

Visiting a household waste recycling centre during the coronavirus pandemic

Frequently asked questions

The purpose of this document is to answer frequently asked questions on changes to Kent County Council's (KCC) household waste recycling centre service (HWRC) during Covid-19.

1. Why are you restricting access? Why have you changed things?

This is due to the need to implement measures that prevent the spread of COVID-19. Government has provided guidelines on how to manage the HWRC service. Government's view is that residents may visit HWRCs provided they have a legitimate reason to visit the site and social distancing is observed by residents and employees

2. Are the HWRCs open?

Our HWRCs reopened in a phased approach from 15 May 2020. All sites are now open 7 day per week.

A booking system has been introduced meaning that customers are required to pre-book a visit to the HWRC if they want to attend and dispose of waste.

We ask residents to only visit:

- up to four times within a calendar month e.g. four in September and four in October etc. (per household), to enable fair access for all
- the site if you cannot dispose of your waste through other means, such as the regular kerbside collection service

This approach will help to:

- reduce infection risk for customers and staff
- protect waste capacity and ensure fair access for all
- reduce impact on the road network outside the sites

This new booking portal is a temporary service change in place to help us manage visitors to the sites.

3. How will the booking system work?

A booking portal is available [via our website \(www.kent.gov.uk/hwrcbook\)](http://www.kent.gov.uk/hwrcbook) where customers can book a slot at one of KCC's 18 HWRCs as follows:

- 8:30am to 9:45 am
- 10am to 11:15 am
- 11:30am to 12:45pm
- 1pm to 2:15 pm
- 2:30pm to 3:45pm

Visits are restricted to four visits per calendar month, **per household**. We appreciate from time to time residents may undertake activities such as having a sort out, moving house or a specific project which may result in the need to visit a HWRC more than usual. Therefore, the limit has been increased to four visits per month to accommodate this for these one-off occasions.

The four bookings may be made for the same or different dates, but you will only be permitted up to four visits in a calendar month.

You are required to make a booking for **each** visit.

Each booking entitles the customer to **one** trip to their chosen site only within their specified booking slot.

We ask that you only book a slot if you are unable to dispose of waste via other means e.g. kerbside collection services.

Slightly reduced opening hours allow for enhanced cleaning to be completed

4. What information will the booking system ask me for?

When you access the booking form you will be asked to provide:

- name
- email address

- vehicle make and model
- vehicle registration

All information is kept confidentially solely for the purpose of the booking only.

Following successful booking completion, you will receive an email confirming:

- date of booking
- time slot of booking
- booking reference number
- site you will be visiting

Please make a note of the booking reference number and keep this confirmation email safe, as you will need to bring it with you when you visit the site.

5. I don't have access to the internet and/or don't have an email address, how can I make a booking?

For customers that do not have internet access and/or an email address we ask you to call our customer service team to complete the form.

They can be contacted on 03000 41 73 73 / Text Relay 18001 03000 41 73 73.

6. What happens if I need to change or cancel my booking?

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

If you need to amend other details such as vehicle details, you will need to cancel your existing booking and make a new booking.

Customers are reminded each household may visit up to four times per calendar month at this time, to ensure fair access to HWRCs for everyone.

We ask customers to please cancel bookings they are unable to use to enable other customers to make a booking.

7. How does Kent County Council protect my data?

Please [read our privacy notice](#) for information relating to the booking scheme.

8. What sites will be open and at what times?

Kent County Council is currently in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 plan and operating a phased approach to reopening. All HWRCs are now open and operating with slightly reduced opening hours to enable our HWRCs to operate safely. Availability of booking slots has been increased across the network of HWRCs since reopening on 15 May.

Please bear with us while we continue our journey back to business as usual. We are doing all we can to provide access to our services and ensure our HWRCs are safe for customers and staff.

Our HWRCs are all open from 8.30am to 3.45pm, 7 days per week. You will be able to pre-book a slot, as follows:

- 8:30am to 9:45 am
- 10am to 11:15 am
- 11:30am to 12:45pm
- 1pm to 2:15 pm
- 2:30pm to 3:45pm

Please arrive within your booking time slot (sites may be slightly busier at the beginning of each time slot).

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

No. You will be able to choose which site you want to attend when you make your booking. If you turn up at the wrong site, you will be turned away.

10. Am I allowed to use a Medway HWRC?

We ask wherever possible that residents use a site within your administrative boundary. However, we understand that some Kent residents live closer to a Medway HWRC than a KCC HWRC and therefore may wish to reduce their journey and use a Medway site. Therefore, if you are a Kent resident, you will need to pre-book your visit to a Medway HWRC via [Medway Council's booking system](#). Please read the details relating to their HWRCs as they are operating slightly differently to ours. You may be required to provide proof of residency to show you are a Kent resident.

11. 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, if you are a Medway resident but live closer to a Kent County Council site, you will be able to [book a slot at one of ours](#). All of [our site policies](#) still apply.

12. What materials can I bring to site?

You will be able to take the all materials that are normally accepted at the HWRCs for disposal. Those items for which there is a charge, will continue to be accepted and the charges still apply.

For more information [visit our 'I want to get rid of' page on our website](#).

13. What can I expect when I arrive on site?

In line with government guidance, we have implemented some social distancing measures on site.

