

Bonfires are not an excuse to burn household rubbish

Press release

Only clean, non-commercial waste should be burned like paper, untreated wood and cardboard.



Only clean, non-commercial waste should be burned like paper, untreated wood and cardboard.

Image credit: Connor Jalbert

The Environment Agency is asking people who are planning on having a bonfire to be careful about what is being burned and to keep it secure before burning.

The burning of most type of waste is illegal as it causes pollution which can harm your own health as well as your family, friends and neighbours and can carry a fine of up to £50,000.

Sam Pickard of the Environment Agency said:

Bonfires are not to be used for a seasonal clear-out of your rubbish. It is not an excuse to get rid of difficult to dispose of rubbish by burning it yourself or asking others to do it for you.

We want to encourage people to make sure they dispose of their waste legally and safely at their recycling centre or through their doorstep collections. And if you are responsible for a bonfire, when you are doing your checks for wildlife also look to see if anyone has added rubbish to your bonfire.

Torrige District Councillor Philip Hackett, Lead Member for the Environment, Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety said:

While bonfires may be a traditional part of the festivities around this time of year they can pose significant risks and impact on our climate.

We recommend people attend an organised event instead of having their own bonfires but if they decide to light their own fires they should make safety a priority and not burn any hazardous materials. Recycling is a much more environmentally friendly way of disposing of unwanted wood and other materials.

PC Martin Beck, Rural Affairs Officer with Devon & Cornwall Police, said:

We work closely with our partner agencies to keep our communities and environment safe and we need the public's help, support and co-operation to do this.

We want everyone to have a fun and safe bonfire night and fully support the message that the Environment Agency is sharing.

Anyone seeing suspicious activities should contact the Environment Agency on 0800 807060 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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[Ofqual seeks views on accessible assessments for students](#)

News story

Consultation launched on draft guidance for awarding organisations



Students are set to benefit from proposed Ofqual guidance on how to make exams and other assessments accessible and user-friendly for all.

We want to hear views from all interested parties – including students and those who represent them – through a [consultation on our draft guidance, published today](#).

The proposed updated guidance will support awarding organisations to design and develop assessments that meet our rules on accessibility.

Students with particular backgrounds, needs and disabilities are among those who stand to gain.

Ofqual Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton said: “The best interests of students are the compass that guides us.

“We regulate so that assessments enable every student to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do – without unnecessary barriers. It is crucial that assessments are as accessible as possible for all students.”

The draft guidance includes how to:

- use accessible, clear and plain language in producing assessments to avoid any unfair disadvantage
- design and develop accessible layout
- use source material, context, images and colour in ways that maximise accessibility
- design and develop assessments to meet reasonable adjustments required by disabled students including those using assistive technology

Accessibility is essential as we meet our statutory objectives, including to secure qualification and assessment standards.

The guidance will help awarding organisations design assessments which comply with our General Conditions of Recognition on accessibility.

We will not make changes to the Conditions themselves, so obligations on awarding organisations will stay the same.

The consultation opens today and will run for 12 weeks, ending on January 24 at 23.45. We expect to announce the outcome in spring 2022.

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Ministers renew efforts to increase opportunities for talented women at the top of UK business

Press release

Government to back a new five-year review to monitor women's representation in the upper rungs of FTSE companies



- Government will support a new five-year review aimed at increasing opportunities for women at the top of Britain's biggest companies
- new five-year review will follow hugely successful Hampton-Alexander Review that saw 50% increase in women on FTSE boards in just 5 years
- Business Minister Paul Scully: The business case for diversity is too strong to ignore
- Ministers have urged the UK's biggest businesses not to take the foot off the pedal when it comes to improving gender diversity in their senior leadership

The call comes as the government announced today (Monday 1 November) it would back a new five-year review to monitor women's representation in the upper rungs of FTSE companies, namely The FTSE Women Leaders Review, and encourage firms to open up opportunities to everyone.

