



BEYOND THE TIPPING POINT: INSIGHTS TO TACKLE HOUSEHOLDER FLY-TIPPING

Keep Britain Tidy



Supported by players of



Awarded funds from



CONTENTS

TACKLING FLY-TIPPING	3
Keep Britain Tidy	6
Keep Britain Tidy's Centre for Social Innovation	8
Reaching the Tipping Point – Keep Britain Tidy's Fly-tipping Action Plan	10
BACKGROUND	13
What is Fly-tipping?	14
Who is Responsible and What Can They Do?	15
Fly-tipping – The National Picture	16
KEEP BRITAIN TIDY'S FLY-TIPPING RESEARCH	17
Behavioural Drivers of Householder Fly-tipping	19
Insights	21
FINAL THOUGHTS	50
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	51
REFERENCES	51

TACKLING FLY-TIPPING

Fly-tipping is the top environmental challenge faced by many local authorities in this country.¹ It is a crime, a nuisance and a hazard, with significant costs – both financial and environmental.

Around a million fly-tipping incidents are reported in England every year.²

Despite resources going into tackling fly-tipping – education, monitoring, enforcement and removal – incidents of fly-tipping continue to increase. This is incredibly disappointing. **We, as a country, need to do more to ensure the public get rid of unwanted stuff safely and legally.**

Almost two-thirds of all recorded fly-tips are made up of household waste.³

Keep Britain Tidy is an independent charity with years of experience in gathering insights into specific behaviours to inform a systematic approach to tackling litter and waste issues. Over the past few years, we have conducted extensive research into why people fly-tip – starting with householders. This doesn't examine organised criminal activity but does investigate why householders might hand over their waste to illegal operators.

Using these research insights, we have developed and tested targeted 'interventions' – actions for local authorities and other land managers to use with residents to tackle this behaviour head-on and reduce householder fly-tipping.

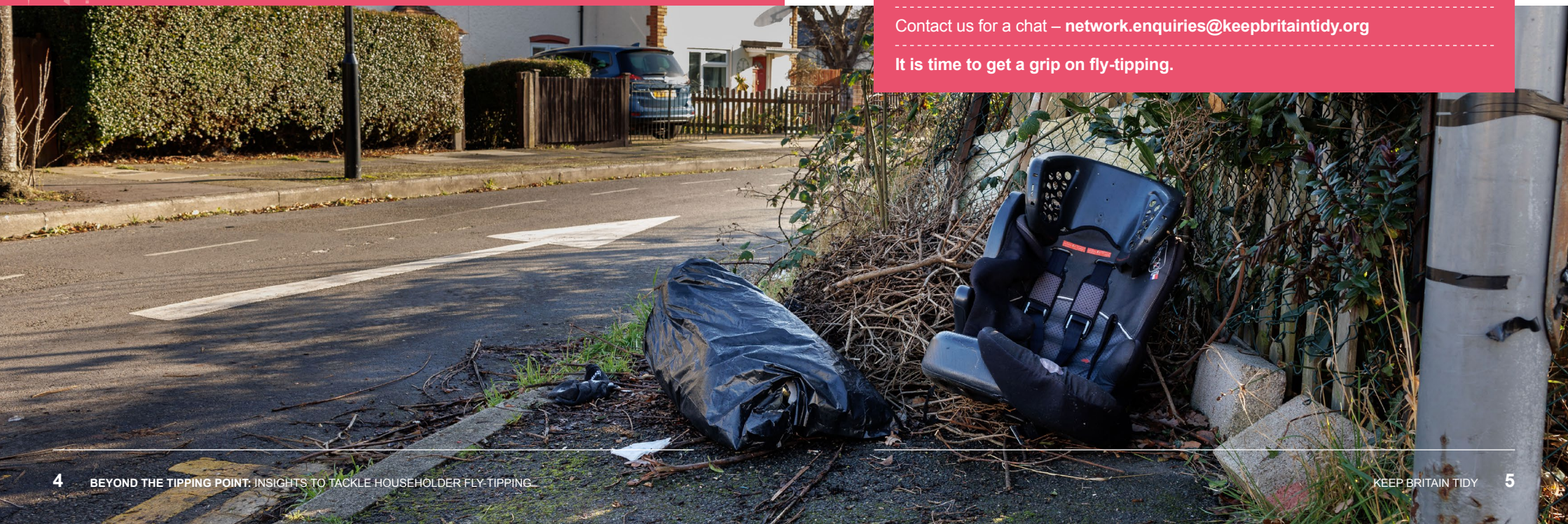
This report is the culmination of our work so far, primarily designed to inform local authority approaches to tackling fly-tipping. The report can also help individuals and community groups understand more about fly-tipping and how to work with their local authority or housing provider to tackle specific problems.

Through insight-led interventions, together we can significantly reduce the fly-tipping that blights our country.

There is still more work to do – further research and trialling new interventions. We are always looking for partners to work with.

Contact us for a chat – network.enquiries@keepbritaintidy.org

It is time to get a grip on fly-tipping.



KEEP BRITAIN TIDY

For 60 years, Keep Britain Tidy has been delivering campaigns and programmes that have positive impacts for society and the environment at a local, regional and national level.

We are a leading independent charity with three goals:

- Eliminate litter and waste
- Improve local places
- Enable people to live more sustainably

This means more to us than just picking up litter. It means creating clean beaches, parks and streets.

It's about working with people, businesses, organisations and public bodies to care for the environment on our doorstep.

It means creating sustainable practices and eliminating unnecessary waste.

