

# Best Practice for Fly-tipping Interventions - experience based guidance



# About this guide

In 2015 The City of Edinburgh Council ran a project, in conjunction with Zero Waste Scotland, which looked at fly-tipping in tenement housing areas of the city and what effect different interventions might have. In the course of the project, there were a number of findings and observations made about how future interventions might best be carried out, for maximum impact.

This guide aims to bring together a summary of the project, with an overview of the findings, to help other local authorities implement future interventions as successfully as possible.



# The project

## Introduction

There are over 60,000 incidences of fly-tipping across Scotland each year, costing an estimated £8.9 million in public money to clean up.

Zero Waste Scotland funded a City of Edinburgh Council project to test different approaches to reduce the amount of fly-tipping that was occurring in tenement housing areas in Edinburgh, over a seven week period in early 2015. The project was devised to test the effectiveness of the three interventions identified in the National Litter Strategy:

- education
- enforcement
- infrastructure;

against a baseline that had been established using the Council's asset management system. This toolkit highlights the best practice identified as a result.





## How it was done

Three areas with the highest incidences of fly-tipping were targeted for this project. A fourth area, where no intervention took place, was included as a control. Mosaic Scotland\* data was used to ensure that there were no significant differences between the types of households in the areas chosen (See Appendix 1).

For the Enforcement Intervention, CCTV cameras (temp and existing) were installed and Environmental Wardens undertook additional day, evening and night patrols focussed on monitoring fly-tipping in the area.

In the Education Intervention, the focus was on educating residents on appropriate means of disposing of unwanted bulky household goods by promoting the National re-use phone line or the Council's Special Uplift service. An information letter was sent to every household and a re-use event held (See Appendix 2).

In the Infrastructure Intervention, the on street facilities were changed to double the number of mixed recycling bins, half the number of landfill bins, and introduce glass recycling bins. A recycling guide was sent to every household to inform them of the changes, and stencilled footprints led to the new facilities. Any impact on fly-tipping was monitored.

In all three areas, intervention specific communications materials, including door posters, lighting column posters and bin stickers, were designed and installed.

A short-term project team, including Strategy, Communications, and Enforcement Council Officers, was brought together to deliver the project, and a small sub-team for each of the three intervention areas was established, to develop and deliver the project within that specific area.

To measure the impact of the different approaches, a number of monitoring techniques were utilised, which included:

- household surveys (633 before the interventions and 310 after) measuring people's awareness of the Council's Special Uplift Service, penalties for fly-tipping etc
- adapted LEAMs surveys
- recording of reported incidences of fly-tipping
- number of requests for Special Uplifts

\* [Mosaic Scotland](#) is Experian's demographic classification tool. Alternative tools such as Acorn also exist.

## Results

### Education intervention

The survey results showed an increase in awareness after the intervention for three questions:

| Survey Question   | Increase in 'Yes' Response |
|---|----------------------------|
| Can you recycle all of the materials you need to at the on-street recycling points? | 16%                        |
| Do you know what the re-use options are for household furniture?                    | 40%                        |
| Do you know what the fixed penalty is for leaving items outside a bin?              | 46%                        |

There was no increase in awareness of the Council's Special Uplift service, or the location of the nearest Community Recycling Centre.



## Enforcement Intervention

The survey results showed an increase in awareness after the intervention for two questions:

| Survey Question  | Increase in 'Yes' Response |
|--|----------------------------|
| Do you know what the re-use options are for household furniture?       | 45%                        |
| Do you know what the fixed penalty is for leaving items outside a bin? | 45%                        |

Again, there was no increase in awareness of the Council's Special Uplift service, the location of the nearest Community Recycling Centre, or indeed furniture re-use options.



## Infrastructure intervention

The survey results showed an increase in awareness after the intervention for two questions:

| Survey Question   | Increase in 'Yes' Response |
|---|----------------------------|
| Can you recycle all of the materials you need to at the on-street recycling points? | 32%                        |
| Do you know what the fixed penalty is for leaving items outside a bin?              | 13%                        |

Once again, there was no increase in awareness of the Council's Special Uplift service, the location of the nearest Community Recycling Centre, or furniture re-use options.





## Conclusions

All three interventions resulted in a significant increase in knowledge about the fixed penalty charged for fly-tipping. No single intervention appears to be more effective compared to other intervention types, which is in line with the varied causes of littering and fly-tipping.

Despite the increased reported awareness, none of the interventions led to significant changes in the reported behaviour regarding unwanted bulky furniture, although there were requests for special uplifts in streets that had never had them before. This may be due to the variation in before/after sampling size.

There was no decrease in the amount of fly-tipping incidences in any of the study areas.

### Recommendations

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the project

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# Recommendations

The points that follow are all ideas that should be considered for any future litter or fly-tipping interventions that you might carry out in the future.



## Recommendations

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# Before commencing...

