

Appendix 1: Government Fly-tipping statistics for England, 2020 to 2021

Updated 8 December 2021

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england/fly-tipping-statistics-for-england-2020-to-2021>

This statistical notice provides statistics on fly-tipping incidents recorded by Local Authorities in England, for April 2020 to March 2021. It covers trends in the number of fly-tipping incidents, with a breakdown by land type, waste type and size. It also covers enforcement and prosecution actions undertaken for fly-tipping incidents. It excludes the majority of private-land incidents and large scale incidents dealt with by the Environment Agency.

The 2020/21 reporting period covers the first year of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted on the levels of fly-tipping seen in 2020/21.

1. Key points

- For the 2020/21 year, local authorities in **England** dealt with **1.13 million fly-tipping incidents, an increase of 16%** from the 980,000 reported in 2019/20.
- **As in the previous year, just under two thirds (65%)** of fly-tips involved **household waste**. Total incidents involving household waste were **737,000** in 2020/21, an **increase of 16%** from 635,000 incidents in 2019/20.
- 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 2020/21, the same as in 2019/20. In 2020/21, the number of highway incidents was 485,000, which was an **increase of 16%** from 419,000 in 2019/20.
- The **most common size category** for fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21 was equivalent to a **'small van load'** (34% of total incidents), followed by the equivalent of a **'car boot or less'** (26%).
- In 2020/21, 39,000 or 4% of total incidents were of 'tipper lorry load' size or larger, which is an increase of 16% from 33,000 in 2019/20. For these **large fly-tipping incidents**, the cost of clearance to local authorities in England in 2020/21 was **£11.6 million**, compared with £10.9 million in 2019/20.
- Local authorities carried out **456,000 enforcement actions** in 2020/21, a **decrease of 18,000 actions (4%)** from 474,000 in 2019/20.
- The number of **fixed penalty notices** issued was **57,600** in 2020/21, a **decrease of 24%** from 75,400 in 2019/20. This is the second most common action after investigations and accounted for **13%** of all actions in 2020/21.
- The number of court fines issued **decreased by 51%** from 2,672 to **1,313** in 2020/21, with the value of total fines **decreasing to £440,000** (a decrease of 62% on the £1,170,000 total value of fines in 2019/20).

2. Background on data reporting and data caveats

These data are based on incidents and actions reported through WasteDataFlow. The intention is to capture all fly tipping incidents, whether reported by staff or customers, and enforcement actions taken by local authorities in response to fly tipping incidents.

Local authorities gather their data from a number of different sources, and data can often be collected and reported by separate teams. There is a level of discretion in applying the reporting guidance. This can lead to some differences in how local authorities record incidents. The nature of fly-tipping means that there can be relatively high variation between years and between local authorities. Changes in data collection and reporting over time mean that trends should be interpreted with caution.

We had been aware of a small number of local authorities who have switched to only reporting customer or staff reported fly-tipping incidents for the detailed breakdown by local authority. We had been able to capture/reflect/estimate all incidents in the total incidents figure for England to retain consistency of the national headline figure. In 2018/19, Detra were aware that four local authorities had provided figures based on customer reported fly-tips only.

To determine the extent of this and to improve the transparency in reported data, Detra undertook an exercise with all local authorities for their 2019/20 data to ask whether they were reporting the number of incidents for customer reported, staff reported or both customer/public and staff reported incidents.

This showed that the majority of local authorities are reporting all fly-tipping incidents, whether reported by staff or customers in 2019/20. Around 10% of local authorities reported that they were either just providing figures based on customer reported fly-tips only, or just those incidents reported by staff. In previous years, estimates were made for 'all incidents' for a very small number of local authorities where the figures provided were known not to be based on 'all incidents'; these estimated figures were included in the national incident totals.

From 2019/20, for those local authorities that are not reporting 'all incidents', no estimates have been made for 'all incidents'. This is due to the number of local authorities concerned and lack of data to make reliable estimates for 'all incidents'. The reporting basis for each local authority is available in the published [dataset \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](#).

2.1 Revisions

Revisions have been made to 2019/20 incidents data for Redcar and Cleveland and actions data for Hounslow and Swale. The 2019/20 reporting basis has also been updated to 'all incidents' for the following local authorities: Basingstoke and Deane, Cannock Chase, Canterbury, Cotswold, Hastings, Mole Valley, Tamworth, Thanet and West Oxfordshire. These revisions have been made due to new or revised data being received after publication. For more detail, please see the [revisions](#) section.

2.2 Assessing the figures

In assessing the figures, local authorities should not be ranked or classified as 'good' or 'poor' performers based purely on numbers of fly-tips. Direct comparison between local authorities is not appropriate and especially where the local authority may be reporting on staff and/or customer incidents. The situation is complex and can be influenced by population density, housing stock, demographics, commuter routes, the rigour with which local authorities identify incidents or encourage the public to report incidents, training of street crews, and increased use of more sophisticated methods for capturing and reporting incidents. Those reporting higher incident numbers are often those being more pro-active and rigorous in identifying incidents. Large authorities may have large enforcement teams using modern, sophisticated methods (e.g. covert surveillance, SmartWater etc.) to catch professional fly-tippers.

Trends over time for a particular local authority may be a fairer comparison and a time series of total incidents for each local authority is available for [download \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24/fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](#). The detailed dataset makes clear the reporting basis for each local authority.

Cost data is only published for clearance costs for 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant multi load' incident categories and enforcement costs for 'prosecutions' and 'injunctions' action categories, which are reported directly by local authorities.

Please note that due to high numbers of incidents being reported as 'other unidentified' for land type and waste type in 2020/21, some caution is needed in the interpretation of year-on-year changes.

Percentage changes presented in this statistical notice are based on unrounded figures.

Further information about the data is available at the end of this release.

