

# CHEWING GUM TASK FORCE

**BIN  
YOUR  
GUM.**



**Annual Report**  
Year Three



# Chewing Gum Task Force

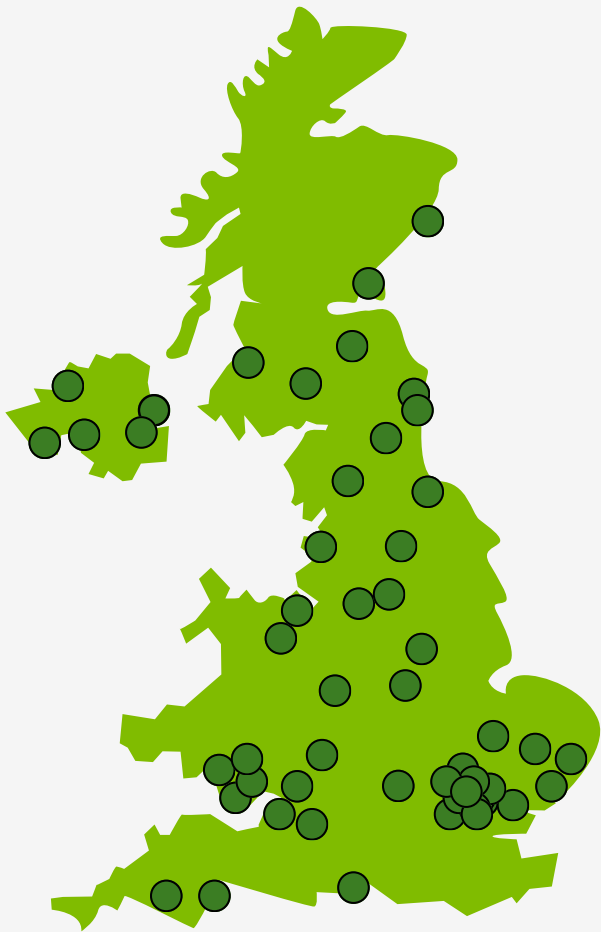
The Chewing Gum Task Force brings together major chewing gum producers (including Mars Wrigley, Perfetti Van Melle and a producer of nicotine replacement therapy gum) to remove gum litter from UK high streets and prevent future littering. The Task Force was established by Defra and is administered by Keep Britain Tidy, with the chewing gum firms investing up to £10 million over five years to achieve two objectives: cleaning up historic gum staining and changing behaviour so that more people bin their gum.

In Year Three of the scheme (2024), we awarded grants to councils across the UK for the purchase of cleaning equipment and/or street cleansing of up to £27,500 (up from grants of £25,000 in Year Two). In addition to the grants for cleansing, 25% of the fund was used to supply gum litter prevention packages to councils. Designed and produced by social enterprise Behaviour Change, these packages are based on behavioural science and target hot-spots where people are most likely to need to dispose of gum, nudging them to use a bin.

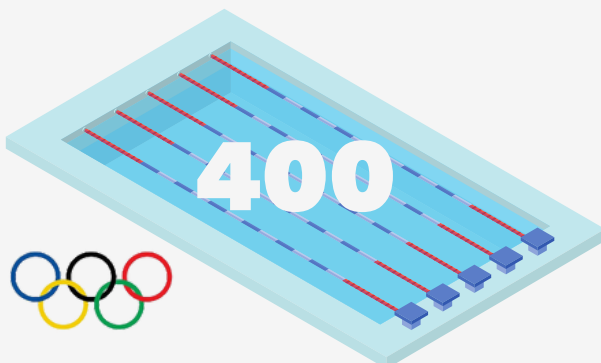
We funded a full independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the cleansing and prevention signage with four councils and one innovation pilot to test specialised interventions to reduce gum littering behaviour in the night time economy. We also supplied new social media assets for all councils to use to communicate their work to tackle gum litter.



## Year Three at a glance



We helped councils clean an estimated **500,000 m<sup>2</sup>** of pavements, an area equivalent to **400 Olympic-sized swimming pools**



We awarded grants worth a total of

**£1.585m** to

**54** UK councils, including

**23** councils funded for a second or third year

**63** gum litter prevention packages fulfilled

**10,359** items printed

up to **68%** reduction in gum littering achieved after two months

**1** innovation pilot completed



# How the funds were used

As in Years One and Two, most councils (more than 65%) used their grant money to purchase new equipment, ensuring that they will continue to benefit after the project ends.

