



COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING

TOOLKIT AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

Introduction

Community litter picking is a great way to show that you care about your local environment, whilst actively encouraging others not to drop litter and take pride in where they live.

Litter picking events can vary in size. Whether there are two of you, or twenty of you, we are forever grateful for your contribution towards improving the environment in and around Newcastle.

This toolkit gives you advice on how to organise a litter pick and the safe working practices you should be aware of. The information in this toolkit is aimed to help you consider the safety aspects of your clean-up day and ensure that the event runs smoothly without anyone being harmed.



Choosing a Location

It is important to carefully choose a location where you can avoid hazards and ensure that the chance of anyone having an accident is kept as low as possible. For example, keep away from areas in close proximity to high speed/busy roads, ponds/watercourses, or where a build up of hazardous materials have been identified (e.g. unknown chemicals, car batteries, or sharps). If you identify such areas, please contact the Council and inform them of the issues. Once you have chosen your location, we would recommend that you complete a risk assessment to confirm the intended site is appropriate, and to help you determine any controls that need to be put in place.

It may also be beneficial to identify the nearest toilets/hand washing facilities that you could use on the day. You may wish to have somewhere you could have refreshments during or after the clean up or provide water for participants.

How we can help!

Our Team

Our friendly team at lovewhereyoulive@newcastle.gov.uk can provide further advice and guidance on your litter pick. We can organise the delivery of the following equipment:

- Black bags
- Litter pickers
- Children's Hi-Viz vests

You can also visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/environment-and-waste/street-care-and-cleansing/local-clean-ups-and-how-get-involved to find out how you can promote your event and publicise your good work. Using social media is a great way to share your stories and encourage others to join in or arrange their own events.

Removal of Collected Litter

Bags from litter picks should be left by a Newcastle City Council street litter bin. Every street litter bin has a 4-digit ID number, please report to <https://envirocall.newcastle.gov.uk/CommunityLitterPicking> for removal. This can only be arranged after the event.



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Community Litter Picking

Community Litter Picking Groups

You do not need permission to volunteer to pick up litter as long as it's on public and not private land.

You can register as a group or an individual, but you will need a valid email address and a password set up.

It's important to consider health and safety so don't work too close to main or busy highways or cause blockages on busy streets and pavements. We can support residents and businesses of the Newcastle City Council area with litter picking advice and equipment. Please check our webpage for more details.

Once registered you can arrange for us to **pick up your collected litter**

We can collect bags of picked litter when they have been deposited near one of our smart litter bins. When using the form you can input the nearest residential address and the map will highlight the nearest smart bins. You can then pick your collection point and get a reference number for your request, and any bags will be collected as soon as operationally possible by our teams. Please note they are not able to give exact collection dates.

If you come across large items that have been fly tipped on council land, please report it for removal via [our online form](#)

We cannot remove items that are on private land. Your Homes Newcastle should be contacted regarding fly tipping on their areas.

[Get started/Login](#)

Litter will only be collected on Monday – Thursday (9am – 3pm) and Friday (9am - 12pm). Please note we are unable to separate recycling from general litter as the bags will be collected along with general street litter bin waste. Any litter collected at weekends or on public holidays will have to be safely stored until we are able to arrange for collection.



Public Liability Insurance

The council strongly advises groups and organisations to check their insurance before organising their own clean ups. If the event organiser does not already have this we advise they take out appropriate 'Public Liability' insurance. Any event organised directly by Newcastle City Council will be covered by its Public Liability Insurance.

On the day Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is a careful examination of the possible dangers you may encounter when carrying out a litter pick. Dependant on your findings, you can then decide on suitable controls, rules and equipment that can be used on the day to remove the possibility of harm occurring, or reduce it to an acceptable level. Please see the example risk assessment within the toolkit.

If an area carries **too many risks** for you and your volunteers, or a serious issue is found that is felt to be too dangerous (such as busy traffic, fast moving water or falls from height) you should consider whether it is more appropriate to leave the clearing of that site and **choose another location**.

To help you to complete a site risk assessment we suggest you consider the following issues and ensure you make a thorough check on the day. This only illustrates some of the hazards that could be encountered. You must make a careful examination of your intended work area to identify the hazards present to determine appropriate controls.



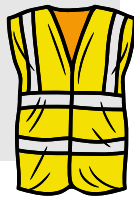
COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING

RISK ASSESSMENT



Clothes and Equipment

- Hi-Vis
- Litter pickers
- Appropriate clothing
- Mobile phone
- Basic first aid



People

- Sufficient adults to supervise young people (relevant checks, e.g. DBS)
- Identify a meeting point
- Consent to photography
- Share phone numbers
- Groups of 2 or more
- Identify first aid trainers
- Brief everyone on the basics and dangers



Lifting/Handling

- Pickers prevent bending and stretching
- Warm up and stretch
- Place sharp objects in sturdy containers
- Ensure items are safe to handle



Environment

- Appropriately dressed
- Right time of day
- Respect wildlife
- Identify nearest toilets
- Wash hands!
- Consider providing refreshments
- Don't touch mouth or eyes
- Cuts/grazes should be covered with surgical tape or waterproof plasters



Materials

- Broken glass - use litter pickers, dispose in solid container
- Drug-related - do not touch and contact council for removal
- Dog fouling - leave this and report to organiser
- Suspect materials (unknown liquids, asbestos) and fly tipping - do not touch, organiser to contact council