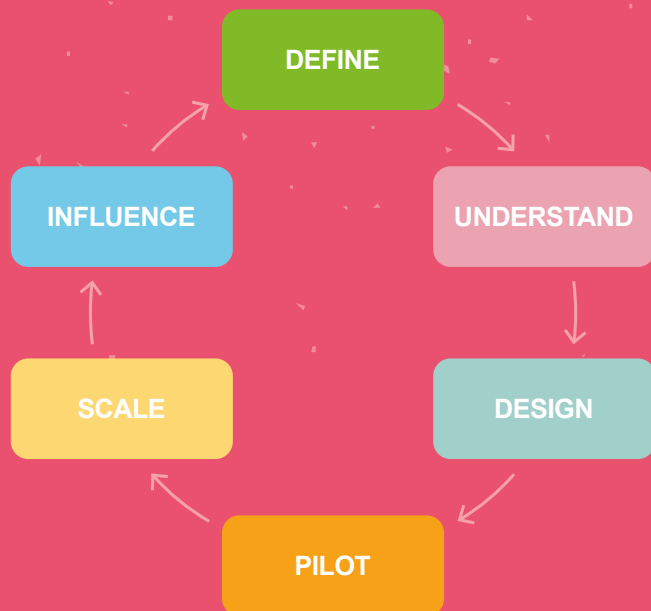
We fight for people's right to live and work in places they can be proud of and prosper in.



KEEP BRITAIN TIDY'S CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

In 2015, Keep Britain Tidy launched the Centre for Social Innovation, becoming the only UK charity to take a systematic approach to applying behavioural insights to tackle litter and waste issues.

The Centre for Social Innovation Framework



We gather research insights into specific behaviours and use these to develop, pilot and scale behaviour-change interventions. We are part of a global movement of policymakers, academics and practitioners looking at the application of behavioural insights to encourage pro-social and environmental behaviour.

In 2021, together with Newham Council, we won the Environmental Services Award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards for the 'Better Streets' programme, which tackled fly-tipping. The programme was also shortlisted for Best Community and Neighbourhood Initiative at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards. Our approach also won a Nudge Award in 2018, an AIM Nudging for Good Award in 2017 and a Charity Award in 2016.



WINNER

What makes our approach unique is our ability to take our interventions to national scale. More than 170 local authorities have implemented one or more of our tested interventions.

To find out more, visit www.keepbritaintidy.org/centre-for-social-innovation

REACHING THE TIPPING POINT

Keep Britain Tidy's Fly-tipping Action Plan

Keep Britain Tidy published its first Fly-Tipping Action Plan, 'Reaching the Tipping Point', in 2016. Much good work has been done since then:

- Our Crime Not To Care campaign has been taken up by 48 local authorities and we continue to work hard to encourage householders not to give their waste to fly-tippers.
- The Government has introduced new policy levers – fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping and for householders who fail to comply with the duty of care when handing over their waste.
- The Government's Waste and Resources Strategy sets out the commitment that we requested to reassess the fly-tipping penalties that are handed out by the courts.
- Our Centre for Social Innovation has been researching the drivers and causes of fly-tipping, working with a range of partners to develop and scale new policy ideas and solutions.



There is more to do. We need a national, strategic approach to the issue, engaging all stakeholders and delivering real outcomes if we are to substantially reduce the number of recorded incidents of fly-tipping each year.

This behavioural research – and using it to provide targeted interventions to challenge people's fly-tipping behaviours and stop them before they start – forms a valuable part of our response.

www.keepbritaintidy.org/reaching-tipping-point





BACKGROUND

WHAT IS FLY-TIPPING?

Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste.⁴ It can be liquid or solid, and dumped on land or in water. Everyone that produces waste has a responsibility to make sure that anyone they pass their waste on to is operating legally.

Householders whose waste ends up being fly-tipped or who are caught fly-tipping themselves face a fixed penalty notice of up to £400, and local authorities and the Environment Agency (in England, or their equivalents in the UK nations) have powers to stop, search and seize vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping.

“

Fly-tipping is a crime, a significant blight on local environments; a source of pollution; a potential danger to public health; a hazard to wildlife, and a nuisance. It also undermines legitimate waste businesses where unscrupulous operators undercut those operating within the law.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Resources and Waste Strategy (2018)

Penalties are issued by the courts according to guidelines set out by government. This can be a potentially unlimited fine, or imprisonment: up to 12 months if dealt with by a Magistrates' Court; up to five years if referred to a Crown Court.

Unlike littering, fly-tipping often also entails the deliberate transport of the waste to the place where it is dumped.⁵



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE AND WHAT CAN THEY DO?

Local authorities are responsible for investigating, clearing and taking appropriate enforcement action for small-scale fly-tipping on public land.

Larger-scale dumping (more than a lorry load), hazardous waste and the work of organised gangs is the responsibility of the **Environment Agency** (in England).

Fly-tipping dumped on private land must usually be removed by the **landowner** at their own cost. Local authorities and the Environment Agency have powers to enforce this or reclaim costs for removal by themselves. Landowners may also be able to reclaim some costs.⁶

More information on responsibilities and prosecution is available from www.gov.uk/guidance/fly-tipping-council-responsibilities



FLY-TIPPING – THE NATIONAL PICTURE

- Local authorities in England deal with up to 25,000 incidents of fly-tipping a week on average.⁷ Most of these are in London, where councils report one-third of all fly-tipping⁸ and the fastest increases.⁹
- In England, there are on average 20 fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people. Rates are highest in London at 43 per 1,000 people, falling to 10 per 1,000 in the South West.
- Costs to clear fly-tipping on private land are estimated at between £50m and £150m every year¹⁰ and the last available figures estimate local authority annual clear-up costs to be almost £58m.¹¹
- Clearing large fly-tips of a ‘tipper lorry’ size or more costs taxpayers between £11m and 13m every year.¹²
- Serious and organised waste crime costs the UK economy at least £600m a year.¹³
- 43% of fly-tipping is dumped on pavements and roads.¹⁴
- Between 97% and 99% of prosecutions result in convictions. Most commonly, courts issue fines, a slightly greater proportion every year, and these now represent around 92% of all prosecution outcomes. But, consistently, fewer than 1% of all fly-tips prompt any form of prosecution.¹⁵



KEEP BRITAIN TIDY'S FLY-TIPPING RESEARCH



Since 2017, Keep Britain Tidy has focused on fly-tipping as a research issue. We have used multiple methods across a wide range of audiences.

