



20th October 2015

Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2014/15

Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste on land, contrary to Section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Local authorities and the Environment Agency both have a responsibility in respect of illegally deposited waste. This includes local authorities and the Environment Agency collecting and reporting data on fly-tipping in their area. This statistical notice covers data reported by the local authorities in England.

Key points

- Local authorities dealt with a total of 900 thousand incidents of fly-tipping in 2014/15, an increase of 5.6 per cent since 2013/14 with nearly two thirds of fly-tips involving household waste.
- The trend in incidents of fly-tipping had been downward until 2013/14 when there was an increase to 852 thousand incidents. The number of fly-tipping incidents increased again in 2014/15 to 900 thousand incidents. Care should be taken when interpreting this increase. This may reflect both improvements to the capture of fly-tipping incidents as well as genuine increases in the number of incidents.
- The most common place for fly-tipping to occur was on highways which accounted for 48 per cent of total incidents in 2014/15.
- Incidents of fly-tipping on footpaths, bridleways and back alleyways increased by 3.2 per cent in England in 2014/15. Together these now account for 28 per cent of fly-tipping incidents.
- Nearly a third of all incidents consisted of a quantity of material equivalent to a 'small van load'. The second largest size category for fly-tipping incidents was 'car boot' and accounted for nearly 30 per cent of total incidents.
- The estimated cost of clearance of fly-tipping to local authorities in England in 2014/15 was nearly £50 million, an 11 per cent increase on 2013/14.
- Local authorities carried out nearly 515 thousand enforcement actions at an estimated cost of £17.6 million in 2014/15, a £0.3 million increase on the previous year. This equated to an increase of 3.1 per cent on enforcement actions in the same period.

Data for each local authority is available in a dataset which is available to [download](#).

There have been no data revisions to this Statistical Release since it was published.

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An Official Statistics publication. These statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility. More information on the Official Statistics Code of Practice can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>.

Fly-tipping Summary Statistics for 2014/15, England



 **900k**
 **£50m**

In 2014/15, there were **900 thousand incidents** of fly-tipping and local authorities spent **nearly £50 million on clearing** the fly-tips. This is up from 852 thousand fly-tipping incidents, and £45.2 million spent, in 2013/14.

 **48%**

Fly-tipping incidents on **highways** accounted for 48% of total incidents and rose from 404 thousand in 2013/14 to 436 thousand in 2014/15.

 **66%**

Household waste accounted for 66% of total incidents and rose from 563k incidents in 2013/14 to 590k incidents in 2014/15.

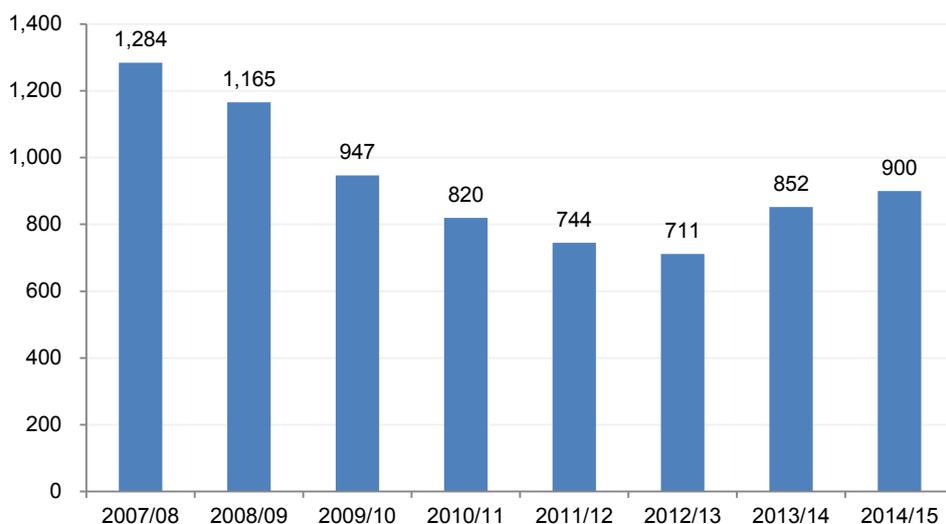
 **31%**

Small van load size of fly-tipping incidents accounted for 31% of total incidents in 2014/15. This is similar to 2013/14.