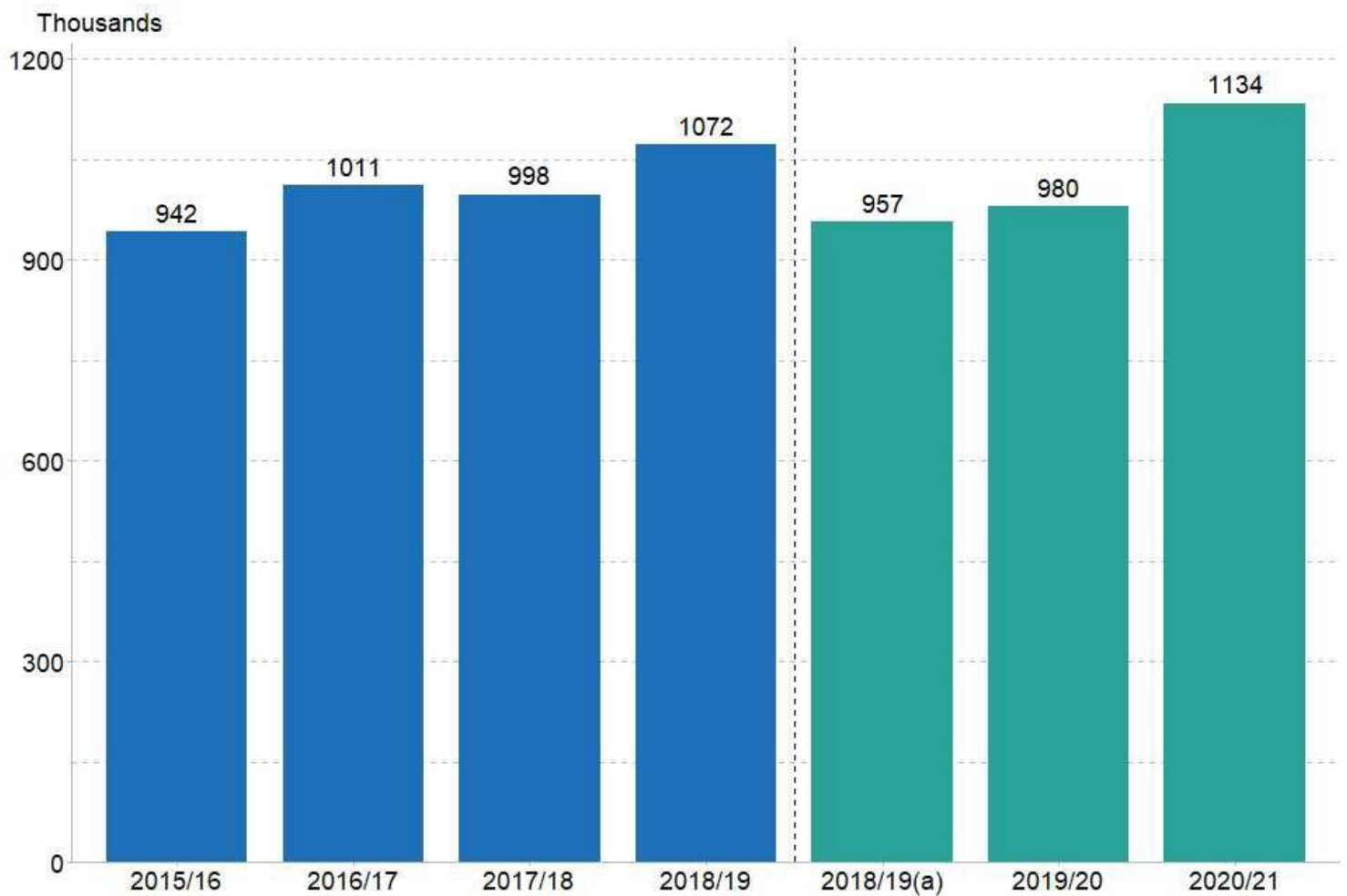
2.3 Impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on fly-tipping

The 2020/21 reporting period covers the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first national lockdown introduced in March 2020 led to some local authorities being unable to maintain collections of dry recyclates, with some suspending garden and bulky waste collections. There was also a widespread closure of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs). HWRCs were later re-opened following Government guidance on managing HWRCs in England during the COVID-19 pandemic but with some restrictions in place (e.g. booking system). These factors and other factors such as changes in household consumption, travel and leisure patterns may have contributed to the increases seen in the number of fly-tipping incidents reported for 2020/21.

Staff shortages, staff being furloughed, and staff being redeployed may also have impacted on the number of enforcement actions which were carried out during 2020/21. Courts were also closed at certain points of the reporting period which several local authorities reported impacted on the number of prosecution actions undertaken.

3. Total number of fly-tipping incidents in England

Figure 1: Total number of fly-tipping incidents in England, 2014/15 to 2020/21



Equivalent figures for 2007/08 to 2014/15 can be seen in the accompanying [dataset \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24/fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](#)

(a) Due to methodological changes, data for 2019/20 onwards is not comparable to earlier years. These methodological changes have been applied to 2018/19. For detailed information on these changes please see the [reporting basis](#) section.

[View the data for this chart](#)

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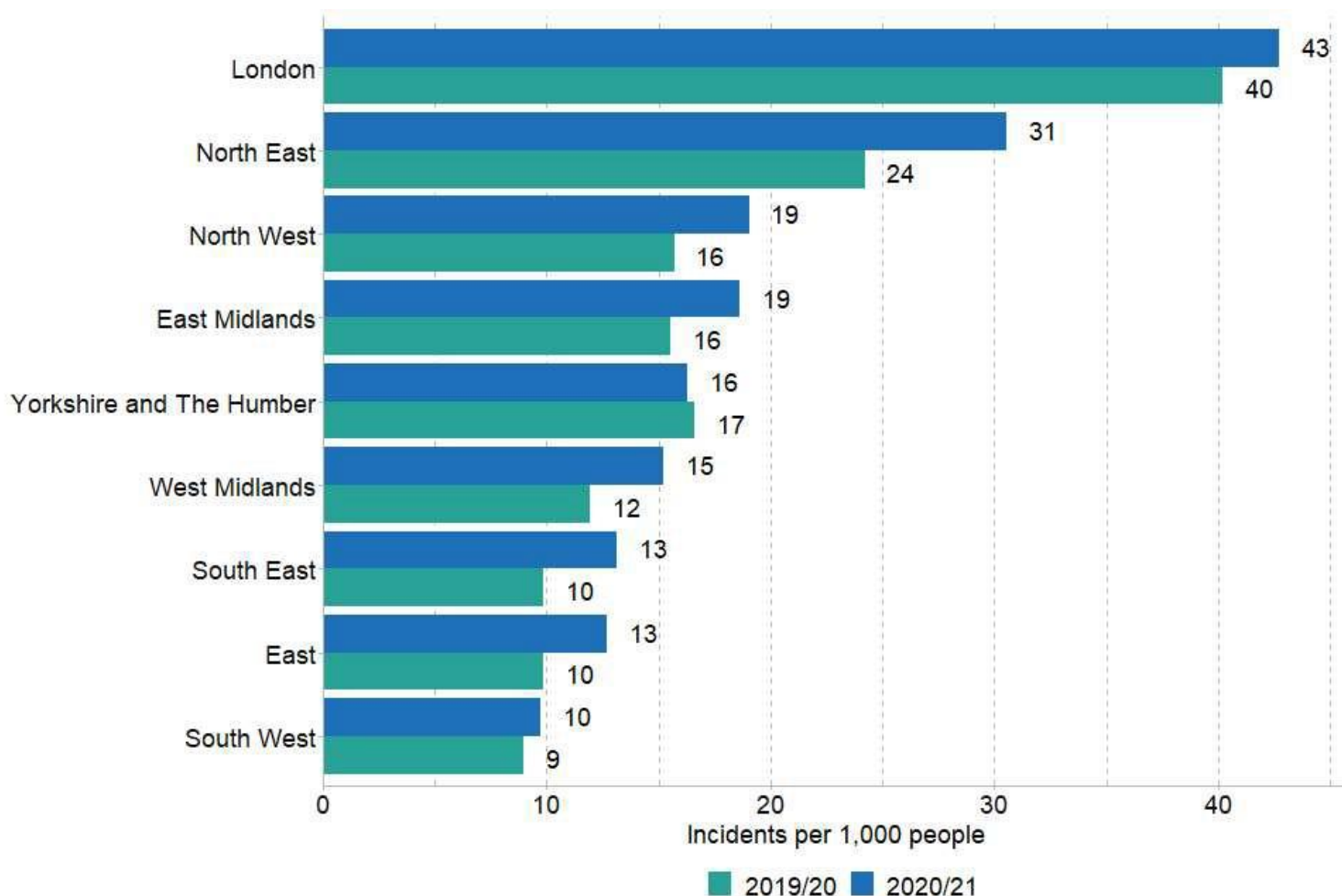
Please note that from 2019/20, the national totals for fly-tipping incidents are not comparable to previously published data, due to methodological changes. These methodological changes have been applied to the 2018/19 data to enable comparisons to be made.

In 2020/21 there were 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents reported, an increase of 16% from 980,000 in 2019/20.

