



19th October 2017

Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2016/17

Key points

- For the 2016/17 year, local authorities in **England** dealt with around **1 million (1,002,000) fly-tipping incidents**, a **7% increase** from the previous year.
- **Two thirds (67%)** of fly-tips involved **household waste**. Total incidents involving household waste **increased by 8%** from 2015/16.
- Consistent with previous years, the **most common place** for fly-tipping to occur was on **highways**, which accounted for **almost half (49%)** of total incidents in 2016/17. The number of highway incidents has **increased by 4%** from 2015/16.
- As in the last few years, the **most common size category** for fly-tipping incidents in 2016/17 was equivalent to a '**small van load**' (33% of total incidents), followed by the equivalent of a '**car boot**' (27%).
- The estimated **cost of clearance** for fly-tipping to local authorities in England in 2016/17 was **£57.7 million**.
- Local authorities carried out **474,000 enforcement actions** in 2016/17, costing around **£16 million**, a **decrease of 20,000 actions and £0.9 million in cost** from 2015/16.
- The number of **fixed penalty notices** issued **increased by 56% to 56,000** in 2016/17. This is now the second most common enforcement action (after investigations), and accounted for **12%** of all enforcement actions in 2016/17.

These statistics are based on fly-tipping incidents reported by local authorities in England, and exclude the majority of private-land incidents. Local authorities gather their data from a number of different sources, and data can often be collected and reported by separate teams, which may lead to discrepancies and some uncertainty. Improvements in data collection and reporting over time mean that trends should be interpreted with caution. Further information about the data is available at the end of this release [here](#).

Data for each local authority, plus a time series for total incidents for each local authority, is available in a dataset to [download](#). Note: 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, as well as reporting methodology, can all have an impact.

Revisions have been made to previous years' cost of clearance data for a small number of Local Authorities, as inconsistencies were found when checking data. These have minimal effect on the overall costs as the changes made up less than 0.03% of the total clearance cost. See Revisions on page 12 for more detail.

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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 can be found at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>.

2016/17 FLYTIPPING SUMMARY STATISTICS ENGLAND



1 MILLION TOTAL INCIDENTS

£58 MILLION

TOTAL CLEARANCE COSTS

Up from 936,000 incidents and clearance costs of £50 million in 2015/16.

490,000 HIGHWAY INCIDENTS

Half (49%) of total incidents and rose from 470,000 in 2015/16.



67% FROM HOUSEHOLDS



Household waste accounted for two thirds of total incidents and rose from 628,000 incidents in 2015/16 to 676,000 in 2016/17.

33% SMALL VAN LOAD SIZE

As in 2015/16, the most common size category was 'small van load', accounting for a third of total incidents in 2016/17



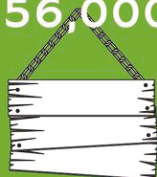
474,000 ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

AT A COST OF £16 MILLION



Down from 494,000 enforcement actions carried out by local authorities at a cost of £16.9 million in 2015/16.

