



# SMOKING LITTER CARU CYMRU GUIDANCE

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cadwch keep  
gymru'n wales  
daclus tidy

# Caru Cymru guidance: smoking litter

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\*This guide is designed to accompany the materials and messages designed through the Caru Cymru project.

\*Key audiences for this document include local authorities, Town and Community Councils, National Park Authorities, Natural Resources Wales and other landowners as well as other agencies interested in developing policies to promote the responsible disposal of smoking-related litter.

\* More information can be found on Keep Wales Tidy's [smoking-related litter paper](#) (2018).

## The Caru Cymru approach

Caru Cymru is a collaboration between all 22 local authorities in Wales and Cardiff University to reach our shared vision of a beautiful Wales, cared for and enjoyed by all. Building on our many years of experience working in communities and schools and our expertise in behaviour change, Keep Wales Tidy has developed a unique approach to tackling local environmental quality issues at the local, regional and national level. Locally, we are working with partners to develop solutions in their areas, engaging with volunteer groups, schools and businesses to foster pride and ownership of the spaces on their doorstep. Nationally, we are hoping to address some of the barriers to collaboration on the most persistent issues through the development of standardised messaging and interventions, based on positive and informative information, from litter to fly-tipping to plastic reduction. We aim to support our partners in creating an enabling environment across Wales to encourage people nationwide to 'do the right thing'.

We have trialled a local project which can work for all areas in Wales. This guidance is designed to support the project materials and provide advice to authorities to achieve a more cohesive approach to smoking-related litter information and infrastructure so that it is more accessible and transparent for public dissemination.

## Why does smoking litter matter?

Cigarette ends are the most common type of item littered by both the Welsh public (25%) and specifically by Welsh litterers (50%).<sup>1</sup> Smoking-related litter consists primarily of cigarette ends, but includes all items relating to smoking. It has been the most common type of litter present on the streets of Wales since our Keep Wales Tidy began its street cleanliness surveys in 2007-08. Despite gradually decreasing since 2009-10, it was present on an average of 79.6% of streets across Wales in 2018-19.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, cigarette ends *'have a very high likelihood of being littered rather than placed in a bin.'*<sup>3</sup> By count, cigarette ends account for 66.3% of litter in England.<sup>4</sup> Cigarette ends are often dropped on to our beaches and directly down drains. In fact, research shows that 52% of those who smoke every day think it is acceptable to dispose of cigarette ends down the drain.<sup>5</sup> Even cigarette ends dropped on the street are often transported by wind or water to our drains and from here they are carried by rivers to the coast. In 2019, cigarette ends were the second most common type of litter found on our beaches during the Marine Conservation Society's Great British Beach Clean, at 42.6 stubs per 100m.<sup>6</sup>

Despite their small size and the fact that 11% of smokers don't consider cigarette ends to be litter,<sup>7</sup> by law cigarette ends are litter. In fact, their size makes them time consuming and costly to clean.<sup>8</sup> Smoking-related litter is particularly problematic when it gets caught in between paving stones or trapped in tree grates as this

makes them difficult or impossible to remove by using normal cleaning techniques. It is estimated that cleaning up smoking-related litter in Wales costs £18.7 million per year (2012 figure).<sup>9</sup>

Smoking-related litter is a blight to our communities. Research shows that the people of Wales think that smoking-related litter has a negative impact on the areas in which it occurs.<sup>10</sup> Not only does the presence of litter (including smoking-related litter) indicate that littering is both a normal and an accepted behaviour,<sup>11</sup> but it also sends a signal that nobody cares. It therefore tends to attract more litter and can even lead to more serious crime as illustrated by the 'Broken Windows Theory'.<sup>12</sup>

Cigarette ends are made of cellulose acetate, which means not only that they can remain in the environment for up to 15 years<sup>13</sup> but also that they turn into microplastic pollution<sup>14</sup>. They contain toxins which pollute our waters, and can be mistaken by wildlife for food, which can be deadly. Cigarette ends also pose a health and safety risk because they can cause fires if not properly extinguished.

