

Anglers welcomed back to river fishing as the Close Season ends

From today, Thursday 16 June, anglers are encouraged to start fishing in our rivers again as the statutory close season for coarse fishing in England's fisheries comes to an end. The 16th is an eagerly awaited date in many angler's fishing calendars.

Coarse fishing is prohibited in some of England's waterways from March 15th to June 15th (inclusive) each year to protect vulnerable fish stocks while they are spawning.

The close season provides an opportunity for the Environment Agency and partners to carry out projects up and down the country to further enhance habitats which are vital for improving fish spawning. An important task is monitoring spawning populations of barbel and chub, boosting our understanding of populations and their habitat use.

Heidi Stone, Environment Agency Fisheries Manager, said:

The annual close season is vitally important to protect our fish stocks, enhance our fisheries, and improve the fishing experience for anglers around the country.

I'm grateful to all of our anglers who comply with the rules and regulations and I am delighted it is now time for anglers to pick back up their rods and return to the river.

The Environment Agency and partners also carry out important work in the winter months to ensure the close season is as beneficial as possible to fish populations, wildlife and the broader environment. This includes:

- Big catchment scale enhancements conducted to improve our fisheries, including re-naturalising river channels, speeding up flows, and protecting banks from erosion. This will increase diversity and spawning success.
- The construction of fish passes to help all fish species move freely and increase their chances of spawning success. Six new passes were built, for example, at the River Ouse in Yorkshire.

Environment Agency officers, in partnership with the Angling Trusts Volunteer Bailiff Service (VBS), have conducted patrols throughout the close season to help protect spawning fish. This year marks the 10th anniversary of 'Operation Clampdown', and officers carried out 542 patrols from 15th March to the end of May, reporting 49 anglers for offences and 162 other alleged breaches of fisheries legislation. Anglers have the potential to be fined up to £50,000 for fishing in the close season, highlighting the importance of this period to protect fish populations.

From today, anglers can return to rivers and benefit from an improved fishing experience. Those returning to fishing, or taking up the sport for the first time, should make sure they have a [fishing licence](#), with 100% of fishing licence income invested by the Environment Agency into the enhancement and protection of England's fisheries. We have made this even easier this year by making the online purchase journey easier with the added benefit of the option to have a digital licence, saving postage costs and allowing more money to be spent on fisheries.

Further information:

- The close season prohibits fishing in rivers, streams, drains, specified canals, and some still-water sites of special scientific interest (SSSI).

Directors falsely applied for £100,000 bounce back loans

David Garry Harrison (48) and Paul Hudson (47) both received 11-year bans after they did not dispute they caused their company to apply for £100,000 worth of bounce back loans it was not entitled to.

The pair, both from Cullompton, Devon, are now disqualified from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

David Harrison's ban became effective on 31 May, while Paul Hudson's disqualification began on 9 June.

Ace Buildings and Maintenance Services Limited was incorporated in June 2017 and carried out general building and maintenance work.

Ace Building and Maintenance Services Limited, however, began to struggle and by October 2019 had a winding-up petition presented against it because it could not pay its debts.

The directors entered into discussions about insolvency arrangements before causing Ace Buildings and Maintenance Services Limited to first enter into a company voluntary arrangement in February 2020. A creditors voluntary liquidation in December 2020 followed, with the company stating liabilities of more than £340,000.

The building firm's insolvency, however, triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service before investigators discovered David Harrison and Paul Hudson caused Ace Building and Maintenance Services Limited to submit two sham applications for bounce back loans it was not entitled to.

On 4 May 2020, David Harrison and Paul Hudson successfully applied for a £50,000 bounce back loan but did not declare the company was distressed and had entered into a company voluntary arrangement with close to £110,000 worth of liabilities.

The two directors submitted a second bogus application on 16 June 2020. Again, they did not declare Ace Building and Maintenance Service Limited's difficulties or that it has already received the maximum amount allowed under the bounce back loan scheme.

Mike Smith, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Bounce back loans provided a vital lifeline to help viable businesses during the pandemic. David Harrison and Paul Hudson, however, cynically applied for government support they were not entitled to when they were fully aware their company was insolvent and was not able to pay its debts.

