



2nd March 2017

Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2015/16

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

- For the 2015/16 year, local authorities dealt with 936 thousand fly-tipping incidents, a 4.0 per cent increase over 2014/15.
- Just over two thirds (67 per cent) of fly-tips involved household waste, an increase of 6.5 per cent from 2014/15.
- Consistent with previous years, the most common place for fly-tipping to occur was on highways, which accounted for 50 per cent of total incidents in 2015/16, a 7.9 per cent increase on 2014/15.
- Incidents of fly-tipping on footpaths and bridleways increased by 8.0 per cent in England in 2015/16 whilst those in back alleyways decreased by 6.7 per cent compared to 2014/15.
- 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 a 'car boot', which accounted for 29 per cent of total incidents by size. These findings are also consistent with the 2014/15 year.
- The estimated cost of clearance for fly-tipping to local authorities in England in 2015/16 was £49.8 million.
- Local authorities carried out 494 thousand enforcement actions in 2015/16 at an estimated cost of £16.9 million, nearly £700 thousand decrease on 2014/15.

Data for each local authority, plus a time series for total incidents 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>.

Note on data methodology and interpretation

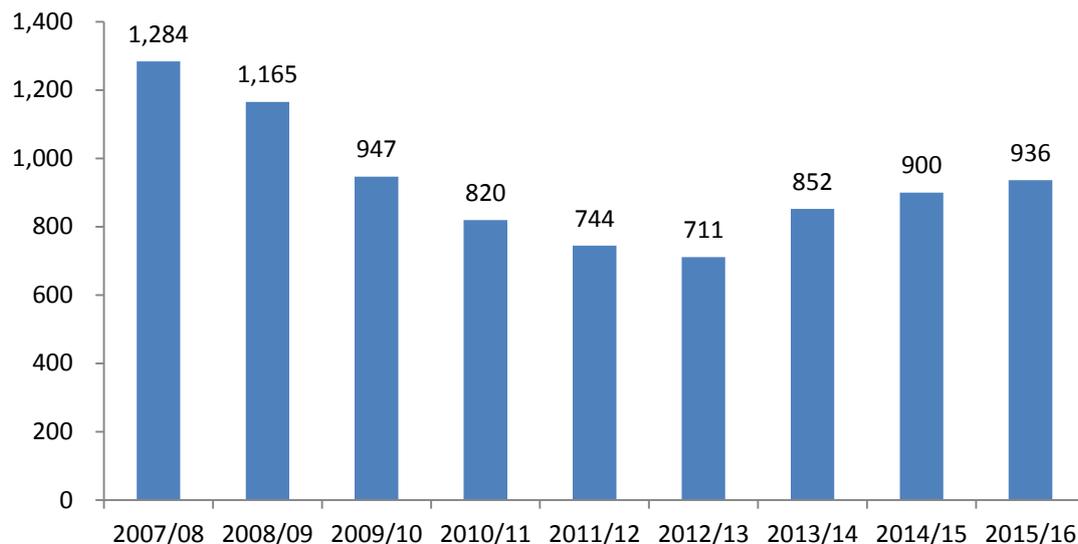
Defra received full returns for the 2015/16 year from 301 out of 326 local authorities, 25 local authorities therefore had missing data and did not respond to data requests, or data validation queries remained unresolved. 6 local authorities had at least one missing quarter for 2015/16 and 13 local authorities had discrepancies between waste or land type data not equalling total incidents. 5 local authorities had provided a return; however land type data was either missing, incomplete or incorrect. Estimation was required based on previous returns for the aggregate figures in the case of no data, incomplete or inconsistent returns in order to produce consistent comparison against the previous years. There was one local authority known to make a change in their basis for reporting incidents using customer reported incidents only and some estimation was required for the aggregate total in order to produce a consistent comparison and trend.

The estimates made for the 7 local authorities total incident data were missing account for 47 thousand incidents in the 2015/16 data, 5 per cent of the aggregated total of fly-tipping incidents. The estimates made for the 5 local authorities with missing, incomplete or incorrect land type data account for 31 thousand incidents, 3 per cent of the aggregated total for fly-tipping incidents by land type. The remaining 13 local authorities of the 25 local authorities requiring estimation accounted for a small proportion of total incidents (80 incidents in total).