New equipment

Redeploying staff and/or equipment

Staffing costs

Contractors

Other

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council



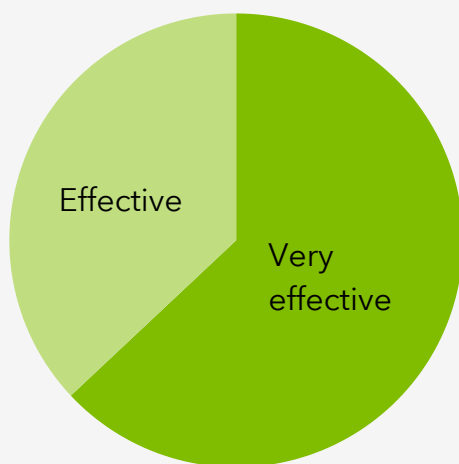
Ipswich Borough Council © Nick Harrison



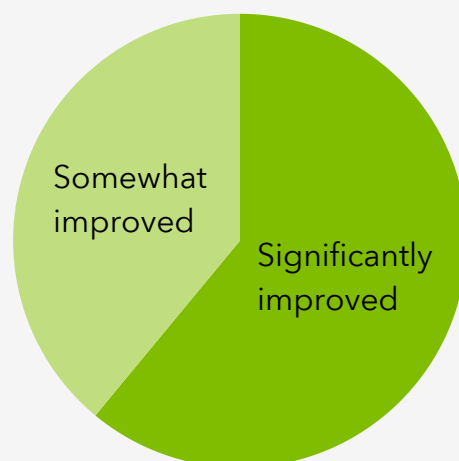
# Our results

## Gum littering reduced by up to 68%\*

100% of councils feel their grant enabled them to effectively tackle gum litter.

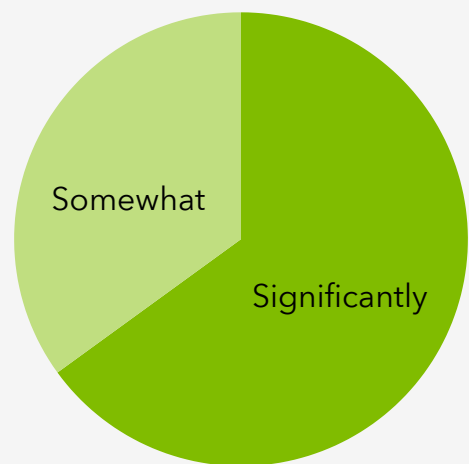


100% of councils reported an improvement in gum litter following their cleansing and signage installation.

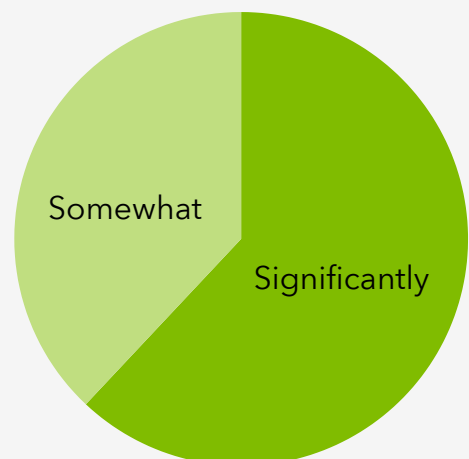


\*Based on results recorded in Cardiff after two months

100% of councils feel that their project has benefitted their local community.



100% feel that their project has increased awareness of the issue of gum littering.



# Our results

**'There has been a significant improvement in the gum littering and staining across our town centres. We have received comments from the public on how much cleaner the town centres look.'** Bury Council

**'The Chewing Gum Task Force grant has greatly benefited our community. It allowed us to address gum litter issues that would have otherwise been delayed due to budget constraints and limited staff resources. The visible improvement in cleanliness has received positive feedback, with many residents and local businesses appreciating the effort. The grant has not only improved the appearance of our public spaces but also fostered a greater sense of pride and respect for the community.'**

Flintshire County Council



Bristol City Council pre- and post-clean



Cheltenham Borough Council post-clean



# Gum litter prevention



**We processed over 60 orders from participating councils across the country, including over 5,800 stickers, 3,700 lamppost signs and over 500 posters.**

The 'Using bin as a nudge' (pictured) was the most popular design, followed by the 'Kitten' sign. Over 8,000 of these designs have been put on streets throughout the UK to reduce gum litter.