11-years is a substantial amount of time to be removed from the corporate arena and their disqualifications will protect the public and creditors, while also serving as a clear warning to other rogue directors that we will robustly tackle financial misconduct.

Ace Buildings and Maintenance Services Limited's Liquidator is considering the bounce back loans and recovery of funds.

David Garry Harrison is from Cullompton, Devon and his date of birth is February 1975.

Paul Hudson is from Cullompton, Devon and his date of birth is January 1974.

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[The devastating impact of Putin's war on the most vulnerable in Ukraine: UK](#)

statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mister Chair. This week I will focus on the disproportionate impact of the deteriorating humanitarian situation on the most excluded and vulnerable groups in Ukraine.

The need is immense: the latest analysis by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that 15.7 million people need humanitarian support within Ukraine, and over 32% of the population have been forced to flee their homes. We know, from too much experience, that war affects different groups of people in different ways. But at its core – vulnerable groups require proper and adequate access to health and social care, food and the financial means to survive, and protection against predators and those who wish them harm.

Women and children currently make up the vast majority of Ukrainian people seeking refuge. This group faces significant risk of gender-based violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse, and often lacks adequate access to pedological healthcare and sexual and reproductive health services.

We are horrified by the many reports of rape and sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces in Ukraine. Let me be clear: the perpetration of sexual violence in armed conflict is a war crime. The indifference with which these crimes are committed belies their profound and far-reaching consequences. Survivors, children born of rape and entire communities feel their impact. This is why these barbaric acts must be investigated and those responsible held to account. We have recently launched the [‘Murad Code’](#) which provides guidelines on how to conduct these investigations safely, ethically and effectively. The UK will support further through the £10 million civil society fund and financial and technical support to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

For some women and girls, the risk of sexual violence and exploitation is heightened by disability. Those with learning and psychosocial disabilities and those in institutions are particularly at risk.

Indeed, many people with disabilities have experienced the cruelty of President Putin’s war. Many are unable to evacuate and have been excluded from humanitarian responses. We emphasise our particularly urgent concern for the safety of the 100,000 children confined to nearly 700 institutions across Ukraine, who cannot flee the Russian Armed Forces. And with every unlawful attack on civilian facilities, the Russian government feeds the problem: the number of Ukrainian people with disabilities grows, and their ability to obtain assistance diminishes.

Older people face the same, often compounded, risks of abandonment, violence and lack of access to the most basic of services. As set out in the [April 2022 Moscow Mechanism report](#), fragile health and mobility difficulties make it challenging for them to flee from the horrifying war in their country. Moreover, since most of Ukraine’s elderly population relies on old-age

pensions, the disruption to social security infrastructure leaves them without means to live.

The April Moscow Mechanism report also described how violent acts motivated by homophobia are largely tolerated throughout areas under temporary Russian control. Indeed, the Russia Patriarch Kirill cited gay parades among the main, quote, "sins" necessitating the invasion. The UK condemns this in the strongest possible terms. Nobody should face violence or discrimination because of who they are or who they love. While humanitarian crises make everyone vulnerable, existing discrimination and violence against LGBT+ people can put them at heightened risk within conflict zones and while fleeing.

Moreover, the impact of the Russian government's war of choice on the defenceless extends beyond Ukraine. I have spoken to this Council before about the devastating effect of Russia's illegal war on global food security. I repeat: it is President Putin's responsibility to lift this blockade. The poorest and the most vulnerable should not starve because of one man's territorial ambition.

Mr Chair – we need to speak up for the most vulnerable in our societies. Those individuals are at their most vulnerable during a time of war. We need to speak up for them to ensure they have a voice. We need to speak up for them to ensure that they are not forgotten. The Russian government's unprovoked, illegal war has many brutal and horrific edges – but the impact it has on Ukrainian women and children and the most vulnerable in society is the most tragic and the cruellest. Russian diplomats and Russian military officials should look deep into their souls. You are enabling this. You can choose to disable it.

Finally, the situation of prisoners of war in Ukraine is gravely concerning. The [Geneva Conventions](#) are clear – all those serving with the Ukrainian Armed Forces should be treated as Prisoners of War. We condemn the reported sentencing of two British Nationals, who were serving with the Ukrainian Armed Forces, by the so-called DPR in eastern Ukraine. The judgement against them is an egregious breach of International Humanitarian Law.

