

Dog Fouling...the North / South divide

[An insight into Dog Fouling in England, by DogFoul and Knein.](#)

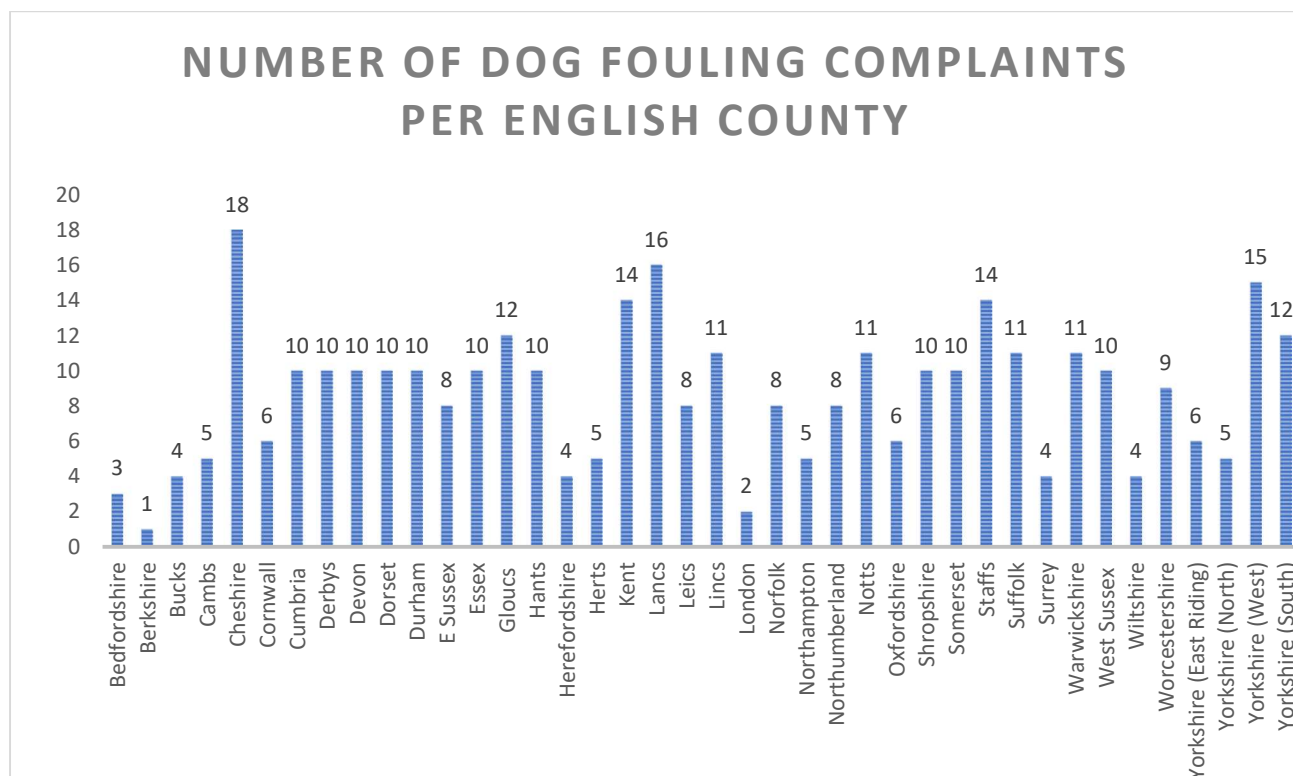
Social media is rife with angry posts about 'dog fouling', and understandably the actions of the Irresponsible Dog Owner make people very angry. To establish if there were regional trends in dog fouling incidents, DogFoul and [Knein](#) collaborated on researching that very subject, and the results are now in. (Full details available at the DogFoul tab [here.](#))

Sue Deegan of DogFoul commented: "Collaborating with Knein.co.uk, we chose to monitor key words and phrases posted on *Facebook* and *Google* relating to 'dog fouling incidents' in England".

Andrew Coleman of [Knein.co.uk](#) said: "During the eight month period from September 2021 to April 2022 we monitored Facebook and Google for complaints about dog fouling. This was achieved by setting up Daily Alerts for terms such as 'dog poop' 'dog poo' 'dog fouling'.....well you can imagine the rest. We then recorded the data on a *county wide level".

"Specifically we were searching for posts made by people that had been personally affected by Irresponsible Dog Owners. What we were not collating was the huge amount of social media postings made by local councillors claiming to be intent on tackling such offenders, without actually doing anything about it." Said Andrew.

