

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO LITTER-PICKING

HELPING ANYONE BECOME A #LITTERHERO

2023



WELCOME

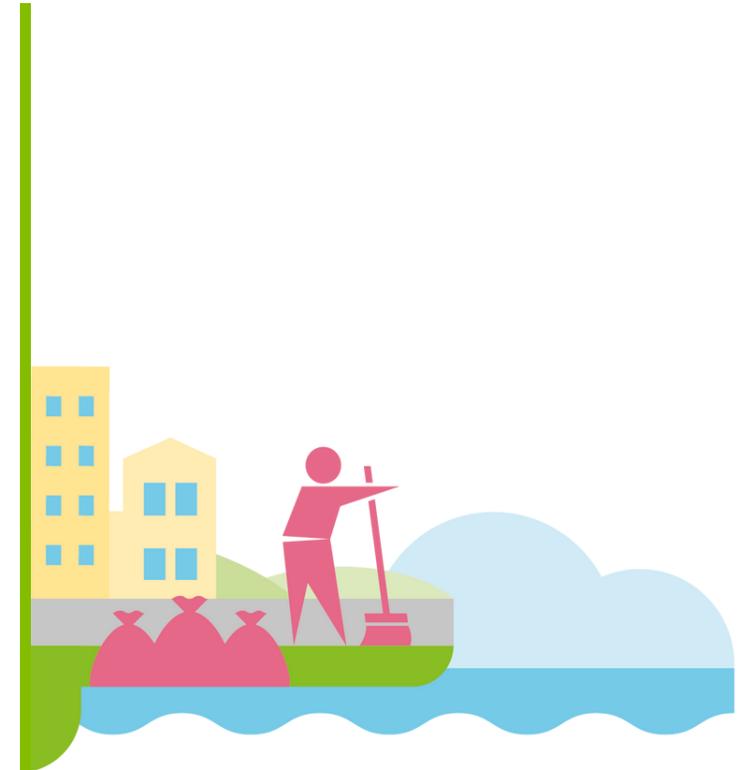
Welcome to our beginner's guide to litter picking, designed for anyone who wants to get started with helping the environment on your very own doorstep.

Although litter picking is a very simple activity, there are some things you need to consider before you begin, to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable experience, whilst making an impact.

A #LitterHero is someone who is interested in and actively volunteering their time to pick up litter, reduce waste and improve the environment around them.

There is a growing network of thousands of #LitterHeroes around the country and together they are making a huge difference. **To register as an official #LitterHero, receive exclusive resources and receive a quarterly litter-picking focused newsletter visit the [Keep Britain Tidy website](#).**

From all of us at Keep Britain Tidy, thank you very much for volunteering your time and energy to support our cause. Happy litter picking!



**#LITTER
HEROES**



CHOOSING A LOCATION TO CLEAN

Choosing a suitable location for a litter pick is easy; it simply needs to be safe and have litter!

You might have noticed that your street could benefit from a clean up. Or maybe your local park, beach, a landmark or a local 'grot spot' could do with some love and attention. Read more on page 6 about choosing a safe location.

If it is private land, please do seek the landowner's permission first.

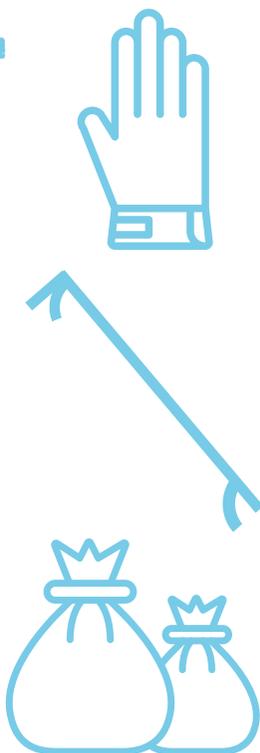


EQUIPMENT

A few pieces of equipment will make litter picking far simpler and safer too.

Many local authorities will loan litter picking equipment out if you ask. Or you can purchase your own kit through the [Keep Britain Tidy litter picking store](#) on our website.

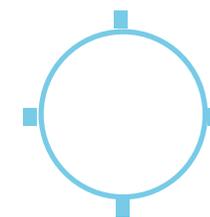
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You should always wear **heavy duty gloves**, for hygiene reasons and to prevent cuts & scratches. We recommend using **hand sanitiser** too.

A **litter picker** will protect your hands from injury and prevent constant bending down.

You need a **bag or container** to place your litter in, plus a second if recycling.



A **bag hoop** will make it far easier to keep bin bags open.



A **high visibility vest** will keep you safer.

DISPOSING OF YOUR LITTER

Before you begin litter picking, you should consider how you will dispose of the rubbish at the end.



If you plan to just clean up a street for ten minutes and fill a carrier bag, that could easily be disposed of in your own bin or a local public bin. However, if you intend to collect more you should speak to the council in advance to find out the best way to dispose of it.

We would not recommend leaving tied up bags next to bins (without prior permission) as this attracts further littering and can attract animals such as rats and seagulls.

We always encourage recycling, so please check in advance what can be recycled locally and where.

