

Minister calls on pension schemes to get “data ready” for dashboards

Press release

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman has called on pension schemes of all types and sizes to make sure their data is ready for pensions dashboards.



The calls come as the government publishes its response to a consultation which gathered feedback from industry, potential providers, consumer groups and future users on what data should be included and how this should be displayed to people.

Bringing pensions into the digital age, dashboards will allow savers to see what they have in their various pensions – including their State Pension – in a single place online, at any time they choose.

Ten years since the introduction of Automatic Enrolment and there are a record number of British people saving for retirement. With more people managing their finances online, the need for pensions dashboards is stronger than ever.

Minister for Pensions Guy Opperman said:

For many people, a pension is the most significant financial investment they will make in their life. That is why the introduction of pensions dashboards is so important.

Clear pensions information at the touch of a button, including on the State Pension, will ensure savers are better informed and more engaged, while helping people to plan effectively for retirement, as well as to find lost and forgotten pension pots.

The building and initial testing of the digital dashboards architecture is already well underway. My message to the trustees and managers of pension schemes of all types and sizes is simple: get data ready.

Pensions dashboards will offer savers a choice of how they keep track of their pension pots, with dashboards to be provided by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) and other organisations who meet the requirements to develop and host their own dashboards.

The first version of pensions dashboards will offer people the opportunity to find their pensions and then view information about their value, but as the use of dashboards becomes more commonplace, user insights and experience will allow for the dashboards experience to be enhanced further.

Media enquiries for this press release

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Published 14 July 2022

[Electric motorbikes race onto UK roads through transport decarbonisation measures](#)

- first year of Transport Decarbonisation Plan sees thousands of electric vehicle chargepoints installed and 130 cycling and walking projects launched
- electric motorbikes to soon become norm on UK roads as new consultation opens to end the sale of new petrol and diesel two wheelers by 2035
- one-year anniversary marked with launch of new strategy to make walking and cycling people's first choice for short journeys

Electric motorbikes and mopeds will soon become the norm on UK roads as the government today (14 July 2022) sets out a range of measures to mark a year of success since the [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) was introduced.

The plan set out the UK's world-leading 'greenprint' to create cleaner air, healthier communities and tens of thousands of new green jobs across the UK.

The progress one year on today shows almost 7,500 extra electric vehicle chargepoints have been installed, supporting the 900,000 green vehicles that are on UK roads, and over 130 new walking and cycling schemes have been funded.

The production of zero emission vehicles alone has the potential to support 72,000 green jobs worth up to £9.7 billion in gross value added by 2050.

To mark its one-year anniversary, the government is launching a new public

consultation to accelerate the transition to zero emission travel by phasing out the sale of new fossil-fuelled motorbikes and moped by 2035, or even earlier for some vehicles.

A further public consultation, Course to Zero, is being launched seeking views on the best route to net zero emissions by 2050 for the UK's domestic maritime sector. This will help inform the government's future actions to achieve full decarbonisation across UK's vital domestic shipping industry.

Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said:

Across road, rail, sea and air we have taken decisive action to reduce harmful emissions while enabling innovation and growing the economy.

We have provided certainty to both the industry and consumers through investment to stimulate a new market to reduce the need for fossil fuels.

Alongside the consultations, the Department for Transport is announcing funding for a competition to help industry develop the zero emission motorcycle supply chain in the UK. This will help create a manufacturing base for small, emission free vehicles and could lead to thousands of new jobs across the UK.

Successful applicants for the £350,000 fund, will undertake research to support the production and distribution of new, green vehicles within the sector.

Since the Transport Decarbonisation Plan's launch last year, the government has worked at pace to deliver many of its ambitious commitments, including bringing forward a Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate to set targets for manufacturers to ensure the supply of electric vehicles meets the soaring demand.

