

Press release: Over 300 volunteer bailiffs help fight against illegal fishing

From Cornwall to Cumbria, an army of dedicated anglers is helping the fight against illegal fishing and fish theft. They are the recruits of the Angling Trust and Environment Agency's Voluntary Bailiff Service (VBS) who act as the "eyes and ears" on riverbanks and lakes, reporting suspicious incidents and providing crucial information to the Environment Agency and the police.

VBS began as a pilot project in the South East in 2012 following a formal partnership between the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust. It was rolled out across the country in spring 2015 and, following inductions last autumn, proudly boasts more than 300 volunteers.

Bailiffs are unpaid and rigorously vetted before they are selected. Successful candidates receive an intensive training course on what is expected of them from enforcement professionals, including the Angling Trust, the Environment Agency and the Head of the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Volunteers are trained on fisheries enforcement law, signs of illegal fishing and how to record information in a way that could be used as evidence. First-hand learning includes attending joint patrols with the police and Environment Agency.

Volunteers recently gained valuable experience when they joined police and Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers on a joint patrol of the River Severn and at a number of stillwaters. Even at a relatively quiet period of the year they found reports of illegal fishing.

It's not just rod licence offenders that are being reported either. On other patrols people have been cautioned by the police for going equipped for poaching, motoring offences and possessing drugs and weapons.

Dilip Sarkar MBE, the Angling Trust's National Enforcement Manager, said:

All of our volunteers are valued and we now have the sound foundation to move forward, increase engagement and provide more practical training. We have come a very long way, since the formal partnership and although we still have far to go, this activity is already making a difference.

Graeme Storey, National Fisheries Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

All money raised through rod licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries benefiting anglers. The Voluntary

Bailiff Service is our latest move to tackle illegal fishing and to protect that revenue. The vast majority of anglers who fish legally deserve to see those who flout the law brought to account but to that criminal minority our message is clear: we won't hesitate to take action.

The Angling Trust and Environment Agency are appealing for more anglers to join the VBS. Induction and training days are being run this spring and anyone interested in joining the VBS should email karen.sarkar@anglingtrust.net

Press release: MHRA warns athletes to avoid potentially dangerous DMAA

As many people embark on a new-year fitness boost, athletes at all levels of sport are being urged to steer clear of the potentially dangerous ingredient DMAA.

DMAA can be found in unlicensed medicines marketed as sports supplements and it has been linked with high blood pressure, tightening in the chest, strokes, heart attacks and even death.

The warning has been issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) as a significant number of products containing DMAA continue to be found on sale in the UK.

MHRA has launched a 'Week of Action' between 30th January and 5th February supported by a number of leading national organisations to alert people to the potential dangers.

The Week of Action aims to improve awareness and will include an animated social media campaign, health & fitness bloggers sharing their stories and a video featuring Team GB Olympic weightlifters at the National Sports Stadium in Crystal Palace.

People who either suspect a product contains DMAA or want to check whether it is present are being encouraged to check online. If you find products on the market, immediately contact us via our dedicated mailbox dmaa@mhra.gsi.gov.uk

Named on the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Prohibited List, DMAA is banned during sports competition and the safety concerns are well documented.

When MHRA find unlicensed medicinal products containing DMAA on the market, urgent action is taken to remove them from sale. Last year MHRA took urgent action to remove a number of products containing DMAA from the market.

Dr Chris Jones, MHRA Medicines Borderline Section Manager said:

As always, we will continue to take robust action when unlicensed medicinal products containing DMAA come to our attention.

We first removed these products from sale in 2012, and will protect public health by continuing to do so. Although the sale of DMAA products has dropped since 2012, any companies selling this unlicensed medicine is one company too many.

Ashley Metcalfe, British Weight Lifting CEO said:

Weightlifting is a fantastic sport, not least because of the health and wellbeing benefits associated with strength training. However, as with all sports, it is very important that lifters participate in a safe and controlled manner, and are aware of the dangers of taking anything that could be potentially harmful – as has been proven with DMAA.

We are proud to support this campaign and hope that it encourages lifters that wish to use sports supplements to choose only those that are properly regulated, and remain well-informed about the dangers of using unlicensed medicines.

Dr Adam Carey, Chair of the European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA) said:

We fully support the MHRA's efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of supplements which contain DMAA. MHRA has classified such products as medicinal products and they have no place in legitimate sports nutrition supplements.

The dangers of consuming DMAA are significant and well-proven. We urge all sportspeople to avoid it at all costs – and emphasise that sportsmen and women can only do this by making sure they're only buying their sports supplements from responsible and reputable retailers.

Nicole Sapstead, UK Anti-Doping Chief Executive said:

Any athlete who takes supplements containing DMAA in-competition – either deliberately or inadvertently – is not only risking their career, but is also risking their health.

If you are considering taking a supplement make sure you assess the need first by speaking to a qualified nutritionist. If you need to take a supplement, make sure you understand the risks and

consequences by undertaking thorough research.

This ‘Week of Action’ is part of the FakeMeds campaign aimed at young adults and highlights the pitfalls of buying unlicensed medicines online.

Visit [here](#) for more information about the ‘Week of Action’.