Four councils (Cardiff, Dundee, East Cambridgeshire and Liverpool) benefitted from a full independent evaluation of the effectiveness of street cleansing and prevention signage. Up to 68% reduction in gum littering after two months was measured as a result of the interventions, through a combination of pre- and post-intervention gum counts and footfall analysis. This compared to up to 80% reduction in gum littering in Year One and up to 60% reduction in Year Two.

**'The immediate benefits are the general cleanliness of the areas following gum removal. The visibility of the operative removing gum was welcomed by members of the public and local businesses. The signage and also word of mouth around the cleansing activity helped to raise awareness of the effects of chewing gum'** Liverpool City Council



The evaluations across Years One to Three continue to show that the interventions are most effective when focused on one area with a high density of signage.



# Prevention signage



'Kitten' Stroud District Council



'Bin your gum' North Ayrshire Council



'Time to bin your gum' Aberdeen City Council



'Emoji' Kirklees Council



**'We received a huge amount of positive feedback and support from local businesses, many of which agreed to the signage being displayed on their property. The topic of chewing gum on the streets and the difficulty in removing it has become something many businesses have started talking to their customers about, and received positive comments about the sign(s) on their premises.'**

Watford Borough Council



'The bin's over there' Ealing Council



# Innovation

We concluded our research into gum littering behaviour in the night time economy. The research revealed various factors leading to gum disposal, a lack of visible bins and a perception of gum litter having little impact in the already messy environment.

We conducted a pilot in Liverpool from October to December 2024, testing glow-in-the-dark night time focused signage, the provision of specific gum litter bins to night time economy venues, and the altering of bin emptying routines to increase bin capacity.

**Results of the pilot will be available later in 2025.**

‘Please bin your gum’ glow-in-the-dark signage



# In the headlines

In its third year, the Chewing Gum Task Force has attracted 156 pieces of print and online media coverage and 96 broadcast pieces (primarily radio). This coverage had a potential reach of over 2.4 billion and an advertising value equivalent of just over £22.5 million.



Bristol City Council



Bath & North East Somerset Council



**‘Thanks to the press release sent out, we also received some coverage from BBC Radio Leicester in a news article, and also on BBC Radio Leicester where they interviewed our project lead, street cleansing staff and the public.’**  
North West Leicestershire District Council



# Social media

In Year Three, councils were provided with new social media assets to communicate their work to tackle gum litter funded by the Chewing Gum Task Force.

76% of councils used the assets and all found them useful in communicating their cleaning activity and prevention signage installation.

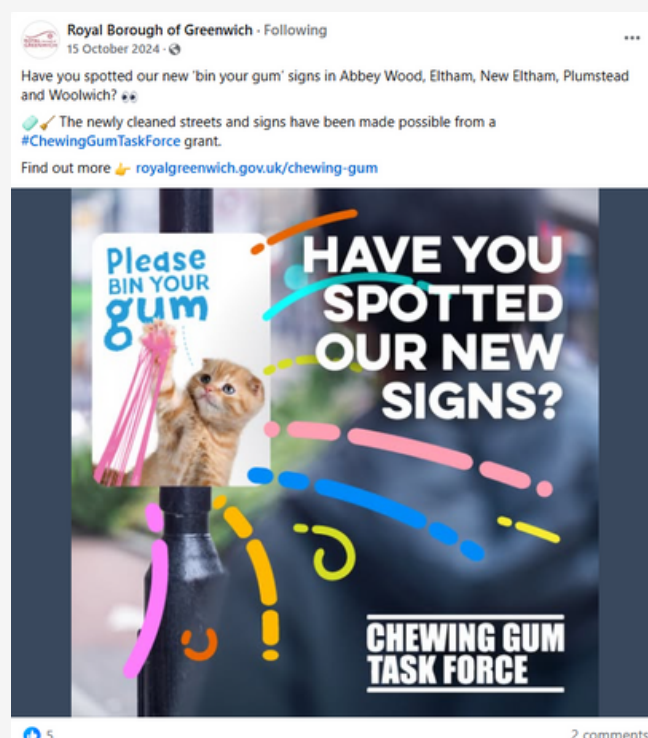
Across social media, the Chewing Gum Task Force featured in 136 posts across X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn with a reach of 1.026 million.

