



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Tackling Illegal Waste Operatives

Leeds City Council – Fly-tipping Intervention Grant

Leeds City Council targeted illegal waste operatives by installing **dashcams** to vehicles and using **waste trackers** for test purchases. The council found that they had **full adherence** from waste carriers to follow-up requests for evidence of paperwork and carried out one test purchase with a neighbouring council **strengthening their partnership work** within the borough.

The Fly-tipping Issue

Leeds council found that professional fly-tippers (operating via social media and word-of-mouth) will dump waste that is usually collected in the inner-city areas into rural/suburban areas across Leeds. The fly-tipping includes black bags of general waste, construction rubble, garden waste and illegal cannabis grows. The size varies and the council are aware that predominately transit vans are fly-tipping this waste and target the same areas on a regular basis. The vehicles are common within the hotspot areas and are unlikely to be challenged by the public.

The Intervention

The council introduced interventions that targeted suspected fly-tippers who pose as waste carriers that normally operate within urban inner-city areas. The council wanted to create a climate of risk for the professional fly-tippers, to change behaviour and in turn prevent fly-tipping from occurring.

Dashboard Cameras (Dashcams)

The council purchased 6 dashcams that were installed onto the Serious Environmental Crime Team's vehicles to capture footage/evidence. The footage will be used when waste carriers are identified but the council are not in a position to be able to stop the vehicle and check paperwork. The council have an information sharing agreement with the DVLA that enables this. Evidence obtained on dashcam can be used to issue notices under Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 34(5) and ask them to produce transfer notes, and under Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 s5 for a waste carrier licence, the

waste carriers have 14 days to respond. If the waste carrier fails to comply the council would issue a £300 fixed penalty notice (FPN) for each offence, if the FPN is not paid within 14 days the council would move to a prosecution.

The dashcams were easy to install and the footage can be accessed via a mobile app by the Serious Environmental Crime Team. The footage produced is of good quality even in poorer weather conditions or limited light in the late evening.



Trackers

The council purchased 14 trackers due to a neighbouring authority promoting this intervention as best practice. The idea was to carry out 'test purchases' of a waste removal service. This in turn should create a climate of fear amongst professional fly-tippers with an increased potential to be caught. The trackers are easy to set up and activate SIM cards. The tracking app is also easy to navigate.

The council would track the waste from moment of collection to disposal. If the waste has been illegally disposed (fly-tipped) the council will retrieve the tracker from the waste, if the waste has been legally disposed the council will try and retrieve the tracker before the waste is processed. If the waste has been fly-tipped the council would start further investigations leading to a prosecution as per normal enforcement procedure; the waste tracking data would provide additional robust evidence.

This intervention comes with financial constraints as the council will need to provide funding to enable this intervention to work. The council are finding it difficult to justify paying £200 on test purchases that cannot be claimed back if the fly-tipper is found guilty.

The council are exploring further shared operations with neighbouring authorities to share the costs.



The Result

Trackers:

The council collaborated with neighbouring authority (Wakefield Borough Council) to deploy one tracker. The suspected fly-tipper was fly-tipping across local authority boundaries. The waste was picked up and deposited at a Wakefield household waste recycling centre as non-commercial waste, but unfortunately at the time Wakefield were unable to take this further.

Due to a freeze on non-essential spending, the council have decided that this type of intervention is to be used when they have a high likelihood of a fly-tipping perpetrator. The council have implemented a focus in their day-to-day operational work to assess and identify suitable high priority fly-tipping targets for waste trackers to be utilised.

Dashcams:

So far, the council have achieved full adherence (4 vehicles) from waste carriers to follow-up requests for evidence of waste carrier licence and waste transfer paperwork. The council have also identified other vehicles but recognised they were part of a recently launched Leeds Accredited Waste Carrier Scheme (LAWCS) separate to the grant funding where background checks have already taken place and therefore no further action was needed.

Other Relevant Data

Enforcement: Due to no offenders being caught the council have not carried out any enforcement actions as a result of these interventions. The evidence from the tracker, if the waste had been fly-tipped, would provide additional robust evidence for prosecution.

Feedback

What went well?

From the legal and responsible waste carriers feedback has been positive and they are satisfied the council are taking action against rouge traders, others think the council should be doing more to combat this. The council have also received complaints from suspected rouge waste carriers that the council are interfering in their work. The council hope to see the illegal market for fly-tippers squeezed resulting in a reduction in fly-tipping.

What key information would you pass on so others can deliver this project?

The council have a strong relationship with other West Yorkshire local authorities' enforcement teams and share intelligence and investigations; the council realised through these connections that they had a mutual fly-tipper working across boundaries.

Anecdotal information suggests that when the council have previously taken part in stop and search multi operations (primarily with the Police), waste carriers know each other and share information on WhatsApp groups, usually warning each other if enforcement operations are active within the area. The council had information to believe that certain waste carriers were actively avoiding council branded vehicles.

Equipment Inventory

Item	Supplier	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Value
Dashcam (64gb SD)	Nextbase	930.00	6	£5,580
Micro Magnetic Trackers	Trackershop	97.00	14	£1,358

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Defra's Fly-Tipping Intervention Grant: The Fly-tipping Intervention Grant supported projects trialling approaches and interventions to tackle fly-tipping. Administered by Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on behalf of Defra, this grant provided capital funding for projects at known fly-tipping hot-spots that showed the potential for improving infrastructure, raising awareness, and supporting enforcement activity.