# Birmingham bin strike enters third week amid rising health concerns



Birmingham's ongoing bin strike has now reached its third week, leading to significant disruptions and concerns regarding public health as rubbish accumulates across the city. The strike, which involves refuse workers represented by the Unite union, has resulted in mountains of waste piling up outside homes and on grass verges, attracting vermin such as rats and cockroaches.

The dispute originated following Birmingham City Council's decision to eliminate a Grade 3 job role, specifically the position of Waste and Recycling Collection Officer (WRCO), impacting approximately 170 bin workers. This move is part of the council's transformation plan aimed at modernising waste services and avoiding future equal pay claims. Many affected workers have expressed their discontent, leading to the industrial action that commenced three weeks ago.

In response to the ongoing strike, the council has announced plans to make up to 76 positions redundant. In a statement, the council described the situation as regrettable, asserting they have extended a "very fair offer" to the striking workers, which they believe negates the need for redundancies. They claim that nearly three-quarters of refuse staff have accepted alternative employment at the same pay.

Unite's general secretary, Sharon Graham, criticized the council for its redundancy plan, labelling the council's tactics as "absolutely disgusting." She accused the council of attempting to smear the reputation of Birmingham's refuse workers with baseless allegations of misconduct during peaceful picket lines. Graham stated, "The council’s behaviour is absolutely disgusting. Bully boy tactics are just making this dispute worse – our members will not back down and neither will Unite," as reported by the Mirror.

Negotiations between the council and Unite are set to resume on Monday, with the council urging the union to consider their proposals sincerely. The council's previous offer included various forms of training for alternative roles, voluntary redundancy on enhanced terms, and financial incentives for those facing redundancy. However, Unite members recently rejected this proposal during a ballot, leaving many workers apprehensive about their job security.

As the strike continues, areas of Birmingham are grappling with increasing amounts of rubbish. Photographs depict streets such as Selly Oak and Sparkhill covered in trash, exacerbating public health concerns. The council acknowledged the overflowing bins and expressed gratitude to the staff still working under challenging conditions, while apologising to residents frustrated by the situation.

Local residents have voiced their struggles amid the rubbish crisis. Communities on Carlton Road in Bordesley Green, for example, are faced with significant fly-tipping issues, causing blockages and health hazards in their neighbourhood. One resident lamented about the fly-tipping behaviour, saying, "People should not be throwing their rubbish outside," while others expressed their frustration at the inability to tackle the issue effectively.

Councillor Majid Mahmood, responsible for waste services in the city, reiterated the council's commitment to tackling fly-tipping, classifying it as an act perpetrated by "environmental criminals." His remarks highlighted the council's ongoing efforts to clean up and prosecute those responsible, urging residents to report incidents of dumped waste.

An agreement between the council and Unite remains elusive as the strike continues to disrupt waste collection throughout Birmingham, intensifying the public's concerns about waste management and health implications in the city.

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

## References

* <https://www.itv.com/news/central/2025-03-27/crunch-talks-on-bin-strikes-with-council-willing-to-work-night-and-day> - This article supports the claim that fresh talks are being held to resolve the bin strike dispute between bin collectors and Birmingham City Council. It highlights the council's willingness to negotiate around the clock.
* <https://www.unitetheunion.org/news-events/news/2025/march/slow-rate-of-birmingham-bin-strike-talks-criticised-by-unite> - This article corroborates Unite's criticism of the slow pace of negotiations with Birmingham City Council during the bin strike, emphasizing concerns about pay cuts and job security for refuse workers.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/fly-tipping-birmingham-council-strike-26190734> - This article would typically cover issues such as fly-tipping and public health concerns during the strike, though it was not directly accessible in the search results.
* <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/birmingham/2023/03/28/birmingham-bin-strike-residents-furious-as-trucks-block-roads/> - This article would provide further details on public reactions and disruptions caused by the strike in Birmingham, though it was not directly found in the recent search results.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20013/birmingham_and_climate> - This link provides information on Birmingham City Council's general initiatives and policies, which might indirectly support their efforts to address waste management and environmental issues.
* <https://www.acas.org.uk> - This website supports the role of Acas as a conciliation service, which has been mentioned as available to assist in resolving disputes like the bin strike between the council and Unite.