



LITTER IN ENGLAND

THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY SURVEY OF ENGLAND
2017/18



INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

Keep Britain Tidy is an independent charity with three goals – to eliminate litter, end waste and improve places. This means more to us than just picking up litter. It means creating clean beaches, parks and streets. It means creating sustainable practices and eliminating unnecessary waste. It's about working with people, businesses, organisations and public bodies to care for the environment on our doorstep. We fight for people's right to live and work in places they can be proud of and prosper in.

BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

Keep Britain Tidy has carried out the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) and published the results annually since 2001, with a pause for two years during 2015/16 and 2016/17. Many stakeholders expressed an interest in this research being repeated , and so in 2017/18, Keep Britain Tidy carried out the survey again.

The survey measures the presence of litter, and it also measures other indicators of cleanliness such as detritus, graffiti and fly-posting. Sites are graded as “acceptable” or not and these grades are used to provide information on the overall cleanliness of England. Other information such as the type of land use and the presence or absence of particular litter types is recorded, providing further insight into the litter issues impacting England.

It is through using this type of research that our Centre for Social Innovation at Keep Britain Tidy is able to identify key issues around waste, place and litter and find innovative solutions to improve our environment. By comprehensively understanding the issues and working with partners to develop evidence-based solutions, we are able to be incredibly effective.



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Keep Britain Tidy developed and use a sampling framework that delivers a statistically robust sample of sites across England, using a range of structured and random sampling. This provides data that is representative of England, however, the data can not be analysed at regional or a more local level. 7,200 sites were surveyed between April 2017 and March 2018 by a dedicated team of experienced assessors with a wealth of experience in conducting local environmental quality surveys.

Sites are assessed using a grading system based on the same principles used in Defra's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. The grades are A, B, C and D. Three additional intermediary grades have been added to provide greater granularity to the data. Grades B- and below are classed as a failure to meet the acceptable standard.



As well as grading sites, supplementary data on litter and land use are recorded. The ten land uses are:

- Main retail and commercial areas
- Other retail and commercial areas
- High-obstruction housing areas
- Medium-obstruction housing areas
- Low-obstruction housing areas
- Industry, warehousing, retail sheds and science parks
- Main roads
- Rural roads
- Other highways
- Recreation areas

Figure One: Local Environmental Quality grading system

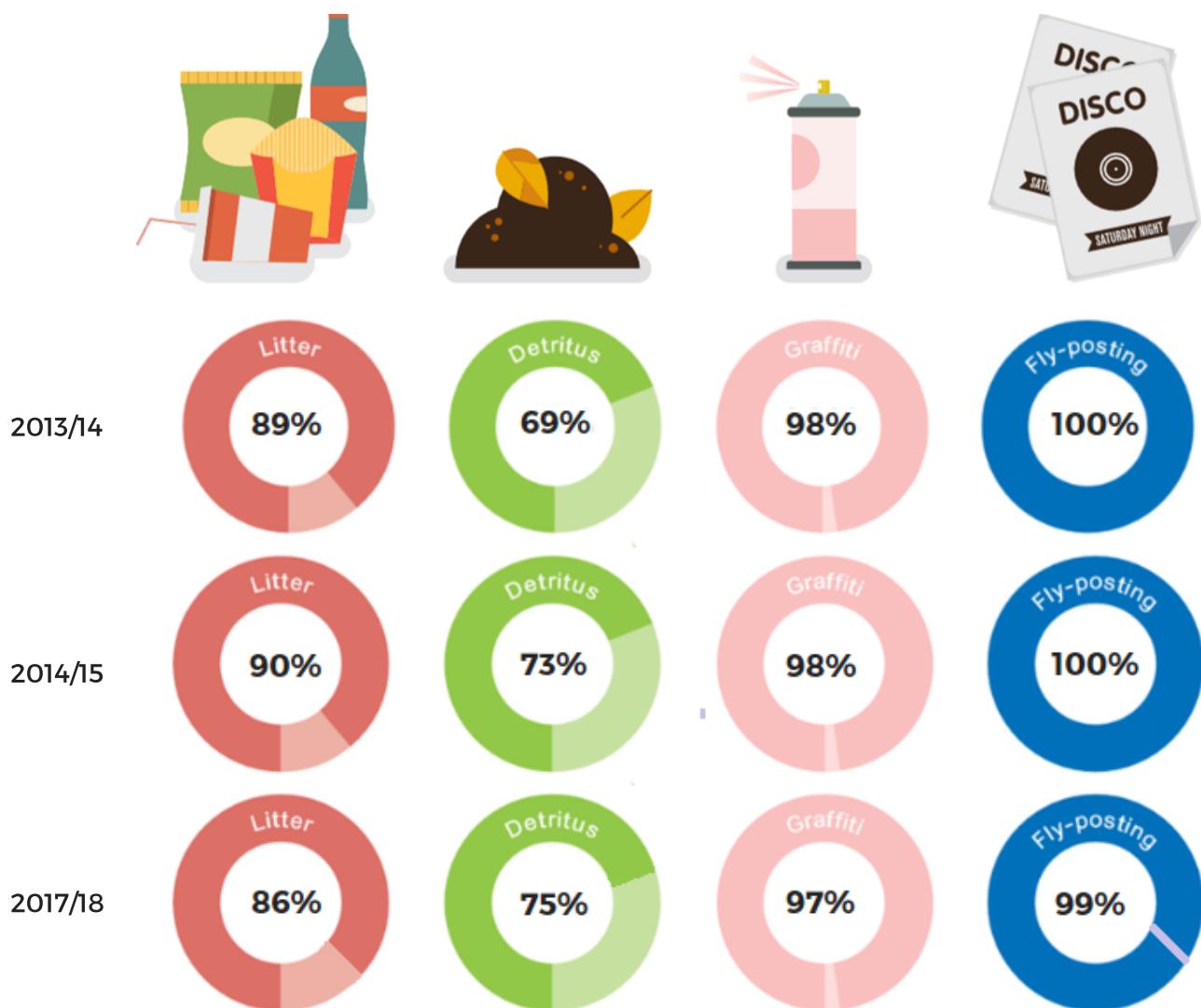
A	None of the issues present
B+	Not formally defined
B	Predominantly free with some minor instances of the issue
B-	Not formally defined
C	Widespread with some accumulations of the issue
C-	Not formally defined
D	Heavily affected by the issue