Many local authorities have changed the way they capture and report fly-tips over the past few years, so the changes over time should be interpreted with some care. Detra is also aware that the definitions used to describe fly-tips in the guidance are interpreted broadly by local authorities.

Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this Notice. Details of the 151 incidents of large-scale, illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2020/21 are published separately. Please see the [dataset \(/government/publication/environment-agency-2020-data-on-regulated-businesses-in-england\)](#) published by the Environment Agency.

Figure 2: Fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in England by region, 2020/21



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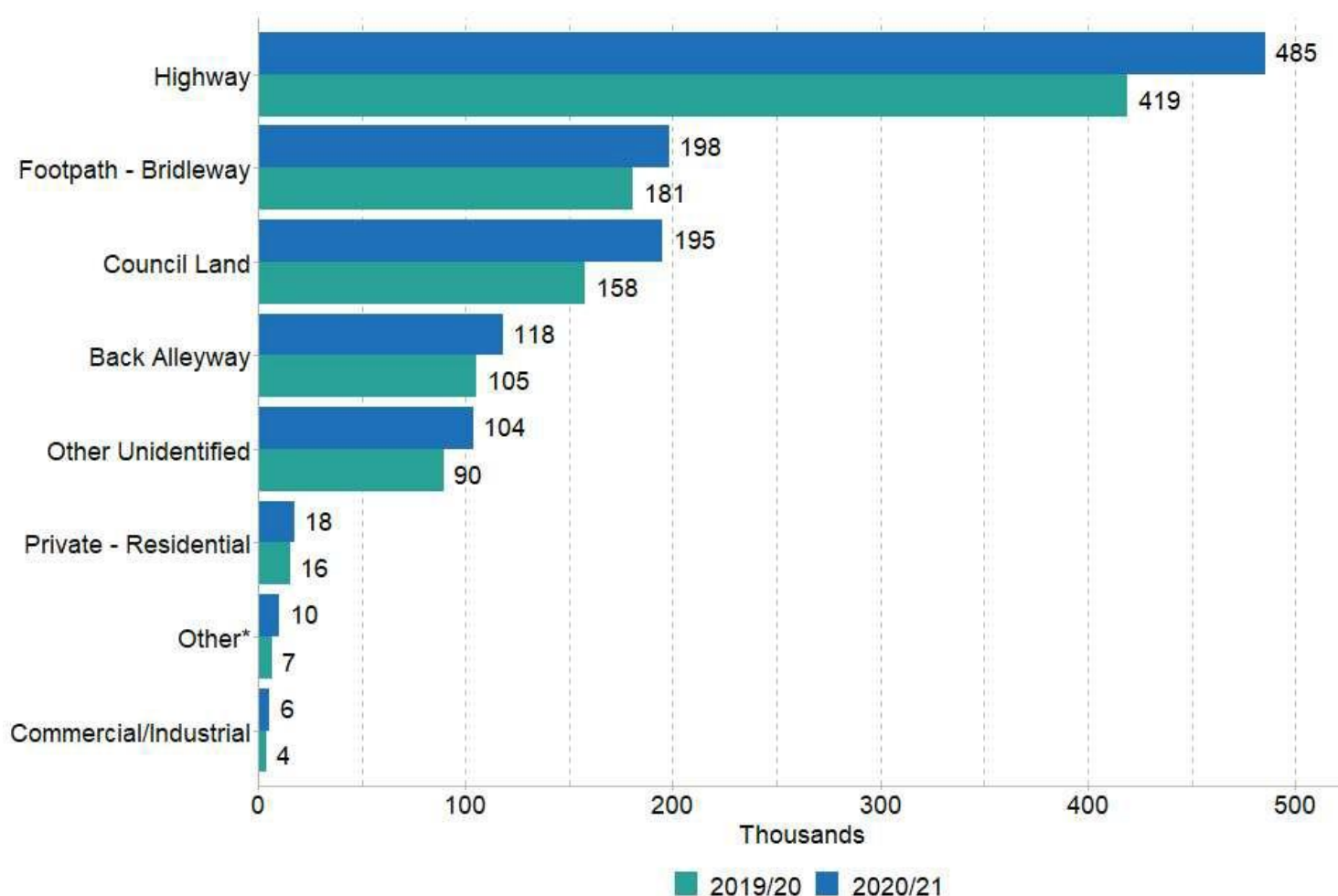
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In 2020/21 there were on average 20 fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in England. London had the highest average number of incidents per 1,000 people at 43, while the South West had the lowest at 10 incidents per 1,000 people.

4. Fly-tipping incidents in England by land type

Figure 3: Fly-tipping incidents by land type in England, 2020/21, compared to 2019/20



* **Other** includes agricultural, watercourse and railway.

[View the data for this chart](#)

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Highways (pavements and roads) have consistently been the most common land type for fly-tipping incidents over time, accounting for over two fifths (43%) of all incidents in 2020/21. In 2020/21 there were 485,000 incidents, an increase of 16% from 2019/20 (419,000 incidents).

Fly-tipping on council land, and 'footpaths and bridleways', each made up around 17% of all incidents in 2020/21. Incidents on council land such as housing estates, car parks, parks and offices increased by 24% to 195,000 incidents from 158,000. Footpath and bridleway incidents increased by 10% to 198,000 from 181,000 incidents.

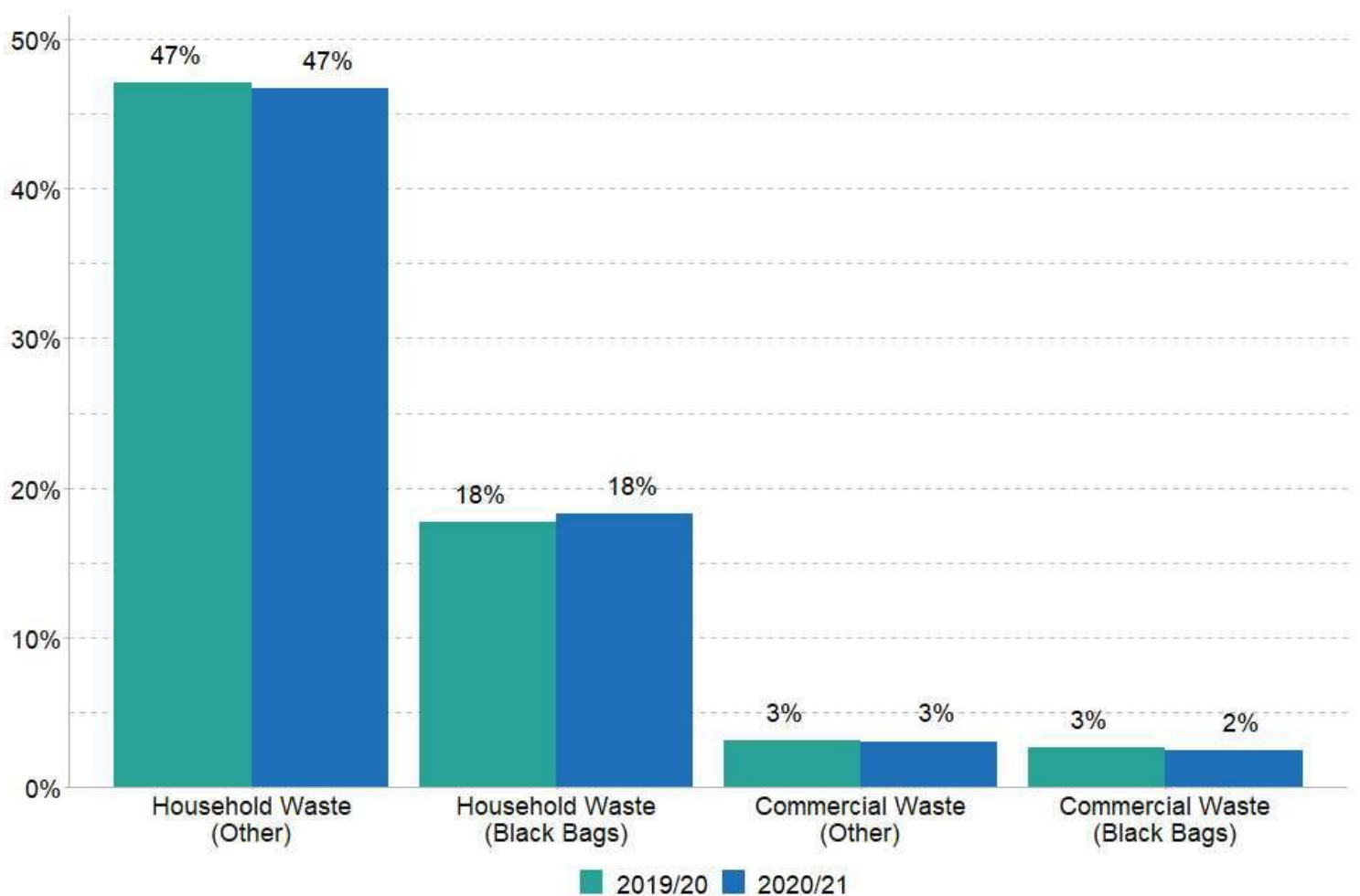
Fly-tipping incidents in back alleyways amounted to a further 10% of all incidents (118,000 incidents) in 2020/21, an increase of 12% from 105,000 in the previous year.

