

Fly-tipping cases increase to more than a million

Jerome Starkey, Countryside Correspondent
October 20 2017, 12:00am,
The Times



The most common place for fly-tipping is on roads, and the most common amount of rubbish dumped is equivalent to a “small van-load”
GETTY

Fly-tipping is at an eight-year high, with more than a million cases recorded over the past financial year.

There were 1,002,154 instances reported by councils in England, which cost £57.7 million to clear up.

It was the fourth year in a row that fly-tipping increased, as councils continued to cut efforts to catch and punish the culprits. It was also the highest level of fly-tipping since 2009, when 1.2 million incidents were recorded.

Campaigners blame the high costs and limited access to municipal tips for fuelling the rise.

The figures do not include rubbish dumped on private land, which campaigners said obscured the true scale of the problem.

Nor do the figures include the industrial scale dumping, or more than 20 tonnes a time, which is classified as waste crime instead of fly-tipping and dealt with separately by the Environment Agency.

The cost to councils of clearing up fly-tipping increased by £8 million to £57.7 million last year, while the number of “enforcement actions,” which range from fixed-penalty fines to prosecutions, fell by 20,000 to 474,000.

Councils spent £16 million on “enforcement actions” last year, down from £17.6 million two years ago.

“It is time to give councils the resources they need to tackle this problem head-on,” Allison Ogden-Newton, from the campaign group Keep Britain Tidy, said.

“We also need the people of Britain to stop treating our country like one giant tip, to take responsibility for their unwanted stuff and make sure that, if they give their waste to someone else to dispose of, they are going to dispose of it legally.”

The most common place for fly-tipping to take place was on roads, and the most common amount of rubbish dumped was equivalent to a “small van-load”, followed by the equivalent of a car boot-full.

There were also at least 33,000 cases that involved tipper trucks and a further 140,000 cases where the amount of rubbish was thought to have come from a larger transit-sized van.

About two thirds of the cases were classed as household rubbish,

the figures reveal, while 7 per cent was commercial waste. Martin Tett, the Local Government Association's environment spokesman, said the money spent clearing up had been diverted from essential services "like caring for the elderly, protecting children or tackling homelessness".

"It is unacceptable that councils are having to spend vast amounts each year tackling this scourge," he said. "When they take offenders to court, councils need a faster and more effective legal system which means fly-tippers are given hard-hitting fines for more serious offences.

"Manufacturers also need to provide more take-back services so people can hand in old furniture and mattresses when they buy new ones."

A spokesman for the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs said that fly-tipping was "an unacceptable blight on our landscape."

"We have cracked down on offenders by strengthening sentencing guidelines and giving councils the powers to hand out on-the-spot fines to fly-tippers," the spokesman added. "We have made it easier for vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping to be stopped, searched and seized and will continue to work with local partners to stop this inexcusable crime."

According to the Environment Agency, waste crime costs the country £1 billion a year in lost revenues. Sir James Bevan, the agency's head, said it was the "new narcotics" and enforcement agencies were struggling to catch up.

Alan Harris

Those carrying rubbish should have a delivery ticket confirming where the waste is going and what it is. It is easy to tell when a van is heavily loaded. A policeman could easily stop a loaded van and the absence of paperwork checked back to the waste owner and the tip destination. The law is there with severe fines attached to be paid by the driver.

If the fines were applied by the courts properly fly tipping could be stamped out overnight.

If I remember rightly the fine max is about £10,000. Much too big a risk for the driver to fly tip three or four tonnes (1 to 2 meters cubed) which could be tipped at a landfill site for less than £100.

Sham K

Recycling needs to be looked at. How much material is actually recycled (not collected). And how much pollution is caused by the process. From collection lorries to the factories.

Where I live the refuse collectors seem to take great delight in refusing to empty a bin because it might be “contaminated”.

Maybe that’s why they are called refuse collectors.

Mrs Sarah Rees

It all seems rather pointless, so you charge a fee to people to use dumps, but collect less revenue, bcos people refuse to pay, so you spend £16mio clearing up the countryside bcos you charge people to use the dump and they don't pay, so yu spend £16mio to clear up the countryside.....I think i can see a way out of this....

Frankenfurter
@Mrs Sarah Rees

Yes, this is virtue signaling meets reality.

David Lowder

We have military drones with nothing better to do use them

You're having a laugh

The trouble with crimes like this is that it is worth taking the risk to save the expense. Even if caught, the penalty will be £5 with £5 costs.

Economic crimes like this should have truly deterrent penalties - confiscation of the vehicle that did it - no appeals, no reduced penalties, s*d Human Rights. You are caught doing/having done it - you face a major economic loss.