HEADLINE RESULTS

Litter has become worse across England since the last survey was carried out in 2014/15. 14% of sites across England did not meet an acceptable standard for litter. For litter, 4% more sites failed nationally in 2017/18 compared to the last national survey in 2014/15.

25% of sites failed to meet the acceptable standard for detritus. Detritus is mud and grime found on our roads and when built up can lead to blocked drains and localised flooding.

Figure Two: Percentage of sites at or above an acceptable standard (grade B and above) for each of the headline indicators 2017/18



LITTERED ITEMS

The survey notes presence or absence of different types of litter. In 2017/18, 79% of sites surveyed had smoking-related litter present, this is a 6% increase on 2014/15. 33% of sites had fast food litter, a 1% increase on 2014/15 and a litter type that has been on the increase since 2010/11, when it was observed on 21% of sites. Alcoholic drinks-related litter has seen a sharp increase from 19% in 2014/15 to 25% in 2017/18.

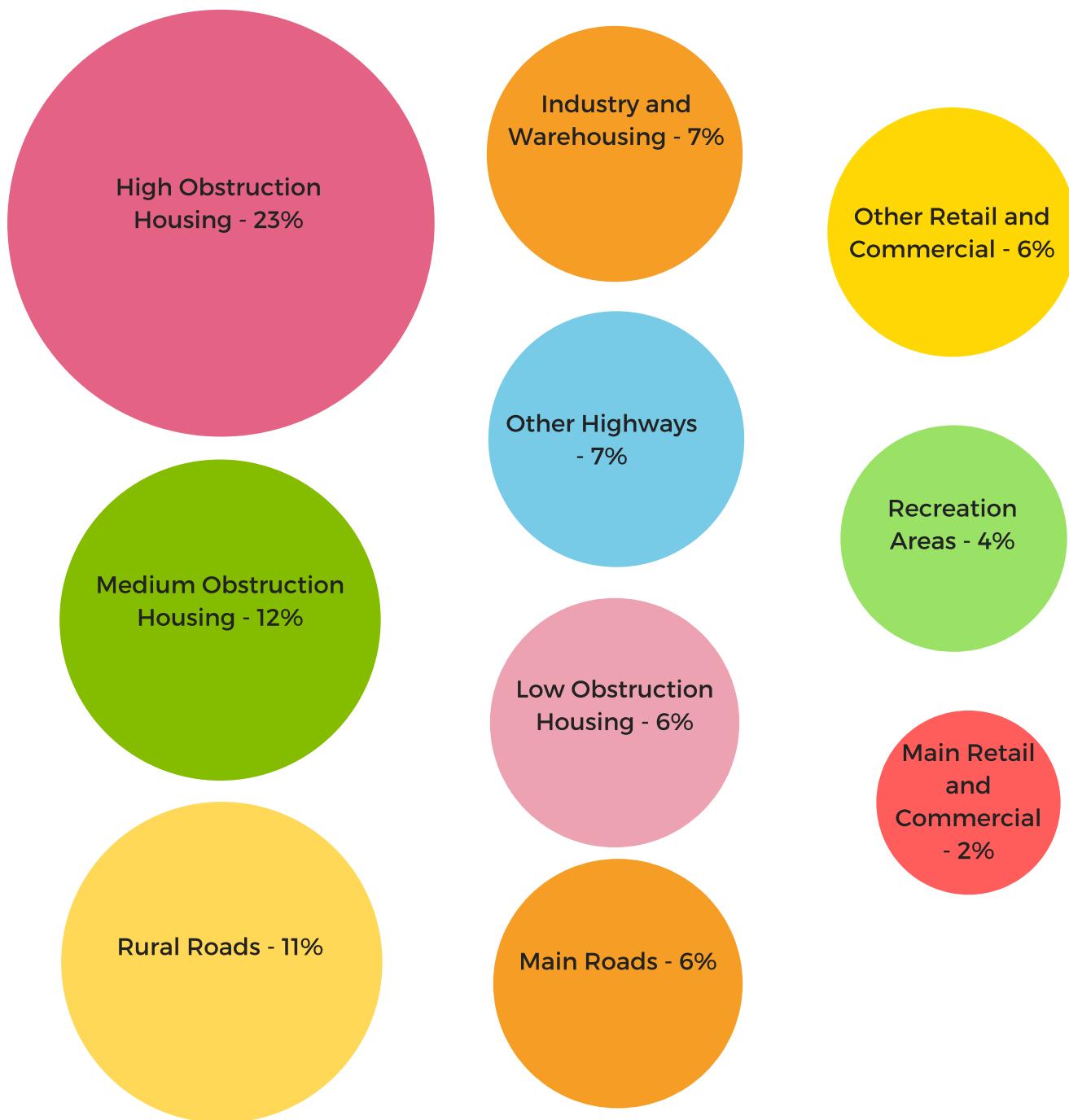
Figure Three: Top ten types of litter found on the highest percentage of sites in 2017/18



LAND USE

Types of land had varying standards of litter. High footfall areas such as Main Retail and Commercial Areas were the cleanest with only 2% of sites failing to meet the acceptable standard. Drilling down to litter type, there were varying levels of litter type found in different land uses. 15% of Recreation Areas had dog fouling present. and 51% of Other Retail and Commercial Sites had fast food-related litter on them both higher than the average found across all land uses.

Figure Four: Percentage of sites not meeting the acceptable standard for litter by land use 2017/18



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Alcoholic drinks-related – all items associated with alcoholic drinks. This includes cans, bottles, wine cartons, identifiable bottle tops and ring pulls etc.

Confectionery material – all types of confectionery material, such as sweet wrappers, chocolate wrappers, lollipop/iced lollipop sticks, chewing gum wrappers, etc., but not the confectionery itself.

