

Dog Fouling:



**A practical guide for reducing the
problem of dog fouling in your
community**

1.0 Introduction

It is estimated that 24% of UK households own a dog and although the majority are responsible, there are still those who don't clear it up.

Dog mess is a nuisance and is associated with various diseases including *Toxocara canis*, which is a roundworm that can cause stomach upsets, throat infections, asthma and in rare cases blindness.

Allowing your dog to foul in a public space without clearing it up, is a criminal offence. In 2017 West Suffolk Council introduced a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) setting the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) at £80, with a maximum fine of £1,000, for those caught offending.

When irresponsible dog owners do not clear up not only are they committing an offence, but they are leaving behind something which can be easily picked up by young children or stood in by others.

It is often difficult to catch dog owners in the act of not clearing up due to location and the times of day that the offending occurs, therefore behavioral change is key.

A recent investigation into barriers to behavioural change in dog walkers categorises five distinct dog walking typologies:

- **proud to pick up** – happy to be seen carrying dog waste, will pick up in all locations and take it home if no bins are available
- **it is the right thing to do** – will pick up in public places but will seek to dispose of the waste as soon as practicable
- **I have done my job** – if there is no bin available will leave the bagged waste to be dealt with by others
- **only if I have to** – will only pick up in the presence of other people and likely to discard when no one is looking
- **disengaged** – will not pick up in any situation even if they are aware of the environmental consequences of their actions

Research has also demonstrated that dog fouling offenders are:

- from all social classes but more likely to be male than female
- include all age groups
- only admit they allow their dog to foul in a public place when pressed
- all know they could be fined, but the majority believed they would never be caught

The targets for influencing behavioural change will undoubtedly include the last three typologies listed above.

The 'I have done my job' group can be influenced by letting them know that any public litter bin will do, and you don't have to use a dedicated dog bin. Dog waste can also be taken home and disposed of in your black (non-recycling) bin at home.

The 'only if I have to' and 'disengaged' groups are difficult behaviours to influence and change, but with campaigns and more community involvement in reporting offenders, the threat of being caught will increase. Offenders may be more inclined to pick up if they think more people are willing to report them.

2.0 Solutions

There are several progressive stages in the process of reducing dog fouling and these can be followed in order, or by selecting those that are most appropriate to the particular local situation.

The flow diagram on the next page details these progressive stages and begins with the least expensive options, before moving on to more costly solutions. This is then followed by more detailed explanations of what each of these stages entails.

