



Ministry of Housing,  
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All Local Authority Leaders and  
Chief Executives in England

5 May 2020

Dear Colleague,

### **Waste services including household waste and recycling centres**

Thank you once again for what you are doing in these difficult times. We know that you are working incredibly hard to balance the need to maintain services and keep your workers safe alongside your wider responsibilities for the health and wellbeing of your residents.

We recognise councils are working tirelessly to keep rubbish and recycling collections open during this national emergency, while bin crews are also playing a vital role in keeping the country going.

We know that councils have had to make difficult operational decisions based on their local needs and priorities, including deploying staff to maintain key kerbside collections. However, we welcome more recent news that some councils are now re-opening household waste recycling centres that have been closed. We urge others to follow suit where it is safe to do so while managing social distancing requirements in the most practicable way.

We would like to reassure you that waste and recycling centres are permitted by law to be open. It is reasonable for people to leave home to take their bulk rubbish to those centres where the material cannot be stored safely at home or disposed of through other legitimate routes.

We have also been working closely with the Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP, and the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Martin Hewitt, to ensure that re-opening these facilities can be managed by local authorities without diverting police resources.

Household waste recycling centres play an essential role to the economy by providing the recycled materials that industry relies on to make new products as well as helping householders dispose of their waste and reducing the risk of fly-tipping.

Defra has now published additional official guidance to support you in maintaining access to these key facilities and, where necessary, with managing the process of re-opening. A link to the guidance can be found [here](#).

Thank you for maintaining these critical public services on which our communities and residents rely.

**SIMON CLARKE MP**  
Local Government Minister

**REBECCA POW MP**  
Environment Minister