

# Press release: New appointments to the Natural Capital Committee

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove has appointed two new members to the Natural Capital Committee.

Professors Melanie Austen and Chris Collins bring their expertise in marine conservation and soil health and are appointed for the remainder of the Committee's current term, through to December 2020.

Professor Austen said:

The Natural Capital Committee has been influential in advising government on the importance of natural capital on sustainable economic growth, health and wellbeing.

I feel honoured to have been invited to join the Committee and am particularly looking forward to adding a distinctly marine perspective, and considering how implementation of the 25 year Environment Plan could improve our natural marine environment and the sustainable benefits that we gain from it.

Professor Austen is a marine ecologist and interdisciplinary marine researcher who is a Head of Science for the Sea and Society group at Plymouth Marine Laboratory. She has recently been appointed as an independent member of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); completed a three year term as the Chief Scientific Advisor to the UK's Marine Management Organisation (MMO); and for the last twenty years has been developing and leading UK and EU funded collaborative marine research projects, including currently GCRF Blue Communities in South East Asia.

Through her interdisciplinary research she has examined and quantified the societal consequences and policy relevance of changes to the marine environment and its ecosystems. She has been an Honorary Professor at the University of Exeter medical school since 2014, a member of other Expert Advisory Groups, and has chaired an EU Marine Board expert group on ecosystem valuation.

Professor Chris Collins is Chair of Environmental Chemistry at the University of Reading, where his research focuses on determining the factors controlling exposure of biota to environmental pollution to develop the evidence base for regulators.

He is the Natural Environment Research Council Soils Coordinator, overseeing a £10 million research investment to improve our understanding of how soils resist, recover and adapt to land use and climate change. Professor Collins chairs the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee providing expert advice to the UK Government on

how to protect the environment, and human health via the environment from chemicals.

Professor Collins said:

Soils have been a bit of a Cinderella topic when compared to air and water, so to restate the commitment to manage soils sustainably by 2030 in the 25 Year Environment Plan was a major step forward. Serving on the Committee will help to ensure we develop the approaches to deliver this aspiration.

Professor Dieter Helm, Chair of the Natural Capital Committee, commented:

Melanie and Chris bring world-leading expertise. They will strengthen the Committee's ability to support implementation of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan at a vital time for the protection and enhancement of our natural environment.

Other members of the Committee include Professors Ian Bateman, Diane Coyle, Paul Leinster, Colin Mayer and Kathy Willis. Dame Georgina Mace recently left the Committee to take up a position on the Adaptation Sub Committee of the Committee on Climate Change.

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## **[Press release: Fishing licence money protecting fish from predatory birds](#)**

Local anglers at Wedgwood pools had been concerned that a number of Cormorants and Goosanders were eating the fish and leaving very little behind. The birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, so it was up to the Environment Agency to step in and protect the fish.

Last week saw the completion of 2 fish refuge 'floating islands' at Wedgwood pools, Barleston, Stoke on Trent. The islands allow fish cover from the birds, through the use of cages beneath the islands, allowing fish to swim in but not the birds.

Environment Agency Fisheries Technical Officer, Mick Buxton said:

This has been a really worthwhile project to be involved in. The Cormorants and Goosanders are having a significant impact on the recruitment of fish, so by introducing these islands, the fish have a greater opportunity to thrive.

There is a secondary benefit from the project too. The plants on the island will also help improve the water quality of the pool, because the plants feed off nutrients in the water and this reduces the risk of algal blooms. The floating islands project was funded through the Fisheries Improvement Program, where the money is collected from anglers through rod licence sales.

An annual fishing licence costs just £30 and now lasts for 12 months from the day you buy it. Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through re-stocking, eradicating invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Fishing licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing, to encourage participation in the sport and to manage a voluntary bailiff scheme.

Children under 13 fish for free. Anyone aged 13 to 16 also fish for free, but do need to have a valid Environment Agency fishing licence. Anyone over 16 must pay for an Environment Agency fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

More information on fisheries and fishing licences, including how to buy your rod licence is available [online](#).

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## **[News story: Precautionary Recall – Children's Blackcurrant Cough Syrup](#)**

People should check bottles of some own-brand children's blackcurrant cough syrup to see if they need a replacement.