9 further local authorities had blank data for tipper lorry size clearance costs or significant load size clearance costs, but had reported incidents of these sizes. As clearance costs for fly-tipping incidents of this size vary, where possible, an estimate was made based on how much on average the local authority spent clearing incidents of these sizes for the previous 2014/15 year.

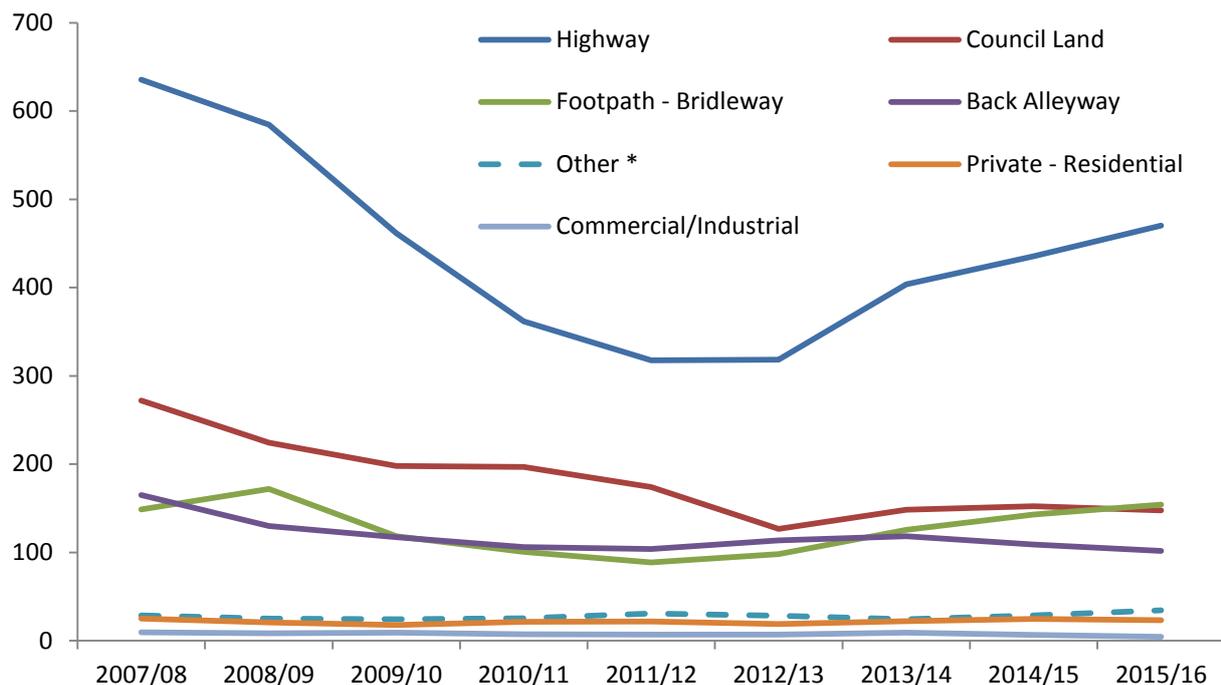
Due to a higher level of estimation made for the 2015/16 year some caution is needed in the interpretation of the trends. Direct comparison between local authorities may also not be appropriate as there can be some differences in approach, where there is a level of discretion in using the guidance on 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. 88 local authorities are showing a decrease of fly-tips since the 2012/13 year; whereas 226 show an increase and 2 local authorities have shown no change.

Figure 1: Trends in the number of fly-tipping incidents in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16 (in 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 and in 2015/16 with 936 thousand incidents. This was a 4.0 percent increase on 2014/15.
- 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. It has also been brought to Defra's attention that the definitions used to describe fly-tips are interpreted broadly from the guidance.
- The estimated cost of clearance of fly-tipping to local authorities in England in 2015/16 was nearly £50 million, a decrease of 0.3 per cent (£143 thousand) from the clearance costs reported in 2014/15.
- Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this Notice. Details of the 125 incidents of large-scale, illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2015/16 are reported separately and are available [here](#).