Further progress includes:

- announcing plans to support the UK market to increase public electric vehicle chargepoints by tenfold, by the end of the decade as part of the [Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#), making public charging cheaper and more convenient than refuelling at a petrol station
- launching the government's first office dedicated to decarbonising the UK's maritime industry, known as the [UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions](#)
- developing a Jet Zero Strategy, which will be launched this year, setting out the roadmap to achieving net zero aviation
- a world leading pledge confirmed at the COP26 Summit to dramatically increase the pace of the global transition so that all new cars and vans are zero emission by 2035 in leading markets and by 2040 globally – this [declaration](#) now has 180 signatures, including from 39 countries worldwide and 14 major vehicle manufacturers on top of cities, fleets

and investors

- launched a £200 million [Zero Emission Road Freight demonstrator programme](#) – supporting industry to develop cost-effective zero emission HGVs and their associated infrastructure
- supported [7 trial hydrogen transport projects](#) to inform future investment decisions and prime export opportunities – the successful trials could lead to increased use of hydrogen-powered transport to move goods and carry out services
- creating Active Travel England, led by Olympic gold medallist Chris Boardman and providing local authorities with £161 million, to deliver 134 first-rate schemes to develop new footways, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings across England

Helena Bennett, head of climate policy at Green Alliance, said:

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan laid ambitious foundations for the sector to begin its transition to net zero after 30 years in which emissions have stayed largely unchanged.

It's promising to see delivery of some of the plan's goals begin including announcements on a zero emission vehicle mandate and phase out of polluting HGVs, but there is more to be done to keep the sector on track with climate targets, and it's more important than ever, given the cost of living crisis, that boosts to public transport and walk and cycling infrastructure are prioritised.

The government is also aiming to improve health and make walking and cycling the natural first choice for shorter journeys by publishing its [second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#). It sets out estimated investment, already committed from various funds, of almost £4 billion into active travel across the government until 2025, including [£2 billion announced for active travel](#) in 2020.

This investment will deliver measures including high-quality walking and cycling routes, safer road junctions, cycle training and a [Walk to School Outreach initiative](#).

This progress will help meet the Prime Minister's 'Gear Change' vision to ensure half of journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030.

National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, said:

If we want to enable millions more people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys, we need to make the environment feel safe and attractive. Funding and supporting local authorities to achieve that is what Active Travel England will focus on – making local trips easier for everyone to make without having to drive.

I'm looking forward to working with councils and other partners to turn this national vision into a reality. Together we can build a

pleasant and sustainable future.

£55 million to restore mine-hunter for NATO ally

- £55 million to regenerate former Royal Navy mine-hunting vessel
- Supporting 100 jobs at Harland & Wolff Appledore site in south-west
- Enhancing mine-hunting capability for NATO ally

British shipyard, Harland & Wolff, has been awarded a £55 million contract to regenerate a former Royal Navy mine-hunting vessel, HMS QUORN.

On behalf of the Lithuanian Government, the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA) awarded the contract that will see HMS QUORN renovated and restored, bolstering NATO maritime capability in Europe.

Supporting ambitions to bolster British shipbuilding, laid out in the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh, the regeneration will support 100 jobs at the south-west shipyard.

The work will see an influx of contractors for the project across the local and national supply chain, with 14 major subcontract packages in engineering, equipment and integration, along with other refurbishment services.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said:

I'm pleased that this multi-million pound contract will see a former Royal Navy mine-hunting vessel restored and regenerated in a British shipyard, supporting UK jobs and strengthening shipbuilding in the south-west.

Lithuania is a key NATO ally and Joint Expeditionary Force partner, and this mine-hunting vessel will bolster NATO maritime capability across Europe, ensuring the Alliance remains ready to respond to evolving global threats.

HMS QUORN completed 27 years of Service with the Royal Navy before being sold to Lithuania in April 2020. The vessel patrolled the seas as part of the Royal Navy fleet of Hunt Class Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMVs) until 2017.

The Hunt Class vessels specialise in active mine-hunting. They use high-definition sonar to scour seabeds for mines, which are then destroyed by the ship's clearance diving teams or mine disposal system.

