

[Press release: Government actions a further step in homeless prevention](#)

New guidance to make sure local authorities intervene earlier to help prevent families and individuals becoming homeless in the first place has been published today (16 October 2017).

The guidance, which is subject to an [8-week consultation](#), sets out how local councils should implement the [Homelessness Reduction Act](#), due to come into effect in April 2018. The new Act requires councils to provide services to all at risk of becoming homeless, on top of those with a priority need such as families with children and those who are vulnerable.

Following further discussions with local authorities in England on the resources required to implement the Act, the government is providing an additional £11.7 million in new burdens funding to local authorities, taking the total amount to £72.7 million. This additional funding will be shared among local authorities over 2 years to meet the requirements of the Act.

The government will also be providing a share of £3 million to local authorities to support them in upgrading their data systems to allow them to assess how the Act is changing homeless prevention in their areas. This comes on top of the government's investment of £550 million until 2020 for homelessness and rough sleeping.

Minister for Homelessness Marcus Jones said:

Tackling homelessness and rough sleeping are complex issues with no single solution, but this government is determined to help the most vulnerable in society. That's why we're implementing the most ambitious legislative reform in decades, the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Local authorities play a vital role in implementing the Act. Therefore the guidance and government funding will support them in making sure people will get the help they need earlier to prevent them becoming homeless in the first place.

The consultation asks for views on the guidance for local councils as they prepare to undertake their new duties under the Act, including:

- Making information and advice about homelessness available to all residents free of charge. This includes advice on preventing homelessness and securing accommodation, as well as rights under the Act, and how to access help.
- Tailoring advice to meet the particular needs of vulnerable groups, including victims of domestic abuse and young adults leaving care.
- Working collaboratively with people who are homeless or threatened with

homelessness, to agree a personalised housing plan based on their needs and circumstances. The plan will set out the 'reasonable steps' the local authority and the customer will take to prevent homelessness or help to secure alternative housing.

- Providing help to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, including single people who do not have 'priority need', and those who might be considered 'intentionally homeless'.
- Securing and helping to secure suitable safe accommodation for people who are homeless, or helping them to stay in their current home wherever possible and appropriate.

The [8-week consultation](#) closes on 11 December 2017.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance has been drafted with the assistance of a working group of local authorities and other stakeholders, and the final version will be published in the spring 2018.

The government is also continuing to fund free training through the [National Housing Advisory Service](#), a partnership between Shelter and Citizens Advice, for local authority staff on the Homelessness Reduction Act up until April 2018.

[Press release: Progress made at EU talks with devolved governments](#)

Agreement has been reached between the UK Government and the devolved administrations on the principles that will underpin the process for bringing back powers from the EU to the UK.

The agreement came at a Joint Ministerial Committee (EN) in London today chaired by the First Secretary of State Damian Green MP with the Scottish and Welsh Governments. A representative from the Northern Ireland civil service also attended.

The First Secretary of State Damian Green said:

Following a set of constructive discussions with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, we have today agreed a set of principles that will underpin the process of repatriating EU powers.

On the day when the UK leaves the EU, all parts of the UK need to be ready. It is the government's intention that the EU Withdrawal Bill will ensure a strong UK internal market, while safeguarding and adding to the decision-making powers of the devolved administrations.

These principles will hopefully now pave the way to agreeing a set of frameworks that will deliver vital certainty and continuity for people and businesses across the United Kingdom.

Note to editors

The communique from the meeting can be found [here](#)

[Press release: Furniture director shelved with a 6 year ban](#)

Rebecca Dale-Essex, of London, knowingly removed the money over a 24 day period prior to the company going into liquidation. She was the sole director of Belle Maison Direct Limited, which sold children's furniture until it went into liquidation on 20 April 2016.

£42,000 of the amount removed came after she had informed the local council that her company had insufficient funds to make payments in respect of outstanding business rates. In total, she left creditors, including the council, out of pocket by £140,314.

She provided a disqualification undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which prevents her from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for six years.

Commenting on the disqualification, Martin Gitner, Deputy Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations, Midlands and West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Rebecca Dale-Essex deliberately removed significant amounts of cash from the company that was for her own benefit, leaving little, if anything, for the creditors of her company.

Company directors should note that the Insolvency Service will investigate and remove them from the business environment if they have acted to the detriment of the company creditors.

Rebecca Dale-Essex's date of birth is September 1971 and she resides in London; She was appointed as a director on 28 January 2009.

Belle Maison Direct Limited (Company number 06804657) was incorporated on 28

January 2009 and was placed into Creditors voluntary liquidation on 20 April 2016.

On 7 September 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Dale-Essex for 6 years, from 28 September 2017.