#### Key points

1 Smoking-related litter is the most common type of item littered in Wales and the most common type of litter found on our streets.

2 Despite being small, by law cigarette ends are litter and their size means that they are easily transported to our waterways and coast, where they stay for a long time.

3 Littered cigarette ends are toxic and pose a risk to our environment, wildlife as well as to human health and can cause fires if not properly extinguished.

## Infrastructure

As cigarette ends are dirty, there is a desire to dispose of them quickly and the lack of bins is often given as an excuse for littering. A litter project run by Hubbub UK showed that closeness of a bin was the biggest motivator for binning litter.<sup>15</sup> Bins are therefore a critical element of creating an enabling environment for smokers to do the right thing. Many local authorities and businesses provide general and smoking-related litter bins to help deal with this issue. However, a local authority survey into 'binrastructure' by the Association for Public Service Excellence showed that of 46 UK wide responses, less than a quarter (24%) of

respondents had a policy in place relating to bin types and location, with many installing bins based on past need or as a result of requests from elected members or members of the public.<sup>16</sup>

When planning to use infrastructure to tackle smoking-related litter, it is best to focus on areas which have a high footfall (such as town centres and transport hubs) or places where smokers congregate (like outside offices, at bus stops and outdoor seating areas). The 2007 ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces forced smokers to gather outside, so the problem tends to be worse outside pubs, restaurants, cafes and offices. As a result, more than 130 cigarette bins were purchased for installation throughout Powys in 2010.<sup>17</sup> A House of Commons report about litter recommended that all public buildings install infrastructure for cigarette ends in areas where staff congregate to smoke.<sup>18</sup> This is something that local authorities can support by ensuring highways requirements are met and by providing and/or installing the bins. From 1 March 2021, legislation will be in place to extend these bans to school grounds, hospital grounds, public playgrounds and outdoor children's care settings.<sup>19</sup> This is likely to have a similar impact on smoking-related litter outside these areas, meaning that more infrastructure will be needed in these locations. What's more, in June 2020, the Health Minister indicated that he wanted to extend the ban further to include city and town centres as well as the outdoor areas of cafes and restaurants,<sup>20</sup> which would change the situation again in future.

However, legislation is not the only factor which is having a big impact on smoking habits. In July 2020, it was reported that around 33,000 people in Wales had stopped smoking since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, and 41% of those responding to the UK-wide survey said that their decision to quit was as a result of Coronavirus.<sup>21</sup> Factors driving smoking behaviour should be used to inform the actions we take to tackle smoking-related litter, whilst recognising that the drivers for littering smoking and the drivers for smoking cessation are vastly different.

In England, cigarette ends make up only 7% of binned waste by count - in fact *'In sites where there were litter bins present, there were 26 cigarette stubs discarded on average, compared to 12 where no bins were present. This effect may be attributable to people congregating around bins to smoke, putting cigarettes out on litter bins, or leaving cigarette butts on top of bins to be subsequently blown off.'*<sup>22</sup> This highlights the importance of bin design. Some smokers are reluctant to dispose of their cigarette ends in a litter bin in case this resulted in a fire. Therefore, it is important that all new litter bins include a metal stubbing plate.

However, these are not the only consideration in bin design. Like most standard litter bins, cigarette bins tend to blend into their surroundings and are often concealed. Increasing bin visibility increases their use,<sup>23</sup> so it would be better for them to be highlighted, with the consistent use of colour as well as text.

Innovative cigarette bins, such as [ballot bins](#) have been designed in recent years. These display a question and two answers, with smokers voting by disposing of their cigarette ends in the slot below their chosen answer.

Questions can be chosen to target certain demographics and can be easily changed. Another example is the [micro bin](#). Not only do these have aluminium liners and stubbing plates that are made primarily of repurposed materials, but they are easy to install and cost less than £10 each. Both bin cleanliness and the level of rubbish in a bin has shown to impact the number of cigarette ends littered.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, cleaning, maintaining and emptying litter and cigarette bins is also essential as it makes them appealing to use and ensures that the contents don't end up as litter in the surrounding area.