Example Risk Assessment for Community Clean Up

Activity to be carried out:
Litter Picking / Community clean up
Date of assessment:
Assessment completed by:
Concerns arising from the activity:
<p>Issues potentially affecting all community members taking part in clean up operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cuts and abrasions due to handling sharp objects (e.g. glass, drug paraphernalia)• Infection due to contact with discarded syringes nappies, dog excrement, rotting food, clinical waste, soil and contaminated water etc.• Burns, irritation and other injuries / illness due to the handling of discarded chemicals, or hazardous materials such as oil, damaged car batteries (acid) etc.• Strains /sprains, crushed hands or feet / slipped disc etc. due to the lifting and carrying of heavy items and /or dropping objects being carried.• Cuts and lacerations due to snagging on shrubs, hidden obstacles, fence wires etc.• Physical injury due to dog bites or violent members of the public• Assault, robbery or worsening of injuries following an accident, due to members of the team working alone, or in isolation.• Extreme weather conditions – heat, cold, ice, snow, rain.• Lost group members sepaprated from party. <p>Issues affecting all community members taking part in clean up operation and to members of the public such as cyclists, dog walkers and pedestrians who may travel through the cleanup area during the operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slips, trips and falls resulting in twisted or sprained ankles, cuts and bruising as a result of walking on uneven / rough or excessively sloping ground, or from tripping on equipment or rubbish left on the ground and obstructing walkways.• Working adjacent to roads and on streets and pavements.



Control Measures:

Prior to clean up starting:

- Decide if weather suitable for the planned activity.
- A site check will be undertaken by team leaders before activity begins to determine and remove any identified hazards (where possible), and to confirm that area is appropriate for activities to be carried out.
- A briefing will take place at the beginning of each session to cover the potential issues identified (as detailed) and working practices to be adopted and followed. Team leaders should update any participant who misses the briefing.
- Any areas near to the location that are unsuitable i.e. due to excessive slopes, hazardous ground conditions, watercourses, busy roads or aggressive dogs etc. will be avoided and this communicated during the initial briefing session. Participants will be advised to maintain a safe distance from such areas.

During the clean up operation:

- All participants should wear appropriate clothing, stout footwear and gloves or sun screen if necessary.
- A first aid kit will be available in the event of minor injuries being sustained. Team leader will have a mobile telephone which can be used to summon the emergency services, should it be required.
- Litter pickers should be used to collect rubbish whenever possible, to avoid handpicking.
- Any heavy objects discovered that are beyond the lifting capabilities of the team should be left and referred back to team leaders, in order that further arrangements can be made for their safe removal via the Local Authority.
- Should any syringes or other hazardous objects be found (such as car batteries or chemicals) be found, they should not be picked up by participants and should be referred back to the team leader so that suitable arrangements can be made for their safe removal via the Local Authority.
- Good hygiene practices should be adopted and participants will be advised to wash hands after handling rubbish and before eating / drinking etc.
- Participants should be considerate to others whilst working on site and remain aware of people around them.
- Participants should work as a group and not break off alone from the main group.
- Should any challenging behaviour be encountered participants should withdraw and inform the team leader, so that appropriate action can be considered, such as contacting the police.
- Participants should not challenge members of the public.
- No lone working will be allowed during the clean up, with all participants working as part of a team. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult and Team Leaders should remain aware of the whereabouts of their teams throughout the clean up.
- A location will identified prior to the cleanup where rubbish bags will be located, ready for collection. This will be in a sensible position and away from footpaths so as not to create an obstruction or trip hazard.



Risk Assessment for Community Clean Up

Activity to be carried out:
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Date of assessment:
Assessment completed by:
Concerns arising from the activity:
Issues potentially affecting all community members taking part in clean up operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••
Issues affecting all community members taking part in clean up operation and to members of the public such as cyclists, dog walkers and pedestrians who may travel through the cleanup area during the operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••



Control Measures:

Prior to clean up starting:

During the clean up operation:



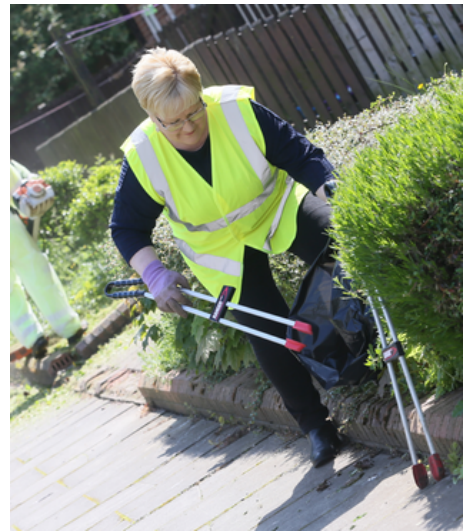


COMMUNITY LITTER PICKING

DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- Inform family members where you are going
- Carry mobile phone
- Use litter pickers
- Wear reflective clothing
- Wear strong shoes
- Wash hands after litter picking
- Inform Council of any problems or issues



DON'T

- Handle needles or sharp objects
- Work near busy roads
- Work in or near watercourses
- Lift anything too heavy
- Work when it is dark/unsafe
- Approach unknown people
- Work when tired



Key Contacts:

- lovewhereyoulive@newcastle.gov.uk
- Northumbria Police non emergency number - 101

