

How you can help the council's 'bin men'

The good news is that the council is about to start collecting the blue bins again so you can all forget how many bottles of red you have consumed over the last five weeks or so.

We spoke to Scott Coleman, who is a supervisor working with the council. He began working there about 15 or 16 years ago as a driver, and now he is in charge of the teams who are working to collect all the rubbish from Edinburgh households.

Due to both staff shortages and a shortage of vehicles, the service is just a little slower than usual, but after speaking with Scott it is clear they are all trying hard.

While Scott asks you to bear with them, he is confident that any complaints about missed bins are being dealt with within the 48 hours after a complaint is logged.

We asked what residents could do to help. Scott said: "When you put your bins out, please make sure you have the correct bin out on the correct day. Please don't overfill the bins as this will make life difficult for our teams.

"Now that glass is back it helps if you take the tops off bottles and jars and also if you rinse them out for us."

The teams are observing strict social distancing and so it is usually only be one person trying to lift any boxes.



Scott explained they have a new way of working so that they can observe social distancing at the same time. Any vehicle can only have a driver plus one team member in the cab, whereas they used to carry a full crew of a driver and two loaders. So that they can deal with waste more efficiently, they have the other team member following in a hire car who is then able to help along the route. But they all manage to stay 2 metres apart while doing so. The council approved the extra resources to allow them to do this, and Scott is very grateful for it as it allows them to more or less stick to their previous schedule.

Food waste is taken to the new Biogen anaerobic digestion facility at Millerhill, and glass to the new multi million pound glass recycling plant at Seafield. If your bottle tops or jar lids are still on then the glass has to pass along a conveyor and a picking device sorts them, but it can be made easier by a little effort on the part of residents.

One of the benefits of the pandemic has been that many council workers have upskilled. Some have become drivers when previously they were not, so while some staff are off for a variety of reasons, it is really a case of all hands on deck.

They are trying their best to stick to their four day timetable and so glass will be collected between Tuesday and Friday next week. Remember Scott's main message – **Don't overfill the bin!**

Maybe you could keep some bottles back till the following week, then it won't look as if the party has been at your house.

And his final message was a big thank you to all the staff working on waste collection. They were praised during the council's Leadership Panel this week too for keeping the service going as well as it has done.