

[Press release: Harron Homes fined £120,000 over construction pollution](#)

A Leeds-based house building company has been fined £120,000 for illegally polluting a watercourse from a Huddersfield construction site.

Harron Homes Limited was sentenced yesterday (20 November) at Leeds Magistrates' Court after admitting one charge of causing illegal discharges from its Farriers Croft estate in 2015.

The Environment Agency prosecuted the firm after investigating reports of contaminated run-off which was entering a tributary of Grimescar Dyke.

Rosalind Emsley-Smith, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that an officer visited the site on 20 November 2015 and saw polluted water flowing out of the entrance of the construction site. The company was also pumping silt contaminated water from site excavations which also entered the watercourse.

Following the Environment Agency's visit, Harron Homes attempted to control the silt run-off by setting up settlement tanks. However, further incidents of pollution were reported in November and December 2015 and subsequent inspections revealed that this system was inadequate. Silty water was found to be discharging, resulting in further pollution.

Samples taken from the discharges showed that they were having a significant impact on the water quality in the watercourse up to three kilometres further downstream. Some samples showed there to be nearly 35,000 milligrams of suspended solids per litre of water, whereas a healthy watercourse is expected to have a concentration lower than 30 milligrams per litre.

The firm's attempt to contain the muddy water was inadequate; silt was seen flowing off the site

Mark West, environment management team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

These pollution incidents had a significant impact on the water environment over a number of weeks, and were entirely avoidable. In West Yorkshire there has been a worrying increase in the number of pollutions incidents reported to us that on investigation are attributable to the construction sector.

Construction companies should consider the potential environmental impact of developments they undertake at the initial planning stage and must adhere to environmental permitting rules and invest in appropriate management systems to prevent their activities from

affecting the local environment.

If anyone spots pollution of this kind, they are urged to contact the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060 so we can investigate.

In mitigation, Harron Homes told the court that it had now put procedures in place to prevent future pollution incidents.

In addition to the fine, the company was ordered to pay £8,706.71 in legal costs and a £120 victim surcharge.

[Press release: October 2017](#) [Transaction Data](#)

This data provides information about the number and types of applications that HM Land Registry completed in October 2017.

In October:

- HM Land Registry completed more than 1,740,000 applications to change or query the Land Register
- the South East topped the table of regional applications with 407,148

The transaction data shows HM Land Registry completed 1,740,068 applications in October compared with 1,586,987 in September and 1,532,007 last October, of which:

- 408,685 were applications to update existing titles compared with 363,990 in September
- 823,267 were applications to obtain an official copy of a register compared with 747,090 in September
- 226,488 were official searches compared with 210,805 in September
- 26,260 were postal applications from non-account holders, compared with 24,136 in September

Applications by region and country

| Region and country | August 2017 applications | September 2017 applications | October 2017 applications |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| South East | 392,737 | 372,168 | 407,148 |
| Greater London | 313,338 | 298,966 | 329,865 |
| North West | 186,030 | 176,591 | 195,045 |
| South West | 164,325 | 155,495 | 168,802 |
| West Midlands | 143,074 | 135,283 | 145,121 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 128,718 | 122,127 | 135,347 |
| East Midlands | 115,673 | 111,411 | 120,689 |
| North | 76,810 | 72,506 | 82,710 |
| Wales | 79,289 | 76,292 | 80,938 |
| East Anglia | 71,789 | 66,034 | 74,202 |
| Isles of Scilly | 47 | 47 | 106 |
| England and Wales (not assigned) | 87 | 67 | 95 |
| Total | 1,671,917 | 1,586,987 | 1,740,068 |

Top 5 local authority areas

| Top 5 local authority areas | August applications | Top 5 local authority areas | September applications | Top 5 local authority areas | October applications |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Birmingham | 25,179 | Birmingham | 23,631 | Birmingham | 26,232 |
| City of Westminster | 21,516 | City of Westminster | 20,892 | City of Westminster | 24,087 |
| Leeds | 19,102 | Leeds | 18,076 | Leeds | 19,895 |
| Manchester | 17,499 | Cornwall | 16,809 | Manchester | 17,810 |
| Cornwall | 17,193 | Manchester | 16,290 | Cornwall | 17,794 |

Top 5 customers

| Top 5 customers | August applications | Top 5 customers | September applications | Top 5 customers | October applications |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Enact | 37,513 | Enact | 39,349 | Enact | 48,058 |
| O'Neill Patient | 26,888 | O'Neill Patient | 24,273 | O'Neill Patient | 24,610 |
| Optima Legal Service | 21,031 | Optima Legal Service | 20,688 | Optima Legal Service | 23,721 |
| Eversheds LLP | 20,189 | Eversheds LLP | 18,307 | HBOS Bank PLC | 20,980 |
| HBOS Bank PLC | 18,235 | Barclays Bank PLC | 16,491 | Eversheds LLP | 19,123 |

[Access the full dataset](#) on data.gov.uk.

