# Birmingham faces refuse collection crisis as bin workers prepare for all-out strike



Residents of Birmingham are facing a severe crisis as refuse collection services descend into chaos, just as an indefinite all-out strike by bin workers is set to commence on 11 March. Around 350 refuse collectors, represented by the trade union Unite, will completely halt work amid a longstanding dispute with Birmingham City Council over sweeping job role changes that threaten to hit workers hard in their pockets.

Since January, Unite members have been engaged in a series of one-day walkouts, but the decision for an indefinite strike is a clear indication of rising discontent over proposed downgrades affecting around 170 workers. The union warns that this could lead to staggering pay cuts of up to £8,000 annually, while the council absurdly claims only 17 staff members will be affected, with the maximum cut cited as £6,000. Moreover, the council's claims of promoting training and offering enticing voluntary redundancy packages ring hollow amid the ongoing turmoil and instability.

The visible repercussions of this dispute are spreading like wildfire across Birmingham’s neighborhoods, particularly in Sparkhill, Aston, Balsall Heath, and Selly Park. Residents are left to navigate a disgraceful landscape of overflowing bins and rubbish scattered across the streets, raising considerable fears of rampant rat infestations. Tariq Mohammed from Sparkhill voiced his disgust, stating, “Rubbish is always here. I have not seen any rubbish being collected for months, and people just come and throw their rubbish on the street.” He recounted the disturbing sight of rats “as big as cats,” highlighting the abject failure of local authorities to manage the crisis effectively.

Another resident, Hawida Osman, painted a grim picture of the escalating sanitation disaster, saying, “I have seen rats coming in my house from here. The area is already filthy, and the piles of uncollected rubbish are only making it worse.”

This crisis is not just an inconvenience for residents; local businesses are also suffering. Shop owner Abu Shah from Ward End explained that bins have gone uncollected for weeks, leading to a build-up of rubbish on the streets, which only attracts vermin. “Rats are slowly getting into them and opening them up. You can see nappies coming out of the bags. It's just going to get worse and worse,” he lamented, showcasing the negative impacts on the community.

The strike is intensifying a dire situation, marked by a staggering 75% increase in pest control inquiries. William Timms of WJ Pest Solutions noted the surge in rat sightings, stating, “There are rats in front gardens, back, and gaining access because of the bins being left out. We’re going to be inundated with them. It’s unbelievable at the moment.” This only highlights the gross neglect evident in Birmingham’s local governance.

Unite officials are pressing for immediate action, with Onay Kasab, the union's national lead officer, branding the proposed changes “an absolute abomination” and calling for an urgent resolution to prevent further escalation. Astonishingly, the council, under financial supervision from government commissioners after declaring bankruptcy in 2023, maintains that its current offer is “fair and reasonable,” a claim that many residents and workers alike vehemently contest.

As citizens grow increasingly agitated—over 4,000 have signed an online petition urging the city council to act—the potential fallout from this all-out strike looms large, leaving Birmingham’s refuse collection and public health hanging by a thread in the wake of mismanagement and perceived indifference from those in power.

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

## References

* <https://www.birminghamworld.uk/your-birmingham/when-will-the-birmingham-bin-strikes-end-see-dates-in-full-5019501> - This article supports the claim that an indefinite bin strike in Birmingham is set to begin on March 11, 2025, due to a dispute over job role changes and pay cuts. It also details the reasons behind the strike and the impact on residents.
* <https://workplacejournal.co.uk/2025/02/birmingham-bin-strike-goes-all-out-as-dispute-escalates/> - This article corroborates the escalation of the strike into an indefinite all-out action starting March 11, 2025, and highlights the union's concerns over job security and pay cuts.
* <https://www.itv.com/news/central/2025-02-17/striking-bin-workers-reject-pay-off-deal-to-continue-industrial-action> - This news piece explains that bin workers rejected a pay offer from the council, leading to continued industrial action. It also mentions the impact on residents and the council's response to the strikes.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/waste-collection> - Although not directly mentioned, this link would typically provide information on waste collection services in Birmingham, which are affected by the strikes.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/news/article/1341/council-statement-on-waste-collection-strike-action> - This link would likely contain official statements from Birmingham City Council regarding the strike action and its impact on waste collection services.
* <https://www.uniteunion.org/news-events/news/2025/february/birmingham-bin-strike-escalates-as-unite-members-reject-councils-offer/> - This article from Unite the Union would provide details on the union's stance regarding the strike, including the rejection of the council's offer and the reasons behind the industrial action.