

[News story: Advocate General appears in UKSC on behalf of the Home Secretary](#)

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Advocate General appears in UK Supreme Court on behalf of the Home Secretary

On 15th and 16th of February 2017, the Advocate General for Scotland, Lord Keen of Elie QC represented the interests of the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the UK Supreme Court cases of R (on the application of Byndloss) (Appellant) v Secretary of State for the Home Department (Respondent) and R (on the application of Kiarie) (Appellant) v Secretary of State for the Home Department (Respondent). Both cases dealt with the issue of whether s.94B of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 complies with the procedural and substantive protections under art.8 ECHR. You can find a link to the UK Supreme Court website for further details, and to watch a recording of the hearings by clicking [here](#)

[Press release: How to fish responsibly during Somerset's elver season](#)

With the 2017 elver season under way, the Environment Agency is reminding Somerset's elver fishermen to stay the right side of the law.

Eels are an endangered species and recognised by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as in need of protection. Fishing for elvers is allowed in England and Wales, but under strict conditions to ensure stocks are not over-exploited.

The elver season runs from 15 February – 25 May inclusive and is largely limited to the Rivers Parrett and Tone. There are approximately 200 licenced elver fishermen in Somerset who must register with the Environment Agency at the start of the season.

Sustainable fishing includes the capture of elvers for re-stocking in countries across Northern Europe where eel stocks have declined and cannot be

replenished naturally.

All elver fishing in Somerset is done with hand held nets known as 'dip nets'. They are restricted in size to 1m long, 0.8m wide and 0.45m deep. Handle lengths should be no longer than 4m. Fishing from boats is prohibited and no other large nets or traps are allowed. As a further precaution, all nets must be tagged and fishermen have photographic ID.

Elvers are attracted to fresh water so to protect stocks, no fishing is permitted within 10m of any river obstruction, dam, inlet, outlet or fish pass that hinders the passage of elvers. A full list of rules can be found in the elver fishing bylaws.

Richard Dearnley for the Environment Agency said:

We recognise the majority of elver fishermen operate responsibly and respect the law. We work closely with the police in detecting illegal fishing and, where we have evidence, won't hesitate to prosecute offenders.

Any illegal or suspicious activity can be reported to the Environment Agency or Crimestoppers. If you would like to report information on environmental crime anonymously, call 0800 555111.

Pembrokeshire company awarded £5.8m contract for new fisheries patrol vessels

The awarding of the contract follows a competitive international bidding process and means the vessels will be built in Wales, by a local company and provide skilled employment in Pembrokeshire.

The new vessels will replace the current ageing boats, to effectively protect from illegal fishing activity in Welsh waters and safeguard Wales' fishing industry and coastal communities in the years ahead.

Since its inception in 2014, Mainstay Marine has safeguarded 30 jobs and created 50 new positions, with 98% of its employees based in Pembrokeshire. The company also employs 10% of its direct workforce as apprentices.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, announced the contracts during a visit to Mainstay Marine Solutions' facilities in Pembroke Dock to see the workshops where the vessels will be built.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“The Welsh Government takes very seriously its responsibility for managing and protecting Welsh seas and it’s important we have the capability to do this. I am pleased we are replacing our ageing fleet and proud a Welsh company has been successful in winning the contract to complete this work.

“Mainstay Marine Solutions has shown a commitment to up-skilling and developing its workforce locally and it is anticipated the continued success of the company will help create further jobs locally, which is excellent news for the local economy.”

Philip Hilbert, Sales Director of Marine Specialised Technology Limited, based in Liverpool said:

“We are delighted to be part of this prestigious project supplying the Cabin RIB which is a flagship project for us. Fisheries enforcement is a key market for us and this craft will be the pinnacle of small craft technology.”

The awarding of the contract to Mainstay Marine Solutions follows a European-wide competitive procurement exercise.

The replacement vessels are expected to be in service by Autumn 2018. It will include a 26m Mono-hull Patrol Vessel, South Fisheries and a 19m Catamaran Patrol Vessel, North Fisheries.

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A conference on how social media can help young people access mental health support in Scotland is to take place on Monday.

The event will bring together social media organisations, MSPs, experts and

charities to explore how online firms can do more to assist those seeking information on psychological matters.

It has been co-organised by Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman Miles Briggs and Twitter, and will be attended by both leader Ruth Davidson and mental health minister Maureen Watt.

The Edinburgh event was organised after Mr Briggs called on social media firms to offer free mental health advertising on their platforms last October.

That sparked contact between the Lothians MSP and Twitter, with the firm saying it will support the best campaign ideas which emerge on the day.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

“Last year I called for social media companies to offer free advertising for mental health organisations so more of our young people would know where to access mental health information and support.

“Surveys have shown the vast majority of youngsters don’t know how or where to access such support.

“I am delighted Twitter took up my call and have worked with me to arrange this event.

“It will bring together mental health charities, youth organisations, academics, design experts, MSPs and the Scottish Government.

“It’s brilliant news that Twitter has pledged to support the best campaigns that come out of the day, ensuring they will reach young people across Scotland and potentially inspire other ideas around the UK and beyond.”

DAY – Monday, February 20, 2017

TIME – 10am-4pm

PLACE – The Hub, Castlehill, Edinburgh EH1 2NE

All media are invited to attend. Both Miles and Ruth will be available for interview and photographs.

Miles urged social media firms to do more to help youngsters coping with mental health challenges last year:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/10/social-media-firms-should-offer-free-mental-health-adverts/>

For more information on the event visit:

<https://blog.twitter.com/en-gb/2017/how-can-social-media-help-address-mental-health-public-policy-goals>

[Press release: West Midlands company director handed penalty by court for waste offences](#)

On 16 February 2017, Jaskaran Bhandal, Director of Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, Oak Farm, Kingswinford, West Midlands pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to 1 count of failing to remove waste from the site, and 1 count of operating a waste site without an authorised environmental permit.

Mr Bhandal was fined £1,332, ordered to pay £3,265 in costs, along with a £120 victim surcharge and disqualified from being a company director for 5 years.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency under Section 59(5) and 157 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and contrary to Regulations 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) and 41 (1)(b) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Environment Agency Officers had been working with Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd to bring the site into compliance under their environmental permit until it was revoked. This decision was upheld at an appeal made to the Planning Inspectorate, and the company was ordered to remove all the waste from the site by 2 July 2014.

Officers visited the site in November 2015 and saw that significant amounts of new waste had been deposited at the site. Officers made a number of enquires and determined that the waste had been deposited by Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd, after their permit had been revoked.

Officers served a Notice to Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd in May 2016 to remove all the illegally deposited waste by 19 November 2016. Officers visited the site on 22 November 2016 and noted some attempts had been made to remove the waste but the vast majority remained in situ.

Mr Bhandal was interviewed and admitted to knowing the site did not hold the relevant permits to carry out the work undertaken, he also accepted he was unable to comply with the Notice served but this was due to financial reasons.

Speaking after the case, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation said:

The successful prosecution of this case should send out a clear message that the Environment Agency is adopting a robust approach

to ensuring those who flout the law are brought to justice. Despite extensive previous efforts to work with the company and seek compliance, it became apparent that prosecution remained the only option to deal with this matter appropriately.

In mitigation, the court heard that the defendant had pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity, had co-operated with the Environment Agency during the interview and that he was sorry for the offences committed.