

# [News story: Enforcement Undertakings accepted from United Utilities](#)

United Utilities have paid £155,000 to environmental charities as part of two Enforcement Undertakings (EUs). The EUs were offered to the Environment Agency after the company admitted causing sewage to pollute two watercourses in the summer of 2016.

## **Benefit to environment**

EUs are a new kind of restorative enforcement sanction. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable.

In July 2016, a blockage in a sewage detention tank in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, caused sewage to overflow to the River Goyt, resulting in discoloration to the river downstream to New Mills, and sewage fungus being deposited on the river bed for at least a kilometre. Although no fish were found to have been killed, there was a short-term but significant impact on invertebrate life and the river habitat, in which fish such as trout and bullhead normally thrive.

In August 2016, a blockage in a sewer in Millbrook, Tameside, caused an overflow through a dislodged hatch cover, resulting in a similar impact on a shorter stretch of Swineshaw Brook which runs to the River Tame.

The EU offers were accepted by the Environment Agency in October 2017 and were completed in January 2018. United Utilities made a total of £155,000 in donations to the Wild Trout Trust, the Ramblers Association and the Healthy Rivers Trust. This money will be used to fund environmental improvements and research in the affected catchments and to restore endangered footpaths.

The company also spent a further £10,000 removing rubbish from Swineshaw Brook and also paid the Environment Agency's incident response and investigation costs in full. In response to both incidents United Utilities had acted quickly to stop the pollution and resolve the cause. As part of the EUs the company also committed to improving their infrastructure and asset maintenance schedules in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

Mike Higgins, an Environment Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

They offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a

court prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to voluntarily make things right. We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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## [News story: London school helps to shape Relationships and Sex education](#)

The City of London Academy in Southwark has been participating in the Department for Education's call for evidence, asking parents, teachers and young people to help shape the new Relationships and Sex education curriculum. Staff and pupils at the school have engaged with age-appropriate content such as mental wellbeing and staying safe online.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb met with teachers and pupils to discuss why the lessons are important and to hear their views on these issues. These steps will help to set guidance for all schools on how to teach these subjects so that it helps young people face the challenges of the modern world.

Academic standards are rising in England, with around 390,000 more London pupils in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010 and 93 per cent of London schools given this rating at their last inspection.

Making sure young people have the knowledge they need to stay safe and develop healthy relationships is part of the government's drive to raise education standards even further.

Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

It has been a pleasure to meet the teachers at the City of London

Academy and to talk to the pupils benefitting from an education that teaches them the importance of healthy and stable relationships.

There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and across the country, schools like the City of London Academy, with 64 per cent of pupils being entered for the EBacc, are raising standards for pupils.

We want to continue to raise the bar and that's why we have committed to update relationships and sex education to meet the needs of young people today. Our call for evidence closes next week and we want as many people as possible to have their say on what the new curriculum should include.

The current statutory guidance for teaching Relationships and Sex education was introduced in 2000. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. The guidance is being updated after legislation was passed by Parliament earlier this year to make relationships education compulsory in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex education compulsory in all secondary schools.

The eight-week 'call for evidence' has been gathering views from people across England from all backgrounds on the content of this subject. It will establish:

- how parents expect their children to be taught this topic in a safe and age-appropriate way; and
- what teachers think they should be teaching their pupils to help them navigate the modern world they are growing up in;
- what children themselves think they would benefit from understanding the most, and the online risks they are concerned with.

Head of the School Dr Jeffery Quaye said:

I welcome the Department of Education's decision to make Relationship and Sex Education as statutory requirement for schools from 2019/2020. Here at City of London Academy Southwark, we observed that by placing more emphasis on relationship instead of the mechanics of reproduction, we have raised students' awareness of sexting and sexual harassment. Also, our students have developed better understanding of the benefits of healthy relationships, staying safe online and managing emotions. Through balanced curriculum changes and a new framework of teaching students, we have seen noticeable evidence of mutual respect, empathy, self-confidence and wellbeing enhanced amongst our students.

Year 11 pupil, Keana Nicholas Pipe said:

I think learning PSHE is important to help students know what to do if they find themselves in any difficult situations. I think it's important to learn about consent because and through the classes I now feel more confident. I know who to ask for advice and how to make an informed choice.

The move to make Relationships and Sex education compulsory was welcomed by the teaching profession and organisations such as Barnardo's, Stonewall, the Catholic Education Service, NSPCC, Terrence Higgins Trust and the End Violence Against Women coalition.

Teachers, parents and young people are invited to have their say on relationship education in schools [here](#)

The call for evidence closes on Monday 12 February.