5. Fly-tipping incidents in England by waste type

Please note that due to high numbers of incidents being reported as 'other unidentified' for waste type in 2020/21, some caution is needed in the interpretation of year-on-year changes. In 2020/21, 127,000 incidents were reported as 'other unidentified'; this type of waste accounted for 11% of total incidents, similar to the 12% of incidents in 2019/20.

Most fly-tipping incidents are household waste (the sum of 'black bags' and 'other'), which in 2020/21 accounted for nearly two-thirds (65%) of all incidents. The majority of this was 'household waste (other)'.

Figure 4: Household and commercial waste in England, 2019/20 and 2020/21 (% of total incidents)



Household waste (other) could include material from house or shed clearances, old furniture, carpets and the waste from small scale DIY works.

Commercial waste (other) could include pallets, cardboard boxes, plastics, foam and any other waste not contained in bags or containers and not due to be collected.

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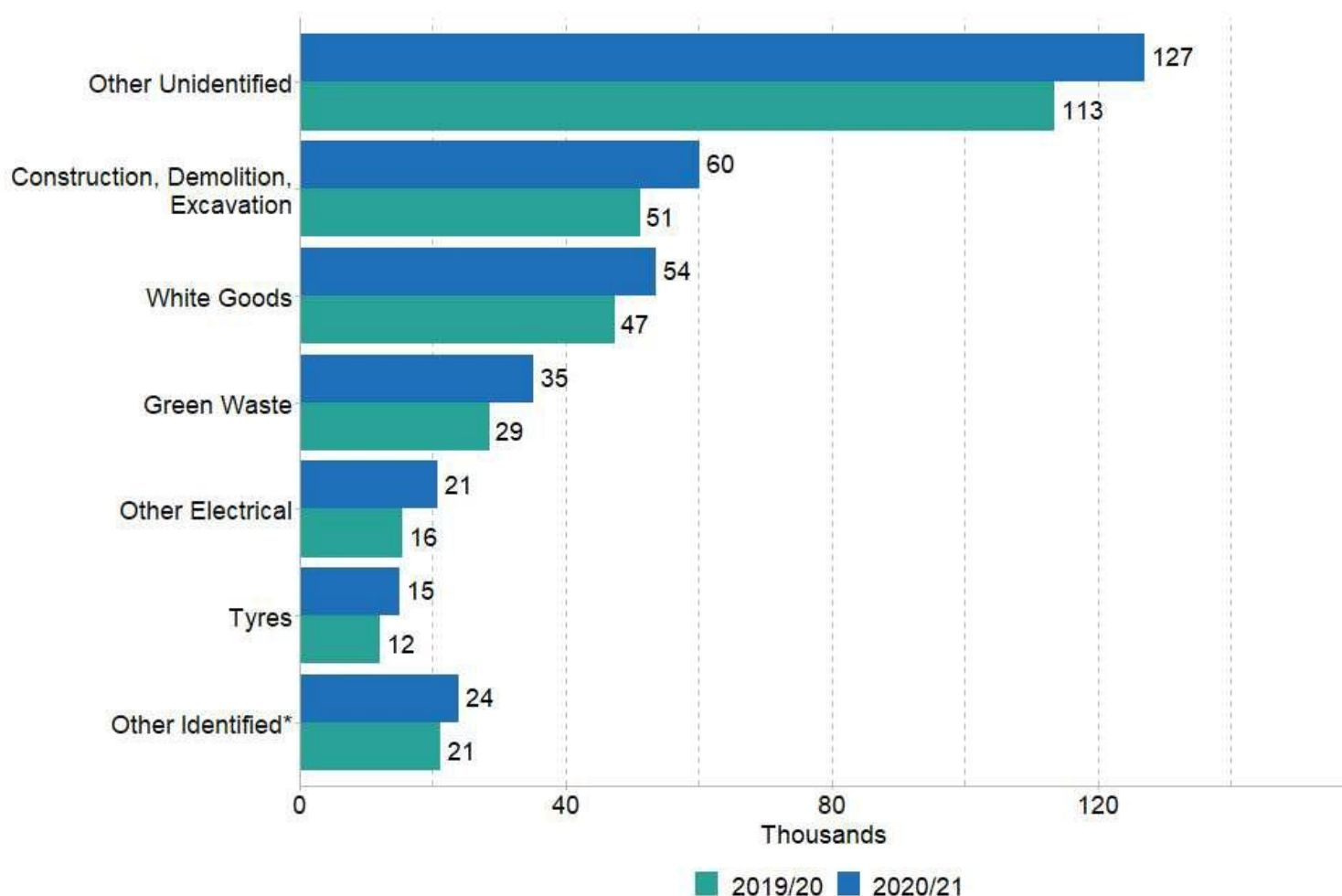
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Total household waste increased by 16% from 635,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 737,000 incidents in 2020/21. The household waste sub-categories, 'black bags' and 'other' increased by 34,000 incidents (19%) and 68,000 incidents (15%), respectively.

There were 61,000 incidents involving commercial waste in 2020/21, accounting for 5% of total incidents. This was an increase of 11% from the 56,000 incidents reported in 2019/20. There were 27,000 incidents of commercial waste in black bags and 34,000 incidents of other commercial waste in 2020/21.

Types of fly-tipping, other than household and commercial waste - which are construction, demolition and excavation; other unidentified; white goods; green waste; other electrical; tyres; vehicles parts; animal carcasses; chemical drums, oil and fuel; clinical; and asbestos - amount to 30% of all fly-tipping incidents. Within this, vehicle parts, animal carcasses, clinical waste, asbestos, and 'chemical drums, oil and fuel' incidents each account for less than 1% of total incidents.