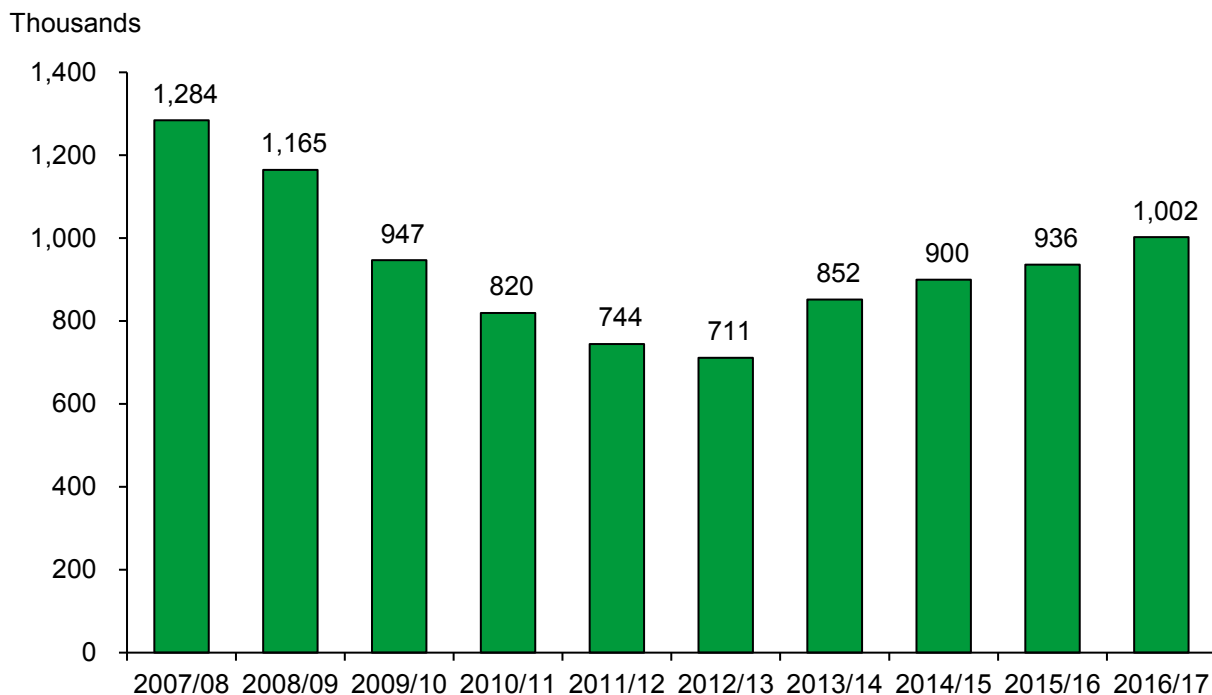
56,000 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES



Up from 36,000 in 2015/16 and now the 2nd most common enforcement action (after investigations), accounting for 12% of total actions.

1. Trends in the number of fly-tipping incidents in England

Figure 1.1. Trends in the number of fly-tipping incidents in England, 2007/08 to 2016/17



Incidents of fly-tipping had shown steady declines from 2007/08 until 2013/14, when there was an increase to 852,000 incidents. Since then, the number of fly-tipping incidents has increased year on year, with 1 million incidents in 2016/17, a 7% increase on the previous year.

Many local authorities have started to improve the way they capture and report fly-tips over the past few years, so the increase over time should be interpreted with some care. Defra is also aware that the definitions used to describe fly-tips are interpreted broadly from the guidance by local authorities.

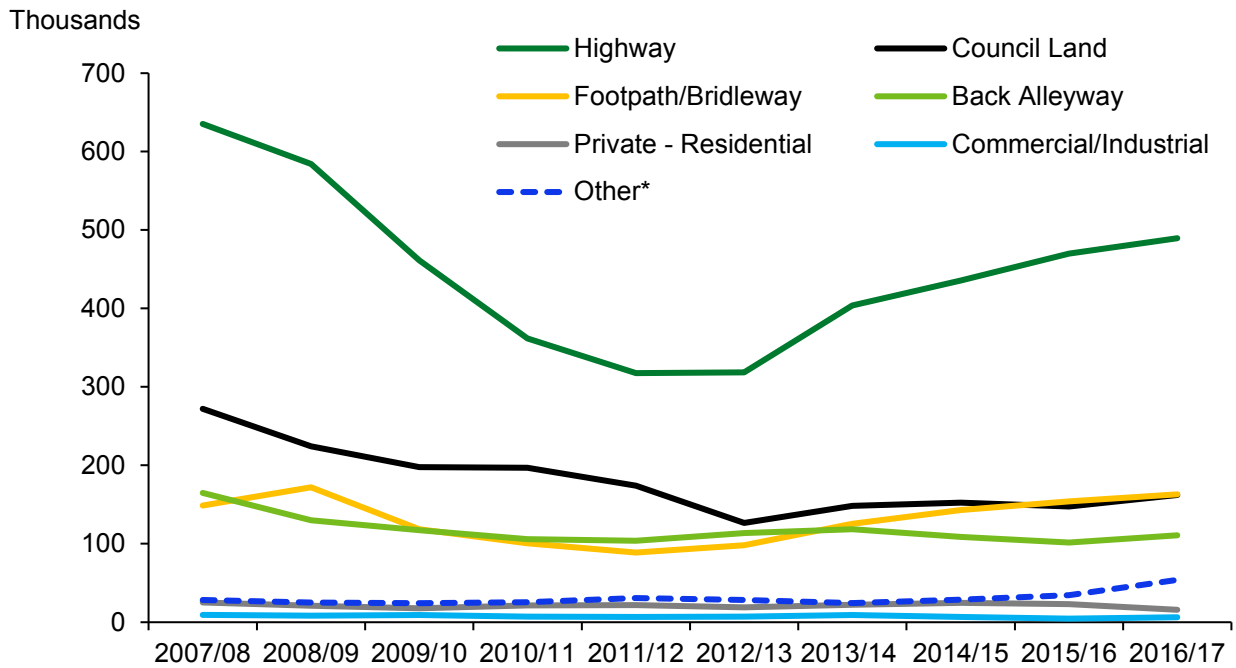
In 2016/17, the estimated cost of clearance of fly-tipping to local authorities in England was £57.7 million, a 16% increase from the previous year, where it was reported to be £49.8 million.

