

KENT'S HOUSEHOLD WASTE & RECYCLING CENTRES TO REOPEN

From Friday May 15th Kent County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) will open to the public for essential use.

From Wednesday May 13th people will be able to book a slot to use one of the county's 18 HWRCs. The booking system goes live on Wednesday 13th May and can be found www.kent.gov.uk.

KCC Cabinet Member for Environment Susan Carey said: "I know how valued our waste and recycling sites are to the people of Kent and I am immeasurably proud of the work our waste team has put in to getting these sites reopened.

"The booking system, which was developed by Medway Council, is crucial to ensure we can keep visitor numbers at a level where social distancing can be maintained and minimise queuing.

"Our focus over the last few weeks has been in ensuring kerbside collections provided by district and borough councils continued, and our teams were redeployed to support those crews.

"Kerbside collections across Kent are now all, or about to be, fully reinstated by the districts and boroughs, including garden waste services." The sites will be open to the public between 9am and 3pm rather than the usual opening hours in order to allow for enhanced cleaning.

Most sites will be open seven days a week and will accept all types of waste including chargeable items. Susan added: "Government advice is that residents should continue temporarily storing their waste at home, if they can do so in a way that doesn't pose a risk to their health. "If, however, waste and recycling cannot be stored at home without causing risk of injury, health or harm, please book a trip to your local HWRC."

Residents can only book one trip in any four-week period to allow all residents to have access to sites and must follow social distancing guidelines. Social distancing proved impossible to maintain prior to closure as visitor numbers topped 800 visits a day.

KCC operates 18 HWRCs, providing facilities for the recycling and disposal of more than 30 different types of waste.

Booking

Visitors to the site will be limited to help us manage social distancing. The number of bookings for each site will vary depending on the size of each site. You can only access the sites by booking an appointment. The quickest way to book is online.

You can only book one trip in any four-week period. This is to enable all residents to have fair access to our sites. If you want to drive a restricted vehicle to a Kent council site you'll still need to apply for a vehicle voucher. <https://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/rubbish-andrecycling/vehicle-restrictions-and-vouchers> Restricted vehicles are not allowed to tow a trailer.

Bookings will only be accepted from residents in Kent/Medway. You should not try to book a visit if you have symptoms of Covid-19, if you are part of a household undertaking 14-day isolation or if you someone who is in the shielded category.

Arriving at the site

If you booked online you must bring your proof of booking email, either a printed copy or displayed on your phone. If you booked over the phone, bring the booking reference number we gave you

when you made your booking. To reduce infection risk, your car windows should remain closed when showing proof to staff.

You must attend the site within your booking slot. If you miss your slot, you may not be allowed to use the site. We suggest you stagger your entry times within your booked slot, as we are expecting a high demand for the service.

Social distancing and safety

You will need to observe the social distancing measures when visiting the sites. Site staff will not be able to offer their usual assistance to help unload and dispose of waste.

A maximum of two people can leave each vehicle to dispose of bulky items without site staff help. However, if you do not have bulky items to dispose of, only one person can leave the vehicle to dispose of waste.

Traffic management will be in place at all sites. Some sites may also block off every other parking bay so that customers and staff can keep to social distancing guidelines. Site staff will direct you.

You will not be allowed onto the compactor platforms when a member of staff is operating the machines. You will need to follow site guidance, and this may include wearing gloves and masks. If you wear either gloves or masks, you'll need to take them home for disposal to avoid the risk of cross contamination.

We ask that visitors to the HWRCs are patient as we all get used to this new way of using the sites. The restrictions are in place for everyone's protection. If you do not follow site rules you may be asked to leave the site.

Security will be in place at the sites. Please be aware that site security includes Automatic Number Plate Recognition, CCTV and body-worn cameras. The site may need to close temporarily for cleaning with no warning.

If you need to dispose of waste contaminated with coronavirus this should be carried out at kerbside. If this is not possible then you need to double bag the material and store this securely for 72 hours before bringing it to the site.