

## **Notice: Richard Matthews: application made to abstract water**

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

---

## **Research and analysis: Environmental costs and benefits at the site of the London 2012 Olympics**

This project set out to estimate what value has been added to the environment in and around the Olympics site in East London through the Environment Agency's engagement with the planning system.

It found that the Environment Agency used £1.5 million of resources to influence the spending of approximately £113 million, which achieved estimated benefits to people and the environment of £116 million over a 40 year period.

---

## **Guidance: Water Environment Grant (WEG) handbooks: guidance and forms**

*Updated:* Terms and conditions document for agreement holders added.

The Water Environment Grant (WEG) scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The scheme closed at 5pm on 11 May 2018. The WEG team will not consider late

applications.

## Successful applicants

Use the 'Guide for agreement holders' to understand what you'll need to do if you get a grant – when you become an 'agreement holder'. This guide explains:

- when you can start work
- how to get paid
- about inspections
- the penalties you'll incur if you breach your agreement terms

The WEG claim form will be available shortly.

Use the 'Terms and conditions for agreement holders' to understand the terms of your agreement.

Use the 'Guide for applicants' to understand the scheme rules.

Use 'Annex A: using geographic databases' to help you find out more on water bodies and designated sites in your project's area.

---

## [Press release: Justice Secretary unveils new bill to cut car insurance premiums](#)

- Clampdown on whiplash claims to save motorists about £35 per year
- The whiplash changes are part of government's wider programme to tackle the compensation culture which is driving up costs to consumers and taxpayers
- Bill includes changes to the way the personal injury discount rate is calculated to bring certainty and transparency to the system, and savings for the NHS

The legislation sets in law measures which will reduce the unacceptably high number of whiplash claims and allow insurers to cut premiums, with motorists anticipated to save on average about £35 per year.

The whiplash measures form a major plank of the Government's wider work to tackle the country's compensation culture, ensuring a more balanced and fair system for all concerned. They follow earlier reforms including the forthcoming ban on cold calling, tougher regulation of claims management companies, and a clampdown on spiralling holiday sickness claims.

The high number of whiplash claims has contributed to increased insurance

premiums but these measures will mean about £1 billion in savings which insurers have pledged to pass on to drivers.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

The number of whiplash claims has been too high for too long, and is symptomatic of a wider compensation culture.

We are putting this right through this important legislation, ensuring whiplash claims are no longer an easy payday and that money can be put back in the pockets of millions of law-abiding motorists.

Road traffic accident related personal injury claims are 50% higher than a decade ago, despite the fall in the number of reported accidents and the UK having some of the safest roads in Europe.

This rise has been fuelled by predatory parts of the claims industry that encourage minor, exaggerated and fraudulent claims, driving up the costs of insurance premiums for ordinary motorists.

The whiplash measures are aimed at cracking down on these claims. The measures will ensure fairness to both motorists and claimants by:

Also contained in the Bill are changes to the way the personal injury discount rate for serious injuries is calculated.

The changes, first mooted in September, will provide a more balanced approach to compensation that fully compensates victims of catastrophic accidents, including the most vulnerable, while addressing issues around overpayment which could have a knock-on effect on public services with large personal injury liabilities – particularly the NHS.

The discount rate is the percentage used to adjust compensation awards for victims of serious personal injury, according to the amount they could expect to earn by investing it. Its application is an important part of the calculation of awards. It only relates to compensation for future loss.

The adjusted awards should put claimants in the same financial position they would have been in had they not been injured – they should receive neither more nor less than full compensation.

In February last year the discount rate was reviewed as required by the law and reduced from 2.5% to minus 0.75%. This dramatically increased the size of awards of damages to individuals.

At the time, the government acknowledged that this move was likely to have a significant impact, launching a consultation on the way the discount rate is calculated in March, followed by the publication of draft legislation in September.

We have also carefully considered the report of the Justice Committee on the draft legislation and accepted the majority of its recommendations.

The changes to the discount rate now being introduced through the Civil Liability Bill will create a fairer and better system of setting the discount rate, which will still provide full compensation. To ensure this happens we will:

- set the rate with reference to 'low risk' rather than 'very low risk' investments as at present, better reflecting evidence of the actual investment habits of claimants;
- establish a regular review of the rate, the first within 90 days of the legislation coming into force and at least every three years thereafter;
- establish an independent expert panel Chaired by the Government Actuary to advise the Lord Chancellor on the setting of the rate.