It should be noted that clearance costs for the majority of size categories (all except 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant/multi loads') are based on historical standard unit costs, which were provided by a small selection of local authorities between 2003 and 2006. They may therefore not fully represent the current costs of fly-tipping clearance to local authorities.

Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this Notice. Details of the 218 incidents of large-scale, illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2016/17 are reported separately and are available [here](#).

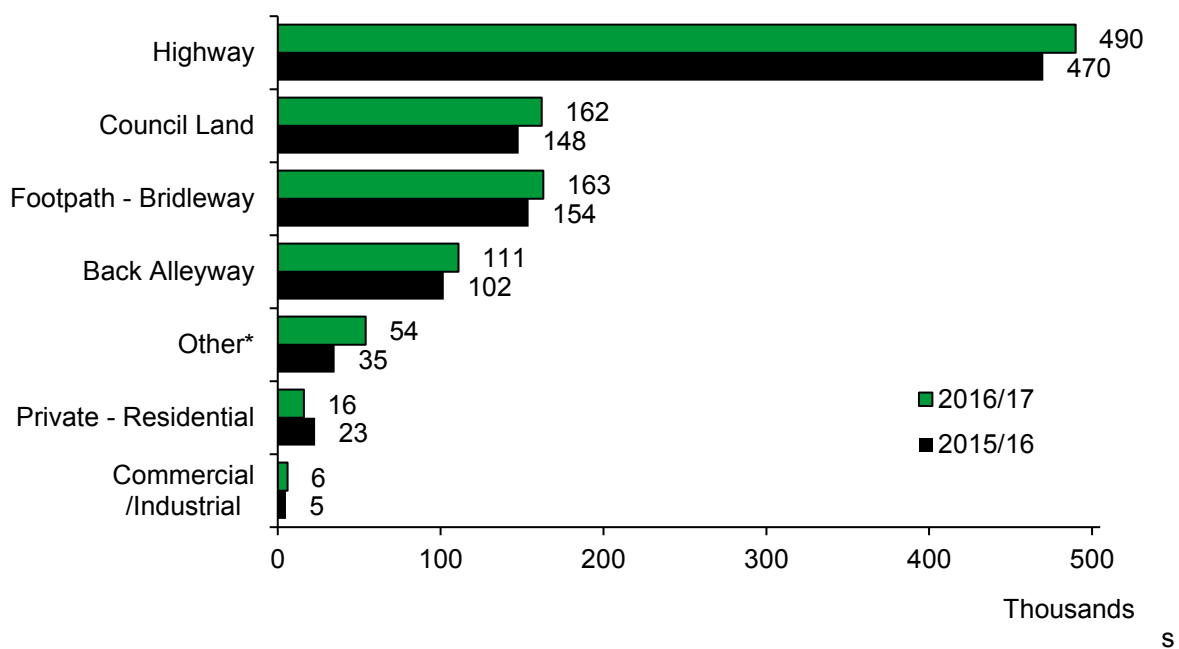
2. Fly-tipping incidents in England by land type

Figure 2.1. Fly-tipping incidents in England by land type, 2007/08 to 2016/17



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

Figure 2.2. Fly-tipping incidents by land type in England, 2016/17, compared with the previous year.



