

Press release: Environment Agency day-long sting confirms 11 illegal waste sites

Environment Agency officers made unannounced visits to 28 sites across Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire yesterday.

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The largest one-day sting operation ever carried out by Environment Agency officers in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire has confirmed 11 illegal waste sites across the area.

Officers found 6 sites where waste had been burnt, a further 3 containing construction and demolition waste, one containing household waste, and one scrapyard – all were operating illegally.

Furniture, plastic, insulation, car parts, fuel containers, chimney-sweeping equipment and even a lawn mower and skis were among the items discovered.

A total of 28 sites were visited by officers; of them 17 were found to be operating within the law. The 11 sites which weren't will now receive written guidance from the Environment Agency clarifying the steps they must take, and follow-up visits will be arranged to make sure the site operators comply.

A pile of waste on an illegal site in Wellingborough discovered by Environment Agency officers yesterday

Mark Rumble, Enforcement team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

Yesterday's successful sting means that, thanks to intelligence from local communities, we found 11 sites where we can now take action to put a stop to activities that blight our neighbourhoods, our environment and our economy.

Also, it's encouraging that so many of the sites we visited were not breaking the law, and we continue to offer support to operators who abide by the rules.

We take waste crime extremely seriously and will be following up every single illegal site we found to bring them in line with the law. We'll also continue to monitor local reports, so if you have information about suspicious waste activity, report it to us by calling 0800 80 70 60.

Evidence gathered from the visits will be used against those breaking the law. Further enforcement action could include work with our partners such as local authorities, police and HMRC to prevent and disrupt crime, the serving of notices to have waste removed from land, and prosecution of offenders. If convicted of illegal waste activity, offenders face unlimited fines and up to 5 years in prison.

More information on the requirements for disposing of business or commercial waste can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Press release: Welsh Secretary launches Wales-France business forum

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The Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns launched the Wales-France

business forum at a reception hosted by the British Embassy in Paris. The forum will connect business people across both countries, encouraging Franco-Welsh trade and creating new business development opportunities.

Wales is estimated to be home to 85 French companies employing more than 9,000 people. These include Keolis and Bouygues, who have committed their support to the new forum following recent investments in Wales. Keolis Amey was awarded the contract to run Transport for Wales and Bouygues has invested in a new innovation campus at Cardiff University which will create more than 60 jobs.

France represents the second largest export destination for Welsh goods and services. The Wales-France Business Forum plans to build on those existing links by giving Welsh businesses a wider platform to promote themselves to new customers.

Speaking at the launch reception, the Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns highlights his aspirations for the forum saying:

This forum will provide a home for strengthened Franco-Welsh relations where business representatives from all sectors can network and learn from one another.

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, this deepening relationship between the UK and France is important both economically and politically.

Crucial to the success of this partnership is the support of the UK, French and Welsh governments to create the right conditions to support companies to export and grow overseas.

The forum will host networking events for French and Welsh businesses and entrepreneurs across Wales, ensuring that Wales remains firmly open for business as the UK leaves the European Union.