

New contract to deliver improved support for modern slavery victims

Potential and confirmed victims of modern slavery will be able to access more flexible support under an improved service.

The new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract, awarded to The Salvation Army today (Monday 29 June), will provide a service that better meets the needs of each victim, including those with specialist and complex needs.

As part of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), it will ensure the safeguarding and protection of victims as well as provide tailored support to individual recovery needs, lifting victims out of situations of exploitation and putting them in a position where they can begin to rebuild their lives.

The new contract will go live later this year, following a period of transition from the current service.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

The government is a world leader in tackling modern slavery, but we are always striving to improve support for victims so that they can get their lives back on track.

The new Victim Care Contract builds on the wide-ranging support the government already provides and ensures that people affected by this abhorrent crime receive personalised, professional care.

Under the current service, victims of modern slavery who have been referred by a designated First Responder, such as a specified charity worker or a law enforcement officer, can access support.

This includes accommodation, where needed, as well as financial support and access to a support worker.

The new contract will continue to provide this support and will also introduce new services for victims. For example, during the first year of the contract the government will work with law enforcement partners to test the set-up and operation of a new provision of Places of Safety.

This new service is aimed at the most vulnerable victims rescued from exploitation and will provide them with a safe place for up to three working days to consider if they want to enter the NRM.

Commissioner Anthony Cotterill, leader of The Salvation Army in the United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland, said:

The Salvation Army has been privileged to work alongside our partners to support thousands of victims of modern slavery as they rebuild their lives.

We are grateful for the opportunity to not only continue to serve these most vulnerable people but that through the new Victim Care Contract we can extend the support available to them at all stages of their recovery.

Working closely with the Home Office and our partners, we will build on the improvements and partnerships we have delivered over the past nine years, continue to add value to the entitlements survivors of slavery receive and ensure their needs are properly managed and respected.

The Salvation Army will remain at the forefront of the fight to help today's survivors overcome the challenges they face and protect other vulnerable people from becoming the victims of the future.

As with the existing contract, all victims' needs will be individually determined on entry to the service, continually re-assessed throughout and considered again when they are preparing to leave.

But the new contract will allow for more specialised services to meet those needs, including varied accommodation and improved support for those with complex requirements.

In addition, the new contract will introduce journey plans to help victims work with their support worker to recover from and reflect on their experiences, and then begin to move on to independence outside of the service.

The new contract is part of the government's ongoing efforts to improve the system of identification and support for modern slavery victims.

Swindon home furnishing company fails to meet recycling duties

A company based in Swindon that sells kitchens, sofas and a wide range of other furnishings will pay money to a wildlife charity for failing to register as a packaging producer.

The Environment Agency took enforcement action because for 13 years, from 2004 until 2017, Neptune (Europe) Ltd failed to recycle enough waste

packaging including cardboard, plastic, paint tins and wooden pallets.

Any company producing more than 50 tonnes of packaging a year with a turnover of above £2 million, must register with the Environment Agency or a packaging compliance scheme, and meet their responsibilities for recycling waste packaging.

Neptune (Europe) Ltd, of Blagrove in Swindon, is a furniture importer, seller and wholesaler. They sell everything from kitchens to bathrooms as well as household accessories.

Tessa Bowering, a senior technical officer for the Environment Agency, said:

We all need to do our bit for the environment. Neptune (Europe) Ltd should have met its recycling obligations, which it failed to do for a prolonged period of time. However, the company cooperated with the Environment Agency to address the offences it had committed and is now compliant with the regulations.

They will pay £17,350 to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, who will use the money for 4 projects; Ravensroost Wood Nature Reserve, Malmesbury, Clouts Wood Nature Reserve, Wroughton, Cloatley Meadows Nature Reserve, Malmesbury and The Firs Nature Reserve, Royal Wootton Bassett. All of these projects will protect, restore and enhance the natural environment.

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Director Dr Gary Mantle MBE said:

Our nature reserves play an important part in raising awareness about the value of the natural world. We are looking forward to using this contribution to the trust to help us deliver some great projects that benefit wildlife and people.

Enforcement undertakings allow companies and individuals to make amends for breaching environmental regulations, including through a financial contribution to a local project.

In agreeing to this type of civil sanction, the Environment Agency must be satisfied the offender will make changes to its operations to prevent future breaches of packaging legislation.

The Environment Agency continues to prosecute organisations and individuals where evidence shows high levels of culpability and serious environmental harm.

The company was sanctioned under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007.

Stay safe around rivers

As ministers ease restrictions on movement caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the public is being warned to keep safe around rivers and canals.

The Environment Agency, which manages many locks, weirs and bridges along the River Thames through Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey and south-west London, wants people to remember the hazards under the water.

[Guidance online at GOV.UK](#) – search staying safe around water – shows the message is clear: vigilance can save lives, and water-related accidents can be avoided by knowing how to stay safe.

