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KEEP WALES TIDY

Litter in Wales Understanding littering and litterers **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT** **NOVEMBER 2010**

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BBQ01028/ CT /AB/ CP Nov 2010

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1 . INTRODUCTION

- The mission of Keep Wales Tidy is to **‘work to encourage local action to protect and enhance the environment of Wales’**. Whilst it does not have direct responsibility for the cleanliness and tidiness of Wales, its aim is to engage in activities that encourage individuals, groups and organisations to act in a way that achieves a Clean, Safe and Tidy Wales.
- To assist Keep Wales Tidy in their aims the client requires evidence of current consumer attitudes enabling them to:

develop a better understanding of the people who litter, why they litter and what they perceive as a clean environment.

- The research focused specifically on Wales and explored the following:
 - Who litters – profiling groups within society and their attitudes towards littering
 - Regional, cultural and individual variations in littering and littering attitudes
 - Individual and group perceptions of cleanliness and other issues relating to local environmental quality
- The research was required to deliver a segmentation of consumers in order that Keep Wales Tidy can **develop targeted policies, strategies and campaigns that contain appropriate messages for different consumer groups and thus are likely to have maximum impact on behaviour.**

2 . RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

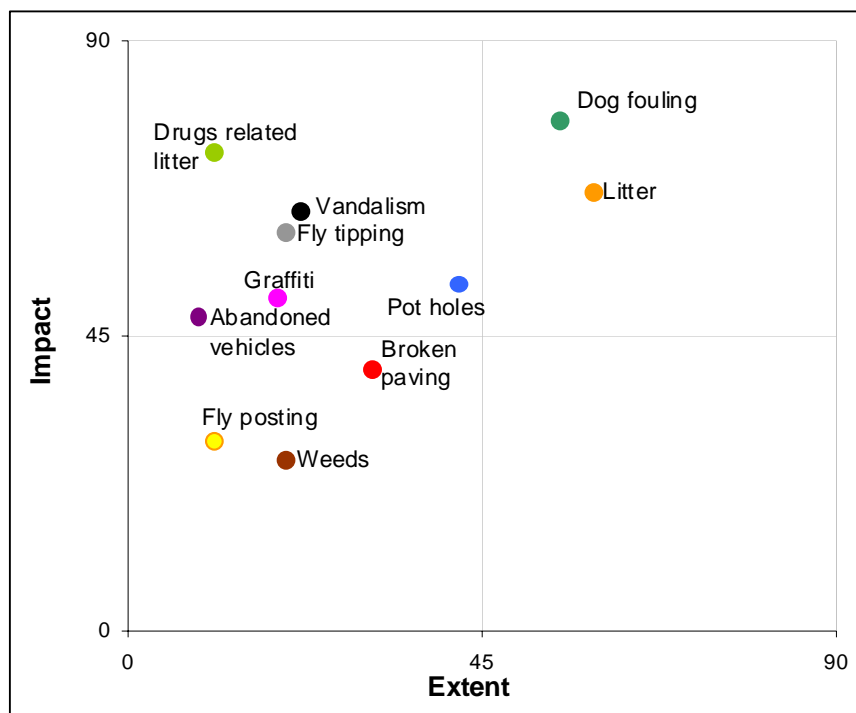
- The research focused specifically on Wales and engaged with adults aged 16+. A three-stage approach was taken, as summarised below:

Stage	Brief Description	Overall purpose
Stage I Quantitative Survey among <u>General Public</u>	621 interviews among a representative sample of Welsh adult population aged 16+	To measure incidence of littering among Welsh population and profiles To provide information to guide Stage II
Stage II Quantitative Survey among <u>Those Who Litter</u>	809 face to face interviews with a representative sample of those who litter	To provide empirical evidence of behaviour and attitudes of those who litter To provide robust attitudinal segmentation of those who litter
Stage III Qualitative Focus groups among <u>Those Who Litter</u>	8 mini focus groups with those who litter – recruited according to the segments produced by the quantitative survey	To gain deeper understanding of attitudinal segments and how to overcome negative behaviour Opportunity to test messages

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Litter in context

- For over half the population of Wales **guilt is strongly associated with the dropping of litter** to a greater extent than other antisocial behaviours such as noise pollution, driving offences or lax work ethics. 51% said they would feel *very guilty* dropping or leaving something behind instead of using a bin while a further 19% said they would feel *fairly guilty*.
- The proportions claiming to feel guilty when littering varied according to the different population profiles with those in the younger age groups and – looking regionally – those in the Valleys – **less likely** to respond to feelings of guilt.
- Litter and dog fouling are perceived to have a significant impact on local environmental quality. As shown in the chart below, when the Welsh public were asked which environmental problems were felt to have the **greatest impact to the look and feel** of a neighbourhood and which **were seen to the greatest extent** across Wales, litter and dog fouling were heavily mentioned.
- The third environmental problem that falls under the remit of Keep Wales Tidy is **drugs related litter** which is seen to a much lesser extent but nevertheless has high impact.



