# Ealing warns summer staff shortages will prolong missed bin collections into September



A staffing shortfall aggravated by summer leave and sickness has left parts of Ealing facing delayed household waste and recycling collections, the council has said. According to Ealing Council’s service page, rounds are being deployed later than usual and any roads not collected on the scheduled day will be prioritised the following day; residents are being asked to leave missed bins out. The authority warned it expects disruption to continue through the school holiday period and into September while staffing levels recover.

Local reporting suggests the problem has affected a sizeable number of households. MyLondon says more than 1,000 homes were left without collections at one point, and the council’s operational partner, Greener Ealing, has cited a shortage of HGV drivers and operational constraints as the cause. Ealing’s website and council statements say the borough is actively recruiting and providing regularly updated lists of affected streets, while giving practical guidance for reporting missed collections.

The pressure comes at a time when council tax in the borough has risen markedly. Ealing Council’s published 2025/26 figures show the Band D charge is now £2,041.02 for the year — an increase reflected in the figures routinely quoted to residents — and Band H properties now face bills in excess of £4,000. The council’s official pages set out how those totals are calculated and note that the increases are linked to formal budget decisions, including precepts and adult social care assumptions.

The squeeze on local services is not solely a local problem: national policy is seeking to lock in regular collections and make recruitment easier. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs set out its Simpler Recycling reforms in May 2024, saying councils should provide a baseline of frequent collections — for example fortnightly black-bin waste and weekly food waste — and signalling measures to bolster the workforce, such as increased vocational testing and faster HGV licence processing. Ministers have also warned publicly that regular waste collections are essential public services that should be maintained.

Ealing’s leadership says it is seeking to address the shortfall through recruitment and by reviewing pay and incentives. A council spokesman told local outlets that, while some staff are off sick, many are on holiday during the summer and the authority is looking at salary and incentive packages to attract and retain HGV drivers — a cohort in short supply across logistics, retail and local government alike. The council also stresses it routinely prioritises missed rounds for next-day collection where possible.

The delays have prompted criticism from political opponents. Susan Hall, Conservative leader in the London Assembly, told The Telegraph the situation was “outrageous”, saying: “When you’re paid to do a job, damn well do it,” and adding that those responsible for service delivery must ensure adequate staffing. Her comments reflect wider frustration among some residents and councillors about visible failures in routine services.

The disruption in Ealing sits alongside a more prolonged crisis in Birmingham, where industrial action over job roles and pay has left waste piling up for months. Reporting by the BBC and regional outlets documents an escalation from intermittent walkouts in January to sustained strike action, and Birmingham City Council’s accounts show it has incurred millions in additional spending to maintain a skeleton service and keep household waste sites open. Unite and the council remain in talks, mediated by Acas, against a backdrop of long‑running equal‑pay liabilities that have constrained the authority’s finances.

For residents the consequences are immediate: unpleasant smells, increased vermin risk and a sense of neglect among some neighbourhoods. Local reporting from Birmingham described complaints about infestations and disruption to daily life; health and environmental concerns are why councils and government alike characterise regular refuse collection as a core public service that must be safeguarded.

Resolving the current disruption in Ealing will, the council says, depend on recruiting new drivers, managing short‑term cover and the return of staff from holiday, with normal service expected to be restored as staffing stabilises in September. Longer term, government moves to standardise collections and ease HGV training and licensing intend to address the structural driver shortage, but councils and unions argue that pay, working conditions and reliable recruitment pipelines will also be needed to prevent repeat problems.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/3055/bin_collection_delays)
* Paragraph 2 – [[5]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/ealing-council-leaves-over-1000-24504198), [[2]](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/3055/bin_collection_delays)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201097/council_tax/3458/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-bin-collections-for-england-to-boost-recycling), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/3055/bin_collection_delays), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
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* Paragraph 8 – [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdjg07xvnnjo), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 9 – [[2]](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/3055/bin_collection_delays), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-bin-collections-for-england-to-boost-recycling), [[5]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/ealing-council-leaves-over-1000-24504198)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15009279/Rubbish-collections-delayed-staff-shortage-binmen.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201172/refuse_services/3055/bin_collection_delays> - Ealing Council’s official webpage explains current delays to household waste and recycling collections caused by a shortage of HGV drivers and staff sickness. It states rounds are being deployed later than usual and promises any roads not collected on the scheduled day will be prioritised the following day, asking residents to leave missed bins out. The page gives specific, regularly updated lists of affected streets and apologises for inconvenience, noting the council is actively recruiting and reviewing workforce arrangements. It provides guidance for reporting missed collections and emphasises efforts to restore normal service in the borough.
3. <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201097/council_tax/3458/> - Ealing Council’s official council tax bands page lists charges for 2025/26, confirming a Band D total of £2,041.02 including the Greater London Authority precept. The table sets amounts for Bands A to H and explains the adult social care precept and how the council’s budget and tax base determine the Band D figure. The page references formal budget decisions and provides context for how council tax is calculated and collected, advising residents where to find their band and noting discounts or exemptions. It is the authoritative source for council tax levels for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and payment information online.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-bin-collections-for-england-to-boost-recycling> - The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs press release sets out the Government’s 'Simpler Recycling' reforms published 9 May 2024, aiming to standardise household recycling and ensure regular waste collections. It announces that councils will be expected to collect black bin waste at least fortnightly and food waste weekly, with a backstop to prevent three or four-weekly collections, and that councils may co‑collect certain materials to simplify arrangements. The release frames regular collections as essential and stresses local flexibility. It also signals support measures such as increased vocational testing and faster HGV licence processing to help maintain collections nationwide.
5. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/ealing-council-leaves-over-1000-24504198> - MyLondon reports that Ealing Council left more than 1,000 homes with uncollected bins because of a shortage of HGV drivers and 'operational constraints' at Greener Ealing, the council’s environmental services provider. The article explains the delays affected recycling and refuse rounds, though collections were typically caught up within 24–36 hours. It links the shortage to national HGV driver shortfalls exacerbated by Brexit and the pandemic, and describes Greener Ealing’s efforts to recruit and train drivers. The piece quotes council sources about missed rounds being prioritised and notes residents’ concerns about smell and inconvenience.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cdjg07xvnnjo> - The BBC explains the background and impact of Birmingham’s bin workers’ industrial action, outlining the dispute over the removal of Waste Recycling and Collection Officer roles and claimed pay losses of up to £8,000 for some staff. It details the escalation from intermittent walkouts in January to an all‑out strike in March, the council’s use of temporary agency labour, and alleged picket-line blockades preventing vehicles leaving depots. The article summarises public health and environmental concerns from uncollected waste, outlines the council’s position on job evaluation and equal pay risk, and describes ongoing Acas-mediated talks and the union’s demands on pay.
7. <https://www.itv.com/news/central/2025-07-21/taxpayer-cost-of-birmingham-bin-strike-revealed> - ITV News Central reports a Birmingham City Council finance report estimating almost £4 million of additional costs from the bin strike, including street cleansing, extended household waste site hours, security and agency overtime. The piece notes the strike began in January and escalated to all‑out action, with the council declaring a major incident as waste piled up. The report states the authority effectively declared itself bankrupt in 2023 because of historic equal pay liabilities. The article lists ongoing cost drivers such as legal advice and call centre staffing, highlights delayed transformation savings, and quotes council and union statements on costs.