Despite their importance, cigarette bins are only part of the solution. They are not appropriate for all locations and it's neither practical nor realistic to provide them everywhere. In the Hubbub UK litter project, half of those seen smoking littered their cigarettes and 71% of litterers were within 5m of a bin.<sup>25</sup> Research in England shows that at sites where bins were present, by count, just 13% of cigarette ends were binned compared with 87% which were littered (while for other smoking-related litter the figures were 36% littered and 64% binned).<sup>26</sup> Pocket ashtrays such as stubbies, ashcans and tins have been designed to provide a portable solution for smokers to dispose of their cigarette ends responsibly wherever they are.

Significantly, bins which rely on a 'novelty' factor such as the ballot bins mentioned above require regular input in order to maintain their novelty and local authorities should consider refreshing these bins at least every two weeks. If left, not only does the novelty value wear off but can exacerbate littering and neglect (by, for example, keeping an obviously out of date message up for too long).

**KEEP WALES TIDY - SMOKING-RELATED LITTER PROJECT 2021**

This project aimed to test a combination of bininfrastructure and messaging to encourage smokers to dispose of their cigarette ends responsibly. The trial was tested across three high streets in Blaenau Gwent - a local authority which has a high rate of smokers and a high prevalence of smoking-related litter. As well as trialling a different message in each town, it also involved the introduction of different infrastructure at different times. The project was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions and engagement were also subsequently affected.

<b>Bininfrastructure (used in every town)</b>	<b>Bilingual messages on posters</b>
Voting bins (2 for each high street)*	Abertillery - Cigarette butts are small but they're still
Micro bins (up to 20 for each high street)	litter
Pocket ashtrays	Ebbw Vale - Ashtrays for butts, drains for water
	Tredegar - Be proud of where you live

\* Each high street had one bin with the question 'Pineapple on pizza?' (Yes/No) and the other with the question 'Travel back in time or forward?' (Back/Forward).

The project ran between mid-May and early July 2021. Partnership working with the local authority and high street businesses was key to the project.

### Key deliverables

- A public survey helped inform the project.
- A suite of bespoke bright orange bilingual artwork was designed incorporating messaging for the project materials.
- Bininfrastructure was chosen based on key behavioural principles:
  - 6 voting bins were installed into which a total of 141g of cigarette ends were deposited.
  - 50 micro bins were installed.
  - 1,400 pocket ashtrays were distributed to businesses to be passed on to smokers free of charge.
- Dedicated hashtags #TidyButts and #BonionTaclus generated more than 11,000 impressions from Keep Wales Tidy social media channels.
- Monitoring and partner feedback allowed us to evaluate the project's success.

### Key outcomes

- Businesses are concerned about smoking litter and are willing to be part of the solution.
- Feedback from smokers has provided useful information on their behaviours and beliefs.
- Smokers engaged with some bininfrastructure (both voting and micro bins), with some bins seeing increased use over time.
- Some businesses reported that the pocket ashtrays had been very popular.
- More than three quarters of businesses thought that the project had raised awareness of smoking litter, while half thought that it had made a direct impact on the cleanliness of the high street.

### Key recommendations (these are explained fully in the challenges and lessons learned section)

- Some project elements were too complex and time consuming so there is room to simplify the project design, the role of businesses and monitoring requirements.
- Thorough weekly cleansing (targeting cigarette ends) is essential to allow the impact of the project to be properly evaluated.
- The installation of bins should concentrate on areas where people congregate (while keeping in mind the possibility of vandalism). Micro bins should not be placed too high. Stronger and sturdier smoking litter bins could also be trialed.

- Increased engagement with the public and businesses would further benefit the project (this was limited due to the pandemic).
- Behaviour change doesn't happen overnight, so a future project could involve less but longer-term monitoring to see whether the desired behaviour changes over time.
- There is scope for further research to identify:
  - The effectiveness of the questions on the voting bins - and how often they need to be changed to retain their novelty value.
  - Feedback from smokers on each intervention and the messaging.

