

Garden Waste Collections Impacted by Driver Shortages

16 August 2020

FCC Environment (South Hams recycling and waste contractor) has asked South Hams District Council to **suspend all garden waste collections from today (Monday 16 August)**. The Council has reluctantly agreed to this to enable FCC Environment to focus on general waste and recycling.

Many other councils around the country have had to do the same in recent weeks as the national shortage of LGV and HGV drivers continues.

Although they would like to be able to collect all waste, including garden waste, FCC Environment know that they must focus all of their resources on the statutory waste and recycling collections. This includes food waste, which can become very unpleasant if not collected in warmer weather.

Cllr Keith Baldry, South Hams Executive Member for the Environment said: "This is not a decision we have taken lightly, but the impact of the national shortage of drivers has meant that FCC Environment has no choice now but to move their resources to ensure they are focused on the vital collections. These are general waste, clinical waste and recycling.

"Therefore drivers that were collecting the garden waste will be redeployed onto the recycling and waste collections.

"As a Council, both for members and officers, this has been one of the hardest decisions that we have ever had to make and we know that it will not be popular. We are also sincerely sorry for the recent disruption to collections."

FCC Environment Operations Director Steve Longdon said "This is an acute challenge which the waste and recycling industry is facing across the UK, one which has been well documented in the national media and which is also affecting many other industries. We are raising this issue at the highest levels in Government to gain support to attract and train new drivers into the sector but this is a long term problem for us all. We are closely monitoring the situation in the South Hams, working in tandem with the council to minimise disruption and apologise to residents for the inconvenience we know this will cause to them."

Suspending garden waste collections is allowing FCC Environment to redeploy staff to support vital rubbish and recycling services.

It is anticipated that garden waste collections will be suspended for a minimum of four weeks. South Hams and FCC Environment will continue to review this as the national driver shortage position develops.

Residents are being asked not to put garden waste in the grey wheelie / residual waste bin.

The Council is offering advice on what residents can do with their garden waste:

Compost: [More on home composting](#)

Recycle centres: All three recycling centres located in South Hams, operated by Devon County Council, take garden waste. Full details, including opening hours, [here](#).

Please do not burn your garden waste. The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service [firmly advises against having bonfires](#), given the risks of fires spreading, the likely nuisance for neighbours and the potential diversion of emergency services. Check out their [downloadable bonfire leaflet here](#).

Visit our website here for FAQs here: <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/waste-suspension>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/southhamsdistrictcouncil>

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