These include:

- Desk-based analyses of fly-tipping data and means of communicating with householders about how to dispose of waste responsibly.
- Multiple focus groups with 'general residents' and with householders that had self-identified as 'fly-tippers' by answering a series of questions on their actions.
- Crew ride-alongs to identify issues and locations of fly-tipping.
- Semi-structured interviews with local authority operational and enforcement staff.
- Co-design workshops with councils, other stakeholders, and householders.
- Quantitative online surveys (local, regional, national, and rural, sub-urban, urban) and various on-street research with residents living near to target hotspots.

Elements of this research have been funded by other organisations, including players of People's Postcode Lottery, Ealing Council, Harrow Council, Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, London Environment Directors' Network, Manchester City Council, Newham Council, Stevenage Borough Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

BEHAVIOURAL DRIVERS OF HOUSEHOLDER FLY-TIPPING

Behavioural science explores cognitive processes, especially those of decision-making and communication, through a systematic analysis of human behaviour.

Keep Britain Tidy's research so far has been done predominantly with householders, whose waste consistently accounts for almost two-thirds of fly-tipping incidents. Our research identified a wide variety of physical, societal and locational factors, together with a clear set of different feelings and emotions, that affected people's propensity to fly-tip.

Understanding how people justify their actions and challenging these excuses head-on, together with removing some of the perceived barriers to disposing of waste correctly, should change fly-tipping behaviours for the better.



This research, combined with Keep Britain Tidy's behavioural science expertise, has enabled us to identify eight insights, detailed next, which pinpoint the excuses and provocations that cause householders to fly-tip.

For each insight, working closely with partners to investigate and tackle specific issues, we have identified a series of approaches that local authorities and other land managers can take to stop these behaviours before they start.

This is one area of the work that we are doing to tackle fly-tipping as part of Keep Britain Tidy's Reaching the Tipping Point Fly-Tipping Action Plan, which seeks to increase the risks of fly-tipping and reduce its rewards.



INSIGHT 1:

PEOPLE DON'T THINK OF SMALL-SCALE, HOUSEHOLDER FLY-TIPPING WHEN THEY HEAR OR SEE THE TERM 'FLY-TIPPING'

- Multiple desk reviews showed that council fly-tipping leaflets, posters and websites predominantly used **photographs of large-scale** (van or tipper-lorry sized) **fly-tipping in rural settings**, set against the threats of the largest fines.

- As a result, **people interviewed didn't see themselves as fly-tippers**, nor did they think that the large fines would be relevant to them.

“

None of this in my view is fly-tipping, fly-tipping is things like construction and industrial waste.

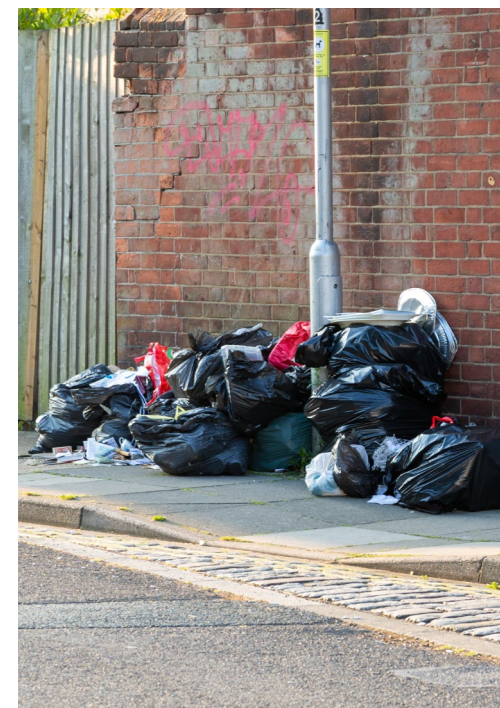
Research Participant

“

I always thought fly-tipping was only bigger stuff.

Research Participant

- The **official terms used differed widely from colloquial ones**. Focus group participants did not say 'fly-tipping' or 'bulky waste' or use these terms to search for information.



Reassess your use of imagery, threats and descriptive language with a critical eye:

- Images should show exactly the type of fly-tipping you want to address so people easily recognise that behaviour as something they, or someone they know, might do.
- Avoid putting the threat of large fines front and centre in communications about small-scale domestic fly-tipping.
- Use clearer, more familiar terms. People described their waste as 'items', 'stuff you need to get rid of', 'unwanted items and waste'. They didn't recognise the term 'bulky waste' but described items as what they were – 'fridge', 'freezer', 'washing machine'. Instead of, or as well as, 'fly-tipping', use terms such as 'the illegal dumping of waste', or 'dumping of rubbish'.
- Make sure that these colloquial terms are linked to internet searches for your services and information.



INSIGHT 2:

THERE IS AN EXPECTATION THAT FLY-TIPS WILL BE COLLECTED QUICKLY AND WITHOUT REPERCUSSION

“

They are very quick to collect it. It used to be about a week, but now it's a day or two.