### Key points

1 As cigarette ends are dirty, there is a desire to dispose of them quickly and bins are an important part of the solution, particularly in areas of high footfall and places where smokers congregate.

2 Cigarette bins should include a stubbing plate and should be made visible with a consistent use of colour and text. Novelty bins need regular updating and consistent updating or else may exacerbate the issue.

3 Pocket ashtrays provide a portable solution for smokers to dispose of their cigarette ends responsibly, even when there isn't a bin nearby.

## Interventions

While litter bins (with provisions for cigarette ends) and smoking-related litter bins are perhaps the most widely used methods for tackling smoking-related litter, other interventions have also been used to tackle litter and other enviro-crimes.

Nudge interventions - which influence people through positive reinforcement - have successfully been used to encourage people to do the right thing. This work (led by Pelle G. Hansen) began in Denmark in 2011, when his students:<sup>27</sup>

1. Distributed free caramels to pedestrians in the streets of Copenhagen and then counted the wrappers they could find littering the streets and placed in litter bins or bicycle baskets
2. Placed green footprints on the ground leading to the litter bins
3. Distributed more free caramels, repeated the counting exercise and found that the footprints had resulted in a 46% decrease in littering (it is believed that social norms played a part on this result)



Keep Wales Tidy has used this idea to nudge dog walkers to bin bagged dog fouling or take it home by using signage and pink pawprints to bins. This led to a 53% reduction in dog fouling across 3 hotspot areas.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Dogs Trust used signage, colour coded dog walking route markers and bin stickers to tackle the issue, which led to decreases of 38% and 40% in dog fouling respectively over two years.<sup>29</sup> These ideas could be amended to tackle smoking-related litter, by nudging people to bins nearby as has been trialled successfully by Keep Britain Tidy (see box below) or using bin stickers to increase their visibility.

#### KEEP BRITAIN TIDY - NUDGING SMOKERS TO BIN THEIR CIGARETTE ENDS

In 2015, Keep Britain Tidy undertook a project to encourage people to dispose of their cigarette ends responsibly which was based on a trial by iNudgeyou to prevent second-hand smoking. Two designated smoking zones were created at areas where smokers congregate in London's Euston Station. These were clearly marked out with a yellow border on the floor and contained bright yellow cigarette bins. Smokers were nudged to these areas (rather than being told where not to smoke) with signage containing a smoking symbol along with a directional arrow and/or the distance to the nearest smoking zone. These interventions led to an overall reduction of 34% in littering behaviour, a trend which appeared to continue with longer term monitoring. *Moreover, 'less than 8% of smokers littered their butts inside the smoking zones, compared to 71% who littered them outside of the smoking zones. This represents a reduction of 89% when smokers are inside the zones.'*<sup>30</sup>

More information: [https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/KBT\\_How-can-we-change-smokers-littering-behaviour\\_2015.pdf](https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/sites/default/files/KBT_How-can-we-change-smokers-littering-behaviour_2015.pdf)

Since smokers often congregate outside pubs, restaurants, cafes and offices, it is also important to engage with businesses. In 2009, Anglesey County Council ran a smoking-related litter campaign which included distributing posters, beer mats and information packs to pub landlords.<sup>31</sup>

Organisations including Marine Conservation Society and Surfers Against Sewage have run 'No butts on the beach' campaigns to raise awareness of the problem. The impacts of the irresponsible disposal of cigarette ends down drains and the fact that all drains lead to the sea are among the campaign messages created by Zero Waste Scotland in a bid to tackle the problem of cigarette litter.<sup>32</sup> These campaigns play an important educational role.

Any interventions should be undertaken in partnership to maximise their impact. In addition, campaigns relating to smoking-related litter could be tied in with days and campaigns in the calendar relating to smoking cessation, as less people smoking should have the added environmental benefit of less smoking-related litter. Already-established points during the year include No Smoking Day (which occurs on the second Wednesday

in March each year)<sup>33</sup> and Stoptober (the annual month-long campaign),<sup>34</sup> both of which offer support to stop smoking.