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

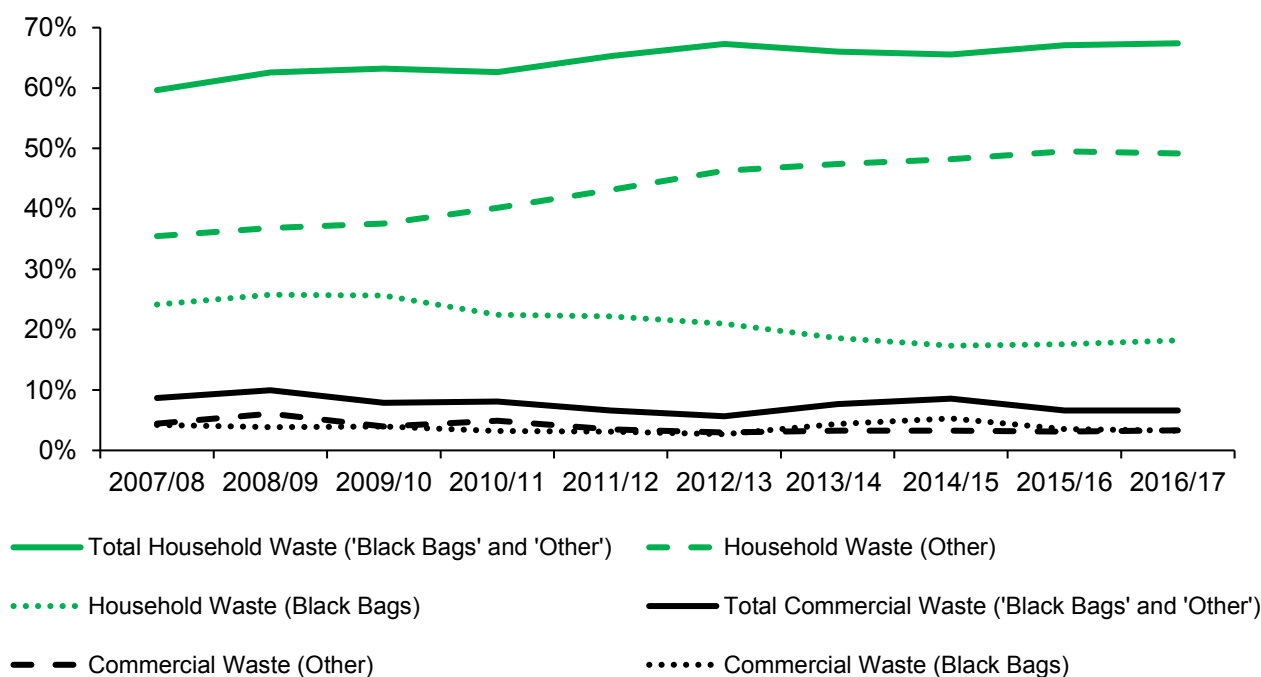
Highways have consistently been the most common land type for fly-tipping incidents over time, accounting for almost half (49%) of all incidents in 2016/17. In 2016/17 there were 490,000 incidents, an increase of 4% on 2015/16 (470,000 incidents).

Fly-tipping on council land, and footpaths and bridleways, each made up another 16% of all incidents in 2016/17. Council land incidents increased by 10% to 162,000 incidents, while footpath and bridleway incidents increased by 6% to 163,000.

Incidents of fly-tipping incidents in back alleyways amounted to a further 11% of all incidents at 111,000 incidents in 2016/17, an increase of 9% from the previous year.

3. Fly-tipping incidents in England by waste type

Figure 3.1. Household and commercial waste in England, 2007/08 to 2016/17 (% of total incidents)



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.

Most fly-tipping incidents are household waste (the sum of 'black bags' and 'other'), which in 2016/17 accounted for two thirds (67%) of all incidents. The majority of this was 'household waste (other)'.

Total household waste has increased from 628,000 incidents in 2015/16 to 676,000 incidents in 2016/17, an increase of 8%. The household waste sub-categories, 'black bags' and 'other' increased by 18,000 incidents (11%) and 29,000 incidents (6%), respectively. There were 66,000 incidents involving commercial waste in 2016/17, accounting for 7% of total incidents. This was a 7% increase on 2015/16, when 62,000 commercial waste incidents were reported.