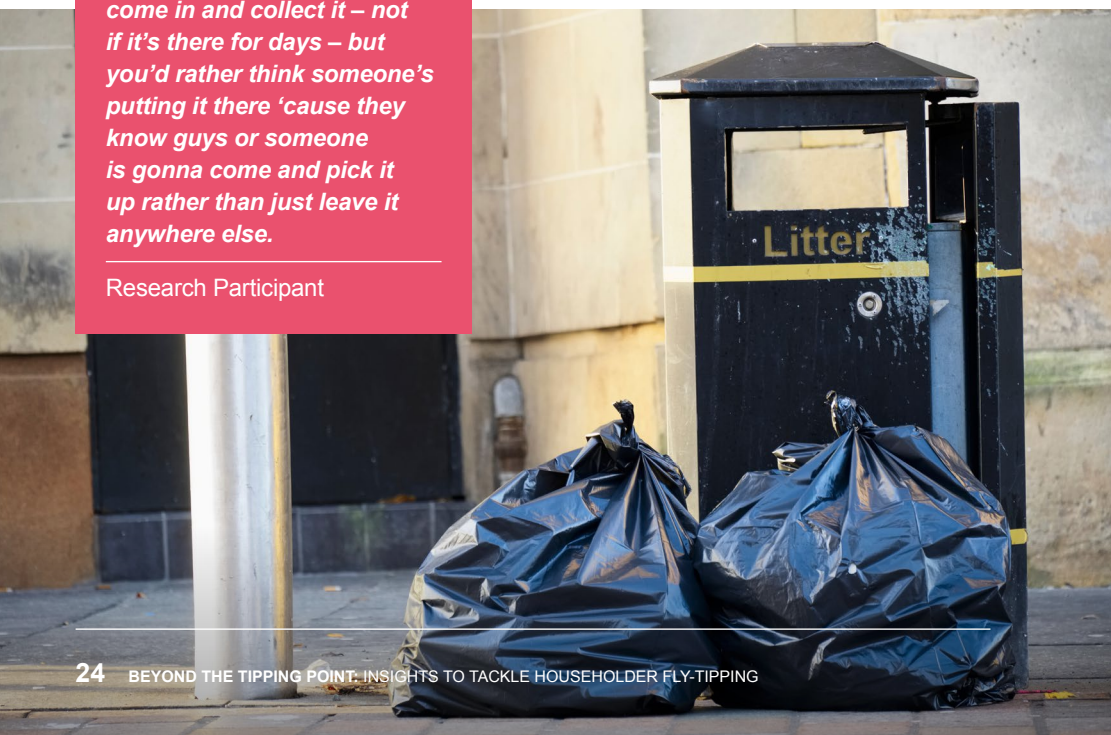
Research Participant

“

...me personally, I don't see a problem with [leaving bags/ items next to bins] if they'll come in and collect it – not if it's there for days – but you'd rather think someone's putting it there 'cause they know guys or someone is gonna come and pick it up rather than just leave it anywhere else.

Research Participant

- Fly-tipping **often disappears** within hours with **no feedback** to residents that the waste collected is classed as 'fly-tipping'.
- Where investigations are taking place, **they aren't always visible** to the perpetrator.
- People who had fly-tipped were more likely to think that if an item is likely to be collected quickly by someone, **then it is fine to leave it out in a public place** (compared to those who hadn't fly-tipped).





- Investigate waste dumped and send warning letters to the perpetrators to say that they have been identified. Seek legal advice if you are unsure.

- Identify repeat offenders and contact them to warn that their actions are under observation. Examples might include landlords misadvising tenants on waste disposal practices, or businesses leaving waste timed to coincide with other types of on-street collections.

“

It was after the letter – after the letter I would never do it again. But people still do it, so I received another letter and I get scared that they think it's me.

Research Participant

- Highlight investigations and enforcement activity on the street using social media and local papers. Contact your legal department first to ensure that the information you seek and publicise is within the law.

Communicate clearly, in a targeted manner, that fly-tipping in any form is not acceptable and is not tolerated:

- Showcase investigations and enforcement activity on the street. Our intervention, detailed below, demonstrates how carefully this approach needs to be calculated to vary over time and place to avoid losing its effectiveness.

“

Well mine [fly-tip] got a cordon [crime scene tape] around it and I walked past it really embarrassed... I'll never do it again.

Research Participant



INTERVENTION: CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION (CSI) TAPE

Working with Newham Council, high-vis CSI tape and stickers were placed on fly-tips and left in situ for a fixed period before removal to counter the expectation that fly-tips would be collected quickly and without repercussions and the perception that fly-tipping is low impact and socially acceptable.



Impact:

- Up to 73% and average 64% reduction in fly-tipping during the intervention with no displacement.
- After the intervention, fly-tipping remained on average 50% lower than before.
- 50% of respondents felt that it showed the council was working to tackle fly-tipping.



INSIGHT 3:

PEOPLE PERCEIVE FLY-TIPPING TO BE LOW IMPACT

- There was a widely held perception that **if services were already in place to collect waste** left out, there was **no problem** with doing so. Participants struggled to understand the cost impacts and implications for the broader community.
- Moreover, if it had been done before, respondents **were more likely to do it again** with other items.
- People felt a **lack of personal responsibility** for their own waste and simply **wanted it 'off their hands'**. Unwanted items were seen as the council's responsibility and what paying Council Tax was for.

“

I will do it again. What else I am going to do? I'm not hurting anyone.