It won't happen because of the Human Rights industry - but that is the only solution.

Johnny Norfolk

When we lived in Germany a couple of times per year you could put anything outside your house that you did not want. For 48 hours people could help themselves then the council came round and took what was left. Looked a mess but it worked. The first time we saw it we wondered just what was going on.

Johnny Norfolk

Make it free to tip all rubbish. No charges. Free collection for large items.

Atticus

My council charges around £30 to pick up large items. An old sofa and table has been in my garage for a year now until I get around to arranging it. People without the luxury of space have to dump

items paid or unpaid.

Councils should pick up large items for free from local tax payers as overall this is cheaper than picking up dumped items.

[Johnny Norfolk](#)

[@Atticus](#) You know it, I know it, but councils do not like to serve the people they like it the other way round.

[Jude](#)

[@Johnny Norfolk](#) [@Atticus](#) It always used to be the way, the tip did not charge for any waste and the Council picked up large items for free. Can't remember exactly when they started charging, around 1995/2000 was it? Ever since then fly tipping has gone berserk.

[Johnny Norfolk](#)

[@Jude](#) [@Johnny Norfolk](#) [@Atticus](#) and its always blame the people when its the governments fault.

[8031](#)

People are doing this because they care nothing for the environment, have no sense of public duty, don't think they'll get caught and if they do, aren't put off by any possible fines.

[Barrie Duke](#)

In the countryside most services have disappeared- roads are a disgraceful mess with potholes, broken and filthy road signs, gutters full of dead leaves, branches and carcasses and rubbish thrown from cars. Gateways are often covered in rubbish.

Tips expect older people to climb to the top of various containers to leave rubbish whilst staff hide. It can take a long time to identify, separate and bag items and select the correct disposal containers.

Most councillors are in denial that a completely free service that accepted all non-toxic waste kept the countryside clean for

decades. The towns may be another story.
We lose a sense of civic pride when councillors believe that applying bean counting criteria solves a problem. It only makes the problem worse and we all suffer.

[Dorothy Dachshund](#)
[@Barrie Duke](#)

Yes Barrie but British people have very little civic pride and don't mind where they dump their rubbish so long as it is not on their own property. Old people are as lazy and irresponsible as the young.

A filthy dirty environment is how we like it here.

[Barrie Duke](#)

Why blame the many for the faults of a minority.

[scillychick](#)

DD. Speak for yourself Dotty it is certainly not how I feel.

[Niall Hughes](#)

Not all British people. Some of us pick up litter that lazy wretches throw on the floor sometimes within a few feet of a bin.

[Dorothy Dachshund](#)

Please refer to Directive 1999/31/EC and Directive 2008/98/EC.

[Adrienne](#)

once the councils began charging quite considerable amounts of money for waste disposal... commercial and private... i thought that fly tipping would increase.. ... seems an obvious though anti social response...

Mr Howard Knight

@Adrienne However, the research shows that there is no correlation at all between council charges for waste disposal and the amount of fly-tipping.

Clear Day

Need to ask individuals why they fly tip. This is what the research should show (if it doesn't already). Difficult to find these people though!

Yersinia Pestis

@Clear Day

Two reasons -

1/ It costs to dump.

2/ They're too idle to go to a dump.

Foreversideways

Who's research?

Righttorant

If it's mostly household rubbish it should often be possible to trace the owners and prosecute them. Oh no, wait. It's more important to harass dead people apparently.

Foreversideways

All the fault of the councils and their rubbish policies.

Culpepper

Each time I return from visiting another country, usually European, I am struck by how shabby ours is. Roads, buildings, verges, town centres - with much litter, pavements peppered with chewing gum, tacky sign posting, dirty buildings, overflowing bins and not forgetting the ugly but permanent decoration of hideous wheelie bins everywhere. This encourages more litter and a no pride in my town/don't care attitude.

At the same time, this disposable society increases the amount of careless waste - it's cheap so let's get rid and get new. Local councils exacerbate the problems by charging tip fees or banning vans from tips - or charge fees to book 2 months in advance a "bulky collection" of items by which time the householder has got fed up and got a man with a van to take away the old sofa. Or worse, having waited out the two months, the council refuses to take the stuff because it either wasn't outside before 6.55am or some drops of rain settled on it overnight. Sigh.

Rents of large spaces are too high so no charity or entrepreneur can afford to take and re-sell reasonably good items. Decades ago the annual bonfire night would see various sofas and so on set upon a heaped bonfire. Or friends/family would be grateful for your cast-offs. No more.

