

# Press release: Environmental charities receive over £1.5 million from businesses which broke environmental laws

*Updated:* Change of tense in one paragraph

Companies which broke environmental laws – either by polluting rivers, breaching permit conditions designed to protect communities or avoiding recycling – have agreed to make payments to a range of charities and have pledged to make improvements to avoid future offences.

30 charities and projects will benefit from the bumper pay-out of £1,564,761.09. The money will be spent by local groups on projects that will make a direct positive impact on the environment. Stretches of rivers will be cleaned up, native species will be restocked into rivers and communities groups will invest in parkland for everyone to enjoy.

There are 26 Enforcement Undertakings on the new list with payments ranging from £1,500 – £375,000, including 6 companies that have agreed to make 6 figure payments:

- Northumbrian Water Limited (£375,000) for pumping raw sewage into a tributary of the River Tyne.
- Filippo Berio UK Limited (£253,906.91) for failing to recover or recycle packaging waste.
- Anglian Water Services Limited have made two separate payments (£100,000 and £100,000) both for causing pollution incidents which killed fish.
- Heineken UK Limited (£160,000) for causing a pollution incident which killed fish.
- Kerry Ingredients UK Limited (£127,975) for causing a pollution incident which killed fish.
- Sandoz Limited (£120,932.23) for failing to recover or recycle packaging waste.

As well as making a suitable payment to an appropriate environmental charity, each company has accepted liability, demonstrated restoration of harm and invested to reduce the risk of similar breaches occurring in future.

The Environment Agency's ability to accept Enforcement Undertakings was extended in 2015 to a far wider range of offences. The Environment Agency is increasingly using this method of enforcement for suitable cases to swiftly restore the environment, improve practices of the offending company and avoid longer criminal court cases. However prosecutions will still be taken, particularly in the most serious cases.

Peter Kellett, Legal Director for the Environment Agency said:

We take pollution incidents very seriously and the payments of £1.5 million we're announcing today are the result of our firm but fair enforcement action and will benefit people and the environment across the country.

Enforcement Undertakings allow those who commit offences to restore the environment and to take steps to prevent a recurrence. When appropriate, they allow a quicker resolution than a prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to put things right with their local communities.

Stephen Trotter, Director, The Wildlife Trusts England, said:

The principle that a polluter should make amends for the damage they've caused makes good sense. We all depend on a healthy environment and this positive scheme allows some natural improvements to be funded which otherwise wouldn't happen. Clearly it would be better if these incidents hadn't happened in the first place – but at least something positive has come out of it.

Hertfordshire & Middlesex Wildlife Trust will use the money to help conserve and protect rare chalk streams and Surrey Wildlife Trust will support a range of projects including care of their heathlands through conservation grazing and Hedgerow Heroes, a citizen science project, to restore the remarkable network of hedges across the county that act as green corridors for wildlife.

The Wildlife Trusts also welcome the deterrent effect that these Enforcement Undertakings should have. It's really important that people understand their responsibilities and care for the natural world – it's also cheaper and makes business sense to do things cleanly than risk causing damage and pollution.

Restoration projects are in addition to work initially carried out to minimise environmental damage caused by pollution. Companies or members of the public are urged report pollution to the Environment Agency's 24/7 hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Environment Agency officers respond to limit damage to the environment and protect people and wildlife.

Several six-figure payments have been made for not recovering and recycling packaging. All companies producing packaging have a responsibility to recycle or pay for recycling to compensate and failure to follow packaging regulations will result in enforcement action and financial penalties.

- The list of enforcement undertakings is published here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enforcement-undertakings-accepted-by-the-environment-agency>

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# Press release: Foreign Secretary statement following increased fighting in eastern Ukraine

From:

First published:

31 January 2017

Part of:

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has urged restraint following the recent escalation of fighting in eastern Ukraine, and expressed concern about the worsening humanitarian situation.

Recent days have seen a significant increase in fighting in the Donbas, particularly focused around the town of Avdiivka where the Ukrainians have declared a state of emergency.

The Foreign Secretary said:

Over the past few days we have seen a high number of casualties and the humanitarian situation has deteriorated drastically in Avdiivka. Many civilians are without water, electricity and heating while outside temperatures are as low as -20 degrees.