Figure 2: Fly-tipping incidents by land type in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16 (in thousands)



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

Figure 3: Fly-tipping incidents by land type in England, 2015/16 as a proportion of total incidents, compared with the previous year

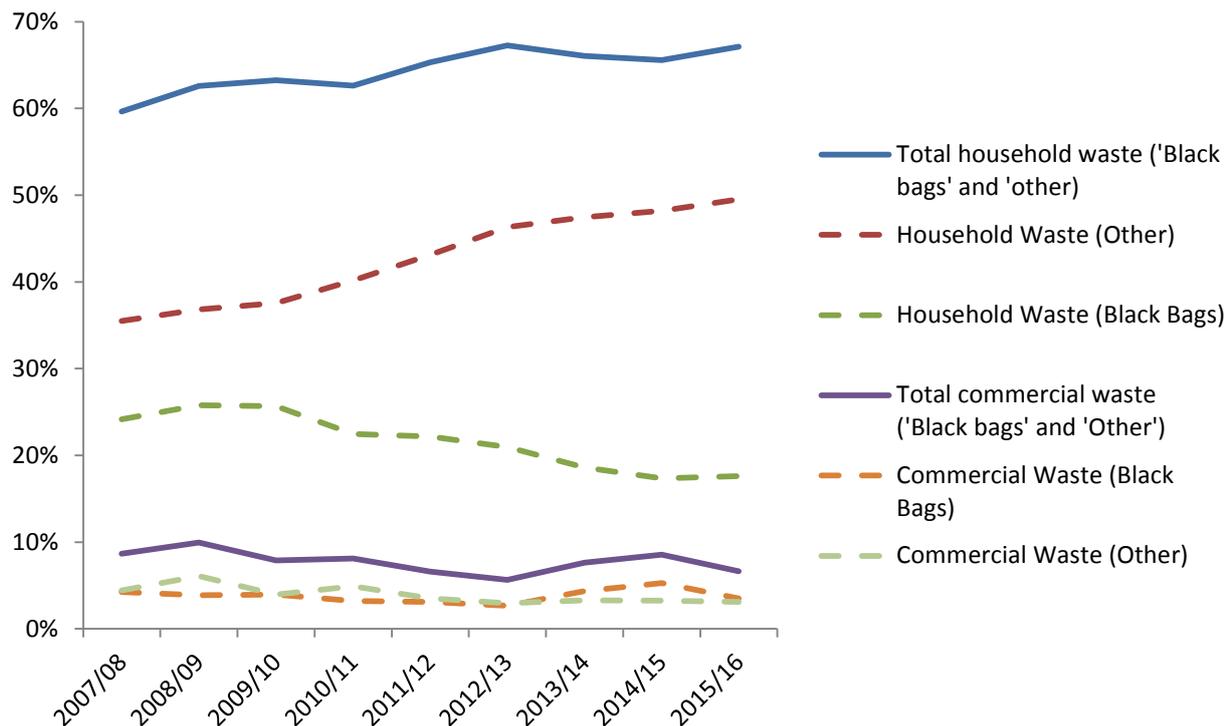


*Other includes agricultural, watercourse, railway and other unidentified land.

- Fly-tipping incidents on highways have consistently been the most common land type over time. In 2015/16 there were 470 thousand incidents compared to 436 thousand incidents in 2014/15, an increase of 7.9 per cent in 2015/16 and accounted for 50 per cent of all incidents.

- Fly-tipping on council land and footpaths and bridleways each made up another 16 per cent of all incidents in 2015/16. In 2015/16, footpaths and bridleways became the second most common land type by increasing by 8.0 per cent to 154 thousand incidents and council land decreased by 3.0 per cent to 148 thousand incidents.
- Incidents of fly-tipping incidents on back alleyways amounted to a further 11 per cent of all incidents at 102 thousand incidents in 2015/16, a decrease of 6.7 per cent.