Notes to editors

1. Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The November Transaction Data will be published at 11am on Thursday 21 December 2017 at [HM Land Registry Monthly Property Transaction Data](#).
2. The monthly Transaction Data showing how many applications for new titles, leases, splitting titles, updating existing titles, official copies of the register and searches were completed, reflects the volume of applications lodged by customers using an HM Land Registry account number on their application form.
3. Completed applications in England and Wales shown by region and by local authority include postal applications as well as those sent electronically.
4. Transaction Data excludes pending applications, withdrawn applications, bankruptcy applications, bulk applications and discharge applications.
5. Transactions for value are applications lodged involving a transfer of ownership for value. Discharge applications remove a charge, for example a mortgage, from the register. For an explanation of other terms used, see [abbreviations used in the transaction data](#).
6. Most searches carried out by a solicitor or conveyancer are to protect the purchase and/or mortgage. For example, a search will give the buyer priority for an application to HM Land Registry to register the purchase of the property. This can give an indication of market activity.
7. Reasonable skill and care is used in the provision of the data. We strive to ensure that the data is as accurate as possible but cannot guarantee that it is free from error. We cannot guarantee our data is fit for your intended purpose or use.
8. Transaction Data is available free of charge for use and re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#) (OGL). The licence allows public bodies to make their data available for re-use.
9. If you use or publish the Transaction Data, you must add the following attribution statement: "Contains HM Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right 2017. This data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0".
10. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
11. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
12. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth more than £4 trillion, including more than £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 24 million titles, which show evidence of ownership, covering more than 84% of the land mass.
13. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry
14. Follow us on:

[Press release: No escape from illegal worker fine for Coventry clothing company director](#)

Mr Dewitt gave a disqualification undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy for six years which is effective from 27 November 2017.

Mr Dewitt was the director of Mystique Coventry Ltd, a company trading as a clothing wholesaler, and on 15 November 2016 Home Office Immigration Enforcement Officers discovered that they were employing seven workers who were not eligible to work in the UK.

The company went into liquidation on 16 March 2017 owing £74,394 to creditors, including the £70,000 penalty imposed by the Home Office Immigration and Enforcement for employing illegal workers.

Martin Gitner, Deputy Head of Investigations with the Insolvency Service said:

Illegal workers are not protected under employment law, and as well as cheating legitimate job seekers out of employment opportunities these employers defraud the tax payer and undercut honest competitors.

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, makes employers responsible for preventing illegal workers in the UK. To comply with the law, a company must check and be able to prove documents have been checked prior to recruitment that show a person is entitled to work.

The public has a right to expect that those who break the law will face the consequences and this should serve as a warning to other directors tempted to take on illegal staff.

Mr Ajay Dewitt, date of birth June 1988 and he resides in Bedworth, Coventry.

Mystique Coventry Limited, company number 10000072 was incorporated on 11

February 2016.

Mr Dewitt was a director from 11 February 2016 to liquidation. The Company went into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation on 16 March 2017 with an estimated deficiency of £68,125.

On 06 November 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Dewitt, effective from 27 November, for a period of 6 years.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

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 other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

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

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Extensive track damage between Ferryside and Llangennech](#)

Between about 06:50 hrs and 08:14 hrs on Monday 30 October 2017, train reporting number 6B13, the 05:00 hrs DB Cargo service from Robeston (Milford Haven) to Westerleigh, caused extensive damage to the track that it travelled over on the part of its journey between Ferryside and Llangennech. The train stopped on the approach to Llangyfelach tunnel, about 70 miles leaving Robeston, when the driver was told of a possible problem. Subsequent examination by Network Rail found at least nine broken rails, and damage to level crossings and signalling equipment.

The train consisted of a locomotive and 29 loaded tank wagons. Examination of the leading wagon found that the brake rigging on the leading bogie had disintegrated, and that the trailing pair of wheels on that bogie had suffered significant damage (wheel flats). Some of the components of the braking system were hanging down and dragging along the track, and others were missing altogether.

The leading wagon was loaded with 76 tonnes of diesel fuel. The following 28 wagons, also loaded with petroleum products, passed over each rail break without derailling.

The RAIB's preliminary examination has concluded that the brakes of all the wagons in the train were almost certainly properly released when the train left Robeston. It appears at present that one set of wheels ceased to rotate at some point during the journey, leading to the development of the wheel flats, and began to turn again in the Ferryside area. The impacts from the rotating, damaged, wheels gave rise to the broken rails, and may also have caused the disintegration of the brake rigging.

Our investigation will try to determine the sequence of events and find out why the wheels behaved in this way, and why the braking components failed. It will also examine how the developing incident was handled by the Network Rail operating staff along the route, and consider any underlying management factors.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

[News story: Shaping the qualifications landscape](#)

Event brings together employers, trailblazer groups and others to discuss the current qualifications landscape and the changes under way.

Ofqual is today (Tuesday 21 November) hosting an event for stakeholders to learn more about England's vocational and technical qualifications landscape. Around 90 representatives from employers, trailblazer groups, training providers and educational associations and organisations are attending the symposium at the Royal Society in London. The event aims to raise awareness and understanding of the qualifications landscape, gather feedback from attendees on their use of qualifications and discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with reform. Ofqual is particularly keen to describe and discuss how regulation can potentially best support them.

Sally Collier said:

We want employers to be confident that vocational and technical qualifications meet their needs, and those of their employees. We are already supporting those aims through the experience and expertise we bring to regulation. Today's event provides another opportunity for us to listen to what users of qualifications have to say, and ensure that they are right at the forefront of shaping the new landscape.

Alongside today's event, we are releasing a range of reports and guidance. These include [findings from a review of nearly 100 apprenticeship assessment plans](#), which we have written to help current and future trailblazers develop these important documents. Another identifies the factors that contribute to the effective functioning of assessments through [a review of 27 vocational and technical qualifications found in performance tables](#). A further document reports on how [Applied General qualifications are viewed and used by stakeholders](#). Together, they provide a set of resources to help inform the effective development of new vocational and technical qualifications.

We are also launching the [prototype of a new interactive tool](#) today to help everyone navigate the current qualifications landscape. This innovative way of visualising data makes our register of regulated qualifications more accessible and easier to explore.