

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

Food Waste Collection Policy

July 2026

Environment Services and Markets

1. Policy title

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Food Waste Collection Policy

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how RBKC provides household food waste collections, how residents should use the service, how the Council will manage different property types, and how the service supports statutory recycling duties, waste reduction, carbon reduction, cleaner streets and value for money.

RBKC's food waste collection service is intended to divert food waste from the residual waste stream, increase recycling performance, reduce disposal costs, improve hygiene, and support national Simpler Recycling requirements. The service forms part of the Council's wider waste and recycling offer, which includes kerbside recycling, communal recycling, mini recycling centres, garden waste subscriptions, special collections and waste reduction initiatives.

3. Food waste reduction

In line with the waste hierarchy, RBKC prioritises the prevention of food waste. Reducing the amount of food wasted not only contributes to environmental objectives but can also save residents money.

RBKC provides information on its public-facing website to raise awareness of the environmental and financial impacts of food waste and encourages residents to take steps to reduce the amount of food they throw away. The webpage also signposts residents to WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste campaign for practical food waste prevention advice and tools. The campaign provides practical guidance on meal planning, portion sizes, food storage, using leftovers and understanding date labels, helping residents make the most of the food they purchase.

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/recycling/reducing-food-waste-tips>

As part of its resident engagement activities, RBKC distributes food waste prevention tools to help residents keep food fresh for longer and reduce avoidable food waste. These include FreshPods and reusable bag clips for sealing open food packets and pouches. RBKC also

showcases WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste campaign materials at public information stalls and community events to raise awareness of food waste prevention.

RBKC is one of 17 London boroughs that financially supported ReLondon's Food's Not Rubbish campaign. Launched in June 2026, the behaviour change initiative aims to reduce food waste and increase participation in food waste recycling services. The campaign is using radio, digital advertising, social media, and a dedicated website to encourage residents to use food before it goes to waste and recycle any unavoidable food waste. <https://relondon.gov.uk/latest/londons-new-food-waste-campaign-launches-to-motivate-londoners-to-use-what-they-can-and-recycle-the-rest>

RBKC's food waste recycling service print communications reinforce the message that food waste prevention should be prioritised, while encouraging residents to recycle unavoidable food waste. The leaflets emphasise that the best use of food is to eat it and encourage residents to minimise the amount of food they discard, while using the food waste recycling service for inedible and unavoidable food waste.

Separate food waste collections can also help households become more aware of the quantity of food they are discarding. Research by WRAP suggests that the visibility of food waste through a dedicated collection service acts as a reminder of what is being thrown away, encouraging residents to adopt behaviours that reduce waste, such as better meal planning and food management. Consequently, promoting participation in food waste recycling collection services may not only increase recycling rates but also indirectly contribute to household food waste prevention and support wider waste reduction targets.

4. Legislative and policy context

RBKC will provide a food waste collection service in line with national Simpler Recycling requirements. From 31 March 2026, household waste collectors in England are required by default to collect food and garden waste, paper and card, other dry recyclable materials, and residual waste from all households, including flats.

The Council's internal food waste planning documents state that all authorities in England must introduce weekly food waste collections for all households, including flats, by 31 March 2026, under section 45A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as introduced by the Environment Act 2021.

The policy also supports RBKC's waste hierarchy duties and wider reduction and recycling objectives. The RBKC Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy identifies food waste rollout, communications, data systems, estate interventions, kerbside interventions, crew training, waste reduction and commercial waste management as part of the current reduction and recycling work programme.

5. Scope

This policy applies to household food waste collections in RBKC, including:

- kerbside household food waste collections;
- food waste collections from estates and blocks of flats using communal food waste bins;
- access to on-street food waste bins at selected mini recycling centres;
- food waste requirements for new residential developments; and
- resident responsibilities for correct use, presentation and contamination prevention.

Commercial food waste collections are outside the main scope of this household policy and should be managed through the Council's commercial waste service and business waste compliance arrangements. The Commercial Waste Team provides paid waste, recycling and food waste collection services to approximately 3,500 businesses and manages service delivery, billing, compliance, and customer management.

Schools in the borough are provided with free food waste collections. (Fee paying schools are managed through the council's commercial waste team).

Food banks and community kitchens may qualify for free or discounted food waste collections. Council buildings are to be provided with food waste collections.

6. Policy objectives

RBKC's food waste collection policy should have the following objectives:

- **Compliance:** meet national Simpler Recycling requirements for weekly household food waste collections.
- **Participation:** make it as easy as reasonably practicable for residents to separate food waste.
- **Clean streets:** ensure food waste is contained, hygienic and presented without increasing street clutter.
- **Contamination control:** ensure only food waste is placed in food waste containers.
- **Operational practicality:** design collections that crews can deliver safely and efficiently.
- **Value for money:** reduce the amount of food waste sent through the residual waste route and avoid disposal costs where possible.
- **Behaviour change:** use communications, signage and engagement to support correct resident use.

