

Northumberland County Council

Charges for rubble, soil, plasterboard, glass windows and ceramic bathroom / kitchen ware from July 2016

Frequently asked questions

Does everyone have to pay to tip these types of waste?

Yes. All householders have to pay to dispose of rubble, plasterboard, soil, glass windows, ceramic bathroom and kitchen ware.

Will this affect any other types of waste?

No. The charges only apply to rubble, plasterboard, soil, glass windows, ceramic kitchen and bathroom ware. All other accepted materials are free of charge, including garden waste

Why do we have to pay to get rid of waste from our home when we already pay Council Tax? Whilst the Council is required to provide a place for residents in its area to deposit their household waste free of charge. Waste from construction or demolition works, including preparatory work, is classed as industrial waste rather than household waste, therefore a council can choose to accept none of this material, put limits on the amount and/ or apply a charge.

Many councils provide no facilities for DIY waste. Northumberland County Council has chosen to provide that facility for the convenience of residents, but at a nominal charge.

What will I be charged for?

The charges apply to rubble and soil and plasterboard (including breeze blocks, bricks, gravel, hardcore, sand, slates, stones, tarmac and tiles), glass windows, ceramic kitchen and bathroom ware. If you dispose of these materials at the same time as other waste from your home (general household waste, grass and hedge clippings) you will only be charged for the rubble, soil and plasterboard, ceramics and glass windows.

What can I deposit for free?

The charges do not apply to general household waste, grass and hedge cuttings, and other categories of DIY waste, such as kitchen units, non-ceramic sinks and baths and doors.

Are there any restrictions on what I can pay to get rid of? There is a total limit of 6 cubic yards of DIY waste allowed from any one household in a calendar year. This applies to both

the chargeable and non-chargeable DIY waste. Once you have reached that limit you will need to find an alternative way of getting rid of your DIY waste; such as a skip, a hippo hire bag from your DIY store or by using a private waste disposal company.

The 6 cubic yard limit does not apply to grass and hedge cuttings, household waste, furniture etc, but these items must be from your own household.

The sites are not licensed to accept ANY waste from landlords, business or property developers, therefore none of those people may enter and pay for waste disposal at the HWRCs.

When were the charges introduced?

The charges were introduced on 14th September 2015, and additional ceramics will be charged from 18 July 2016.

How much will I be charged? Please see the prices on the website which give an indication of what the costs will be and how they are calculated. You can also download the leaflet – ‘Rubble, Plasterboard, Soil and DIY materials’.

How should I deliver my waste?

Please deliver your waste in heavy duty bags or similar to make it quick and easy to unload your vehicle. This will also make it easier for the site attendant to make an accurate assessment for pricing.

Do not start emptying your vehicle until the charge has been agreed with a site attendant and payment has been made. The soil must go in the garden waste skip, the plasterboard goes in the plasterboard skip and there is a rubble skip for the hardcore, rubble, bricks, ceramics etc.

Will site staff weigh my waste on site?

No. The site staff have been provided with training and guidance on how to accurately assess your chargeable waste in bag equivalents or according to the vehicle type.

What if I disagree with the Site Attendants' assessment of how much I should pay for?

The site staff have been provided with training and guidance on how to accurately assess your chargeable waste in bag equivalents or according to the vehicle type. The site attendants decision is final. How the charge is being administered by the site attendants will be monitored

by their line managers and Northumberland County Council staff to ensure that it complies with the policy.

How do I pay?

All payments must be made via debit or credit card. **No cash or cheques** will be accepted on site. If you have no credit or debit card you can apply for a prepaid card online (eg. Pockit or Cashplus) or a prepaid travel card through some Post Offices. These can then be loaded with small amounts of cash at Payzone points in a similar way to a bank debit or credit card. You do not need to have a bank account or a credit rating to get one of these cards.

Visit www.moneysupermarket.com/prepaid-cards for advice on how to get a card, visit our website for a list of local Payzone points where you can load money onto your card (some may also be able to supply the card) or visit <http://payzone.co.uk>

Why I am only able to make a card payment?

The decision to take card-only payment has been made as this would place an extra burden on Site Attendants for keeping a cash float and would compromise site security.

What if I have several loads - do I have to pay every time?

If you have more than one load you will have to pay on each visit.

How has the Council arrived at/justified the costs?

The Council has taken into account the costs for disposal of the rubble, soil, plasterboard, glass windows and ceramic kitchen and bathroom ware. The charge will help towards these costs but won't cover the whole cost, with the remainder still covered by the council.

What happens if I can't pay?

If you are unable to pay, you will be asked to leave the site and to return later with a means of payment. You will not be allowed to dispose of any chargeable materials unless you can pay - using a card. You will of course be allowed to dispose of any of the non-chargeable household waste free of charge, and non-chargeable DIY waste provided you have not exceeded your annual 6 cubic yard limit.

What if I don't want to pay?

If you don't want to pay you will be unable to tip your waste at the HWRC and will have to use another disposal option such as hiring a skip or taking the waste to a private waste management company.

What are you going to do if I leave my waste outside the site and refuse to pay?

By leaving the waste outside the site you are fly tipping. This is against the law and can carry a fine of up to £50,000. Most sites have CCTV and site staff are instructed to gather evidence of anyone fly tipping waste for possible prosecution.

Don't you have to consult users before making this sort of change?

In 2014 the Council undertook face to face surveys to find out how residents thought that the council could reduce the cost of providing the service. The highest proportion thought that a charge could be made for specific waste types. This was in preference to reducing opening hours or closing sites.

Prior to the charges being introduced, banners and posters have been displayed at each of the household waste recycling centres and leaflets handed out to members of the public by site and council staff. Leaflets have been sent to parish and town councils and libraries and the charges were promoted via press releases and on the council's website and social media channels.

Have you taken into account the cost of clearing the fly tipping?

When we have made previous changes, for example to opening hours, there was not a significant increase in fly tipping. Experiences elsewhere are that after the initial bedding in period, fly tipping is not an issue. We will continue to work with our colleagues and the Environment Agency to deal effectively with this issue.

Where can I find out more about commercial waste disposal ?

For information on commercial waste disposal see the [commercial waste](#) section of our website.

Regarding soil, if I bring in turf with soil attached will I be charged?

With regards to turf, edging would be defined as maintaining the borders of your lawn. This waste would be free of charge. If you were to dig up your lawn for example to construct a patio, erect fencing or a structure, build a pond or undertake landscaping which generates soil, this would be regarded as alteration, repair and improvement works and would be charged for.

Is there any dispensation/exemption for the elderly, those on low income or those with disabilities?

No, everyone has to pay the charges. The Council has tried to keep the charges to a minimum, and they are lower than many of the other council's which charge for this waste.

Is asbestos included in the charges?

The sites are not licensed to accept asbestos. Please see the hazardous waste section of our website for further advice on disposal of asbestos.