Background

1. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe.
2. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements 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 Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health.
3. The approach for the classification of Borderline products is set out in Part 9 of the 2012 Human Medicines Regulations (as amended). A borderline product is a product which does not have a relevant authorisation or registration that the Licensing Authority regards to be medicinal product. Unless exempt unlicensed medicines may not be placed on the UK market without the appropriate authorisation.
4. MHRA classifies products (not substances) according to the definition of a medicinal product.
5. MHRA’s Medicines Borderline Section reaches a determination on whether a product is or is not a medicinal product on a case by case basis, and in the light of:
 - the definition of a medicinal product
 - following an assessment of all the available evidence
 - relevant European Court Judgments and domestic Court precedents.
6. MHRA first classified a product containing DMAA to be [medicinal products in 2012](#). MHRA has since determined a number of products which contain DMAA to be medicinal products and may not be placed on the UK market without the appropriate authorisation.
7. DMAA is regarded as being capable of significant modification to human physiology. Products containing DMAA have already been subject to regulatory controls in various countries around the world following a series of suspected links to serious adverse effects. It is MHRA’s view that the uncontrolled sale and supply of products containing DMAA poses potential risks to public safety.
8. MHRA is responsible for ensuring that medicinal products work and are acceptably safe and is not responsible for the licensing of products such as sports supplements which are used by athletes to improve their performance. MHRA will investigate instances of the sale and supply of unauthorised medicinal products, including those that may be present in sports supplements.
9. We have been working with British Weightlifting, UK Anti-Doping, ESSNA, UK Active, National Food Crime Unit (FSA) and Sporting Integrity Ltd for

the DMAA 'Week of Action.

News story: PM to meet ministers from devolved nations at first JMC meeting in Wales

The Prime Minister is to hold the first Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) meeting to take place outside of London today, in a special meeting in Wales.

As a sign of the government's commitment to engage with the devolved administrations and to seek a Brexit that works for the whole of the UK, the Prime Minister, together with the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, the Secretary of State for International Trade, the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Minister for the Cabinet Office will be meeting with ministers from the devolved administrations today.

This will be the second JMC under the Prime Minister's leadership and follows 3 JMC(EN)s that have taken place over the last few months.

Discussions are expected to focus on our exit from the EU, how we can work together to support UK businesses to trade and invest in the lead up to leaving the EU and intergovernmental relations.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, the Prime Minister said:

I am delighted to be holding today's JMC in Cardiff, particularly in the week the Wales Bill is expected to gain Royal Assent – heralding a new devolution settlement for Wales.

At the JMC in October, I set out how we would fully engage with the devolved administrations in the process of planning the UK's departure from the EU.

I am pleased that the committee on EU negotiations has met 3 times since then, giving ministers from the Scottish government, Welsh government and Northern Ireland executive a direct line to the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU.

I know ministers and officials from all sides are also in regular contact bilaterally. We have received papers from both the Scottish and Welsh governments and I am grateful to the devolved administrations for their contributions to this important process.

We will not agree on everything, but that doesn't mean we will shy away from the necessary conversations and I hope we will have

further constructive discussions today.

We have also had the Supreme Court judgement which made clear beyond doubt that relations with the EU are a matter for the UK government and UK Parliament. We should not forget that that means MPs representing every community in the UK will be fully involved in the passage of Article 50 through Parliament.

The United Kingdom voted to leave the EU, and the UK government has a responsibility to deliver on that mandate and secure the right deal for the whole of the UK. We all have a part to play in providing certainty and leadership so that together we can make a success of the opportunities ahead.

The Prime Minister met all the heads of the devolved administrations within her first month of taking up office, and has made it a priority of the UK government to fully engage with them on the UK's exit from the EU.

Since the referendum the UK government has continued discussions with the devolved administrations both at ministerial and official level, including a direct line to the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU through the JMC(EN).

There have been 3 JMC(EN) meetings to date. There will be further meetings including the JMC(EN) as the UK government continues discussions with the devolved administrations on this important issue.

News story: More people to receive help to stay warm in their homes thanks to new energy reforms

Homes across the UK will get extra support to keep warm during the colder months [thanks to reforms published today](#). Changes to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will make sure energy companies provide necessary support to people struggling to meet their heating bills. Plans to extend the scheme from April 2017 to September 2018 were also published today.

The reforms which were consulted on last year will usher in a simplified scheme, with energy companies required to provide struggling households with free energy efficiency measures to make their homes warmer and bring their bills down.

Minister for Energy and Industry, Jesse Norman said:

The Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty, and a key

part of that is to help people keep bills down by living in more energy efficient homes. These changes will move the UK a further step towards the goal of insulating a further 1 million homes by 2020.

As well as an increased focus on low income and vulnerable homes, eligibility will be extended to social housing tenants in EPC bands E, F and G, and local authorities will also be able to help match people with energy suppliers.

Suppliers will also be required to install a minimum 21,000 solid wall insulations per year, up from the consultation figure of 17,000.

There will be continuing protection for the delivery of energy efficiency measures in rural areas, with a requirement that 15% of suppliers' Carbon Emission Reduction Obligation be delivered in these areas.

ECO has proved a very effective delivery mechanism with over 2 million measures installed in around 1.6 million properties between 2013 and the end of November 2016.

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