

# [The system for school place planning is broken – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Minister,**

commenting on the expected rise in families not getting their first choice of school on secondary school offer day, said:

“The system for school place planning is broken.

“The Tories’ unjustified fixation with Free Schools means new schools are opening in areas which do not need them and just last week the NAO reported that the Government are not doing enough to ensure all parents can exercise choice when selecting the right school for their children.

“The Tories need to sort this mess out instead of obsessing over a handful of new grammar schools which will only help a minority of children.”

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## [Press release: Environment Agency unveils new paintings to promote fishing](#)

The Environment Agency has unveiled three paintings by top wildlife artist David Miller to promote angling. The images front the 2017/18 fishing licences which go on sale today (1 March). The three fishing licence designs depict salmon (*Salmo salar*), mirror carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) in their natural habitats.

You can see the images, and download posters here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rod-fishing-licence-campaign>

The Environment Agency has also launched “Get a Fishing Licence” on GOV.UK to simplify the process of buying a fishing licence:

[www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence](http://www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence). This is part of a series of improvements to the service, which include:

- Free licences for junior anglers, up to the age of 17, announced in

November 2016

- The fishing licence now lasts for 12 months from the day it is bought, rather than expiring at the end of March each year
- The use of three rods now needs just one licence, rather than two.

People are required to buy a fishing licence in order to fish legally in England, Wales and along the Border Esk in Scotland. Sales of licences for the 2015/16 season raised [£21 million](#). The money was used to restock rivers with 452,220 coarse fish, encourage over 35,000 people to try angling for the first time and bring 2,043 successful prosecutions against crimes like poaching.

Artist David Miller said:

I'm delighted to have provided the images for the fishing licences again this year, not only because it gave me the opportunity to paint three species for the first time but also because all the money raised goes back into supporting fisheries. Of the three I was particularly pleased with the brown trout, my favourite UK game fish, and one I love to fish for on small rivers and streams.

Judy Proctor, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

We hope David's stunning images encourage people to give fishing a go. Angling creates over 37,000 full time jobs and generates over £1 billion for the UK economy, but at its heart it's a much loved outdoor sport connecting people with nature. We've listened to anglers' concerns and improved the fishing licence to make the process of getting out and fishing legally simpler.

People who don't buy a fishing licence are not only cheating other anglers and the future of the sport but running the risk of criminal conviction and a fine. The Environment Agency urges anyone to report fisheries crime as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For those who can't access the internet, fishing licences can still be bought by phoning 0344 800 5386 or over the counter in the Post Office.

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Notes:

The Environment Agency publishes a detailed breakdown of how fishing licence money is spent in the annual fisheries report on GOV.UK. Read it here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-report-shows-how-21-million-of-rod-licence-money-helps-angling>

More on the changes to licences here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-fishing-for-children>

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## News story: Appointment to the board of the Environment Agency

Joanne Segars OBE has been appointed to the board of the Environment Agency by Environment Secretary, Andrea Leadsom.

The appointment will take effect from 1 March 2017 for three years.

Joanne is the Chief Executive of the Pensions and Lifetime Savings Association, having originally joined the organisation as Director of Policy. She is a board member of the Pensions Infrastructure Platform and Pensions Europe, with experience spent as Chair of both.

Joanne is also on the board of Pension Quality Mark Ltd. Joanne is a founding governor of the Pensions Policy Institute and sits on its council. She is also a Director of TUC Stakeholder Trustees Ltd.

Formally, Joanne was Chair of the Scheme Advisory Board for the Local Government Pension Scheme; a member of the Secretary of State's Advisory Group on Stakeholder Pensions; and a board member of the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the Environment Agency's executive through regular board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

All appointments to the Environment Agency board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointment complies with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (which was superseded by the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments in January 2017).

The Environment Agency is a Non-Departmental Public Body, set up under the Environment Act 1995 to take an integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement in England. The Environment Agency has major responsibilities in flood management, water resources and quality, climate change, land quality, chemicals, pollution prevention and control, waste, conservation and biodiversity, fisheries conservation, air quality and navigation.