A key NATO ally and partner in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), Lithuania will add the restored mine-hunting vessel to its existing fleet, with the addition of this capability boosting NATO capability across Europe.

Tailored for the Lithuanian Navy, the work includes upgrades to the ships mission and sonar systems, and an additional search and rescue capability. The contract will also add new main engines, generators and propulsion gear as well as refurbish the accommodation, hull, ancillary systems, electrical systems and painting.

Cdre Richard Whalley, Head of DESA, said:

This contract award reinforces our excellent working relationship that we have with Lithuania as our NATO ally as well as UK owned Harland & Wolff. We're really pleased to see HMS QUORN refurbished in Appledore Shipyard and look forward to continuing our work with them supporting the British supply chain.

It is planned that the ship will be handed over to the Lithuanian Navy in 2024. HMS QUORN is the third mine-hunting vessel that DESA has sold to Lithuania, following the sale of HMS Dulverton and HMS Cottesmore in 2008.

[Reappointment of non-executive member of the Independent Monitoring Authority](#)

News story

The Lord Chancellor has re-appointed Punam Birly as a non-executive member of the Independent Monitoring Authority.



The Secretary of State has re-appointed Punam Birly as a non-executive member of the Independent Monitoring Authority (IMA) for a tenure of three years. Her appointment will commence on 8 December 2022 and will run until 7 December 2025.

Punam Birly biography

Punam Birly is Director of Global Employment at global energy services provider Petrofac Services Limited. She was appointed as non-executive member of the IMA on 8 December 2020.

Ms Birly was a Partner at KPMG LLP (UK) from 2008 to 2020. She was Head of Employment and Immigration within the Tax and Legal Services Practice, and the lead on People related Brexit issues. She is a Solicitor of the Senior Courts of England & Wales and previously worked in various expatriate tax, legal and reward roles at Andersen, Deloitte and PwC.

Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements

The IMA was established under the EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 (EUWAA). Under the provisions set out in EUWAA, the IMA has the power to receive complaints, launch inquiries and initiate or intervene in legal proceedings. The IMA also has a duty to review the effectiveness of the legislative framework relating to citizens' rights. In exercising its functions, the IMA must have regard to the importance of dealing with general or systemic issues in the implementation and application of citizen' rights.

Appointments and re-appointments to the IMA are run in line with the process set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Published 14 July 2022

[Water and sewerage company performance on pollution hits new low](#)

The Environment Agency is today calling for:

- Courts to impose much higher fines for serious and deliberate pollution incidents. Fines currently handed down by the courts often amount to less than a Chief Executive's salary.
- Prison sentences for Chief Executives and Board members whose companies are responsible for the most serious incidents and company directors struck off so they cannot move on in their careers after illegal environmental damage.

The Environment Agency has today (14 July) released its [annual report](#) on the environmental performance of England's nine water and sewerage companies.

The report shows that overall in 2021, the performance of the companies fell to the lowest level we have seen under the Environmental Performance Assessment (EPA). Measured against our 4 star rating, most of the companies' performance declined. Despite continuing enforcement action against those breaching environmental laws, water companies remain undeterred by the penalties currently being issued by the courts.

Southern Water and South West Water were given just a 1 star rating, while 4 companies were rated only 2 stars – meaning they require significant improvement.

Northumbrian Water, Severn Trent Water and United Utilities performed more positively and maintained 4 stars.

Since 2011 we have used the EPA, which rates each company in England from 1 star to 4 star, for performance on environmental commitments such as pollution incidents and treatment work compliance.

Following a regular 5-yearly review of the EPA process, the Environment Agency has deliberately tightened its metrics to set stretching targets that will push companies to meet regulatory requirements and our expectations. Not only did most companies fail to meet these new higher standards, most of them saw their performance deteriorate against the previous standards.

