

Environment Agency targets Luton waste sites

Waste sites in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Essex and East London got a surprise early visit last week from Environment Agency officers working with the British Transport Police (BTP), Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police, the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC) and Openreach.

The unannounced inspections were part of a wider BTP operation targeting the theft of cabling and catalytic converters, which has been rising across the south east this year.

Officers from the Environment Agency's Hertfordshire and North London area office visited 33 sites in Brentwood, Havering, Iver, Luton, St Albans and Watford as part of a multi-agency week of action targeting metal and vehicle recycling businesses.

They discovered 9 sites were operating illegally, found several catalytic converters at locations and at one site they uncovered a suspected case of modern day slavery. Meanwhile, 11 drivers of the 21 waste vehicles inspected during road-stops were given advice and guidance.

The intelligence-led visits were part of a BTP operation targeting the theft of cabling and vehicle catalytic converters, which has been rising across the south east this year.

BTP officers searched sites for stolen metal, in particular catalytic converters that are stolen for the precious metals they contain. A surge in the value these metals has prompted a significant increase in thefts. Officers also identified stolen equipment and checked waste companies' financial records to ensure they adhered to the 2013 Scrap Metal Dealers Act.

Alex Chown, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

This should serve as a warning to those who would flout the law that we and our partners are rooting out waste crime and we won't hesitate to take action.

Unscrupulous scrap metal sites are accepting stolen catalytic converters and cabling, further fuelling their theft across the south east.

Joint investigations and enforcement will continue and if convicted, those responsible could face extensive fines and even prison sentences.

Phil Davies, Joint Unit for Waste Crime Manager, said:

This week of action is another example of how the JUWC together with other partners and agencies are targeting criminals who exploit the waste industry and harm the environment. Utilising the skills and expertise across agencies we will continue to identify further opportunities to impact upon waste crime.

Anyone who suspects illegal waste activity is reminded to report it to our 24-hour hotline by calling 0800 80 70 60, or anonymously contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can [check your waste collectors waste carriers registration](#).

See the [British Transport Police press release for details of its activities during the week](#).

The [Joint Unit for Waste Crime](#) was launched in 2020 by the Environment Agency and partners. It brings together environmental regulators and law enforcement agencies to tackle serious and organised waste crime, which is estimated to cost the UK economy at least £600 million year. It also causes great harm to the environment, local communities and businesses.

Everyone involved in the inspections made sure they complied with social distancing rules with correct PPE to make sure everyone involved was safe.

[Environment Agency targets St Albans metal sites](#)

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[What is data quality?](#)

What is data quality?

Public sector organisations need the right data in order to run good services, make the right decisions, and create effective policies. Data takes many forms including budget figures, employee data, survey responses, and data gathered in digital services. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring data quality. You can read more about the importance of good quality data in the [Government Data Quality Framework](#).

In this article we're going to look at what data quality is, and the different paths towards good quality.

What does good quality look like?

Good quality data is data that is fit for purpose. That means the data needs to be good enough to support the outcomes it is being used for. Data values should be right, but there are other factors that help ensure data meets the

needs of its users.

Quality of data content

Having good quality data does not mean every value must be perfect; good quality will be different for different data sets. Quality can be measured using [six dimensions](#): completeness, uniqueness, consistency, timeliness, validity and accuracy. Different data uses will need different combinations of these dimensions; there are no universal criteria for good quality data. It is important to actively manage quality, and work to improve poor quality.

Quality of data processes

Having good quality data is a great start but it needs to be maintained. When data is moved or changed there is a chance for quality problems to be introduced. Automating manual data processes together with robust validation rules can prevent errors and improve consistency.

Documenting the processes used in your data's journey improves the organisation's understanding and helps to ensure consistency when handling the data.

Quality of data sets

If we start with values that are right, and process them well, we also need to ensure that the data we collate, package and share as a data set is good quality. Providing data in an agreed format or specification ensures consistency and makes it easier for users to process and analyse further.

All datasets should have metadata – information about the data that helps people understand what it is (and is not!).

Quality of analysis

Having the right data values, good processes and well created datasets gives us the best foundations for analysis. Continuing quality assurance throughout the analytical process helps ensure quality analysis; see the [Aqua Book](#) for more detail. When analysis needs to be delivered under significant time constraints, it may not be possible to carry out full quality assurance checks. Read the [guidance on urgent quality assurance](#) for more information.

