

Government announces new crackdown on fly-tipping

Households will no longer have to pay to get rid of DIY waste under plans set out by government to change the rules that currently allows some Local Authorities to charge for DIY waste from households. Under the proposals, household DIYers would not be charged to get rid of waste including plasterboards, bricks and bath units.

This is part of a fresh move to crack down on fly-tipping, which has increased since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Government banned backdoor charges on local residents disposing of household rubbish at household waste centres in 2015 and since then guidance has made clear that this includes DIY household waste.

However, around a third of Local Authorities still charge for certain types of DIY waste, using rules designed for construction waste. The changes outlined in a technical consultation published today will change this rule and could save households up to £10 for an individual item – for example, a sheet of plasterboard.

Fly-tipping is a crime which blights communities, poses a risk to public health and the environment, and costs up to £392 million a year. Local authorities dealt with 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21, up by 16% from 2019/20.

Alongside this, a call for evidence on the use of booking systems at recycling centres will be launched today – some of which were brought in when restrictions were imposed during the pandemic – amid concerns these could be making it harder for people to dispose of their waste and increasing the risk of fly-tipping.

Finally, a number of councils in England will also be awarded grants to tackle fly-tipping through trial projects, including CCTV to target hotspots.

Environment Minister Jo Churchill said:

When it comes to fly-tipping, enough is enough. These appalling incidents cost us £392 million a year and it is time to put a stop to them.

I want to make sure that recycling and the correct disposal of rubbish is free, accessible and easy for householders. No one should be tempted to fly tip or turn to waste criminals and rogue operators.

Furthermore, the funding that we have announced for Local Authorities today will help them trial innovative new projects to

put a stop to fly tipping. We will learn from the successes – and replicate them.

There were over 60,000 fly-tipping incidents with construction, demolition and excavation material in 2020/21, an increase of 18% from 2019/20.

A number of local authorities charge for construction waste such as paving slabs and roofing materials, but the Government is today consulting (LINK) on amending legislation so that householders cannot be charged for of DIY waste at recycling centres.

In addition, new council grants totalling £450,000 will help fund a range of projects such as:

- CCTV: The use of covert and overt CCTV cameras at hot-spot locations can help to reduce the numbers of people dumping waste illegally, while also providing further evidence to help identify those that continue to offend.
- Artificial intelligence: Buckinghamshire Council plans to use a combination of AI enabled Rapid Deployable Cameras (RDC) and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to provide an alert to any visible left items at fly-tipping hotspots in real-time and link them to the vehicle that deposited them, allowing officers to rapidly investigate.
- Delivering education to communities on fly-tipping: Funding for Durham Council for CCTV will lead to individuals being directed to the council's self-funded digital educational tool for those issued with an on-the-spot fine for fly-tipping. The tool aims to educate and encourage long term behaviour change and completion reduces the amount of the fine.
- 'No bags on the street' policy - Newham Council will receive funding to prevent bags being on the street in front of business premises which can attract additional waste. They will scale up their trial of containers to house residential and commercial waste, which resulted in a 24% reduction in fly-tipping. Single items, such as furniture and mattresses, accounted for 16% of total fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21, rising by 7% from the year before. To tackle this, the Government is considering measures such as ecodesign, ecolabelling and extended producer responsibility – where manufacturers are responsible for the costs of dealing with waste created by their products.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Jacob Hayler, said:

There is no single 'silver bullet' to tackle the scourge of fly-tipping so we are pleased to see the Government announcing a range of new measures today to help deter this deeply anti-social criminal behaviour.

In addition to helping individuals recycle their household waste

materials at HWRCs, of particular importance is stopping this material from falling into the hands of organised waste criminals leading to larger scale fly-tipping, which is why the ESA also strongly supports digital waste tracking and reform of the licensing regime for carriers, brokers and dealers of waste material. This protects both the environment and legitimate recycling and waste operators.

Marcus Gover, WRAP CEO said:

The latest IPCC report clearly states that 'it's now or never' if we are to act on global warming. This stark reminder that how we use the world's natural resources is threatening our very existence signposts material efficiency and recycling among priorities.

Minimising waste is central to this and the introductions of grants to reduce fly tipping across England and Wales are necessary to help prevent the continual environmental cost of this illegal activity.

These new plans build on extra funding given to the Environment Agency to tackle waste crime as well as new powers to stop illegal waste sites posing a risk to the environment, including the ability to lock up sites and force rogue operators to clean up all their waste.

The action announced today comes after [plans to reform the waste industry, were launched in January](#). Digital waste tracking will mean those handling waste will record information from the point waste is produced to the stage it is disposed of, recycled or reused, making it easier for regulators to detect illegal activity and tackle fly-tipping and other waste crime.

Our reform of the licensing system for waste carriers, brokers and dealers will increase the competence and background checks needed to operate as a waste carrier, broker or dealer, and make it easier for regulators to enforce against non-compliant operators whilst making it harder for un-registered operators to find work in the sector.