

Missed Collection Policy

Through the forthcoming introduction of the Live Feed/In-cab data system, it is anticipated that the Council will be able to collate information on genuine missed collections to ascertain the accurate extent of the issue as opposed to what is sometimes misleading headline figures, and a social media narrative that can distort public perception.

In January 2024 for example, of the 778 reported missed collections for recycling 618 calls were due to the crew either running late (and either collected later that day or the following morning) or the resident presenting on the wrong day. A further 23 reports were due to the vehicles being unable to access the streets due to inconsiderate parking and 15 due to the crews correctly leaving behind the recycling due to it being contaminated.

In the case of refuse collections, the service is aware of many instances whereby the bin was not actually presented for collection or the property in question has two bins, which are swapped over once the vehicle has passed through, and the second bin is reported as a missed collection. The current system also allows residents to report a missed collection if the crews have correctly green stickered bags as excess waste for the Recycling Awareness and Compliance Team to investigate.

Through working closely with our collection crews, the service is also aware of residents removing the excess waste or contaminated waste stickers put on by the crews and then reporting their waste as a missed collection.

In order to understand the full extent of the actual missed collections across the County Borough and allow the service to focus on addressing the genuine cases, these unjustified reports need to be eliminated from the reporting mechanism.

The In-Cab Live Feed will address this in a number of ways:

1. The digitised collection rounds will be linked to the online/telephone reporting system and therefore a resident will be unable to report a missed collection if the corresponding collection crew have not marked

the street as 'collections complete', thus reducing the volume of calls logged when the crew are simply running late.

2. Similarly the system will not allow a missed collection to be reported if a resident has presented on the wrong day/week.
3. With the camera system, the crew can immediately report an access issue with an associated photograph to show why they cannot safely access the street. How the Council/Service deals with these ongoing issues needs to form part of the revised Missed Collections Policy.
4. The crew can also immediately report via the in-cab tablet when recycling is contaminated. This report generates a call for the Recycling Awareness and Compliance Officer to attend the property to conduct an assistance visit, and a missed collection call cannot be generated in this instance.
5. Similarly when the crews green sticker bags as excess, they can immediately report this through the in-cab tablet, generating a call for the RACO to attend, and a missed collection call cannot be generated.
6. In the case of double bins, the crew can use the in-cab reporting mechanism should they suspect that is the case. Should missed collections be reported for that property, the live camera feed will be used to prove the bin was emptied and the missed collection call removed from the reportable headline figures as an unjustified complaint.
7. Should a property not have presented a bin, the crew will immediately report via the in-cab tablet and the camera footage used as evidence that the bin was not presented.

Other benefits to the Live Feed system which should help address collection issues (not exclusive to missed collections) include:

1. Live information on properties that receive an assisted collection so any operative covering that round knows which properties receive this service, reducing the human error element associated with unfamiliar drivers/operatives;
2. Crews can immediately report damaged equipment such as food waste bin for example which will automatically generate a call for the delivery teams thus reducing the contact required by the resident to order equipment (should a resident try to order, they will be notified that their crew has already placed an order on their behalf).
3. General order of equipment – the crews can order any equipment on behalf of the resident should they approach the crew and request. This

is particularly important in the case of food waste bags whereby the crew may have run out of stock on the vehicle.

4. Live information on which properties have E stickers and the ability to report properties who present with E stickers who are not eligible. The service is aware that these stickers are being traded on social media and have been used as part of a house clearance (26 excess bags on one collection). This will reduce the volume of excess waste being presented as the properties will be reported to the RACO's for investigation and reduce the cost to the Council on the E stickers themselves (in conjunction with the review of the No Side Waste Policy).

Additional Service Issues:

Blocked Access:

There are increasing occurrences of collections being prevented by parked vehicles since the pandemic and the associated shift to home working, coupled with the increased size of cars and inconsiderate parking.

When a crew, either refuse or recycling are unable to enter a street to carry out collections, they return to the street on two further occasions (usually one more on collection day, and once again the following morning if resources allow). They do attempt to identify the vehicle owner however in most of cases are either unsuccessful or are met with a somewhat impolite response. The service also, as standard, carry out a whole street letter drop requesting vehicles are parked somewhere else on collection day, however, this measure also often proves unsuccessful.

It is not feasible for the service to continue to return to the same location repeatedly where these access issues exist. Firstly, that has a knock on effect to the remaining collections for that day/rest of week as well as unnecessary additional journeys in diverting the crews. For example, all collection crews on a Friday are within the former Lliw Valley area, and could be in a position of having to travel from Lower Brynamman to return to a street in the Dulais Valley from the Wednesday collections that were unable to be carried out, only to find the street is still inaccessible.

The service has, where possible, when access issues persist, reallocated some streets to the smaller collection vehicles, however these collection

rounds are now at full capacity with no further smaller vehicles within the fleet that can be utilised or sufficient manning to do so.

The service has also, in conjunction with the Traffic Section and in consultation with requisite Local Members, looked to introduce TRO's in certain areas to prevent access being blocked. This is a last resort measure in areas where residents have been without collections on a considerably frequent basis and there are no other collection methods available.

When a resident reports an unsuccessful collection, even when access issues have been identified by the collection crews, the resident receives the current Policy message i.e. for a whole missed street, we WILL return by 4pm the following working day whether that be through the automated email when logging a call online or the 'script' used by the Contact Centre personnel. This causes escalated complaints both to the Contact Centre and the service when collections are still not then carried out due to obstructions remaining.

Another collection method that can possibly be considered is to move collections to the end of the streets, creating 'collection points' which would mean residents having to bring their waste a considerable distance on collection day to these 'collection points', and then having to retrieve their equipment from that point. In areas where this is the only collection method, it is proven that the collection point becomes a dumping ground and a graveyard for abandoned kit and therefore such arrangements are to be avoided if possible.