### Key points

1 Nudge interventions - which influence people through positive reinforcement - have successfully been used to encourage people to responsibly dispose of their cigarette ends.

2 Awareness raising campaigns informing smokers of the impacts of smoking-related litter and the responsible disposal of cigarette ends play an important educational role.

3 Interventions should engage businesses, be undertaken in partnership and could also be tied to occasions which encourage and supporting smokers to quit the habit.

## Messaging

It seems that littering cigarette ends is seen to be more socially acceptable than littering other items of litter because of their small size and the perception that they are biodegradable.<sup>35</sup> With smoking-related litter being littered at such a high rate and being more resistant to change than other litter types,<sup>36</sup> messages which highlight the issue of smoking-related litter, its impacts and consequences are invaluable to changing behaviour. As well as using messaging on bins and pocket ashtrays - which has largely been a missed opportunity in terms of awareness and engagement until now - they can also form part of wider project or campaign materials.

The demographics most likely to smoke are the 25-34 age group and smoking prevalence is higher in deprived areas.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, messaging should target these audiences. It is also important to recognise that smoking is often a symptom of negative socioeconomic factors and language and approaches should be considered accordingly.

Research undertaken by Keep Wales Tidy highlighted several potential messages relating to cigarette ends which could be used to try to change behaviour:<sup>38</sup>

- Despite their small size, they are litter
- Cigarette filters are made of plastic meaning that they are not biodegradable and stay in the environment for many years
- Littering them has serious consequences for health, wildlife and the environment
- Drains are not disposal facilities

- There are alternatives to stubbing out cigarettes on the ground and as long as they are properly extinguished, they can be safely disposed of in litter bins
- Like other litter, people can and do get fined for littering them

These could be used to try to educate smokers to allow them to make more informed decisions on the actions they take.

Working in partnership can help gain wider reach. Therefore, organisations such as local authorities, businesses and the third sector should work together where possible to maximise the effectiveness of their work.

### Key points

1 Using messaging relating to cigarette litter - especially on smoking-related litter infrastructure - has largely been underutilised until now.

2 Messaging should target demographics most likely to smoke - the 25-34 age group and deprived areas.

3 Possible messaging includes those which raise awareness of the problem, its impacts and consequences as well as responsible disposal methods.

## Innovation

While prevention through behaviour change is the most sustainable means of addressing smoking-related litter, cleansing remains critical. Cleaning up cigarette ends stops them from being able to harm the environment and wildlife or pose a risk to human health and safety. In addition, as previously mentioned, litter tends to attract more litter - research shows that 14% of Welsh litterers agree with the statement *'If an area is run down I don't see a problem dropping litter'*.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, clean areas tend to be better cared for.

Products have been designed to ease street cleaning, including the collection of small items such as cigarette ends. For example, the Belgian Glutton Collect street vacuum cleaner has various nozzles to specifically help with cleaning smoking-related litter (including for difficult-to-reach areas like tree grates) and an automatic spray feature to prevent the risk of fires from lit cigarette ends.<sup>40</sup> However, investing in such specialist equipment requires an initial - often significant - capital cost. The development of such products also highlights the need to 'design-out' litter traps (such as gaps between paving and tree grates) to prevent problems from occurring in the first place. Keep Wales Tidy has produced guidance on 'Designing for a Clean, Safe and Tidy Environment'.<sup>41</sup>

### TERRACYCLE - CIGARETTE WASTE RECYCLING

Terracycle is an American recycling company which collects and repurposes materials which are typically hard to recycle. In 2015, the company launched a programme which allowed individuals, groups, workplaces and councils to collect, pack and then ship the smoking waste (extinguished cigarettes, ash, filters, rolling paper, loose tobacco pouches as well as outer plastic and inner foil packaging) to be recycled for free.<sup>42</sup> The organic material (tobacco and paper) which are composted, are separated from the plastic components, which are cleaned, melted and made into pellets before being mixed with other plastics and used to make a variety of plastic products.<sup>43</sup> Commenting on the scheme's launch, Tom Szaky, the company's Founder and CEO said: *'The Cigarette Waste Brigade has the potential to drastically reduce the amount of cigarette waste that is littered.'*<sup>44</sup>