Figure 5: Types of other fly-tipping in England, 2020/21, compared to 2019/20



* **Other Identified** includes vehicle parts, animal carcasses, clinical waste, asbestos, and 'chemical drums, oil and fuel'.

[View the data for this chart](#)

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038135/Figure5.csv

For some waste types, such as green waste or electrical goods, it is not always possible to tell whether they originated from households or businesses.

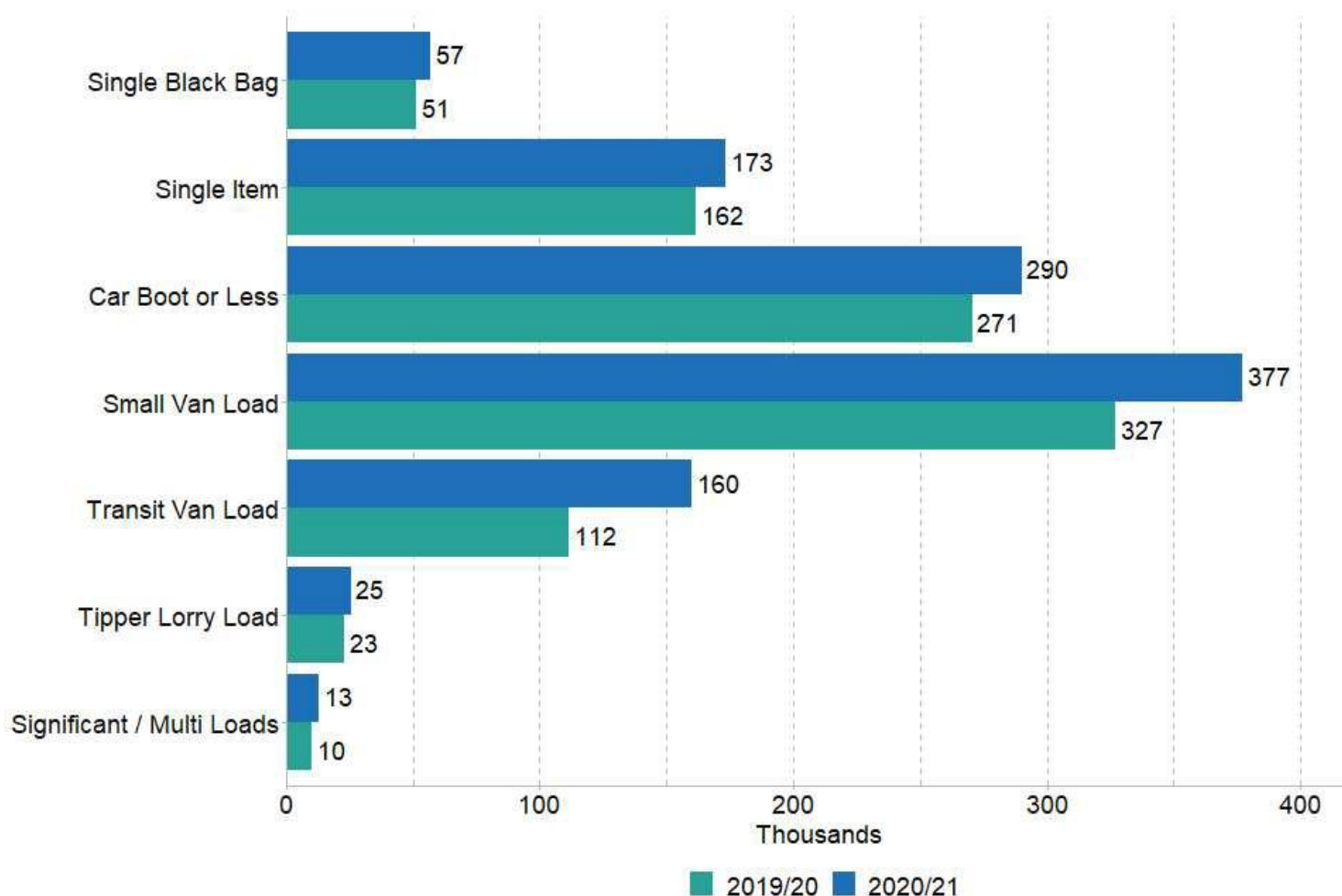
The number of white goods incidents in 2020/21 was 54,000, an increase of 13% from 2019/20 (47,000 incidents). White good incidents accounted for 5% of total incidents in 2020/21. Green waste accounted for 3% of total incidents in 2020/21. Tyre incidents accounted for around 1% of total incidents in 2020/21.

Incidents with construction/demolition/excavation material increased by 18%.

6. Fly-tipping incidents in England by size

Incidents recorded by size category relate to those investigated and cleared by the local authority. For a number of reasons, but primarily due to incidents on private land, which an authority may not clear, total incidents by size category may not match total incidents recorded by land type or waste type.

Figure 6: Fly-tipping incidents by size in England 2020/21, compared to 2019/20



[View the data for this chart](#)

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As in 2019/20, 'small van load' was the largest size category in 2020/21, with around a third of incidents (34% or 377,000 incidents) reported being this size, this is a 15% increase on 327,000 incidents in 2019/20.

The second-largest size category is equivalent to a 'car boot or less'. Fly-tipping incidents of this size increased by 7% from 271,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 290,000 incidents in 2020/21 and made up 26% of all incidents.

'Single items', such as furniture, mattresses etc. accounted for 16% of total incidents and have increased by 7%, from 162,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 173,000 in 2020/21.

In 2020/21 'Single black bag' size incidents accounted for 5% of total incidents and have increased by 11%, from 51,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 57,000 incidents in 2020/21.

In 2020/21 'Transit van Load' incidents accounted for 14% of total incidents and have increased by 43%, from 112,000 incidents in 2019/20 to 160,000 incidents in 2020/21.