 **515k**
£17.6m

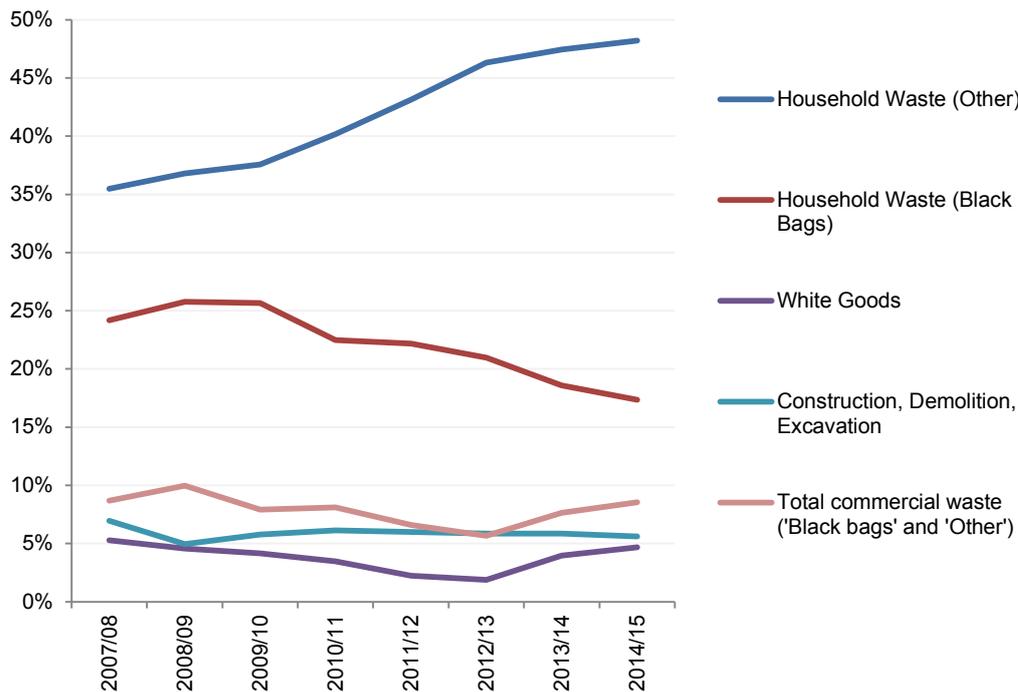
In 2014/15 total **enforcement actions** rose by 3.1% to **515k** and the **estimated cost of enforcement actions** carried out by local authorities was £17.6 million. In 2013/14 enforcement actions were 500k and the cost of these actions was £17.3 million.

Figure 1: Trends in number of fly-tipping incidents in England, 2007/08 to 2014/15 (thousands)



- Incidents of fly-tipping had shown steady declines between 2007/08 and 2012/13 until 2013/14 when there was an increase to 852 thousand incidents. The number of fly-tipping incidents increased again in 2014/15 to 900 thousand incidents. Care should be taken when interpreting this increase. This may reflect both improvements to the capture of fly-tipping incidents as well as genuine increases in the number of incidents. During the quality assurance process for both 2013/14 and 2014/15 data, local authorities who had reported increases for fly-tipping incidents explained the reasons for this were: the introduction of new technologies; such as on-line reporting and electronic applications, increased training for staff and a more pro-active approach to removing fly-tipping.
- Local authorities dealt with 900 thousand incidents of fly-tipping in 2014/15 in England, ranging in size from single black bag to tipper lorry load. Household waste accounted for 66 per cent, 'small van load' size was 31 per cent and 48 per cent of fly-tips were on highways.
- There was a 5.6 per cent increase in fly-tipping incidents in England in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14 with upward trends in most incident size categories. Single bag incidents were the only size category not to see an increase in incidents.
- The estimated cost of clearance of fly-tipping to local authorities in England in 2014/15 was nearly £50 million, nearly 11 per cent higher compared to 2013/14.
- Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this Notice. Details of the 151 incidents of large-scale illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2014/15 are reported separately and are available [here](#).