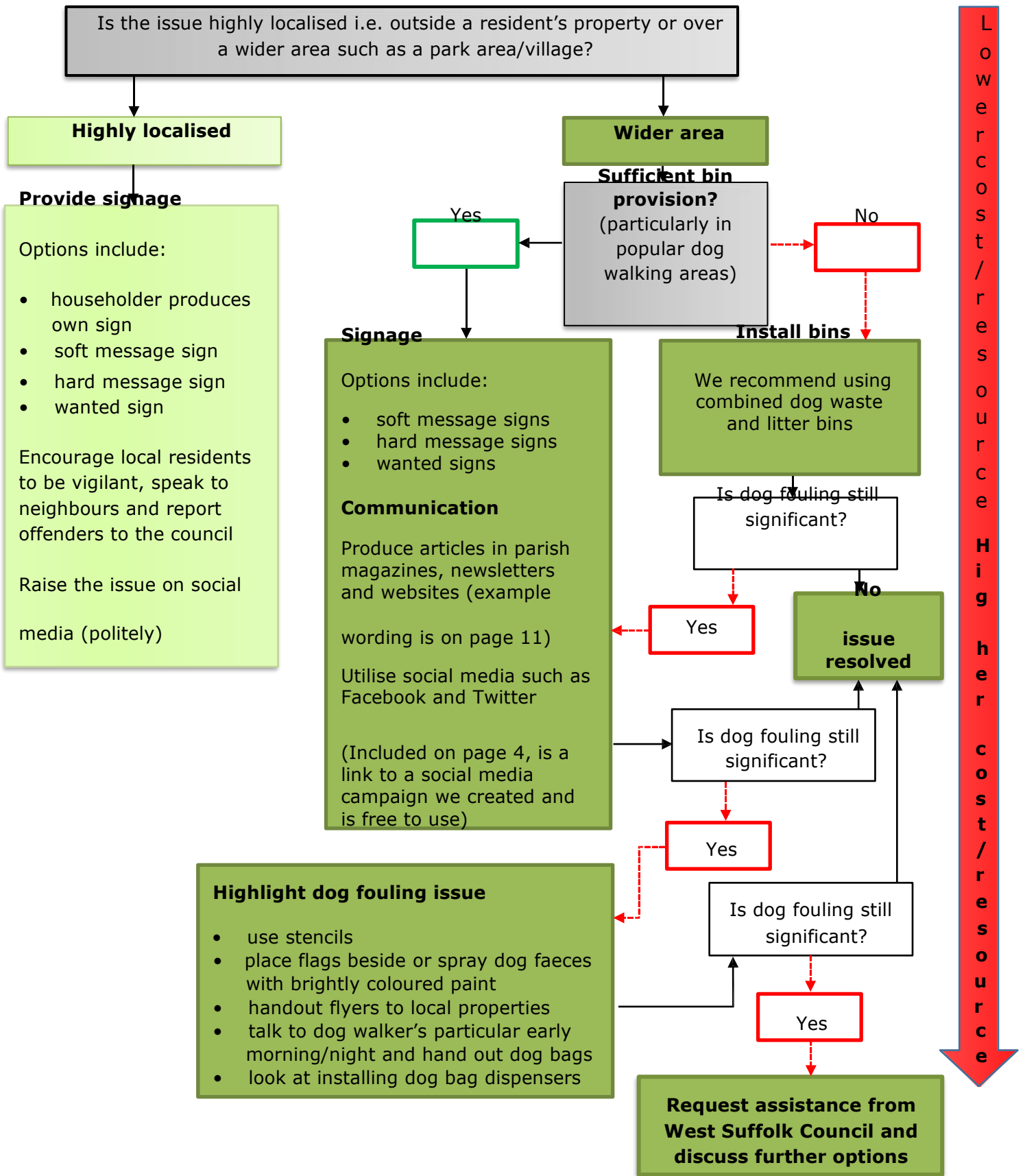
The implementation of a single stage may be enough to resolve the issue at one location whereas at another you may need to apply several stages in a graduated way to have the desired outcome.

Success is best measured by the level of reduction in local dog fouling rather than the number of fines that have been issued. Fines and prosecutions are last in the list of stages.

Details of trials that were undertaken and the various stages that were implemented can be found in the appendix. But before you begin there are some important questions to consider:

- where are your hotspot locations?
- when does it happen, such as specific times of the year or times of day?
- what stages do you want to implement?
- who is going to implement them?
- how are you going to measure success?

Flow diagram to assist in the management and reduction of dog fouling:



3.0 Basic provision

Most locations suffering from dog fouling will already have the basic provision of a dedicated dog bin, litter bin or combined dog/litter bin somewhere on or nearby the site. Dog waste can be disposed of in any street litter bin and can also be taken home and placed in a residents' own black (general waste) wheelie bin.

To encourage and reinforce responsible dog ownership, a minimum of one waste disposal bin should be sited at or near to the location of the fouling and positioned so that it is both easy to empty and visible for users. This is particularly important at locations where visitors are likely to arrive by vehicle to walk their dogs.

4.0 Minimal cost stages

Publicity/social media campaign

It is vital to increase awareness of local dog fouling issues amongst residents and/or users of a particular location as much as possible. The greater the awareness the greater the social pressure is on offenders to do the right thing. Raising awareness also increases the likelihood of potential witnesses reporting offending and the more would-be offenders feel they could be reported, the less likely they are to offend.

