



The state of England's local environment

A survey by Keep Britain Tidy 2008/09



What is the survey about?

Keep Britain Tidy carries out surveys to assess the cleanliness of our local places from litter and dog mess to graffiti and fly-posting. The information is used by local councils to see how they are performing against the national average and is useful for government and residents to see how clean or dirty our country is.

It is the biggest survey of its kind with our surveyors visiting an astounding 12,540 sites in 54 local council areas across the nine regions of England between April 2008 and March 2009, and this is what we discovered...

Getting better

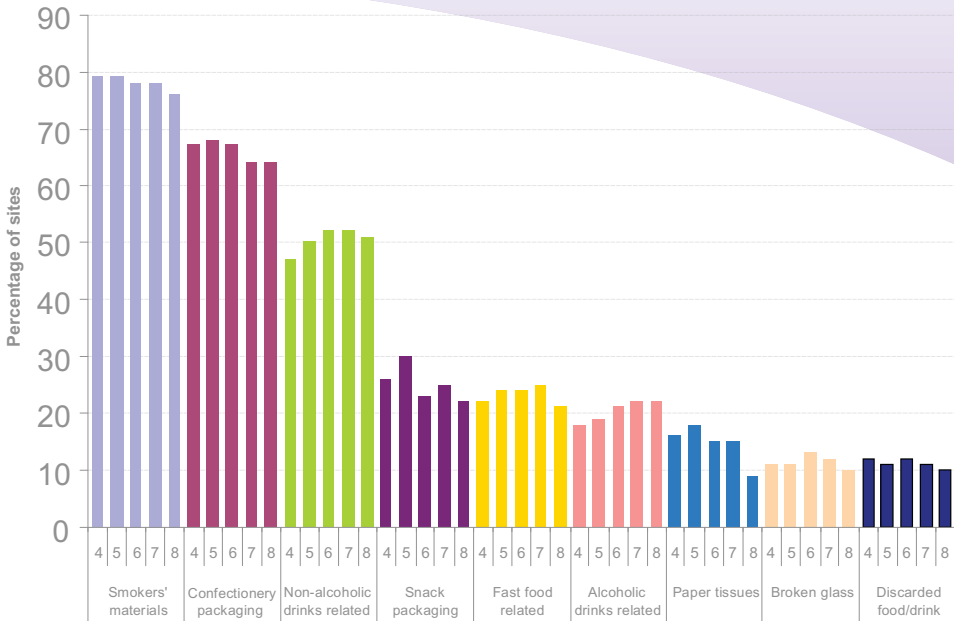
Litter is improving slightly, with slight reductions in fast food, snack packaging and smoking related litter

The good news is that we have seen a slight improvement in the incidence of litter during this survey and litter has moved from being unsatisfactory in the previous two years the survey was carried out (2006/7 and 2007/8), to being satisfactory in 2008/9. Since the survey began this has been a volatile measure, but we have seen a 4% reduction of litter this time – a fall for the second year running. It is encouraging that there has been an improvement in the right direction, which could be an indication that councils have improved their overall performance in cleaning up litter. It is important to note that due to the scale of the task we can only measure whether the litter type is present and this survey does not record how many actual pieces of litter were observed.

As always, smokers' materials remain the biggest blight on our streets but there has been a small decline in their presence and it is heartening to see other types of litter such as confectionery and snack packaging, and fast food rubbish showing a slight decline too (see charts opposite).

Litter continues to be predominantly found on footpaths, roads, and trapped in hedges and up by fences.

Incidences of the types of litter over last four years



This table shows the percentage of sites surveyed where we found the following types of litter. The higher the percentage the more prevalent the litter is.

