

Press release: Partnership push to raise awareness of flood risk

The Living with Water site launched today on World Water Day, the United Nations-led campaign designed to tackle the global water crisis.

The Living with Water partnership – made up of Hull City Council, East Riding Council, the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water – was set up last year after the four bodies established a strong working relationship following the devastating floods of 2007.

Its website, livingwithwater.co.uk, will let residents know how residents can get involved in water resilience and prevent against flooding.

The partnership made a successful bid to be part of the City Water Resilience Framework (CWRf) project, along with Miami, Mexico, Amman and Cape Town.

Lee Pitcher, Living with Water general manager, said:

Huge steps have been taken in various engineering solutions across the region, but now is our time to engage the region to make a change. This website highlights how everyone can get involved with our projects to make a change.

We will bring you news on the various schemes across the area, events you can get involved with and ways in which you can protect your homes and businesses against flooding.

Neil Longden, Environment Agency flood risk manager for Yorkshire North and East, said:

The Living With Water Partnership is doing great work, which is building on the hard work done by Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency in reducing flood risk over the last ten years.

The Living With Water partners are investing more than £200 million on flood risk reduction work in Hull and East Riding. This is one of the largest capital investments in the country. We are already helping renew ageing defences, replacing pumps, constructing flood defences, adopting natural flood management techniques and creating new flood storage areas.

With Hull & Haltemprice being the second most flood prone place in the UK outside of the Thames Estuary, the partnership also aims to raise awareness of this risks and offer advice on self-help measures, such as through installing property flood resilience in

homes and signing up to flood warnings and creating a flood plan.

Councillor Daren Hale, Hull City Council's portfolio holder for economic investment and regeneration, said:

Hull's historic relationship with water is a unique one. The city developed around water as a trading port, establishing our position as Yorkshire's only maritime city.

However, in 2007 and 2013, the city experienced a substantial amount of flooding across the city. As a result of this, we developed a dedicated flood risk team, and their work has been absolutely instrumental in understanding the risks posed to Hull.

Preparation is critical for our city, and the team working across the Living with Water partnership have brought together a wealth of expertise to the forefront of climate change discussions that will not only help to shape our plans for future developments, but also impact the city's position in terms of becoming a resilient economic driver for the region.

Press release: James Brokenshire confirms funding to help people off the streets

- Investment totalling £46 million allocated to 246 areas nationwide – providing an estimated 750 additional staff and over 2,600 new beds in total
- Funding will be used for additional staff and outreach and accommodation services
- This now means that over three-quarters of local authorities in England are covered by specialist Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding

Councils across the country will share over £46 million to help get people off the streets and into accommodation, Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has confirmed today (25 March 2019).

The money forms part of the government's £100 million Rough Sleeping Strategy and will be used to fund rough sleeping coordinator roles, add new or additional outreach services and extend existing or provide new temporary accommodation. This includes night shelters and hostel spaces. There is also an opportunity to provide housing-led solutions such as Housing First

services.

This funding includes £34 million for the 83 Rough Sleeping Areas and an additional £12 million for other areas of the country, demonstrating this government's commitment to tackling the issue and ending rough sleeping once and for all.

Across all areas, it is estimated that the money will provide funding for up to:

- 110 rough sleeping coordinators to improve local handling of the issue
- 300 outreach workers
- 350 other support and specialist roles
- over 1,400 new emergency bed spaces, including winter night shelter provision
- over 700 new long-term beds, including in the private rented sector and supported housing
- more than 500 new temporary spaces, through hostels for example
- over £2.5 million for spot-purchasing beds and increasing access to accommodation

Some projects will provide specialist support such as family reconnections, immigration advice or access to mental and physical health services.

Others will focus on providing services for specific groups of people, such as vulnerable women, those transitioning from leaving care or people trying to get their life back on track after leaving prison.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

The £100 million-backed Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out this government's blueprint for ending rough sleeping for good.

We are taking the necessary steps to make that happen, already providing 2,600 additional beds and 750 more support staff for the most vulnerable people in our society.

But we must keep up the momentum and that's why we are giving this funding to areas and projects that need it, ensuring progress continues to be made and people are given the help they need to turn their lives around.

