

Press release: West Midlands anglers ordered to pay over £111,000 for licence offences

The Environment Agency successfully prosecuted nearly 400 anglers in the West Midlands during 2018-19 netting a total of more than £111,000 in fines and costs.

Figures just released show that in the 12 months up to the end of March this year, in the West Midlands 393 people were ordered to pay costs and fines totalling £111,246.91 for fishing without a licence or with an incorrect licence. During this period, fisheries officers carried out 4,885 licence checks.

Nicky Tomlinson of the Environment Agency said:

Buying an annual licence costs £30 and takes only minutes online, yet a small number of anglers continue to flout the law and risk prosecution.

It's important anglers have a licence before fishing; the money from licences is invested into England's fisheries and rivers, improving the sport of angling.

Anglers should also ensure that they are familiar with our byelaws, which are available on the Environment Agency web pages.

Nationally, there were 1,633 successful prosecutions during the same period, resulting in fines and costs totalling £475,299.04. There were 65,853 licence checks carried out during 2018-19. Information on fishing licences is available on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

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Nearly 400 anglers were prosecuted in 2018/19

Speech: Jeremy Wright speaking at the Professional Publishers Association Festival

Good morning everyone.

The story of this country has been told through our magazines and publications.

And at this historic venue, what a fitting opportunity to talk about the value of our publishing sector, one of our oldest and most colourful industries.

We can be proud that we still have thriving publications that have been going strong since the 19th century, and have been permanent fixtures in this country for longer than Nelson's Column and Tower Bridge.

The PPA does excellent work advocating for this vital industry, the value of which is not just in economic numbers but in the wider value to our society too.

Context

But let us be under no illusions. It is a difficult time for the magazine industry, and indeed for publishing as a whole.

In her recent report into high quality journalism, Dame Frances Cairncross painted a stark picture.

There are now around 6,000 fewer journalists than there were roughly a decade ago.

And over the last ten years, the circulation for local newspapers has halved.

The main driver is rapid change in how we consume content. The majority of people now read news online, including ninety-one percent of 18 to 24 years olds.

And these same forces have been sweeping the magazine industry.

Whilst magazines have seen less of a decline than newspapers, the Review highlights that the print circulation of news and politics magazines fell by an average of 18 per cent over the five years from 2012 to 2017.

However, we are seeing some success stories too, which were also highlighted in Dame Frances' report.

She mentioned the Economist and Spectator as examples of publications that are bucking the trend and bolstering their sales in a difficult climate.

And Private Eye has also seen a bumper revival in sales. Although to be fair in Westminster we're giving them plenty of material.

In recent years, there have been new and innovative formats for magazines, and new models of generating revenue.

For example, British Vogue has responded to the changing landscape by positioning the magazine as part of a global brand, producing bespoke content for platforms like Snap and Instagram.

A prosperous publishing sector is so important. Firstly, because it helps to provide the outlets and forums that bring our society together.

Just look at this room today – publications representing so many interests, from crocuses to cricket.

Supporting people in getting high quality content, whatever their passion may be, and helping to educate and inspire future generations.

Second, a lively and sustainable publishing sector is an integral component of a well-informed society.

In a world where online disinformation is an increasing concern, fearless and trusted sources of news and information are as important as ever.

So we can hold the powerful to account and have a public discourse that puts the facts first.

A healthy and diverse media sector is a sign of a healthy democracy. It is in all of our interests to get this right.

So I wanted to use my remarks to briefly set out how we might work together to achieve this goal.

Sustainability

The Cairncross Review set out some strong recommendations to chart a new future for our media sector, and I am grateful for the PPA's engagement with that Review.

We have already started work on a number of these recommendations, and we will respond in full later in the year.

We are also looking at longer-term structural concerns, and how we as a Government can address them.

For example, online advertising now represents a growing part of the economy and forms an important revenue stream for many publishers. But this burgeoning market is largely opaque and extremely complex.

And therefore it is currently impossible to know whether the revenue shares

received by news publishers are fair and recognise the considerable work that goes into making high quality content.

Dame Frances proposed that the Competition and Markets Authority conducts a market study into the digital advertising market.

I agree, and such a study would examine whether the online marketplace is operating effectively, and whether it enables or prevents fair competition.

Her Review also proposed establishing a new code of conduct, to rebalance the commercial relationship between publishers and online platforms.

That recommendation was echoed in the subsequent review by Jason Furman, which called for a digital platform code of conduct.

I am very keen to ensure we make progress in these areas, and I have asked my officials to look in depth at this issue, working closely with publishers, and the platforms.

Success here will hopefully go some way to level the playing field.

Another consequence of the online revolution is that it is harder than ever to protect intellectual property.

Intellectual property is the lifeblood of any creative sector and helps artists and producers to be rewarded for their ingenuity.

We want to see better protection for creators, while maintaining the rights of users and supporting a thriving digital economy.

