# Brighton and Hove Cityclean faces meltdown amid violence and rising missed collections



Brighton and Hove City Council has recently come under fire following disturbing revelations concerning its waste management service, Cityclean, particularly at its Hollingdean depot. In January 2025, a death threat was made against a Cityclean manager, which has prompted an investigation by Sussex Police. This incident is one of several reported acts of intimidation, including tyre slashing targeting managers and a general atmosphere of fear at the workplace. Such adversities were highlighted in an internal report that sought to update the council's cabinet on ongoing efforts to foster a more robust organisational culture and enhance service delivery.

The report paints a grim picture of rising violence and abuse within the Cityclean environment, marked by incidents involving racist, misogynistic, and violent behaviour among employees. A disturbing example cited involved a worker who brought weapons such as a samurai sword and nun-chucks to the workplace amid an ongoing investigation into these serious allegations. Human rights lawyer Aileen McColgan KC led an external inquiry revealing this toxic culture, which has been exacerbated by a high turnover of staff—over 40 individuals have resigned amid this turmoil.

Consequently, the council is grappling with escalating issues regarding missed rubbish and garden waste collections. Recent data indicates that the number of missed collections surged dramatically, with an average of 1,369 failures recorded over the three months leading up to May, compared to just 573 in the previous quarter. The council has identified possible sabotage as a contributing factor, alongside a deteriorating fleet and staffing shortages driven in part by a challenging work environment. Brighton and Hove Independent councillor Mark Earthey has labelled the situation a "complete meltdown," as residents report their rubbish being collected less reliably than ever before.

Efforts to remedy the crisis have led to the establishment of a service recovery programme, supported by £892,000 recently approved by the council. This programme aims to tackle operational inefficiencies, incorporating technological advancements such as vehicle tracking and monitoring software to improve collection reliability. The approach seeks to provide real-time information about missed collections, which has often frustrated both residents and staff due to inefficient paper-based systems. Furthermore, the council plans to recruit additional drivers and operational managers to bolster its workforce and enhance service resilience.

The cultural shift within Cityclean is now a priority for the council, which acknowledges that staff morale and workplace safety are integral to reversing the decline in service standards. Cityclean managers have expressed their commitment to addressing “toxic behaviours” by implementing rigorous monitoring of suspicious activities, although they face the dual challenges of external scrutiny and internal resistance from disgruntled employees.

As the council prepares for its upcoming cabinet meeting, the potential for further scrutiny and debate remains high. The report not only outlines the current challenges but emphasises the need for a concerted effort to rehabilitate the service's reputation and effectiveness. With ongoing strategic investments and reforms, there is cautious optimism that Brighton and Hove City Council can begin to restore community trust in its waste management operations.

In summary, the dual crises of workplace culture and operational inefficiency continue to plague Cityclean, demanding swift and decisive action from the council. The unfolding situation serves as a stark reminder of the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful work environment, as well as the necessity for reliable public services that meet the needs of residents.

### Reference Map

1. Information regarding the death threat and police involvement.
2. Details on the increase in missed collections and the abusive culture.
3. Insights on staff turnover and culture from the inquiry.
4. Overview of the service recovery programme's funding and goals.
5. Data on missed rubbish collections and attributing factors.
6. Mention of ongoing toxic behaviours and council's response.
7. Specific focus on missed garden waste collections.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25150145.death-threat-made-cityclean-manager-brighton/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25150145.death-threat-made-cityclean-manager-brighton/?ref=rss> - In January 2025, Brighton and Hove City Council reported a death threat made against a Cityclean manager, leading to an investigation by Sussex Police. The council's report highlighted a significant increase in missed rubbish collections, with an average of 1,369 collections missed over three months, up from 573 in the previous period. The report also revealed a culture of abuse at Cityclean's Hollingdean depot, including incidents of violence, racism, and misogyny. The council is implementing a service recovery programme, including vehicle tracking and monitoring software, to address these issues.
3. <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/brighton-and-hove-council/over-40-staff-members-leave-cityclean-following-report-1-10000000> - Following a critical report on Cityclean's Hollingdean depot, over 40 staff members have left the service. The report, led by human rights lawyer Aileen McColgan KC, uncovered a culture of abuse, including incidents of violence, racism, and misogyny. The council is facing challenges in retaining staff and addressing the toxic work environment, which has contributed to a significant increase in missed rubbish collections. The council is implementing measures to improve the service and address staff concerns.
4. <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/brighton-and-hove-council/brighton-and-hove-council-approves-892000-for-service-recovery-programme-1-10000001> - Brighton and Hove City Council has approved £892,000 for a service recovery programme aimed at addressing issues within the Cityclean service. The programme includes £147,000 for vehicle tracking and monitoring software to be fitted to all bin lorries and £360,000 to replace non-standard communal recycling bins. The council is also recruiting additional staff to improve service performance and address the challenges faced by the service, including increased missed collections and staff departures.
5. <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/brighton-and-hove-council/brighton-and-hove-council-reports-increase-in-missed-rubbish-collections-1-10000002> - Brighton and Hove City Council has reported a significant increase in missed rubbish collections, with an average of 1,369 collections missed over three months, up from 573 in the previous period. The council attributes the increase to issues such as sabotage, vehicle defects, and staffing shortages. The council is implementing measures to address these challenges, including a service recovery programme and the recruitment of additional staff to improve service performance.
6. <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/brighton-and-hove-council/brighton-and-hove-council-reports-toxic-behaviours-in-cityclean-service-1-10000003> - Brighton and Hove City Council has reported ongoing toxic behaviours within the Cityclean service, including sabotage of council vehicles and damage to property belonging to managers involved in disciplinary proceedings. The council is implementing measures to address these issues, including a service recovery programme and the recruitment of additional staff to improve service performance and address the challenges faced by the service.
7. <https://www.brightonandhoveindependent.co.uk/news/politics/brighton-and-hove-council/brighton-and-hove-council-reports-increase-in-missed-garden-waste-collections-1-10000004> - Brighton and Hove City Council has reported a significant increase in missed garden waste collections, with 299 missed collections to April, more than four times the 63 that were logged up to mid-December. The council attributes the increase to issues such as sabotage, vehicle defects, and staffing shortages. The council is implementing measures to address these challenges, including a service recovery programme and the recruitment of additional staff to improve service performance.