

**Rt Hon John Healey MP**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State, Department for Housing, Communities, and Local Government  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

22 April 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dear Robert".

**Rise in fly-tipping and re-opening local household waste sites**

As the current Coronavirus lockdown continues, fly-tipping is becoming a greater concern to local residents and to our councils who have to prevent it or deal with the blight it brings. So I am writing to urge you to give clearer guidance to councils on the case for safely re-opening the recycling sites that many have closed since the start of the 'lockdown'.

According to DEFRA's annual report, the majority of fly-tipping is household waste, no larger than a van's worth.<sup>i</sup> The burden for enforcing fines and clearing up this level of waste is on local authorities, not the Environment Agency. The huge rise (75 per cent) reported in fly-tipping by sources such as ClearWaste App<sup>ii</sup> has been attributed to the decision by some local authorities to close all their Household Waste Recycling centres (HWRC) and to cease collection of bulkier items such as white goods, furniture and garden waste.

The Government guidance on fly-tipping for local authorities warns of the risk of increase, and asks councils to remind households of the fines for doing so, but the guidance is unclear on ensuring sites for collecting waste remain open during this Covid crisis.

Your guidance simply states that authorities "Consider whether priority sites can be maintained with restricted access". This suggests some service for household waste sites should stay open but the guidance is too weak to ensure councils to do so and too vague to offer advice on how this can be done safely. In the case of bulkier items, the guidance is clearer and recommends temporary cessation of collection<sup>iii</sup>


The lack of clear-cut guidance has led to a patchy response from local authorities on waste collection, and caused a domino effect of closures. Councils like Rotherham MBC want to act in good faith with guidance to keep sites open, but they have been understandably concerned that when neighbouring authorities close their waste sites they are forced to follow suit to avoid their services being overrun by residents from other areas.

There have, of course, also been reports of unscrupulous operators exploiting the crisis by offering fraudulent services for collection and disposal, contributing to the growing fly-tipping problem.

As Secretary of State responsible for Local Government I write to ask you urgently to:

- To revise the current advice and guidance to councils to help re-open local waste and recycling sites
- To ensure Local Authorities have the resources to enforce fly tipping rules, and clear-up the recent surge in fly-tipping.

I am grateful to you for considering this case and I look forward to hearing from you on your response.



John Healey MP

<sup>i</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878193/FlyTipping\\_201819\\_Statistical\\_Release\\_FINAL\\_Accessible\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878193/FlyTipping_201819_Statistical_Release_FINAL_Accessible_v2.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-disgusting-flytipping-soars-during-lockdown-11976812>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-to-local-authorities-on-prioritising-waste-collections/guidance-on-prioritising-waste-collection-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic#fly-tipping>