Figure 2: Types of fly-tipping incidents in England, 2014/15 as proportion of total incidents



Footnotes

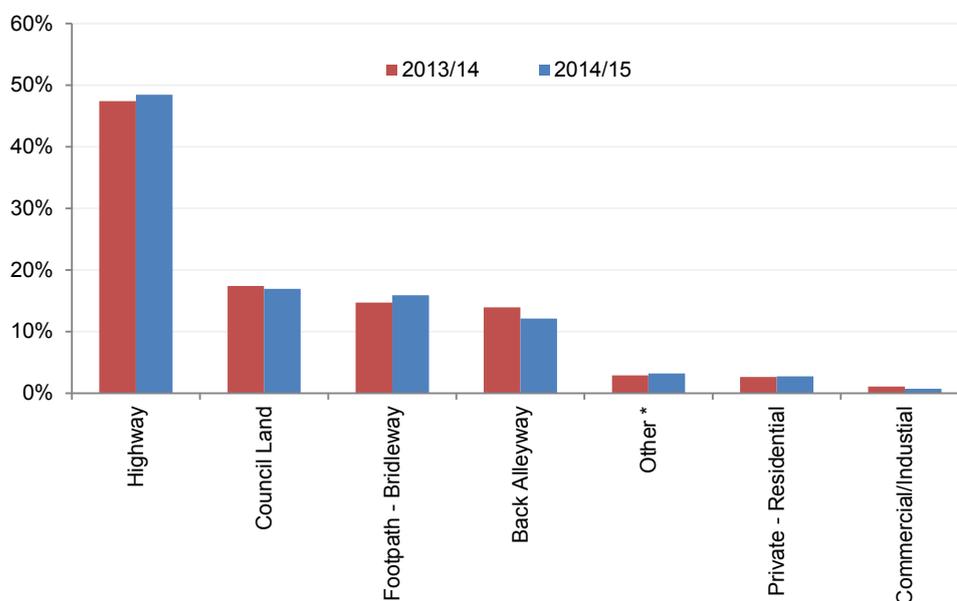
Household Waste (Other) could include material from house or shed clearances, old furniture, carpets and the waste from small scale DIY works.

Commercial Waste (Other) could include pallets, cardboard boxes, plastics, foam, and any other waste not contained in bags or containers and not due to be collected.

- Household waste which includes 'black bags' and 'other' is the largest waste type contributing to all fly-tipping incidents. In total this accounted for 66 per cent of all incidents in 2014/15 where incidents were nearly 590 thousand incidents, one for every 40 households in England. The chart above shows household waste for 'black bags' and 'other' separately where both types of household waste were following the same trend up to 2009/10. In 2009/10 incidents of household waste 'other' were 38 per cent and have increased to 48 per cent in 2014/15. Whereas incidents of household waste 'black bags' have decreased from 26 per cent in 2009/10 to 17 per cent in 2014/15.
- Commercial waste is the second largest waste type contributing to fly-tipping incidents in England. Almost 9 per cent of incidents in England in 2014/15 were of commercial waste. There was a 18 per cent increase in commercial waste incidents from 65 thousand in 2013/14 to 77 thousand in 2014/15.
- Incidents of white goods increased from 13 thousand incidents in 2012/13 to 34 thousand incidents in 2013/14 in England. There was a further smaller increase in 2014/15 of white goods, up by 25 per cent to 42 thousand incidents in England.
- Other waste types include 'green waste', 'other electrical', 'tyres', 'animal carcasses', 'vehicle parts', 'asbestos', 'chemical drums, oil/fuel', 'clinical' and 'other unidentified'. These waste types in total accounted for 9 per cent of all incidents in 2014/15 with 'other unidentified' contributing 6 per cent to total incidents.

