**Brown Bin: Frequently asked questions**

**What are the brown bins for?**

District Councils are required to ensure separate collections for various waste streams and as such provides collection of the different wastes, contained in colour coded wheeled bins.

From April 2017, Councils are required to provide receptacles for the collection of Food Waste.   To meet this requirement Council has distributed brown bins to all householders, to dispose of their food waste.

**When will I get my brown bin?**

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is currently delivering Brown bins to all residents that previously were not on the brown bin scheme.  Council hope to have all brown bins delivered within the next few weeks.  You will also receive an information leaflet, roll of compostable liners and a kitchen caddy.  If you have not received your brown bin by the end of May, please contact the Regulatory and Technical Services on 0300 013 2233.

Residents in the Ballyward area of our District will continue to dispose of their biodegradable waste in their green bin

**When will you empty my brown bin?**

Council will deliver information leaflets to all residents notifying them of when to put their brown bin out for collection i.e. either with black or blue bin.  Council will empty Brown bins on a fortnightly basis from the beginning of May.  This information shall also be available on the NMDDC website

**Other residents have 240 litre brown bins, why am I getting a 140-litre bin?**

All new brown bins issued will be 140 litre, as these bins are to ensure compliance with new legislative requirements regarding a separate food waste collection.  While you can place other organic material (e.g. grass) in the new brown bin, the bin is primarily to ensure you do not put food waste in your black bin.

**What can I put in my brown bin?**

Your brown bin is primarily for the separate collection of food waste. This includes;

•        Leftovers and plate scrapings

•        Fruit and vegetable

•        Meat and bones (cooked and uncooked)

•        Bread, cakes and pastries

•        Dairy products (yoghurt and cheese)

•        Egg shells

•        Tea bags and coffee grounds

Please refer to our leaflet for more information on what can and cannot be placed in the brown bin to ensure collection and recycling.

**Can I place dog mess and cat litter in the brown bin?**

No.

**Will you not empty my black bin if I put food waste in it?**

Once the Education for food waste is complete, officers will carry out random checks on black bins to see if they contain food waste. On finding food waste, they will advise residents how to use their brown bin correctly, and monitor their black bin for a number of weeks to ensure compliance.  If food waste is persistently placed in the black bin officers will reject it.

**Why can I not put my food waste in my black bin?**

Food waste regulations introduced on 1 April 2017 have banned food waste from going into landfill. Landfilled food waste rots and produces methane gas and is therefore harmful to the environment.  The cost of recycling food waste is much cheaper as opposed to landfilling and contributes to the statutory recycling targets, we, as a Council must meet.  Council will place a sticker on your black bin, advising you not to put food waste in the black bin.

**Where can I get more compostable liners for my kitchen caddy?**

Council will only supply one roll of liners.  Residents can collect a free roll, from our centres at Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick and Greenbank Offices, Newry.

Most supermarkets stock the compostable liners eg Asda, Gordons Chemist, Lidl, Sainsburys, Tesco, etc – make sure the bags you buy have the **seedling logo** on them and are**at least 10ltrs in volume**.

Some compostable bags may state that it is not acceptable to place cooked food waste in the bag, please ignore this as it refers to home composting, all food waste is acceptable for treatment in an In Vessel Composting system.

**Can I use plastic bags as a liner for food waste?**

No. Plastic bags will not biodegrade and will cause problems in the composting process for this reason they are not acceptable in food waste caddies or brown bins. You can only use compostable bags. You can put loose, unbagged food waste in the bin, line the caddy with newspaper or wrap food waste in newspaper and put this in your food waste bin.

**What is the difference in biodegradable and compostable?**

Biodegradable liners take time to break down in the In-vessel composting system, whereas compostable bags will break down within two weeks.

**Can we buy the liners from Council?**

Not at present

**I am currently using a 240 litre brown for my food waste and garden waste; can I have a free roll of liners?**

Yes, compostable liners can be collected at Council Offices at Downshire Estate, Downpatrick or Greenbank Office, Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry

**Can I put food packaging along with food waste in the green or brown bin?**

No. Do not put any packaging in the food waste bin, only compostable bags. Rinse recyclable packaging and put this in the blue recycling bin. If the packaging is not recyclable, put this in the black bin.

**Can I use plastic carrier bags as a liner for my food waste caddy?**

No, Council will not empty your bin if it contains plastic carrier bags.  You can use compostable liners or wrap your food waste in newspaper.

**I have a big garden. If I fill my 140l brown bin, can I put the remaining grass into my black bin?**

No.    You should not place materials that can be recycled or composted in your black bin.  Bring additional green waste to your local HRC for composting.

**What happens my food waste after collection?**

When collected, we will take your food waste to a recycling facility where it is recycled and turned into compost and soil additives

**What are food waste arrangements for households in apartments?**

All apartments will receive the same service as other households; you can contact our Customers Services for further advice or information

**I own a commercial premises, what do I have to do?**

You will have received a letter from the NIEA explaining the Food waste legislation and that it is your responsibility to dispose of your food waste correctly.  We can offer you a food waste collection service, collected on a fortnightly basis.  You will have to buy your 140 litre brown bins and pay for collection.  Please contact our office for costs associated with this service.

**I am a commercial customer can I have a roll of free liners?**

Yes

**I did not use the brown bin for food waste and cannot find the caddy, can I have a new one please?**

Yes, they can be collected from:  Downshire Civic Centre, Downpatrick , Greenbank Offices & Monaghan Row Offices, Newry

**What about the mess of separating the food waste?**

Council will provide a free kitchen caddy and a roll of compostable liners.  Use the liner to place in your kitchen caddy, and when full, simply tie a knot in the bag and dispose of in your brown bin.  You can also line your kitchen caddy with newspaper, as it can also be disposed of in your brown bin.

**Can I have two bins for my grass etc.?**

No.  Residents can only avail of one brown bin.  The 140 litre brown bin is primarily for the capture of food waste, if you have spare capacity you can put grass (which is biodegradable) in your bin.  If you have additional grass, hedge cuttings etc., you can bring them to your local HRC for recycling

**Will Council wash or clean my brown bin as it may start to smell?**

No.  Householders are responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of their own bin.  There are several private companies that offer a wheelie bin cleaning service – refer to yellow pages for companies.  Council will collect your brown bin every fortnight, so the waste does not stay any longer in the bins as it would have in the black bin.

**Council regularly miss my bin as bin men do not come at the same time every week. What should I do?**

Please place your bin out for collection by 7.30am on the designated day.  If we miss you bin, we shall endeavour to have it emptied as soon as operationally possible.