The increase in total commercial waste incidents is accounted for by an increase in reported incidents of 'commercial waste (other)'. These increased by 14%, from 29,000 incidents in 2015/16 to 33,000 incidents in 2016/17. Commercial waste from black bags has remained fairly constant at around 33,000 (albeit a slight decrease of 0.3% from the previous year)

Types of fly-tipping, other than household and commercial waste – which are construction, demolition and excavation; other unidentified; white goods; green waste; other electrical; tyres; vehicles parts; animal carcasses; chemical drums, oil/fuel; clinical; and asbestos – amount to 26% of all fly-tipping incidents. Within this, asbestos, clinical waste, animal carcass, vehicle parts, and chemical drums, oil and fuel incidents each account for less than 1% of total incidents.

Table 3.1. Types of fly-tipping other than household and commercial waste in England, 2007/08 to 2016/17

Year	Number of fly-tipping incidents by waste type						
	Other Unidentified	Construction, Demolition, Excavation	White Goods	Green Waste	Other Electrical	Tyres	Other Identified*
2007/08	76,000	89,000	68,000	59,000	45,000	30,000	40,000
2008/09	66,000	58,000	53,000	49,000	35,000	23,000	35,000
2009/10	65,000	55,000	39,000	39,000	30,000	20,000	26,000
2010/11	57,000	50,000	29,000	35,000	24,000	20,000	25,000
2011/12	58,000	45,000	17,000	34,000	17,000	17,000	22,000
2012/13	54,000	42,000	13,000	32,000	17,000	14,000	22,000
2013/14	53,000	50,000	34,000	36,000	16,000	14,000	20,000
2014/15	57,000	50,000	42,000	35,000	15,000	14,000	19,000
2015/16	59,000	55,000	49,000	33,000	18,000	13,000	19,000
2016/17	67,000	55,000	55,000	32,000	17,000	12,000	22,000

*Other Identified includes vehicle parts, animal carcasses, clinical waste, asbestos, and chemical drums, oil and fuel.

Since 2015/16, the number of other unidentified waste type incidents has increased by 14%. This type of waste accounted for 7% of total incidents in 2016/17.

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

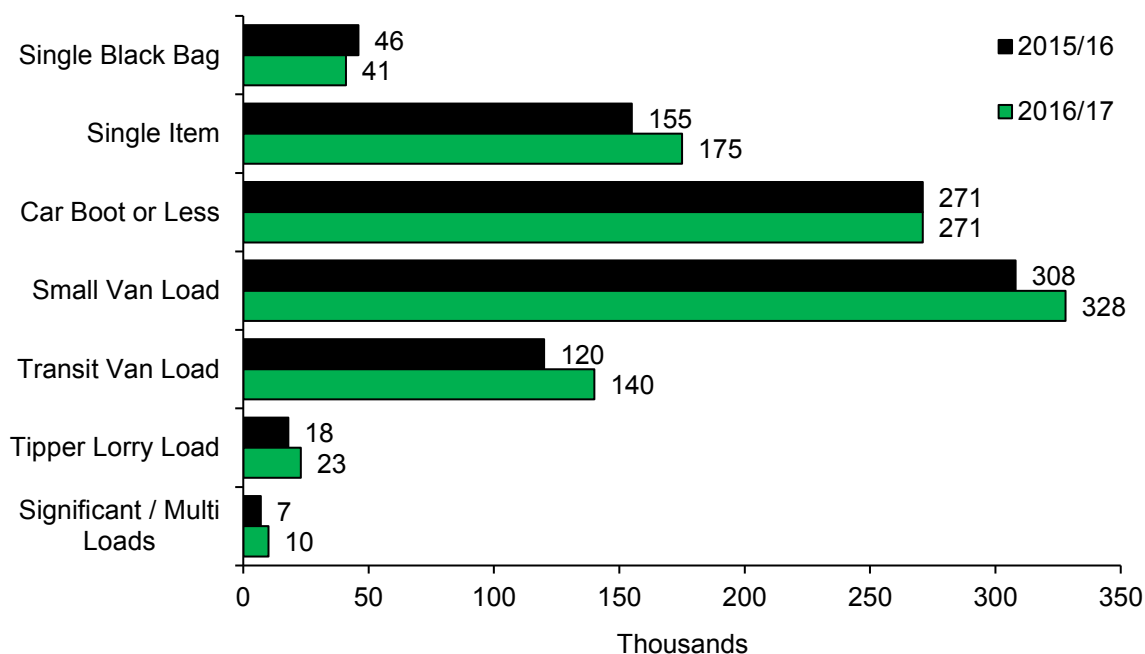
Incidents of white goods have been increasing each year since 2012/13. The increase from 2015/16 to 2016/17 was consistent with the previous year, with an increase of around 6,700 incidents, resulting in 55,000 white goods incidents, compared with 49,000 in 2015/16.