- For some waste types, such as green waste or electrical goods, it is not necessarily possible to tell whether they originated from households or businesses.

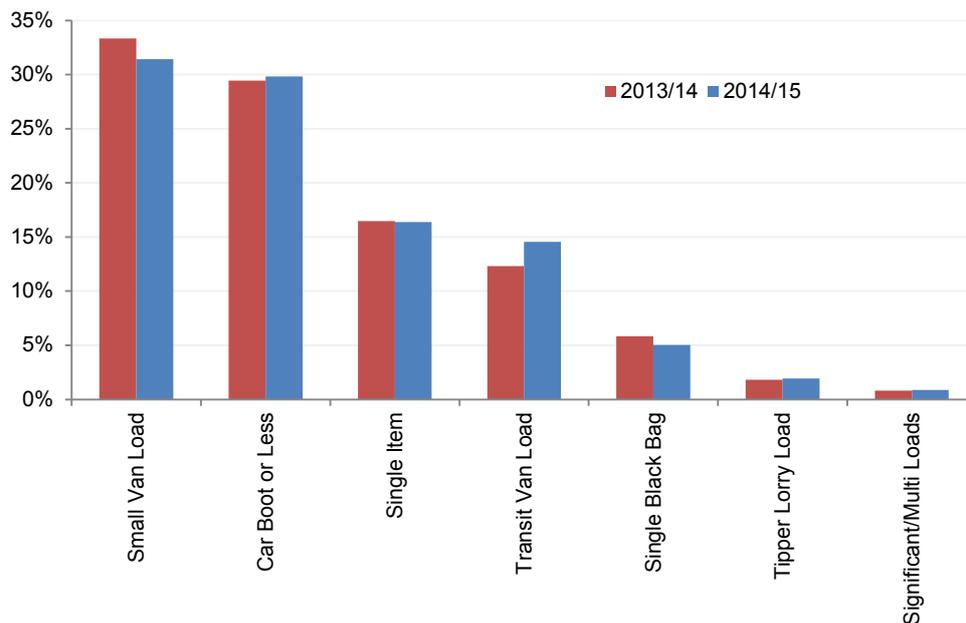
Figure 3: Fly-tipping incidents by land type in England, 2014/15 as a proportion of total incidents



* Other includes agricultural, watercourse, railway and other unidentified land.

- Nearly half of all fly-tipping incidents occur on highways. In 2014/15, 48 per cent of all fly-tips occurred on highways. This was a 7.9 per cent increase of fly-tipping incidents on highways from 404 thousand incidents in 2013/14 to 436 thousand tonnes in 2014/15 in England.
- Incidents of fly-tipping on footpaths, bridleways and back alleyways are the second largest land types where fly-tipping occurs. In 2014/15, 28 per cent of all fly-tips occurred on footpaths, bridleways and back alleyways in England. This was a 3.2 per cent increase for fly-tipping incidents on footpaths and bridleways and in back alleyways in England in 2014/15 and accounted for nearly 252 thousand incidents.

Figure 4: Fly-tipping incidents by size in England, 2014/15 as a proportion of total incidents



- The largest size of fly-tipping incidents is equivalent to a ‘small van load’. In 2014/15, 279 thousand incidents (31 per cent of total incidents) were of a size equivalent to a small van, practically the same as in 2013/14.
- The second largest size category is equivalent to a ‘car boot or less’. In 2014/15, 265 thousand incidents (30 per cent of total incidents) were the size of a ‘car boot or less’. This was an increase of nearly 7.3 per cent in 2014/15 in England.
- ‘Single items’ which would cover items such as furniture, mattresses etc. accounted for 16 per cent of total incidents. In 2014/15, 146 thousand incidents were recorded as ‘single items’, which was a 5.3 per cent increase on 2013/14.
- In 2014/15, local authorities dealt with 129 thousand incidents (15 per cent of total incidents) equivalent to the size of a ‘transit van’ in England. This is an increase of 25 per cent.
- Since 2007/08, the profile for the proportion of incidents for size categories has remained broadly similar apart from ‘single black bag’. In 2007/08 incidents of ‘single black bag’ size were 11 per cent and decreased to 5 per cent in 2014/15.