More information: <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/cigarette-waste-recycling>

Hubbub UK have focused on bold, attractive and fun methods to engage smokers rather than using instructions telling them what to do. Their Butts Out campaign on Villiers Street, London, included giant cigarette ends to highlight that cigarette litter is *'no small problem'*.<sup>45</sup> Another of their campaigns featured a Fumo Musical Pole - *'An interactive smoker's pole that rewards the user with an audiovisual display, energetic tune and LED lights, when they dispose of their cigarette butts.'*<sup>46</sup> The pole can be seen in action here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eutUgxlqHRY>.

#### Key points

- 1 Cleaning up smoking-related litter is critical and specialist equipment can be used to make this easier, but it comes at a financial cost.
- 2 Cigarette waste recycling exists, whilst 'designing out' litter traps can prevent problems from occurring in the first place.
- 3 Bold and fun methods can be used to engage smokers and encourage them to do the right thing but the novelty of use can expire and would need to be maintained and / or replaced frequently.

## Community action

Most examples of action taken by the community to tackle litter - and often the initial work undertaken to improve areas - tends to be in the form of clean-ups. This usually includes all litter, not just smoking-related litter. Clean-up action is varied, with examples including:

- Individuals doing one-off [2-minute cleans](#) (including on beaches and streets) or regular cleaning as litter champions
- Community groups getting together, often monthly (but sometimes more regularly) to look after a certain piece of land or tackling any local hotspot area
- National clean-up campaigns, which sometimes focus on the coast (such as the [Great British Beach Clean](#))

Keep Wales Tidy plays a vital role in supporting this work in Wales, and supported more than 83,000 clean-ups and 1,005 litter champions to remove over 16,000 tonnes of litter from the environment between 2008 and 2018.<sup>47</sup> More recently, the charity has created a map of [community groups](#), which includes contact details to link budding volunteers to established groups. It has also set up [litter picking hubs](#) across the country, from which volunteers can borrow equipment. Keep Wales Tidy also offers free insurance cover for 12 months for new groups.<sup>48</sup>

In order to maximise the impact of clean-ups, Keep Scotland Beautiful has produced a [Litter Pick Plus Toolkit](#) which encourages volunteers to work in partnership with offenders, and has a [letter template](#) which can be used to get in touch with the relevant group or organisation (cigarette ends outside pubs is an example mentioned). Similarly, Keep Wales Tidy has produced a [School Litter Toolkit](#) which encourages schools to take action on cigarette litter by looking at the school grounds and the wider community, raising awareness of the problem and teaming up with local organisations to tackle the issue. The toolkit also contains examples of schools which have taken action.

### Key points

- 1 Community action tends to be in the form of clean-ups, which incorporates all types of litter, rather than smoking-related litter only.
- 2 Keep Wales Tidy plays a key role in supporting this vital voluntary action.
- 3 Volunteers and schools should aim to maximise the impact of their clean-ups by linking up with local organisations, particularly in hotspots of smoking-related litter.

## LITTER AND THE LAW

Littering is an offence under Section 87 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990.<sup>49</sup> Under Section 27 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, litter is defined to include products designed for smoking.<sup>50</sup>

Anybody caught littering can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. This provides a way of offering someone who has committed the offence an opportunity to avoid prosecution by the court, by paying a sum of money. The amount can be set at a local level, between £75 and £150, with a default value of £75, but local authorities can choose to offer discounts for early payment. Failing to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice can lead to prosecution, with a possible fine of up to £2,500. Some local authorities offer alternative options such as Community Service. In 2019, the Welsh Government issued [Guidance on the Use of Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Offences](#).

