

Environment Bill further strengthened to tackle storm overflows

The Government has today (26 October) announced that the Environment Bill will be further strengthened with an amendment that will see a duty enshrined in law to ensure water companies secure a progressive reduction in the adverse impacts of discharges from storm overflows.

The amendment bolsters the raft of measures already being taken by Government through the Environment Bill, which as currently drafted will put in place more protections against water pollution than ever before.

Earlier this year the government published a new set of strategic priorities for the industry's financial regulator Ofwat, which set out the direction from government that water companies must take steps to "significantly reduce storm overflows" and that the regulator should ensure funding should be approved for them to do so. This publication – known as the Strategic Policy Statement – strongly influences investment decisions and is one of Government's key tools in driving action from water companies.

This amendment will enshrine that expectation in law, to further align the Bill with the government's strategic priorities for the sector and help to drive action from industry.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Earlier this summer, the Government published a new strategic policy priorities for Ofwat and the water sector asking them to significantly reduce the discharge of sewage from storm overflows in the next pricing review.

Following a debate in the House of Commons last week during the final stages of the Environment Bill, today we are announcing that we will put that commitment on a statutory footing with a new clause.

During wet weather, storm overflows release diluted wastewater into rivers, preventing a combination of sewage and rain from overloading the sewers and backing up into homes and businesses. As climate change has led to greater rainfall, and water infrastructure has not kept pace with population growth, their use has increased in recent years.

Significant penalties have already been handed out to water companies discharging unacceptable amounts of sewage into our rivers. Earlier this year, Southern Water received a record-breaking £90m fine, while Thames Water was handed £4m and £2.3million fines for separate incidents.

The Government will hold underperforming companies to account, and is already

taking direct action to deliver progressive reductions in the harm caused by storm overflows through measures in the Environment Bill, including:

- a new duty directly on water companies to produce comprehensive statutory Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans, setting out how they will manage and develop their drainage and sewerage system over a minimum 25-year planning horizon, including how storm overflows will be addressed through these plans.
- a power of direction for the government to direct water companies in relation to the actions in these Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans if they are not good enough. We will not hesitate to use this power of direction.
- at least one new target to drive progress in the priority area of water. In our policy paper published in August 2020, we set out the objectives for targets currently under consideration. For water, these include reducing pollution from agriculture, wastewater, and abandoned metal mines, and reducing water demand
- a new duty on Government to produce a statutory plan to reduce discharges from storm overflows and their adverse impact, and report to Parliament on progress.
- a requirement for government to produce a report setting out the actions that would be needed to eliminate discharges from storm overflows in England, and the costs and benefits of those actions. Both publications are required before 1 September 2022.
- a new duty directly on water companies and the Environment Agency to publish data on storm overflow operation on an annual basis.
- a new duty directly on water companies to publish near real time information – within one hour- on the operation of storm overflows.
- a new duty directly on water companies to monitor the water quality upstream and downstream of storm overflows and sewage disposal works.

The Government has also taken significant action outside the Bill:

- Between 2020 and 2025, water companies will invest £7.1bn on environmental improvements in England, including £3.1 billion on storm overflow improvements alone.
- We have committed to undertaking a review of the case for implementing Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England. This Schedule would set mandatory build standards for sustainable drainage schemes on new developments.
- All of these measures are informed by the work of the Storm Overflows Task Force which brings together key stakeholders from the water industry, environmental NGOs, regulators, and Government in order to drive progress in reducing sewage discharges. The Taskforce has agreed a long-term goal to eliminate harm from storm overflows.

The age of our Victorian sewerage system means a complete elimination of discharges from storm overflows would be extremely challenging and initial assessments suggest would cost over £150bn according to the Storm Overflows Evidence Project, commissioned by the Storm Overflows Taskforce. The full research report will be published shortly.

Our Environment Bill will ensure we deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country – transforming how we protect our natural environment, make better use of our resources and clean up our air and water.