Since 2007/08, green waste has generally decreased over time, and accounted for 3% of total incidents in 2016/17. Tyre incidents have been steadily declining since the start of this time series in 2007/08, and accounted for just 1% of total incidents in 2016/17.

Incidents with other electrical items have decreased by 4% since 2015/16, while incidents with construction/demolition/excavation material have remained at a similar level.

4. Flytipping incidents in England by size

Figure 4.1 Fly-tipping incidents by size in England 2016/17, compared with the previous year.



Incidents recorded by size category relate to those investigated and cleared by the local authority. For a number of reasons, but primarily due to incidents on private land, which an authority may not clear, total incidents by size category will not match total incidents recorded by location/type.

As in 2015/16, most fly-tipping incidents were equivalent to a 'small van load'. In 2016/17, a third of incidents (328,000 incidents) were reported to be the size of a small van load, a 7% increase on 2015/16.

The second-largest size category is equivalent to a 'car boot or less'. In 2016/17, fly-tipping incidents of this size were unchanged from the previous year at 271,000 incidents in 2015/16, and made up 27% of all incidents.

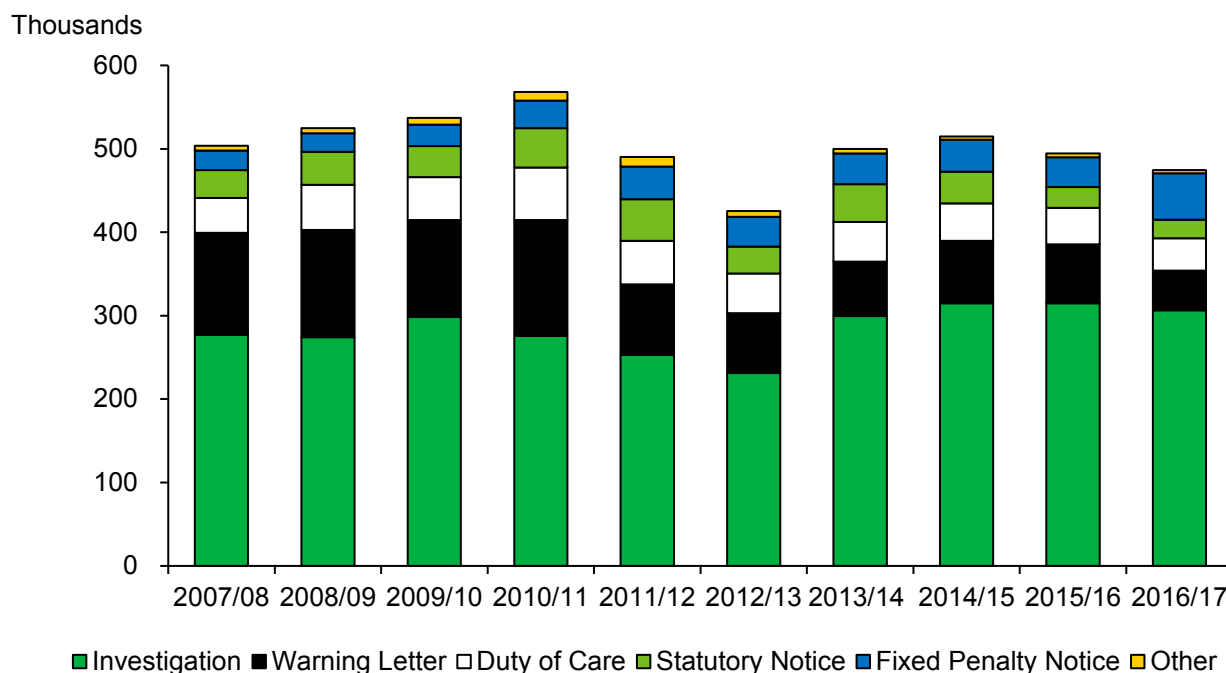
'Single items', such as furniture, mattresses etc. accounted for 17% of total incidents and have increased by 13%, from 155,000 incidents in 2015/16 to 175,000 in 2016/17.

