

# Action taken after dry weather in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire

Following a dry spring, river flows and some groundwater levels are 'below normal' in parts of the rivers Great Ouse and Old Bedford in Bedfordshire and West Cambridgeshire.

Prolonged dry weather is a natural event. It occurs as a result of low rainfall for an extended period of time. Once prolonged dry weather is declared actions are taken to minimise impacts on the environment and the risk of further deterioration.

Impacts of this weather are already being felt in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire with river flows becoming lower, causing problems for wildlife and river users.

The Environment Agency has been monitoring the situation and reviewing the range of dry weather indicators, including groundwater levels, river flows and soil conditions.

It also has teams ready to respond to reports of low dissolved oxygen levels in watercourses to help protect fish populations.

Abstraction licence holders in the affected areas are likely to receive notice to restrict the amount of water they take as described in their licence conditions. This may include taking reduced quantities or only abstracting at particular times, depending on local circumstances.

Helen Smith, a drought manager for Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

We continue to monitor our key river, groundwater and reservoir sites using telemetry, and are liaising with water companies to understand any emerging concerns.

We are also working with farmers, businesses and other abstractors to manage water availability and ensure that they get the water they need to be resilient while maintaining our protection of the environment.

We are closely monitoring the developing incident and produce regular reports on the water situation, available on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

In the lead up to this announcement the Environment Agency has been monitoring weather forecasts, hydrology, and the impacts on the environment.

Field teams have been busy sampling to check for the impacts of dry weather on the ecology.

We have also been meeting with water companies so we can share information and request action to be taken in accordance with their drought plans.

We can all do our part to use water wisely and manage this precious resource. If you are using water in the garden, take some simple steps such as fitting a trigger to your hose or using a bucket to wash the car or water plants. For more water saving tips visit [Waterwise](#).

If people see any environmental impacts due to dry weather, such as fish in distress, please report it to the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60.

### **Additional information**

- The last time East Anglia moved to prolonged dry weather status was in 2020 for the Cam and Ely Ouse area.
- The last time East Anglia declared drought was in May 2019. This drought resulted from three years of exceptionally dry weather across the southeast. It was declared as an environmental drought. The winter rainfall replenished groundwater levels but the dry spring has seen levels drop in some areas.
- The Environment Agency's regulatory role involves issuing and regulating abstraction licences and drought permits, imposing abstraction restrictions and scrutinising water company drought plans to ensure they are robust and fit for purpose.
- Water companies plan for the expected increase in demand and reduction in effective rainfall over the warmer months and decide themselves on proposing water restrictions. We work closely with the companies to ensure they follow their drought plans.

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## **[Second stage of Angiolini Inquiry to be brought forward](#)**

News story

Part 2 of the Angiolini Inquiry to commence.



In a [letter](#) sent to Lady Elish yesterday, the Home Secretary has agreed that Part 2 of the Angiolini Inquiry should proceed as soon as practically possible.

Priti Patel stressed that the work of the Inquiry should progress given its vital importance in giving the public full confidence that the police are there to protect them.

The Angiolini Inquiry was established in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard to understand how a serving police officer was able to carry out this horrendous crime and what lessons need to be learnt so that policing, and its partners, can do everything possible to ensure it doesn't happen again.

The Inquiry has recently announced that it will not be possible to publish the findings of Part 1 of the Inquiry until criminal and misconduct proceedings related to the case have concluded.

Part 1 of the Inquiry is looking in detail at the timeline of Wayne Couzens' career, including all allegations of criminal behaviour and misconduct, decisions taken in relation to his vetting and the extent to which any concerns were either known and/or raised by colleagues.

Part 2 is expected to consider what broader issues have arisen for policing from this and other tragic cases, as well as steps that the police and its partners can take to ensure the protection of women.

The Home Secretary will remain in dialogue with Lady Elish as the scope for Part 2 is developed.

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**[Simon Blagden CBE confirmed as new](#)**

# Chair of Building Digital UK

**Simon Blagden CBE has been appointed by Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries to chair Building Digital UK (BDUK) – the agency in charge of delivering the government’s roll out of faster broadband and mobile coverage across the UK.**

Simon has 30 years’ experience in the IT, telecoms and digital industry. For 14 years he was non-executive Chairman at Fujitsu Telecommunications UK.

The new role will place him at the helm of the executive agency overseeing Project Gigabit, the biggest broadband roll out in British history backed with a record £5 billion to connect hard-to-reach areas across the UK, as well as the £1 billion Shared Rural Network which will dial up 4G phone signal rural areas.

