

GLASS IN THE GREEN BIN FROM AUGUST 1ST

Briefing note/FAQs for Elected Members (July 2024)

Why?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor James Lewis, announced in February that the Council was working on plans to introduce kerbside glass recycling collections for the first time in Leeds, enabling residents to use their green bin for glass bottles and jars.

This will make it simpler and easier for residents to recycle more from their home and without the need for more coloured bins or containers.

We estimate that Leeds residents currently put 11,400 tonnes of glass in their bins each year, which if recycled would have huge environmental benefits, including a carbon saving of around 2,600 tonnes per year when compared to incineration. Importantly, there will be no additional cost to this.

When will residents be able to put glass in their green bin?

All green bins collected from 1st August 2024 can include glass.

So, residents can actually start to put glass in their green bin at the point its next scheduled is on or after 1st August.

What glass will I be able to put in the green bin?

Any colour glass bottle or jar. Give it a quick rinse, put the lid/top back on if you still have it and put it in your green bin.

So that includes things such as wine/spirits/beer bottles, pop bottles, jam-jars, sauce jars and bottles, coffee jars and even the love it or hate it spread jars.

What glass can I NOT put in the green bin?

Anything that is not a bottle or glass basically. So NO glass light bulbs, window panes etc. Put these in your black bin or take to your local household waste site/tip.

What about broken glass bottles/jars?

Please take extra care and either put broken glass in your black bin as you do now, or if you do put it in your green bin make sure it isn't loose and bag it first.

How will people know?

We will publish information on the council website and on the Leeds Bin app. We will also promote a "get ready for glass" campaign through social and other online media, as well as press releases. We will also work closely with all Councillors across the city to help make sure we reach local community networks.

What's changed that means we can now consider doing this?

Until now, we have not had a local facility capable of taking the quantity of mixed recycling waste we collect in Leeds that could efficiently and effectively sort the glass from the other materials.

Our existing contractor has recently developed a proven, successful approach at its other main sorting facility in Derbyshire and is willing to invest in the required machinery/plant in Leeds.

The benefits of being able to efficiently extract and recycling glass now outweigh the potential reduction in newspaper/magazine recycling quality that having broken glass in the mix risks.

Why not collect the glass in a separate bin just for glass?

This is an option we considered. However, we would prefer to trial the effectiveness of including glass in the existing green bins as more customer friendly option and not to add to the different bins people need.

The national Simpler Recycling scheme and related legislation require councils to consider options that require the fewest number of different bins for households and encourage the co-mingling of materials into one recycling bin where possible. We hope this will help Leeds to deliver a “3-bin” strategy for the collection of all household waste (including garden and food waste).

What will happen to the glass we put in the green bin?

The glass will be sorted/separated by the contractor at the facility where all the green bin contents are taken to in Leeds. They anticipate being able to extract at least 95% of the glass from the contents and send all of that glass for recycling, with the majority remelted into new bottles and jars. As with the glass that is currently recycled from bottle banks, we will ensure the glass is remelted into new bottles and jars as locally as possible (our aim will be 100% within Yorkshire).

Will this mean the end of bottle banks in Leeds?

No. The plans do not include the removal of bottle banks. Currently we collected about 8,000 tonnes each year from bottle banks and 10,400 tonnes each year from black bins. We will see how people’s habits change once the green bins start accepting glass. If people end up mainly using the green bins and we have bottle banks sitting empty and unused we will review on a site by site basis. But at this stage we envisage a network of bottle banks continuing to be provided across Leeds, so people still have a choice and for when they may be otherwise worried about filling their green bin up after a party for example!

What happens if people put glass in the green bin when its next collection is before August 1st?

We already get about 1,150 tonnes of glass contaminating the green bins each year. The sorting plant that the contents of green bins are taken to is not yet set up to safely sort and recycle glass. So any glass that’s currently put in the green bin causes issues for the machinery, is a risk to those staff manually sorting waste and gets in the paper making it less recyclable. The extensive network of bottle banks across Leeds remain available to use and is how residents should continue to recycle glass until August 1st when glass can also be put in the green bin.