

Roofers and builders reminded to follow duty of care

Press release

The Environment Agency is reminding roofers and builders in Devon and Cornwall to take responsibility for their waste.



Asbestos is a hazardous material and must be disposed of properly

Most roofers and builders are law-abiding and take their duty of care seriously when it comes to waste management. But the reminder comes after agency officers found a large amount of buried asbestos waste when executing a search warrant at a site in the South West. The operator of the site was arrested by the police and questioned.

Asbestos and other hazardous wastes require disposal by specialist contractors at sites that can legally and safely handle it. Mishandling it creates a serious risk to public health, the environment and wildlife.

Kevin Baker of the Environment Agency said:

Tradespeople that create waste, especially during activities like construction and roofing, must make sure that waste goes to a site legally able to accept it. Roofing tiles often contain asbestos so make sure you know what you're dealing with.

When waste is transferred between different parties it needs a waste transfer note. If a site or waste operator asks for cash for tipping, and provides zero paperwork to you, then be suspicious. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you get rid of asbestos or other waste at illegal sites, don't be surprised if you get a knock on the door.

Unscrupulous people posing as genuine waste collectors cause serious harm to the environment by taking construction waste and dumping it. This waste causes air, ground and water pollution and odour issues. Criminal actions like this also undermine legitimate waste collection businesses.

Managers, owners, and staff of all construction businesses must use a registered waste carrier to collect, recycle or dispose of their waste. Check the Environment Agency [public register](#) of waste carriers before using them. Make sure the waste is [accurately described](#) and know where your waste is going. Follow the [EA blog](#) for all the steps builders can take to follow their duty of care.

Anyone who suspects illegal waste activity can report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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[Prime Minister signs new assurances to bolster European security: 11 May 2022](#)

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson visiting Sweden and Finland today to fortify European security
- Nations to sign mutual security assurances with the UK to tackle traditional, hybrid and cyber threats
- Security declarations will see a step-change in defence and security cooperation, including the sharing of new intelligence and joint military operations

The Prime Minister is signing historic declarations with Sweden and Finland today to reinforce their security and fortify northern Europe's defences, in the face of renewed threats.

As fellow liberal democracies, and members of the Joint Expeditionary Force, both nations are already vital security partners in Northern Europe, with world-leading defence capabilities and cutting-edge technology development.

Visiting Harpsund, the Swedish Prime Minister's country residence, and Helsinki, the Prime Minister will set out the UK's intention to support the two nations' armed forces should either face crisis or come under attack.

This morning the Prime Minister signed mutual security assurances with Prime Minister Andersson in Sweden, and this afternoon he will travel to Finland to sign a similar security declaration with President Niinistö.

The declarations will see a step-change in defence and security cooperation between the UK and each country, intensifying intelligence sharing, accelerating joint military training, exercising and deployments, and bolstering security across all three countries and northern Europe.

They will also see the UK bolster its collaboration on traditional threats facing all three nations, while working also with Sweden and Finland to tackle new geopolitical challenges, such as hybrid and cyber threats.

The Prime Minister will also make clear the UK's unwavering support for NATO's open door policy during the visit.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We are steadfast and unequivocal in our support to both Sweden and Finland and the signing of these security declarations is a symbol of the everlasting assurance between our nations.

These are not a short term stop gap, but a long term commitment to bolster military ties and global stability, and fortify Europe's defences for generations to come.

The declarations signed today will allow the UK to cooperate with key Nordic partners and their armed forces, in all domains, including cyberspace. They will also allow for closer collaboration on new technology and intelligence gathering.

As part of increased defence cooperation with Sweden and Finland, the Prime Minister will offer to increase deployments to the region, including with Royal Air Force, British Army and Royal Navy assets and personnel.

Both Sweden and Finland have played a key role in supporting Ukraine to defend itself in recent weeks and months, while British, Swedish and Finnish forces have exercised together across the High North and the Baltics.

Both nations are part of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force taskforce, which brings together 10 countries in support of stability and security in the North Atlantic, Baltic Sea Region and the High North. The assurances made today build on the already close ties of that defence grouping.

Today's visit comes after the Prime Minister welcomed the Swedish and Finnish leaders to Downing Street in March to discuss closer security and defence ties.

NET ZERO PROGRAMME: Looking beyond carbon emissions

The [Climate Change Act 2008](#) is the UK's approach to reducing emissions and preparing for climate change. It set a statutory target to reduce UK Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions by at least 80 percent (against 1990 levels) by 2050. Then in June 2019, [secondary legislation](#) was passed that extended that target to "at least 100 percent". Simply put, if this audacious target is met it will mean the UK will stop contributing to global emissions by 2050.

The property industry has a huge role to play in reducing carbon emissions: according to the UK Green Building Council, the UK built environment (buildings and infrastructure) is [responsible for 25 percent of UK greenhouse gas emissions](#). And a recent [United Nations report](#) shows the global building industry alone contributes 38 percent of total global emissions.

