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WASTE CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

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TOP TIPS FOR PRACTITIONERS TACKLING WASTE CRIME



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Top tips for practitioners tackling waste crime

Waste crime investigations are often complex, involving environmental harm, community impacts, intelligence development, and partnership working. The following tips can help practitioners achieve better outcomes when preventing, investigating and tackling waste crime.

Think beyond the waste

When attending an incident, don't just focus on the waste that has been deposited. Think about:

- Who generated the waste?
- Who transported it?
- Who benefited financially?
- Is this part of a larger pattern?
- Could this be linked to organised criminality?

The waste deposit itself is only part of the investigation.

Protect the scene

Treat fly tipping incidents like any other potential crime scene. Before anything is moved:

- Take photographs.
- Record the location.
- Identify access and exit routes.
- Preserve evidence.
- Consider witness and CCTV opportunities.

Remember that evidence can easily be lost once clearance begins so be thorough at the scene.

Follow the intelligence

A single incident may seem minor but could form part of a much larger picture. Look for:

- Repeat locations.
- Repeat offenders.
- Vehicle registrations.
- Business links.
- Social media advertising.
- Waste transfer patterns.

Build strong partnerships

Waste crime rarely sits with one organisation. Partnership working often provides information and opportunities that would not be available to a single organisation. Develop relationships with:

- Other local authorities.
- Environment Agency.
- Police.
- Registered social landlords.
- Community safety teams.
- Waste collection services.
- Landowners.

Understand your hotspots

Understanding the location affected can help to identify effective reduction and prevention measures. Ask:

- Why is waste being deposited here?
- How do offenders access the location?
- What type of waste is appearing?
- When are incidents occurring?

Record everything

Accurate record keeping protects both the investigation and the investigator. Make sure you are recording:

- Actions taken.
- Decisions made.
- Evidence found.
- Intelligence received.
- Partnership discussions.
- Enforcement outcomes.

Use proportionate enforcement

Not every incident requires prosecution. Consider all the available options and seek to use the most proportionate response. Aim to achieve compliance and prevent future harm alongside enforcement action.

Consider the community impact

Whilst waste crime does affect the environment, practitioners also need to consider how it can:

- Reduce community pride.
- Increase fear of crime.
- Damage confidence in local services.
- Affect vulnerable residents.
- Contribute to wider anti-social behaviour.

Understanding these impacts helps demonstrate the true harm caused by offending.

Talk to local people

Residents often hold valuable information. Consider:

- Estate walkabouts.
- Community meetings.
- Discussions with local businesses.
- Meet with landowners.
- Talk at neighbourhood groups.

Local intelligence can identify offenders, patterns and opportunities that may not be obvious through formal reporting systems.

Don't overlook householder duty of care

Many fly tipping incidents originate from household waste that has been collected by rogue operators. When investigating:

- Consider how the waste reached the location.
- Identify who arranged the disposal.
- Explore potential duty of care issues.
- Look for opportunities to educate residents.

Use a problem solving approach

Repeatedly clearing waste without addressing the cause is rarely effective.
Consider signage, CCTV, barriers, environmental improvements, behaviour change campaigns, partnership interventions.
Ask "What can stop this happening again?", rather than simply "How do we clear this up?"

Follow the money

Many waste crimes are financially motivated. Understanding the profit behind the activity often helps strengthen enforcement opportunities. Consider:

- Avoidance of disposal costs.
- Tax avoidance.
- Commercial gain.
- Organised offending.

Look for wider criminality

Maintain professional curiosity and consider whether additional offences may be present. Waste crime can sometimes be linked to:

- Fraud.
- Organised crime.
- Vehicle offences.
- Scrap metal offences.
- Money laundering.
- Modern slavery.

Communicate success

Communities often only see the problem. Visible action helps build public confidence and encourages reporting. Share:

- Successful investigations.
- Enforcement outcomes.
- Environmental improvements.
- Partnership projects.
- Positive case studies.

Never stop being curious

One of the most valuable skills when investigating is professional curiosity. Always ask:

- What am I missing?
- Does this make sense?
- Is there another explanation?
- Is this linked to something bigger?
- Who else could help?

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