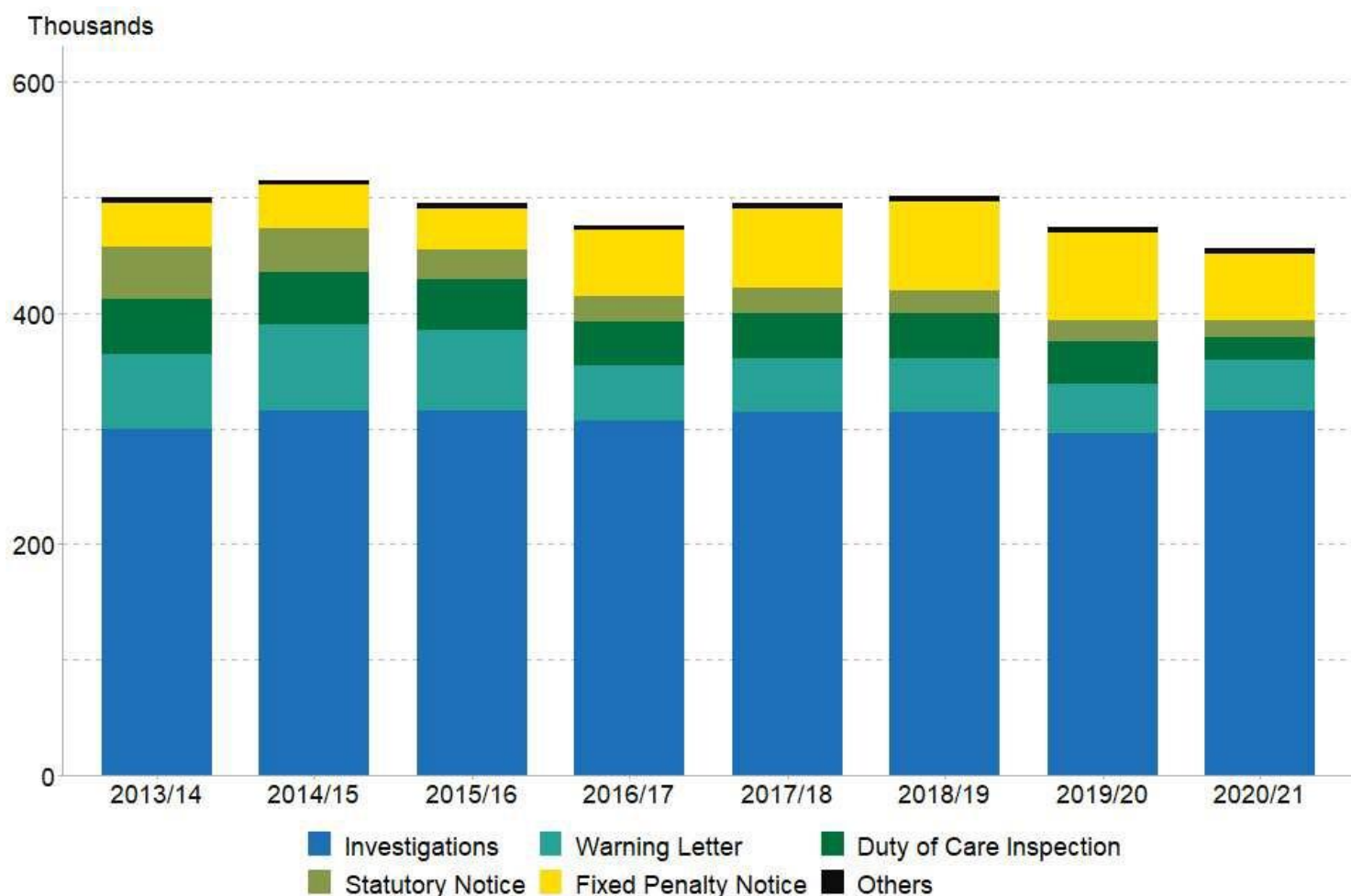
In 2020/21, 39,000 or 4% of total incidents were of 'tipper lorry load' size or larger, which is an increase of 16% from 33,000 in 2019/20. For these large fly-tipping incidents, the cost of clearance to local authorities in England in 2020/21 was £11.6 million, compared with £10.9 million in 2019/20.

As noted above, we no longer produce estimates of clearance costs for other size categories.

7. Fly-tipping enforcement and prosecution

As previously mentioned, from 2019/20 national totals for fly-tipping incidents are not comparable to earlier years due to methodological changes. However, data on enforcement and prosecutions actions are not affected so the full time series is presented in this section.

Figure 7: Fly-tipping enforcement actions in England, 2012/13 to 2020/21



'Other' is the sum of stop and search, vehicles seized, formal caution, prosecution and injunction

Equivalent figures for 2007/08 to 2012/13 can be seen in the accompanying [dataset \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24 -fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038137/dataset_24_fly_tipping_incidents_and_actions_taken_in_england.csv)

[View the data for this chart](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038137/figure7.csv)

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There were 456,000 enforcement actions carried out in England in 2020/21, a 4% decrease (of 18,000 actions) from 474,000 enforcement actions since 2019/20. It should be noted that multiple actions can sometimes be carried-out on one particular incident.

Total enforcement costs have not been estimated for 2020/21 as accurate costs are not available for the majority of enforcement categories.

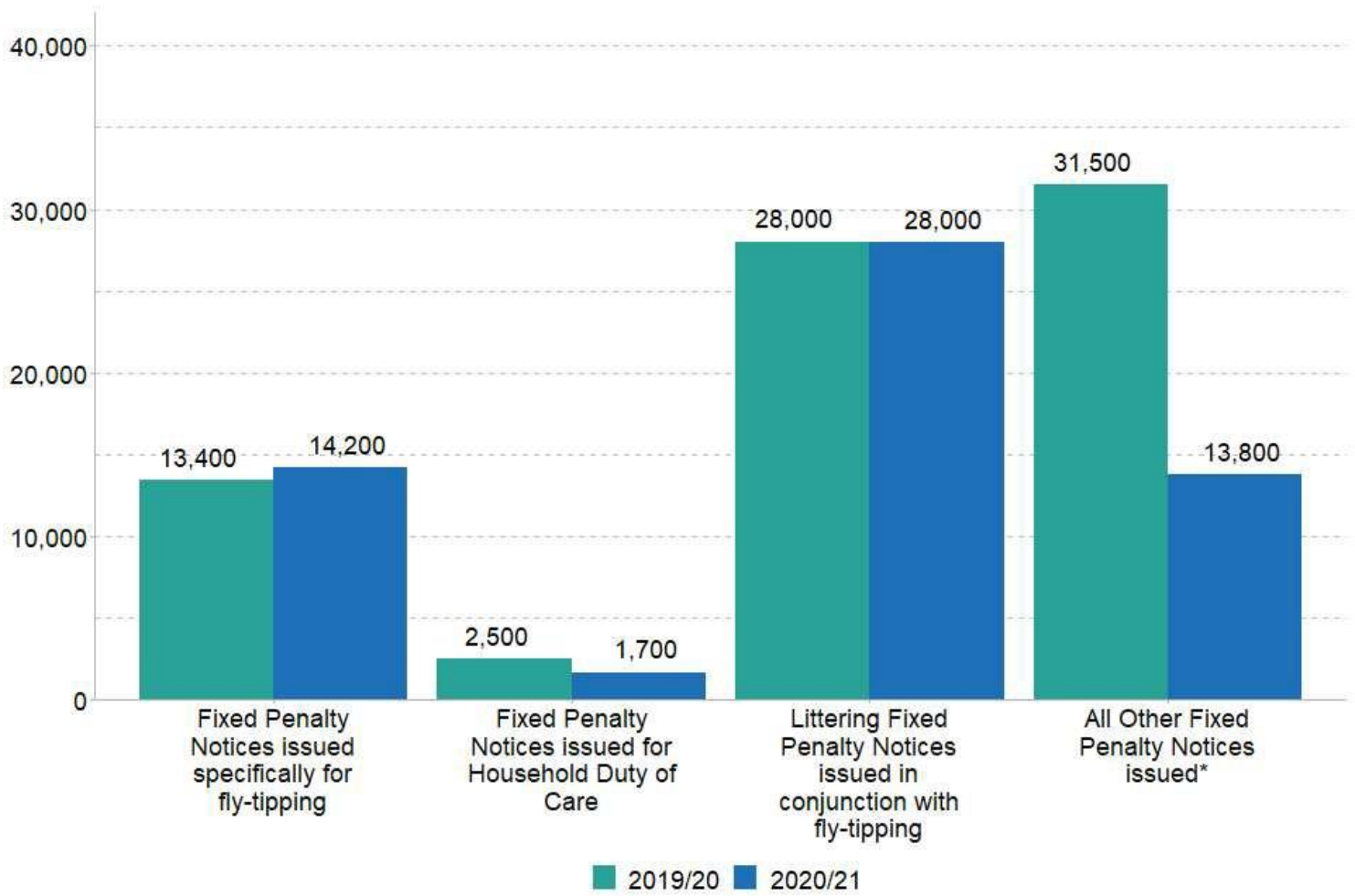
Investigations have consistently been the most common action taken against fly-tipping incidents over time, accounting for 69% of all actions in 2020/21, with 316,000 investigations in total. This is an increase of 7% from 2019/20, where 296,000 investigations were carried out.