- Try to quantify the cost: cost of the intervention (including monitoring and evaluation) vs the cost to clean up fly-tipping. Presenting this as a business case, with this breakdown of cost and impact (financial, social and environmental) will help to inform decision making.
- Try and gain as good an understanding of the fly tipping that occurs as possible, as much of it may not be getting reported. A reliable baseline will be necessary to correctly monitor change. Using Flymapper or existing Council reporting systems could help with this.
- Check out the condition of any on street domestic and trade waste bins and what kind of environment they create. Poor bin conditions could be contributing to fly-tipping problems.
- Find out all you can about the specific project area so that interventions can be adapted to reflect the



specific issues in those areas e.g. restricting access to hot spots.

- Find out about the types of people who live there: obtain detailed demographics by linking Mosaic mapping or similar to census data, so that interventions can be adapted to reflect this, e.g. overcoming language barriers.





- Further understanding of the population can also be gained through pre-project surveys. This helps to ensure that pre-intervention behaviours and attitudes of the residents are as similar as possible on commencement, and that the samples are a true reflection of the population at large.
- Liaise with colleagues to ensure that other interventions or communications are not taking place that may affect the behaviours or attitudes of the observed population.
- Interventions such as plain clothes patrols and CCTV can take some time to organise. Ensure this is taken to account when planning timescales.
- Stencils (as pictured on the left) had limited success and were likened to graffiti: they should be used with caution.

# Communications...

Select specific communications tools that target the audience you have identified and use a range for maximum impact and coverage, for example:

- different languages
- target specific groups personally e.g. students at the end of term.
- Keep messages simple, bold and visual: stating that fly-tipping is illegal and attracts a fine was the most widely recalled message in this project.

The most effective communications in localities were:

- posters on the back of close doors and on lamp posts
- on-street bin stickers.

Ensure they are large and colourful enough to attract attention.

Run events that offer alternatives in a fun and inspiring way, such as:

- Swap shops
- Upcycling classes
- Sewing/upholstery classes
- Computer repair classes
- Poster adverts for events should be placed in strategic positions, early enough to allow people to plan, but not too early that the posters become tatty and are no longer noticed



# Carrying out the interventions...

- Ensure that you have **ALL** the workforce resource in place in advance and work as a team to cover the various aspects of the project. Again make use of officers that work in the study localities and benefit from their knowledge
- Consider how you staff the project, i.e. there are pros and cons with deciding between using agency staff vs regular staff overtime
- Work in partnership with landlords, housing associations, police etc., and make contact with them as early as possible
- Ensure you also have all the capital (e.g. cameras and other infrastructure) and revenue (e.g. staffing) spend in place prior to commencing the project.



# Data collection and evaluation...

- Follow best practice guidance on using Flymapper or existing Council reporting systems could help to ensure that 100% of fly-tipping incidents are recorded.
- Making use of local knowledge, through street sweeping crews, could help to get a more complete picture.
- Survey the same houses before and after the interventions where possible as this makes for a more reliable comparison of reported behaviour or awareness change.
- Make sure that the population of reported behaviour or awareness change sample size is large enough that reliable statistical analysis can be carried out. For more detail on sampling, please see chapter 3 of <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/monitoring-and-evaluation-guidance>
- Try to develop surveys that do not influence answers: design them in a way that does not reveal their true purpose, so that people do not try to guess the 'correct' answer.



# Further information...

This guidance was developed in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council.

For further information about the project, contact:

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# Appendix 1

Details of the areas that interventions were carried out, plus the control.

| Area       | Intervention   | Number of Houses | Mosaic Classification  |
|------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Leith      | Enforcement    | 2281             | Majority N56, then N55 |
| Leith Walk |                |                  | Majority N55           |
| Gorgie     | Education      | 3344             | Majority N55           |
| Dalry      |                |                  |                        |
| Hillside   | Infrastructure | 1997             | Majority N55           |
| Marchmont  | Control        | 664              | Majority N57, then N55 |

