# Birmingham bin strike continues as military deployed to manage waste crisis



The ongoing bin strike in Birmingham, which began on March 11, continues to wreak havoc on the city's public cleanliness as thousands of tonnes of uncollected waste remain on the streets. In response to the escalating situation, military personnel have been deployed to assist in managing the public health risk stemming from the mounting refuse.

The dispute arises from a conflict over pay between the Birmingham City Council and refuse workers, represented by the Unite union. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner has urged union members to accept an “improved” offer aimed at resolving the situation, while Health Secretary Wes Streeting characterised the strike as having “escalated way out of hand.”

Sharon Graham, the general secretary of Unite, has strongly defended the workers, stating, “It is important to reiterate the truth, as opposed to the lies being peddled in an attempt to distract. This dispute is not about greed or increased pay. This dispute is about workers losing up to £8,000 of their pay – which for some is almost a quarter.” Birmingham City Council has countered that only 17 workers would be impacted by the pay changes, claiming that the actual financial loss for those employees would be significantly less than what Unite has reported.

Graham also pointed out that a partial pay protection deal has already been negotiated, and she encouraged the council to consider a broader proposal submitted by the union. A further vote on a potential agreement to end the strike is scheduled for Monday.

The council previously declared a major incident and sought help from neighbouring authorities to manage waste collection. Reports from residents indicate a dire situation, with numerous locals claiming to have spotted giant rats, allegedly the size of cats, among the refuse.

In a statement concerning the government's response, a spokesperson highlighted the deployment of military personnel with operational planning expertise to assist Birmingham City Council. This move is part of a series of measures intended to address the public health risks associated with the extensive littering. The government has already facilitated support through neighbouring councils that have provided additional waste collection vehicles and crews, and have opened waste centres for Birmingham residents.

Public sentiment appears to lean towards government intervention, as a recent poll indicated that 57 percent of voters nationally believe the Government should take action to clear Birmingham's streets, a figure that rises to 67 percent within the West Midlands. While many blame the council for the ongoing situation, there is also a significant portion of the public—63 percent—who oppose privatisation of bin collection services.

The city's ongoing refuse collection issues remain at the forefront of public discourse as negotiations between the union and the city council continue against the backdrop of significant community concern.

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

## References

* <https://news.sky.com/story/birmingham-bin-strike-why-are-workers-striking-and-how-long-will-it-last-13339621> - This article corroborates the ongoing bin strike in Birmingham, the dispute over pay, and the council's declaration of a major incident due to public health concerns. It also highlights the significant amount of uncollected waste and health risks such as rats.
* <https://www.circularonline.co.uk/news/birmingham-bin-strikes-explained-what-is-the-dispute-about/> - This piece explains the dispute over the abolition of the Waste Recycling and Collection Officer roles, which could lead to pay cuts for some workers. It also mentions the involvement of government figures and the use of mobile household waste centres as a contingency measure.
* <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2025/04/13/uiiw-a13.html> - This article discusses the strike's impact, the government's stance, and Unite's concerns about pay cuts. It also details the presence of police and security measures at picket lines and the proposed deal to resolve the strike.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-bin-strike-latest-updates-25886661> - Although the specific article was not available, similar coverage by local news outlets typically reports on the public's perception of the strike, government responses, and the negotiations between Unite and the council.
* <https://inews.co.uk/news/birmingham-bin-strike-latest-updates-2584426> - This type of article from news outlets often provides updates on the strike's status, reactions from local residents, and efforts by the council and government to address the situation.