



# How to carry out a Clean Up survey

# Introduction

A litter survey is a great way to take the next step to tackle litter in your community.

Undertaking a survey will allow you to collect localised data which will help you understand and effectively monitor the litter situation in your community. It will also:

- Provide you with up to date evidence to support engagement with relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, housing associations or businesses.
- Provide you with information to design and implement activities locally to tackle litter and help change behaviours.
- Contribute towards building a national picture of litter across Scotland and the impact this is having on local communities.

Looking for information on how to organise a litter pick?

Find more information on our website:  
[www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org/cus](http://www.KeepScotlandBeautiful.org/cus)



# Checklist for success



## Planning your survey

Decide where you are going to do your survey and litter pick. Use our Clean Up Scotland guide to support you with litter picking logistics. Make sure you print survey sheets off and have plenty of pens, pencils and clipboards. Familiarise yourself with the site and do a risk assessment of the activity.



## On the day

Brief your volunteers. As with any litter pick, cover all risks and safety guidelines. For those helping with the survey make sure you clearly outline the transect **(the 100m survey area** - more about this on the next page) and how to fill in the sheets. We recommend working in pairs: one litter picking and identifying items, the other recording on the survey sheet. If you find something not listed on the survey sheet, add it in the 'other items' box at the end.



## After the event

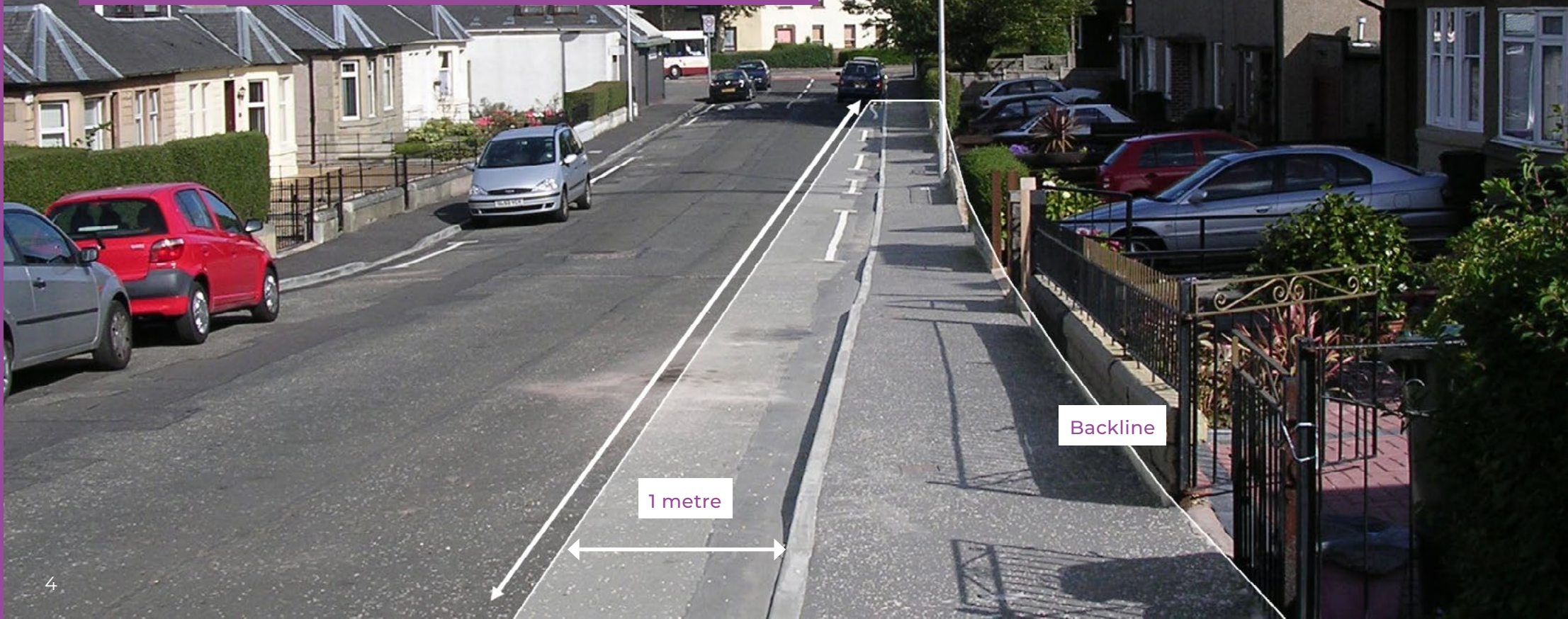
Submit your results at:  
<https://members.keepsotlandbeautiful.org>

Repeat – If you want to get a clear understanding of the littering trend repeat your survey, in the same location, regularly. Once a season is ideal but you can do it as often as you'd like.

