

Research into Fly tipping

Who Fly tips

Domestic dumping is the most widespread form of fly-tipping. It is normally household waste (which is dumped at the wrong time or place) or waste which is not picked up as part of normal waste collection services; such as garden refuse and bulky items like unwanted furniture.

Small scale **commercial fly- tipping** is normally caused by tradesman or businesses wishing to avoid paying for waste collection and disposal services¹

Organised fly-tipping i.e. Large scale commercial dumping is motivated purely by money and covers all illegal dumping by companies or individuals who have been paid to dispose of this waste.² Large scale dumping ranges from one man with a van through to highly organised gangs. It has been estimated that people involved in organised illegal waste disposal can profit by up to £1 million a year.³ It has been suggested that those involved are highly organised, dangerous individuals and even that, “drug barons are moving out of drugs and into fly tipping. There is more money in it and less risk”⁴.

The Construction industry is a major generator of waste and construction and demolition waste is the most expensive to remove. Several trucks can dump several tonnes of clay, bricks and concrete etc in one visit which has a severe effect on the environment. Its removal is also both expensive and time consuming.

Breakdown Of Waste Tipped

A survey by Encams⁵ (formerly the Campaign to Keep Britain Tidy) gave the following breakdown of the type of waste fly-tipped::

Domestic refuse –	21%
Construction wastes –	21%
Other commercial wastes-	20%
Landscape wastes –	13%
Bulky household items –	12%
Travel and transport related –	8%

¹ Clearing fly tipped waste from land: Partial regulatory impact assessment –Defra 2004

² London Assembly Environment Committee 2004

³ Consultation on statutory direction to the environment Agency and waste collection authorities on the unlawful disposal of waste – Defra February 2004

⁴ London Assembly Environment Committee 2004

⁵ Local Environmental Quality Survey of England 2003/4

Other miscellaneous materials – 5%

Reasons why People Fly Tip

According to the Chartered Institute of Waste Management⁶, the reasons why people feel empowered to fly tip may be summarised as '*no-one told me I couldn't tip if there; there are no signs to say you can't and everyone tips there*'. Defences normally offered when the dumper is prosecuted also include:

- The bin men are too lazy to take it
- What else can I do
- It will rot down
- My bit won't make any difference
- The Council charges a fortune for shifting it; what do you expect?
- The tip is never open when you need it.

The Institute suggests that while none of these reasons are acceptable, an insight into the rationale of the fly-tipper provides useful information on what kind of waste management infrastructure is needed in an area. They therefore believe that such information should be used to assist waste collection and waste disposal authorities that are developing services.

Where Does Fly Tipping Occur

It has been suggested⁷ that fly-tipping occurs in areas which are assessable, secluded and have other accumulated waste, e.g. waste lands, construction sites and industrial areas. Accessibility depends on what is being dumped. For small tips items within walking distance of the source, e.g. private skips, secluded pathways etc. For larger quantities where vehicular access is required, no through roads, lay-bys, and car parks are more accessible.

Problems with smaller trade waste tends to be in areas where there are shops or high density of commercial activity and large scale construction and demolition tipping in areas where there are significant construction and redevelopment projects, low density housing areas and transport facilities such as station car parks. High density residential areas will tend to have problems with domestic dumping.⁸

The Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science has suggested a number of points for action⁹ including:

- "The observation that certain kinds of location are at risk of large scale tipping raises the possibility of pro-active action to protect such sites.

⁶ Local Environmental Quality a guide to good practice published by the Chartered Institute of Waste Management (September 2005)

⁷ Report for Department of the Environment on technical aspects of controlled waste management (Coggins and Cooper 1991)

⁸ A problem-orientated approach to fly tipping (Webb and Marshall) published by Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science

⁹ Ibid

Further research would enable the risk factors to be more clearly defined, and at risk sites to be better identified and protected.

- Attention should focus on emerging areas at risk rather than specific locations. Strategically placed CCTV cameras or automated number plate readers might be worth considering.”
- “Serious consideration should be given to facilitating the legitimate disposal of contaminated waste, and reducing the ability of fly-tippers to justify their behaviour to themselves.”
- Develop a system and infrastructure to support the analysis of offender networks and to join up with other enforcement systems.
- Making more use of scientists to increase the availability of forensic evidence with which to support a prosecution.
- Encouraging organisations such as local authorities that commission large-scale developments to include good waste disposal as an important bid assessment criterion.
- Encourage local authorities to include effective waste disposal as an assessment criterion for all planning applications and building control inspection.
- Development of an intelligence system that enables a picture of offenders, their networks, their relationships, behaviour and modus operandi to support the development of offender-focused crime reduction strategies.

The Institute suggests, amongst other things, that local authority analysts will want

- To analyse specific problems in their area, identify their causes and the factors that contribute to particular hot spots.
- To devise and monitor strategies to tackle them.

As indicated in the report the Institute have been commissioned to do further work in this area and to help develop good practice.

Public Opinion

According to MORI and local surveys people are more concerned about the quality of their local environment than almost anything else.¹⁰

At the last customer satisfaction focus groups exercise participants expressed the view that more should be done to “make an example of fly-tippers, litterers and dog-foulers via enforcement action.” Bruce Grove and Northumberland Park were described as a dumping ground and dirty as a result of fly –tippers and dog fouling. More information on the focus groups’ comments are set out in Annex 1

The Organisation Involved in Combating fly Tipping

Fly tipping now involves at least three Government Departments:

¹⁰ House of Commons Library Research Paper 05/01

- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) leads on strategy and is responsible for the work of the Environment Agency.
- The Home Office lead on tackling anti-social behaviour and are responsible for the judicial system.
- The Dept for Communities and Local Government with its responsibilities in relation to local authorities.

Agency's and other organisations involved include:

- The Environment Agency which was set up by the Environment Act 1995 and took on the function of, amongst other thing, the waste regulation authorities.
- The Local Government Association who co-ordinate local authority's response to waste management initiatives.
- Local Authorities, such as Haringey, who as waste disposal authorities face the increased cost of disposing of fly-tipped waste as well as being "locally based" organisations responsible for keeping public areas clear of litter and refuse.
- Encams who carry out surveys, run campaigns and give advice on waste management.
- The Greater London Authority who run "Capital Standards" which is a four year campaign aimed at improving the cleanliness of London streets and public areas and also in providing appropriate training. The Mayor of London also wants to set standards and targets to combat fly-tipping etc.
- The National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group is a forum which identifies good practice and advises government on the problems associated with fly tipping and potential solutions. The Forums membership includes representatives from Defra, the Environment Agency, local government associations, Institute of Waste Management and various land owning and business organisations.
- The Metropolitan Police with their role in Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies as well as enforcement and prevention issues.
- The Magistrates Association who give advice to Magistrates on issues such as sentencing.
- Community Service Volunteers who organise volunteering projects.

Prosecutions

A recent survey for Defra¹¹ suggests that between 1998 and 2003 only about a quarter of local authorities have prosecuted fly tipping offenders.

¹¹ Trends in Environmental sentencing in England and Wales 2003