Research has found that having diversity at the top can improve companies' profitability, and government is eager to ensure everyone, whatever their background, has equal opportunity to succeed and achieve on merit to make the most of talent across the UK.

Business Minister Paul Scully said:

UK business has taken great strides when it comes to gender diversity at board level, underlining the success of the

government's voluntary approach.

Companies shouldn't take their foot off the gas. Evidence shows that more diverse businesses are more successful businesses – the case is too strong to ignore.

To date, the government's actions have proven immensely successful in encouraging companies – without the use of quotas – to improve the gender balance on their boards, through fair recruitment on the basis of merit.

Earlier this year the final report of the government-backed Hampton Alexander Review, which ran from 2015 to 2020, found that its main target had been more than met, with over a third (34.3%) of FTSE350 board positions held by women.

This marked a huge increase of 50% over 5 years. The numbers of 'one and done' boards – with only one woman member – dwindled from 116 in 2015 to just 16 earlier this year.

Today, the new FTSE Women Leaders Review opened its online portal for FTSE companies to submit their gender diversity data. New leadership is currently being appointed to steer the review, and take forward new targets over the coming years.

1. Women on Boards Reported numbers for Women on Boards of FTSE 350 companies, as at 11 January 2021 show:
(Source – BoardEx) • FTSE 100 at 36.2% • FTSE 250 at 33.2% • FTSE 350 at 34.3%
2. Women in Leadership Reported numbers for Women in leadership roles of FTSE 350 companies, as at 31 October 2020 show: (Source – Hampton-Alexander Review Portal) • FTSE 100 at 30.6% • FTSE 250 at 28.5% • FTSE 350 at 29.4%
3. Women in Leadership is defined as the Executive Committee & the Direct Reports to the Executive Committee on a combined basis.
4. The FTSE Women Leaders Review Portal is open for all FTSE 350 companies to submit their Women in Leadership gender data from Monday 1 November until Tuesday 30 November 2021. The next annual report will be published in February 2022.
5. Further information is available at <https://ftsewomenleaders.com>.

Buildings in Australia lit up green to mark opening of COP26, #GoGreenForCOP26

Yagan Square in Perth, The National Carillon, Telstra Tower, and the British High Commission in Canberra, The British Consulate in Sydney (Gateway Building) and Town Hall Sydney, and Melbourne Town Hall were due to be cast in special green light.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) brings together over 120 world leaders in Glasgow, including Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, for a two-week programme of negotiations, dialogue, and ambitious target setting.

National Carillon, Photography: Rohan Thomson

As host and president, the UK Government is committed to ensuring an ambitious and inclusive summit striving to uphold the Paris agreement and put the world on track to keep 1.5 degrees global warming within reach.

In addition to Glasgow, a series of special COP26 panel events and discussions will also take place in Australia during the Summit.

Gateway Building (British Consulate General Sydney), Photographer: Andy Baker

UK High Commissioner to Australia Vicki Treadell said:

The symbolism of light is powerful, a projection of hope. Around Australia we are lighting up buildings to reflect the spirit of global unity needed to address climate change. Our partnership with our Australian friends, and how we follow up the commitments achieved at the UN Climate Summit in Glasgow, is essential to that unity & spirit of hope.

Climate change affects us all, and only by working together will we be able to ensure the future of our planet and our people.

Telstra Tower, Photography: Rohan Thomson

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said:

The City of Sydney has long been a leader in taking action to tackle the climate emergency. We were the first local government in Australia to become carbon neutral in 2007 and our operations are now powered by 100% renewable electricity.

We are proud to be highlighting the start of the UN Climate Conference in Glasgow by turning Sydney Town Hall green and hope global leaders will set the legitimate, ambitious and necessary targets to tackle the greatest existential threat of our lifetime.

Sydney Town Hall, Photographer: Abril Felman

City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp said:

We're building on Melbourne's reputation as a centre for clean energy innovation, by working towards our ambition to have a city powered by 100 per cent renewable energy by 2030, and zero net emissions by 2040.