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# Dubs Amendment: the families that opened their doors to child refugees that have yet to come



# Green Party

1 March 2017

**Catherine Marchand: “Our lives, like many others in our position, are on hold as we wait to see whether Theresa May will let us open up our home and provide the safety and security that these unaccompanied minors so desperately need.”**

**Duncan Blinkhorn: “Our message to politicians is: we are here, we are waiting to help, and we are not alone.”**

**Keith Taylor MEP: “There are families and local authorities across the country that are waiting to provide the support and security these vulnerable children need.”**

There are families, communities and local authorities across the UK waiting to help vulnerable child refugees, according to Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East.

The former Brighton councillor is highlighting the story of a Brighton couple who have spent the last seven months going through a rigorous fostering process in the hope of offering a safe home to a vulnerable child fleeing conflict.

Catherine Marchand and Duncan Blinkhorn from the Hanover and Elm Grove area of the city are speaking out about the Government’s ‘callous’ abandonment of child refugees ahead of [Wednesday’s Commons vote](#) on the Dubs Amendment.

Catherine and Duncan, both 55, hope to demonstrate to MPs that there are compassionate families across the UK keen and able to care for and provide homes for the 3000 unaccompanied minors the Government had originally promised to bring to safety.

Catherine, a Community Nurse who has worked in the NHS for more 35 years, said:

“The government’s decision to renege on its promise to thousands of the most

vulnerable refugee children is utterly appalling.”

“Our lives, like many others in our position, are on hold as we wait to see whether Theresa May will let us open up our home and provide the safety and security that these unaccompanied minors so desperately need.”

“The success of the World War II Kindertransport scheme, to which my family and countless others will forever owe a debt of gratitude, relied on the goodwill of national governments and their peoples. The British people’s compassion and goodwill is not lacking – so where is our Government’s? History will not judge us kindly if Theresa May insists on maintaining her callous approach to a refugee crisis that is driving unaccompanied children into the arms of human traffickers and extremist groups.”

Catherine’s partner, Duncan, the co-ordinator of the Brighton Bike Hub, added:

“We have invested much of the last seven months in making preparations to help. We are lucky to have the support of our community and are proud that Brighton and Hove identifies as a ‘city of sanctuary’. Ours is not an isolated case, there are families like ours in communities across the country that are keen and able to help”

“Our message to politicians is: we are here, we are waiting to help, and we are not alone; now is not the time to pull up the drawbridge, it is the time to embrace your humanity and uphold a promise you made to three thousand vulnerable child refugees.”

Keith Taylor, who has been a vocal critic of the Government’s wavering response to the refugee crisis, said:

“I share, wholeheartedly, Cathy and Duncan’s sense of anger and frustration at the Government’s behaviour towards the most vulnerable child refugees. While I want to commend Cathy and Duncan for their patience and their compassion it is important to recognise that their story is not unique; there are families and local authorities across the country that are waiting to provide the support and security these vulnerable children need.”

“The UK has taken just 350 lone child refugees which is nowhere near the 3000 originally proposed by Lord Dubs and is equivalent to fewer than one per local authority in the UK.”

“Britain has a proud tradition of welcoming those most in need. We stepped up to rescue 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi persecution. Which is why I am echoing Cathy and Duncan’s calls for MPs to stand by the country’s values and fight to reverse Theresa May’s decision and keep the Dubs scheme alive.”

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# I strongly urge those who blocked this UN Security Resolution to reconsider – Emily Thornberry

**Emily Thornberry MP, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary**, responding to the veto by Russia and China of a UN Security Council Resolution sanctioning the Syrian government for using chemical weapons, said:

“Under any circumstances, chemical weapons are barbaric, and their use must never be tolerated. This is a core principle of international humanitarian law, which the Syrian government itself accepted when it joined the Chemical Weapons Convention.

“There should be no impunity for those found responsible for using chemical weapons, and I strongly urge those who blocked this resolution to reconsider.”