

# Press release: School visits to talk water safety

The visits to schools around Marston-on-Dove, followed a number of reports over recent weeks of children playing on weirs, which are often used by the Environment Agency to monitor river flows.

During the talks schoolchildren heard about the dangers of the water around weirs, some of which are not always obvious, including strong underwater currents and sudden changes in water depth. They were also given information about how they could avoid these risks by taking note of warning signs, not walking or climbing on weirs and avoiding swimming near weirs, locks, bridges or other structures on rivers.

Emma Smailes, Operations Manager from the Environment Agency said:

We know that children love to explore the outdoors, especially during summer holidays, and we want to help them remain safe whilst doing so. That is why we felt it was important to talk to the children directly to remind them of the potential dangers when playing near structures in rivers.

We would also encourage parents and guardians to speak to their children, teenagers and young adults to warn them about the dangers and basic safety points when out having fun.

David Walker, Leisure Safety Manager from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said:

At this time of year it's especially important for parents to have a conversation with their family about the risks of open water, particularly in the areas where it's prevalent.

Many of the risks aren't obvious, such as weirs, and the effects of cold water shock. It's important to think about this in advance so that if, on the rare occasion, you see someone in trouble or get into trouble yourself, you know what to do.

If you want to go for an outdoor swim, it's always best to go to supervised sites such as lidos. Programmes such as the Swim Safe scheme give children the experience of swimming in open water, teaching them about how to stay safe in a controlled environment

More information about water safety is available from [The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#)

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## **Press release: Illegal waste operation carried out at Harwich**

Environment Agency officers from teams across England have conducted an intelligence-gathering operation at Harwich International Port in Essex focussed on the illegal export of waste.

The aim of the operation was to stop and check HGVs carrying waste in a bid to identify any waste materials which could have been being illegally exported to Europe.

Around 30 loads were stopped on the day, with paperwork checked and waste loads examined. Officers were seeking intelligence about waste that could potentially be illegal heading to the continent and assessing the supporting documents.

Field intelligence officers, port officers and members of the illegal waste shipments team were on hand to speak with drivers passing through the port, offering advice and support on transporting waste abroad legally. The team on site made use of the Environment Agency's Incident Command Unit, enabling them to receive emailed paperwork from waste contractors when it was found to be missing.

Twenty-nine trailers were inspected in total, and 18 were found to be carrying waste. In each instance the paperwork was examined and in 9 cases there were missing or incomplete documents. These were eventually all completed with the support of Environment Agency officers and the vehicles were allowed to continue their journeys.

Chris Smith, National Intelligence Manager, whose team led the operation for the Environment Agency, said:

The sheer volume of material that we found today and prevented from being exported illegally is a big win, but our work isn't finished. Today's action sends a strong message that we will track down those involved in illegal waste activity. We intend to continue our inspections of waste at ports around all of England to ensure waste being exported is done so legally.

The effects of exporting waste illegally is harmful to the environment and the economy. It undercuts legitimate businesses and causes harm to human health and the environment in destination

countries.

Waste crime is a serious issue diverting as much as £1 billion per annum from legitimate business and the Treasury. Since April 2011 the Environment Agency has invested £65.2 million in tackling it.

Anyone with information about suspected illegal waste operators should call Crimestoppers in confidence on 0800 555 111.

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## **Press release: Rwandan Presidential elections**

The people of Rwanda participated peacefully and in great numbers in last week's Presidential election, with a result which reflected the will of most Rwandans.

However, international observers, including from the UK, noted problems on polling day, though this followed a more open campaign than in previous elections. I hope that Rwanda will continue to improve its electoral system in advance of the 2018 parliamentary elections.

As a close and long-standing partner of Rwanda for many years, the UK looks forward to working with President Kagame on our shared priorities of development, peacekeeping, trade and the future of the Commonwealth.

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## **News story: Ministerial appointment to the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group**

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG) was established in 2017. The group's remit builds and expands upon that of its predecessor body the National DNA Database (NDNAD) Ethics Group (EG).

The BFEG will provide ministers and the Home Office with impartial, independent, balanced and objective ethical advice on all aspects of biometrics and forensics which fall within the purview of the Home Office. Advice will include, for example, consideration of the ethical implications of the exploitation of new and more rapid automated biometric and forensic

technologies and their role in expediting the conviction of criminals whilst protecting the privacy rights of individuals and maintaining public confidence.

We are looking to recruit members from a variety of professions, including genetics, forensic science, biometric data, data protection, the police, social science, political science, medical science and law.

If you are interested applying for a position on the BFEG, further information can be found on [Centre for Public Appointments](#) website. The application deadline is Sunday 20 August.

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## [News story: New Insolvency Service board members named](#)

Three non-executive directors have been appointed to the Board of Insolvency Service.

Richard Oirschot, Mary Chapman and William Trower QC have joined the Board which is responsible for the strategic leadership of the agency.

Insolvency Service chairman Steve Allinson said:

I am very pleased to welcome Richard, Mary and William to our Board. They each bring particular skills that will be very valuable to us as we work with our excellent senior executive team of the Insolvency Service to develop the strategy for the agency over the coming years. They join the Board at a time when our work continues to be very important for the economic well being of the country .

- Richard Oirschot is an experienced board director with a background in corporate recovery. He is a member of the Institute for Turnaround and is a licenced insolvency practitioner.
- Mary Chapman has held many private, non-profit and public sector governance positions including as chief executive of the Chartered Management Institute, director of the Royal Mint and is currently a Trustee of the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England.
- William Trower QC has a financial and commercial practice which includes insolvency and corporate restructuring. He sits as a Deputy High Court Judge (Chancery Division) and was a member of the Insolvency Rules Committee between 2000 and 2011.

Board members are appointed initially for three year terms. The newly appointed directors replace Dame Elizabeth Neville, Tracey Bleakley and David

Ereira who have now completed their service on the Board.