Clearance costs for 'single black bag' (£7), 'single item' (£29), 'car boot or less' (£29), 'small van load' (£56) and 'transit van load' (£115) incidents are all standard costs but it should be noted that these are based on information from selected local authorities provided between 2003 and 2016 so may not accurately represent current costs. Local authorities are asked to report actual costs for categories 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant/multi loads'.

Costs for size categories with a unit clearance cost ('single black bag', 'single item', 'car boot or less', 'small van load' and 'transit van load') equalled £47.7 million in 2016/17, compared with £43.7 million in 2015/16. Larger loads ('tipper lorry' and significant/multi loads'), where local authorities can report their own costs, amounted to £9.9 million in 2016/17, compared with £6.1 million the previous year.

5. Fly-tipping enforcement and prosecution

Figure 5.1. Fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2007/08 to 2016/17



Note: Total actions taken does not include 'vehicle seized'

'Other' is the sum of fixed penalty notices, stop and search, vehicles seized, formal caution, prosecution and injunction

There were 474,000 enforcement actions carried out in England in 2016/17, a 4% decrease (of 20,000 actions) since 2015/16. Local authorities spent £16 million on enforcement actions in England in 2016/17, down from £16.9 million in 2015/16 (a 5% decrease).

Investigation actions have consistently been the most common action taken against fly-tipping incidents over time, accounting for 65% of total enforcement actions, with 307,000 investigations in total for 2016/17. This is a 3% decrease from 2015/16, when there were 315,000 investigation actions.

In May 2016 local authorities in England were given the power to issue fixed penalty notices for small scale fly-tipping. Prior to this date, local authorities issues fly-tippers with fixed penalty notices in relation to littering, duty of care or anti-social behaviour. The new fixed penalty notices give local authorities a more specific fixed penalty notice type, and an alternative to prosecutions and a more efficient and proportionate response to small scale fly-tipping. Local authorities are still also using the previous fixed penalty notices as well as the new ones in appropriate circumstances.

Local authorities issued 56,000 fixed penalty notices in total during 2016/17 and these were the second most common enforcement action, accounting for 12% of total actions. The number of fixed penalty notices has increased by 56% from 36,000 in 2015/16. By contrast, number of prosecutions decreased by 25%, from 2,135 in 2015/16 to 1,602 in 2016/17.

There were 47,000 warning letters issued in 2016/17, accounting for 10% of total enforcement actions. This is a decrease of 33% from the 70,000 issued in 2015/16.

There were 39,000 duty of care inspections carried out in 2016/17, accounting for 8% of total enforcement actions. This is an 11% decrease in number of duty of care inspections from the 44,000 duty of care inspections in 2015/16.

A total of 22,000 statutory notices were issued in 2016/17, accounting for 5% of total enforcement actions. Statutory notice actions have decreased by 12% from 25,000 in 2015/16.

Table 5.1. Fly-tipping prosecution outcomes in England, 2007/08 to 2016/17

	Fine	Absolute/ Conditional Discharge	Other (successful outcomes)*	Community Service	Custodial Sentence	Cases Lost	Total Prosecutions	Successful Prosecutions
2007/08	1,624	217	169	54	42	102	2,209	95.3%
2008/09	1,497	203	168	60	16	51	1,955	97.4%
2009/10	1,859	178	258	45	34	76	2,457	96.6%
2010/11	2,023	173	73	35	7	57	2,409	95.9%
2011/12	2,487	180	76	39	4	29	2,796	99.6%
2012/13	1,839	165	106	16	18	23	2,170	98.8%
2013/14	1,685	183	56	19	10	36	2,002	97.6%
2014/15	1,492	128	95	35	21	31	1,810	97.8%
2015/16	1,838	136	67	32	18	44	2,135	97.9%
2016/17	1,318	93	81	26	28	56	1,571	98.4%

Other successful: Any other positive results awarded by the court this period.

Successful prosecutions: Presented as a percentage of total prosecutions.

Local authorities carried out a total of 1,571 prosecutions for fly-tipping offences in England in 2016/17, a decrease of 25% on 2015/16. Costs of prosecution actions also decreased, by 8% from £347,000 in 2015/16 to £320,000 in 2016/17.

The success rates for prosecution actions against fly-tipping are consistently very high over time. Over 98% of prosecutions resulted in conviction in 2016/17.

