



Causes of littering and fly-tipping

Small Scale: individuals littering

Without people there wouldn't be litter:

- General public, family, YOU dropping litter.
- Throwing litter out of car windows.
- Leaving litter after having picnics or BBQ's.
- Schools grounds are often filled with litter pupils have dropped.

25% of the Welsh population feel that it's acceptable to drop or leave something if there isn't a bin nearby.

Large Scale: business related waste

Without businesses there would be nothing to drop:

- The increase in fast food consumption has led to a huge increase in littering.
- Products in supermarkets are increasingly wrapped in plastic that needs to be disposed of correctly.
- Large businesses and industries can produce large amounts of waste. Some will choose to fly-tip their waste rather than pay to safely dispose of it.
- Some companies charge to take away waste, then dump it illegally in order to avoid the cost of taking it to an authorised waste facility.

Indirect

Reduced local authority budgets can lead to reduced rubbish removal and emptying of public waste bins. This may lead to litter being dispersed indirectly by other means:

- Blown out of bins by wind.
- Pulled out of bins and spread by wildlife e.g. seagull.

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact:
enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk 0300 065 3000

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Consequences of littering and fly-tipping

Environmental

- Litter is dangerous for pets and wildlife. The RSPCA get over 7,000 calls a year about animals injured by litter. The true number isn't known as many will die from their injuries and are never found.
- Cigarette butts dropped or thrown from car windows can start grass fires. There were more than 55,000 grass fires in Wales and almost 550 forest fires in South Wales between 2000 and 2008, many started deliberately.
- Leaching of chemicals into soil can occur from litter such as batteries.
- Litter not only looks very unattractive it can also attract pests including rats.
- Litter is often blown into streams and rivers and is eventually carried to the sea. Waste in the sea can injure and kill sea creatures.
- Tiny pieces of plastic are eaten by marine animals and fish and enter the human food chain.

Economic

- The cost of cleaning up litter in Wales costs around £70 million annually.
- The annual clean-up of fly-tipping incidents in Wales costs nearly £2 million.
- Property prices can be reduced in fly-tipping hot spots as the area is seen to be less attractive.
- Research shows areas full of litter or that are regularly fly-tipped are less likely to attract visitors, impacting local businesses.
- Litter can be especially devastating on places reliant on tourism for income. For example, the single most important factor influencing people's decisions about which beach to visit is its cleanliness. This means a littered environment can have a significant and long-term adverse impact on local business and community.

Social

- Some types of waste can be harmful to health, such as asbestos. Litter can also attract pests like rats that can carry diseases.
- Litter makes the environment look unattractive. This can discourage those living in the area from spending time outside. This increases problems such as obesity. It can also impact on mental health problems including anxiety and stress.
- Littering can reduce pride in an area, leading to it becoming neglected.
- Litter encourages more littering! In the same way an area which contains fly-tipped waste is more likely to have more waste dumped nearby.

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Combating littering and fly-tipping

Legal

- Fly-tipping Action Wales tackles illegal dumping of waste. They advise the public on their legal duty to get rid of waste responsibly and to only use registered waste carriers. Fly-tippers can face fines of up to £50,000 and/or prison.
- You can be prosecuted for the Offence of Leaving Litter under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Magistrate's Courts can fine up to £2,500 for litter offences.
- Authorised officers working within the Local Authority or the Police can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's). These can be set at a local level from £75 to £150.

Education / Awareness

- The Welsh Government funds Keep Wales Tidy to run the Eco-schools programme. This is an international initiative which encourages pupils to engage with environmental and sustainable development issues. Littering and waste are two of the topics covered in the initiative.
- The Welsh Government works closely with Keep Wales Tidy and the 22 local authorities on the Tidy Towns initiative. The project aims to empower the people of Wales to take responsibility for the quality of their own local environment so they can contribute towards a clean, safe and tidy Wales.
- Being aware of recycling facilities in your local area and what doorstep recycling you can do enables you to take responsibility for your waste. Using online re-sale sites ensures unwanted items can be reused, reducing your waste and possibly earning you some money. Some charities will collect unwanted items such as furniture.

Reduce - Reuse - Recycle

- Upcycle unwanted items! Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming waste materials or unwanted products into new products of better quality. E.g. guitars made from skateboards!
- Use your local provisions correctly, e.g. recycling bins, and make the most of household collections and local tips.
- When our waste is recycled it can be turned into new products which have a value.
- Recycling litter reduces pressure on our natural resources as less raw materials are required.

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