By law, local authorities and other landowners have a duty to keep land for which they are responsible, clear of litter and refuse, and in 2007 the Welsh Government issued guidance to help local authorities carry out their duties. Further powers to tackle litter have since been introduced with the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005,<sup>51</sup> while the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014<sup>52</sup> can also be used to tackle the problem. In addition, under the Licensing Act 2003, some businesses are required to obtain Premises Licences. One of the main objectives of the licencing is the prevention of public nuisance, which includes litter.<sup>53</sup> This therefore provides local authorities with another means of tackling smoking-related litter and having receptacles for the responsible disposal of smoking-related litter (as well as other litter) should be a requirement as part of the license agreement.

## Enforcement

Research from 2010 shows a high (77%) awareness of fines among Welsh litterers but that the majority (79%) thought it was unlikely they'd get caught and punished for littering.<sup>54</sup> To be effective, enforcement should be widespread and applied consistently across Wales, otherwise it is likely to move problems to other areas. As more local authorities have turned to private companies to boost their enforcement efforts for environmental crimes, the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for littering in Wales – and specifically for littering smoking-related litter – increased significantly until 2016-17.<sup>55</sup> While these figures have since decreased and vary significantly from place to place, Welsh Government data shows that almost 16,000 people were issued

with Fixed Penalty Notices for smoking-related littering during 2016-17, which made up more than half all Fixed Penalty Notices for littering that year.<sup>56</sup>

One of the reasons for this may be that smokers are seen as an 'easy target' and there have been anecdotal reports of smokers being 'followed by private enforcement staff in order to catch them offending and increase their numbers. As there is a correlation between smoking and negative socioeconomic factors, care should be taken not to be seen as 'targeting the poor', not least because this demographic is the least likely to be able to pay a fine and could lead to higher administrative costs in the long run.

Whilst education, engagement and infrastructure should be the primary actions to tackle smoking litter, enforcement can be an important tool in the fight against litter and is popular amongst smokers<sup>57</sup> and the general public.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately however, enforcement is expensive and has become increasingly difficult as local authorities' budgets are reduced.

Messaging relating to enforcement should only be used if it can be backed up with visible enforcement (i.e.; that it presents a real threat of getting caught) and that it is carried out fairly, effectively and backed up by fully resourced 'back office' systems.

If the above cannot be done, the power of the deterrent will be lost, meaning that the message will be ineffective in prompting responsible behaviour. Where this is the case, creating 'smoking zones' containing cigarette bins (as was trialled by Keep Britain Tidy) could be more effective and would likely lead to a more positive public reception.

#### Key points

1 Smokers can be seen as an easy target but this can be very negatively perceived due to the correlation with smoking and negative socio-economic factors

2 Enforcement only works if there is a real threat of being caught

## Monitoring and evaluation

To understand how things are going, it is advised that the area is cleansed and monitored before, during and after any intervention is put in place. The monitoring area(s) should be agreed at the outset. The size of the area to be monitored will depend on the type of area. For example, for a town centre location, it could be a 50m length of high street, while for a rural village, it might be the pavement area outside a pub. The monitoring

area should extend further than the actual intervention (if applicable) so that it can show whether or not the problem has simply moved.

Initially, the area should be cleansed. The following week, smoking related litter should be monitored and recorded, allowing for a week's worth of litter to be recorded. These elements should be undertaken separately but on the same day and time each week.

If possible, areas which do not have any interventions should also be monitored (following the same timetable) to be used as a control for comparison purposes. These areas should be as similar as possible to the intervention areas in terms of size and footfall. Monitoring a control area at the same time, without interventions, will allow for any external influences to be accounted for such as weather or time of year. Where possible, the autumn should be avoided for smoking-related litter projects as leaf fall hides the litter making monitoring difficult.

A minimum of two weeks of baseline monitoring should be undertaken followed by three weeks of monitoring once the intervention(s) are in place. However, the longer monitoring continues for, the better as this will help establish longer term impacts. If the intervention is successful, it may not be necessary or desirable to remove the intervention. Where this is the case, it would be recommended to replicate and/or scale up the project with further monitoring if required.

