

Booking to visit a Household Waste Recycling Centre

The purpose of this document is to answer frequently asked questions on booking when visiting Kent County Council's (KCC) Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs, sometimes known as the 'tip').

1. Why was a booking system introduced? Do I still need to book?

The booking system was introduced during the first lockdown in 2020 to limit the number of people visiting a HWRC at any one time to ensure social distancing without causing queues of traffic outside the Centres. The booking system also ensured the limited capacity could be shared fairly.

Whilst the booking system was brought in to help us manage the demand on our sites in response to social distancing and revised workplace regulations, it has provided some benefits regarding the management of the sites which may be considered as beneficial.

Following a public consultation held last year, and a debate at the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee, the decision has been taken by the Cabinet Member for Environment to keep the booking system on a permanent basis.

KCC has been trialling 'on the day' bookings at the HWRCs at several sites in the county, and this will be introduced across all 18 HWRCs in the coming months.

Details relating to the [Decision](#) to keep the booking system can be found at the following link:

2. What feedback have you received on the booking system?

A public consultation was undertaken between 19 August and 30 September 2021. A full report of findings from the [consultation](#) along with a Waste Management service view report can be found at the following link:

During the operation of the booking system, and prior to the public consultation, KCC also carried out two surveys to understand more about customers experiences using the booking system.

The survey results identified that a significant majority of customers consider the booking system to be a positive development.

We have also received feedback through other channels such as from social media comments, via HWRC site staff, and emails from customers.

3. What improvements have been made to the booking system?

Many of the issues or concerns raised have helped us to improve the booking system, as detailed in the table below.

'You Said'	'We did'
Increase number of appointments available so I have more chance of a date/time I prefer	Number of appointments increased from 20,000 to 65,000
Make bookings available more than a week in advance	Bookings available a month in advance
Offer an evening opening at least once a week	13 of the 18 HWRCs now offer later evening appointments on a Wednesday
Make time slots shorter/allows for more slots available/same day bookings	Time slots changed from 1.5 hours to half hourly Opening hours extended to pre-Covid times Next day booking available Potential for on the day bookings being explored
Allow bookings to be cancelled or amended	Bookings now able to be cancelled or amended
Allow more trips in one time slot	Time slots reduced to half hourly, multiple bookings per day allowed
Remove the four limit per month	Four limit per month removed

The most suggested recommended improvement to the booking system identified in the public consultation feedback was to introduce the ability to book 'on the day'. KCC has been trialling 'on the day' bookings at the HWRCs at several sites in the county, and this will be introduced across all 18 HWRCs in the coming months.

4. How does the current booking system work?

A booking portal is available via our [website](#) where customers can book a slot at one of KCC's 18 HWRCs. Slots are every half an hour with most Centres offering extended hours on Wednesdays during summer months (except for Deal, Faversham, New Romney, Richborough and Sheerness).

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.

5. What information will the current booking system ask me for?

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

- name
- email address
- postcode*
- vehicle make and model
- vehicle registration

*Postcode information is collected to help us determine how far customers travel to use the HWRC service and to assess availability/capacity at the Centres.

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) adhered to, and to support any future policy change recommendations.

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.

6. 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 KCC's contact centre to complete the booking form. They can be contacted on 03000 41 73 73 (Text Relay 18001 03000 41 73 73).

7. 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.

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

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.

Please refrain from 'bulk booking' to ensure fair access to HWRCs for everyone.

8. How does Kent County Council protect my data?

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

Please read our [privacy](#) notice for information relating to the consultation

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 are likely to 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, please visit [Medway Council's website](#) for their up-to-date information regarding their service. 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 KCC Centre, you will be able to book a slot at one of ours. Please see our [site policies](#).

12. What materials can I bring to site?

You will be able to take 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 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
- directed onto site once the staff member has confirmed your visit

Customers using a restricted vehicle will be asked to produce a vehicle voucher and a booking reference number.

Please continue to respect others who may wish to maintain distance.

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

Customers can bring confirmation of their booking via:

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

15. Am I entitled to visit more than once per day?

Yes, this is permitted. Please be aware that each booking entitles you to **one** visit only. If you require more than one visit, please make the required number of bookings – you will receive a unique booking reference for each visit.

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

The number of slots available are equal to pre-Covid levels, there should therefore be plenty of availability. Calendars are available for a month in advance.

If you cannot book a slot for the time you want, please keep trying. New slots are added each day, and as bookings are cancelled availability may change.

17. Will I be charged to use the site?

No. Our service remains free at point of access for customers. 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

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

18. 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 HWRCs, 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.

19. 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
Kent County Council
First Floor Invicta House
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XX