



**UK** SUSTAINABLE  
FLOORING  
ALLIANCE

## Info Sheet – Waste Crime Action Plan- England (Apr 2026)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** UKSFA is NOT a Regulatory Body. This document has been created for information only and is **not** advice. Readers should consult with the appropriate Regulatory Body before undertaking any action.

### Waste Crime Action Plan 2026: What does it mean for flooring?

The Government's new Waste Crime Action Plan is a clear signal that the issue of waste is being treated as a serious, organised activity.

With stronger enforcement, tighter rules, and mandatory digital tracking on the horizon, flooring businesses should expect higher compliance standards and some short-term cost pressure.

#### What's changing?

**Stronger enforcement** - A £45m boost to the Environment Agency (EA) means more inspections, faster site shutdowns, and closer collaboration with police and HMRC. Expect quicker action against illegal waste sites, including those handling flooring materials.

**Expanded powers** - EA officers are set to gain 'police-style' powers, allowing earlier intervention and searches. The goal is to disrupt criminal activity faster and recover illicit profits.

**Faster penalties** - Unlimited civil penalties are already in play, enabling the EA to fine offenders more quickly without lengthy court cases. Serious breaches will still face criminal prosecution.

**Digital Waste Tracking (DWT)** - From October 2026, sites receiving waste must log it all digitally. This will replace paper-based processes with real-time, regulator-visible data.

**New permitting rules** - Carriers, brokers, and dealers will be reclassified as "transporters" and "controllers," requiring permits and competence checks. Many flooring businesses that arrange or move waste may fall into these categories.

**Exemption reforms** - Activities previously covered by exemptions, such as certain storage or sorting operations, may now require full permits. The aim is to close any loopholes.

#### What does this mean in practice?

- Quicker shutdowns of non-compliant sites
- Data-led inspections, with inconsistencies in waste records triggering investigations
- Greater scrutiny of everyone in the waste chain, not just end operators
- Less reliance on paperwork, as digital tracking exposes weak compliance

##### Impact on costs

In the short term, costs are likely to rise due to investment in DWT systems and staff training. There will also be higher fees from permitted carriers and brokers, and increased costs where exemptions are replaced by permits.

However, there will be some potential savings in the long term for compliant firms. The aim is to reduce illegal competition undercutting legitimate operators and create better value recovery from well-segregated flooring waste.

The plan also aims to deliver more stable pricing as the market becomes more transparent.

### **What are the opportunities for flooring businesses?**

- Traceable take-back schemes can become a competitive advantage
- Better data supports ESG reporting and client requirements
- Stronger partnerships with compliant operators can improve tender success

### **What should you do now?**

Start by mapping your waste collection supply chain in detail, making sure you clearly understand who is acting as the controller, the transporter at each stage and where the FINAL end destinations for all of your materials are. This clarity will be essential as roles become more tightly regulated.

At the same time, begin preparing for Digital Waste Tracking by speaking with your waste partners about their readiness and timelines, ensuring you're aligned well ahead of implementation.

It's also important to review how your materials are classified, particularly when dealing with legacy flooring that may contain hazardous elements. Misclassification will become much more visible under the new system. Alongside this, check whether any current waste exemptions you rely on will still apply under the updated rules, as some may be withdrawn or tightened.

Finally, plan financially. Increased compliance requirements, system upgrades, and potential changes in waste handling costs mean you should build additional allowance into your budgets for 2026–27.