Figure 5: Fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2007/08 to 2014/15 (thousands)

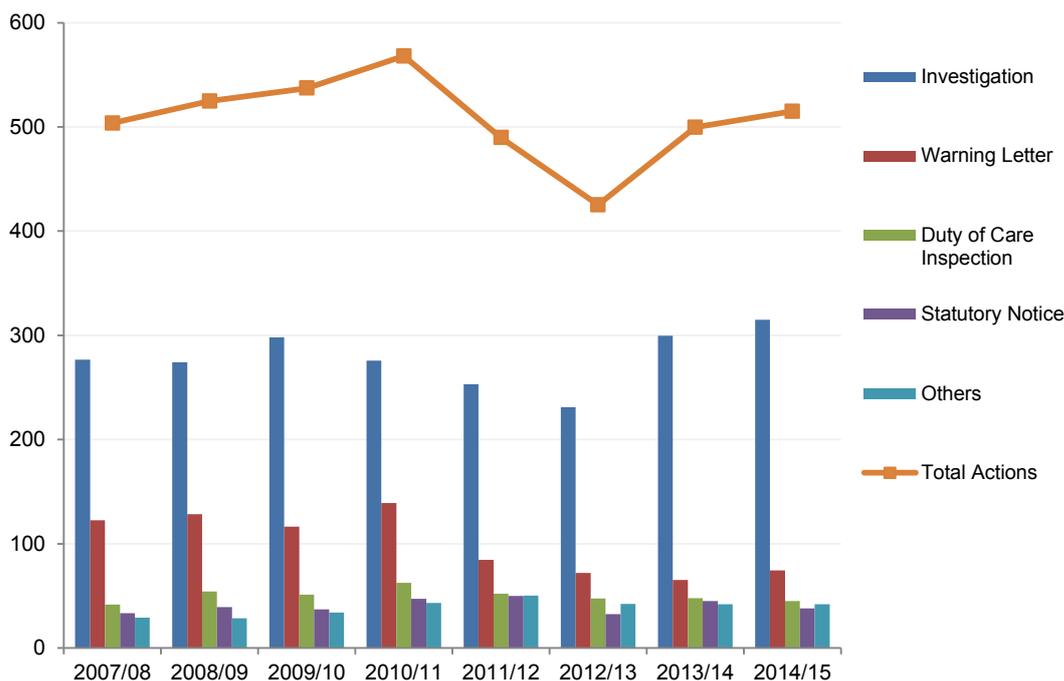


Table 1: Number of fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2007/08 to 2014/15 (thousands)

	Investigation	Warning Letter	Duty of Care Inspection	Statutory Notice	Other Enforcement Action	Total Actions
2007/08	277	123	42	33	29	504
2008/09	274	129	54	39	29	525
2009/10	298	117	51	37	34	537
2010/11	276	139	63	47	43	568
2011/12	253	85	52	50	50	490
2012/13	231	72	48	32	42	425
2013/14	300	65	48	45	42	500
2014/15	315	75	45	38	42	515

- Nearly 515 thousand enforcement actions were carried out in England in 2014/15, an increase of 3.1 per cent from 2013/14 with local authority expenditure increasing. Local authorities spent £17.6 million on enforcement actions in England in 2014/15, up from £17.3 million in 2013/14.
- The most common action taken was investigation which amounted to 315 thousand in total in 2014/15. In 2013/14 the number of investigations was 300 thousand, an increase of 5.1 per cent.
- Local authorities issued over 75 thousand warning letters and 38 thousand statutory notices in 2014/15. The amount of warning letters issued has increased by 15 per cent from 65 thousand in 2013/14.