These are very similar to what you may experience in a supermarket and are there to protect customers and staff. A full list of social distancing measures in

contained within point 20 of this document.

When you arrive on site you will be:

- welcomed by a member of staff who will ask to see your booking reference number. Please keep your window closed when you are displaying this.
- directed onto site once the staff member has confirmed your visit.

We are restricting the number of customers on site at any one time and once there is a space you will be directed to enter the site and dispose of waste.

These new measures may delay entry to site, and we ask that customers are patient while our staff get you through as quickly as they can.

Customers using a restricted vehicle will be asked to produce [a vehicle voucher](#) and a booking reference number.

14. How can I bring confirmation of my booking reference?

Customers can display confirmation of their booking through a closed vehicle window via:

- smart phone (screen shot or actual email)
- printed confirmation email
- handwritten note clearly showing the booking reference

15. Will staff help me with my waste, or can I bring someone to help me?

To reduce infection risk staff will not be helping people dispose of waste. This means that you will need to manage the waste yourself.

You can bring one other person from your own household with you to assist with unloading items, at site staff discretion.

In exceptional circumstances, if, for example you have a disability or have difficulty removing waste from your vehicle yourself, we can offer assistance. Please speak to a member of site staff on arrival.

If you have no option but to bring children with you, they must remain in the vehicle at all times.

16. What happens if I try to attend the site more than once on my booking day?

Each booking entitles you to one visit only. If you try to attend more than once, you will be turned away and asked to book another slot.

If you have made four bookings for the same day, you will have received four booking reference numbers. Please use one booking reference number per visit.

This is to ensure fair access to HWRCs for everyone.

17. I have tried to book a slot but cannot get one. What can I do?

We expect demand to be high for the service and this may result in customers not being able to get a slot at the time/date they wish. Please keep trying as we're adding new slots daily. Calendars are available for a month in advance.

Customers are reminded to only visit:

- up to four times within a calendar month to enable fair access for all
- the site if you cannot dispose of your waste through other means, such as the regular kerbside collection service

We urge customers to follow these rules, so that slots are available for those who really need them.

We ask for your patience during this time and are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause you.

You should make use of district/borough council bulky waste collections to avoid trips to site where possible [check with your local district or borough council](#) for updates to their service.

Please also familiarise yourself with the comprehensive weekly collection services provided by your local council as this may be sufficient.

18. Do I need to wear gloves or a mask when I attend the site?

We request that customers wear gloves where they possibly can. This can be any type of glove such as a rubber glove or a gardening glove.

We advise you to wear a face covering/mask.

Please keep your window closed, and only open it slightly to speak to site staff if required. Please adhere to staff direction on social distancing.

If a customer has worn gloves or a mask to site, we ask that these are taken home to be disposed of to reduce the risk of infection.

19. Will I be charged to use the site?

No. Our service remains free at point of access for visitors. However, you will still be charged for the disposal of the following items, which has been in place since 3 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 (charged for since 2012).

For more information, please [read our waste charging guide](#).

20. What social distancing measures and site rules are in place to keep everyone safe?

As mentioned earlier in this document we have implemented a number of social distancing measures to keep everyone safe whilst they visit our site. Our full social distancing measures and site rules are as follows:

- Customers should only book a site visit where there is no alternative.
- Customers must attend the site within their booking slot, if they miss the

slot, they may not be permitted to use the site.

- Customer numbers on site will be limited to support social distancing.
- Abusive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Customers who do not comply may be asked to leave the HWRC or may be banned from using the HWRC.
- Parking bays will be reduced on site to ensure adequate space between vehicles so customers and staff can adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Members of staff will not assist customers with lifting their waste to reduce the risk of infection.
- Customers will not be allowed onto the compactor platforms when a member of staff is operating the machines.
- Customers will only be allowed onto compactor platforms and gantries one at a time.
- Where customers are disposing of waste contaminated with Covid-19 we ask them to double bag the material and store this securely for 72 hours before putting out for your regular waste collection or bringing to site
- All customers are asked to wear gloves and a face covering/mask whilst on site to limit the risk of infection. This can be any type of glove (for example garden gloves, rubber gloves etc). Customers are requested to take gloves and masks home for disposal to avoid the risk of cross contamination.

We appreciate that customers may be frustrated by the new systems in place on site, but we ask for their patience as they are in place for everyone's safety.

Members of the public visiting an HWRC should not include people who are:

- extremely vulnerable and are remaining at home for shielding purposes
- symptomatic with coronavirus (COVID-19)
- in a 14-day household isolation

21. I want to access the site in a restricted vehicle. Can I still do this?

If you drive a restricted vehicle e.g. van, pick-up etc. and currently have vehicle vouchers to use our sites, you will also need to book a time slot. You will need to bring both your vehicle voucher and booking confirmation to gain entry to site.

If you *require* vouchers for a restricted vehicle, you will need to apply for

them. You can do this online by [visiting our vehicle restrictions and voucher page](#), once you have received your vouchers, you should then book your time slot.

22. I'm unhappy with the service. How do I make a complaint?

Please [follow the complaints procedure](#).

We would suggest that you register any complaints via email to prevent any delay in you receiving a response although please be mindful that we may not be able to get back to you immediately.

If you are unable to use email then please write to the following address:

Waste Management

First Floor

Invicta House

Maidstone

Kent

ME14 1XX