Supporting good data quality

These aspects of quality don't stand alone. Other things that can support an organisation in achieving good quality data include:

Data governance

Clear roles, responsibilities, policies, principles, and organisational structures ensure data is managed well, in a way that benefits the whole organisation.

Design

Good design of services, data architecture and data collection will build the best foundations for good data quality.

Data Management

Having the right activities and processes around data ensures it is properly managed in an organisation. These can cover quality, design, sharing, access, security and many other aspects of data. Look out for forthcoming guidance on a single data maturity model for use across government. This will help you assess your current data management practices.

Reproducible Processing

Automating data processes reduces errors. The Office for Statistics Regulation recommends [Reproducible Analytical Pipelines](#) as the best approach to use for official statistics.

Metadata

Metadata is information about data such as a description of the data source, its purpose and processing. Relevant metadata supports data quality work and helps users to assess whether the data set is adequate for their use. For more guidance, see the [Metadata Standards](#) published by the Data Standards Authority.

Standards

Standards define consistent ways of capturing or storing data. Standards improve sharing and integration of data. The [Data Standards Authority](#) leads the cross-government conversation around data standards. Standards help to establish consistency and validity of data; they do not guarantee data quality. If you are designing services to collect data from users, refer to the [gov.uk design patterns](#).

Records Management

Good organisational policies and procedures for storing and retaining information can grow into good practice for your data. Good records management depends on clear ownership, maintenance of assets, retention and disposal, audit trails and metadata, just like good data management.

How can data quality be achieved?

Good quality means:

- good design
- having the right values in your data
- processing that data well
- forming it into good quality datasets accompanied by metadata
- analysing the data properly

This will be easier to achieve if you have the right governance, information and data management, and standards in place.

The Government Data Quality Hub (DQHub) is developing tools, guidance and training to help you with your data quality initiatives. You can find the [Government Data Quality Framework](#), tools and case studies on [our website](#).

We can also offer tailored advice and support. Please contact us by emailing dqhub@ons.gov.uk.

[Arrival of new Deputy Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific](#)

[Louise Cantillon](#) has been appointed as the new British Consul General to New South Wales. Her role includes that of Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific (Australia and New Zealand) for the Department for International Trade (DIT) responsible for identifying and progressing trade and investment opportunities across key sectors including infrastructure, technology, financial services and defence.

Cantillon as a senior member of the British High Commission's network across Australia will contribute to the delivery of key foreign policy objectives for the UK including climate leadership and preparation for the UK's Presidency of the UN Climate Conference (COP26).

Louise Cantillon, Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific and British Consul General of New South Wales said:

I am delighted to join the Australian and New Zealand networks during such a pivotal and exciting time for our countries.

Current negotiations for a comprehensive free trade agreement will create more jobs, unlock trade and investment opportunities and foster innovation.'

I am looking forward to working across the network as well as with partners, industry and government as we continue to strengthen our already rich relationships.

As the first female British Consul General in Sydney, I am incredibly proud to be leading and representing the team at such an important time for us all.

HE Vicki Treadell British High Commissioner said:

I am delighted to welcome Louise to our team.

This is an important time as we take our partnership with Australia to one of strategic significance. She has a wealth of experience in trade and investment which will be vital as we work towards our ambitious free trade agreement and the future opportunities that follow. This will deliver jobs and growth for both our economies as we seek to build back better and greener post-Covid.

Louise moved to Australia from Shanghai, China, where she was DIT's Sector Director and Minister Counsellor of Creative, Consumer and Learning Industries. She also previously led the Infrastructure, Creative and Sports Teams in China.

A chartered surveyor by background, Louise brings a wealth of international experience in both the public and private sectors, including the Head of Major Projects at the British Council working across Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Malaysia.

In 2019 to 2020 (July to June), total trade in goods and services between the UK and Australia was AUS\$36.7 billion, making the UK Australia's fifth-largest trading partner. The UK is also the third largest direct investor in Australia and the second-largest destination for Australian foreign direct investment.

Louise took up her new roles effective of 26 April 2021 and will be based at the British Consulate General Sydney. Find her on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) (log in required)

Louise has recently taken up weight lifting, is fluent in Mandarin and enjoys spending her spare time (bush!) walking with her family.