The majority of prosecution outcomes are fines, which were issued in 82% of the outcomes from actions taken against fly-tipping incidents in 2016/17. The number of fines issued decreased by 28% to 1,318 in 2016/17, but with the value of total fines increasing to £723,000, increasing by 7% from £677,000 in the previous year. The number of custodial sentences increased 56% from 18 in 2015/16 to 28 in 2016/17.

DATA USES, CONTEXT, METHODOLOGY, FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS POLICY

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.

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 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. Flycapture used to be the database for local authorities and the Environment Agency to report fly-tipping. However Flycapture has now been replaced by the Fly-tipping Module in WasteDataFlow which became live on 1st October 2015. 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 218 incidents of large-scale illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2016/17 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. These statistics are based on the returns made to the Fly-tipping Module in the WasteDataFlow database by local authorities in England from April 2016 to March 2017. The Fly-tipping Module is the national system used from 2015 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. A detailed 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 WasteDataFlow personnel and Defra. This is done by a quarterly check of specific aspects of the data to identify any possible anomalies which would be queried with authorities.
4. Estimate 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.
6. As part of enquiries made as part of the quality assurance process, 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. For reasons explained about variability of reporting by local authorities please see the dataset showing the trend in total number of incidents by local authority since 2012/13, available with the local authorities' data for 2016/17 [here](#).
7. Enquiries remained unresolved for one local authority at the time of publication of this statistical notice where there were differences in the basis of reporting. Defra are aware that for the 2016/17 year, one local authority has provided figures based on customer-reported fly-tips with what they considered in line with other local authorities whereas in previous years it was based on all incidents of fly-tipping, so was potentially inconsistent and wouldn't provide a reliable trend. Therefore Defra made an estimate in line with previous years to note the trends of fly-tipping over time but the reported

data for this local authority was published in the local authority data set. This estimate does have a significant influence on the overall trend.

8. Non-response:

Thurrock submitted incomplete data for quarters one and two, and had unresolved data queries for quarters three and four, so an estimate was made by Defra for the full year. Total incidents were provided but the return was missing breakdowns by land type, waste type, a size, so estimates were made based on the proportions from 2015/16.

Land type and waste type breakdowns did not sum to the total incidents for Redditch, as there was one more total incident than in the breakdowns, so a small adjustment was made to the “Other – unidentified” categories.

Returns from 18 local authorities for 2016/17 had missing entries for the ‘tipper lorry load’ and/or ‘significant/multi load’ clearance costs. These were estimated for Arun, Barnet, Bristol, Carlisle, Crawley, Croydon, Hammersmith and Fulham, Herefordshire, Kettering, North Somerset, Norwich, Preston, Redbridge, Rochdale, Suffolk Coastal, Thurrock, West Lancashire, and Windsor and Maidenhead.

9. Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

Note on data methodology and interpretation

Defra received mostly complete returns from 325 out of 326 local authorities for the 2016/17 year. Thurrock submitted incomplete data and Defra therefore made an estimate.

The majority of missing data was for the ‘tipper lorry load’ and/or ‘significant/multi load’ clearance costs for 18 of 326 local authorities. These were estimated based on previous years’ data where the figures were consistent or showed a consistent trend over time, or otherwise using average 2016/17 unit costs from the known returns.

Due to a higher level of estimation made for the previous year (2015/16), some caution is needed in the interpretation of year-on-year changes and longer term trends.

Direct comparison between local authorities may not be appropriate as there can be some differences in approach, where there is a level of discretion in using the guidance on reporting. The situation is complex and can be influenced by population density, housing stock, demographics, commuter routes, the rigour with which local authorities identify incidents or encourage the public to report incidents, training of street crews, and increased use of more sophisticated methods for capturing and reporting incidents. Trends over time for a particular local authority may be a fairer comparison and a time series of total incidents for each local authority is available for download. There can be relatively high variation between years and between local authorities.

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 Fly-tipping Module of WasteDataFlow.

While carrying out quality assurance for this publication, Defra noticed some inconsistencies in the cost of clearance data for 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant/multi load' for a small number of local authorities in 2015/16, 2014/15 and 2012/13, hence revisions have been made and are noted in the associated dataset published this year. Some costs were removed where they appeared alongside zero incidents. These made up less than 0.03% of the total clearance cost in any given year and therefore have minimal effect on the published total.