

Press release: New steps to tackle littering announced

New steps will be taken to deal with litter louts and those few who mindlessly throw rubbish from their vehicles, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

Cleaning up our streets and countryside currently costs the taxpayer almost £800 million a year and so maximum on-the-spot fines for dropping litter will almost double from April next year – from the current limit of £80 to £150 – in order to deter and punish the anti-social minority who continue to drop rubbish.

In future councils will also be able to impose these fines on the owners of vehicles from which litter is thrown, even if it was discarded by someone else. The government is clear these fines should not be abused simply as a means of raising money, so guidance on how fines should be applied will be issued to councils.

Environment minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Littering blights our communities, spoils our countryside and taxpayers' money is wasted cleaning it up.

Throwing rubbish from a vehicle is just as unacceptable as dropping it in the street and we will tackle this antisocial behaviour by hitting litter louts in the pocket.

These new fines will make sure the perpetrators, not the local community, bear the cost of keeping our streets and roads clean.

Today's announcement means that:

- From April next year, the maximum on-the-spot fine local authorities can issue for dropping litter will nearly double, from £80 to £150. The minimum fine will increase from £50 to £65, while the default fine will increase from £75 to £100.
- For the first time, local authorities will also be able to apply these penalties for littering to vehicle owners if it can be proved litter was thrown from their car – even if it was discarded by somebody else.

The changes to fines for littering follow a public consultation as part of the launch of England's first ever Litter Strategy in April 2017. These new findings showed the vast majority of respondents were in favour of increasing on-the-spot fines.

More than 85% were in favour of increasing fixed penalties for littering, while local authorities agreed that new penalties to tackle littering from

cars would help to improve environmental quality in their area. The government is today confirming that it will proceed with these measures, with legislation introduced by the end of this year and the new fines in place by April next year, subject to parliamentary approval.

The government is clear however that councils must not abuse the power to impose fines. Councils should take into account local circumstances, like local ability to pay, when setting the level for these fines. Government guidance will be issued around the turn of the year to ensure the new powers are used in a fair and proportionate way by local authorities.

[Press release: Playground reinstated after ground collapse](#)

Pupils at an infant school in Derbyshire are 'back on the right lines' after the final touches have been made to their playground, which had been affected by historical coal mining.

On Friday 13 October 2017 new game markings were drawn onto the playground of Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School in Swadlincote, Derbyshire.



One of the children using the playground

Over 200 pupils at the school were left without a playground in May 2017 when a seemingly small dip on the surface of the tarmac turned into a small ground collapse.

The Coal Authority, which deals with the legacy of Britain's coal mining, confirmed that the hole was the result of past coal mining and quickly began repairs. The collapse was initially infilled with stone before drilling was undertaken to ascertain the extent of the problem in an area where coal was known to occur within a shallow coal seam or outcrop.

Drilling revealed the extent of the collapse and it was designated as being a shallow unrecorded shaft – a possible bell pit. Shallow workings were also found under the remainder of the playground and so the Coal Authority capped the shaft with a reinforced concrete slab and also filled the old workings with concrete grout.

The initial work was completed during the first week of the summer holidays, but the pupils were still without the final repairs – the markings geared for outdoor play on the ground. At all times the pupils safety was of utmost concern and alternative provisions were made to ensure all children had access to outdoor play.

Specialist contractors working on behalf of the Coal Authority reinstated the markings, including a rainbow and number squares that have been designed by the youngsters themselves.



A playground decoration

Alan Hines, Project Manager for the Coal Authority, said the markings will

bring an end to the repair work.
He said:

It will be good to see the playground finished with new markings that have been designed by both children and parents. This will bring a very nice end to an incident, which saw both the playground and the markings ruined.

Charlotte Hancock, the school's Business Assistant, said the work will be the final part of the repair programme. She said:

The event was quite surprising.

A small dip in the playground on a Friday had turned into a hole by Monday. Fortunately, no one was hurt during the incident but it left the children without their large playground.

The playground was reinstated over the summer holidays and all the children then needed were some new markings that would let them play their games during break times.



A butterfly playground decoration

Notice: AL4 8DF, Affinity Water Limited: environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency office you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application

Consultation outcome: Proposed Control of Mercury (Enforcement) Regulations 2017

Updated: Summary of responses and government response added.

We want to know what you think about how we plan to enforce controls on mercury in the UK. The controls will apply the requirements of [EU Regulation 2017/852 on mercury](#).

We are interested in the views of those in industries that use mercury or deal with mercury waste, as well as those involved in dentistry. In particular, we would like to hear whether you view the approach proposed as

being appropriate and proportionate.

This is a joint consultation led in England by Defra, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), with input from the Department of Health. In the Devolved Administrations it has been led by the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland) and the Department of Health (Northern Ireland).

Research and analysis: Approaches to maintaining knowledge on location of ephemeral features

Requirement R083

Requirement detail

An important component of managing impact is clarifying the presence of sensitive features. Traditional methods of determining the location of features provide a snapshot of distribution. For the majority of features, this snapshot remains representative for extended time periods.

Some features however, are characterised by high variability with spatially patchy distributions, temporal instability and/or large natural fluctuations in local populations such that they may be present at a location only for a short period of time (ephemeral). Examples include Sabellaria reef, blue mussel beds, pink sea fan and mobile habitats like sandbanks.

At present the MMO receives advice from statutory nature conservation bodies on a case by case basis. MMO can also receive or require information from developers in the form of an environmental statement or survey results if a need can be identified in advance. This generally requires reactive responses from applicants and managers.

High variability makes attribution of impacts challenging. The MMO therefore seeks approaches to provide and maintain up to date knowledge of the distribution of mobile and ephemeral protected features.