Local publications such as newsletters, village magazines, websites and social media can all be utilised, and to assist with this we have provided:

- a social media campaign, which is freely available and can be downloaded by visiting westsuffolk.gov.uk/bins/street_cleaning/dogfouling.cfm
- two template news articles are included in the appendix and can be adapted for use in newsletters or websites

You can also include links to our pages to signpost individuals wanting to download posters for themselves, to report offenders or for general advice using westsuffolk.gov.uk/bins/street_cleaning/dogfouling.cfm.

Signage

Signage can be a very useful tool in deterring dog fouling and the best locations are those where the largest number of people will see them, both at the hotspot location itself and in surrounding areas, such as:

- main entrance and exit points
- popular routes and footpaths
- car parks
- notice boards (villages, schools)
- local businesses (shops)

We have designed three signs. The first has a softer, reminder message of 'Bag it, bin it!', another with a harder hitting message of 'Shameful' and finally a 'Wanted' sign that warns irresponsible dog owners that others are watching out for them (this sign has proved particularly effective).

All three signs are freely available for anyone to download, print and use at westsuffolk.gov.uk/bins/street_cleaning/dogfouling.cfm.

'Bag it, bin it'



'Shameful'



'Wanted'



Once you have printed your choice of signs they can be displayed within weatherproof noticeboards or in windows. Or, if you are able to laminate them then they can be placed at locations outside. Laminated signs can be attached to small wooden stakes or posts and this will enable you to be flexible in locating signs on open areas such as grass fields.

The more prominent a location you can display a sign, the more the message will be seen by those people whose behaviour you are trying to change. Signs must only be displayed where you have permission to do so.

If you prefer you could also design your own signs and display them; sometimes a more bespoke sign can have a greater impact at reducing the problem. This is particularly the case when dealing with incidents at highly localised locations.

We do have a limited supply of signs printed on 5mm Foamex board, and are happy to supply them if stocks allow. Alternatively, there are numerous local companies who will be happy to provide quotes. An A4 sign on 5mm Foamex board is likely to cost around £2 - £3 each depending on quantities ordered, but other materials are available such as aluminium composite which are more expensive, but also more durable.

Flyer

The 'wanted' poster has been incorporated into a flyer which can be printed out and hand delivered to properties in or near hotspot locations or given out to supporters at sports games or other community events.

The front page contains the same text as the 'Wanted' poster and the rear has a form for anyone who has seen a dog owner/walker not clearing up to describe what they have witnessed.

WANTED
INFORMATION
TO IDENTIFY
THE
DOG OWNER
WHO IS ALLOWING A DOG TO FOUL THIS AREA AND DOES NOT CLEAN UP!

Contact us (in confidence)
01284 763233

love live
West Suffolk Council

Reporting Dog Fouling

Your Details
Contact name: _____
Phone number: _____
Email address: _____
Home address: _____

Incident Details
Date: _____ Time: _____
Location: _____
What did you see?

Type (description) of dog involved:

Name and address of the person responsible (if known):

Car registration, make, model and colour (if a vehicle was involved):

Please report incidents to: customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephone 01284 763233

A copy of the flyer is available in the appendix to print and can be particularly useful when earlier stages have failed to reduce incidents of dog fouling.

School Talks

We have teamed up with the Blue Cross who focus on responsible dog ownership, to provide free talks to primary schools and cub/scout groups. Further details and an online application form can be found at bluecross.org.

National Campaigns

Keep Britain Tidy provide information and materials including entire campaigns, although there is normally costs associated with the services provided. They have recently run three differently themed campaigns:

- do it for your dog
- the dog poo fairy
- we're watching you

More information is available from keepbritaintidy.org/local-authorities/reduce-litter/dog-fouling/solutions.

The Dogs Trust have run several campaigns over the last few years promoting and encouraging responsible dog ownership.