Telling householders they mustn't use a man with a van or that they should check his credentials (whatever they may be) is daft. Very few of us have the transport - or the tip licence - to get shut of the stuff ourselves.

Only Ikea will swap new sofas for old - for a fee. Only sofas though.

No, the answer is down to Councils - they neglect this most basic of services to justify the bleating about insufficient income, knowing it will stir up annoyance. Collection and disposal by them should be more often, and recycling/local tip visits easier and cheaper. Put the council tax up and earmark it on our bills - other EU countries charge separately for environmental and cleaning budgets. Help householders to put the cowboys out of business.

[Ricky Freeman](#)

Most of council tax and government council grants go on welfare of one form or another. Councils can't afford to open their recycling sites.

[Mr Howard Knight](#)

[@Ricky Freeman Fantasy!](#)

[Yersinia Pestis](#)

We live a mile from a "recycling centre"- the irony is that if there's something there I can recycle I'm not allowed to take it.

[Dr Nick Cornish](#)

[@Yersinia Pestis](#) Why?

[Yersinia Pestis](#)

[@Dr Nick Cornish](#)

Who knows? Elf 'n safety?

[Dr Nick Cornish](#)

[@Yersinia Pestis](#) [@Dr Nick Cornish](#) I constructed a 5m x 5m patio a few years ago.

Went to the dump with waste rubble etc; and commented to the person there that this was my third visit that day.

He said that that was illegal but he would let me off this time but in future only two visits a day were allowed. When I asked him if that meant that if I cycled up with a single bin bag three times I would be stopped but if I put both in the car and went once would I be stopped on the bike on the 3rd time?

Answer: obviously yes.

Pathetic.

Clear Day

Simple answer, don't tell them how many times you've been there!

Dr Nick Cornish

@Clear Day Thanks but it's a small town and they know me.

Clear Day

Maybe don't make eye contact or go incognito!

Yersinia Pestis

@Clear Day

Not a lot of use if they record the reg. of the cars.

Frankenfurter

There is a simple solution. Take the stuff at the tip. Stop giving someone with a van grief because he wants to get rid of a sofa. Otherwise, in might end up in a beauty spot.

In fact, fly-tippers metaphorically could really be freedom fighters pointing out to a government that it is your job to make peoples lives happier. Not to lecture people about their carbon footprint.

Michael Watson

If our tip was still operational, I would. As it is, stuff just piles up behind my shed. I don't agree with your view that they are freedom fighters

Yersinia Pestis

£5,000 fine, 12 months disqualification from driving and confiscation of the vehicle. That would do for a first offence. Oh, and no social security if you lose your job for it.

I am feeling rather weary..

Parts of beautiful South Leicestershire is turning into a tip!

Michael Watson

An inevitable consequence of councils closing local waste centres....yes, I mean YOU Lincolnshire CC and closing the Leadenham tip which was always bulging at the seams.

Odin

If it costs nearly £58 million to clear up fly tipping plus £16 million enforcement, I wonder what it would cost to allow free tipping and avoid these costs.

Silver Fox 2

@Odin Don't be silly. That would require sensible, joined-up thinking by local councillors that would help the community. I cut my mother's lawn and attempted to take the grass cuttings to her local tip. I was refused entry as my car number plate was registered to an address in another county. And they wonder why people just dump stuff!

Clear Day

Easy answer. Sack those Coucillors and employ sensible and educated Volunteers who would solve these problems for a retainer! I also visited the UK recently and noticed (like Culpepper above) what a 'tip' the countryside was looking. And all the road congestion - my God, what a mess. UK GB is in one helluva mess and seems to have given up. So sad.

SJR2020

Where I live the rise in fly tipping appears to be directly proportional to the availability of local tips, where, once the Waste Nazis from the council got involved, various groups were banned from tipping there.

What did they honestly think would happen.....?

Igor Zap

How much is spent on clearing up after illegal occupation by travellers?

Two of Seven

@Igor Zap Too much. They moved into a field a mile down the road from us. It took 10 days to get rid of them and they left behind a pile of rubbish about 25 feet high which the farmer had to clear. He made sure tho' to plant a crop since then to avoid a re-occurrence.

Winebuddy

My local waste disposal site now charges £2.00 to dispose of 1 bucket of clean brick rubble! People will not pay at this level!

Omnishambles

@Winebuddy Name and shame?

Winebuddy

Northumberland County Council!

Adrienne

@Winebuddy Somerset also do it....

Winebuddy

@Adrienne @Winebuddy And there was me thinking it was just in the "Northern Powerhouse"!!

Two of Seven

@Winebuddy Agree. Our local tip charges more to dispose of some product than it costs to purchase.