

Policy paper: Devolution of Landfill Tax to Wales and the 2 year transitional period for the Landfill Communities Fund

Landfill Tax will be devolved to Wales from 1 April 2018 and the LCF in Wales will close. Environmental bodies may hold unspent funds from contributions by landfill operators located throughout England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Ministers decided that there should be a 2 year transition period, from 1 April 2018 until 31 March 2020, during which these unspent funds can be spent on projects located in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

News story: Results of first survey of thousands of heat network consumers

The government has today published the findings of the [first survey of heat network consumers](#). It asked about their satisfaction with their heating system, price and transparency of billing, and customer service.

A heat network takes heat from a central source and delivers it to a number of buildings. There are around 17,000 heat networks in the UK, with some of the largest networks at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London, Sheffield and Nottingham.

Expansion of the heat networks market is a key part of the government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), but strong consumer protections are needed to ensure that customers can be confident in their heating supply as the market develops.

Our survey was carried out by independent researchers between April and July 2017 and received over 5,000 responses. The survey results suggested that, while there was significant variation in the prices paid by heat network consumers, on average they were likely to pay less than non-heat network consumers.

The survey also shows that while there are issues affecting the sector that need addressing, heat network consumers were just as satisfied overall with their heating systems as non-heat network consumers.

Consumers on [Heat Trust](#) registered schemes (the voluntary industry-led consumer protection scheme) in general received more comprehensive billing

information, and service interruptions tended to be rectified quicker, in line with the Heat Trust's service standards.

Claire Perry, Minister for Climate Change and Industry said:

As we set out in our Clean Growth Strategy, encouraging the uptake of heat networks is an important way to reduce carbon and cut heating bills for customers.

This survey of consumers provides an important evidence base as we seek to expand the use of heat networks from now to 2021.

The projects that the government supports through the [Heat Network Investment Project](#) must meet Heat Trust equivalent standards, comparable to those provided to customers of gas and electricity, as well as meet minimum technical standards in terms of performance and efficiency of systems. Membership of these schemes is voluntary for existing heat networks.

The government will feed in the results of the survey to the Competition and Markets Authority which announced today that it is carrying out a market study into the heat networks sector. The heat networks industry is also developing proposals to protect consumers and lower risk for investors which will be published in 2018.

[Notice: M44 6BD, Kingsland Drinks Limited: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision for:

- Operator name: Kingsland Drinks Limited
- Installation name: The Winery
- Permit number: EPR/VP3434YY/A001

[Press release: New guidance for](#)

[fishermen ahead of next phase of the discard ban](#)

The next phase of the landing obligation, also known as the 'discard ban', comes into force from 1 January 2018.

The Marine Management Organisation [has provided guidance](#) for the fishing industry to help them comply with the next phase of the discard ban. This outlines which fish come under the landing obligation, what fishermen have to do with them on board, and which can be sold for human consumption.

The new developments will see more fishing vessels captured by the landing obligation as thresholds for inclusion are reduced or removed for some fish species. There are also changes around exemptions for some vessels, in particular where scientific evidence indicates that an increase in selectivity of species is hard to achieve and around unwanted catches for certain gear types.

For 2018, the UK Government has worked to maintain, and in some cases extend, exemptions allowing fish with high survival rates to be discarded as well as some unwanted catches that are difficult to avoid. In addition, the MMO will continue to apply a fair and proportionate approach to enforcement.

The development is the latest phase of the wider discard ban which will bring an end to the practice of throwing dead fish back into the sea. The landing obligation was initially introduced in January 2015 for certain pelagic fisheries. All quota species will be phased in under landing obligation rules by 2019.

Guidance on the [landing obligation](#) can also be found on the European Commission's website.

Financial support from the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) may be available to help fishermen adapt and comply with the landing obligation. Further information is available on [the MMO website](#).

[Press release: Heathrow coach firm polluted river with toilet waste](#)

A west London river was contaminated after toilets from luxury coaches were emptied into public drains.

Symphony Chauffeurs Ltd, based near Heathrow Airport, broke environmental law

when staff poured waste into sewers, instead of taking the waste to an approved site for disposal.

Officers from the Environment Agency turned detective in 2015, tracing pollution in the River Crane to where Symphony operated, a trading estate minutes from the airport.

A monitoring device, called a sonde, found the river had been polluted, and other sondes identified Symphony as the source, which officers confirmed through a network of drains.

The watercourse was further polluted when chemicals and dirty water entered the drains after staff washed vehicles on Symphony's premises. The firm had been warned by the Environment Agency and the company's landlords doing so was against the lease. Symphony would have stayed within the law by disposing of the chemicals at an approved site, or by cleaning their cars and coaches at an authorised location.

Symphony Chauffeurs Ltd, Eastern Business Park, Ely Road, Hounslow, was fined £18,000 by Ealing Magistrates' Court, which ordered the firm to pay £12,113.62 in costs, and a victim surcharge of £170. The company was charged with allowing poisonous, noxious or polluting matter into the River Crane, between May 2015 and February 2016, and failing to provide the Environment Agency with documents relating to their activities.

The sole director of the firm, Allen Jeyakumar, of Lee Road, Greenford, was fined £3,134 by the court, for allowing Symphony to commit the offences. Mr Jeyakumar also had to pay a victim surcharge of £142.

Mathew Reed, who led the investigation for the Environment Agency, said:

Incidents like this have the potential to have a serious and long-term impact on the health of the river. Symphony Chauffeurs Ltd was given repeated warnings about its activities.

People might think we will find it too difficult to trace the cause of pollution, but this case proves that some detective work leads to a conviction.

Identifying pollution through a complex network of drains can be difficult, but that doesn't mean it cannot be done. We have the skills and technology to do it.

Both Symphony Chauffeurs Ltd and Allen Jeyakumar pleaded guilty to all charges at an earlier hearing.

For media enquiries, please call 0800 141 2743, or email southeastpressofficel@environment-agency.gov.uk.