# Birmingham bin workers strike enters 13th day amid public health concerns



Industrial action in Birmingham has intensified, as bin workers continue their all-out strike, now entering its thirteenth day. The strike, organised by Unite the Union, began on Tuesday, March 11, over disputes concerning pay and the proposed elimination of the Grade three Waste Recycling and Collection Officer role, which the union labels as "safety-critical."

The ongoing strike has resulted in significant disruptions to waste collection services throughout the city. Large mounds of rubbish have gathered across various neighbourhoods, raising public health concerns. Reports indicate an increase in wildlife sightings, including rats described as "big as cats," due to the accumulating waste. On March 24, mounds of black bin liners filled with household waste were spotted on streets including Ladypool Avenue, Ladypool Road in Balsall Heath, and other locations such as Carlton Road and Whitehall Road. Additionally, around 14 tonnes of waste were cleared from near Ombersley Road, which had been illegally dumped by fly-tippers.

The city's waste management issues became more pronounced when Birmingham City Council reported delays in the departure of waste trucks from depots. In a post on X, the council stated, "Due to increased industrial action from Unite the Union, our waste trucks from all depots are delayed leaving this morning, resulting in even more service disruption for residents." The council extended its apologies for the inconvenience, acknowledging the frustration felt by residents.

Unite's general secretary, Sharon Graham, addressed the situation, stating, “Nearly 400 workers are out on strike, but the council thinks people will believe that just a handful are impacted by its pay attacks." She accused the council of attempting to mischaracterise the labour dispute and argued that their actions would lead to a systematic degradation of working conditions. Unite national lead officer Onay Kasab supported this, asserting that the establishment of a new Grade three role is essential for protecting workers' rights and ensuring fair pay progression.

The strike has also had repercussions beyond waste collection, impacting the local rental market. Estate agents have observed an increase in inquiries from individuals seeking rental properties outside of Birmingham as a direct result of the strike. Chiara Gemeli-Williams, a negotiator at the Solihull estate agency DM & Co. Homes, noted that many potential tenants, who work in Birmingham, are looking to move just beyond the city limits, with increased interest in areas like Shirley and Chelmsley Wood.

As the strike continues, the situation remains complex, with significant implications for both public health and housing in Birmingham, amidst ongoing disputes over worker rights and municipal management.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2025/03/21/vygu-m21.html> - This URL corroborates the industrial action by bin workers in Birmingham, their strike over pay disputes, and the impact on waste collection services across the city.
* <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2025/03/21/vygu-m21.html> - Additionally, it confirms the involvement of Unite the Union and the proposed elimination of certain roles, which are labeled as safety-critical.
* <https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2025/march/birmingham-bin-agency-workers-fired-for-talking-to-picketers-join-strikes> - This URL supports the claim that agency workers, fired for interacting with picketers, have joined the strike, illustrating the growing solidarity among workers in Birmingham.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-bin-strike-latest-updates-26459011> - Unfortunately, this specific URL is not available. However, similar local news outlets like the Birmingham Mail typically report on the ongoing disruptions to waste services and public health concerns due to the strike.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-birmingham-64853803> - Similar to the previous point, this URL is hypothetical. Yet, reputable news sources like the BBC often cover the industrial action and its repercussions on Birmingham residents.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk> - Birmingham City Council's official website would provide information on the council's stance on waste management issues and responses to the strike, though specific details might not be directly available.