Figure 4: Breakdown of most common fly-tipping waste types: Household and commercial waste in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16

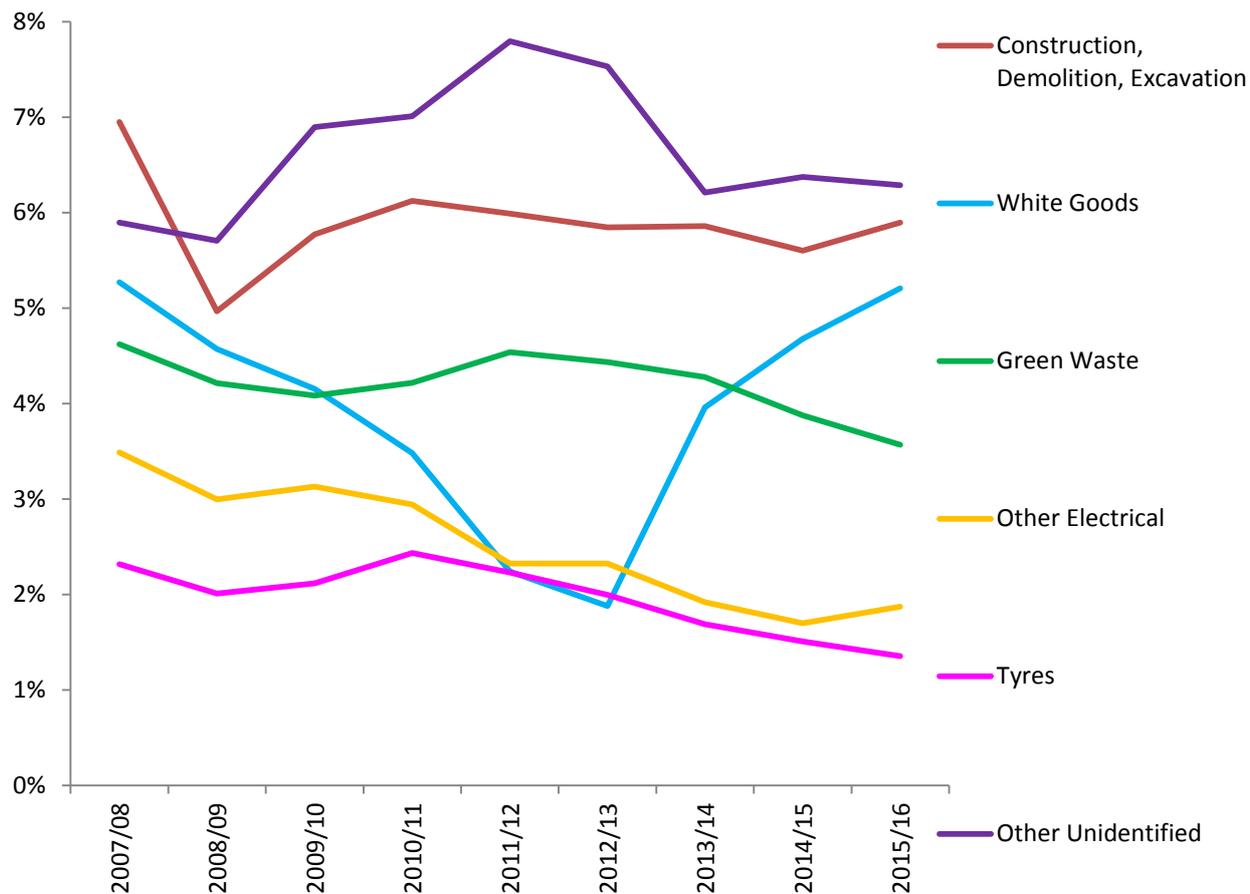


Household waste (other) could include material from house or shed clearances, old furniture, carpets and the waste from small scale DIY works.

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.

