

## **SPLIT BROWN BINS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **WHY ARE THE BROWN BINS SPLITTING?**

There is a manufacturing fault with some of the brown recycling bins that means that they are prone to splitting. They can split at the sides, front or back.

The splits are not caused due to the bins being mishandled by the collection crews or by the action of the collection vehicle.

### **WHY HAS THE NUMBER OF BROWN BINS SPLITTING INCREASED?**

We don't know exactly why there has been an increase in the number of bins splitting – however we do know that plastic is affected by cold weather and last winter we experienced very low temperatures. We believe that this has made some of the bins weaker and more prone to splitting.

### **WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG TO GET A REPLACEMENT BIN?**

Since December 2017 we have seen a huge increase in the demand for replacement brown bins – before December 2017 we were dealing with on average 80 split bin requests per week – which along with the requests for black and green bins meant that we could deliver within 10 working days. We are now receiving on average between 150- 200 requests for replacement bins per day – so unfortunately we have had to extend the delivery time to 20 working days to manage the demand. We are working with our contract partners to develop options to deliver replacements in a shorter time frame.

### **WHY CAN'T YOU TELL ME WHAT DAY MY REPLACEMENT BIN IS BEING DELIVERED?**

We have never provided customers with a delivery date for their bins – but we understand that it is not ideal to have to leave your bins outside your property for 20 days. We are looking at ways in which we can improve our delivery system to both reduce delivery times and provide a date – but until then, due to the volume of requests we are unable to provide this.

### **MY NEIGHBOUR HAS HAD THEIR BIN DELIVERED BUT I AM STILL WAITING – WHY IS THIS?**

We allocate delivery slots on a postcode basis but also based on when we receive requests so your neighbour may have requested their bin several weeks ago which is why they have received their bin. We will deliver to groups within the same street wherever possible to reduce the need to travel back to the same road on numerous occasions but due to the time intervals within which bins are logged it is not always possible to do this.

### **WHY ARE YOU LEAVING SOME BROWN BINS UNEMPTIED?**

Some brown bins are very badly damaged and have very large split or holes in the front and back. Due to the splits the bins are getting caught on the vehicle lifting mechanism and are very difficult to dislodge. The crews have been trying to dislodge the bins themselves but this is an unsafe practice that cannot continue. Therefore if a bin is badly split and considered likely to get stuck – the crews have been asked to log the bin as damaged and regrettably leave it as it cannot be emptied safely. We are looking at ways to notify customers if this is the problem with the bin.

### **WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH MY RECYCLING IF MY BIN IS FULL?**

We will accept recycling in other containers such as woven shopping bags (bags for life) plastic boxes, clear sacks - if the weather is dry you can also use cardboard boxes (if it's wet they can get soggy and the contents fall out).

You can collect a supply of clear sacks from the walk-in centres at Solihull Town Centre, Shirley and the Bluebell Centre in Chelmsley Wood and we are also looking into whether we can provide clear sacks at other locations.

Once you've submitted your request for a replacement brown bin you'll be provided with a reference number, you'll need to provide this when you collect your clear sacks.

You can also purchase clear sacks from some supermarkets.

### **I DON'T HAVE TIME TO COLLECT CLEAR SACKS – WHY CAN'T YOU DELIVER THEM?**

We are using all of our available delivery resources to deliver replacement bins – and we need to prioritise the replacement of these – if we deliver clear sacks it would take up a delivery slot that we could use to deliver a replacement bin. Some supermarkets sell clear sacks for recycling – these would also be accepted through the collection service.

### **IF ALL THE BINS ARE DAMAGED OR LIKELY TO SPLIT – WHY DON'T YOU REPLACE THEM ALL?**

We don't currently know if all of the brown bins in circulation will split.

The brown bins are under warranty and the bin manufacturer has to replace all damaged bins – however these are currently replaced on a like for like basis so when we return a damaged bin we get a new bin in return.

To replace all of the bins we would need a significant amount of replacement bin stock (we delivered 76,000) and we currently don't have the resources to do this – however we are considering our options around this.

### **MY BIN IS FULL AND I CANNOT EMPTY IT – WILL I STILL GET A REPLACEMENT?**

It is easier for our delivery and collection crews to remove a bin if it is empty – which is why we ask for bins to be left empty if possible – however if you are physically unable to empty your bin e.g. residents on our assisted collection list – we will remove the bin when it is full in these circumstances as long as it is not too heavy to lift onto the delivery vehicle.

### **WILL I GET A REDUCTION IN MY COUNCIL TAX DUE TO THE ISSUES WITH BROWN BINS?**

No, we are unable to issue a refund or rebate of your Council Tax due to issues with the brown bins and collections. While the waste and recycling service is funded by the Council Tax, it is not the only service that the Council Tax funds and Council Tax payments are not service specific.

### **THE FAULT IS WITH THE BINS – WHAT IS THE BIN SUPPLIER DOING TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM?**

The supplier of the bins is replacing damaged bins. They also arrange to collect and then recycle the damaged bins returned to the depot. However we are discussing how they could provide additional support to the council to deal with the damaged bins.