Leading the Government's drive towards emissions reduction is [the Government Property Agency](#) (GPA) – the public sector property holding company responsible for delivering the Government's property agenda across its office and warehouse portfolios. The GPA currently manages more than 700,000 square metres of office estate across the UK. Its vision is a transformed, shared, sustainable and value for money government estate. To achieve this the GPA is rationalising, refurbishing and retrofitting the existing estate, as well as constructing modern, sustainable, digitally-connected and inclusive [Government Hubs](#).

Crucially, the GPA is aiming to go beyond just reducing carbon emissions. It's also minimising consumption of energy, water and waste, improving resilience to climate change (temperature change, flood risk etc.) and reducing carbon embodied in construction.

In late 2020, the GPA established a Net Zero Programme which is being delivered in [strategic partnership with Atkins/Faithful+Gould](#). The Programme exists to:

- Improve energy efficiency (reduce consumption)
- Increase the use of green energy (decarbonise)
- Generate and store green energy (locally)
- Reduce embodied carbon (in construction) for the Government's office portfolio

One year, many successes

In just one year of its Net Zero Programme, the GPA has already made carbon savings to the equivalent of more than 2,000 flights from London to New York, or planting circa 47,000 trees.

Net Zero and sustainability initiatives are being designed into spaces as

early as possible, starting from construction design where possible. For example, the Croydon Hub new build – which is designed to exceed BREEAM Excellent – is generating solar gain through building facades

In Titchfield, energy usage from lighting has been reduced by a forecasted 75 percent by replacing circa 2,000 aged luminaries with modern LED lighting products. This also returned significant maintenance cost savings, and saw 100 percent of the packaging from the upgrade works returned to the supplier to reuse for the next supply of lighting.

Ageing external car park and access lighting has been replaced in Coventry returning an estimated 60 percent energy saving.

Lagging was installed to more than 2,000 metres of pipework on the Whitehall boiler system in London. This, along with new plate heat exchanges, will achieve greater than 17 percent carbon reduction, with an expected 91 percent carbon reduction when the project is completed.

An obsolete Building Management System (BMS) was replaced in Nottingham with a modern system that is allowing more efficient building control strategies. This is creating a more comfortable environment for building users, as well as offering greater insights into how the building can be better managed to maximise efficiencies.

But it doesn't stop there:

- 43 lighting upgrade projects have been completed across 20,000 light fittings
- Heat pumps are being installed at six sites to support heat decarbonisation
- 60 sites are being upgraded to smart metering for more efficient energy usage monitoring and data-driven decision making
- 100 percent green tariff electricity is being provided to all GPA-managed buildings
- Targeting 80 percent material designed for reuse and 50 percent reused

Looking forward to a sustainable future

The Government has made the additional commitment to achieve a [78 percent reduction in carbon emissions](#) across the public sector by 2035 (against a 2017 baseline). Leading by example when it comes to making buildings Net Zero and sustainable, the GPA has committed to reaching the same target (to reduce emissions by 78 percent by 2035) for Government offices – the ones that it manages – by 2032, three years ahead of the Government's target.

The property industry as a whole faces many unique challenges in the journey to Net Zero. By looking beyond carbon emissions, it's clear there are opportunities to take great strides in achieving a carbon neutral society.

Find out more about the [Government Property Agency here](#).

Joint outcome statement: India-UK round three FTA negotiations

News story

Round three of negotiations for a free trade agreement between the Republic of India and the United Kingdom



On 6 May 2022, the Republic of India and the United Kingdom concluded the third round of talks for an India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Negotiation officials undertook these technical talks in a hybrid fashion – with some of the teams meeting in New Delhi and the majority joining virtually.

For this round of negotiations, draft treaty text was advanced across the majority of chapters. Technical experts from both sides came together for discussions in 60 separate sessions covering 23 policy areas.

The fourth round of negotiations is due to be hosted by the UK in June 2022.

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Change of British High Commissioner to Cyprus: Irfan Siddiq

Press release

Mr Irfan Siddiq OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Cyprus.



Mr Irfan Siddiq OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Cyprus in succession to Mr Stephen Lillie CMG who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Siddiq will take up his appointment during August 2022.

Full name: Irfan Siddiq

Partner: Penélope Siddiq

Children: Two

Date	Role
2021	Full-time language training (Greek)
2021	FCD0, Director, Africa (East and Central) (February – June)
2018 to 2021	Khartoum, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2017 to 2018	Plan International (Secondment), International Advocacy Director
2016 to 2017	FCO, Head of Secondments Unit
2013 to 2016	Baku, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2011 to 2013	FCO, Head of Arab Partnership Department
2010 to 2011	Baghdad, Deputy Head of Mission
2007 to 2010	Damascus, Deputy Head of Mission
2005 to 2007	FCO, Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary
2004 to 2005	Washington, US State Department (Secondment), Policy Officer, Iraq Desk
2003 to 2004	Baghdad, Governance Directorate, Coalition Provisional Authority, Political Officer
2002 to 2003	Cairo, Second Secretary Political/Press

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