing small quantities, using meal planners, batch cooking, freezing and gifting food — which could save you money.

- Together with residents across the country, you will help to reduce the large amount of waste that ends up in landfill or incineration that could instead be converted into fertiliser, or biofuel to create energy.
- 70% of food waste is produced in the home, with the average person in the UK producing approximately 70kg of a food waste per year.

Frequently asked questions

We anticipate that the new service will prompt a wide range of questions and have created a list of frequently asked questions that sit on the website that would be helpful for you to be aware of.

Q. Where is my external food waste bin collected from?

A. Your external food waste bin will be collected from the front of your property.

Q. What size are the caddy and outdoor food waste recycling bin?

A. The dimensions of the 7-litre kitchen caddy are: height 21cm, width 27cm; depth 20cm.

The dimensions of the 23-litre outdoor food waste recycling bin (including the handle) are: height 41cm, width 32cm; depth 39cm.

Q. Will the kitchen caddy smell?

A. Using the kitchen caddy for food waste is no different to having food waste in your current kitchen bin. The kitchen caddy has a lid which is lockable and will help contain any potential smells.

We will also provide you with liners to use in in the kitchen caddy to help keep your bin clean.

You can empty the kitchen caddy into the external food waste caddy as regularly as you wish to prevent smells in your kitchen.

Q. Will the outdoor bin attract wildlife and how do I stop them getting into the bin?

A. The food waste will be collected in a 23-litre container specifically designed to be pest and fox-resistant, featuring a lockable lid to help prevent access.

Q. What if I don't produce any food waste?

A. Remember there is no amount too small. The best thing we can do with our food is enjoy it but some waste like orange peel, tea bags and bones are unavoidable and can all be recycled.

Q. Can I opt out of food waste collections?

A. The government has made it mandatory for councils to collect food waste from all households, so all households will receive the food waste starter package.

Recycling food waste in your food waste bin helps to reduce the amount of household waste in your grey bin.

It is also much better for the environment as it means food waste is not going to landfill or being incinerated.

If you do not separate your food waste as requested, you may be issued with a legal notice formally requiring you to do so. You would receive a fine if you did not comply with the notice.

Q. I already have a food waste bin or caddy. Can I use this?

A. We've found the visibility of the previous green outdoor food waste recycling bin for our crews is poor, so you'll need to use the new silver ones that we are delivering.

You can either choose to repurpose your old container for something else, or you can contact us to arrange a collection and it we'll send it to be recycled.

Our email is wastechanges@lancaster.gov.uk

We suggest you accept the new kitchen food waste caddy, as a spare is always handy whilst washing one up or if your current one is full when the weather is too unpleasant to venture out to your compost bin.

Q. How to I stop the outdoor food waste bin from flying away with the wind?

A. The outdoor food waste bin can be weighted down when empty on windier days if needed.

Q. I compost my food waste. Do I need to participate?

A. We're delighted that you compost your food waste as this significantly reduces the amount of waste that goes to landfill. We need more people like you sharing your expertise with friends and neighbours to encourage others to get composting.

We understand that you may not use your food bin as much as other people—or at all—due to composting, but we want to ensure that if your compost bin is full or if you experience any mobility issues/needs change, that you have everything you need to use this service — to avoid any food waste going to landfill.

A spare caddy is always handy whilst washing one up or if your current one is full when the weather is too unpleasant to venture out to your compost bin.

Q. I don't have time to do this – why should I?

A. It's very quick and simple to do and there's lots of benefits, like more space in your grey bins and less smells as your food waste will be collected weekly.

You'll also help reduce the amount of food waste going to landfill or incineration sites.

Shockingly, 70% of food waste is produced in households.

Q. I don't have space for the caddy or external bin, what should I do?

A. We understand that many properties already struggle with space, particularly those with smaller terraced gardens. Food Waste is mandatory, and we have specifically chosen smaller bins with a carry handle to help with storage. The outdoor caddy is around 1/10th of the size of your other outdoor bins.

The indoor kitchen caddy is small and will fit on a kitchen counter, under the sink or in a cupboard. People can use their own indoor container if they prefer something more stylish or fits better into the kitchen.

We appreciate your efforts to help increase the amount of rubbish which is recycled in our district.

Q. Do I need to use biodegradable liners?

A. Our liners are made of polythene, making them non-biodegradable, but they are made of recycled materials.

You can use biodegradable liners in your kitchen caddy if you wish but it is not necessary because once the bags are mechanically split open, they are separated and turned into refuse-derived fuel — instead of being processed with food waste, which requires a different process.

Q. Will I be provided with more liners?

A. Funding for more liners is yet to be determined. As it is not necessary to use biodegradable liners, you can line your kitchen caddy with any type of plastic bag.

Q. Must I use liners in my food caddy?

A. If you don't want to use liners, that is okay. Although, you will need to wash out your caddy and potentially your outdoor food waste bin more regularly to avoid smells.