This is all part of the government's [Rough Sleeping Initiative](#), launched last spring, which is providing over £45 million to councils over the next 2 years to support rough sleepers in their area off the streets and into secure accommodation where they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives.

In [August 2018](#), the government unveiled its [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#), which sets out the next steps towards achieving the aim of supporting everyone off the streets and into a home and to end rough sleeping for good, backed by £100 million of funding.

As outlined in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, the government has provided £45 million for the Rough Sleeping Initiative fund.

This consists of £34 million for the 83 authorities with the highest number of rough sleepers and a further £12 million set aside for spending on other areas and projects in the 2019-20 year.

The additional £1 million will be funded from within existing budgets.

See the [Rough Sleeping Initiative funding allocations](#) (PDF, 171KB, 6 pages)

[Press release: CMA leads Europe-wide action on car hire](#)

People renting a car from Europe's 5 biggest hire companies can now do so with more confidence following CMA-led action. Firms including Europcar and Sixt have made changes to deliver on previous commitments about how they display charges and other key information on their websites, so people will now know exactly how much they are paying upfront.

The move comes after a CMA review of whether the companies were complying with commitments they made to be clearer about their prices, in some cases about charges that people can't avoid when renting a car. This found the firms were still providing unclear information on some of their websites.

In 2015, Avis Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, Sixt, and Europcar made a [series of commitments](#) to the CMA, European Commission and other consumer enforcement authorities across Europe. These included providing customers with the total price they will pay at the start of the booking process and clearer information about any other costs, such as excess amounts and deposits. But, after reviewing the firms' practices, the CMA found that in some cases customers could still be hit by hidden costs or misled by unclear information.

After leading a Europe-wide project to address these concerns, the CMA is now satisfied that the 5 companies are making the necessary changes to make sure that key information is displayed clearly and prominently. These changes will also apply to Goldcar following its recent acquisition by Europcar, and, as this action has been taken across Europe, consumers across the EU will benefit from CMA's work.

George Lusty, Senior Director for Consumer Protection at the CMA, said:

No one should be misled or caught out by hidden fees when renting a car.

The big 5 told us in 2015 they would update their practices, but we've found they weren't doing all that they'd committed to. Following our further intervention, the charges people see on the big 5's websites will be clear, prominent and accurate, allowing customers to choose the best possible deal for them.

We'll keep the firms under close review to ensure they deliver on their commitments.

The CMA has also taken separate action against 2 Spanish car hire companies following concerns that UK holidaymakers were being misled by their practices. Centauro Rent-A-Car and Record Go Alquiler Vacacional have now agreed to improve the way they display information on their websites, ensuring that they include all compulsory charges upfront.

George Lusty continued:

If a firm sells to UK customers, they do so under UK law and must answer to it.

We are prepared to act if we find any that any company is misleading UK customers – be it based in the UK or abroad.

This is the latest in a series of actions the CMA has carried out since 2015 in the car rental industry. Other examples include securing an estimated £100 million in benefits for UK customers following its initial investigation into the Big 5's practices, and enforcement action against a number of car hire comparison sites.

The CMA has also published [advice for car hire businesses](#) to help them comply with consumer law, as well as [advice for consumers](#) on what to watch out for when renting a vehicle.

Notes to Editors:

1. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015. The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices and specific prohibitions against misleading actions, misleading omissions and aggressive commercial practices. Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act aims to protect consumers from unfair contract terms, and requires contract terms to be fair and transparent.
2. The companies involved are Avis Budget Group, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Hertz Europe Limited, Sixt SE and Europcar Mobility Group (which acquired Goldcar in 2017). For more information, see the [summary of areas where further changes were required to be made](#).
3. The CMA has not made a finding on whether the practices it is concerned about breach consumer protection law. All of the companies concerned agreed to make changes to their practices after the CMA raised its

concerns. If necessary, the CMA can take action through the courts to enforce consumer law under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002. Ultimately, only a court can rule that a particular term or practice infringes the law.

4. The CMA will continue to encourage compliance with consumer law in this sector in line with its published prioritisation principles.
5. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
6. For CMA updates, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

[Press release: Co-op Breached Code finds Groceries Code Adjudicator](#)

Christine Tacon, the Groceries Code Adjudicator, has ordered the Co-op Group to introduce major changes to its governance, systems and processes after carrying out a formal investigation into the retailer.