7. Service types

7.1 Kerbside food waste collections

Where a property is suitable for kerbside food waste caddy collections, residents who sign up will be provided with a small 7-litre kitchen caddy, a larger 23-litre outdoor food waste caddy, a 12 months' supply of food waste liners and service information leaflets.

The operational approach should be that residents place tied liners from the kitchen caddy into the outdoor caddy, lock the outdoor caddy by placing the handle forward, and present it correctly by 7am on the collection day. On the collection day, the outdoor caddy should be at the front of

the property by 7am, at kerbside/ground level, at the front edge of the property and as close to the pavement as possible.

Food waste caddies should not be placed on the pavement, in basements or inside bin housing structures. The public webpage and the service information leaflets state these restrictions explicitly.

7.2 Estates and blocks of flats

For estates and blocks of flats, RBKC should work with landlords, housing providers, managing agents and site staff to agree suitable locations for communal food waste bins. The public webpage states that RBKC has been working with landlords, housing providers and property managers to introduce communal food waste bins and advises residents whose block does not offer food waste recycling to ask their property manager or site staff to contact the Council. Residents may also contact RBKC directly for assistance.

Residents in blocks using communal food waste bins should empty their indoor caddy into the communal food waste bin using securely tied liners.

For communal collections, RBKC will use appropriately sized food waste bins that are safe for crews to move and empty. RBKC does not collect 240-litre food waste bins because food waste is heavy, and this would present a manual handling risk; any 240-litre bins should be replaced with 140-litre bins.

7.3 On-street food waste bins

Where a property is near an on-street food waste bin, residents may sign up to receive a 7-litre food waste kitchen caddy and caddy liners. Food waste recycling bins are located at 13 mini recycling centres.

This should be treated as a supplementary access route, particularly for properties where individual kerbside food waste caddy presentation is not practical.

7.4 Properties with limited or no external storage space

Where households have no or very limited external space to present a caddy for collections, RBKC will consider alternative service options, including on-street communal bins, or single-use food sacks. RBKC has identified these options for households with no or limited external storage space, while also noting practical concerns around contamination, dumping, operational complexity, splitting sacks, vermin risk, street clutter and enforcement.

RBKC should adopt a mixed approach for these properties, using the least intrusive and most operationally reliable solution for each street or property type.

8. What can be collected

The following items should be accepted in the food waste collection service:

- raw and cooked food;
- vegetables, fruit and peelings;
- meat, fish and bones;
- dairy, including cheese and eggs;
- bread and pastries;
- tea bags and coffee grounds;
- eggshells;
- rice, pasta, and beans.

These accepted items are listed on the public food waste collection webpage (<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/food-waste-collections>), in service information leaflets and bin stickers.

9. What must not be collected

The following items must not be placed in food waste bags, caddies or bins:

- packaging of any kind;
- black bags;
- garden waste or houseplants;
- liquids, such as milk;
- oil or liquid fat;
- any material that is not food waste.

These excluded items are listed on the public food waste collection webpage (<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/food-waste-collections>), in service information leaflets and bin stickers.

10. Liners and bags

Residents can use Council-provided liners when supplied or purchase their own from supermarkets or other retailers. RBKC's preference is that residents use compostable bin liners.

Black or opaque bags must not be used for food waste because crews need to check that only food waste is inside. The public webpage states that crews will not collect black or opaque bags for this reason.

RBKC should provide additional caddy liners to residents where requested.

11. Collection frequency

Food waste collections will be weekly. The national requirement is for weekly food waste collections for all households, including flats. RBKC Waste Planning Guidelines also state that food waste should be collected once weekly for residential developments.

12. Presentation requirements

For kerbside food waste collections, residents must present the outdoor caddy:

- by 7am on the collection day;
- at kerbside level;
- at the front edge of the property;
- as close to the pavement as possible;
- visible to crews from the road.

These requirements are stated on the public food waste collection webpage.

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/food-waste-collections>

Residents must not place the outdoor caddy on the pavement, in basements, or inside bin housing structures. These restrictions are also stated on the public webpage and service information leaflets.

The policy should make clear that food waste collections differ from the residual waste and recycling arrangements in some kerbside locations. Food waste recycling caddies must be placed on ground level at the edge of the property and be visible from the collection vehicle, which differs from waste and recycling collections where crews may collect deeper within property footprints, including basements or bin cupboards.

12.1. Assisted collections

RBKC should offer assisted collections to residents who are unable to bring their food waste recycling to the collection point.

Food waste recycling collection point is on ground/kerb level; but if a resident is unable to bring their food waste up to the ground level for collections, RBKC should provide them with an assisted collection from the basement level.

Assisted collections are arranged on a case-by-case basis.

13. Contamination and non-collection

RBKC reserves the right not to collect food waste containers where they contain non-food waste, black or opaque bags, packaging, liquids, oils, garden waste or other unacceptable material. This follows the public webpage list of excluded materials and its statement that black or opaque bags will not be collected because crews must be able to check the contents.