In May 2016 local authorities in England were given the power to issue fixed penalty notices for small scale fly-tipping. Prior to this date, local authorities issued fly-tippers with fixed penalty notices in relation to littering, duty of care or anti-social behaviour. This fixed penalty notice gave local authorities a more specific fixed penalty notice type, an alternative to prosecutions and a more efficient and proportionate response to small scale fly-tipping. Local authorities are still using the previous fixed penalty notices as well as the new ones in appropriate circumstances.

Further enforcement powers were given to local authorities and the Environment Agency in January 2019, who can now issue fixed penalty notices for breaches of householder duty of care, where householders pass their waste to an unlicensed waste carrier.

Local authorities issued 57,600 fixed penalty notices in total during 2020/21 and these were the second most common enforcement action, accounting for 13% of total actions. The total number of fixed penalty notices has decreased by 24% from 75,400 in 2019/20.

Figure 8: Number of Fixed Penalty Notices by type in England, 2020/21, compared to 2019/20



* These are FPNs which have been served in relation to fly tipping and other waste offences that are not captured by the other three categories.

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For 2020/21, 14,200 (25%) of fixed penalty notices were issued specifically for small scale fly-tipping, 28,000 (49%) in relation to littering, 1,700 (3%) in relation to household duty of care and 13,800 (24%) in relation to other waste offences.

The number of prosecution actions has decreased by 52%, from 2,900 in 2019/20 to 1,400 in 2020/21. Costs of prosecution actions decreased, by 58% from £1,172,000 in 2019/20 to £489,000 in 2020/21.

There were 43,000 warning letters issued in 2020/21, similar to 2019/20. Warning letters accounted for 9% of total enforcement actions in 2020/21.

The number of duty of care inspections fell by 45% in 2020/21, from 36,000 inspections to 20,000 inspections. This accounted for 4% of total enforcement actions in 2020/21.

A total of 15,000 statutory notices were issued in 2020/21, accounting for 3% of total enforcement actions. This was a decrease of 20% from the 19,000 statutory notices issued in 2019/20.

Table 1: Fly-tipping prosecution outcomes in England, 2012/13 to 2020/21

Year	Fines Issued	Absolute or Conditional Discharge	Other (successful outcomes)	Community Service	Custodial Sentence	Cases Lost	Total Prosecutions	Successful Prosecutions
2012/13	1,839	165	106	16	18	23	2,170	98.8%
2013/14	1,685	183	56	19	10	36	2,002	97.6%
2014/15	1,492	128	95	35	21	31	1,810	97.8%
2015/16	1,838	136	67	32	18	44	2,135	97.9%
2016/17	1,318	93	81	26	28	56	1,571	98.4%
2017/18	1,938	66	112	45	25	58	2,243	97.5%
2018/19	2,056	80	108	40	26	101	2,401	96.2%
2019/20	2,672	58	95	44	41	50	2,945	98.8%
2020/21	1,313	33	36	15	4	25	1,412	99.2%

Other successful: Any other positive results awarded by the court this period.

Successful prosecutions: Presented as a percentage of total prosecutions.

Equivalent figures for 2007/08 to 2011/12 can be seen in the accompanying [dataset \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](#).

[View the data for this table](#)

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038139/Table1.csv

The success rates for prosecution actions against fly-tipping are consistently very high over time. Over 99% of prosecutions resulted in conviction in 2020/21.

The majority of prosecution outcomes are fines, which were issued for 92% of the prosecutions taken against fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21. The number of fines issued decreased by 51%, from 2,672 in 2019/20 to 1,313 in 2020/21, with the value of total fines decreasing to £440,000 (a decrease of 62% on the £1,170,000 total value of fines in 2019/20).

The number of community service outcomes decreased 66% from 44 in 2019/20 to 15 in 2020/21.

8. What you need to know about this release

8.1 Contact details

Responsible statisticians: Katherine Merrett and Adele Storr

Email: WasteStatistics@Defra.gov.uk

Media enquiries: 0330 041 6560 (Defra Press Office)

8.2 Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. These statistics have been produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility. For more information, please see the [Official Statistics Code of Practice \(https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/\)](#).

9. About these statistics

Fly-tipping is the illegal deposit of waste on land, contrary to Section 33(1)(a) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Local authorities and the Environment Agency both have a responsibility in respect of illegally deposited waste. This includes local authorities and the Environment Agency collecting and reporting data on fly-tipping in their area. This statistical notice covers data reported by

local authorities in England.

9.1 User Statement

Data on fly-tipping is collected to inform policy making and to provide local authorities with a management tool that enables a problem solving approach to be taken. It records the number of fly-tipping incidents, the type of material tipped, location and size, together with enforcement action taken. The data are used by local and central government, researchers and the public.

9.2 Context

Fly-tipping is a crime, a significant blight on local environments; a source of pollution; a potential danger to public health; a hazard to wildlife, and a nuisance. It also undermines legitimate waste businesses where unscrupulous operators undercut those operating within the law.

Local authorities and the Environment Agency both have a responsibility in respect of illegally deposited waste with certain obligations set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Local authorities have a duty to clear fly-tipped material from relevant land in their areas and consequently they deal with the vast majority of fly-tipping on public land, investigating these and carrying out a range of enforcement actions. The Environment Agency is responsible for dealing with large-scale, serious and organised illegal dumping incidents which pose an immediate threat to human health or the environment. Responsibility for dealing with fly-tipping on private land rests with private landowners and is not subject to mandatory data reporting.

Incidents involving the Environment Agency or cleared by private landowners are not included in this notice. Details of the 151 incidents of large-scale, illegal dumping dealt with by the Environment Agency in 2020/21 are published separately. Please see the [dataset \(/government/publications/environment-agency-2020-data-on-regulated-businesses-in-england\)](https://government/publications/environment-agency-2020-data-on-regulated-businesses-in-england) published by the Environment Agency.

9.3 Methodology

These statistics are based on the returns made to the Fly-tipping Module in the [WasteDataFlow \(https://www.wastedataflow.org/\)](https://www.wastedataflow.org/) database by local authorities in England from April 2019 to March 2020. The Fly-tipping Module is the national system used since 2015 to record the incidents and cost of clearing and enforcing against illegally deposited waste by local authorities and the Environment Agency. [Detailed guidance \(https://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/GuidanceNotes/Fly-tipping/GN64WDF_Fly-tipping_module_v1.0o.pdf\)](https://www.wastedataflow.org/documents/GuidanceNotes/Fly-tipping/GN64WDF_Fly-tipping_module_v1.0o.pdf) is available on the use of WasteDataFlow. Private landowners are not required to report fly-tips on their land, although some choose to do so voluntarily.

It should be noted that the private land data included in this notice do not reflect the full scale of fly-tipping on private land, as most cases go unreported.

The reporting system has been modified to allow more detailed information capture on the individual types of fixed penalty notices issued by local authorities. This has included fixed penalty notices specifically for small scale fly-tipping which were introduced in May 2016 and more recently fixed penalty notices for breaches of householder duty of care which came into force in January 2019.

Local authorities gather their data from a number of sources and departments. Incidents are reported by the public through call centres or online, operatives on the ground collecting and recording, Enforcement Officers, contractors and management companies. Many authorities await verification from investigations before recording public reports as fly-tips.