In 2000 he joined Spescom, a specialist business communications technology group based in Johannesburg, as CEO to lead its international telecoms and IT business. He continues to serve as non-executive Chairman of management consultancy Larkspur International. In 2016, he was awarded a CBE for services to the economy.

He will step down as Chair of the Telecoms Supply Chain Diversification (TSCD) Advisory Council, a position he has held since last year. The Advisory Council is a non-statutory advisory committee of independent members set up to provide advice to the government on measures to build a more diverse, innovative and secure telecoms supply chain.

## **Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:**

“ BDUK is critical to rolling out the lightning-fast broadband and mobile coverage needed to improve lives and drive productivity across the UK. Simon will be an extremely capable chair of BDUK thanks to his deep understanding of telecoms and wide breadth of experience in the sector.

“ He will lead the team delivering the country’s biggest digital connectivity projects, including our £5 billion investment in Project Gigabit and the £1 billion Shared Rural Network.”

## **Chair of BDUK, Simon Blagden CBE, said:**

“ I’m pleased to be taking on the role as Chair of BDUK at this exciting time for the telecoms sector. I am determined to use my experience gained through more than 30 years in the industry to maximise BDUK’s potential and to advance the pace and ambition of our delivery.

“ Communities from Perth in Scotland to Padstow in Cornwall are already benefiting from gigabit-capable connections to their homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and libraries. My priority will be for BDUK to build on these foundations and deliver the digital infrastructure that is vital for people, communities and businesses across the UK.”

Ends

## **Notes to editors**

### **Chair appointment**

- The appointment is for a term of four years. The role is for two days per week, remunerated at £80,000 per annum.
- The new Chair was appointed through a fair and open process, in line with the methods used for other DCMS Public Appointments.
- Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
  - Playing a leading role in BDUK's engagement with its key stakeholders, both within government and externally with telecommunications network providers and suppliers
  - Establishing a close and effective working relationship with the CEO and ensuring that the Board is effective in holding the executive to account for programme delivery and providing direction
  - Effectively leading the Board, drawing out the skills and experience of other Non-Executive Directors
  - Promoting the highest standards of integrity, probity and corporate governance, ensuring that BDUK complies with all governance requirements
  - Ensuring the Board has a succession planning strategy, including providing advice to Ministers on other appointments to the Board; maintaining a focus on promoting equality and diversity through Non-Executive and Executive appointments and throughout the organisation as a whole

### **Building Digital UK**

BDUK is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. It works to ensure that homes and businesses across the UK can access fast and reliable digital connectivity, by investing in the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband across fixed and mobile networks.

### **Project Gigabit**

Project Gigabit is the government's flagship £5 billion programme to connect hard-to-reach communities unlikely to be connected through commercial rollout, meaning families no longer having to battle over bandwidth and people in rural areas can have the freedom to live and work more flexibly, helping businesses to grow and vital public services to thrive.

The faster connections delivered by the scheme have been levelling up rural communities across the UK: enabling businesses to grow by using digital technology to boost their productivity and giving people living in more remote areas better access to good jobs.

### **Shared Rural Network**

The Shared Rural Network is the government's £1 billion deal with the four Mobile Network Operators to ensure 95% of the UK's geography has a 4G signal by the end of the programme. This will be delivered through a shared network

of new and existing phone masts in partial not spots (areas where there is currently coverage from at least one, but not all operators) and total not spots (areas where there is currently no coverage from any operator). More information on the programme can be [found here](#).

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## [Ministry of Defence announces further crackdown on unacceptable behaviour in the Armed Forces](#)

Two more policies and a new strategy have been announced today as part of Defence's commitment to crack down on unacceptable sexual behaviour in our Armed Forces.

The new procedures, will build on measures already introduced by the Ministry of Defence to tackle unacceptable sexual behaviours in the UK Armed Forces and improve the experience for everyone, and in particular women in the Armed Forces. The policies and new strategy have been created alongside the [Zero Tolerance policy: Discharge for sexual offences and sexual instructor-trainee relationships](#) that was announced earlier this year as part of the wide-ranging programme of work that has been delivered across Defence

### **Minister for Defence People, Leo Docherty said:**

Abusive, discriminatory or predatory behaviour has no place in our Armed Forces and these measures send a clear message that these types of behaviours will not be tolerated.

As a forward thinking and modern employer, the Armed Forces are a place where our serving personnel can thrive, and we will continue to expect the highest values and standards of each and every one of them.