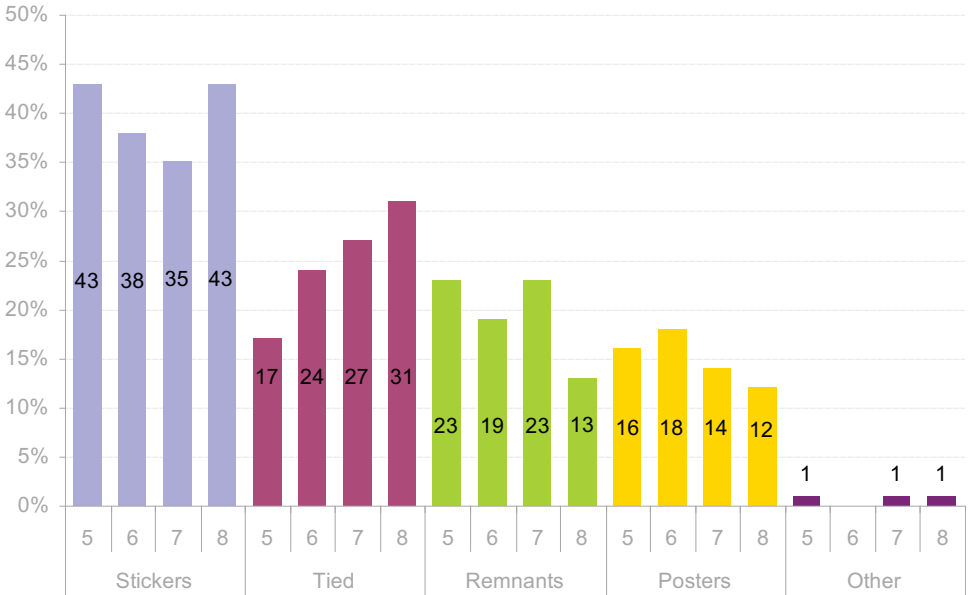
	% for 2007/08	% for 2008/09
Smokers' materials	78	76
Confectionery packaging	64	64
Non-alcoholic drinks related	57	51
Snack packaging	25	22
Alcoholic drinks related	22	22
Fast Food Related	25	21
Broken glass	12	10
Discarded food/drink	11	10
Plain plastic carrier bags	9	10
Paper Tissue	15	9
Till Receipts	10	9
Newspaper	8	8
Vehicle parts	7	7
Travel related	7	7
Solid gum	6	5
Supermarket carrier bags	6	5

Figures for supermarket plastic carrier bags have decreased which is no doubt linked to the fantastic reduction in supermarket carrier bags issued over the last year, however, the number of plain plastic carrier bags ending up as litter increased.

Illegal postings on the decline

There has been a 1% decline in the number of entertainment posters being fly-posted but posters tied to lampposts and other poles has unfortunately increased.

Proportions of types of fly-posting over last four years



Getting worse

Lower cleanliness levels overall

We have created something called the national cleansing index score which is based upon a basket of scores made up of litter, detritus (the soil you find around paved areas), leaf fall, weed growth, staining, fly-posting and graffiti. It gives an overall impression of how clean and tidy an area is.

This survey shows that the cleanliness of areas overall is getting worse with the national benchmark slipping 2% since 2007/08. In spite of seeing an improvement in litter, other issues such as staining, detritus and leaf fall have brought the overall cleanliness score down. This overall score is useful for councils to assess which areas of their cleansing regimes may need more attention.

The National Benchmark

	2006/07 (Year 6)%	2007/08 (Year 7)%	2008/09 (Year 8)%
National Benchmark	68	69	67

Please note that the higher the National Cleansing Index score, the cleaner the area is considered to be.

A regional view

Yorkshire and the Humber getting cleaner but everywhere else on the decline

Unfortunately overall cleanliness standards using the basket of measures have slipped for all regions with the exception of Yorkshire and the Humber which has seen a 3% improvement. The South West continues as the cleanest region with the North West continuing to fall at the bottom of the list.

Regional Benchmarks

	2006/07 (Year 6) %	2007/08 (Year 7) %	2008/09 (Year 8) %
South West	72	73	70
South East	72	71	68
East of England	66	68	68
Yorkshire & the Humber	67	65	68
West Midlands	68	68	67
North East	68	72	66
London	66	66	63
East Midlands	64	66	62
North West	62	64	60

Please note that the higher the National Cleansing Index score, the cleaner the area is considered to be.

South West at **70%** has maintained its position as the cleanest region of England for the third consecutive year despite a decline of 3% over the previous year. Figures for detritus, leaf fall and weed growth all fell away, as did cleansing standards at bus stops. However, overall standards for litter remain high.