That is why we have been supportive of the EU Copyright Directive. And while the Directive is not perfect, it is an important modernisation of the copyright framework for the digital age.

Just as we do with all legislation, we will work closely with those affected to make sure we implement it in the right way, and that includes the PPA and its members.

So there's a big programme of work all across Government to create the right conditions for publications, big and small, to both thrive and flourish.

Representation

The value of a lively publishing sector can be felt all across the UK.

Throughout history, our publications have given platforms to those from all walks of life.

Publications like The Voice, Jewish News and the Eastern Eye have played a vital role in supporting communities all across the country, and have brought fresh perspectives and new voices to our publishing scene.

Just as I am concerned by the closure of local newspapers, the closure of community publications, whether they bind people together through background

or through common interest, is of concern too.

Creating the right environment for these publications, whether they are online or in print, should make it more likely that everyone has a high quality publication that they can seek out, whatever their background.

And it is just as important that we make sure the industry as a whole represents the variety and diversity that makes up modern Britain.

Proper representation is vital to maintaining the trust of different audiences – whether it is representation on the byline or elsewhere in the organisation.

This isn't just the right thing to do. It makes good business sense.

To know how to evolve to meet the needs of younger, more diverse audiences; you need to employ them.

And provide genuine opportunities for those who have talent but may not yet be the finished product, or might not know the right people.

I know there is some excellent work taking place here.

For example, the Spectator no longer asks for prospective interns to submit CVs, opening the doors to those whose educational background may have previously discouraged them from applying.

On top of this, other schemes are tackling wider underlying societal issues. The award winning PressPad is aiming to diversify the media by helping aspiring journalists on work placements to find affordable accommodation with experienced mentors.

And I am delighted to be supporting the Creative Careers Programme, which will ensure that at least 160,000 young people will learn about working in the creative sectors through meeting a range of different employers.

And it will allow a further two million young people to access careers advice about the creative sector.

The programme will be working with employers to help strengthen and develop more routes into the creative industries, so we can have a creative workforce that is more reflective of our wider society.

I hope that you can keep building on this momentum, working to provide for diverse, young and UK-wide audiences, and exploring innovative ways to reach them.

And I will keep advocating for the industry at the Cabinet table and beyond.

Conclusion

The breadth of our publishing industry is something that we can be proud of as a nation.

We have a sector that is almost unparalleled in its scale and its vibrancy, spanning multiple formats and many diverse areas.

But it is a challenging time and we cannot be complacent about the scale of this challenge.

In an era where disinformation and misinformation are posing a grave threat to our democracy and civil society, this is an industry worth fighting for.

So thank you for everything you do to entertain and inform our nation.

Let's work together to make this sector stronger and more sustainable in this digital age.

Thank you very much.

News story: Security Minister launches Serious and Organised Crime Strategy in Wales

A strategy to protect communities from the threat of serious and organised crime will be launched in Wales today (Thursday 9 May) by the UK government, building upon successful collaboration between law enforcement, charities and the Welsh and UK governments.

The UK Minister for National Security and Economic Crime, Ben Wallace, is hosting the event in Newport alongside representatives from the Welsh government and Welsh law enforcement. They will highlight the threat of serious and organised crime (SOC) and demonstrate how trailblazing early intervention work in Wales is diverting young people away from being drawn into it.

According to the National Crime Agency, there are around 4,600 serious and organised crime groups in the UK. These criminals use violence and intimidation in communities to operate and prey on the most vulnerable in society, from victims of modern slavery and human trafficking to young people suffering sexual exploitation and abuse.

A key part of the Strategy is a pilot programme to introduce Community Coordinators, including in Newport, Gwent. The coordinators, who are funded by the Home Office, will work with communities to build their resilience to this type of crime through early intervention work with young people and support for schools, parents and guardians.

At the launch, Minister Wallace will say:

I see right across the national security threat picture for the UK – terrorism, espionage, hostile threat activity and corruption. Any one of these is enough to keep you awake at night, but there is nothing that compares to the scale and harm of today's serious and organised crime.

Serious and organised crime is the most damaging, and deadliest, national security threat we face in the UK. It affects us all. High-level criminals operate right across Wales – they are active just as much in rural villages as they are in our cities.

The Minister will also say:

It is essential that we continue to invest in such works as the Newport Community Coordinators. That is why we were ambitious with this pilot, and, seeing the successes here, are continuing to invest in the programme.

It is only by working together that we can be successful.

The Gwent Community Coordinator, Chief Inspector Paul Davies of Gwent Police, is working with St Giles Trust and Crimestoppers on a programme delivered to all nine secondary schools in the city of Newport. This helps to educate youngsters about the risk of serious and organised crime and encourage them to report concerns. It has reached 5,400 pupils so far.