Top tips for river safety:

1. Don't jump or dive in as the depth may vary and there can be unseen hazards.
2. Don't go in near weirs, locks, pipes and sluices. These and some other water features are often linked with strong currents.
3. Inland waters can be very cold, no matter how warm the weather. Those going into cold water can get cramp and experience breathing difficulties very quickly.
4. Keep a look out for boat traffic. Boaters, especially on larger vessels, can find it very hard to spot swimmers.

Parents and guardians can help keep children in their care safe by:

- teaching them to swim
- warning them not to go into water alone, or unsupervised
- ensuring they know where the children are and what they are doing
- supervising them closely when near any open water

Drowning can occur very quickly, even in shallow water, and the key to keeping safe is to take all necessary precautions to avoid getting into difficulty in the first place.

Experience shows it is often young people who get into trouble whilst swimming in open water, which contains hazards, particularly in and around locks, weirs and bridges. Unexpectedly cold waters or strong currents can also catch bathers off-guard.

Youngsters are often seen jumping off the many bridges along the Thames. While this may seem like great fun, there are hidden dangers in the water that can cause tragic consequences.

Russell Robson, River Thames operations manager for the Environment Agency,

said:

Summer is always a busy time on our rivers, especially if the weather is good.

The River Thames is a focal point for leisure time, but I'd prefer people didn't swim in any river, unless part of an organised event.

One of the main risks is cold-water shock, causing you to breathe in water, weakening your muscles, and cause immediate heart problems. Unseen currents and reeds beneath the surface could pull you under.

I'd urge parents and guardians to supervise younger children closely in and around water. Teenagers and young adults should be warned of the dangers and to remember some basic safety points when out having fun.

Read and act upon our water safety advice on GOV.UK – search stay safe around water.

Anyone out in any kind of boat should wear a life jacket.

[Innovative team scoops prestigious Royal Society of Chemistry Award](#)

News story

A team of university researchers from across the UK – funded by the NDA, National Nuclear Laboratory, Sellafield Ltd and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council – has scooped a prestigious award.



The award-winning Distinctive team

Image credit: Image provided by Michael Fairweather

Led by Leeds University and including a number of other UK universities, the partnership known as The DISTINCTIVE (Decommissioning, Immobilisation and Storage Solutions for Nuclear Waste Inventories) Consortium are winners of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Industry-Academia Collaboration Award.

The team won the accolade for delivery of research that addressed challenges associated with the continuing safe storage and disposal of radioactive legacy nuclear waste.

Members are part of a programme which links nuclear industry experts with UK academics and PhD students to roll-out of innovative solutions and train the next generation of scientists and engineers – helping the NDA to develop and maintain key skills we need to undertake our mission over the coming decades.

NDA Research Manager Dr Rick Short said:

This is a huge achievement for the team which has worked hard, bringing together a wide variety of expertise to collaborate and tackle challenges surrounding decommissioning by developing fundamental understanding of our materials and finding innovative solutions.

As well as providing funding, the NDA, Sellafield Ltd and National Nuclear Laboratory were industry partners for this programme, which was set up to support UK government strategy on nuclear decommissioning and waste management.

Receiving the award, Partnership leader Professor Michael Fairweather said:

The success of the consortium is testament to the close collaboration between academics and industry partners, not only in jointly formulating the overall work programme and the individual projects within it, but also in jointly supervising the researchers and delivering planned impacts.

We would like to thank the EPSRC, National Nuclear Laboratory, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Sellafield Ltd for the funding that enabled us to carry out our work.

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New Future Skills Hub for North Ayrshire

News story

Magnox funding helps boost further and higher education opportunities in North Ayrshire.



North Ayrshire College has received funding from Magnox

Magnox is pleased to announce £499,999 has been committed to Ayrshire College for the new Future Skills Hub on the Kilwinning Campus, due to open in late 2021.

The college has been given a major boost with the allocation of [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority](#) (NDA) funding – allocated through the Magnox socio-economic scheme. The aim of the scheme is to mitigate the impact of decommissioning and support sustainable communities in which Magnox operates.

The Hub will deliver a curriculum in Engineering, Construction and SMART Technologies for employers, primary schools, secondary schools and college students. The new facility will provide first-class training for people in Ayrshire for generations.

David Wallace, NDA Stakeholder Relations and Socio Economics Manager, said:

Support for this project has leveraged much-needed match-funding, which will help build a sustainable future long after the Hunterston A site has closed. These new training facilities will prepare current and future generations for the employment opportunities generated by the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

Ayrshire College Principal, Carol Turnbull said:

The news that Magnox has announced this outstanding funding package towards the creation of the Future Skills Hub in North Ayrshire is marvellous news for the College and all our partners and stakeholders in education and business. Magnox's commitment to the project has been invaluable in support of us bringing the funding package together and we are grateful for this funding. The Future Skills Hub will impact positively on key skills and employability opportunities for so many people across the community".

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