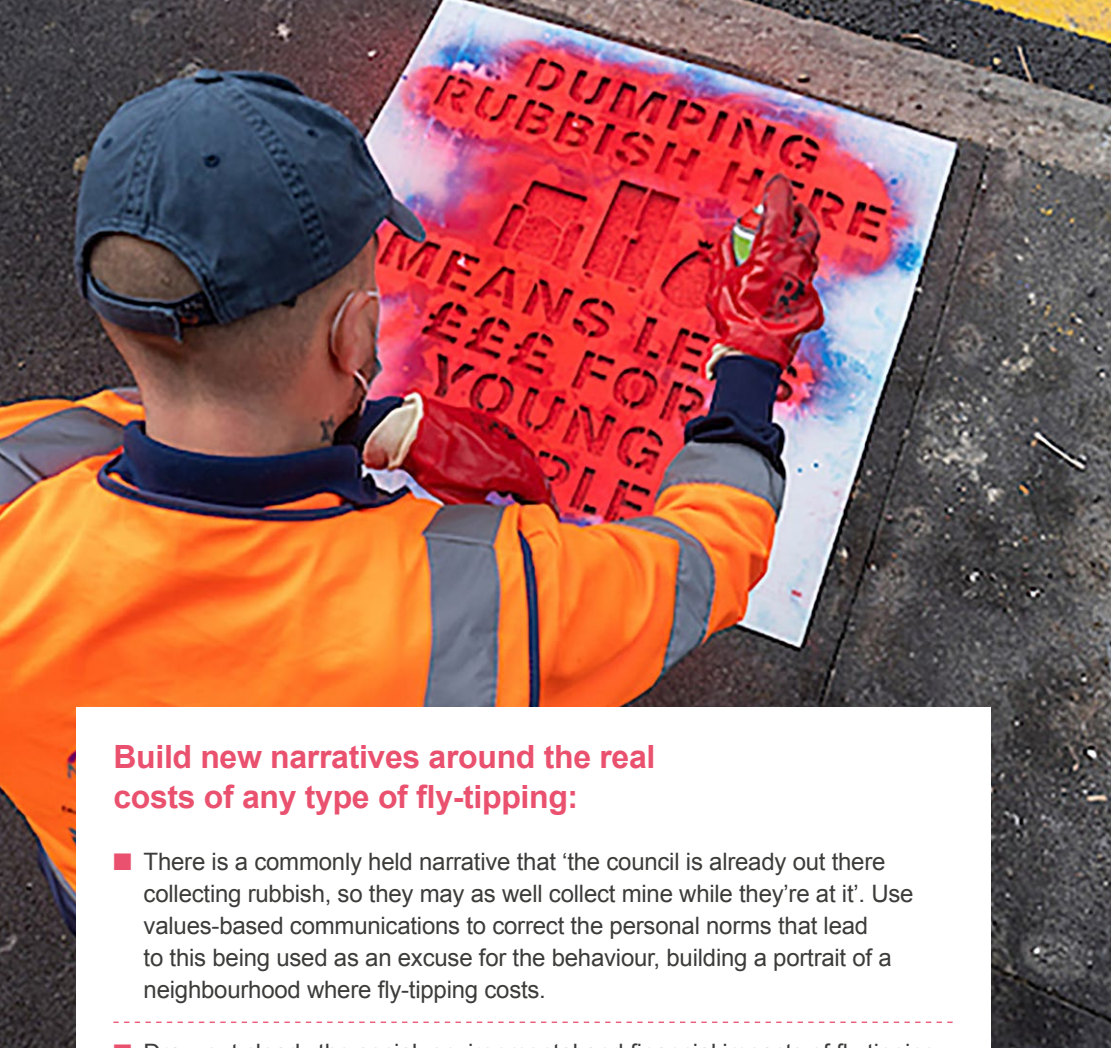
Research Participant

“

I think when you get rid of it, you are not thinking about the effects on other people, but you are thinking about your own space, as London housing is quite small.

Research Participant





Build new narratives around the real costs of any type of fly-tipping:

- There is a commonly held narrative that 'the council is already out there collecting rubbish, so they may as well collect mine while they're at it'. Use values-based communications to correct the personal norms that lead to this being used as an excuse for the behaviour, building a portrait of a neighbourhood where fly-tipping costs.
- Draw out clearly the social, environmental and financial impacts of fly-tipping to residents and users. Appeal to intrinsic values – fly-tips are often collected by the council and this money could be better spent on other community services such as parks, healthcare or education.
- Use hyper-local messaging, e.g. with all wording, costs and pictures clearly relating to a particular ward or neighbourhood.
- Behaviour-changing messages can be built into public events engendering pride in the community, part of a long-term strategy to establish new norms and improve areas in partnership with the residents. This might help to inform hard-to-reach groups.

INTERVENTION: SOCIAL IMPACT STENCILS

Chalk-based paint was used to stencil the ground each time a fly-tip was removed, leaving a message about the costs and impacts of fly-tipping to the community. This also reinforced the message that fly-tips do not simply disappear.

Using Keep Britain Tidy's extensive behavioural research into fly-tipping, this intervention was designed in partnership with Newham Council to address directly the justification that fly-tipping has very little social, economic or environmental impact.

DUMPING



**WASTES £££
FOR YOUR
COMMUNITY**

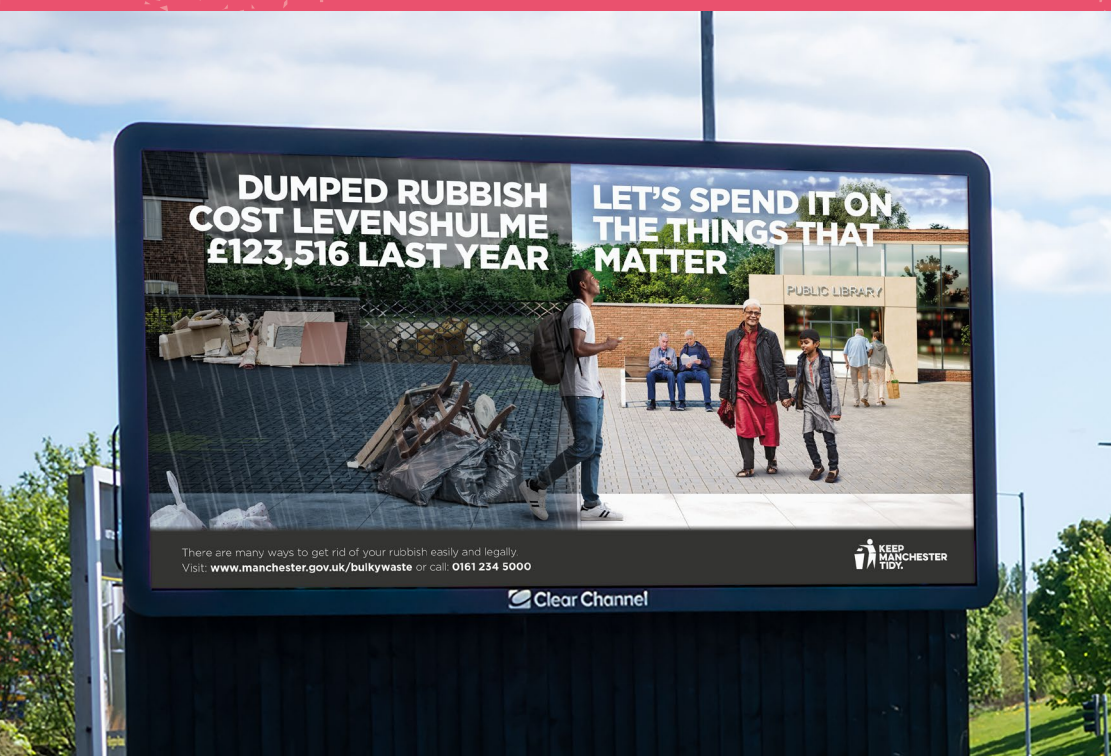
Impact:

- Average 67% reduction in fly-tipping during the intervention with no displacement.
- Post-intervention, fly-tipping remained on average 63% lower than before.
- In the two years post-intervention, fly-tipping remained on average around a third lower than the baseline.
- 46% of respondents said it made them think twice about what to do with their unwanted items.
- 58% of respondents felt that the intervention showed that the council was working to tackle fly-tipping.

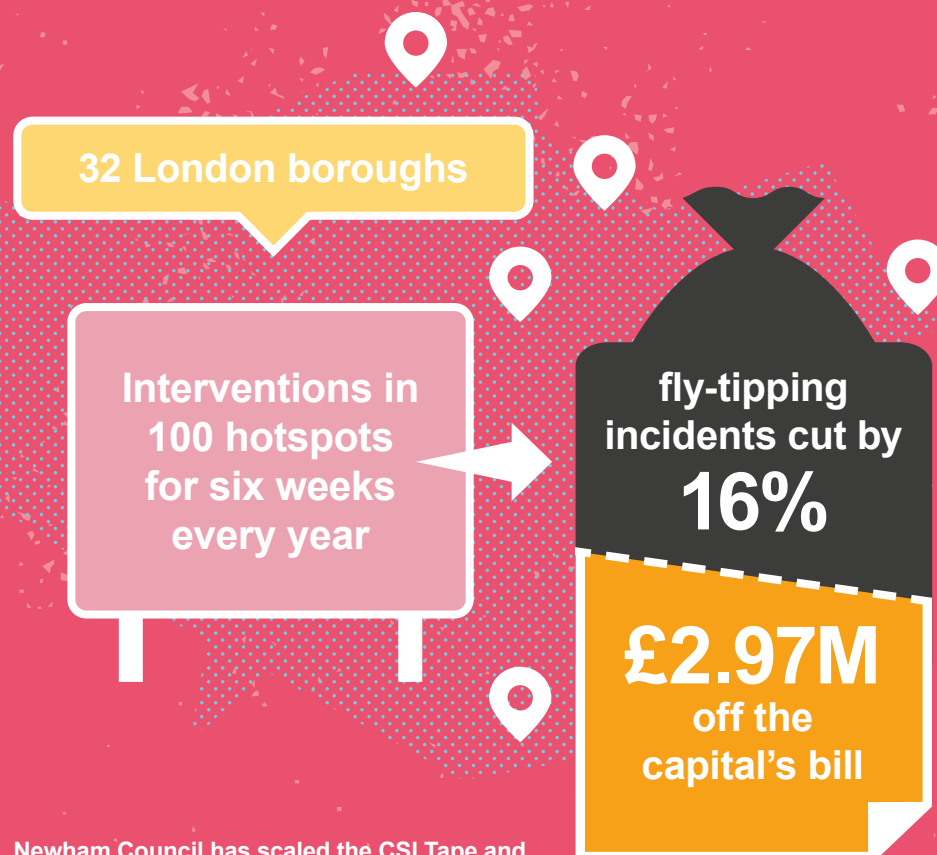


INTERVENTION: VALUES-BASED COMMUNICATION

Informed by Keep Britain Tidy's behavioural research, this intervention was designed to highlight the broader social impacts of fly-tipping. Using a series of positive nudge actions, targeted campaign materials were developed with and for each partner authority to demonstrate to their residents why making the effort to dispose of waste responsibly is important.



Five local authorities trialled a tailored values-based message poster campaign detailing the actual costs of fly-tipping at ward level, set against the perceived needs for the same community. The aim was to use emotive visuals to highlight to residents the real cost that their fly-tipping had, to challenge directly the justification used that fly-tipping 'doesn't hurt anyone'. The results of this campaign are not yet available.



Newham Council has scaled the CSI Tape and Social Impact Stencils interventions and now targets hot-spots for six weeks on a rolling basis. Fly-tipping has dropped at two-thirds of sites, with fly-tipping incidents dropping by 42% on average at those sites. Keep Britain Tidy has calculated that scaling this approach across London would cut fly-tipping by 16% and save just under £3m a year.

Keep Britain Tidy calculations

INSIGHT 4:

SOME COUNCIL POLICIES ARE UNINTENTIONALLY DRIVING FLY-TIPPING

- Local authority **policies and practices** can inadvertently **provoke people into fly-tipping**, either by frustrating their efforts to 'do the right thing' or justifying their actions in dumping waste.
- **Waste collection policies** (including bulky and side waste, additional bin charges), **clear-up practices**, and **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)** (opening times, rules), are regarded especially as being conducive or otherwise to fly-tipping actions.
- Some residents felt **'told off'** by predominantly negative communications.

“

You see the council [street sweeper] leaving bags of rubbish on the street.

Research Participant

“

If it's just the fact that the council are going to come and get it anyway for free, then who's not going to just let the council come and get it.

Research Participant

“

Collection crews don't have much regard for the residents... They just literally come in, drag the bins out and go. They drop it everywhere. We have a cleaner every week and he spends most of his time cleaning up the bin mess that the bin men have left when they're dragging stuff out. I mean it's really poorly organised.

