

# Press release: Environment Agency trials use of body cameras

Environment Agency enforcement officers in the North East are wearing body worn cameras as part of a six-month trial.

It is the first of its kind within the organisation and is aimed at assessing if cameras can help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against staff, particularly those working with regulated and illegal waste sites.

If successful, body worn cameras, which are now the norm among many enforcement agencies, could be rolled out to Environment Agency teams across the country. They could be used in a variety of ways, including at visits to poor performing sites, illegal waste sites, during fisheries and navigation patrols and even during incident response.

Since the trial started in April, waste enforcement and fisheries officers have been wearing the devices during their routine activities and activate them if they encounter a hostile situation or site.

Footage from one of the cameras during a visit to an illegal waste site

## **Pilot scheme**

The pilot scheme comes after Environment Agency employee, Paul Whitehill, an ex-police officer, was threatened with violence when he and a fellow colleague attended an illegal waste site on a routine visit. He said:

I worked with body cameras in the police and saw how effective they can be so suggested we run a trial.

Already officers have reported that wearing the cameras has prevented threatening situations from escalating.

Environment Agency waste enforcement officers regularly encounter aggressive behaviour across the country. Since 2001, the Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted 59 cases of obstruction, hostility or threatening behaviour towards staff, 22 of which were in the North East.

## **'Safety is paramount'**

Rachael Caldwell from the Environment Agency's Waste and Enforcement Department, said:

The safety of our staff is paramount. They are well trained in dealing with hostile situations and we take any threat against them

very seriously. But our preference is to prevent hostility in the first place.

Studies also show that people are less likely to contest the evidence when they know their offence is captured on camera. This could help speed up justice and reduce legal costs.

Officers taking part in the pilot must follow guidelines on use of these cameras. They will not be permanently switched on and people will be informed if they are being filmed. If they are used the footage is automatically deleted after a month unless it is required for evidential purposes.

Rachael added:

Officers will only switch the cameras on if and when they enter a hostile situation. That could be a site where they have experienced aggressive behaviour in the past, or an unknown quantity where hostility may be anticipated, such as on a remote river bank.

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## [News story: Exciting opportunity to manage inshore fisheries and conservation](#)

The MMO is looking to recruit members for the North Western, North Eastern, Sussex, Southern and Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs).

Each IFCA needs members who will take a balanced approach to caring for our seas, assessing the priority and importance of all users and stakeholders. The vacancies are an opportunity for someone who wants to improve the quality of the inshore area and are available in the following regions, the:

- North Western IFCA is looking for three new members; interest is welcomed from those with experience and interest in commercial fishing; recreational fishing; the marine environment; or with other relevant interest and experience.
- North Eastern IFCA is looking for three new members; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in commercial fishing, particularly with mobile gear; commercial/recreational sea angling; and those with a strong academic and/or scientific background. In addition, applicants from areas including Hartlepool, Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside would be particularly welcome.

- Sussex IFCA is looking for two new members; applicants are encouraged who have experience and knowledge of commercial fishing including both mobile and fixed gear operations. Applications from throughout the Sussex IFCA district from Chichester Harbour in the west to Rye in the east are welcomed.
- Southern IFCA is looking for a new member; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in shellfish aquaculture.
- Cornwall IFCA is looking for a new member; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in commercial fishing.

Andrew Wareing, Director of Business Development and Transformation for the Marine Management Organisation, which is responsible for appointing local people with relevant expertise to the IFCA's, said:

"These are rare, exciting opportunities for people with experience and a passion for their inshore marine area to play a major part in shaping how their local area is managed. If you want to make a positive difference and help balance economic, social and environmental needs, we would be pleased to hear from you."

The deadline for applications is midnight Monday 18 September 2017.

The role is on a voluntary basis although relevant expenses may be reimbursed.

[More information on the vacancies and how to apply.](#)

You can email [ifcarecruitment@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:ifcarecruitment@marinemanagement.org.uk) or telephone 0208 225 6659 or 0208 026 5171 for more information.

## **Background**

There are 10 IFCA's around the English coastline and they are responsible for sustainably managing sea fisheries and conservation within 6 nautical miles from shore. They have the power to make byelaws to protect resources and the environment in their area as well as also enforcing national and European fisheries legislation.

IFCA's are either committees or joint committees of the local authorities that fall within an IFC district. They are tasked with sustainably managing inshore sea fisheries and conserving their local marine environment. They are made up of representatives from local councils along with people from across the different sectors that use or are knowledgeable about the inshore marine area, such as commercial and recreational fishermen, environmental groups and marine researchers, who offer their time voluntarily.

The Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency and Natural England also each has a statutory seat on the IFCA. Through their local management and funding structures, IFCA's help put local councils, communities and businesses, and individual citizens in the driving seat, allowing them to play a bigger part in the protection and enhancement of their inshore marine environment.

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## **[News story: Open Call for Innovation cycle 6 deadline extended](#)**

As a result, we're extending the deadline for the Open Call for Innovation Cycle 6 from midday today until 7am 30 August 2017.

We're monitoring the situation closely and hope that the service will be back online shortly. We'll keep you updated via our digital channels [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

Apologies for any inconvenience.

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# Press release: Charity Commission review finds sufficient evidence of public benefit in Plymouth Brethren Gospel Hall Trusts

The Charity Commission has today published the findings from its programme of post-registration monitoring of Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC) Gospel Hall Trusts.

The Commission has not identified any significant regulatory issues relating to the charities' compliance with their governing documents, and has seen sufficient evidence of each charity's engagement with the wider community to demonstrate public benefit.

However, the report sets out a number of areas in which the Commission provided regulatory advice to trustees of the Gospel Hall Trusts, including on the charities' control of charitable collections made at meetings of Gospel Hall congregations.

The regulator committed to monitoring a sample of recently registered PBCC charities to ensure they were complying with their governing documents, including a Deed of Variation (DoV) adopted during the charities' registration with the Commission. Over 100 Gospel Hall Trusts have been registered since 2013; of that number 24 were selected for monitoring, including those about which the regulator was contacted with individual concerns.

As part of its work, the Commission spoke to a number of individuals who were concerned about the treatment of former members at Gospel Hall Trusts. The Commission accepts that trustees of Gospel Hall Trusts are not responsible for the behaviour of individual members, who have personal choice in their dealings with their own family members and others. However, the Commission's report makes clear that it expects the trustees to ensure the DoV is readily available to members and to have regular discussions with them about its provisions. It concludes that the trustees of these particular charities on the evidence it has seen have acted in accordance with the requirement for compassion set out in the DoV.

**Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, says:**

This is an important example of our proactive case work focused on recently registered charities. Our aim in monitoring new charities is to ensure they are operating in line with their governing document, and are following any regulatory advice and guidance, to help ensure that the public can support charities with confidence.

In this case, our review is able to provide public reassurance that the trustees of Gospel Hall Trusts are taking steps to embed the principles of the Deed of Variation in the running of their charities; we have provided regulatory guidance to some individual trusts and expect them to follow that advice consistently.

This review follows a report into the first PBCC charity to register, the [Preston Down Trust](#), and concludes the Commission's programme of post registration monitoring of PBCC charities. The regulator says that, as with any charity, it will carefully assess any concerns that may be raised in future.

The [full report is available](#).

## **Ends**

## **Notes to editors**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our annual report.
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).