

[News story: Vasquez report published](#)

MAIB's report on the investigation of the of the fatal carbon monoxide poisoning on the small motor cruiser Vasquez on 12 November 2016, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and the subsequent actions taken:

PDF, 1.52MB, 12 pages

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Press enquiries

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

[News story: DVSA aims to stop violence against its staff](#)

Between April 2016 and March 2017, more than 300 driving examiners, vehicle testers and roadside enforcement staff suffered physical or verbal abuse while doing their jobs. This was an increase of more than 50% on the previous year.

Attacks on staffs have included:

- verbal abuse and death threats
- damaging staff cars and offices
- serious physical assaults
- lorry drivers trying to run DVSA enforcement cars off the road
- failed driving test candidates driving off with their examiner still in the car against their will

DVSA's campaign aims to put a stop to this completely unacceptable abuse against its staff.

Don't take it out on our staff

Around 4,600 people work for DVSA. They help you to stay safe on Great Britain's roads by:

- testing learners to make sure they can drive safely
- helping keep vehicles safe through MOTs and annual tests
- taking unsafe drivers and vehicles off the roads

They all have a right to come to work without being abused, threatened or assaulted.

The campaign will:

- warn people what will happen if they do abuse, threaten or assault staff
- show how being assaulted at work affects members of staff
- encourage staff to report any instance of abuse so offenders can be dealt with

Posters warning about the consequences of assaulting staff will be displayed at DVSA sites across Great Britain

At driving test centres

Learner drivers who swear at or verbally abuse staff will be forced to:

- use a different test centre the next time they take a test
- take future tests with an extra supervisor present

Anyone who threatens or assault examiners, drives off with an examiner still in the car, or damages DVSA property will:

- be reported to the police
- face the strongest possible penalties

Although it's extremely rare, driving instructors sometimes try to influence the results of a driving test by harassing or threatening examiners. They face being:

- banned from specific driving test centres
- removed from the approved driving instructor register

At the roadside, at operator sites or authorised testing centres

DVSA will:

- record any abuse from commercial drivers and vehicle operators as evidence for any investigation by the traffic commissioners – they have the power to suspend or take away driving licences and operator licences
- report serious incidents to the police

In some busy sites, enforcement staff are starting to trial body-worn cameras to capture evidence of abuse.

Body-worn cameras will be trialled by DVSA

Abuse will not be tolerated

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

Our staff work incredibly hard to help you stay safe on Britain's roads. We do not tolerate anyone abusing, threatening or assaulting them.

Our message is clear – whatever has happened, don't take it out on our staff. If you do, we'll press for the strongest possible penalties.

The Traffic Commissioner for Wales, Nick Jones, said:

My fellow traffic commissioners and I welcome the agency's campaign to tackle the unacceptable abuse which staff may face whilst carrying out their professional duties.

[News story: UK Government invests £3.5m in Ayrshire](#)

The UK Government is set to invest £3.5 million in an ambitious regeneration programme in Kilmarnock. The HALO project in the former Diageo bottling plant will strengthen Ayrshire's economic prospects, create nearly a thousand new jobs and benefit local businesses and residents.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

This £3.5 million investment, part of the UK Government's industrial strategy, will help create an innovation hub at the heart of this ambitious regeneration project. The scheme has huge potential to transform the Ayrshire economy, drive businesses innovation and attract new talent to the region.

The new innovation hub will foster the next generation of entrepreneurs, with a strong focus on innovation, digital skills, and cyber security.

The wider project will see the first commercial deep geothermal heat pump installed in the UK in nearly thirty years, providing green energy at below-

market prices to nearby homes and businesses. It will also create new office space and retail areas which will attract dynamic businesses into Kilmarnock, as well as affordable homes.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy is helping industry succeed and supporting the private sector in achieving ambitious projects which can have a transformative impact in their local economies. Coming on top of around £1 billion invested in UK City Deals in Scotland, the support for the HALO project demonstrates the commitment of the UK Government to help support the Scottish economy and deliver for people in Scotland.

Press release: UKEF helps GE and Enka UK secure contract to support Iraq's energy security

Rt Hon. Greg Hands MP, Minister for International Trade, welcomed the news, saying:

The Department for International Trade through UK Export Finance is delighted to be supporting these power projects, which will significantly enhance the energy sector in Iraq. Construction of the projects also presents huge – and hugely exciting – opportunities for UK exporters, and clearly demonstrates the UK's leadership in the energy sector.

UKEF has provided a guarantee to support the government of Iraq in its contract with the GE-led consortium.

This support will finance the early stages of construction of two GE-powered 750-megawatt gas-fired power plants at Dhi Qar and Samawa in southern Iraq. Once complete, the power plants will help to alleviate severe energy shortages in Iraq, supporting the country's infrastructure development and energy security. Further financing may follow to support additional UK procurement.

