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WASTE CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

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OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE FLY TIPPING



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What opportunities are there to reduce fly tipping through improvements to the circular economy, waste reduction, and repair initiatives.

In some cases fly tipping is a symptom of failures elsewhere in the waste system. Where disposal is expensive, inconvenient, confusing, or perceived as the easiest option, some individuals and businesses will look for shortcuts. As a result, improving the circular economy can become a fly tipping reduction measure as well as an environmental objective.

Reduce Waste at Source

The less waste generated, the less waste there is to be illegally disposed of.

Opportunities include:

- Encouraging producers to design products that last longer and are easier to repair.
- Reducing unnecessary packaging.
- Promoting waste minimisation programmes for households and businesses.
- Supporting digital rather than paper-based services where appropriate.
- Providing guidance to construction and demolition sectors on waste reduction.

Reducing waste generation can lower disposal pressures, particularly in sectors that generate bulky waste, furniture, DIY waste and construction materials, all of which frequently feature in fly-tipping investigations. The Government's Waste Crime Action Plan also places emphasis on preventing waste crime by designing it out of the system.

Expand Reuse Networks

Many items that are fly-tipped still have economic or social value.

Examples include:

- Furniture reuse schemes.
- Community reuse shops at household waste recycling centres.
- Charity partnerships.
- Online reuse platforms.
- Local authority "give and take" events.
- Social enterprise repair and resale projects.

By creating convenient reuse routes, residents are less likely to pay unlicensed operators to remove unwanted items and less likely to abandon items themselves.

Increase Repair Opportunities
A culture of repair can reduce disposal of items that are simply broken rather than unusable.

Examples include:

- Repair cafés.
- Community workshops.
- Volunteer repair schemes.
- Refurbishment programmes for electrical goods.
- Training initiatives that develop repair skills.

This is particularly relevant for electrical items, white goods and furniture, which frequently appear in fly-tipped waste streams

Improve Access to Legal Disposal
Behaviour change campaigns are most effective when people have realistic alternatives to illegal disposal.

Opportunities include:

- Extended opening hours at recycling centres.
- Mobile recycling facilities.
- Bulky waste collection services.
- Reduced charges for certain waste streams.
- Better information on local disposal options.
- Easier booking systems.

There is often a direct link between convenience and compliance. If legitimate disposal is perceived as difficult, some residents and traders will seek cheaper or easier alternatives.

Support Small Businesses and Tradespeople
Potential interventions include:

- Waste duty of care education.
- Training on legal disposal routes.
- Promotion of licensed waste carriers.
- Trade waste recycling opportunities.
- Business-focused reuse networks.

Small traders generate waste that can't be disposed of through household services but may not have formal waste contracts in place.

Develop Circular Economy Hubs

Local authorities could work with partners to create local hubs where materials can be:

- Reused.
- Repaired.
- Refurbished.
- Resold.
- Recycled.

Particular opportunities exist for:

- Furniture.
- Timber.
- Construction materials.
- Bicycles.
- Electrical equipment.
- Office equipment.

These hubs can reduce disposal costs whilst generating community and economic benefits.

Improve Public Understanding of Waste Value

Many behaviour change campaigns focus on enforcement and penalties. Whilst important, there is also an opportunity to focus on value.

Messages could include:

- "Someone else can use this."
- "Repair before replacing."
- "Waste is a resource."
- "Donate rather than dump."

Research and practical experience demonstrate that consistent messaging is important for changing behaviour over time.

Better Tracking and Visibility of Waste

Improved waste tracking can make it harder for waste to disappear into the illegal economy.

Digital waste tracking and stronger controls within the waste sector are important developments in tackling waste crime.

Benefits may include:

- Greater accountability.
- Earlier identification of illegal activity.
- Improved intelligence.
- Increased confidence when selecting waste carriers.

Address the Bulky Waste Problem

Many fly-tipping incidents involve:

- Sofas.
- Mattresses.
- White goods.
- Household furniture.

Circular economy interventions could include:

- Furniture banks.
- Refurbishment schemes.
- Textile and mattress recovery projects.
- Social enterprise collection services.
- Partnerships with housing providers.

Providing alternatives for bulky items can remove one of the most common drivers of fly-tipping.

Link Circular Economy and Enforcement

The strongest approach is likely to combine:

- Waste reduction.
- Reuse and repair.
- Education.
- Duty of care campaigns.
- Intelligence sharing.
- Visible enforcement.

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