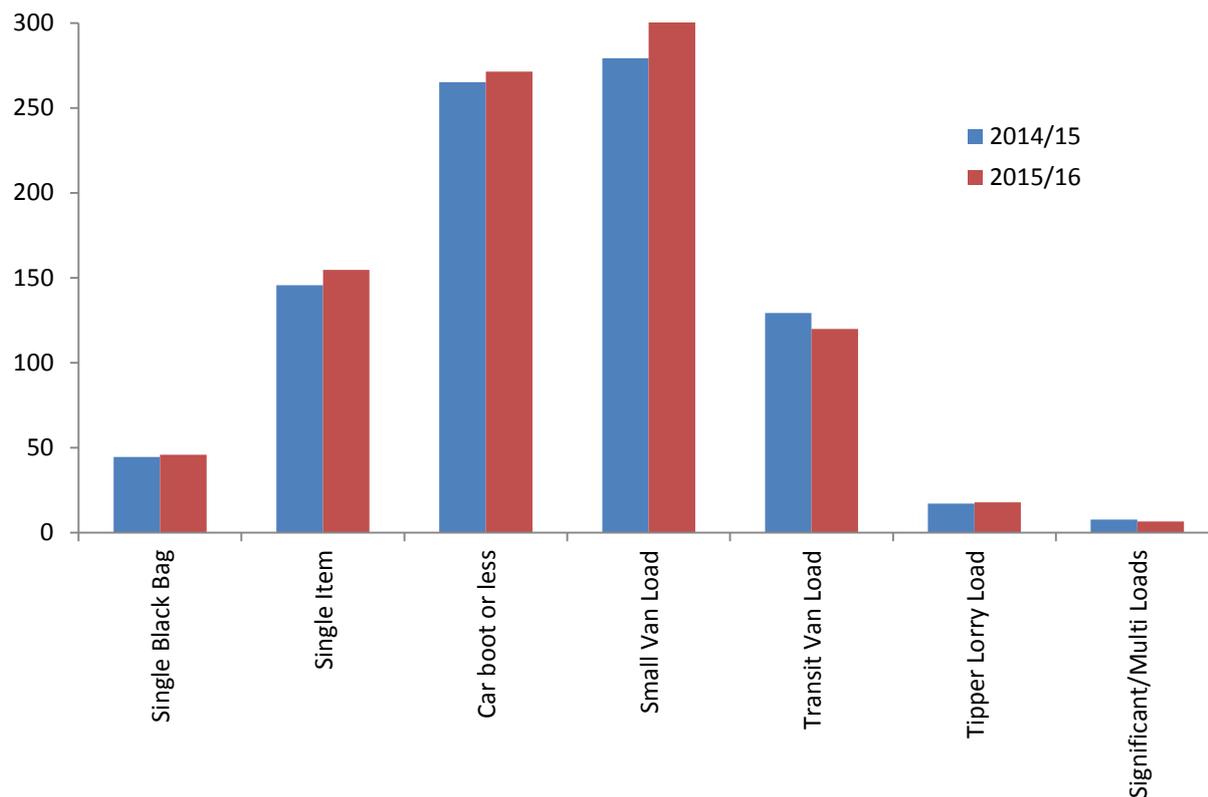
- Most fly-tipping incidents are household waste (the sum of 'black bags' and 'other') and in 2015/16 accounted for 67 per cent of all incidents. The majority of this was household waste (other).
- Total household waste has increased from 590 thousand incidents in 2014/15 to 628 thousand incidents in 2015/16, an increase of 6.5 per cent. The household waste sub-categories, 'black bags' and 'other' have also increased by 9 thousand incidents (5.5 per cent) and 30 thousand incidents (6.9 per cent), respectively.
- The second most common waste type in 2015/16 was total commercial waste with 62 thousand incidents, accounting for 7 per cent of total incidents. This was a 19 per cent decrease on 2014/15 where 77 thousand incidents of commercial waste had been reported.
- The decrease in 2015/16 in total commercial waste incidents is due to a reported decrease in commercial black bags. These decreased 31 per cent, from 48 thousand incidents in 2014/15 to 33 thousand incidents in 2015/16. Other commercial waste has remained fairly constant from the 2014/15 year, remaining at 29 thousand incidents.

Figure 5: Types of fly-tipping other than household and commercial waste in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16, as a proportion of total incidents