3.2 Litterers in Wales

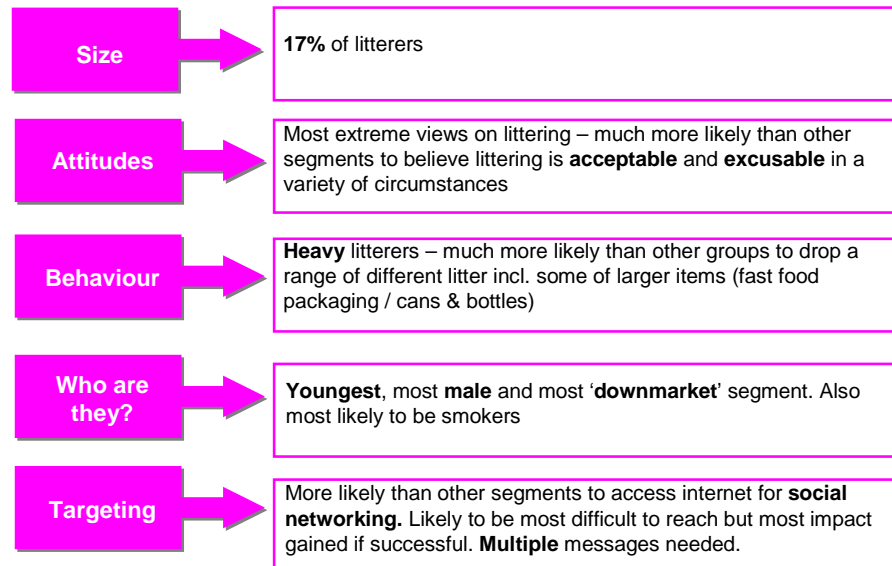
- In total **half (50%) of the population of Wales were found to be litterers** in that they had dropped [an item¹] instead of using a bin or taking it home in the last year.
- Littering **varies by demographic group** with age in particular appearing to be a determining factor – 76% of those aged 16-34 were classified as litterers compared with 24% among those aged 55+.
- Amongst litterers, in order to provide further insight into the different attitudes towards littering, a **segmentation of Welsh litterers** was undertaken using a multivariate analysis known as cluster analysis. This analysis revealed four distinct groups of litterers as defined below:

Segments derived from the cluster analysis amongst Welsh litterers

Segment	Characterised by	Account for x% of Welsh Littering Population
Litter Louts	Finding litter to be excusable and acceptable in a range of different scenarios	17%
Not My Fault	Being conceptually 'anti-litter' but finding excuses for littering when perceived to be beyond control	28%
Does That Count	Being unsure whether all 'littering' really counts as littering	28%
Principled Light Litterers	Taking a largely anti-litter stance, responsible for only low level littering	27%

- The four segments can be summarised as follows:

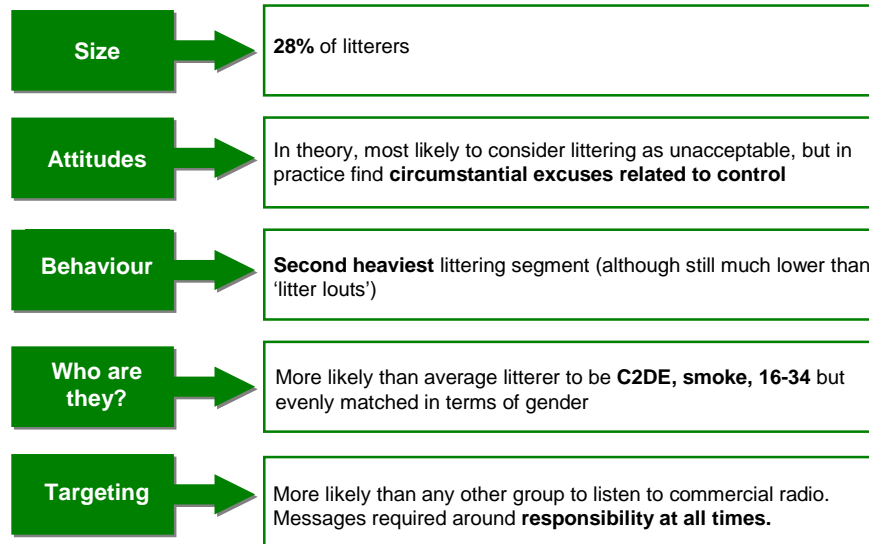
- **Litter Louts**



- 57% agree “if an area is run down and a mess already I don’t see a problem in dropping a bit of litter”.
- 51% agree “if you know it’s going to be cleaned up it’s OK to drop litter”.