INVOLVING OTHER #LITTERHEROES

#LITTERHEROES

Many volunteers do head out on their own, although it can be very enjoyable to litter pick with friends and family. Why not inspire them to get involved and become #LitterHeroes too?

If you would like to connect with fellow litter pickers in your local area, check out our [**#LitterHeroes webpage**](#) for more information on how we recommend doing this.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

There are a number of steps that we would recommend you take in order to ensure your litter picking is carried out in the safest way possible.



- Always wear **heavy duty gloves** and use a **litter picker** if possible. Do not scoop litter up with your hands as it might contain hidden sharp objects.
- Do not touch your face or any open wounds with your gloves and always **wash your hands** after litter picking.
- If litter picking alone, **let someone know where you plan to go and what time you plan to be home**. Always take a mobile phone with you. What 3 Words is a very useful app to help identify your specific location if needed.
- **Check the weather forecast in advance and do not litter pick in extreme weather conditions**. In summer, take plenty of water and wear sun cream and a hat if needed. In winter, wear warm and waterproof clothing.
- Always wear **sturdy footwear**.
- Wear a high visibility vest or bright colours so others can see you. Please **only litter pick during full daylight** though.
- Please only attempt what is **within your personal capabilities**.

Each location has its own hazards and these should be considered before you begin.

Avoid litter picking in potentially dangerous locations e.g. steep slopes, slippery banks, busy roads, derelict buildings or near animals or electric fences.

If litter picking near water, please **do not enter the water**, be mindful of tides and always avoid working near fast flowing or deep water.

Please note this resource is prepared for guidance purposes only as to general risks and hazards that may arise when litter picking. Specific risks and hazards at each location will vary, and it is the sole responsibility of the event organiser to identify those risks and hazards, and have in place appropriate health and safety standards. Keep Britain Tidy cannot be held legally responsible for any personal injury or damage suffered or incurred as a result of participation in a litter pick.

HEAVY ITEMS

- Do not carry more than you can comfortably manage. If an object is too heavy for you to move, contact the council.
- Change bags when they become too heavy, rather than overfilling them.
- Remember that even light objects are much heavier when wet.
- Do not continue pulling at an object which is firmly stuck in the ground.
- When lifting heavy items, crouch down with bent knees, get a firm grip and lift with a straight back.



WHAT TO PICK



During your litter pick, you are aiming to remove any items that should not be in the environment. However, there are some items we would recommend you avoid clearing, for your own safety:

- **Potentially hazardous objects** such as unidentified cans or canisters, oil drums, boat flares and chemical containers.
- **Sharp objects** such as broken glass, metal and disposable BBQs. If safe to pick up, these can be placed directly into a litter bin. But they should not be placed in your bag as they can rip through the bag and cut your legs.
- **Clinical waste** such as needles/syringes. Instead, make a note of their location and inform your local council.
- **Dead animals.**
- **Fly tipping**, as it could contain hazardous materials such as asbestos. Instead, contact your local council.
- If you spot a **pollution incident**, contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.

COLLECT & COUNT

At Keep Britain Tidy, we believe sharing the results of your litter picking is just as impactful as removing the litter itself!

That's why we have developed the Collect & Count tool. It is a simple form you can access via our website, which we ask all #LitterHeroes to complete after their litter pick.

We use the information shared to monitor and demonstrate the scale of the national litter problem and the impact of volunteer action. Throughout 2023, we are also offering the chance to record details of smoking related-related litter found, in order to inform future research and campaigns on this increasingly prevalent issue. (This is optional).

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All we'd like to know is -

- **The region you litter picked**
- **How many people took part**
- **How long you litter picked for**
- **How many bags of litter were collected.**

The Collect & Count form only takes 2 minutes to complete and you can access it via the Keep Britain Tidy website homepage or here.

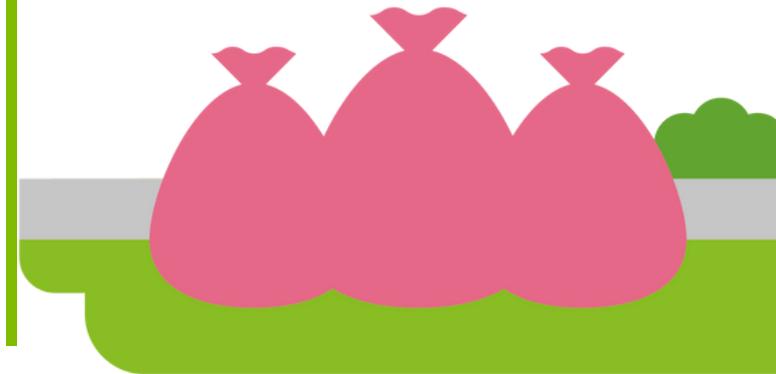
Thank you for your data, it truly is invaluable to our campaigning efforts!

THANK YOU!

Hopefully this guide has covered everything you need to get started as a #LitterHero. If you do have any further questions, you can email litterheroes@keepbritaintidy.org

Lastly, we love to see your litter picking pictures on social media, so don't forget to tag Keep Britain Tidy in anything you share online.

Thank you from everyone at Keep Britain Tidy and happy litter picking!



 **Think before you print.**

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