Detritus - comprises dust, mud, soil, grit, gravel, stones, rotted leaf and vegetable residues, and fragments of twigs, glass, plastic and other finely divided materials.

Discarded food/drink – small amounts of dropped or spilt food and drink.

Fast food-related – packaging and paraphernalia related to freshly prepared, ready-to-eat food and drink that is eaten on the go. This includes wrappings, boxes, drinks containers, plastic straws, plastic cutlery, branded paper napkins, all sandwich cartons, salt sachets.

Fly-posting - any printed material which is unauthorised and either informally or illegally fixed to any structure. It includes all sizes of material, from small self-adhesive stickers to large posters – often advertising events. It excludes formally managed and approved advertising hoardings and any other authorised legally placed signs and notices (unless they are out-of-date).

Graffiti - any informal or illegal marks, scratchings, carvings, drawings or paintings that have been deliberately made by a person or persons on any physical element comprising public space.

Non-alcoholic drinks related – all items associated with non-alcoholic drinks, including cans, bottles, cartons, identifiable bottle tops and ring-pulls etc

Packaging - any packaging material which is deemed to have been dropped by a member of the public, an example of packaging is cellophane wrapping

Smoking-related litter – all types of items discarded by people using tobacco products, including cigarettes and cigarette ends, cigars, matchsticks/boxes, cigarette and cigar boxes/wrappers, disposable lighters

Snack packs – all items of packaging litter that are associated with pre-baked/pre-prepared snack foods, e.g. crisp packets, biscuit packaging, cake wrappers etc

Vehicle parts – these include any part of a motorised vehicle, including bodywork, engine parts, number plates, wheel trims, exhaust (or part(s) of), and light or window glass, which appear to have originated from a vehicle.