# Fly-tipping crisis in Bootle prompts urgent action from council



Over recent weeks, a significant rise in fly-tipping incidents has been reported in Bootle, a town within Sefton, Merseyside, leading to numerous complaints from local residents. The Liverpool ECHO, keen to explore this pressing issue, paired with Sefton Council's street-cleansing team to investigate the depths of the problem firsthand.

The accumulated waste has been a source of distress for residents, as various large items, including fridges, sofas, mattresses, and construction debris, have been left strewn across streets and alleyways. One particularly alarming case was reported by Collette Etherington, a resident who stated that the ongoing issues have confined her to her own home for the past four years, creating a situation she described as a “living nightmare.”

ECHO reporter Elliot Jessett joined the street-cleansing team on their daily rounds, starting from the council's depot on Hawthorne Road at 7:30am, where they lined up operations for the day. A core member of the team, Kevin Shields, who has extensive experience in waste management, expressed his commitment to the community while highlighting the emotional toll of dealing with repeated incidents of fly-tipping. He noted, "It can be gut-wrenching for everyone... It's soul-destroying," referencing a previous clean-up that saw 20 tonnes of waste removed only to have fridges reappear shortly after.

Fly-tipping, defined as the illegal disposal of waste, represents a serious criminal offence that burdens local councils financially, diverting resources away from other essential services. Sefton has faced 3,903 fly-tipping incidents this year, with Kevin attributing much of the illegal dumping to rogue traders seeking profit while avoiding waste disposal fees. Enforcement of regulations against such activities is hindered by the need for concrete evidence to secure prosecutions, further complicating efforts to curb the trend.

Team members like Dominic Hannigan, who has worked with Sefton Council for eight years, echoed Kevin's sentiments. He relayed experiences of cleaning up only to return shortly after, only to find more rubbish discarded, illustrating the frustrating cycle they face daily. His colleague, Darren Phillips, who manages their operations, characterised the situation as nothing short of an epidemic.

In light of increasing concerns, both Sefton Council and One Vision Housing (OVH), a local housing association, have initiated plans to tackle fly-tipping. Recently, Sovini, the maintenance contractor for OVH, introduced an Alleyway Strategic Action Plan, beginning with a clean-up event aimed at improving community conditions. Susan Levey, a Property Clearance Operative, stated that such initiatives are crucial for fostering pride in communities and ensuring a clean living environment.

While the street-cleansing team continues its dedicated efforts to manage the fly-tipping epidemic, the situation remains challenging, calling attention to the complexities of addressing illegal waste disposal within urban communities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/mysefton-news/latest-news/new-fly-tipping-campaign-sees-sefton-council-asking-residents-wft/> - This article supports the claim that Sefton Council is actively addressing fly-tipping in areas like Bootle through campaigns and community engagement, highlighting the challenges faced by residents and the council's efforts to prevent illegal dumping.
* <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/whall/?id=2025-04-08a.280.0> - This parliamentary discussion mentions the rising number of fly-tipping incidents across the UK, echoing the concerns about financial burdens and the need for effective enforcement strategies to combat fly-tipping.
* <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/mp/wendy-morton/debate/2025-04-08/commons/westminster-hall/fly-tipping-west-midlands> - This debate highlights the national issue of fly-tipping, emphasizing its impact on communities and the environment, and discusses potential strategies for tackling the problem, including increased enforcement and education.
* <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/flytipping> - While not directly referenced, this URL generally supports discussions around local council efforts to manage fly-tipping, aligning with the context of Sefton Council's initiatives.
* <https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Fly_tipping_final.pdf> - This report from the Environment Agency provides context on fly-tipping and its impacts, supporting the discussion around its environmental and social consequences.