South East at **68%** also showed a reduction of 3% over the previous year. Litter, leaf fall and staining showed deterioration. Staining and graffiti at bus stops and litter on landscaping also produced poorer results. However, there was good news over weed growth and overall standards for litter remain satisfactory.

East of England, also at **68%** has the same score as in the previous report. Improvements in litter, staining and graffiti were balanced by slipping standards in detritus, leaf fall and weed growth. There was an improvement of cleanliness standards at bus stops, with litter, staining and graffiti all showing improvement. Overall standards for litter are now satisfactory.

Yorkshire and Humber at **68%** was the only region to show an overall improvement, improving by 3% over the previous year. Values for detritus and staining improved, as did litter at bus stops and litter on landscaping. Not a single indicator declined in this region, though overall standards for litter remain unsatisfactory.

West Midlands at **67%** slipped by just 1%. Improvements in litter and leaf fall plus staining at bus stops were slightly outweighed by declines in detritus, weed growth and staining. Overall standards for litter are now satisfactory.

North East at **66%** slipped by 6% over the previous year, the largest falling away of standards in any region. Figures fell for litter, detritus, leaf fall, weed growth and staining. Litter and staining at bus stops and litter on landscaping also deteriorated. Overall standards for litter are now unsatisfactory.

London at **63%** slipped by 3% over the previous year due to falls overall in detritus and graffiti, although there was an improvement in litter and graffiti at bus stops. Overall standards for litter remain unsatisfactory.

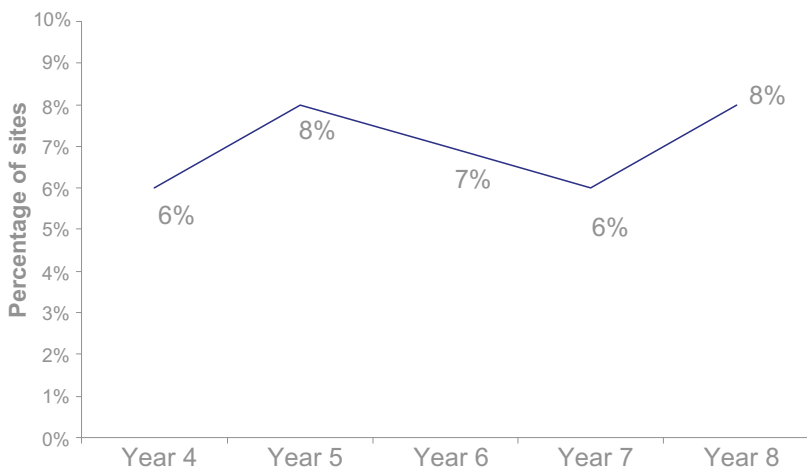
East Midlands at **62%** slipped by 4%. Falls were recorded for detritus, leaf fall and weed growth. Cleanliness standards at bus stops also fell away. However, there was improvement in litter on landscaping. However, overall standards for litter remain unsatisfactory.

North West at **60%** slipped by 4% and maintains its position at the foot of the table for a third consecutive year. Values declined for litter, leaf fall, staining and graffiti. Staining at bus stops and litter on landscaping also deteriorated. Overall standards for litter remain unsatisfactory.

Dog Mess on the up

Recent improvements in dog fouling have been reversed in this survey with dog mess now being found on 8% of sites looked at. However, this is still an improvement on when the survey first started and dog poo appeared on 10% of all sites. We are now starting to see bagged dog poo left either on the ground or hanging in trees and bushes. It appears that although the message about clearing up dog mess is having a significant impact, if there isn't a bin to hand, people are discarding the bagged dog waste immediately rather than taking it home.