UKEF and the Department for International Trade teams in Iraq and Turkey are working closely with Enka UK and GE to source at least US\$250 million worth of goods and services from the UK to deliver the projects in coming months. A supplier fair was held in March, in partnership with energy sector bodies NOF Energy and the Energy Industry Council, to connect companies in the UK supply chain with the projects.

The move demonstrates GE's commitment to developing its UK supply chain

following the agreement between GE and UKEF signed in 2015. GE is the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor for the projects, which were announced in January, and Enka UK is the main subcontractor.

This support follows an [agreement between the governments of the UK and Iraq](#), signed in March, reaffirming the UK's commitment to supporting Iraq's continued economic development.

Yavuz Akturk, Director at Enka UK, said:

We are very pleased to see UK Export Finance, the leading ECA active in Iraq, supporting these projects. It would not have been possible for us to enter into these projects with GE without their support. These projects will help the people in the country by increasing the electrification rate while providing great opportunities for UK exporters of goods and services to participate in these transformational projects in Iraq.

Guto Davies, Head of ECA Financing, Global Capital Advisory, GE Energy Financial Services, said:

The closing of this facility supports the construction of these two new power plants and GE's commitment in Iraq. UK Export Finance and the Department for International Trade in Iraq have been instrumental in helping us achieve this critical milestone.

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a [regional network of 24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
 - Bond insurance policy
 - Bond support scheme
 - Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
 - Direct lending facility
 - Export insurance policy
 - Export refinancing facility
 - Export working capital scheme
 - Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Image credit: Department for International Trade

[Press release: Environment Agency's efforts see Norfolk's eel population boosted](#)

Increased numbers of eels have been observed at a Norwich fish pass, as well as sightings further upstream on the River Tud, the first to be found in that location for nearly 40 years.

Jez Wood, a specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

Last month 2 small eels were found on a routine fish survey on the Tud, a tributary of the Wensum.

Two doesn't sound like many, but these are the only small eels we've found on this stretch for years, and only the fifth and sixth of this size found in the Wensum catchment since 1973.

Whilst this does not herald the recovery of the species as a whole, it does show the positive benefit of eel passes at barriers to migration and the monitoring programme at the Environment Agency.

The global eel population has dropped dramatically over the past 40 years, with numbers down by as much as 95%. Whilst there are thought to be many reasons for this decline, barriers to upstream migration are one that we can do something about.

These barriers reduce access to freshwater habitat in which many eels prefer to live while they mature, before migrating back across the Atlantic to the Sargasso Sea where they spawn and die.

In Norfolk barriers include tidal sluices, weirs and mills. Eel passes are helping the Environment Agency ensure the population can be restored and stabilised.

The status of the European eel is still regarded as "critical" and the Environment Agency is creating passes at several key obstruction locations on Norfolk Rivers, such as New Mills Yard, in Norwich.

Eel numbers are monitored by the Environment Agency at various tidal structures and also in fish monitoring surveys on the rivers. Since the New Mills pass was installed in 2009, the number of eels have ranged from the hundreds to a record 34,000 in 2016.

These are not new eels fresh from the Sargasso, but older eels which have spent time in the Broads for maybe 2 or 3 years before attempting to migrate

upstream.

Whilst it's not known why the numbers of eels fluctuate so greatly, the general increase in numbers and the findings upstream are positive signs for the health of our rivers.

Factfile: Lifecycle of eels

Much is still unknown about the lifecycle of the European eel.

It is catadromous, which means it spends most of its time in freshwater but returns to sea to breed.

The larval stage of the eel, called Leptocephala, migrate across the Atlantic drifting on the Gulf Stream before metamorphosing into the glass eel stage 7 centimetres when they enter continental waters around September.

They reach the estuaries in the UK from October/November in the South West and spread over the rest of Britain over the next few months, though don't tend to actively migrate upstream until the spring.

Glass eels start passing tidal structures in April and through the summer and gradually become pigmented elvers. The urge to migrate upstream is not consistent – not all glass eels migrate past the tidal barriers in the first year. Some elvers stay in the estuary never entering the rivers, some stay in the estuary and enter the river in subsequent years.

Those that do enter the rivers can migrate upstream for several years, moving during the warmer months so the downstream reaches tend to be dominated by younger age-classes whilst upstream areas can contain only old/large individuals, predominately female.

Growth rates vary, but females reach between 45 and 85cm 10 to 12 years post-metamorphosis and males between 30 and 45cm 6 to 10 years post-metamorphosis.

At this point physical changes occur, and they change from yellow eels to silver eels and they start the downstream migration in late summer and autumn and return to the Sargasso where it is believed that they spawn and die, though this behaviour has never been witnessed.