The immediate priority must be security and a full sustained ceasefire, in line with the provisions of the Minsk agreements. I urge all parties to demonstrate restraint, and help facilitate crucial repairs to restore vital utilities and assist the vulnerable. Sanctions against Russia cannot be lifted until the Minsk commitments are fulfilled.

The UK continues to stand by Ukraine in full support of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**Further information**

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# News story: CMA reviews FirstGroup bus undertakings in Bristol

From:

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The CMA is to review long-standing undertakings covering FirstGroup and local authority tendered bus services in the Greater Bristol area.

The undertakings followed the 1989 merger of local bus companies Badgerline and Midland Red West which was investigated by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC). The MMC ruled that the merger would remove competition for bus services contracted by the former Avon County Council. Local authorities tender for – and subsidise – unprofitable bus services in order to maintain important transport links for residents.

The merged company was therefore required to sign up to a number of restrictions, including a cap on the amount they could receive from the local authority for running a tendered service – and a requirement to return any excess profit from such services.

These undertakings were amended in 1996 following a subsequent bus merger where both operators became part of FirstGroup.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has now decided to review the undertakings to see if there has been a change in circumstances which justifies their removal or variation.

The CMA is seeking views in particular from local authorities, bus operators and bodies representing bus passengers in the Greater Bristol area. It wants to hear about whether the ability of local authorities to attract competitive bids has changed in the intervening years, whether the growth of other operators has increased competition for tendered bus services and the practical impact of the undertakings.

Responses are invited via the review [case page](#).

The CMA has also today published its [final advice](#) to the secretary of state recommending the removal of remedies in 2 merger cases that followed investigations carried out under the Fair Trading Act.

Today's actions result from the CMA's ongoing programme of work on remedy reviews, initially set out in the CMA's [2015/16 annual plan](#), with the aim of reducing burdens on business by assessing whether past merger and market remedies should be removed or varied when they are no longer necessary. Since its creation in 2014, the CMA has launched 96 remedy reviews, around two-

thirds of which have resulted in the removal of the remedy.

For more information see the [remedies review case page](#).

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## Press release: Thousands officially pardoned under 'Turing's Law'

From:

First published:

31 January 2017

Thousands of gay and bisexual men convicted of now abolished sexual offences have today been posthumously pardoned.

The historic moment comes after the Policing and Crime Bill today (31 January 2017) received Royal Assent – enshrining, in law, pardons for those convicted of consensual same-sex relationships.

The new law, made possible following government intervention, will also see statutory pardons granted to the living. However, this will only apply in cases where offenders have successfully applied through the Home Office's disregard process to have historic convictions removed.

Justice Minister Sam Gyimah said:

This is a truly momentous day. We can never undo the hurt caused, but we have apologised and taken action to right these wrongs.

I am immensely proud that 'Turing's Law' has become a reality under this government.

'Turing's law' has been a longstanding government commitment, in order to build on the case of World War II hero and Enigma codebreaker Alan Turing.

Turing, who committed suicide in 1954 following his conviction for gross indecency, was posthumously pardoned by Her Majesty the Queen in 2013.

### **Notes to editors**

- The new law was made possible through amendments to the Policing and Crime Bill which received Royal Assent today.
- The amendments were first tabled by Lord Sharkey, Lord Cashman and Lord

Lexden with government support.

- As well as posthumously pardoning gay and bisexual men, this law will also provide pardons for the living in cases where convictions have been deleted through the disregard process. This will ensure that due diligence is carried out and prevent people from claiming to be cleared of offences that are still crimes – including sex with a minor and non-consensual sexual activity.
- For example, under the disregard process, the Home Office has rejected several applications where the activity was non-consensual and others where the other party was under 16-years-old.
- An applicant is only eligible for a 'disregard' if the Secretary of State decides that it appears that the other person involved in the conduct which constituted the offence consented to it and was aged 16 or over at the time, and that the conduct would not now constitute the offence of sexual activity in a public lavatory. In other words, the Secretary of State must be satisfied that the conduct is no longer criminal.
- The new law mirrors both the existing disregard process and the new pardon arrangements in Northern Ireland.
- For more information call the MOJ press office on 020 3334 3503 or 020 3334 3529

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## **Guidance: Algal blooms: advice for the public and landowners**

Algae naturally occur in inland waters, estuaries and the sea. Blooms can form when their numbers become excessive. This guide describes the features of algal blooms, how they can affect you and what you should do if you see one.