

# [News story: Ineos is granted environmental permit for exploratory borehole in South Yorkshire](#)

The Environment Agency has granted an environmental permit to allow Ineos Upstream Ltd to drill an exploratory borehole at a site in South Yorkshire.

The 'Standard Rules' permit allows the company to carry out drilling and waste management to take core samples of the rock at Common Road, Harthill. It does not allow fracking.

Standard Rules permits include fixed rules and conditions that cover common, low-risk industrial activities including low-risk testing. They are issued to companies only after they demonstrate that they understand and can manage the risks to people and the environment.

If the firm wishes to carry out additional activities on the site in the future, such as full well testing or hydraulic fracturing, it must submit a bespoke permit application that is tailored to those activities.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

Our regulatory controls for onshore oil and gas are in place to protect people and the environment. Standard Rules permits are common across industry and maintain high levels of environmental protection. They do not allow companies to carry out fracking – this activity requires a bespoke permit application which would be subject to a site-specific environmental risk assessment and extensive public consultation.

As with all decisions on whether to issue environmental permits, we will assess a company's proposals to ensure they meet strict requirements. If an activity poses an unacceptable risk to the environment, the activity will not be permitted.

A copy of the published permit can be found online at:

[consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/ineos-upstream-limited-exploration-sites](https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/ineos-upstream-limited-exploration-sites).

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## [The Government's chaotic approach to the Brexit negotiations risks threatening our safety – Blomfield](#)

**Paul Blomfield MP,**  
**Labour's Shadow Minister for Exiting the EU,** commenting on the House of Lords EU

Committee report on Brexit: the EU data protection package, said:

“Labour has repeatedly raised concerns about security information and data sharing, which we heavily rely on to investigate and prevent terrorism.

“It's clear that the Government has no idea what maintaining close criminal justice and law enforcement ties with our European neighbours will look like, and no plan to make data sharing work.

“The Government's chaotic approach to the Brexit negotiations and intransigent red line on the European Court of Justice, meaning we could crash out without a deal on anything, risks threatening our safety.”

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## [Millions of public sector workers will have been left bitterly disappointed by the Chancellor – John McDonnell](#)

Today, Labour's Shadow Treasury Team challenged the failing economic record of this anarchic Cabinet at the final Treasury Questions of the parliamentary session.

The Chancellor and his team's performance proves beyond a doubt that he has no answer on low pay, no answer on tackling tax avoidance and no answer on the disastrous impact that leaving the EU without a transitional arrangement will have on British jobs.

It is clear Labour is ready as a government-in-waiting – ready to replace a chaotic and bitterly divided Conservative Party.

**John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow**

**Chancellor**, speaking  
after Treasury Questions, said:

“A multi-millionaire Chancellor,  
on £145,000 a year, living in two grace and favour properties at taxpayers’  
expense, and renting out another property for a reported £10,000 per month,  
should not attack public sector workers – our hospital cleaners, nurses,  
teachers and firefighters – as overpaid.

“Today, the out of touch  
Chancellor has once again refused to take the opportunity to apologise to our  
public sector workers. Millions of public sector workers will have been left  
bitterly disappointed by the Chancellor’s failure to commit to doing the  
right  
thing and adopt Labour’s proposals to lift the public sector pay cap.”

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## [Drug use in jail now at 8-year high](#)

18 Jul 2017



The number of prisoners disciplined for taking drugs in jail has now hit an  
eight-year high, figures have revealed.

Official statistics show 1164 inmates were caught either taking drugs or  
administering them to others last year, the equivalent of more than three a  
day.

This comes 6 months after the Scottish Conservatives highlighted the worrying  
upward trend of substance abuse in prisons.

Today’s figures are nearly double the 634 caught four years ago.

The Scottish Conservatives have said the ever-increasing use of illegal  
substances in the country’s prisons is undermining any attempts being made to  
rehabilitate criminals and cut reoffending rates.

And these figures don’t include those convicts who have taken drugs and  
managed to get away with it.

In recent years the Scottish Government has introduced measures such as  
signal jamming trials to reduce the illegal use of mobile phones inside.

But no such progress has been made on drug-taking, with last year’s the  
highest number of incidents since 2008-09, when 1257 were caught.

**Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:**

“Yet again, we see offenders continuing their criminality within prison walls, an environment which is supposed to be completely secure.

