

Thousands of fly-tippers go unprosecuted in Northern England Borough



Site of fly-tipping in the borough of West Lancashire. Source: Lancashire County Council

Nearly 4,000 reports of fly-tipping were made to the West Lancashire Borough Council in northwestern England during 2024.

None of these reports led to the perpetrator being identified or prosecuted, according to figures released by the council in response to a [Freedom of Information \(FOI\) request](#) made by a 'Mr Guinness'.

The data released showed that from 1 January to 31 December 2024, 1,389 fly-tips were reported by residents in the rural borough.

A further 2,454 tip sites were logged and collected by community litter picking teams, bringing the total number of reported fly-tips to 3,843 in the borough that year.

The reported figures show that an average of 31 fly-tips were reported per 1,000 people in West Lancashire. This stands much higher than the national average of 19 reports per 1,000 people in England as reported by [Gov.UK](#).

Number of reported fly-tips per 1000 people

West Lancashire	31
UK Average	19

Reports of fly-tipping per person in West Lancashire are 60 per cent higher than the national average. Source: Elisabeth Montague

[Fly-tipping](#) is the illegal dumping of waste on land or in water usually done to avoid the cost of properly disposing rubbish, according to Gov.UK.

West Lancashire Borough Council treats fly tipping as a [“serious criminal offence that carries a fine of up to £50,000”](#) with offenders facing prison sentences, according to their website.

Fly-tippers are notoriously difficult to identify as they often leave little traceable evidence and often dump in rural areas with no surveillance like West Lancashire.

Prosecuting fly-tipping requires lengthy investigations which, if taken to court, often costs councils more than what is repaid, according to the [Local Government Association](#).



Rural areas are often the most blighted by fly-tipping because of a lack of surveillance. Source: LancsLive

Conservative Councillor for Whittlefield with Ightenhill in the adjacent Lancashire County Council, Don Whitaker, said fly-tipping in local boroughs is a “health hazard as well as being an eyesore.”

He explained that local residents are having to deal with the smell of “bags of garbage that are rotting away that in turn attract vermin.”

“If I were to be representative in that particular area I would be exceptionally frustrated”, he said.

Whitaker explained that educating residents on the consequences of fly-tipping combined with leafleting reduced offences in his constituency after “four years of continuous work”, with law being enforced if necessary.

“We’ve got equipment that we can put in place to actually catch people doing it which leads to prosecutions,” he said.

Whitaker suggested that West Lancashire Borough Council should use similar strategies to prevent fly-tipping reports from increasing even further.



Councillor Whitaker (left) clearing a site of fly-tipping with a local resident. Source: Don Whitaker

In response to fly-tipping going unprosecuted in the borough, frustrated residents have formed many community groups to tackle the issue themselves.

‘Burscough Litter Pickers’, founded in the village of Burscough in West Lancashire, reportedly collected 1,000 bags of litter from 2022 to 2023.

In an interview with Burscough News, member of the group George Clandon said fly-tipping is an “[ever growing problem](#)”.

Clandon directly called out fly-tippers by asking readers to “please love where you live and KEEP BURSCOUGH TIDY!”

West Lancashire Borough Council has been approached for comment.