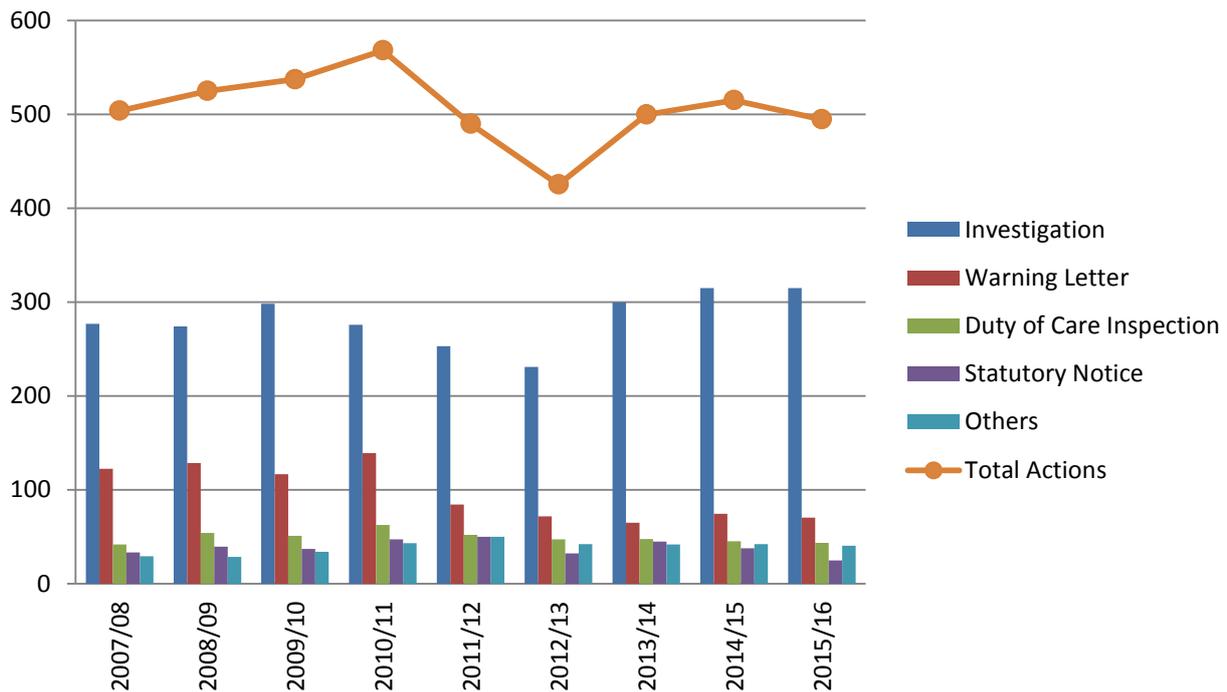
- For some waste types, such as green waste or electrical goods, it is not always possible to tell whether they originated from households or businesses.
- A notable increase is for white goods, which has been increasing since 2012/13, white goods had another smaller increase for the 2015/16 year with 49 thousand incidents compared to 42 thousand incidents in 2014/15.
- Since 2007/08, green waste has been steadily declining over time, and accounts for 4 per cent of total incidents in 2015/16.
- Tyres have also been decreasing over time, and accounts for 1 per cent of total incidents in 2015/16.
- Since 2014/15, other unidentified incidents have increased by 2.6 per cent and still account for 6 per cent of total incidents.
- Incidents with construction/demolition/excavation material and other electrical have increased since 2014/15 by 9.5 per cent and 14.6 per cent respectively.
- The proportions of asbestos, clinical, animal carcass, vehicle parts, chemical drums, oil and fuel incidents are all below 1 per cent of total incidents.

Figure 6: Fly-tipping incidents by size in England, 2015/16 (in thousands)



- 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.
- Most fly-tipping incidents were equivalent to a 'small van load', a consistent finding over time. In 2015/16, 308 thousand incidents or a third of incidents were reported to be the size of a small van, a 10 per cent increase on 2014/15.
- The second-largest size category is equivalent to a 'car boot or less', also consistent over time. In 2015/16, fly-tipping incidents the size of a 'car boot or less' increased by 2.3 per cent to 271 thousand incidents from 265 thousand in 2014/15 and made up 29 per cent of all incidents.
- Single items, which cover items such as furniture, mattresses etc. accounted for 17 per cent of total incidents and has increased by 6.2 per cent from 146 thousand incidents in 2014/15 to 155 thousand incidents in 2015/16.
- Clearance costs for 'single black bag' (£7), 'single item' (£29), 'car boot or less' (£29), 'small van load' (£56) and 'transit van load' (£115) are all standard costs. Local authorities have to report actual costs for categories: 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant/multi loads'.
- Costs for size categories with a unit cost: 'single black bag', 'single item', 'car boot or less', 'small van load' and 'transit van load' equalled £43.7 million in 2015/16, a 2.2 per cent decrease from £42.7 million in 2014/15. Larger loads ('tipper lorry' and significant/multi loads') where local authorities can report their own costs fell by 15 per cent on 2014/15, bringing the overall clearance cost for 2015/16 down.