“For the second year running, more than three inmates are being caught using drugs every day, and these figures indicate it’s getting worse year after year.

“Detecting and recording these incidents isn’t enough – it’s crucial the SPS cracks down on this problem and stops these substances slipping through the net.

“All political parties agree that rehabilitation of offenders is critical if we want to reduce stubbornly high reoffending rates.

“But how can this be expected to take place while drug-taking remains so prevalent in prisons?”

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- **1164 prisoners were caught ‘Administering, or allowing to be administered, a controlled drug to oneself’ in 2016-17.** It’s the highest drug use has been at since 2008-09. (*Scottish Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2016-2017*, Appendix 5, p76, link; previous annual reports are available at [link](#)).

**Below are the numbers for prisoners disciplined for taking drugs in the last nine years:** 2008-09 – 1257 2009-10 – 863 2010-11 – 664 2011-12 – 638 2012-13 – 634 2013-14 – 869 2014-15 – 1003 2015-16 – 1133 2016/17 – 1164 All previous reports can be found here:

<http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publications.aspx>

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## [SNP propose reducing requirement for school playing fields](#)

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18 Jul 2017



The SNP want to water-down the requirement for playing fields for new schools, it has emerged.

At the moment, playing fields have to be a minimum size.

A consultation document published yesterday by the Scottish Government proposes changing the regulations, with new rules for synthetic pitches.

These plans would allow synthetic pitches which are much smaller than grass pitches – up to half the size:

- The average secondary school of 850 pupils, for example, currently has to provide 3.2 hectares of grass pitches – but in the new rules, would have to provide just 1.7 hectares of synthetic area.
- A primary school of 450 pupils would only have to provide 0.3 hectares of synthetic area, compared to 0.6 hectares of grass.

The proposed rules would also allow new schools to ignore the minimum size for grass pitches, if they are developing mixed grass and synthetic pitches.

The consultation refers to guidance from SportScotland to support this change – but almost all of the new regulations for secondary schools would allow playing fields smaller than the SportScotland guidance. A secondary school of 1200 pupils is recommended by SportScotland to need 3.9 hectares of mixed pitches, for example – but under the new regulations, would be allowed to go below the existing minimum of 3.6 hectares. In practice, the regulations mean that most new school playing fields will be smaller than under the previous guidance, and many will be smaller than recommended.

**Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:**

“Safety is paramount, but before any decisions are taken, the Scottish Government must pay attention to the Sport Scotland recommendations – and there must be no attempt use this consultation to diminish the playing space available.

“The cross-party Sport committee at Holyrood and the Health and Sport Committee have both heard evidence that points to the diminished number of playing fields available across Scotland.

“That comes at the same time as there is rising obesity and worrying signs of poor health amongst too many of our young people.

“This consultation is an opportunity to review matters properly, and ensure that all our schools are safe and have campuses fit for the 21st century.”

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The consultation can be found [here](#). The difference between the existing and proposed regulations is as follows: **Primary**

Size	Existing regulations	New regulations (grass only, hectares)	New regulations (synthetic only, hectares)
60 or less	$\frac{1}{4}$ acre = .1ha	0.1	0.1
61-140	$\frac{1}{2}$ acre = .2ha	0.2	0.3
141-215	$\frac{3}{4}$ acre = .3ha	0.3	0.3
316-450	1 acre = .4ha	0.4	0.3

451 or more      1 ½ acres = .6ha      0.6      0.3

**Secondary**

<b>Size</b>	<b>Existing regulations</b>	<b>New regulations (grass only, hectares)</b>	<b>New regulations (synthetic only, hectares)</b>	<b>SportScotland recommendation (typical mix of pitches, hectares)</b>
320-500	4 acres = 1.6 ha	1.6	1.7	2.5 ( for 500 pupils)
501-750	6 acres = 2.48 ha	2.4	1.7	2.5 (700)
751-1000	8 acres = 3.2 ha	3.2	1.7	3.2 (1000)
1001-1200	3.6	3.6	2.5	3.9 (1200)
1201-1400	4	4	2.5	3.9 (1400)
1401-1600	4.4	4.4	3.2	4.5 (1600)
1601-1800	4.8	4.8	3.2	–
1801-2000	5.2	5.2	3.2	–

SportScotland guidance calculates the area required for an average mixture of activities and timetabling for schools of different size, with typical mixes of grass and synthetic pitches.