St Giles Trust and Barnardo's are also working with children of secondary school age who have been identified as being at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime. St Giles Trust provide intensive, specialist support with a peer-led approach. Barnardo's provide one-to-one therapeutic support to the young people alongside activities such as sport to divert them away from a criminal lifestyle. Barnardo's also provide support for their families. Families First, a Welsh Government programme, is also supporting parents and guardians.

Chief Inspector Paul Davies said:

Serious and organised crime is a complex area, and prevention and early intervention are critical elements to the effective management of this threat.

Supporting the most vulnerable in our communities – our children – along with partner organisations is an important part of our work.

Jane Hutt, the Welsh Government's Deputy Minister and Chief Whip said:

I very much welcome today's launch of the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy in Wales.

The Welsh Government is committed to making our country safer through joint action to tackle serious and organised crime and its adverse impact on communities and vulnerable people.

Serious and organised crime is a complex and largely hidden problem affecting more UK citizens than any other national security threat. It is estimated to cost the UK at least £37 billion every year.

The new strategy – which was initially launched in London in November – sets out how the UK government will build the country's defences against this threat, track down the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

The UK government and law enforcement will continue to use all the levers at their disposal to protect communities from the threat of serious and organised crime, dismantle the highest harm criminals and their networks and bring them to justice. This includes using the capabilities of the security and intelligence agencies, sanctions and visa and citizenship deprivations.

Meanwhile these interventions will help prevent vulnerable people, communities and businesses from being targeted by criminals, and support those who are.

A project that the Home Office and Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service funds is helping around 30 young people by giving them an opportunity to recognise the consequences of becoming involved in serious and organised crime, and to learn to recognise high-risk situations and practice ways of responding.

They take part in role-plays incorporating potentially harmful online encounters, child sexual exploitation and drug supply. One of the participants, 11-year-old Graham (not his real name), was referred to the intensive programme by his headteacher as he was at severe risk of being exploited by criminal networks.

Graham came from a background of domestic violence, was previously on the child protection register and had been talking to adult strangers online. Suffering from low self-confidence, he was bullied and became a habitual absconder from school. He was also aggressive and had a bad relationship with the police.

Through the programme, Graham received support to address his behaviour and emotions, and was taught how to stay safe online and build his confidence.

Dr Gareth Norris, project evaluator for Ceredigion Youth Justice and Prevention Service said:

Although it's early days, Graham has no new school exclusions, or involvement from social services.

He is now able to confidently seek assistance when he needs it, rather than look for support from those who would exploit him.

News story: A re-inspection of the Home Office's Reporting and Offender Management processes and of its management of non-detained Foreign National Offenders

My original inspection reports on the Home Office's Reporting and Offender Management (ROM) processes and on its management of non-detained Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) were published together in November 2017 since they dealt with various overlapping issues.

The ROMs report made six recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Home Office, and the FNOs inspection made a further eight, six of which were accepted, one partially accepted, and one rejected.

This re-inspection looked again at all 14 recommendations. It found that the Home Office had made significant efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the reporting process, principally through technology-enabled smarter working, and that a good deal of analysis and review work had been done in relation to the management of "out of contact" cases. However, at the time of the inspection, it was unable to evidence that any of the original six recommendations could yet be considered "Closed". Crucially, Home Office guidance on how to deal with non-compliance with reporting requirements and absconders had not been updated and practice varied across the ROMs and caseworking units. This issue, particularly the tracing of absconders, deserved to be treated with considerably more urgency than the Home Office had shown.

The original FNO report acknowledged that implementation of the recommendations would not change some of the underlying challenges or risks surrounding the monitoring and removal of non-detained FNOs, but it was important that the Home Office was able to demonstrate it was doing as much as it possibly could to manage them. This re-inspection found that five of the eight recommendations could now be considered closed. However, the Home Office had not made the promised improvements in its recording and quality assurance of FNO casework, which raised questions about how well it actually understood and was mitigating the risks.

My report, which was sent to the Home Secretary on 31 January 2019, made four recommendations, the first of which concerned taking the necessary actions to close the original recommendations without further delays. The Home Office has accepted this and set out the actions it has taken or is planning to take. Towards the end of 2019-20, I will look for confirmation that these

actions have been completed and have been successful.

Two other recommendations concerned FNO management, including a request for the Home Office to revisit its rejection of my recommendation regarding monitoring re-offending rates for FNOs released to 'no fixed abode', which the Home Office has now accepted. Again, this is a matter of demonstrating that it has a grip on the risks.

My final recommendation looked to ensure that the moves towards smarter working at the ROMs do not have the unintended consequence of reducing the Home Office's ability to safeguard vulnerable individuals. In accepting this recommendation, the Home Office has referenced the commitments it made in response to my earlier report on its identification and safeguarding of (non-detained) vulnerable adults. During 2019-20, I plan to check on its progress in fulfilling those commitments.