# Working out your transect (100m area)

## Pedestrian street

Often on pavements, there is a physical barrier, such as a fence or wall. This is called the “backline” and may prevent you from surveying a full metre wide on either side of the transect. Where one of these is present you would work from this backline, across the pavement and up to a meter onto the nearside of the road.



1 metre

Backline

# Working out your transect

## Commercial Street

Some of the more littered areas might be high streets. Like the pedestrianised street there might be a pavement you can use as a transect, however, if the street has been fully pedestrianised then you can choose where to start your transect. Make sure to survey 1 metre on either side of you to complete the full transect area.

Top tip: If the street is busy, litter pick the 100m transect first and then use a quieter spot to analyse your items collect complete the survey sheet at a quieter spot afterwards.

Backline

1 metre

# Working out your transect

Path through a greenspace

Include the path and one metre each side of the path.



# Working out your transect

## Rural land / fields with no path network

Where there are no paths, try to follow a “desire line” (the place where most people seem to walk), and include up to one metre on either side of the desire line.



1 metre

1 metre

# Working out your transect

## Rural land / fields with no path network

Where possible, identify a desire line to use as a path as advised for field examples. If there are no obvious or long desire lines, use an existing feature, such as a wall, as the backline and follow the same procedure as a pedestrianised street.

To ensure consistency across surveys and allow comparisons to be made, all transects need to be 100m. This might mean you go beyond your normal litter picking route or need to extend your survey area.

Desire line

Backline

1 metre

# Carrying out your survey

## You will need:

### Survey sheets

(enough for one per survey area)

### **Pens / pencils**

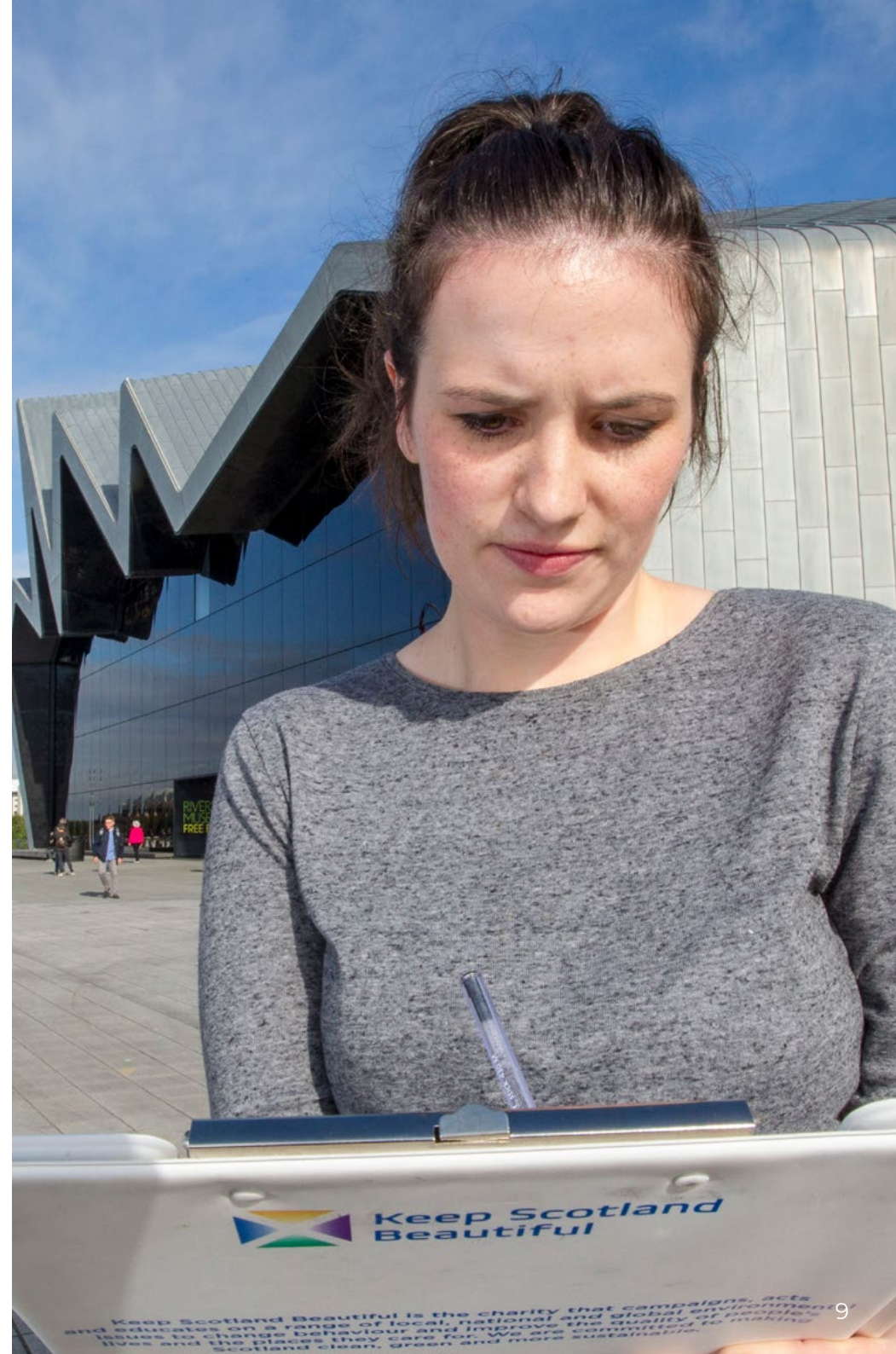
(enough for one per team)