She found the supermarket group had breached the Groceries Supply Code of Practice on two counts. The retailer failed to provide reasonable notice to suppliers of decisions to de-list products and varied supply agreements unilaterally and without reasonable notice in the way it applied two specific charges.

The GCA launched the investigation on 8 March 2018 after an 18-month period of significant engagement with Co-op during which the retailer accepted it was unable to get to the bottom of issues and could not demonstrate that it had taken remedial action in all the relevant circumstances.

In reaching her findings Ms Tacon interviewed a broad cross-section of Co-op suppliers as well as employees of the retailer and examined documents provided by the Co-op and suppliers.

She found that the retailer de-listed suppliers with no notice or short, fixed notice periods that were not reasonable in the circumstances. It applied standard notice periods which was contrary to the Code and her guidance which specify that notice of de-listing should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The retailer's conduct in introducing depot quality control charges and benchmarking charges also breached the Code and the Adjudicator found this caused particular difficulties for suppliers with fixed-cost contracts as they would not be able to amend their cost prices to reflect the increased cost incurred when Co-op applied the charges.

There were weaknesses in training, policies and processes for buyers and the poor functioning of existing IT systems contributed to the retailer's Code breaches.

Ms Tacon said:

The practices and behaviours described in my report were widespread. Systems, processes, business practices and the ability of different parts of the retailer to affect suppliers' risks and costs of trading with the company all contributed to Co-op breaking the Code. At the core there was inadequate governance to oversee and manage Code compliance.

The clear conclusion is that Co-op needs to take a very different approach to Code compliance. I have made robust recommendations for urgent action and I will be helping the retailer change its approach by monitoring closely how they implement those recommendations.

The Adjudicator has set down five recommendations for the Co-op to follow:

1. Co-op must have adequate governance to oversee and manage its compliance with the Code;
2. Legal, compliance and audit functions must have sufficient co-ordinated oversight of Co-op systems to ensure Code compliance;
3. Co-op IT systems must support Code compliance;
4. Co-op must adequately train on the Code all employees who make decisions which affect a supplier's commercial arrangements with it; and
5. Co-op must in any potential de-listing situation communicate with affected suppliers to enable the retailer to decide what is a significant reduction in volume and reasonable notice.

The Adjudicator will monitor Co-op's delivery against each of the recommendations and has requested an implementation plan within 4 weeks.

Ms Tacon said:

My recommendations are focused on remedying the root causes of the issues I found and the weaknesses in Co-op's systems and processes. They are a proportionate and effective measure to reduce the likelihood of future non-compliance by Co-op in these areas and I have decided not to use my fining powers in this instance.

Ultimately, I launched this investigation to help Co-op to get things right for the future. The Co-op will, however, pay the full cost of the investigation and my costs in overseeing the implementation of the recommendations.

Co-op has accepted that its focus at the time was on business recovery and it is clear that the Code was not embedded into its culture as it should have been. It mistakenly assumed that its brand values and desire to work in a certain way meant that it was likely to be acting in accordance with the Code and that if there were any issues with compliance, suppliers would have made the

retailer aware of them.

Co-op's actions were not malicious, it has already repaid those suppliers it has identified as having had charges introduced without sufficient notice and is committed to working with me to change for the better.

This has been an important investigation because it firmly establishes the role of governance and corporate culture in ensuring Code compliance. The most improved retailers, as reported in my annual survey, have all started by accepting how important this is and working to develop a really joined-up approach to compliance at every level in their respective businesses.

My interpretation of the key paragraphs of the Code will apply to all the regulated retailers and I will be talking to them about what this will mean for them. And can I remind suppliers that the [GCA annual survey is open](#) now and I urge them to complete it to inform my future work.

[Read a full version of the Investigation report.](#)

For more information, please email enquiries@groceriescode.gov.uk or call 020 3738 6537.

[News story: DBS email addresses have changed](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) published a [news story](#) back in September 2018 advising that all DBS email addresses were changing.

Alongside the Home Office, DBS have dropped 'GSI' from their email addresses. When contacting us, our email addresses will now end '@dbs.gov.uk'.

For the past few months, all emails to the old email addresses were automatically re-routed to our new however this will stop as of 31 March 2019, so people should make sure they have updated their contact lists.