- Local authorities in England carried out nearly 45 thousand duty of care inspections in 2014/15, a decrease of 5.4 per cent from 48 thousand carried out in 2013/14.

Figure 6: Number of fly-tipping prosecution outcomes in England, 2007/08 to 2014/15

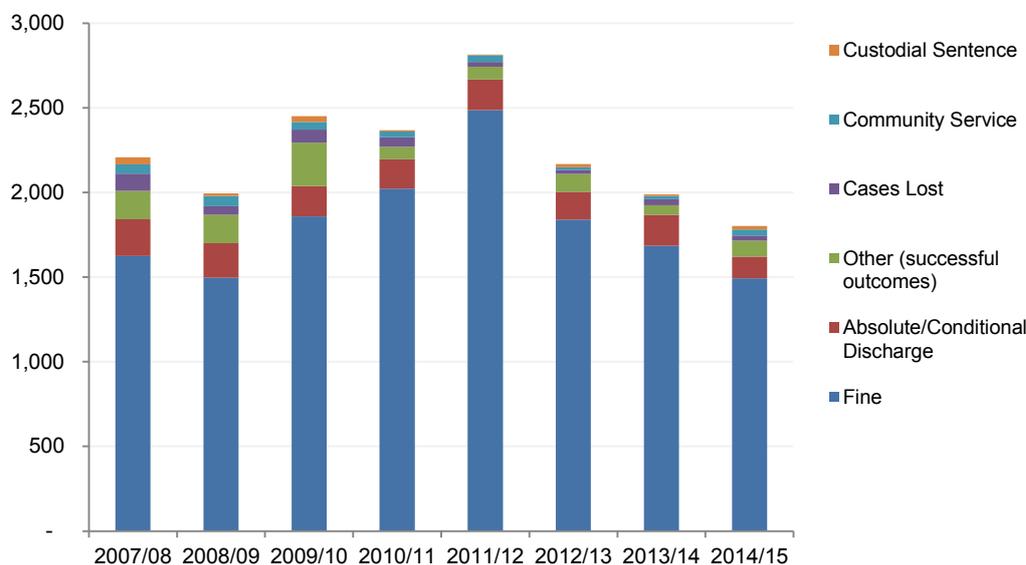


Table 2: Fly-tipping prosecution outcomes in England, 2007/08 to 2014/15

	Fine	Absolute/Conditional Discharge	Other (successful outcomes)	Community Service	Custodial Sentence	Cases Lost
2007/08	1,624	217	169	54	42	102
2008/09	1,497	203	168	60	16	51
2009/10	1,859	178	258	45	34	76
2010/11	2,023	173	73	35	7	57
2011/12	2,487	180	76	39	4	29
2012/13	1,839	165	106	16	18	23
2013/14	1,685	183	56	19	10	36
2014/15	1,492	128	95	35	21	31

- Local authorities carried out 1,810 prosecutions for fly-tipping offences in England in 2014/15, down by 9.6 per cent from 2,002 in 2013/14.
- Over 98 per cent of fly-tipping prosecutions in England in 2014/15 resulted in a conviction. The vast majority (82 per cent) resulted in a fine. Other outcomes included conditional discharge, community service and 21 instances of custodial sentences.

DATA USES, CONTEXT, METHODOLOGY, FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS POLICY

User Statement

Data on fly-tipping is collected to inform policy making and to provide local authorities with a management tool which enables a problem solving approach to be taken. It records the number of fly-tipping incidents, the type of material tipped, location and size, together with enforcement action taken. The data are used by local and central government, researchers and the public.

Context

Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste on land contrary to the Section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Fly-tipping is 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.