As individual cigarettes are small in size, grading the amount of smoking-related litter present is unlikely to show whether or not a difference has been made by the intervention(s). Therefore, it is suggested that counts of smoking-related litter are undertaken, split into the following two categories:

- Cigarette ends
- Any other smoking-related litter

While counting the quantities of these items take time, only by undertaking detailed counts can the impact of interventions truly be evaluated. This means that counting is the preferred monitoring technique for smoking-related litter. Counts should only include litter which can be removed using standard cleaning techniques, and therefore should not include for example cigarette ends which are stuck tightly between paving stones or trapped beneath tree grates. An alternative monitoring method would be weighing the smoking-related litter cleansed, but again the small size of cigarette ends means that this would only work if the smoking-related litter was separated from other litter types. This may not be possible with the cleansing methods used locally and separating the smoking-related for weighing after cleansing takes place is unlikely to be a viable option.



Depending on the interventions being introduced, other quantitative monitoring may also be required e.g. weekly weighing of smoking-related litter collected in any new 'binrastructure', keeping a record of the number of pockets ashtrays distributed.

This should also be accompanied by feedback from any partners (collected through interviews for example), and where possible, from smokers too. If this includes perceptions of cleanliness, questionnaires should ideally take place before as well as after any interventions, to avoid smokers having to provide retrospective opinions which may not be as accurate. Perceptions are useful but should never be used in isolation as the information is so subjective (and therefore unreliable) without the quantitative data to back it up.

Although best not to use before the intervention date to avoid skewing baseline results, social media can help promote smoking-related litter projects and the use of a dedicated hashtag can be used to engage the audience. Monitoring social media activity is therefore another useful way of getting user feedback. Photographs will provide another layer of evidence, particularly to help visually compare the issue before and after the intervention has been put in place.

[Appendix 1](#) provides an example timetable for a smoking-related litter project, incorporating all the elements described above.

Other data sources such as litter complaints received by the local authority could also be used to get a fuller picture of the intervention's impacts. However, this information should be used with caution (and again never as a sole technique) as it is commonly the case that complaints stem from the most affluent and least affected areas and may well not be indicative of the scale or location of the problem.

All of these sources of data and information should be analysed in detail so that the intervention can be properly evaluated. Findings and lessons learned should be shared to allow an ongoing strategic approach to smoking-related litter to be developed across Wales over a long-term period.

### Key points

- 1 Cleansing and monitoring should take place at the same time each week and should ideally include a control area.
- 2 The most accurate way of monitoring a smoking-related litter intervention is by counting individual items of smoking-related litter, which can be complemented with other methods dependent on the intervention.
- 3 Other information should also be gathered to get a fuller picture, such as partner feedback, smoker questionnaires, social media analysis and photos.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Smoking-related litter intervention plan

Week, day and time	Stage of project	Activity in the intervention area(s)	Activity in the control area(s)	Additional activity	Other
1 Tuesday 10am	Stage 1 – Baseline (Before)	Cleansing only	Cleansing only	Baseline questionnaire to smokers	
2 Tuesday 10am	Stage 1 – Baseline (Before)	Monitoring followed by cleansing  <b>then install intervention</b>	Monitoring followed by cleansing		
3 Tuesday 10am	Stage 2 – Intervention (During)	Monitoring followed by cleansing	Monitoring followed by cleansing		
4 Tuesday 10am	Stage 2 – Intervention (During)	Monitoring followed by cleansing	Monitoring followed by cleansing		
5 Tuesday 10am	Stage 2 – Intervention (During)	Monitoring followed by cleansing	Monitoring followed by cleansing		
6 Tuesday 10am	Stage 3 – Post-intervention (After)	Monitoring followed by cleansing	Monitoring followed by cleansing		

Photos and throughout the 7-week period

Social media activity and monitoring from week 3 onwards

7 Tuesday 10am	Stage 3 – Post- intervention (After)	Monitoring only	Monitoring only	End of project questionnaire to smokers  Partner feedback
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