

Press release: South West Water fined for sewage pollution near shellfish beds

South West Water has been ordered to pay £205,000 in fines and costs for discharging sewage into the Fal estuary in Cornwall. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

On 26 August 2013 untreated sewage overflowed from the water company's Newham sewage treatment works near Truro into the Fal, an internationally important shellfishery, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The illegal spill occurred after a piece of redundant grating fell and partially blocked an inlet at the works, causing sewage to back up and overflow into the estuary via a storm storage outfall. The spill continued for about 9.5 hours, during which time enough sewage escaped to fill 4,563 bath tubs (730,000 litres).

The discharge occurred close to mussel and oyster beds at Malpas and Grimes Bar. As a precaution, these shellfisheries were temporarily closed by Cornwall Port Health Authority because of the possible risk of contamination by harmful viruses and bacteria such as Norovirus and e.coli.

The decision to close the shellfish beds was taken just before the start of the commercial harvesting season (1 October). Although most harvesting is done during the commercial season, there is a risk small quantities of shellfish may be hand-picked by individuals outside of this time and there would have been a potential risk to those consumers.

Sewage at the Newham treatment works normally undergoes a high level of treatment (tertiary) including ultra violet (UV) that kills bacteria and disinfects effluent. An UV disinfection system is required at this site because of the Fal estuary's designation as a shellfishery.

The sewage discharged over a bank holiday on 26 August was settled and screened, but otherwise untreated and occurred outside of a storm event. This would have resulted in a significant increase in levels of bacteria in parts of the Fal estuary and meant the treatment works was in breach of its Environment Agency permit.

Mark Pilcher, team leader for the Environment Agency in west Cornwall, said:

It is essential large sewage works bordering estuaries with conservation designations and also containing shellfish beds are operated and inspected to a high standard to prevent unpermitted sewage spills posing risks to public health and the environment.

In this case an inspection programme or removal of a redundant grating structure would have removed the risk of this grating falling into the sewage works and blocking it leading to the spill of sewage.

South West Water Limited was fined £185,000 plus £20,000 costs after pleading guilty to 2 offences under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 including, on 26 August 2013, causing pollution of the Fal estuary through the illegal discharge of sewage and failing to maintain a saline tank valve at its Newham sewage treatment works. The water company was fined £175,000 for the first offence and £10,000 for the second. The case was heard at Truro Crown Court on 15 February 2017.

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[News story: Justine Greening's vision for the teaching profession](#)

In a [speech](#) at the Chartered College of Teaching's inaugural conference, Education Secretary Justine Greening set out her ambition for a high-status teaching profession, backed up by high-quality continued professional development and pledged her support for teachers as the body of experts who are key to driving social mobility.

Addressing an audience of over 450 teachers, Justine Greening described the launch of new the College of Teaching as a historic moment for the teaching profession. Commenting on the launch she said:

Teaching deserves all the hallmarks of the other great professions

– with a high bar to entry, high-quality initial training and a culture of ongoing self-improvement.

So it's crucial that, like other experts, teachers now have a professional body with a shared commitment to ever-improving standards, disseminating evidence on what works, and driving progress for the profession as a whole.

And I especially want to see a new generation of teachers becoming part of the Chartered College of Teaching – to help safeguard and shape the profession's future.

The Education Secretary also outlined plans to strengthen the teaching profession so that every child has access to an excellent teacher, including:

- making absolutely clear that QTS will not be scrapped – instead, the government will work with the sector to develop and introduce a newly strengthened QTS from September 2019, so that all school leaders will want all their teaching staff to achieve it
- announcing the first round of bidding for the £75 million Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund – to enable new, high-quality continued professional development (CPD) provision to be delivered where it can make the most difference, including in the 12 opportunity areas
- new, fully revised gold-standard national professional qualifications (NPQs), developed in partnership with the teaching profession, to be implemented from September this year. £10 million from the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund will be made available to incentivise take-up of the new NPQs for high-potential professionals working in the most challenging schools

Underlining the importance she placed on ensuring teachers have the right support and skills so they are able to help all young people fulfil their potential, the Secretary of State said:

Teachers are the great drivers of social mobility in our country. We know that the single biggest in-school influence on a child's life chances is the quality of teaching they receive.

It is important that all teachers are supported with the right framework that will allow them to become the best professionals they possibly can be.

I want to work with the profession to make sure this happens, with a golden thread through every teacher's career from initial training and QTS through continued professional development, especially in those early post-QTS years, through to specialism or leadership.

Great teaching transformed my life, and I want to make sure that happens for today's generation of children in our schools. I will do all I can to ensure teachers have the right support that will

enable them to spread opportunity for children and young people – particularly those who need it most.

[Press release: New British Deputy High Commissioner for Lagos arrives Nigeria](#)

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Laure Beaufils looks forward to working with a variety of Nigerian partners to further progress on the UK/Nigeria relationship.

The British High Commission in Nigeria has announced the arrival of Laure Beaufils, appointed as British Deputy High Commissioner for Lagos, Laure is the first female to head the UK mission in Lagos. She arrived Nigeria on Monday, 20 January 2017, and already looks forward to the tasks ahead.

Commenting upon arrival, Laure said “I’m delighted to be in Lagos and leading the UK mission here. I look forward to working with a variety of Nigerian partners to further progress the already strong UK/Nigeria relationship”.

Laure Beaufils has been head of the UK Department of International Development in Rwanda since August 2014 where she managed a \$100 million portfolio of programmes focusing on economic development, governance and social sectors. Prior to holding this position, she worked in various positions in the UK Government. She was the lead strategic adviser working for the British Prime Minister in his role as co-chair of the UN Secretary General’s High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda.

She ran DFID’s department for Overseas Territories. She led a team working on climate change, and also worked for the UK mission to the UN, as first secretary responsible for development. Prior to joining the UK civil service, she worked with the UN and civil society organisations. She also worked with the private sector as a financial auditor. She has lived and worked in Rwanda, Ethiopia, India, Cambodia, France, the UK and the USA.

Charity group launches Belt and Road first-aid project

The Chinese Red Cross Foundation (CRCF) Monday launched a first-aid project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative in Beijing.

The project will offer first-aid resources, including ambulances and medical professionals, and public health services along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a 3,000-km network of roads, railways and pipelines linking Kashgar in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and southwest Pakistan's Gwadar Port.

The first emergency medical center under the project will be built in Gwadar Port, according to the CRCF.

The project is sponsored by the CRCF Silk Road Bo'ai Fund, a non-profit program which aims to contribute to the Belt and Road Initiative by providing humanitarian services. The fund was also launched Monday.

As part of the fund, a project on helping children with congenital heart disease in Afghanistan was announced by the CRCF on the same day.