

Preventing flytipping in your local community

Guide to making a difference to where you live



Make a start to cleaning up your community

Communities can play a big part in the fight against flytippers¹. Getting them involved in flytipping prevention can help reduce or eliminate the illegal dumping of waste.

Here are some ideas you can use to help stop local flytippers in their tracks.



Educate

The first step in motivating people to action? Tell them the scale of Scotland's flytipping problem.



Give them the hard facts

Because flytipping usually happens away from the public eye, for many it's a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. These stats will help you bring the issue back into focus:

- It's estimated that at least 25,000 tonnes of waste are illegally flytipped each year. That's around 60,000 incidents.
- Flytipping costs the Scottish public sector more than £11 million each year.
- The total cost to Scotland (including the hidden cost to society) could be as much as £100 million.
- 40% of people in built-up areas, 33% of people in very rural areas and 23% of people in suburbs and villages reported witnessing flytipping in the last year.
- Flytipping has far wider consequences than 'just' making our landscapes look ugly. It dampens property prices, increases mental health issues and drives up crime rates.

Bust the myths



Some important elements of flytipping are often misunderstood. Tackling the problem starts with making sure people understand the part they have to play. Here are some of the most common untruths people think are fact:

Fact or fiction? “If I put waste next to a bin, I’ve done my bit”

Fiction: Leaving large household items next to a bin without arranging a suitable pick-up is flytipping.

Fact or fiction? “If I hire a contractor, waste disposal is their problem”

Fiction: Householders have a duty to make sure their waste is treated responsibly. They could end up in court if they don’t check a contractor’s credentials.

Get people to check their contractor

One of the most effective ways to combat flytipping? Stop potential dumpers picking up people's waste to begin with.



Many homeowners give little thought to what happens to their household waste when a third-party takes it away. Share this checklist with people in your area to make sure they know the rules – and that they could end up in trouble if they don't check their contractor's waste licence.

Waste carrier checklist

Not sure who's OK to take away your waste? Ask these questions to make sure your contractor is legit, or you could face a fine.

- Do you have a waste carrier's licence?
- What is your waste carrier number?
- Where do you plan to take my waste?
- What is your vehicle registration number?
- Can I have a receipt?

VIDEO

Get creative

Communicating information in an unusual way is a tried and tested way to make it memorable.

Recycling for Suffolk embraced this idea and created a tongue-in-cheek video about checking a waste carrier's credentials. Featuring an opportunist tradesman and a well-meaning householder, the video has been viewed online more than 50,000 times.



Communicate

Community awareness is crucial. Put the issue firmly on the local agenda by running a local communications campaign.

**NO ONE
WANTS
TO LIVE
IN A
@*%*! TIP.**

Those caught fly tipping household waste may be prosecuted.
Let's keep Newcastle a canny place to live.
newcastle.gov.uk/keepitclean

**KEEP IT CLEAN
NEWCASTLE**

Newcastle
City Council

Our flytipping prevention communications toolkit includes context-specific messaging ideas you can use for free. They've all been created by professionals and tested for effectiveness. All you have to do is put them out in your local area. Or, you can create your own.

Here are some important things to think about when you're planning a local campaign:

- **Decide on a budget** – do you already have money in place? Are you eligible for any funding?
- **Identify your audience** – who are you talking to? What are their interests? What words do they use to talk about flytipping and the local area?
- **Keep it local** – focus on what matters to people in your area. They're more likely to care if it affects them directly.
- **Decide what you want to say** – you can't say everything with one campaign. Pick your most important message and focus on that.
- **Decide what you want to change** – what do you want your audience to do? Be as specific as you can, and build it into a clear call to action.
- **Make it memorable** – introduce some creativity to make your message stand out. That could mean eye-catching visuals, a clever slogan or an imaginative delivery method.
- **Turn it into a conversation** – read our guide to using social media. It's packed with ideas on building online momentum behind your efforts.

In 2016, Newcastle City Council took a stance against flytipping with a gutsy communications campaign. The bold approach worked: around a third of people asked said the campaign had made them rethink their behaviour – and the flytipping figures reflected it.

ARTWORK

The ZWS Flytipping Prevention Communications Toolkit

You'll find lots of free-to-use, context-specific materials in our flytipping prevention communications toolkit.

Recruit



The more people you get to support your efforts, the more chances you have of creating a new social norm in your area.



Not sure how to build a following?
Try these ideas:

Citizen science – ask people to monitor flytipping activity in their immediate area. This doesn't require much commitment at first but can boost people's interest, and involvement, over time.

Combine efforts with other community groups – are others around you campaigning for similar causes? Ask them to promote your efforts, or even join forces.

Advertise – use communications to spread the word about your cause. Make it clear to people how they can find out more.

Host introductory events – make getting involved as easy and accessible as possible by running dedicated events for newcomers.

Local press coverage – action encourages action, so publicise your successes to date, no matter how small.

Report

Local authorities can't monitor everywhere all the time. Community reports can help them to track and tackle activity they might otherwise miss.



Do your bit by making sure people know who to contact if they see evidence of flytipping:

- Your local authority
- Dumb Dumpers on 08452 304090
- dumbdumpers.org lets you report flytipping anonymously if you prefer. Incident reports are then passed to the local authority, SEPA or the local police.

Stay safe

Keep your community safe by reinforcing the 'don't approach, don't investigate' message. They should simply report incidents to the authorities and let the professionals do the rest. Don't interfere with the rubbish in any way, this could affect the evidence gathering process.

Regenerate

A 2014 study revealed that people who regularly see flytipping around them are more likely to adopt the habit themselves². Remove the rubbish and those attitudes shift.



Bringing people together to regenerate neglected land also raises awareness of your prevention efforts – adding significant social pressure to the fight against flytipping.

Here's how to get a regeneration project off the ground:

1 Identify problem sites

Monitor flytipping hotspots for a few months to identify where you could make the most difference.

2 Find out who owns the site

Contact the landowner to investigate why it's not been maintained.

3 Reclaim the site for community use

Is the site public-owned? You may have a right to reclaim it. Ask your local authority.

4 Investigate funding options

Depending on what you decide to do with the land, there may be funding available to you.

5 Take steps to deter flytippers:

- block access
- clear shrubbery
- build fences

² Yamamoto & Yoshida (2014)



A group of Manchester residents turned the once waste-filled alleyways behind their homes into an art club. The Back Gallery offers everything from gate-decoration making to mural painting. The project has stopped the passageways being seen as a dumping ground, resulting in a “considerable drop in the amount of fly tipping” since the project kicked off.³

In Edinburgh, locals are adopting streets to help keep them litter and flytipping free. It's all part of a scheme launched by local community group, Leithers Don't Litter. 50 streets are now under the guardianship of their residents.

Collaborate

Just because you're fronting a community campaign doesn't mean you have to go it alone. Teaming up with neighbours, local businesses and other partners will make you much more effective.



Some of these organisations may be able to give your campaign an extra boost:

Local authorities – pair up to deter flytipping in public areas.

Local businesses – approach community-focused companies to raise project funding.

Community groups – join forces to pool resources and double your impact.

Environmental organisations – get insight, advice and perhaps even funding from the likes of Keep Scotland Beautiful and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Full source references

CIPR. (n.d.). Pride Awards 2016

Case Study.

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