Q. Why can't garden waste go in the food waste caddy?

A. Food waste will be sent for anaerobic digestion — a different process which converts organic waste in an oxygen-free environment into biogas and digestate

Q. Why can't food waste go in the garden waste bin?

A. Garden waste is sent for composting in Lancashire, and the facility does not accept food waste. Food waste will be sent for anaerobic digestion, a different process which converts

organic waste in an oxygen-free environment into biogas and digestate. The digestate can then be safely used as a nutrient rich fertiliser to enhance soil fertility and help crop growth.

Q. Can I get assistance moving my external food recycling bin to the collection point?

A. Our assisted bin collection service is designed to support residents who are unable to move their bins and boxes to the kerbside.

To be eligible, there must not be a family member, carer or anyone living at your property who can present your bin for collection and or return it to the property.

The quickest way to apply is by [completing our online form](#), which is sent directly to the waste team.

If you already have assisted collection, the food waste caddies will be added automatically.

Q. What do I do if my outdoor food waste bin is lost?

A. If your outdoor food waste bin is lost, the quickest way to report this to get a replacement by [filling in our online form](#) but you can also call customer services on 01524 582491.

Q. What do I do if my collection has been missed?

A. If by 6pm we have not collected your waste, you should [report it as a missed bin](#), and we will aim to return for a collection within three working days. Please leave your bin/box or sack out until we collect it.

Q. What difference will household food waste recycling make when businesses create food waste?

A. Household food waste recycling will make a big difference as shockingly 70% of all food waste is created in the home.

Workplaces with 10 or more full-time employees are already required to separate food waste to comply with Government legislation, with micro-firms set to participate by 31 March 2027. So, we really are all on this journey together.

Q. How can I reduce my food waste?

A. There's lots of great tips on how to reduce food waste — which can also save you money — on the [Love Food Hate Waste website](#).

Q. Will we need to pay for the food waste recycling kit?

A. No.

Q. Will our council tax go up because of this?

A. Collecting food waste will become a statutory service, and council tax is collected to support in our funding of our services.

The budget for the coming year is not yet set and there are many factors which contribute to the decision on council tax rates.

Our annual budget consultation will take place in early 2026.

Q. Will Lancaster City Council profit from the collection of food waste?

A. We collect all the waste and recycling across the district, however after collection, all waste goes to Lancashire County Council for disposal and recycling.

It is projected that the food waste collected across the county will produce enough electricity to not only run the food waste facilities, but to operate the whole of Lancashire County Council's Farington Waste Recovery Park — saving the county council just over £4m a year.

Q. Why was the previous food waste service scrapped?

A. The decision to end the mixed food waste and garden waste collection service in 2014 was made by Lancashire County Council — the Waste Disposal Authority — as there were more cost-effective options available to deal with green waste if the food waste was removed.

As this is now a statutory government requirement, Lancashire County Council has recycling centre can now process this.

Communications methods

Website

A webpage with everything you need to know about this new service, including a detailed list of FAQs, can be found here:

<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/foodwaste>

Press Release

You can view the [press release](#) for the launch on our website.

Social Media

We have social media activity planned across our platforms and would ask you to share, quote, or like our posts. Our accounts are:

[Facebook: @lancastercc](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

[Instagram: @lanaster city council](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

[Threads: @lanaster city council](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

[X: @lanastercc](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

[LinkedIn: @lanaster-city-council](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

[Nextdoor: @lanastercc](#)

- [Food Waste Launch](#)

Photo assets can be downloaded via:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TAZnqYgSQcBvQC-Qt6ehUcRwA_LQI_kf?usp=sharing

Newsletters

We would be happy for you to help spread the word via internal and external newsletter communications.

Template:

Weekly Food Waste Collections Start This February

Lancaster City Council is reintroducing a weekly food waste collection service to households across the district to comply with the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms.

By using this service, you'll cut the amount of waste going to landfills or incineration, and benefit from more space in your grey bins, food waste no longer rotting for weeks and causing odours, and the ability to identify waste to save money.

You can get started as soon as you receive your starter pack in February or March 2026, which will include:

- A 7-litre kitchen caddy
- A 23-litre outdoor food waste bin (or communal alternative where needed)
- Two rolls of caddy liners
- An instructional leaflet
- A printed collection calendar

The new service accepts all types of food waste, including: leftovers; dairy products; fruit; vegetables; rice; pasta; beans; baked goods; meat; fish; bones; tea bags; and coffee grounds.

Once collections begin, food waste will be picked up weekly from the front of your property, on the same day as existing waste or recycling services.

After collection, the material will go to Lancashire County Council's anaerobic digestion facility in Leyland to be transformed into renewable biogas for electricity and nutrient-rich fertiliser for farmland.

To celebrate the launch, 15 golden tickets will be placed in food caddies, with prizes such as a £200 Love2shop voucher.

Find out more, including about events taking place across the district to support you, by visiting: www.lancaster.gov.uk/foodwaste.

Posters

We'd appreciate if you could display posters in suitable locations to help raise awareness of the service changes. A4 and A3 sizes are available to download here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TAZnqYgSQcBvQC-Qt6ehUcRwA_LQI_kf?usp=sharing

Useful Links

[Food waste recycling collections](#)

[Assisted collections](#)

[Household waste webpages](#)

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