The matters of unfitness, which she did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that:

- Between 19 June 2015 and 13 July 2015, despite knowing the amounts due in respect of Business Rates, she caused BMD to enter into transactions to the detriment of the company and its creditors totalling of £121,500, which worsened its insolvent position. These monies were funds held in BMD's bank accounts, which she transferred to herself.
- Further, £42,000 of these funds were transferred between 7 July 2015 and 13 July 2015, after she had emailed the Council advising BMD had insufficient funds to maintain repayments to a historic balance outstanding in respect of Business Rates on 7 July 2015.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses

and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Foreign Office Minister visits Riyadh

Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt visited Riyadh for bilateral meetings with the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Sunday 15 October 2017).

In meetings during the visit, including with Foreign Minister Al Jubeir, Mr Burt highlighted common UK-Gulf security interests and discussed a range of issues. These included UK support for Vision 2030, the need to redouble efforts to end the war in Yemen, and the tensions with Qatar.

Mr Burt discussed the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen with President Hadi and Foreign Minister Mekhlafi.

Speaking after his visit to Riyadh, Minister Burt said:

Saudi Arabia is one of our strongest regional allies and we continue to work closely together in a range of important areas. We support the delivery of Saudi Arabia's ambitious reform programme, Vision 2030, and the need to resolve the ongoing dispute with Qatar.

Central to all of my meetings was the ongoing conflict in Yemen. I made clear my concern that this conflict was now contributing to the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and that the longer it continued the worse the situation would get. I also stressed the importance of keeping space open for the humanitarian community. Everyone agrees that urgent steps must be taken to make progress towards a political solution. The UK is playing a central role in these efforts and I call upon all parties to the conflict to show the flexibility required to keep the political process moving.

Further information

[News story: Brown trout return to Newcastle-under-Lyme](#)

This follows successful work to improve the ecology and habitat of the brook.

The Lyme Brook runs through the heart of the town, and has suffered from poor water quality from as far back as the industrial revolution when new industry and development had an impact on the brook.

Since the 1980s water quality in the Lyme Brook, one of a number of brooks that form the headwaters of the iconic River Trent, has dramatically improved. In recent years, using the Environment Agency's Environment Improvement Fund, a partnership called the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership has been working to improve the habitat of the brook, mainly through Lyme Valley Parkway.

This volunteer-led programme that brings together Groundwork West Midlands, the Wild Trout Trust, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the National Citizen Service has been making all sorts of improvements to encourage brown trout to return to their ancient spawning grounds. And the partnership is excited to say, brown trout have been found.

Stephen Cook from Groundwork West Midlands said:

It's great to see that the years of hard work by local people have paid off.

The fact trout are in the brook means that other species will be thriving too and the quality of the habitat must be improving which is so important. It was also great fun creating the new berms, shifting the gravel and teaching children about their waterways so this news is just the icing on the cake.

Councillor Ann Beech, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council cabinet member for operational services, added:

The Borough Council is proud to be involved in a partnership project which is already reaping the rewards of work to improve the water environment at the Lyme Brook.

It's great news that brown trout have returned – it's a clear indicator of the brook's renewed health as high quality water and a

good habitat are vital requirements for them to spawn. Where they thrive, other wildlife will too.

Although the Environment Agency has found brown trout, the work doesn't stop. The partnership is continuing to work on further habitat improvements so the brook can sustain trout breeding populations.

It is currently looking to recruit members for a 'Friends of the Lyme Brook' group to safeguard this work and lead on future improvements. If you are interested, please call Groundwork on 01782 829914 or email Stephen.cook@groundwork.org.uk.

Mel Westlake, Catchment Coordinator from Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment said:

This is fantastic news as brown trout are an indicator that the work being carried out by the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment partners is having a real and lasting effect on the water quality and habitats for fish.

The brown trout is synonymous with Newcastle-under-Lyme for a number of reasons including appearing on [the borough's coat of arms](#) as well as featuring on the statue on the roundabout in the centre of the town.

We hope to be able to continue with more of this restoration work throughout the whole of the Trent Catchment ensuring that brown trout are once again a common site in our local rivers and brooks.

Hopefully in the near future, brown trout will again be a common sight in Newcastle.

The trout were found on an Environment Agency fish survey of the brook. The trout were measured and returned unharmed to the water.

Improvements led by Groundwork West Midlands were carried out through a series of volunteer-centred events using volunteers from the local community, Friends of Lyme Valley Parkway, Environment Agency and National Citizen Service.

These improvements have involved the creation of shallow sloping 'berms' along the bank side using brushwood from the pollarding and coppicing of suitable trees nearby. Opposite each 'berm', sections of the bank side have been removed with a mini-digger allowing the brook to 'wiggle'.

In addition, gravel spawning areas (riffles) have been created by placing gravel at locations in the brook, together with pinned woody debris, which has been fixed into the banks. Woody material becomes home to invertebrates and is a good hiding place for young fish.

Yellow flag iris and sedge have been planted along this section of the bank and in the muddy pockets within the berms. These plants will provide shelter and shade for developing fish and for adult fish. [Further details of the project](#) are online and there are films showing the making of the Lyme Brook wiggle.

[Lyme brook: road to recovery](#)

[Second phase and fish survey](#)