

Update from the waste services team



Due to a variety of issues, our waste services team is currently facing a number of challenges in relation to the availability of frontline staff.

To provide you with more information around the specific challenges being faced at this current time and the work being done to resolve these, I have provided further detail below:

HGV Driver Shortages

The UK is currently experiencing an HGV driver shortage which is estimated to be a shortfall of around 100,000 HGV drivers. This is being widely reported in the national press with a number of sectors being impacted.

At a local level we have lost 7 HGV drivers from the refuse collection service since the start of the year, which is creating a number of operational challenges.

COVID-19 - Positive Cases & Self-Isolation

We have up until recently avoided any major disruptions as a result of COVID-19. However in the last week we have had a number of positive cases, which are creating operational challenges related to the self-isolation period for both positive cases and those deemed as close contacts.

COVID-19 Adjustments

We have been required to make a number of operational adjustments throughout the pandemic to meet the relevant government guidelines relating to social distancing.

This has included reducing the number of staff in cabs from three to two. Doing this means that the second loader is transported by a support vehicle and an additional loader, subsequently increasing the number of staff required to deliver the service.

Response

In response to the staff shortages as outlined above, we have taken the following steps to mitigate any impact on services:

- Deployed staff from across A&I to undertake driving and loading roles
- Trained up staff from other A&I services to be able to undertake driver and loader roles
- Employed additional relief staff
- Moved 7 temporary staff into permanent roles within the waste collection team
- Put in place HGV driver training for loaders
- Deployed foreman and charge hands to undertake driver and loader operation
- Utilised agency staff where available (very limited availability of loaders and no HGV drivers)
- Entered into discussions with third party providers as a contingency arrangement

Impact

The impact on kerbside collections has been negligible to this point as A&I has prioritised its delivery, however there has been an impact on other services:

- On the 19 August we cancelled scheduled bulky uplifts to release further staff and ease the pressure on our waste services team
- We have redeployed staff from across the Parks & Environment Team which has had an impact on their service provision

As it is a statutory service, it is possible that over the coming days and weeks there will be times where we have to prioritise waste collection services.

We will be monitoring this situation closely over the coming days and weeks and will provide further updates as this situation progresses.

Regards,

John Curry
Service Director - Assets & Infrastructure