### **Key details of the publications include:**

Zero Tolerance to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy: Sexual exploitation and abuse involves sexual activity where there is an imbalance of power. This policy supports Defence's commitment to crack down on unacceptable sexual behaviour and prohibits all sexual activity which involves the abuse of power, including buying sex whilst abroad. The policy will ensure that every allegation will be responded to, no matter where the allegation takes place, and introduces a presumption of discharge for anyone found to be engaging in the targeted behaviours, including buying sex whilst deployed outside the UK.

Tackling Sexual Offending in Defence Strategy: This strategy prioritises victims and aims to reduce the prevalence and impact of sexual offending in the Armed Forces. This will be done through the application of preventative measures such as awareness-raising, training and better understanding the most prevalent types of offenders. Survivors who do not think they will be believed will be reassured and encouraged to come forward and seek support, and the adoption of recommendations from reviews into the Service justice System will encourage increased reporting, engagement and successful prosecutions.

Zero Tolerance to Unacceptable Sexual Behaviour Policy: A Victim/Survivor Focused Approach: This applies to all UK Armed Forces personnel and follows the recently published Zero Tolerance to Sexual Offending and Sexual Relationships Between Instructors and Trainees policy which introduced mandatory discharge for anyone convicted of a sexual offence. This new policy places greater emphasis on the support for victims, with a presumption of discharge from the Armed Forces for any person who behaved in a sexually unacceptable way. This policy builds trust and confidence in Defence's ability to deal with unacceptable behaviours and demonstrates that supporting people who are victims of unacceptable sexual behaviour is a top priority.

These new measures demonstrate significant progress against the recommendations made by Rt. Hon. Sarah Atherton MP in her report ['Protecting Those Who Protect Us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life'](#).

In parallel to these new publications, an extensive programme of work has been delivered across Defence as part of the [Government's Response](#) to Sarah Atherton's Inquiry. This includes training developments around the concept of consent, transformation of the Service Complaints system, the stand-up of the Defence Serious Crime Unit HQ, delivery of improvements to uniform and equipment for women, and the Servicewomen's Health Improvement Sprint, which will ensure our Armed Forces are delivering against being a truly inclusive employer.

Read the [Ministry of Defence policies to tackle unacceptable behaviour](#).

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## [Russia's illegal war against Ukraine increases risk of trafficking: UK statement to the OSCE](#)

The armed conflict in Ukraine, caused by the unprovoked invasion by Russia, has created an increased risk of human trafficking across Europe. The number of girls and vulnerable women who find themselves unaccompanied or separated creates significant risks of gender-based violence, and child protection and

trafficking risks. Difficulties in accessing basic goods and services and lack of access to safe shelter have rendered women and girls extremely vulnerable to this form of exploitation.

The seriousness of the situation makes it all the more regrettable that Russia refused to support the renewal of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine's mandate, whose office was doing excellent work with local authorities and social services on mechanisms to help victims of human trafficking.

Madam Chair, given the number of refugees vulnerable to exploitation, we must continue to mitigate the risk that Ukrainians are either trafficked into our countries for onward exploitation, or exploited after arriving via a safe and legal route. This requires an end-to-end response.

There are various actions States can take to help those most vulnerable to the effects of Russia's illegal invasion. For the UK's part, our [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#) allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the UK.

To address the risk that the scheme may be used for trafficking, sponsors are subject to criminal and accommodation checks soon after, or prior, to the guest arriving. These checks are enhanced in the cases of children. We also ensure that law enforcement bodies are involved in the scheme and that local authorities are aware of who to work with, on the ground, to help mitigate those risks. Our National Crime Agency generates, disseminates and acts upon intelligence through our International Liaison Officer or ILO network, as well as with multilateral partners such as Europol and Interpol.

Also, civil society groups have collated resources to help inform displaced people arriving in the UK of their rights, entitlements and essential services to further mitigate risks of exploitation.

As Russia's invasion continues, global drivers of serious organised crime strengthen, as organised crime groups seek to exploit the mass movement of people. In countries neighbouring Ukraine, UK ILO officers are introducing and participating in multi-partner hubs involving Ukrainian and in-country officers, NGOs and refugees. We are sharing UK best practice and materials to displaced Ukrainian law enforcement on the ground in Poland, as well as to local law enforcement partners in Romania, Moldova and in Ukraine.

Madam Chair, we commend the work of the OSCE in its efforts to respond to the heightened risk of trafficking brought about by President Putin's illegal war against Ukraine, including documenting the testimony of those who have fled. But the responsibility to end this threat lies with Russia, and Russia alone. It must immediately cease its invasion and withdraw its forces. To delay doing so simply continues to create more displacement, more uncertainty, more anguish and more misery.

Thank you.