Local authorities and the Environment Agency both have a responsibility in respect of illegally deposited waste. Local authorities have a duty to clear fly-tipping from public land in their areas and consequently they deal with the vast majority of fly-tipping on public land, investigating these and carrying out a range of enforcement actions. The Environment Agency is responsible for dealing with large-scale, serious and organised illegal dumping incidents which pose an immediate threat to human health or the environment. Both local authorities and the Environment Agency are required to collect data on their activity and report this to the Flycapture database. Responsibility for dealing with fly-tipping on private land rests with private landowners and is not subject to mandatory data reporting.

Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this Notice. Details of the 151 incidents of large-scale illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2014/15 are reported separately and are available [here](#).

The Environment Agency has worked with authorities to improve reporting quality and has produced guidance to reduce the possibility of double counting in authority returns. This can occur for example when an incident is recorded at the point a local authority is notified and also by a waste management contractor who clears up the fly-tip.

Methodology

1. This report is based on the returns made to Flycapture by local authorities in England from April 2014 to March 2015. Flycapture is the national database set up by Defra, the Environment Agency and the Local Government Association to record the incidents and cost of clearing and enforcing against illegally deposited by local authorities and the Environment Agency. Private landowners are not required to report fly-tips on their land although some choose to do so voluntarily. It should be noted that the private land data included in this notice do not reflect the full scale of the problem as most cases on private land go unreported. Detailed guidance and explanation is given in separate guidance available [here](#).
2. Local authorities gather their data from a number of sources and departments. Incidents reported by the public through call centres, operatives on the ground collecting and recording, Enforcement Officers, contractors and management

companies. Many authorities await verification from investigations before recording public reports as fly-tips.

3. Data is requested in respect of incidents cleared or investigated by local authorities and separately the enforcement actions taken against fly-tippers. These can often be collected and reported by separate teams. Therefore data can be entered onto the system by one or more persons within an authority. This may lead to some discrepancies and a level of uncertainty. Data verification and quality assurance is carried out by the Environment Agency to identify major cases. This is done by a monthly check of specific aspects of the data to identify any possible anomalies which would be queried with authorities. In addition there are ad hoc meetings of local authorities, at a national or local level, where a representative of Flycapture will attend to discuss the system and data provided.
4. Estimates costs are calculated based on typical unit costs for dealing with the different types of incidents. Costs were provided by a small selection of local authorities between 2003 and 2006 when the Flycapture database was being set up. In August 2015 Defra undertook an exercise to update the cost basis by surveying 100 local authorities that had previously indicated a willingness to participate. Unfortunately both the quantity and quality of response data was insufficient to provide robust factors as replacements and historic ones have had to be retained.
5. A breakdown of data for each local authority is available on the Defra website. In assessing the figures local authorities should not be classified as 'good' or 'poor' performers based purely on numbers of fly-tips. The position is complex and population density, housing stock and commuter routes can all have an impact. Those reporting higher incident numbers are often those taking the issue seriously and being rigorous in identifying incidents. Large authorities may have large enforcement teams using modern, sophisticated methods (covert surveillance, smartwater) to catch professional fly-tippers. As part of enquiries made as part of the quality assurance process for both years 2013/14 and 2014/15, several authorities reported that the increase in the number of incidents reported compared to previous years was a result of the introduction of new technologies; such as on-line reporting and electronic applications as well increased training for staff and a more pro-active approach to removing fly-tipping and have explained this as a factor in the increase in the number of incidents reported.
6. Non-response: For 2014/15, Poole BC has not reported their fly-tipping data therefore an estimate has been made at the national level. Tameside MBC reported 9 months of data for 2014/15 so the remaining months have been estimated to complete their return. Newcastle upon Tyne City Council reported their total incidents data and therefore estimates for the remaining categories have been made to provide a national total.
7. Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the data from all users including how and why the data is used. This helps us to understand the value of the statistics to external users. Please see our contact details at the bottom of the first page of this notice.

Revisions Policy

Defra will provide information about any revisions made to published information in this statistics release and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for various reasons, including when data from third parties is unavailable or revised data has been input to the Flycapture database.