A problem with one of the ingredients in these medicines has been identified which could cause them to allow mould to grow. There is a low risk that the mould could make the child unwell or cause a reaction, although to date we are not aware of any cases where this has happened. As a precaution it has been decided to recall affected batches.

Only a small number of batches from 8 different products are being recalled. No other cough syrups are affected.

Dr Sam Atkinson, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) Director of the Inspection, Enforcement and Standards Division said:

Check if you have any of the listed cough syrups and if you do,

please don't use them. Take them back to where you bought them from.

The mould is not always visible, so return any of the affected cough syrup bottles, even if it looks okay to use. "If your child has recently taken one of these cough syrups, and, in the unlikely event that they have become unwell or had a reaction, please speak to your GP, pharmacist or other healthcare professional.

Our highest priority is making sure the medicines you and your family take are safe. This is why, even though there is a low risk of a reaction, we have asked the company to carry out this recall and why we want people to check their medicine cabinets.

As with any medicine, we strongly encourage anyone to report any suspected side effects to us via our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

## Notes to Editor

Brand and Product Description	Batch Number(s)	Expiry Date
Asda Children's Dry Cough Syrup Glycerol Blackcurrant Flavour	274V1, 276V1, 278V1, 283W1	27/09/2017, 31/10/2017, 02/01/2018, 19/02/2018
Bell's Children's Cough Syrup Blackcurrant Flavour	280V3	04/01/2018
Morrisons Children's Dry Tickly Cough Glycerin 0.75g/5ml Oral Solution	282W1	30/01/2018
Numark Children's Dry Cough 0.75 g/5 ml Oral Solution	280V1, 288W1	04/01/2018, 27/04/2018
Sainsbury's Children's Dry Cough 0.75g/5ml Syrup	275V1	11/10/2017
Superdrug Children's Dry Tickly Cough Glycerin 0.75 g/5 ml Oral Solution	280V2, 284W1	04/01/2018, 24/03/2018
Tesco Children's Dry Cough Syrup	277V1, 278V2, 281W1	31/10/2017, 02/01/2018, 30/01/2018
Wilko Tickly Cough 0.75g/5ml Oral Solution	275V2	11/10/2017

1. MHRA is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgments to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes

the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#) and the [Clinical Practice Research Datalink \(CPRD\)](#). The Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health. [www.mhra.gov.uk](http://www.mhra.gov.uk)

2. [Link to Yellow Card Scheme](#)

3. Images:

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## [Press release: Government publishes key licensing changes to further protect tenants](#)

New guidance for landlords to further protect tenants from poor living conditions has been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government today (20 June 2018).

Following legislation introduced last month, from 1 October 2018 any landlord who lets a property to 5 or more people – from 2 or more separate households – must be licensed by their local housing authority.

The move, affecting around 160,000 houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), will mean councils can take further action to crack down on the small minority of landlords renting out sub-standard and overcrowded homes.

New rules will also come into force setting minimum size requirements for bedrooms in HMOs to prevent overcrowding. Landlords will also be required to adhere to council refuse schemes, to reduce problems with rubbish.

The [guidance document](#) includes further details on extending mandatory licensing to smaller HMOs and introducing minimum bedroom sizes as government continues to rebalance the relationship between tenants and landlords.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone deserves a decent and safe place to live.

Today's new guidance for landlords will further protect private renters against bad and overcrowded conditions and poor management practice.

## **Selective licensing**

Government is also today announcing a review to look at how selective licensing is used and find out how well it is working.

In areas where selective licensing applies, landlords must apply for a licence if they want to rent out a property. This means the council can check whether they are a “fit or proper person” to be a landlord, as well as making other stipulations concerning management of the property and appropriate safety measures.

The review will see independent commissioners gather evidence from local authorities and bodies representing landlords, tenants and housing professionals.

The review’s findings will be reported in spring 2019. There will be an update on progress in autumn this year.

Selective licensing allows local housing authorities to make it compulsory for all private rented accommodation in a specified area to have a licence.

The schemes are intended to deliver improved standards and safety in the private rented sector for areas suffering serious problems.