



environmental
services
association

Media release

RISE IN FLY-TIPPING SIGNALS NEED FOR TOUGHER ENFORCEMENT

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The Environmental Services Association (ESA) has responded to today's publication by Defra of *Fly-tipping statistics for England 2019/20*, which show that fly-tipping is on the rise and that tougher and better-resourced enforcement is needed.

Head of Regulation at the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Sam Corp, said: "Today's figures show that fly-tipping is unfortunately on the rise, with nearly a million incidents in England alone during 2019/20. Fly-tipping is one of the most common and pervasive environmental crimes, which affects not just the environment, but also has social, economic and health implications too.

Regulating against this behaviour and prosecuting offenders is challenging and, coupled with relatively low penalties even when an offender is convicted, these factors unfortunately make fly-tipping a low-risk and high-reward crime. Today's figures show that, although the number of fines issued by the courts increased by 30 per cent year on year in 2019/20, the total number of fines issued totalled just 2,671 – which is a drop in the ocean compared with the number of incidents.

Both these latest statistics, coupled with the recent BBC Panorama investigation due to be broadcast next week, highlight the need for us all to be aware of our legal duty of care when having our waste collected by a third party – whether this is hiring a bin, a skip or a "man in a van" – to stop waste falling into the wrong hands.

However, as the ESA first flagged back in our 2015 research [‘Britain’s Dirty Secret’](#) and 2017 in [‘Rethinking Waste Crime’](#), there are failings in the waste carriers’ registration system which unfortunately make it all too easy for criminal operators to appear legitimate.

ESA recognises that Defra has been working to reform the system, to include more rigorous front-end checks, competency requirement and mandatory electronic waste tracking, but we are keen to see quicker progress and more resources allocated to the Environment Agency in particular. Waste crime, including fly-tipping, is not reducing and has serious consequences for both the environment and for legitimate waste businesses.

The ESA is due to publish further independent research later this year exploring the incidence of waste crime and its economic impact, which we hope will provide a better understanding of the scale of the

problem today, as well as to encourage greater momentum in proposed government policy changes and tougher enforcement.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

The Environmental Services Association (ESA) is the voice of the recycling and waste management sector in the UK. You can find out more about our work and our members in our [Annual Report](#) available from www.esauk.org

A summary of the fly-tipping statistics is included below:

- For the 2019/20 year, local authorities in England dealt with just under 1 million (976,000) fly-tipping incidents, an increase of 2% from the 957,000 reported in 2018/19.
- Just under two thirds (65%) of fly-tips involved household waste. Total incidents involving household waste were 632,000 in 2019/20, an increase of 7% from 588,000 in 2018/19.
- The most common place for fly-tipping to occur was on highways (pavements and roads), which accounted for over two fifths (43%) of total incidents in 2019/20. In 2019/20, the number of highway incidents was 419,000, which was an increase of 6% from 396,000 in 2018/19.
- The most common size category for fly-tipping incidents in 2019/20 was equivalent to a ‘small van load’ (34% of total incidents), followed by the equivalent of a ‘car boot or less’ (28%).
- In 2019/20, 33,000 or 3% of total incidents were of ‘tipper lorry load’ size or larger, which is a decrease of 8% from 36,000 in 2018/19. For these large fly-tipping incidents, the cost of clearance to local authorities in England in 2019/20 was £10.9 million, compared with £12.8 million in 2018/19.
- Local authorities carried out 474,000 enforcement actions in 2019/20, a decrease of 26,000 actions (5%) from 501,000 in 2018/19.
- The number of fixed penalty notices issued was 75,400 in 2019/20, a decrease of 2% from 77,000 in 2018/19. This is the second most common action (after investigations), and accounted for 16% of all actions in 2019/20.
- The number of court fines issued increased from 2,056 (30%) to 2,671 in 2019/20, with the value of total fines increasing to £1,170,000 (an increase of 7% on the £1,090,000 total value of fines in 2018/19).

This article provides an overview of the [BBC Panorama investigation](#) which found that the licensing system is failing to stop illegal dumping of waste. The programme is due to be broadcast on Monday 1 March 2021.

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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