### **Clipboards / something to lean against**

(enough for one per team)

## How accurate do I need to be?

The guidelines we give should be followed as closely as possible. The guidance on transect choice and size ensures that all of the information we gather is comparable. Being as accurate as possible when recording and submitting all of the litter collected gives a more robust and better indicator of the state of Scotland's local environment.



# Filling in your survey sheet

One survey sheet should be completed per transect, and should only include litter found in that area.

[You can download the survey sheet here.](#)

At the top there is space to include a description of the area, the location type and the overall grade. Other environmental quality indicators are included too. These are: vandalism, graffiti, weeds, detritus, ground staining (including chewing gum), flytipping and flyposting. Participants should tick the box that indicates the amount you see, ranging from not visible in that area, to a large amount in the area.

Walk your entire transect area, identifying each piece of litter that you find. Each individual bit of litter should be tallied and totals provided by type. It's easiest to pair up to do this – one person picking and identifying, the other marking them on the survey sheet.

If you have more than two people conducting the survey and wish to divide the transect into smaller sections you may wish to print additional survey sheets. Someone will need to consolidate the litter count tally at the end to capture litter within the entire transect on one sheet.

Make sure you fill in the exact number as we won't be able to use data like "lots" or "100s". There is an "other" section for each material type and a "miscellaneous" section to record items which aren't listed on the sheet. Please try to be as specific as possible.

**Top tip:** Read over part three of the survey sheet before your event, so know the different litter types and where they are on the sheet.

## Submitting your results

Please submit your survey results here:

<https://members.keepsotlandbeautiful.org>



# Example survey



**Survey details**

Group name Keep Cupar Beautiful

Organisers name John Smith

Name of location Eden Canal pathway

Type of location:

Local neighborhood  Woodlands

Park  Roadside / layby / carpark

School grounds / campus  Beach

Riverside  Coastal

Canal

Nearest village / town / landmark Cupar

Postcode AB12 3CD

Latitude (e.g 56.1267512) 56.1267512 Longitude (e.g -3.9633940) 3.9633940

Survey date 04.10.20 Survey time 10am

Weather conditions Bright and sunny

Are there any other factors influencing the survey (e.g. a recent clean up, a storm event or an overflowing bin)? Please provide details.

There was an over-flowing dog poo bin at the time of the survey.