Research Participant



Carefully examine the totality of waste collection and disposal options from a user perspective:

- Review all waste collection (business and residential), clean-up and fly-tipping strategies. Do they provide a perceptibly 'fair' and joined-up service that will not justify excuses for fly-tipping behaviours?
- Are HWRCs and public recycling areas available when people want to use them, straightforward to use and well-served, so waste is not left alongside full containers?
- Consider options for the removal or containerisation of legitimate household and business waste to avoid attracting other dumped waste.
- Is there scope to differentiate waste collections to meet community needs? For example, providing more frequent regular collections in populous neighbourhoods with less waste storage space, or extra provision at times of student tenancy changeovers or just before religious festivals where clear-outs are encouraged?
- In communications, trial the use of some positive reinforcement messaging (XX% people behave responsibly).



INTERVENTION: NO WASTE ON STREETS

Part of the award-winning Keep Britain Tidy and Newham Council 'Better Streets' series of fly-tipping interventions was the No Waste on Streets pilot. The aim was to remove all waste, legitimate or otherwise from high-street locations. Specially designed 'units' to containerise and remove time-banded waste from view were installed on a busy high street where the presence of bags and other rubbish tended to attract further fly-tipping and littering.

Impact:

- An average 24% reduction in fly-tipping during the intervention.
- 39% of respondents said it made them realise that dumping rubbish on streets was illegal.
- 75% of respondents said the intervention made them feel that the council was doing something to tackle waste dumped on streets.

INSIGHT 5:

CERTAIN TYPES OF FLY-TIPPING ARE SEEN AS MORE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE

“

I leave a note on furniture I've left out saying 'Take it'.

Research Participant

“

Scrap metal dealers come. They come and pick up for free. They took our chairs and tables. We leave [them] outside.

Research Participant

“

I don't think multiple black bags by public litter bins is fly-tipping, as it's not furniture.

Research Participant



- Many respondents had left bulky items out for other residents and/or scrap dealers who might like them for free, believing that they needed or would make good use of the items. They felt that this contributed positively towards their local community.
- Leaving bags outside closed charity shops or alongside clothes banks were the most common fly-tipping activities that people carried out, as well as the most justifiable. Those who agreed fly-tipping was acceptable under various circumstances were also consistently more likely to say that they had fly-tipped.
- Our research suggests that this perception is more an excuse and less a motivator to fly-tip, and that the convenience of fly-tipping and perceived acceptability are stronger motivators of the behaviour.





Tackle these excuses head-on in communications and action:

- Have separate strategies for dealing with black bag and bulky waste fly-tipping.
- Highlight responsible ways of dealing with waste that can be reused.
- Address perceived 'social acceptability' by highlighting the costs of all fly-tipping to the community (see Insight 3).
- Directly discount the excuse of 'helping someone out'; encourage people to think about what actually happens to their items once they leave them on the street, and make them aware of the penalties (see Insight 7).
- Work with charity shops to make it clear that charity donations left outside cannot be used.

“

[We need] Information. A sign on the charity door saying, 'Please do not leave things outside because they won't be taken in'. I'd put it back in my car and I'd go around the next day when it's open.

Research Participant

INSIGHT 6:

THE 'HASSLE FACTOR' IS A SIGNIFICANT DRIVER OF FLY-TIPPING

“

During a house clearing, I do get the car and go to the recycling centre or tip, but it can be a hassle as they check everything there, so I left the items outside of my house.

Research Participant



- Most fly-tippers were **motivated** predominantly by a **wish to get rid of their rubbish as quickly and easily as possible**. They (particularly younger people, students, and those living in small accommodation) were not willing to store it for any length of time until it could be collected.
- Waste disposal **options** that were regarded as **slow, expensive and/ or inconvenient, were not used** and a quicker and easier option was chosen. Whether or not it led to the waste being subsequently fly-tipped (either by themselves or the person they handed it to) was far less of a consideration.
- Frequently, **council bulky waste services** were mentioned as being **expensive, difficult to access and slow to collect**, and less frequently, HWRC sites with fussy policies or unfriendly staff. As a result, people instead left items for scrap men, 'rag and bone' men or contacted a 'man with a van' advertising through social media.



“

Make it easier to get the council to collect [my items]. Phoning the council is a long process; I'd rather get a fine.

Research Participant



'Tip the balance' to make fly-tipping a less attractive option compared to the alternatives:

- Conduct user journey mapping to assess the ease and effectiveness of using both council and other services to dispose of waste responsibly.

Consider:

- How do we make the right thing to do easier and the wrong thing more difficult compared to other options?



- Ensure you consider bulky waste collection, HWRC sites, and the ease of getting information on managing waste using terms that people understand.
- Fly-tipping can be made less attractive by increasing the threat of enforcement (see Insights 2 and 8) or highlighting the actual costs to the community (Insight 3).
- Bulky waste services could be made easier to book and quicker to collect. Community benefits could be offered as incentives; such as grants to local charities.

INSIGHT 7:

HOUSEHOLDS ARE NOT MANAGING THEIR WASTE EFFECTIVELY

- Many research participants felt **overwhelmed by the amount of waste** they were bringing into their households, particularly cardboard and plastic packaging, and were running out of space in their bins at least once a month.
- This appears to be a **direct driver of fly-tipping behaviour** as two in five said that they disposed of it in a manner considered to be fly-tipping. They did not see a difference in using their household waste bin or a public litter bin for household waste.

“

My bin was full so I just put it outside. It was not taken and I am still waiting for someone to pick it up.

Research Participant

“

Cardboard and plastic [are] the most common things as we order lots of stuff online, which contains packaging.