The City of Melbourne is leading by example, using 100 per cent renewable energy to power our operations and now electrifying our buildings and fleet.

To contact the British High Commission for climate related media enquiries, please contact amelia.mcnair@fcdo.gov.uk or 0416 645 857.

Every report counts: support the Yellow Card scheme by reporting suspected side effects

Press release

People who suspect they have may have experienced a side effect from a medicine or vaccine are being encouraged to report it to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Yellow Card scheme as part of the global #MedSafetyWeek campaign from 1-7 November 2021.



The social media campaign calls upon healthcare professionals, national immunisation programme staff, as well as patients, their carers and families, to report suspected side effects from medicines or vaccines using the [Yellow Card scheme](#). This [#MedSafetyWeek](#) is the sixth annual awareness week involving medicine regulators from over 60 countries. It focuses on the importance of reporting suspected side effects following vaccination and the MHRA is taking part to further encourage everyone to report.

Vaccines are the best way to protect individuals against infectious diseases and have already saved millions of lives. Like all medicines, side effects can happen. Reporting suspected side effects to the Yellow Card scheme helps the MHRA to identify new side effects and gain more information about known effects.

Every report counts, so the advice to everyone is to report any suspected side effect to medicines, vaccines or medical devices as soon as possible. You can show support during [#MedSafetyWeek](#) by sharing the MHRA's posts on social media and discussing with colleagues, friends and family the importance of reporting suspected side effects to the Yellow Card scheme. Healthcare professionals prescribing, dispensing or administering medicines or vaccines are encouraged to discuss side effects with their patients and to be vigilant for new or rare suspected side effects.

Mick Foy, Head of Pharmacovigilance Strategy at the MHRA, says:

The most important part of our work is making sure the vaccines and medicines you and your family take are effective and acceptably safe. This campaign comes at a crucial time when millions of people in the UK are vaccinated against COVID-19 but is equally applicable to all vaccines and medicines.

Yellow Card scheme reports play a key role in helping the MHRA monitor the safe use of all medicines and vaccines to protect public health through effective regulation.

Reporting suspected side effects using the Yellow Card scheme helps ensure vaccines, medicines and medical devices continue to be used

in the best way and adds to the known safety information about healthcare products.

Notes to Editor

1. The [MHRA](#), which runs the Yellow Card scheme, is responsible for protecting and improving the health of millions of people every day through the effective regulation of all medicines, vaccines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks.
2. Anyone can use the Yellow Card scheme to report suspected side effects of medicines and vaccines, incidents involving medical devices, defective, fake medical products and safety concerns for e-cigarettes or their refill containers (e-liquids). The Yellow Card scheme is an early warning system for detecting patient safety issues and the scheme has identified many new safety issues that were unknown before being reported via a Yellow Card report.
3. Reports can be made on the Yellow Card scheme [website](#), via the app available from the [Google Play Store](#) or [Apple App Store](#), via freephone (0800 731 6789, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) or by reporting an issue to their healthcare team who can file a report on their behalf. Yellow Card reporting for suspected side effects can also be made from some clinical IT systems for healthcare professionals (EMIS, SystmOne, Vision, MiDatabank and Ulysses).
4. The MHRA is providing a dedicated [Coronavirus Yellow Card reporting site](#) to report suspected side effects to medicines, vaccines, medical device and test kit incidents used in coronavirus testing and treatment.
5. Patients are advised to contact a healthcare professional if they are worried about their health.
6. National medicines regulatory authorities from 63 countries across the globe and their stakeholders will be taking part in this international campaign led by Uppsala Monitoring Centre (UMC), the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring. The campaign is supported by members of the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA) and the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA). The #MedSafetyWeek 2021 project team consists of representatives from the following organisations working collaboratively: Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (UK) as co-lead, Egypt Chapter of the International Society of Pharmacovigilance (ISoP Egypt), the Health Products Regulatory Authority

(Ireland) and the Food and Drugs Authority (Ghana).

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