**'The assets were colourful and eye-catching. The content was concise. It was nice to have a choice of the two types.'**

Bath and North East Somerset Council

**'Assets were great, there was a good choice of different visual approaches. The way the toolkit was put together made it very clear and easy to use.'**

Surrey Heath Borough Council



# Spotlight on Ipswich



© Nick Harrison

## Ipswich Borough Council has received funding in Years One, Two and Three of the Chewing Gum Task Force.

To maximise the impact and test intervention methods, different areas have been targeted each year with different prevention signage. In Year One, the town centre and waterfront areas were targeted followed by shopping precincts in Year Two and areas around secondary schools in Year Three.

Outside of the Chewing Gum Task Force grant, the Council also delivered community engagement activities to raise public awareness of gum littering.



© Nick Harrison



© Nick Harrison

**In Year One, we used the 'Kitten' vinyl stickers with the A4 size eye-catching posters in shop windows.'**

**'In Year Two, 'The bin's right here' signage had a stronger impact on residents and gave better results with a slower increase of litter in locations following the deep clean. Many locations remained at the same levels as the deep clean, which showcases that the prevention signage helped to highlight the litter bins.'**

**'In Year Three, we chose new prevention signage, the bright blue and pink 'Bin your gum' to stand out to the new target audience.'**

**'We have continued to use every piece of machinery bought in each year of the grant scheme to enhance our cleaning and gum removal both in the town centre and borough wide.'**

**'The grant has given us the ability to continue in our mission for a litter free Ipswich; a town both residents and non-residents alike can be proud of.'**



# Year Two update

**In Year Two of the scheme, by combining targeted street cleaning with the specially designed signage, participating councils achieved reductions in gum littering of up to 60% in the first two months.**

Since publication of the Year Two report, we concluded follow up evaluation. As per Year One's follow up evaluation, this showed that a reduced rate of gum littering was still being observed six months after clean-up and the installation of prevention materials.

**'Gum littering has reduced, the areas cleansed are visually improved and the eye catching 'Kitten' signage is continuing to educate the general public on anti-gum littering.'**

Braintree District Council

**In addition, six months after completion of their Year Two projects:**

- **90%** of councils feel that the issue of gum littering has improved in the cleaned areas.
- **100%** of councils agree that the grant has benefitted their community.
- **100%** of councils feel that the grant has helped raise awareness of gum litter in their local areas.
- **100%** of councils would recommend the Chewing Gum Task Force grant scheme to another council who is struggling with gum litter.



# First three years at a glance

We have now passed the midpoint of the five-year Chewing Gum Task Force programme.

Over the first three years, we have awarded grants worth a total of...

**£4.88m** to

**122** UK councils, including

**31** councils funded over multiple years

We have cleaned over **3.4 million square metres of pavement.**

By combining targeted street cleaning with litter prevention signage, we have proven our impact in **reducing gum littering by up to 80%** after two months, with a reduced rate of gum littering still being observed six months later.



Edinburgh City Council



Mid Ulster District Council



## With thanks to...

**MARS  
WRIGLEY**

**'Mars Wrigley is delighted to continue supporting the work of the Chewing Gum Task Force. Together, we have shown that it is possible to change behaviour and to achieve sustained reductions in gum litter. Millions of people around the UK enjoy chewing gum products every year, and we want to keep encouraging responsible gum disposal.'**

Naomi Jones, Corporate Affairs Director,  
Mars Wrigley



**"As we begin our forth year as part of the Chewing Gum Taskforce, it is encouraging to see that targeted messaging, the provision of appropriate disposal solutions, and the dedication and commitment of local councils are delivering measurable, sustainable progress in the removal of chewing gum from UK streets.'**

Hayley Osborne, Communications &  
Sustainability Manager, Perfetti Van Melle



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working,  
active landscape valued by everyone

**'Tackling chewing gum litter is a serious and challenging problem for councils across the UK. It is great to see gum producers playing their part by investing in a sustained programme to clean up historic gum staining and change behaviour to prevent littering in the future.'** Allison Ogden-Newton,  
Chief Executive, Keep Britain Tidy



**The Scottish  
Government**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



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