Figure 7: Fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16 (in thousands)



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

Table 1: number of fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16 (in thousands)

Year	Investigation	Warning Letter	Duty of Care Inspection	Statutory Notice	Fixed Penalty Notice	Other	Total Actions
2007/08	277	123	42	33	24	6	504
2008/09	274	129	54	39	22	6	525
2009/10	298	117	51	37	26	8	537
2010/11	276	139	63	47	33	10	568
2011/12	253	85	52	50	39	11	490
2012/13	231	72	48	32	35	7	425
2013/14	300	65	48	45	37	6	500
2014/15	315	75	45	38	38	4	515
2015/16	315	70	44	25	36	5	494

Note: Total actions taken does not include vehicle seized

Other includes prosecutions, vehicles seized, stop and search, formal caution and injunctions.

- 494 thousand enforcement actions were carried out in England in 2015/16, a 4.0 per cent decrease (of 20 thousand enforcement actions) since 2014/15. Local authorities spent £16.9 million on enforcement actions in England in 2015/16, down from £17.6 million in 2014/15.
- Investigation actions are the most common action taken against fly-tipping incidents over time, accounting for 64 per cent of total enforcement actions with 315 thousand investigations in total for 2015/16, the same number of actions for 2014/15.

- Local authorities issued 70 thousand warning letters in 2015/16, and accounted for 14 per cent of total enforcement actions, a 5.6 per cent decrease from the 75 thousand warning letters in 2014/15.
- 44 thousand duty of care inspections were carried out in 2015/16 accounting for 9 per cent of total enforcement actions, a 3.1 per cent decrease from 45 thousand duty of care inspections in 2014/15.
- 25 thousand statutory notices were issued in 2015/16, accounting for 5 per cent of total enforcement actions, a 34 per cent decrease from 38 thousand in 2014/15.
- 36 thousand fixed penalty notices were issued in 2015/16, accounting for 7 per cent of all enforcement actions, a 5.9 per cent decrease from 38 thousand in 2014/15.
- There were just over two thousand prosecution actions taken in 2015/16.

Figure 8: Fly-tipping prosecution outcomes as a proportion of total prosecution outcomes in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16