Where contamination occurs, the recommended policy position is that crews should leave the container unemptied where safe and practical, record the issue through operational reporting channels, and residents should be advised of the reason for non-collection. This operational approach is consistent with the contract-manual summary that SUEZ should report unsafe or incorrectly presented containers and leave a notification with the household.

14. New developments and planning requirements

New developments should be designed to allow residents to separate waste into residual waste, mixed recyclables, and food waste. RBKC Waste Planning Guidelines states that residential waste must be capable of being segregated into three streams: mixed recyclables, food waste, and residual waste.

For small-scale residential development, mixed recyclables, food waste and residual waste should be stored in bins or sacks designated by RBKC on a hard level surface within the front garden or yard, and food waste must be presented in caddies within the boundary of the property. RBKC Waste Planning Guidelines states that placing bins or sacks on the public highway is not permitted.

For large residential developments, internal storage should ideally be provided in kitchens, residents should transfer waste to relevant waste storage areas, and communal stores should include enough space for general waste, recycling bins and food waste bins and appropriate signage.

The planning guidance states that food waste should be collected weekly, residual waste twice weekly, and dry mixed recycling twice weekly.

15. Treatment and disposal route

Food waste collected by RBKC should be sent for recycling through anaerobic digestion where available.

Currently (July 2026), food waste disposal costs the Council £0 per tonne compared with £184 per tonne for general waste disposal, and that each additional tonne of food waste diverted therefore delivers direct cost avoidance.

16. Performance and monitoring

RBKC should monitor:

- number of households offered the service;
- number of households actively participating, where data is available;
- estate and communal bin coverage;
- tonnage collected;
- contamination levels;
- missed collections;
- resident complaints and enquiries;
- cost avoidance compared with residual waste disposal;
- operational issues such as inaccessible caddies, storage constraints, and unsuitable communal bin locations.

17. Communications and resident engagement

RBKC should provide clear, accessible communications explaining:

- how to sign up;
- what caddies and liners residents will receive;
- what can and cannot go in the caddy;
- when and where to present food waste;
- what to do if liners run out;
- how residents in flats or estates can access the service;
- what should residents do if their property has no suitable storage space.

The Council's draft recycling strategy identifies communications and engagement as important because RBKC has a dense urban housing stock, high population density, a significant non-English-speaking population and a high level of rented and transient households, all of which complicate communication and engagement.

18. Responsibilities

Residents

Residents are responsible for separating food waste correctly, using the caddy or communal bin provided, keeping food waste free from contamination, tying liners securely, presenting caddies correctly and removing caddies from presentation areas after collection where applicable.

Landlords, managing agents and housing providers

Landlords, housing providers and property managers should work with RBKC to identify suitable locations for communal food waste bins and support resident communications. The public webpage explicitly asks residents in blocks without food waste recycling to ask property managers or site staff to contact RBKC.

RBKC

RBKC is responsible for service design, resident information, service rollout, contract management, monitoring, performance reporting, and ensuring the service supports statutory requirements and the Council's waste reduction objectives.

Contractor

The contractor is responsible for delivering the collection service in line with the Council's service specification, collecting correctly presented containers, reporting unsafe or incorrectly presented containers, and supporting the operational performance of the service. The contract-manual summary states that food waste collections are weekly; the standard kerbside container is a 23-litre container, and SUEZ should report unsafe or incorrectly presented containers.

19. Complaints, missed collections and service requests

Residents should use the Council's published contact routes to request food waste services, caddies, liners, or support. The public webpage currently directs food waste requests to foodwaste@rbkc.gov.uk or 020 7361 3001 while online forms are unavailable.

19.1 Missed collections

Food waste collections are scheduled to take place between 7.00am and 4.00pm on the designated weekly collection day.

Where a resident has presented their food waste caddy correctly in accordance with this policy and it has not been collected by 4.00pm on the designated collection day, the resident should report the missed collection to the Council. Missed collections should be reported between 4:00pm on the scheduled collection day and 12:00 midday on the next working day. A collection will be arranged before the next scheduled collection.

Missed collections will take place on one of the Council's food waste collection days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday.

Reports of missed collections can be made directly to the Council by email foodwaste@rbkc.gov.uk or by calling 020 7361 3001 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm).

20. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are changes to national legislation, statutory guidance, DEFRA funding, RBKC collection arrangements, the waste contract, treatment arrangements, or operational learning from rollout.

Disclaimer:

RBKC is expanding its weekly household food waste collection service in line with national Simpler Recycling requirements. The Council will offer an appropriate food waste collection or access route to households, taking account of property type, available storage, operational safety and local street conditions. Where a standard kerbside caddy is not suitable, the Council will consider alternative arrangements such as communal bins, on-street food waste bins or other approved collection methods.