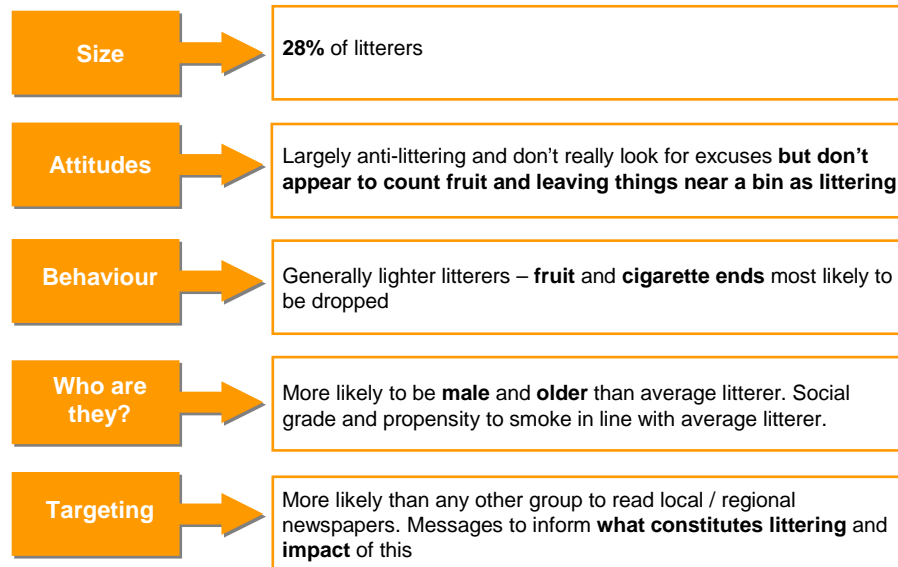
¹ Items were: cigarette butts/ ends, cigarette packaging, confectionary wrappers, cans or bottles, fast food packaging, fruit, pieces of food (not fruit), small bits of paper, chewing gum, leaflets flyers and newspapers, plastic bags, dog fouling.

○ Not my fault



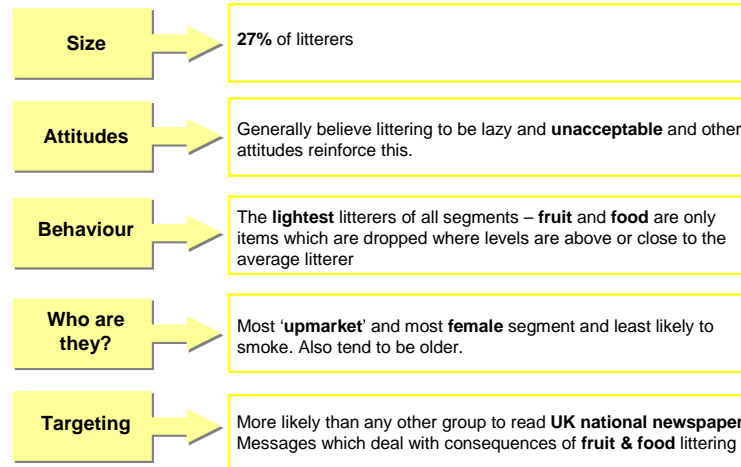
- 91% agree “generally I don’t think there are enough bins provided in public places”
- 79% agree “when someone’s in a hurry it’s easy to see why they might drop something on the ground rather than finding a bin”

○ Does that Count



- 91% agree “if a bin was overflowing and I couldn’t put my litter into it I’d put it next to the bin or on top”
- 52% agree “throwing an apple core on the ground does not count as littering”

○ **Principled Light Litterers**



- 92% agree “people who drop litter are just lazy”
- 91% agree “any type of littering is completely unacceptable”

3.3 Rationales for littering

- Focus groups were conducted with three of the four segments of litterer in greater detail: *Litter Louts*, *Not My Fault*, and *Does that Count*. This stage of the research explored rationales behind littering amongst these three of the most prolific littering groups in Wales. The summary of rationales are given in the table below.