Data are requested in respect of incidents cleared or investigated by local authorities and, separately, the enforcement actions taken against fly-tippers. These can often be collected and reported by separate teams. Therefore, data can be entered onto the system by one or more persons within an authority. This may lead to some discrepancies and a level of uncertainty. Data verification and quality assurance is carried out by WasteDataFlow personnel and Detra. This is done by a quarterly check of specific aspects of the data to identify significant anomalies which would be queried with authorities.

Until 2017/18, estimate costs for the majority of clearance and enforcement categories were calculated based on typical unit costs for dealing with the different types of incidents/actions. Costs were provided by a small selection of local authorities between 2003 and 2006 when the Flycapture database was being set up. These were used to generate standard unit costs for the clearance and enforcement categories, which were then multiplied up by the numbers of incidents and enforcement actions respectively, in order to generate total cost estimates. The standard unit costs used are detailed in the accompanying notes to the published datasets.

In August 2015 Detra undertook an exercise to update the cost basis by surveying 100 local authorities that had previously indicated a willingness to participate. Unfortunately, both the quantity and quality of response data was insufficient to provide robust factors as replacements. During 2017, Detra carried out some preliminary investigations to source updated costs, but concluded that more targeted and detailed work is required to properly understand the complexities surrounding costs to local authorities. As the standard unit costs are now more than 10 years out of date, the decision has been taken to cease using these from the 2017/18 publication onwards. For the time being only costs for clearance categories 'tipper lorry load' and 'significant/multiloads', and enforcement categories 'prosecutions' and 'injunctions' (which are reported directly by local authorities) will continue to be published. Detra is currently considering the feasibility of updating the standard unit costs via research or alternative methodology, subject to resource and other priorities.

9.4 Detailed breakdowns

A breakdown of data for each local authority is available on the [Defra website \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](https://gov.uk/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england). In assessing the figures local authorities should not be ranked or classified as 'good' or 'poor' performers based purely on numbers of fly-tips. Direct comparison between local authorities is not appropriate, as there can be some differences in approach where there is a level of discretion in using the guidance on reporting. The situation is complex and can be influenced by population density, housing stock, demographics, commuter routes, the rigour with which local authorities identify incidents or encourage the public to report incidents, training of street crews, and increased use of more sophisticated methods for capturing and reporting incidents. Those reporting higher incident numbers are often those being more pro-active and rigorous in identifying incidents. Large authorities may have large enforcement teams using modern, sophisticated methods (e.g. covert surveillance, SmartWater etc.) to catch professional fly-tippers. Trends over time for a particular local authority may be a fairer comparison and a time series of total incidents for each local authority is available for download. There can be relatively high variation between years and between local authorities.

As part of enquiries made during the quality assurance process, several authorities reported that the increase in the number of incidents reported compared to previous years was a result of the introduction of new technologies; such as on-line reporting and electronic applications, as well as increased training for staff and a more pro-active approach to removing fly-tipping. These authorities have explained this as a factor in the increase in the number of incidents reported.

From 2019/20, incidents per 1,000 people for each local authority have been included in the published [dataset \(/government/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england\)](https://gov.uk/statistical-data-sets/env24-fly-tipping-incidents-and-actions-taken-in-england)

9.5 Reporting basis

Under Section 71(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 local authorities are required to report information on fly-tipping incidents and actions taken through WasteDataFlow. Details of all fly-tipping incidents, reports, and actions should be reported via WasteDataFlow, including customer reported and those reported by, and pro-actively cleared by staff and contractors.

We had been aware of a few local authorities who were not reporting all incidents or who had changed their basis of reporting.

For the 2019/20 reporting year, Defra undertook a check with all local authorities around the basis of reporting in order to improve transparency in the reported data. An additional question was added to WasteDataFlow to capture the reporting basis for each local authority. The question included was as follows:

The data entries in the Fly-tipping module is a record of fly-tipping offences under s33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. We want you to record information for all relevant incidents and actions covering both public reported and those pro-actively cleared by your own and contractors crews. Please select the description that best describes the coverage of your reporting of Fly-tipping incidents and actions:

1. All incidents i.e. customer/public reported and those reported by, and pro-actively cleared by, your own and contractor crews.
2. Customer/public reported only.
3. Staff/contractor and pro-actively cleared only.

This confirmed that the majority (286; 90%) of all local authorities, in 2019/20, were reporting all incidents; 29 (9%) were providing figures based on customer reported fly-tips only, 1 was providing figures based just on those incidents reported by staff and 1 local authority had changed their basis of reporting during 2019/20.

In previous years, estimates were made for 'all incidents' for a small number of local authorities where it was known that the local authorities reported figures were not based on 'all incidents'. These estimated figures were included in the national incident totals but not in the local authority level dataset.

For 2019/20 onwards, for those local authorities that are not reporting 'all incidents', no estimates have been made for 'all incidents'. This was due to the number of local authorities concerned and lack of data to make reliable estimates for 'all incidents'. This means that the national totals for 2019/20 onwards are not comparable to national totals from earlier years. In order to have comparable data for 2019/20 and 2018/19 we have removed the previous adjustments made to the 2018/19 national figures. These adjustments were made to those few local authorities that were known not to be reporting all incidents, but where the data was available to make the adjustments.

For the revised 2018/19 and the 2019/20 national totals onwards, these only include estimates for non-response and missing data.

The questions on reporting basis have been retained in WasteDataFlow to enable Defra to continue to monitor the basis of reporting. In 2020/21, 279 (89%) of local authorities were reporting all incidents; 30 (10%) were providing figures based on customer reported fly-tips only, 3 were providing figures based just on those incidents reported by staff and 2 local authority had changed their basis of reporting during 2020/21.

We will continue to encourage local authorities to make all reasonable efforts to report all incidents in future years.

Data on enforcement and prosecution actions is not affected by the methodological change and the time series is presented in this notice.

9.6 Non-response and estimation

In 2020/21, all 314 local authorities provided data on fly-tipping incidents and actions. In some earlier years this was not the case and estimates were made for missing returns.

For 2020/21, three of the 314 local authorities did not submit data on clearance costs for 'tipper lorry load' and/or 'significant multi-load' incidents for some or all quarters. These were estimated by Detra based on previous quarters' data where the figures were consistent or using average 2020/21 unit costs from the known returns or otherwise using an average of previous years' data for these LAs. These three local authorities were Bristol, Folkestone and Hythe and Isle of Wight.

Estimates for clearance, enforcement costs and non-response are included in the national totals but are not shown in the local-authority dataset.

Due to higher levels of estimation made from the 2015/16 data, some caution is needed in the interpretation of year-on-year changes.

9.7 Feedback

We welcome feedback on the data from all users including how and why the data is used. This helps us to understand the value of the statistics to external users. Please see our contact details section of this notice.

9.8 Revisions Policy

Detra will provide information about any revisions made to published information in this statistics release and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for various reasons, including when data from third parties is unavailable or revised data has been input to the Fly-tipping Module of WasteDataFlow.

Prior to the release of this publication, during quality assurance of the 2020/21 data a number of data errors were found in the 2019/20 data. Revisions have been made to 2019/20 incidents data for Redcar and Cleveland and actions data for Hounslow and Swale. The 2019/20 reporting basis has also been updated to 'all incidents' for the following local authorities: Basingstoke and Deane, Cannock Chase, Canterbury, Cotswold, Hastings, Mole Valley, Tamworth, Thanet and West Oxfordshire.

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