Percentage of sites with dog fouling

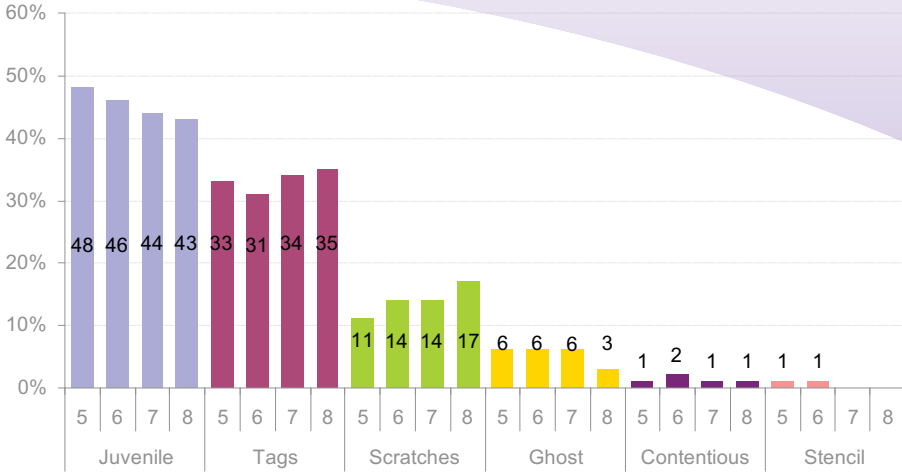


Graffiti makes its mark

Tags (stylised personal graphics, often large and in bold colours and usually painted with spray cans) and scratches are unfortunately on the rise but juvenile etchings in marker pens such as 'I love Johnny' are decreasing. Luckily reports of contentious graffiti are only 1% of all graffiti which is a clear sign that councils continue to respond effectively to remove this most unpleasant messaging.

The most common locations for finding graffiti are walls and windows followed by posts and public utility boxes.

Proportions in types of graffiti over last four years

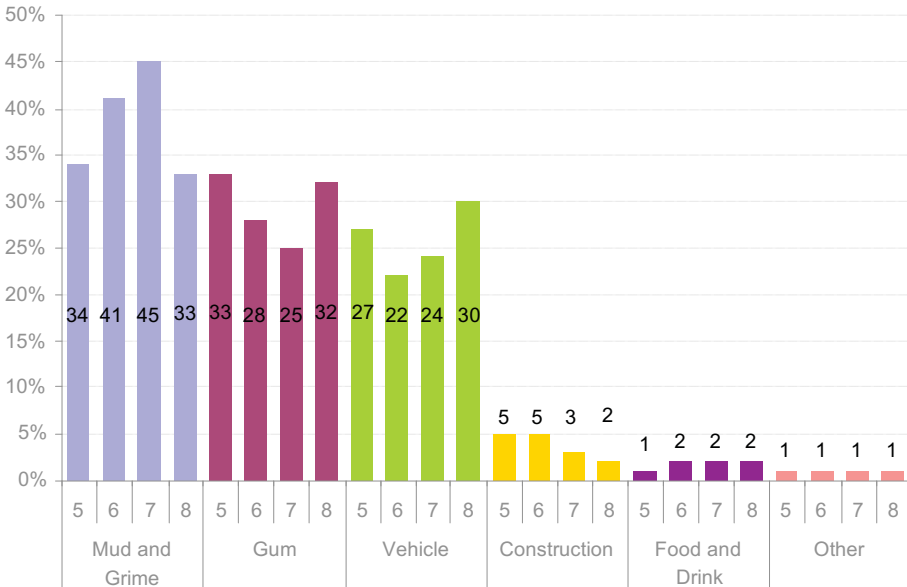


Stains on our streets

Gum remains a sticky problem

Whilst mud and grime on our streets is getting better, trodden in chewing gum and staining from vehicles is on the up with gum seeing a 7% increase and vehicle grime a 6% increase.

Proportions of staining over last four years



Want to know more?

This leaflet is a synopsis of a more detailed technical report entitled the Local Environmental Survey of England (2008/09) which can be found by visiting the surveys section at www.keepbritaintidy.org

What can you do?

We all have a role to play in keeping the area where we live clean and tidy whether it is the council, residents or industry. All we ask is that you do your bit to:

- ✓ respect your environment
- ✓ use a bin or take your rubbish home
- ✓ pick up any rubbish you find lying around
- ✓ encourage others to respect their environment too
- ✓ find out more about our work by signing up as a supporter - visit www.keepbritaintidy.org and look under the 'Get involved' section

Get in touch

enquiries@keepbritaintidy.org

01942 612621

Keep Britain Tidy
Elizabeth House
The Pier
Wigan
WN3 4EX

www.keepbritaintidy.org