Where access issues are in relation to rear lane collections, and the properties have a clear ability to present front of house instead, the service will consult with the Local Members to make any necessary changes to ensure a consistent collection service can be provided.

There can also be some confusion by residents whereby one material stream can be collected but not the other e.g. refuse can collect but not recycling and a better understanding of the size and loading mechanism of these vehicles needs to be communicated to residents.

A refuse (black bin collection vehicle) is rear loading and therefore can access some streets to carry out collections that a recycling vehicle cannot. The recycling vehicles are all side loading, with doors on each compartment

that need to be opened outward during the collection process therefore vehicles parked either side of a street or lane have a bigger impact on those vehicles. The service will, through its Community Engagement programme and social media channels, carry out targeted campaigns aimed at providing residents with a better understanding of these matters.

Taking the above into account, there needs to be a clear stance on missed collections due to access issues as part of the Missed Collections Policy, whereby if the crew has returned on the two further occasions (where resources allow) and are still unable to access then residents have to wait until the next allocated collection day and a missed collection report for each individual property will not be accepted. In instances like these, to compensate the crew will be directed to collect a permitted number of additional bags on the next successful collection via the Live In-Cab data system.

Whilst the above position is not ideal, the service constantly diverting resources, increasing the Council's carbon footprint and having a disproportionate impact on other households across the County Borough is not a sustainable position.

Bins not fully emptied

A further repeated report as a missed collection is for bins not being fully emptied. The 'shaker' facility on our bin lifting mechanisms is set to its optimal level to remove the waste contained within a bin. Therefore the only reason a bin would remain half/not fully emptied is if residents have 'rammed' waste into the bin to the extent that despite repeated attempts to empty the bin with the vehicle bin lift, the waste remains lodged in the bin. These instances are then often reported as a missed collection by the resident. As with the blocked access issue detailed above, the collection service has fulfilled its obligations in attending and attempting to empty the bin and therefore it should not be considered as a missed collection. In cases where waste is found to be rammed into bins to the extent that collection is not possible (which can be reported via the In Cab Waste Management System by the crew), then it is proposed the matter would not be considered a missed collection and the waste will be left for the next regular collection.

Missed Collections Policy:

It is proposed this updated Missed Collections Policy linked with the introduction of Live Feed will be reviewed again 6 months after the full introduction of the new system.

Until the service is able to accurately determine the extent of missed collections a decision cannot be made on whether we are able to return to any or all genuine instances of individual missed collection as a matter of course.

The proposed updated Missed Collection Policy to take effect from 1st October 2025 is as follows:

Missed Collections Policy

Missed Weekly Recycling Collections (Food, Glass, Plastic/tins &cans/paper & Card/batteries, Small WEEE, Garden Waste, AHP/Hygiene)

Given recycling collections are weekly, it is proposed that the resident has to wait until the next collection.

Missed Refuse

For properties that have genuine missed refuse collection, a denotation will be put on the in-cab tablet for the crew to collect the permitted number of additional bags on the next collection and confirm the collection has been made before they can close the street down as complete. **Note: This is an improvement on the current Policy in that previously we have not permitted the additional waste to be presented on the next collection.**

Bin Half/Not Fully emptied

The service has fulfilled its obligations in trying to collect the waste and despite repeated attempts using the bin shaker facility the waste remains lodged in the bin. This is not considered to be a missed collection and residents are requested to remove the obstruction and re-present their bin on their next collection.

Missed Pull-Outs

With the introduction of Live Feed, missed pull outs should not happen, however, in the cases of genuine missed pull outs the current Policy stance should remain and we WILL return for a missed pull out by 4pm the following day.

Blocked Access

If the crew has returned on the two further occasions (where resources allow) and are still unable to access then residents have to wait until the next allocated collection day and a missed collection report for each individual property will not be accepted. In instances like these, the crew will be informed to collect up to an additional 3 black bags per property on the next successful collection via the Live In-Cab data system.

Whole Street missed (either refuse or recycling)

With the introduction of Live Feed, unless there are circumstances outside of the service control such as a large number of breakdowns, whole street missed collection should not occur (with the exception of blocked access issues). The Live Feed system has the capability to list the streets that have been unable to be collected in these instances so automatic notification can be sent to the Supervisors, Website, Social Media, Contact Centre and affected residents (if they have signed up to the MyNPT portal), detailing revised collection arrangements.

Commercial Waste Collections (Trade)

When our crews attend paying trade customers they telephone the Supervisor to record if bins/containers have not been presented or if access has been prevented etc., e.g. gates locked. If waste/recycling was not presented at the time of attendance we will not return, and the waste/recycling will be collected during the next normal collection. An additional collected fee will be payable, should the council be requested to return to empty waste/recycling containers that were not presented at time of attendance.

Alternatively, if we have missed a trade waste collection which is reported as being missed during office hours on the allocated day of collection we will return and put right the problem. When we attend trade premises for collection, any side waste presented which exceeds the purchased capacity will not be collected and if collection is requested by the customer; charges will apply as per our contract rates.

In accordance with the Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023, all trade waste agreements with the council must include arrangements for the separate collection of recycling materials (including glass bottles, plastic bottles and metal cans, food waste, cardboard, drink cartons and paper). The Council reserves the right not to collect any recycling bins should they contain any non-recyclable waste or the wrong recyclable materials and additional charges may be applied as per contract rates. Alternatively, customers will be given the option to sort the recycling themselves and we will then return and make the collection on the next collection day. Contract rates are set out annually in fees and charges.