The Government has [previously made amendments](#) that set a new, historic legally-binding target to halt species decline by 2030 and allow ministers to [introduce charges](#) on all single-use items, not just plastics, helping to cut waste and put an end to throwaway culture. New measures will also [help landowners](#) secure long-term environmental benefits through conservation covenants and better protect ancient woodland in England.

The amendment is also very similar to Amendment 45 in the name of the Duke of Wellington, which was debated in the House of Commons on Tuesday. The Government will bring forward the amendment in the House of Commons, when the Bill returns there for the next stage of passage.

The Strategic Policy Statement to Ofwat is a very powerful tool for the Government to drive action from water companies, as it strongly influences investment decisions and financial assessment. The Government [consulted](#) on the Strategic Policy Statement recently.

[HRH The Prince of Wales telephone call with Prime Minister Imran Khan](#)

World news story

Both agree on need for greater global cooperation on climate change and protecting the environment



HRH The Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Imran Khan spoke by telephone on Tuesday. They reaffirmed the close and unique bonds between commonwealth nations with the 1.6 million diaspora at the heart of the relationship.

With less than a week to go until COP 26 – UN Conference on Climate Change in

Glasgow, HRH The Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Khan agreed on the need for greater global cooperation on Climate Change and protecting the environment. HRH The Prince of Wales congratulated Prime Minister Khan on Pakistan's example on tackling climate change including the 10 billion tree tsunami initiative.

Reiterating the international community's desire to see stability in Afghanistan, The Prince of Wales also noted Pakistan's key role in the region.

For further information

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

Contact
British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. 0300 500 5306

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[Avian influenza – Bird flu identified at a wildbird rescue centre in Worcestershire](#)

The UK Chief Veterinary Officer has confirmed a case of avian influenza (bird flu) at a wildbird rescue centre in Worcestershire today.

Wild birds migrating to the UK from mainland Europe during the winter months can carry the disease and this can lead to cases in poultry and other captive birds.

All birds on site will be humanely culled. A 3km and 10km temporary control zone has also been put in place around the infected premises to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

UK Health Security Agency advises that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency has made clear that bird flu poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. The premises does not supply poultry, meat or eggs to the commercial food chain.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

H5N1 avian influenza has been confirmed at a wildbird rescue centre in Worcestershire. We have taken swift action to limit the spread of the disease and any birds at risk of infection will now be humanely culled.

UK Health Security Agency has confirmed that the risk to public health is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said that bird flu poses a very low risk to food safety for UK consumers.

As we move into the higher risk period over winter bird keepers should pay extra attention to the health of their birds. Anybody who suspects disease should report it to their vet or APHA immediately. The best way to tackle this disease is for poultry keepers to ensure that they have strong biosecurity measures in place.

Dr Gavin Dabrera, Consultant Epidemiologist, UK Health Security Agency, said:

Avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds and the risk to the general public's health is very low. The regional UKHSA Health Protection Team is working closely with Defra to closely monitor the situation and will be providing health advice to persons at the site as a precaution.

It is generally important to not touch any sick or dead birds and to make sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap after contact with any animal.

A Food Standards Agency spokesperson said:

On the basis of the current scientific evidence, the Food Standard Agency advises that, avian influenzas pose a very low risk to UK consumers through the food chain.

Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, remain safe to eat.

A detailed investigation is in progress to determine the most likely source of this outbreak.

There are some simple measures that all poultry keepers should take to protect their birds against the threat of avian flu. These apply to people running a large commercial farm, keeping a few hens in their back garden and those rearing game birds.

These include:

- Keep the area where birds live clean and tidy, control rats and mice and regularly clean and disinfect any hard surfaces

- Keep chickens and turkeys completely separate from ducks and geese
- Conduct regular maintenance checks on their sheds
- Clean moss off the roofs, empty gutters and remove vegetation between sheds where birds are kept
- Draw up contingency plans for storing bedding and dealing with pests
- Place birds' feed and water in fully enclosed areas that are protected from wild birds, and remove any spilled feed regularly
- Put fencing around outdoor areas where birds are allowed and limit their access to ponds or areas visited by wild waterfowl
- Clean and disinfect footwear before and after entering premises where birds are kept

Poultry keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian flu advice](#).