Our Data Crunching



Data for the eight month period from September 2021 to April 2022

The results:

The top three positions in England for the fewest number of dog fouling complaints (the cleanest) were:

- 1) Berkshire (1)**
- 2) London (2)**
- 3) Bedfordshire, Surrey, (joint on 3 each)**

The worse three counties in England for dog fouling complaints were:

- 1. Cheshire (18)**
- 2. Lancashire (16)**
- 3. West Yorkshire (15)**

When it came to which counties in England were more likely to not pick up after their dogs, the information seemed to suggest that there was very much a north / south divide.

But were we alone in our findings?

Andrew commented: “Interestingly, during the time we were compiling our figures, the findings from a similar study was published earlier in the year by the [Kennel Store](#) titled ‘*Where are the worst places for dog fouling in England (and Wales)*’. The research collated the number of fines issued for dog fouling offences.”

“We realised what an opportunity it was to compare our...would they be completely different...or would our findings be similar?” Said Andrew.

The results of the Kennel Store study found that eight of the top 10 worse offenders were in the North of England, predominantly the North West (the two other being the Welsh constituencies Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC (5th) and Conwy BC (6th).

The eight English constituencies were:

1. Barnsley - South Yorkshire (Central North England)
2. Wirral – (North West)
3. Burnley – Lancashire (North West)
4. Northumberland – (North East)
5. (Wales excluded) Cynon Taff CBC
6. (Wales excluded) Conwy BC
7. Cheshire East – Cheshire (North West)
8. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (North West)
9. Wyre - (North West)
10. Rotherham – South Yorkshire (North West)

“It was very clear from both studies that there did seem to be a worse problem with dog fouling in the North of England compared to the rest of England.”

“Our findings recorded many more complaints in Northern England counties. This was also mirrored in the findings of the Kennel Store research which concluded that there were more fines in Northern England constituencies. Similarly, both studies concluded that London was one of the cleanest areas.” Said Andrew.

“However, there were anomalies”, said Andrew. “For example the Kennel Store results stated that Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council and Leeds City Council were some of the cleanest areas. And yet our data suggests that the

counties that these constituencies are based in are in fact nearer the top of the offenders rather than the bottom. This could therefore suggest that there are areas within constituencies that perform much better than other areas.”

“However our findings, and those of the Kennel Store, are purely indicators, and cannot explain the full picture into why certain areas have more dog fouling offences than others.”

“In order to establish precisely where and why certain areas have more fouling offences than others, you would need to factor in more data and consider the following:”

Areas issuing the most fines;

- are in fact simply being proactive by issuing and enforcing fines.

For example, if constituency ‘A’ has 500 actual incidents of dog fouling (reported or unreported) and issues 480 fines, it is more successful in dealing with dog fouling than a constituency that also has 500 actual incidents of dog fouling (reported or unreported) but issues just 20 fines.

Whereas a constituency with 500 incidents (reported or unreported) does have a dog fouling problem, but is more successful in tackling the problem by fining people than the constituency with 500 incidents (reported or unreported) but issues only 20 fines.

Or that a constituency that issued zero fines;

- doesn’t address the problem at all
- has a constituency of very, very responsible dog owners
- *are investing in ‘educating dog walkers’ rather than ‘fining’ them...suggesting that ‘educating’ is a better deterrent than ‘fines’.

It also worth considering why certain areas may have higher rates of dog fouling. For example, both studies do not take into account ‘per capita’...ie how many people live in that area. It would be reasonable to think that an area with less people, i.e more rural, is likely to have fewer dog fouling offences than an urban area with more people.

Equally, relative deprivation in small areas (in England) may impact on the number of dog fouling complaints.

Interestingly, figures on just that subject were compiled by '[FixMyStreet](#)' and Keep Britain Tidy. However, the two sets of data showed completely different trends forcing FixMyStreet to conclude 'Going through the research on (and history of) dog fouling suggests an understanding of the issue as a social rather than logistical problem. In this light the relationship between dog fouling and multiple deprivation (as well as why that relationship doesn't cleanly appear in FixMyStreet data) can be seen as the result of social factors affecting the owners of dogs, rather than just environmental factors.'

ENDS

- * For ease of data recording we did not record Metropolitan Boroughs etc as individual area. Instead the 'complaints' posted in these area were recorded in the closest geographical county.
- * The Kennel Store reported that 'when investigating fine procedures in each district council, we discovered some councils do not implement fines, and alternatively they offer education as to why not picking up dog excrement is dangerous and the importance of keeping our streets clean.'