

# Ban the use of non-biodegradable dog poo bags

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 21 Mawrth 2022  
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Reference: SR22/2236-5

Petition Number: P-06-1259

Petition title: Ban the use of non-biodegradable dog poo bags

Text of petition: Plastic dog waste bags last for centuries and have a large negative impact on the environment. Even when they eventually break down, they remain as toxic micro plastics, threatening wildlife and human health.

## 1. Background

There are approximately nine million dogs in the UK, with 26% of households owning at least one dog. It has been estimated that dogs produce more than 1,000 tons of faeces every day in the UK and much of this waste is deposited in public areas.

There are a wide variety of dog waste bags available to purchase – from standard plastic to biodegradable. Dog waste bags are usually disposed of in general waste (“black bag”) bins. It is illegal for dog owners to not clean up their dog’s waste in a



public area, and [fixed penalty notices](#) can be issued for non-compliance. There is an [exemption](#) for some kinds of public land in England and Wales, including: land used for agriculture or woodlands; rural common land; land that is predominantly marshland, moor or heath; and highways with a speed limit of 50mph or more. Some local authorities in Wales also [issue fines](#) for dog owners who walk their pets without carrying waste bags. More information about dog fouling can be found in this [House of Commons library briefing](#).

In March 2021 the Welsh Government published its circular economy strategy, [Beyond Recycling](#), which includes a headline action to “phase out unnecessary single-use items, especially plastic”. Between July and October 2020 it [consulted on proposals to reduce single-use plastic](#). The consultation included a proposed list of nine items to be banned including **oxo-degradable products** (plastic products which break down by oxidation into micro-fragments). Examples include carrier bags, agricultural mulch films and, most recently, certain plastic bottles. The consultation does not specifically mention dog waste bags, but due to the wide variety available to purchase it is likely some would fall under this category. However the [Internal Market Act 2020](#) has raised [uncertainty about the practicalities of a ban](#), as any single-use plastics banned in Wales but permitted or imported into the rest of the UK could still be sold in Wales.

Keep Wales Tidy has published two reports on dog fouling: [Tackling Dog Fouling](#) and [Enforcement of Litter and Dog Fouling](#). The first references work by the Wales Centre for Behaviour Change, Bangor University and stakeholders which found that many people do not realise that they can put dog waste bags into a street bin, creating a barrier to responsible behaviour. Neither report explores the issue of non-biodegradable waste bags.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The letter from the Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, outlines a number of challenges associated with banning non-biodegradable dog waste bags, including:

- Variation in the materials used for making “environmentally friendly” bags. She states “compostable bags” made from natural materials often require specific conditions of heat and temperature to decompose, which are not found in the natural environment; and

- The potential unintended consequence of people not disposing of their bags properly as they believe they will quickly and safely break down.

The Minister believes the most effective way to tackle the issue is to ensure dog owners pick up dog waste and dispose of it appropriately in a bin. She outlines the Welsh Government is working with Local Authorities and Keep Wales Tidy, including funding the [Caru Cymru](#) programme, which has a [specific campaign focused on dog fouling](#).

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue of biodegradable dog waste bags has not been considered in the Senedd.

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