## **Notes to editors**

The Government's commitment to tackle the whiplash epidemic has previously been welcomed by the Association of British Insurers (ABI), with leading insurance firms including Aviva and LV= pledging to pass 100% of savings onto motorists.

In February 2017 the discount rate was reduced from 2.5% to minus 0.75%, which has led to larger awards and concerns in some quarters that the current law provides more compensation than needed to claimants. The consultation, launched in March, sought to address those concerns by collecting views on how to make the system better and fairer.

It is a well-established principle of law that individuals should receive full compensation for losses suffered as a result of personal injuries that are not their fault. The personal injury discount rate is a percentage used to adjust the lump sum awards for future losses, costs and expenses received by victims of life-changing injuries to account for the amount victims can expect to earn by investing their awards. The discount rate applied to the compensation for future financial loss (such as loss of future earnings and care costs) should ensure that people receive the full compensation that they were awarded – no more or less – by taking into account what they are likely to earn on that money before they are expected to have spent it.

The current framework for setting the discount rate uses real yields from Index Linked Gilts as a proxy for the returns that can be expected from a very low risk investment strategy. However, drawing on expertise from financial advisers, the Government has found strong evidence that in practice claimants are advised to and invest in low risk diversified portfolios.

At the time the discount rate was lowered, a number of pledges were made,

including a consultation to consider whether there is a better and fairer way of setting the rate in future. That framework is contained in the legislation published today.

---

## **Press release: Environment Agency says that a different approach is needed to tackle flooding over next 50 years**

A different approach is needed to tackle flooding over next 50 years, Environment Agency Chief Executive James Bevan has said today

- Country is better protected than ever against flooding
- Every £1 invested in flood schemes saves £10 in damages avoided
- During this century a new approach is needed to tackle flood risk in 21st Century

Over the next century a different approach is needed to protect the country from flooding, the Environment Agency's Chief Executive said in a keynote speech at the annual Flood and Coast Conference today (Tuesday 20 March).

As he revealed that every £1 invested in new flood schemes saves the economy £10 in damages avoided, Sir James Bevan said that despite huge advances in flood protection, what worked so well in the past will not be enough in the future. Rising sea levels and higher populations in built-up areas will mean new approaches are needed to combat increasing flood risk. Since 2015, new flood schemes completed by the Environment Agency have benefitted more than 100,000 homes but to continue building on this success new 21st century approaches are needed.

These include a call for greater business investment, quicker emergency response and increased use of natural flood schemes, in addition to 'hard' defences, in order to reduce the impact of flooding on communities around the country. He questioned how these challenges should be dealt with and suggest that more concrete – simply building our flood defences higher and higher – is not the answer.

As he laid out his thoughts on the future of flood protection, Sir James Bevan said that tough questions had to be asked about what to protect. He questioned whether there might be a case for considering future funding priorities.

He said that everyone has a part to play to reduce flood risk and that homeowners in flood risk areas should know the risks and what action they can take – and he praised communities and flood groups who have already taken

great steps in this area.

Sir James Bevan said:

Almost every day in this country, when rivers and tides rise, rain falls and storms blow, thousands of people sleep safe and unaware that they are being protected by flood defences.

But what works so well now – and has done in the past – may not be enough in the future. Over the next fifty years if we are going to give the country the best possible protection against flooding, we are going to need a different approach.

The Environment Agency manages flood risk on over 36,000 km of river, 9,000km raised flood defences and over 22,000 flood structures – from the Thames Barrier to local pumping stations. Since 2016, it has upgraded its response capability with more than 6,500 staff trained and ready to help protect communities when floods threaten, 40km of temporary barriers, 250 mobile pumps, and 500,000 sandbags. Partnerships to help respond during incidents have also been strengthened – including with the army.

Government is investing £2.6 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management projects between 2015 and 2021.

Now in its third year, the annual Flood and Coast Conference brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. More on the conference here: <https://www.floodandcoast.com/>.

The Environment Agency is currently working in its next National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy which will address these challenging questions raised in Sir James Bevan's speech.