Research Participant

Support residents in better managing their waste within the existing service:

- Identify problem waste types for different communities and implement specific interventions.
- Encourage households to crush recyclables before putting in their household bins to use the space more efficiently.
- Use communications to focus on waste prevention and reduction, for example promoting reusables over single-use packaging.
- Reframe waste as resident's responsibility rather than that of the council.
- Investigate and seek to remedy specific issues to keep waste from accumulating and attracting further dumping, for example sources of fly-tipping at communal bin stores or houses of multiple occupation where current bin provision might not be sufficient.





INSIGHT 8:

THE PERCEIVED THREAT OF ENFORCEMENT IS LOW

- Participants were generally **supportive of punishments for fly-tipping**, even if they had been caught themselves.
- There was a **mixed understanding of the potential implications of getting caught**.
- Many respondents **did not feel any responsibility for their own waste** once it had left their hands.

“

People know that they can put stuff out, no one seems to be doing anything about it.

Research Participant

“

Yeah but if you saw a sticker on there and we will be fined for X amount of money for fly-tipping, then you wouldn't want to put [it there again] for fear of being caught.

Research Participant



Increase the perceived threat of enforcement to prompt correct behaviours:

- Build narratives of a personal responsibility for waste and where it ends up. Run campaigns advising that there are fixed penalty notices for duty of care as well as requirements for residents to check for waste registration details and request a receipt or other paperwork to show how their waste is disposed of.
- Increase the visibility of enforcement through specific interventions (see Insight 2).
- Publicise actions taken against fly-tipping. To counter the community's perception that most of the fly-tipping they observe occurs without consequences, broadcast pursuance of householder fly-tipping as well as large-scale tips.
- Decide whether to invest in enforcement to tackle specific problems.





FINAL THOUGHTS

The battle against fly-tipping continues, but there is room for optimism. Choosing to dump waste illegally is a behaviour that can be changed.

As an independent charity, Keep Britain Tidy is in a unique position. We are free to lobby for legislative and judicial change. We are able to work with a wide range of partners to develop targeted solutions informed by our research. As with this report, we can bring that knowledge together and share it, as well as scaling up effective projects for wider benefit.

Fly-tipping will continue to be a priority for Keep Britain Tidy. We know that it is a significant problem for local authorities and indeed for everyone responsible for managing land – public or private. We are committed to a significant and long-term programme of fly-tipping research, to understand people's triggers and barriers, to inform targeted insights, to develop and test effective interventions that can change attitudes and behaviour in the long term. This report makes available the findings of our work so far, and we intend to keep investigating and sharing our work on fly-tipping for as long as it remains a problem.

Just clearing fly-tipping is not an effective strategy to deal with it. Our research shows that it can actually make the situation worse, by apparently trivialising the impact that fly-tipping actually has and raising the expectation that dumped items will be cleared away quickly and without repercussion. We recommend that all local authorities produce a fly-tipping strategy that clearly identifies the local problem, objectives, a plan of action, and how progress against the plan will be monitored. The plan of action should involve behaviour change interventions, education, engagement, and enforcement, as well as clearing fly-tips. We invite local authorities to work with us to produce robust and effective fly-tipping strategies.

We also invite local authorities and other land managers to partner with us to investigate and develop more targeted work against fly-tipping, as well as rolling out proven interventions, making positive changes on a national scale.

Contact us for a chat – network.enquiries@keepbritaintidy.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Keep Britain Tidy is grateful to players of People's Postcode Lottery for funding elements of the research and the production and publication of this report.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for funding elements of the research: Ealing Council, Harrow Council, Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, London Environment Directors' Network, Manchester City Council, Newham Council, Stevenage Borough Council, and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

We would like to further thank Newham Council for funding the piloting of the CSI Tape, Social Impact Stencils and No Waste on Streets interventions, and Bradford Council, Hackney Council, London Borough of Havering, London Borough of Hounslow and Manchester City Council for part-funding piloting of the Values-based Communication intervention.

Report designed and produced by Carbon Creative www.carboncreative.net
Photographs copyright Brendan Foster Photography, Andrew Baker for Newham Council and Shutterstock.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Keep Britain Tidy Network Survey – “What are your top three environmental challenges for the next three years?” Keep Britain Tidy (2020)
- ² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Fly-Tipping Statistics for England (2013/14 annually through to 2020/2021)
- ³ Defra, Fly-Tipping Statistics for England (2020/2021); *ibid.* (2019/20); *ibid.* (2018/19), *ibid.* (2017/18), *ibid.* (2016/17)
- ⁴ Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.33, s.34. Legally referred to as “controlled waste” it is waste that is subject to legislative control in either its handling or its disposal, due to its potential to have detrimental effects including on human health or the environment, now or in the future. It includes household, commercial, and industrial waste
- ⁵ HM Government (2017); Litter Strategy for England
- ⁶ Environmental Protection Act 1990, s.59
- ⁷ Defra, Fly-tipping Statistics for England (2013/14 annually through to 2020/2021)
- ⁸ Tilley, N, Fly-tipping during a pandemic (2020); UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science from Defra's WasteDataFlow figures
- ⁹ Defra, Fly-tipping Statistics for England (2013/14 annually through to 2020/2021)
- ¹⁰ National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group, About fly-tipping; <http://www.tacklingflytipping.com/home/1508>
- ¹¹ Defra (2017); Fly-tipping Statistics for England (2016/17)
- ¹² Defra, Fly-tipping Statistics for England (2016/17 annually through to 2020/2021)
- ¹³ Estimate. Defra Press Office (20th February 2020); <https://deframedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/02/13/our-work-to-tackle-the-scourge-of-fly-tipping-and-how-the-environment-bill-will-deliver-on-our-green-ambition/>
- ¹⁴ Defra (2021); Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2020 to 2021
- ¹⁵ Defra (2021); Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2020 to 2021
- ¹⁶ Defra (2021); Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2020 to 2021

£10.00

ISBN 978-1-7397976-0-7



This publication was researched, written
and published by Keep Britain Tidy
ISBN 978-1-7397976-0-7

First published in 2022 by Keep Britain Tidy
Copyright © 2022 Keep Britain Tidy