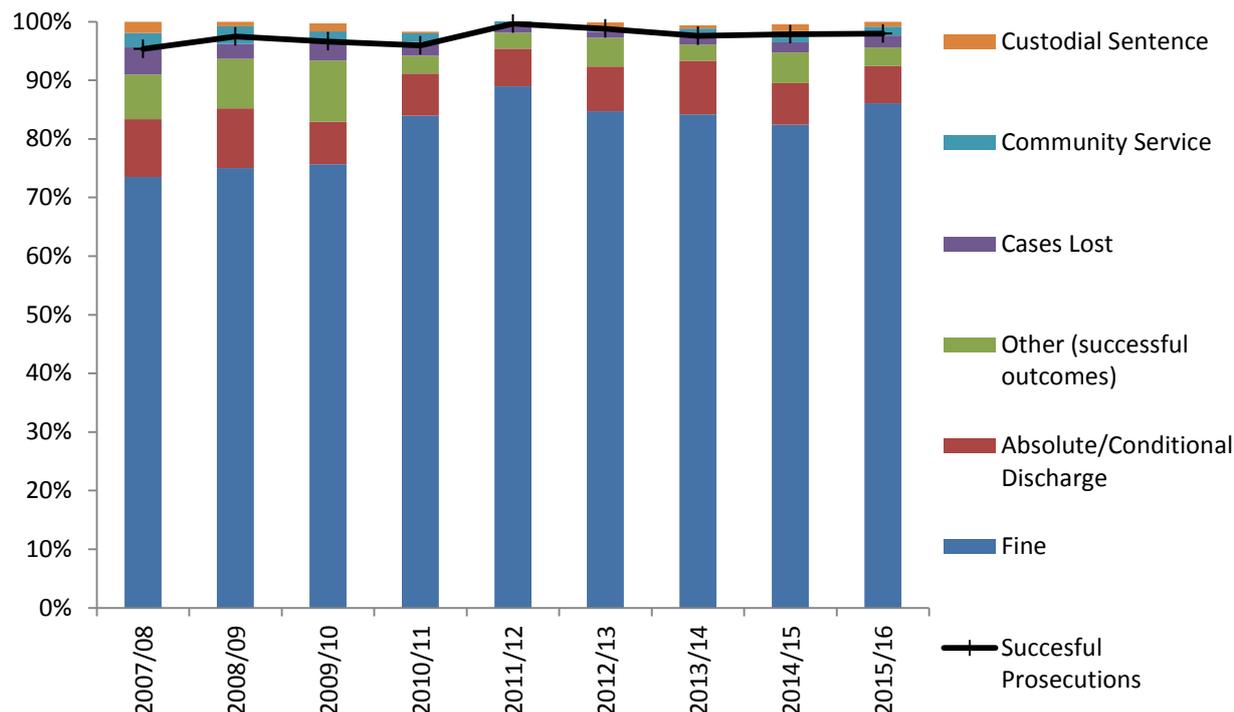


Table 2: Fly-tipping prosecution outcomes in England, 2007/08 to 2015/16

	Fine	Absolute/Conditional Discharge	Other (successful outcomes)	Cases Lost	Community Service	Custodial Sentence
2007/08	1,624	217	169	102	54	42
2008/09	1,497	203	168	51	60	16
2009/10	1,859	178	258	76	45	34
2010/11	2,023	173	73	57	35	7
2011/12	2,487	180	76	29	39	4
2012/13	1,839	165	106	23	16	18
2013/14	1,685	183	56	36	19	10
2014/15	1,492	128	95	31	35	21
2015/16	1,838	136	67	44	32	18

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

- Local authorities carried out 2,135 prosecutions for fly-tipping offences in England in 2015/16, an increase of 18 per cent on 2014/15. Costs of prosecution actions also increased by 20 per cent from £288 thousand in 2014/15 to £347 thousand in 2015/16.
- The success rate for prosecution actions against fly-tipping are very high over time. For 2015/16, 98 per cent of prosecutions resulted in conviction, consistent with 2014/15.
- The majority of prosecution outcomes are fines, where these were issued in 86 per cent of the outcomes from action taken against fly-tipping incidents in 2015/16, with a 23 per cent increase in the number of fines since 2014/15. The value of total fines reported for 2015/16 was £677 thousand, a 16 per cent increase on the £583 thousand reported in 2014/15.

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. 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 125 incidents of large-scale illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2015/16 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 2015 to March 2016. 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. 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 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. 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.
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 2015/16 [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 2015/16 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: many of the returns for 2015/16 were either missing or had possible data anomalies or reporting inconsistencies and there were unresolved data validation queries. Poole had submitted one quarter data and Defra have made

estimates for previous years; an estimate was made for the full year based on the aggregated total. Brighton and Hove, City of Bristol, Daventry, Mole Valley, North Somerset and Westminster had missing quarters' returns and so estimates for the remaining quarters were made at a national level.

- a. Croydon had reported extremely large numbers in the categories marked 'other' for waste type and land type and were unable to provide an accurate figure so an estimate for the full year over all categories was made.
- b. For Barnet, Bracknell Forest, Christchurch, Hounslow, Kettering, Lewisham, Norwich, Tamworth, Weymouth and Portland clearance costs were estimated for the size of waste categories relating to 'tipper lorry size' and 'significant/multi load'.
- c. Where category for land type or waste type data breakdowns did not sum to the totals entered, a small adjustment was made to the category with most incidents: Bromsgrove, Carlisle, Mid Devon, Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Dorset, Redditch and Tewkesbury had waste type 'other' (unidentified) incidents estimated. Richmond upon Thames, Tameside, and Tower Hamlets had household black bags estimated. Land type measures were estimated for Eastleigh. Private/Residential estimates were made for Leicester, a council land estimate was made for Redditch and Newcastle upon Tyne, Back alleyways were estimated for South Tyneside, Highways were estimated for Mid Devon, North East Derbyshire and North East Lincolnshire.

9. 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 Fly-tipping Module of WasteDataFlow.