Further information on how to help prevent the spread of the disease can be found [here](#).

[Derbyshire company director fined for security licence infringement](#)

Press release

On Monday 18 October, Mark Longden from the High Peaks area pleaded guilty to a criminal offence at Derby Magistrates' Court.



Security Industry Authority

On Monday 18 October, Mark Longden from the High Peaks area pleaded guilty to a criminal offence at Derby Magistrates' Court for failing to provide information to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) when requested. The court fined Longden £200. He must also pay £500 court costs and a victim surcharge of £34.60. The SIA brought the prosecution, which took place after Longden failed to appear in court in May when a warrant was issued for his

arrest.

Longden, whose SIA licence is currently suspended, is a director of Nighthawk SEC@Solu Ltd. SIA investigators approached him in December 2020 seeking information about a fellow director of the company. He failed to engage with the SIA for several reasons, one being that he'd moved and had failed to advise the SIA of his new address. Informing the SIA of a change of address is a condition of holding an SIA licence.

When the SIA's investigators located Mr Longden at another address and served a further, formal request for information, he again failed to engage with them. This left the SIA no other option but to prosecute him.

Jen Hart, one of the SIA's Criminal Investigations Managers said:

Mr Longden has now got a criminal record for committing a criminal act for failing to supply information when we formally asked for it and likewise for breaching his licence conditions.

Notes to editors:

Further information:

On each licence renewal occasion a person will be informed of the renewal/granting of the licence and will receive a copy of the SIA licensing conditions which every licence holder is required to adhere to, with few exemptions. The conditions stipulate that the licensee must:

1. Display the licence where it can be seen at all times when engaging in designated licensable activity unless it has been reported it lost or stolen, or it is in our possession (exemption applies in certain roles).
2. Tell the SIA and the police if their licence is lost or stolen.
3. Tell the SIA of any convictions, cautions or warnings, or charges for relevant offences whether committed in the UK or abroad.
4. Tell the SIA if any public body is investigating them for any relevant offence
5. Tell the SIA of any changes to name and/or address.
6. Not deface or change the licence in any way (should the licence become damaged, the licensee should advise the SIA and request a replacement).
7. Not display a licence that has been defaced or altered in any way.
8. Produce the licence for inspection on the request of any constable, any member or employee of the SIA or other person authorised by the SIA.
9. Return the licence to the SIA if the licensee is asked to do so.
10. Tell the SIA of any change to the licensee's right to remain or work in the UK.
11. Where the SIA has granted the licence on the basis of a qualification or licence gained outside the United Kingdom: tell the SIA of any changes to the validity of that qualification or licence; tell the SIA of any disciplinary action taken or proposed to be taken against you in connection with that qualification or licence.

The [licence conditions are clearly displayed on GOV.UK](#), which is publicly accessible, and are listed in [Get Licensed](#), which is also readily available.

Further information:

- The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Our main duties are: the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities; and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.
- For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit www.gov.uk/sia. The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).

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[PM call with Prime Minister of Singapore: 26 October 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.



The Prime Minister spoke to Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong this afternoon.

The leaders praised the enduring strength of the UK-Singapore relationship, which the Prime Minister said had both historic and future importance.

The Prime Minister underlined the UK's ambition to strengthen our relationships in the Indo-Pacific, including with Singapore. He said this is exemplified by our ASEAN Dialogue Partner Status, our application to join the

CPTPP and the deployment of the UK's Carrier Strike Group, which visited Singapore earlier this year.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Lee discussed the importance of the upcoming COP26 Summit, which has the potential to be the crucial turning point on climate change.

The Prime Minister welcomed Singapore's leadership and hoped that the country will utilise its technological prowess to achieve net zero by 2050 as well as taking further steps on phasing out coal.

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