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## **[Press release: Committee welcomes report of the Cross-Party Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy](#)**

This is a strong, cross-party set of proposals from the working group, which offer a standard of protection and independent support in line with those that the best employers offer their staff.

We welcome the strengthening of the roles of the independent Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards and House Committees, and, for the first time, a shared and binding behaviour code.

For these proposals to fully address unacceptable behaviour, they must be rooted in the leadership, culture and practice of the House. This report is an important and welcome first step.

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## **[News story: Government funding boost for bus industry in drive to improve](#)**

# air quality

*Updated:* First year funding figure for Southampton City Council corrected to £1,177,835.

Funding will be awarded to 20 local authorities as part of the Clean Bus Technology Fund, which was launched in 2017 and is run by the Joint Air Quality Unit.

[Speaking at the UK Bus Summit at London's QEII Centre](#) on 8 February 2018, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani set out how the money will enable older vehicles to meet minimum emissions standards, and contribute to better air quality.

Speaking at the Bus Summit, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Buses and coaches are hugely important to those who rely on them and to the communities in which these people live and work.

Road transport is going to change dramatically over the next couple of decades – and we have to make sure that the bus industry is ready to benefit from those changes.

We have to move away from nose-to-tail car traffic at peak times, endless engine idling, stop-start travel and rising pollution and carbon emissions. Rather than contributing to the problem – buses and coaches very much form part of the solution.

The money will allow councils to retrofit vehicles with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide, as part of a drive to help ensure that more buses and coaches can contribute to improving air quality in UK cities.



Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

Poor air quality affects public health, the economy and the environment, which is why we are determined to do more.

I am delighted to see so many high quality applications to the Clean Bus Technology Fund and, as a result, the government has decided to bring forward funding meaning that we will award nearly £40 million to retrofit more than 2,700 buses.

This is another way which the government is delivering on its commitment to improving the environment within a generation and leave it in a better state than we found it.

Alongside this, the Department for Transport will use the [Bus Services Act](#) as a way of encouraging councils and bus companies to look at measures to encourage the public to use buses.

In 2016, government invested £30 million through the [Low Emission Bus Scheme](#), which helped put over 300 new low emission buses on the roads, with a further £11 million and 150 buses being announced in 2017.

## Winners



<b>Clean Bus Technology Fund 2017 to 2019 winners</b>	<b>Number of buses</b>	<b>2017/18 funding</b>	<b>2018/19 funding</b>
1. West Yorkshire Combined Authority	156	£1,368,000	£1,474,200
2. Bristol City Council	81	£1,047,800	£1,167,000
3. Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	79	£828,000	£674,180
4. Leeds City Council	75	£0	£1,371,000
5. Transport for West Midlands	364	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
6. Leicester City Council	109	£1,101,581	£1,101,581
7. Oxford City Council	83	£938,910	£724,020
8. Coventry City Council	104	£0	£1,500,000
9. Nottinghamshire County Council	112	£1,373,265	£0
10. Transport for Greater Manchester	170	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
11. North Tyneside Council	69	£862,600	£339,000
12. Nottingham City Council	171	£1,500,000	£1,196,517
13. Transport for London	500	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
14. Sheffield City Council	117	£560,000	£1,386,800
15. Liverpool City Region Combined	149	£1,499,586	£1,497,277
16. Southampton City Council	145	£1,177,835	£1,500,000
17. Derby City Council	152	£1,500,000	£798,330
18. Essex County Council	60	£1,072,500	£0
19. South Tyneside Council	29	£232,500	£252,000
20. Newcastle City Council	43	£180,000	£510,000
Totals	2768	£19,742,577	£19,991,905

## Further information

In November 2016 the Department for Transport announced a further £100 million to support low emission buses. Of this, £40 million was put towards the Clean Bus Technology Fund, and £60 million was dedicated to new low emission buses. From the £60 million, £11 million was used to fund the best of the bids which had initially narrowly missed out on funding from LEBS, supporting the purchase of a further 150 low emission buses. The remaining £49 million will be used to fund the next round of the Low Emission Bus Scheme.

By 15 September this year (2018), 5 local authorities are required to set out their final plans for bringing nitrogen dioxide concentrations within legal limits in the shortest possible time. A further 23 local authorities are required to set out their initial plans by the end of March, with final plans by the end of the year.

In August 2017, the [Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership launched the Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme](#), with government funding support.



## **Roads media enquiries**

Media enquiries  
020 7944 3021

Out of hours media enquiries  
020 7944 4292

Switchboard  
0300 330 3000