

Kent County Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) booking system.

We are sometimes asked why KCC's HWRCs have a booking system and this document explains how it was introduced, how it has developed in response to customer feedback and also answers other questions that are raised about the HWRCs.

1. Why was a booking system introduced?

The booking system was introduced during the first lockdown in 2020 to ensure social distancing at the HWRCs without causing queues of traffic outside.

2. Why have you kept the booking system now that lockdown restrictions have ended?

The booking system has virtually eliminated queuing at the HWRCs. Improvements to the original booking system were made in response to customer feedback, and surveys found our customers liked the convenience and certainty of a booked slot.

3. How was the decision taken to retain a booking system?

A public consultation was held between 19 August and 30 September 2021 and over 10,000 responses were received with a clear margin of support for keeping the booking system. Following debate at the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee, the Cabinet Member for Environment took the decision to keep the booking system on a permanent basis.

The consultation report along with a Waste Management Service view on the HWRC booking system and response to the consultation is available in the consultation documents section on the [consultation webpage](#)

Please also see the [Cabinet Committee paper](#), which explains the rationale behind the decision, including the benefits of maintaining the booking system post-covid restrictions.

4. How does the booking system work?

Booking slots are available every half hour during opening hours with no limit on the number of slots that can be booked. The available slots are easy to see for each HWRC up to a month in advance. You can also book on the day itself provided there are available slots, and around 40% of bookings are made on the day itself.

Bookings can be made on the [KCC website](#) or, for those without access to the internet by phone (see Q6).

5. What information do I need to give to make a booking?

You are asked to provide: • name • email address • postal address* • vehicle make and model • vehicle registration. * Postal information is collected to help us determine how far customers travel to use the HWRC service, to assess availability/capacity at the sites and to determine whether residents are from Kent or outside Kent.

All personal information is kept confidential and will be used to administer and manage the online booking scheme, contact you to obtain your survey feedback regarding the online booking system and a visit to a HWRC*, ensure our KCC booking rules (including terms and conditions) are adhered to, and to support any future policy change recommendations. Once you have booked you will receive an email confirming: • date of booking • time of booking • booking reference number • site you will be visiting. Please bring your booking reference number with you

- on your smart phone (screen shot or email)
- printed confirmation email

- handwritten note clearly showing the booking reference

*with your permission

6. How do I book if I do not have internet access?

Bookings can also be made at KCC's contact centre on 03000 41 73 73 (Text Relay 18001 03000 41 73 73).

7. Can I change or cancel my booking?

Your confirmation email will contain a link which lets you cancel your booking or amend the date and time.

Your registration number cannot be changed on your booking. If you need to use a different vehicle (non-restricted vehicles only, unless you have a valid vehicle voucher), please take your booking reference with you and explain to site staff on arrival. Please note, any vehicle used must adhere to site policies.

We ask customers to cancel any booking(s) that are no longer required, to allow other customers to use the slot.

8. Can I turn up to use any site once I have booked?

Your booking is specific to the HWRC you have chosen but you may book at any one of our 19 HWRCs across Kent.

9. Can I use a Medway HWRC?

With effect from 31 March 2023, Kent residents will no longer be able to use Medway HWRCs. Visit the [Medway Council website](#) for more details.

10. I am a Medway resident. Can I use a Kent HWRC?

We ask wherever possible that residents use a site within your administrative boundary. However, non-Kent residents (inc. Medway residents) are welcome to use KCC HWRCs, albeit from 1 April 2023 an entry fee of £10 per visit will be payable upon arrival (card payments only).

11. What materials can I bring to site?

Please see our '[I want to get rid of](#)' page on our website for guidance.

12. What can I expect when I visit the site?

When you arrive on site you will be:

- welcomed by a member of staff who will ask to see your booking reference number (we are developing a system to check this automatically)
- directed onto site and given guidance on which bins are suitable for the waste you have brought
- you will need to unload your waste and put it in the appropriate bins. Please ensure you load your vehicle in a manner that allows you to empty your vehicle at the HWRC. Site staff may help customers where possible but must not lift or remove heavy builders bags or hippo bags as they are not designed to be moved manually.
- In accordance with our Equalities Impact Assessment, assistance arrangements can be made for customers requiring support due to a protected characteristic including age, disability or pregnancy by selecting 'assistance request' on the online booking form, or by speaking with the Contact Centre for bookings made by telephone.
- Please continue to respect others who may wish to maintain social distance, both other customers and staff.

13. May I visit more than once per day?

Yes, there are no limits on the number of visits you may make either in one day or over the month. You will need to book each visit separately and you will receive a unique booking reference for each visit. You may only bring your own household waste. Business waste is not accepted at the HWRCs.

14. Do you have enough slots?

Capacity at our HWRCs is at pre-Covid levels for our original 18 HWRCs and in May 2022 we opened a new HWRC at Allington near Maidstone which has increased the overall number of slots. The booking system enables us to monitor use and we have added extra slots at the busiest times/sites. There may still be times when all slots are booked but overall there are plenty of slots available.

15. Will I be charged to use the site?

No. Our service remains free at point of access for residents. However, you will be charged for the disposal of the following items (policy which has been in place since June 2019). • breeze blocks, bricks, cement, concrete and drain pipes • ceramic bathroom and kitchen items (baths, bidets, cisterns, shower trays, sinks, toilet pans, wash basins) • flagstones, granite, marble, paving slabs • hardcore, rubble, gravel, rocks, stones • plasterboard • sand • soil • tiles (ceramic, clay, slate) • tyres For more information, please read our waste [charging guide](#)

16. Can I bring any type of car/van/trailer to the site?

We have [vehicle restrictions](#) on some vehicles. Please see our [website](#) for further details. Trailers are limited to 2.05m in length (not including tow arm) and cannot be used by restricted vehicles/vehicle vouchers. Please see our [site operating policies](#).

17. Has the booking system resulted in an increase in flytipping?

There has been no increase in flytipping in Kent since the booking system was introduced. In Kent, flytipping has reduced slightly. This finding accords with the experiences of other authorities that have a booking system and is reflected in the results of a [national report](#) commissioned by Defra, which concludes there is no evidence to suggest a link between HWRC booking systems and an increase in flytipping.