They have previously included the 'Big Scoop' and 'Bag it & Bin it' campaigns. Their latest campaign, 'Love at First Scoop' included a kit of A4 Posters, A5 Flyers, packs of poo bags and bin stickers.

The materials used in this campaign are displayed below and a range of advice and downloads are available from dogstrust.org.uk/news-events/issues-campaigns/dog-fouling/.



Local Campaigns

Some local communities have used other techniques in an attempt to highlight the amount of dog faeces at a particular location and at the same time, shame those that are offending.

This is fairly inexpensive and can be as simple as a laminated sign on a stick, a flag or a harmless spray. The sign or flag is placed beside any dog waste in a given area to highlight where the fouling is and how much of it is not being cleared up. The effect can be striking and is a good way of increasing awareness.



The 'Pink Means Poo' campaign has been used in villages in the North East where a local mum was so fed up she decided to use the pink chalk spray to prevent others from stepping in the piles of mess as well as shaming irresponsible dog owners/walkers. The amount of fouling decreased by 50% in three weeks.

5.0 Higher cost stages

Bag dispensers

Bag dispensers can help by removing the excuse used by irresponsible dog owners/walkers that they do not have a bag to clear up their mess. Although this is never a valid excuse, the supply of free bags onsite can help to alleviate the issue.

They are approximately £100 to buy and are fairly easy to install to either a brick wall or fence post. Dispensers require ongoing monitoring and costs to ensure bags are replenished, however sponsorship can often be found from local businesses to cover this.

Placed at the right site dispensers tend to be used by people who have forgotten to bring a bag or who have used all their bags, rather than those simply expecting a free supply.

Further information and current prices of dispensers and replacement bags can be viewed at jrbenterprises.com.

Waste disposal bins

Additional waste disposal bins, such as those pictured below, will not necessarily stop the issue but can be considered as an option along with other stages.

There are of course the initial costs required to purchase a bin and then also the ongoing costs of emptying it to consider.

All locations in which the trials took place, as referenced in the appendix, had existing waste disposal bins in place, but still continued to have issues with dog fouling.



6.0 Conclusions

To reduce dog fouling it is necessary to change the behaviour of a minority of irresponsible dog owners/walkers who are not clearing up.

The stages listed here aim to remove some of the excuses for not clearing up and to reinforce the message that this behaviour is not acceptable.

These stages can be adapted to suit the particular needs and resources of any community, group or organisation who are faced with the issue of dog fouling.

The trial areas listed in the appendix have either used one, or a combination of stages to reduce dog fouling at their particular locations and all demonstrate that improvements can be achieved.

7.0 Contacts

For further information or advice on the prevention of dog fouling or any other environmental crime issues please contact our customer services team on 01284 763233 or email customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk.

Appendix

Example dog fouling article (1)

The dog population of the UK is around 9 million, with the amount of excrement being produced probably exceeding 1,000 tonnes a day.

Dog mess is a nuisance and is associated with various diseases including *Toxocara canis* which is a roundworm whose eggs can be found in dog mess. This causes stomach upsets, sore throats, asthma and in rare cases blindness.

When irresponsible dog owners do not clear up, not only are they committing an offence but they are also leaving behind something which can be easily picked up by young children or stood in by others.

Dog owners please remember:

- ✓ take enough bags when you take your dog(s) out
- ✓ bag it and bin it - any street litter bin will do
- ✓ use your black household bin at home if no other bin is available



We would encourage anyone witnessing a dog fouling incident to report this to any of the parish/town councillors, the parish clerk or directly to West Suffolk Council on 01284 763233 or by emailing customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk.

Example dog fouling article (2)

This is a reminder to all dog owners/walkers to pick up after your pet if it fouls.

Whether you own a dog or not, dog poo affects everyone and there has been an increase in instances of fouling recently on footpaths, verges and perhaps more worryingly on the football pitches where children play.

There is simply no excuse for this, just bag it and bin it! It's against the law not to clear up after your dog, and you could face a fine of up to £1,000.

