

Devon County Council is reopening its recycling centres for essential use only from Monday 11 May.

The government has defined 'essential use' as waste that 'cannot be stored without causing a risk of injury, health or harm to the resident or other members of their household.'

Residents are urged to follow government guidance and only travel to recycling centres if the waste presents a hazard and 'cannot be legally and responsibly disposed of in other ways.'

It is the first stage of what will be a phased reopening for Devon's 19 Household Waste Recycling Centres and is subject to any subsequent government announcements.

To protect the public and staff a series of health protection measures will be in force at each centre, including a one-in one-out policy and the two-metre social distancing guidelines.

Unfortunately, this means for the time being site staff will not be able to assist with unloading waste.

These measures are likely to cause significant delays and queues and residents are advised to postpone their visit where possible.

Most recycling centres will open Monday May 11 and operate their usual opening hours. However Punchbowl in Crediton won't open until Friday May 15 and will only open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Opening hours will be 9am to 5pm Fridays and Mondays and 10am to 6pm on Saturday and Sundays.

In addition, Crowndale Recycling Centre in Tavistock, will be open from Sunday May 17, and only open on Saturdays and Sundays, both days 10am -6pm.

This is to ensure that the adjacent Waste Transfer Stations, which are vital in ensuring kerbside collections continue, remain fully operational.

In addition:

- Residents displaying coronavirus symptoms, are asked not to visit the recycling centres.
- Only cars without trailers, with a maximum of two adults per vehicle, will be permitted on site.
- To keep unloading times to a minimum, trailers, vans, pick-ups and commercial vehicles will not be granted access for the time being.
- Payments on site must be by credit/debit card only

Councillor Andrea Davis, Devon County Council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, said; "We understand that storing some waste for long periods may not be safe and that is why, following government guidance, we are reopening our recycling centres for essential use only.

"The safety of the public and staff is our top priority and lengthy waiting times should be expected due to the new restrictions in place.

"We ask you to avoid queuing on the Public Highway and if it is very busy to come back later. In the first instance, we ask that if people cannot store waste at home, they should use the regular kerbside collections for disposal. If however the waste is presenting a hazard and there is no other legal way of disposing of it, then they can bring it to our recycling centres. We are working to restore normal service as soon as it is safe to do so and we appreciate your patience at this time."