Rationales for littering

Rationale	Key issues	Example Verbatims
Others' responsibility	Local Council at fault Never a bin when needed State of bins	"I'm not holding this any longer and I can't see any bins around. I've done that before, I've been somewhere and I've had a wrapper or something and I've held on to it for so long." (Not My Fault)
Social factors	Alcohol encourages Group mentality	"It's like when you're in a big group, if there's a big group you can't imagine someone walking to a bin...'excuse me, I'm just going to the bin'" (Litter Lout)
Habit	Never taught not to Just the norm	"It's just, like, from the way you've been brought up, living in these bad areas, it's just in your mindset to think like that" (Litter Lout)
Not concerned	Little care for local area Self-focused Anti-authority	"I walked through another town ... and I think I dropped something and the bloke said "pick that up now". And I gave him a few words of my choice but I weren't going to pick it up ... I think it'd be more embarrassing for me to go and pick it up and put it in the bin than to just walk off" (Litter Lout)
No one can see me	Feel guilt Out of sight out of mind	"I think if I was walking down a country lane or something with rubbish, I'd probably think I'd drop it rather than just keep carrying it, just throw it in some hedge or something. No one is about, it's like driving in the car, goes out the window" (Not My Fault)
Prevalence	Gives permission Makes it the norm Run-down areas	"I just had an envelope where I'd opened my mail and where I live there we all rubbish by there and I was walking down to the shops and I just threw the empty envelope" (Not My Fault)
Size, condition	Smaller items OK If greasy, sticky	"If I've got food I'll drop it, but if I've got like a big bag then I will carry it until I see a bin somewhere" (Does that Count)
Not litter	Smaller items Fruit Certain scenarios	"[Butts] it's only a little thing, at the end of the day ... What problem's it causing?" (Litter Lout)

- Looking at rationales by the litterer segments:
 - Litter Louts** display strong attitudes towards littering which are difficult to address. For this group littering is an ingrained social habit with little if any thought to consequence.
 - Not My Fault** display rationales that are more easy to target with messaging. This segment identify most strongly with *others' responsibility*, *not litter*, *size/ condition* and *no-one can see me*.
 - Does That Count** again display rationales that can be addressed by targeted messaging, identifying most with *no-one can see me*, *size/ condition* and *not litter*.

3.4 Preventing littering

Following discussion in the focus groups, including exposure to previous anti-litter campaigns, four major themes emerged in terms of how littering could be prevented:

Highlight consequences

- Bring out the **health impact** of littering: when the “Don’t Feed the Animals” campaign was tested the execution was found to be visually and aurally memorable, the message grasped and the impact considerable.
- Highlight how litter is a **part of jigsaw/ process** as an area becomes more run-down – and not to underestimate it as a contributor to urban degeneration.
- Reinforce how littering is **not victimless** by emphasising the impact both of the litter itself as well as the required investment in dealing with it – and subsequent cost to the tax payer/ at the expense of other services.

Changes to physical environment

- Immediate, remedial steps will go some way to treating the **symptoms** of littering such as:
 - Installing more bins to address low levels of inconvenience *but a tipping point is likely to be difficult to identify*. Additional bins would work towards overcoming the given excuse – shown most strongly in the Not My Fault and Litter Lout segments – that there are not enough bins or bins are overflowing. “[more bins] so that there’s not really an excuse, and then they can start punishing” (Male, Litter Lout, Cardiff).
 - Focusing on ‘better bins’ such as those that can be moved into strategic locations, that are attractive/ well designed or are a destination in themselves.

Highlight enforcement

- Implement **fin**es and with the implementation develop a system of publicizing fining and enforcement behaviour: awareness of fines is a deterrent as well as the fine itself. Currently while awareness of fining is high, perceived likelihood to be fined is low.
- Build on **enforcement** messaging that stresses *someone will see me, someone will fine me* to raise awareness of fines. “Well, I personally won’t do it, now that I know that they’re spying on me and that they’re going to give me a £75 fine, that would be enough to stop me” (Does That Count).

Promote benefits

- Play on feelings of **guilt** to emphasise how litter erodes the benefits of a safe, clean and attractive environment. Guilt as a tactic to prevent litter is more effective amongst older litterers and has less appeal – on its own – amongst Litter Louts. When promoting a clean and litter free environment, the execution of this message is all important. The environment being portrayed must resonate with the target audience and avoid having no connection with their local area. One of the adverts used from a previous campaign was perceived to be more of a tourism advert (idyllic country village scene) than an anti-litter campaign.
- Reinforce **'what's in it for me'** – an approach that had appeal amongst Litter Louts who do not tend to focus on external implications of littering.
- Discuss the **impact** of clearing up on local Councils and subsequent investment in the community – particularly at the expense of the individual (for example 'clearing litter will use budget from service X that the Council provides').