We would encourage anyone witnessing a dog fouling incident to report this to any of the parish/town councillors, the parish clerk or directly to West Suffolk Council on 01284 763233 or by emailing customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk.



WANTED

INFORMATION

TO IDENTIFY

THE

DOG OWNER

**WHO IS ALLOWING A DOG TO FOUL THIS
AREA AND DOES NOT CLEAN UP!**

Contact us (in confidence)

01284 763233



Reporting Dog Fouling

Your Details

Contact name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Home address: _____

Incident Details

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

What did you see?

Type (description) of dog involve:

Name and address of the person responsible (if known):

Car registration, make, model and colour (if a vehicle was involved):

Please report incidents to: customer.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk or telephone 01284 763233

Trials

Wickhambrook (publicity, dog bag dispensers and signage)

Like many villages, Wickhambrook has playing fields adjacent to their community hall where children play and football matches take place. There are dog waste bins in all four corners of the field, but dog fouling has been an ongoing issue.

The usual warning signs were not having the desired effect and both the parish and West Suffolk Council agreed to trial a new approach:

- publicity (parish newsletters and website)
- bag dispensers (two installed and stocked locally)
- new signage (soft messages, followed by harder message signs)

The amount of dog fouling incidents monitored at the Wickhambrook playing field significantly reduced over and beyond the trial period and the awareness of the issue rose within the community.

Red Lodge (warning signs)

Red Lodge Parish Council had ongoing issues with dog fouling on public pavements around Hundred Acre Way and although they had already installed numerous dog bins in the area, the problem had not been resolved.

The dog fouling was sporadic and appeared to be the result of a very small number of dog walkers who were persistently not picking up after their dog.

Two types of signs were provided for the parish to trial. First, they used the 'Shameful, Selfish' signs which were placed on lampposts around identified areas. After two weeks the parish reported around a 50% reduction in the number incidents.

These signs were then removed and replaced with the 'Wanted' poster for two further weeks. By the end of the trial, dog fouling in the area had reduced by 90%.

It was felt by the parish that the 'Wanted' poster had been the most effective way of reducing dog fouling in this area. This was not only more successful than the dog bins, but also far less expensive.

Great Whelnetham (new dog bin, signs, flyers)

In Great Whelnetham, a local resident was fed up with the amount of dog mess not cleared up from the footpaths around the housing estate and on the route to the local primary school.

The parish council paid for a new dog bin to be installed close to the school and the newly designed soft message signs were placed at key locations in the village. The resident who had raised concerns, along with other local volunteers, delivered the

'Wanted flyers' to households within the village and also highlighted the issue on local social media groups.

There was a considerable improvement and the flyers helped remind potential offenders that they could be reported if they left their dog's mess on the footpaths.

Great Bradley (bag dispenser)

Although a smaller village, Great Bradley still had issues with dog's mess being left on the footpaths around its playing field. They had a dog bin at the main entrance/exit to the field and had used old style warning signs, but incidents continued.

Following the success at Wickhambrook, they decided to purchase a bag dispenser for their playing field and have since noted a marked improvement on the field and also little fouling on the surrounding footpaths.

Parks Department (bag dispensers)

The councils' own parks department has installed dog bag dispensers at two of its park locations, Nowton Park in Bury St Edmunds and East Town Park in Haverhill.

These dispensers have been sponsored by a local veterinary practice and are well used. Neither of them has been vandalised and there has been a reduction in dog fouling at both parks.

Waste Department (bag dispensers)

The councils' waste department worked with Tikspac to install a network of dispensers that provide a solution for dog walkers who find themselves without a bag. These dispenser stations provide a backup, remove any excuse not to clean up and are 100% biodegradable.

The dispensers and bags are supplied free of charge as they are sponsored by businesses in exchange for advertising. They are restocked by council operatives whilst they are emptying nearby bins and have helped to reduce the amount of dog fouling not cleared up.