Mr Chair, we reaffirm our full support for and solidarity with Ukraine and its people. They are standing tall and we stand with them. For as long as it takes.

[UK commits to reform of the Consumer Credit Act](#)

News story

Plans to modernise consumer credit laws to cut costs for businesses and simplify rules for consumers have been announced by the government today (16th June).



The Consumer Credit Act, which came into force in 1974 and governs billions of credit card purchases and loans each year, is highly prescriptive and increasingly cumbersome and inflexible – confusing consumers and adding unnecessary costs to businesses when implementing its requirements.

The government will move much of the Act from statute to sit under the Financial Conduct Authority – enabling the regulator to quickly respond to emerging developments in the consumer credit market, rather than having to amend existing legislation. It will also simplify ambiguous technical terms to make clear to consumers what protections they have – and make it easier and more cost effective for businesses to comply with regulation.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen said:

The Consumer Credit Act has been in place for almost 50 years – and it needs to be reformed to keep pace with the modern world.

We want to create a regulatory regime that fosters innovation but also maintains high levels of consumer protection.

That's why I have committed to undertake this ambitious long-term reform – and it's exactly what I'll deliver.

Leaving the EU has provided additional opportunity for regulatory reform and the government will examine which parts of EU retained legislation can be repealed or replaced to ensure regulation is better suited to the needs of the British people.

The reforms will allow lenders to provide a wider range of finance whilst maintaining high levels of consumer protection. For example, we will ensure that the information a consumer receives throughout the lending process is easy to understand and will be both screen and print-friendly. We will also ensure that lenders are able to more easily provide credit for emerging and new technologies such as electric cars, helping millions of people embrace technological innovation.

The reforms will build on the recommendations of the Financial Conduct Authority's retained provisions report and the Woolard Review – which both made recommendations for a reformed regime.

A consultation is expected to be published by the end of this year outlining the government's proposals, and seeking views from stakeholders on how the Act should be reformed.

Further information

Published 16 June 2022

National Security and Investment report shows new system is working

Press release

The first report on the UK's new national security and investment system has been published.



- Report shows operational success of new system for screening investments for national security concerns
- new system has been providing certainty for businesses, with all assessments completed within their legal deadlines
- businesses and investors encouraged to explore the guidance available to ensure they fulfil their legal obligations

The first report on the UK's new national security and investment system has been published by Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng today (Thursday 16 June). It covers the period from 4 January 2022, when the system came into place, to 31 March 2022.

The government's new powers under the National Security and Investment (NSI)

Act provide it with the ability to intervene in qualifying acquisitions across the economy that could harm the UK's national security.

It also requires businesses and investors to notify the government of certain acquisitions across 17 sensitive areas of the economy.

The new system is providing businesses with clarity and speed, with all assessments completed within deadlines and many completed sooner.

Modern threats are being tackled, with deals involving cutting-edge technology such as artificial intelligence and the space sector being closely scrutinised. The conflict in Ukraine is an example of the instability that the government is guarding against.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The government is laser-focused on growing our economy and levelling up every part of the UK, but this will not come at the cost of our national security.

This report shows our new investment screening process is working. It's simple and quick, giving firms speed and certainty to do business in a way that protects the security of the UK.

The new system is more efficient as government has to call-in a deal for further assessment within 30 working days of accepting a notification, while under the previous system the government had had up to 4 months to intervene following the completion of a deal.

Key findings of the report include:

- the average time to inform parties that a notification has been accepted as complete is 3 working days. This is line with international partners, such as the USA's system taking 5 days
- where the government has called-in a deal, on average this has been decided in 24 working days. The shortest time the government took was 11 working days and all have been decided within the deadline of 30 days
- the government has received 222 deal notifications in the 3-month period
- of these deals, 17 were called-in by the government for further assessment
- of the 17 called-in, 3 were cleared with the other 14 cases still being assessed at the end of the reporting period

Acquisitions called-in for further assessment included businesses from areas of the economy such as artificial intelligence, advanced materials, and satellite and space technologies.

The government has published extensive [guidance](#) which includes the process for submitting notifications. The government encourages businesses to explore this platform to ensure they are fulfilling their legal obligations.

Published 16 June 2022