

Just a little bit more... for Bristol!

New and improved recycling containers roll out across the city as residents urged to recycle more to cut costs and protect the planet

From Southmead to Southville, Redland to Redfield, wherever you are in the city, Bristol Waste Company and Bristol City Council are calling on all Bristolians to recycle "just a little bit more" for the good of our city, our neighbourhoods, and our planet.

Bristolians are already great at recycling, proudly holding the crown for the highest recycling rates among England's large 'core' regional cities for 11 years and counting.

Results of a recent consultation¹ show that reducing waste and recycling more is important to residents of Bristol. To help the city achieve these goals local leaders are encouraging everyone to do just a little bit more for Bristol to help reduce waste and improve their recycling for the environment and to save public money.

Bristol City Council and Bristol Waste Company are working in partnership with an external logistics company to deliver brand new and improved recycling containers to 175,000 homes across Bristol from 7 September into November.

Homes on kerbside recycling collections will receive a new red bag for plastic and cans, which is 60% bigger than the old brittle green boxes, and a new blue bag for card, cartons and paper. The new bags will also be sealable, reducing litter, and easier to store between collections. Households with missing or damaged brown food bins will have new ones, and black boxes that are more durable won't change.

Residents will receive letters asking them to put out their containers on their usual bin day, ready for the swap. The delivery teams will work with Bristol Waste recycling crews to replace the old containers which will be emptied. Residents are being urged to put out all their containers – even if they're empty.

The container change project is part of an ambitious programme to improve recycling rates by 2% and follows Bristol Waste's award-winning campaigns 'Slim My Waste' and 'Bindigestion' – encouraging residents to get recycling materials out of the black wheelie bin. It represents a £1.4million investment in the city's recycling and the first of many improvements planned for Bristol over the next few years.

By recycling 'just a little bit more' – from banana skins to flattened cardboard boxes, and rinsed sauce jars – together, Bristol will:

- Reduce carbon emissions and the amount of waste sent for incineration

¹ [Appendix F1 Waste and Recycling Consultation report.pdf](#)

- Free up space in households' black general waste bins
- Help protect the planet by conserving natural resources and turning existing materials into brand new items
- Save the city money by reducing expensive disposal fees for general waste
- Generate funds for the city by selling recycling to specialist reprocessing companies, to make into new items

Councillor Abi Finch, Chair of Bristol City Council's Environment and Sustainability Committee said: "It's brilliant to see these new, improved recycling containers being rolled out. I've heard from many people who are frustrated with recycling blowing out of boxes and littering our streets, and with having to pay for replacements when the brittle green boxes break. These new containers have been carefully chosen to resolve these issues after listening to people's concerns.

"We all know recycling is better for the planet, but you may not know it also saves the council money. In short, we can't afford not to! Bristol Waste is making changes to make it easier for everyone to recycle, so now it's up to all of us to keep food waste and recyclables out of our black bins."

Ricky Gayfer, Operations Director for Bristol Waste Company, said: "Lots of people don't know that correctly recycled items in Bristol are sold to generate funds for the city. Compare that to general waste from the city's black wheelie bins, which costs Bristol millions of pounds each year in disposal fees.

"The best way to show your love for our city is to spend just a little bit more time each week to recycle extra items, sort them properly and give cans and plastics a rinse. There are about half a million people in our city — if we all recycle more, think of the difference we'll make together. The crews at Bristol Waste make 23 million collections each year, and if we all recycle more, we can help reduce pressure on public funds, free up space in our black bins, and protect the planet we all call home."

Sarah Burns, Sustainability and Engagement Manager for Bristol Waste Company said: "Let's recycle more, for Bristol. We know from our research that over 50% of the average Bristol black wheelie bin is recyclable materials, and the things we see most commonly are actually really easy to recycle — like squashed plastic bottles and rinsed yoghurt pots.

"Recyclable food waste makes up 26% of the average black wheelie bin. By taking an extra moment to put plate scrapings or out-of-date food into our brown food waste bins, we're doing our bit for the city. Recycling reduces demand on finite natural resources and lowers carbon emissions, while also saving money for council taxpayers so it can be spent on other vital services."

Collected old containers will be repurposed or recycled to make new items, and the new containers were selected based on cost, durability and sustainability.

For more information and top recycling tips, visit:

bristolwastecompany.co.uk/recycle-more

FACTFILE

What's changing?

- New red bag: for plastics and cans, offering 60% more capacity than the old green box.
- New blue bag: for card, paper and cartons.
- Brown food waste bins: available for households who need replacements for broken ones or who don't have one.

These new bags feature sealable lids to prevent litter from blowing into the street during windy conditions, the red bags are far more durable than the previous brittle green boxes and the bags can be squashed for easy storage to reduce pavement clutter between collections. They also align with the government's Simpler Recycling² legislation, which has successfully reduced street litter and improved collection efficiency in other local authorities. Red was chosen as it is part of the recommended colour coding for cans and tins recycling and is a common industry-endorsed choice.

Collected old containers will be repurposed or recycled to make new items, and the new containers were selected based on cost, durability and sustainability.

Key facts: what's in Bristol's bins?³

- Over 50% of what is currently thrown into the average Bristol black wheelie bin could be easily recycled in the kerbside containers
- 26% of what's in the black wheelie bin is food waste, which should go into the brown food waste bin for weekly recycling collection

² Find out more about Simpler Recycling policy in England here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update>

³ Waste Composition Analysis 2025

- General waste from black wheelie bins is incinerated to generate energy. Reducing this waste directly cuts carbon emissions and saves the city millions of pounds in disposal fees
- Correctly sorted recyclables are sold to generate funds which can be redirected to pay for local services, increasing value-for-money for council taxpayers. In 2025 Bristol Waste recycled or composted 64,289 tonnes, saving the city £8.7million in disposal costs and generating £4.2million through recycle sales

---END---

Notes to editors

Please reach out if you have any questions, for images and for interview requests.

For more information, please contact:

Hannah Deas, External Communications Manager at Bristol Waste
email: Hannah.deas@Bristolwastecompany.co.uk mob: 07821 635933

Dagmar Smeed, Head of Marketing and Communications at Bristol Waste
email: dagmar.smeed@bristolwastecompany.co.uk mob: 07968 411350

Bristol City Council public relations desk. Email: newsdesk@bristol.gov.uk

About Bristol Waste Company

At Bristol Waste we take care of the city, keeping it clean and safe for our residents and customers. We visit every home, clean every street, look after schools, civic buildings and commercial buildings – every day we strive to make people's lives cleaner, safer, and better.

You will see us collecting the waste and recycling, cleaning the streets, running the recycling centres, removing graffiti, cleaning buildings, providing security services and much more. We even grit the roads in the winter and clear fly-tips.

Serving the needs of the residents and businesses of Bristol, on behalf of Bristol City Council, is at the heart of what we do. Some only see us as a waste and facilities management business, but we see things differently; our role is to improve the lives of those who live, work, or visit Bristol and to protect the environment.

Our work is shaped and inspired by four values: we work together, we do what's right, we communicate, and we perform. These values form the basis of all the work we do for the city of Bristol and beyond.