Width of area surveyed: 2 metres



Your charity for Scotland's environment

**Litter count**

1. Plastic / polystyrene	Tally	Total	4. Metal	Tally	Total
4/6 pack yokes			Aerosol / spray cans		
Bags other: eg empty bin bags, animal feed / fertiliser			Appliances: eg washing machine		
Bags: shopping / partial shopping bags		3	BBQs		
Bottles / containers / drums: other			Cans: drinks can		5
Bottles / containers: eg plastic drinks bottle		7	Cans: food		
Cigarette butt / filter		15	Caps / lids		
Cigarette lighters / cigarette box wrapping / tobacco pouch		3	Fishing weights / hooks / lures		
Cups: plastic / polystyrene		2	Foil wrappers		
Fishing line, fishing net and net pieces			Paint tins		
Food / fast food container: plastic / polystyrene		3	Shopping trolley		1
Jerry cans / oil containers / drums			Wire / mesh / barbed wire		
Packets: crisp / sweets		5	Other (please specify)		
Party poppers / fireworks			<b>5. Rubber</b>	Tally	Total
Pens / pen lids			Balloons (inc string valves and ribbons)		
Plastic / polystyrene pieces			Boots eg wellington boots		
Plastic caps / lids		1	Tyres and engine belts		
Plastic cutlery / trays / straws / stirrers			Other (please specify)		
Plastic sheeting / industrial packaging			<b>6. Wood</b>	Tally	Total
Shoes / sandals			Crates / pallets		1
Shotgun cartridges			Wooden chip forks / lolly sticks		
String / cord / rope			Other (please specify)		
Toys / dummies			<b>7. Cloth</b>	Tally	Total
Other (please specify)			Clothing / shoes / towels		
<b>2. Paper / cardboard</b>	Tally	Total	Furnishings		
Bags			Sacking		
Cardboard: eg box			Other (please specify)		
Cartons: eg tetrapak juice carton			<b>8. Glass / ceramic</b>	Tally	Total
Cigarette packet			Construction material eg bricks, cement, tiles		
Cups: paper coffee cup		3	Drinks bottles / containers: glass		
Food / fast food container: eg pizza box		2	Glass or ceramic fragments		
Newspapers / magazines			Light bulbs / tubes		
Other (please specify)			Other (please specify)		
<b>3. Sanitary / medical</b>	Tally	Total	<b>9. Dog faeces</b>	Tally	Total
Condoms			Bagged		5
Containers / tubes inc pill packets			Left unbagged		3
Cotton bud stick			<b>10. Miscellaneous</b>	Tally	Total
Syringes / needles			Bagful rubbish: black bin bag		
Tampons / towels / panty liners			Bagful rubbish: shopping bag		
Wet wipes			Other (please specify)		
Other (please specify)					

# FAQs

## Do I have to do a survey on every Clean Up?

No, you can do a Clean Up without doing a survey. However, we would encourage you to complete a survey on every litter pick wherever possible. This enables you to see trends in littering, gives you a more informed position from which to develop future Clean Up activities and keeps our data relevant and current.

## Does my whole Clean Up need to be surveyed?

No, you only need to do one 100 metre stretch of the area to complete a survey.

## How many transects do I need to do for a survey?

A single transect (100 metre stretch) is a survey. However, we would encourage you to complete as many transects during your Clean Up as is manageable, as this gives a better picture of littering in the area.


## How often do I need to do a survey?

We would recommend that you do the survey at least once a year. However, to get the fullest picture possible, repeating the survey at different times, particularly seasonally, is recommended. We might ask you to repeat the survey at specific times if we are focussing on different types of problems, such as a dog fouling campaign.

## I'd like to use this survey as a way to monitor an anti-littering project. Can you help?

Yes, we have got lots of ideas on how you could use this. Get in touch, using the contact details on the next page, with your idea and we can discuss how we can support you.





Thank you for completing a survey. On our online platform you will be able to download your own survey reports to give you evidence of the litter levels in your area. <https://members.keepscotlandbeautiful.org>

To find out how you can use this evidence to tackle this problem check out our website: [www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/cus](http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/cus)

If you have any other questions, get in touch with us at [cleanup@keepscotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:cleanup@keepscotlandbeautiful.org) or 01786 47133.



We support the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that provides advice and support to help create and maintain cleaner, safer and healthier local environments where people and communities can thrive. It's part of our work to make Scotland clean, green and sustainable.



T: 01786 471333 E: [info@keepscotlandbeautiful.org](mailto:info@keepscotlandbeautiful.org)

 [facebook.com/KSBScot](https://facebook.com/KSBScot)  [@KSBScot](https://twitter.com/KSBScot)

[www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/cus](http://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/cus)