The latest EPA shows:

- The sector's performance on pollution was much worse than previous years.
- Southern Water and South West Water were rated as 1 star.
- Three companies (Northumbrian Water, Severn Trent Water and United Utilities) maintained 4 stars, although certain improvements are still required.
- Seven water companies had an increase in serious incidents compared to 2020. In total there were 62 serious incidents for 2021 – the highest since 2013.
- There has also been no overall improvement for several years in total incident numbers or compliance with conditions for discharging treated wastewater.

The Environment Agency Chair Emma Howard Boyd met with the Chairs of water companies over the last week.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

It's appalling that water companies' performance on pollution has hit a new low. Water quality won't improve until water companies get a grip on their operational performance. For years people have seen executives and investors handsomely rewarded while the environment pays the price.

Company directors let this happen. We plan to make it too painful for them to continue like this. The amount a company can be fined for environmental crimes is unlimited but fines currently handed down by the courts often amount to less than a Chief Executive's salary. We need courts to impose much higher fines. Investors should no longer see England's water monopolies as a one-way bet.

In response to its annual EPA report, the Environment Agency is today calling for:

- Courts to impose much higher fines for serious and deliberate pollution incidents – although the amount a company can be fined for environmental crimes is unlimited, the fines currently handed down by the courts often amount to less than a Chief Executive's salary.
- Prison sentences for Chief Executives and Board members whose companies are responsible for the most serious incidents
- Company directors struck off so they cannot simply move on in their careers after illegal environmental damage

A Defra spokesperson said:

This report shows that water companies are ignoring their legal responsibilities. Water company chiefs cannot continue to make huge profits whilst polluting our waters.

We will not tolerate this behaviour and we will take robust action if we don't see urgent improvements. We are the first government to set out our expectation that water companies must take steps to significantly reduce storm overflows and earlier this year we consulted on a comprehensive plan to tackle the adverse impact of discharges from storm overflows.

Since 2015 the Environment Agency's prosecutions against water companies have secured fines of over £138 million. In 2021 the Environment Agency concluded seven prosecutions against water and sewerage companies with fines of £90 million, two of £4 million, £2.3 million, £1.5 million, £150,000 and £540,000. Five prosecutions have already concluded in 2022 with fines of £300,000, £240,000, £233,000, £50,000 and £18,000, and more prosecutions are progressing in court.

Working with Ofwat and Defra, we have set out clear expectations through the Water Industry Strategic Environmental Requirements (WISER) for 2020-2025 which we expect water and sewerage companies to meet. Ofwat's PR24 methodology is currently out for consultation and we will be responding in due course to help shape it and ensure it meets the ongoing challenges.

Other action Defra and the Environment Agency are taking includes:

- Increasing inspections of sewage treatment works
- New requirements through the Environment Act for companies to put

monitors on all their storm overflows, both on the network and at sewage treatment works and make the data public

- Carrying out the country's largest ever investigation into environmental crime, our [investigation of all water companies into potential flow-to-full treatment \(FFT\) non-compliance](#) at wastewater treatment works. This involves all the water companies, and we are looking at whether they have knowingly and deliberately broken the law in relation to the treatment and discharge of sewage
- Toughening our regulation – placing greater emphasis on the root causes of non-compliance and pollution incidents and making sure that our company action plans are targeted and effective

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- On 18 November 2021, the Environment Agency (EA) and Ofwat announced major investigations into potential widespread non-compliance by water and sewerage companies at wastewater treatment works.
- The investigations were launched after companies revealed to us that they may be in breach of their permit conditions. This issue was brought to light following the EA's requirement of companies to improve how they monitor and manage flow-to-full treatment at wastewater treatment works through the installation of new monitors.
- While the investigation progresses, the EA, government and Ofwat are working closely together to ensure water and sewerage companies take immediate action where potential breaches of permit conditions are identified. It is the water and sewerage companies' responsibility to bring their sites back within compliance as soon as possible and they will be held to this by the regulators.