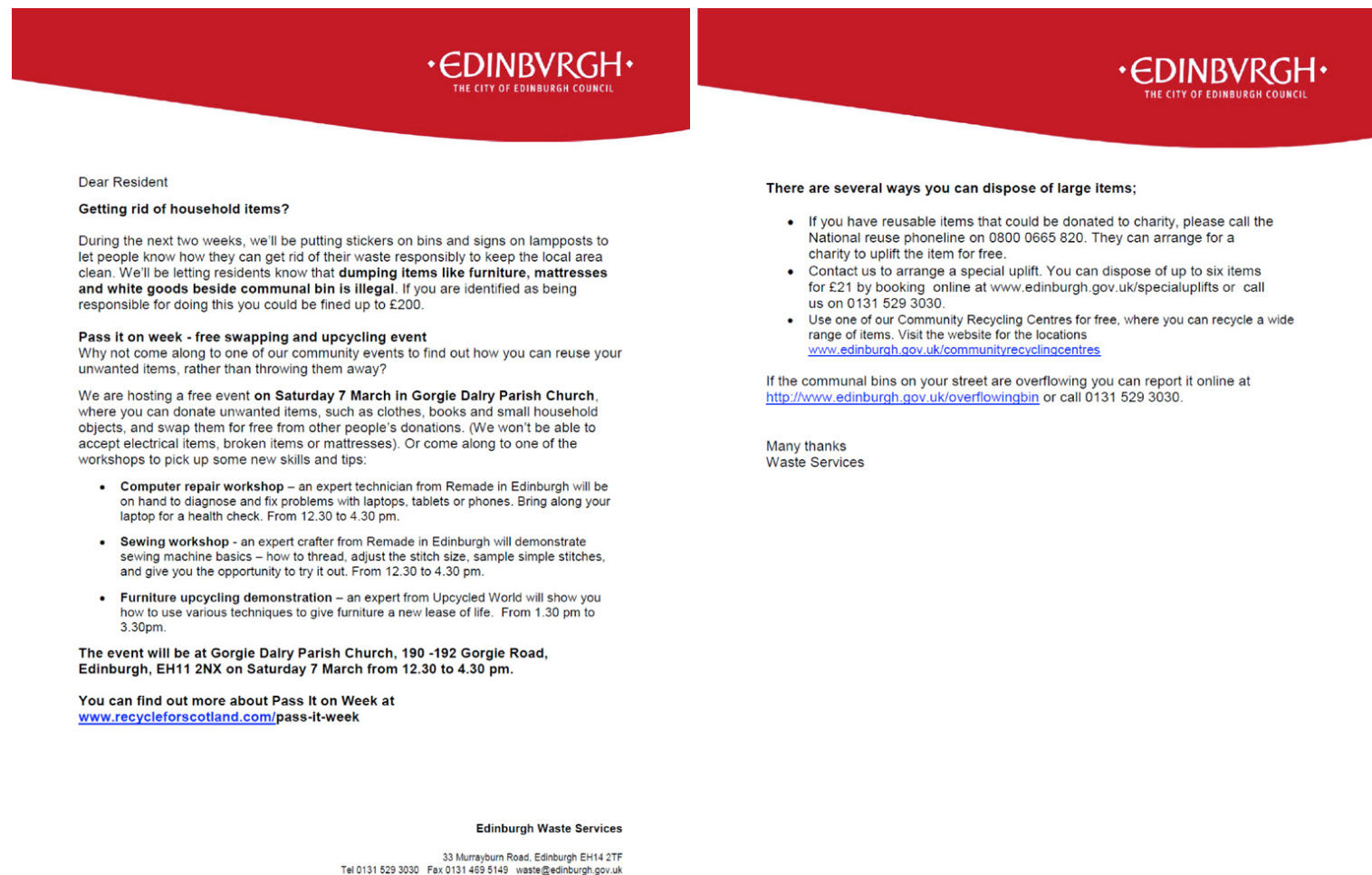


# Appendix 2

The letter that was sent to residents in the education intervention was designed to remind them that fly-tipping is illegal, while at the same time offering them an alternative. In retrospect, this was a lot of information on one letter.

An alternative might have been to promote Pass it on Week/the event separately in posters and/or fliers.

This would have had the added advantage of limiting the letter to one page, making it more likely to be read.



# Appendix 3

Examples of artwork used in the project.



# Appendix 3

A leaflet was distributed to residents letting them know about the National Reuse Phoneline

**National re-use  
phone line**  
0800 0665 820

**Before you put it out...  
can we pick it up?**

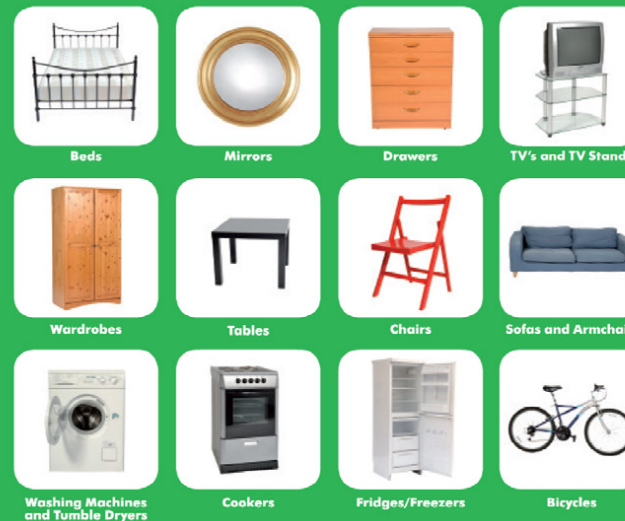


Furniture and household goods can be re-used by local community organisations – benefiting the environment and helping local people.

**To donate your unwanted items,  
or for advice and information,  
call the National re-use phone line  
on 0800 0665 820**



## What bulky items can we collect?



**Please call the National re-use phone line  
to find out more information and discover  
what can be collected in your area.**

Something that you don't want anymore can still be used by someone else.

**The benefits of re-use:**

- You can help your local community, especially those in need, to buy items at an affordable price
- You can give items you no longer want and know they will be appreciated by someone else
- You can help protect the environment as re-using items reduces the amount of waste we send to landfill

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