

Press release: Preferred Candidate Selected for the role of Comptroller and Auditor General

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News story: Fly-tipping: New financial penalties in government fight against waste crime

New financial penalties have come into force to crack down on fly-tipping. The majority of householders already dispose of their waste responsibly, however from today (7 January) any householder who fails to pass their waste to a licensed carrier, and whose waste is found fly-tipped, could face penalties of up to £400.

The government has also [issued guidance](#) to ensure councils use these new powers proportionately, which makes clear penalties should not be used as a means of raising money and should not be issued for minor breaches.

Potential fly-tipping by rogue operators, and the risk of a penalty, can be simply avoided by using certified waste carriers. Householders can search for registered waste carriers quickly and easily on the [Environment Agency's](#) website.

[Latest figures](#) show the government's crackdown on fly-tippers is delivering

results, with no increase in the number of incidents for the first time in five years for the 2017/18 year.

To tackle the potential over-zealous enforcement on households, in 2015 the government removed criminal penalties for breaches of household bin requirements in favour of a new civil penalty system.

Councils were urged to use letters or notices on bins to remind people of appropriate practices. This measured and balanced approach, set out in [further guidance](#), continues to allow councils to focus their efforts on the small minority who cause genuine harm to the local environment through irresponsible behaviour.

The guidance for councils on issuing the fixed penalty notices will continue to ensure they strike the right balance. This guidance also says that local authorities should consider whether the householder is a vulnerable person, for instance due to age related ill-health or a mental or physical disability.

We have also [committed](#) to clarifying charging arrangements for waste disposal in relation to small scale DIY construction activities carried out by ordinary householders, which the government has made clear should not be charged for at Household Waste Recycling Centres.

- We support local partners through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG) which has [published a series of fly-tipping prevention guides](#) for householders, businesses and landowners, outlining best practice for the prevention, reporting, investigation and clearance of fly-tipping.
- 88% of [councils agreed](#) a new fixed penalty notice would help tackle fly-tipping.
- We have already given councils the powers to hand out on-the-spot fines to fly-tippers, and made it easier for vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping to be stopped, searched and seized.
- Last year [councils issued](#) 69,000 on-the-spot penalties for fly-tipping offences.

Press release: Helping hand to set up new businesses

A new government service allowing start-ups to jointly register their company and register for tax has been used 200,000 times.

News story: Defence Secretary commends UK peacekeepers in South Sudan

The UK must continue to set an example in the battle to bring equality and stability to the world's most fragile countries, the Defence Secretary has declared.

Gavin Williamson visited the UK's largest contribution to United Nations peacekeeping, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), where military personnel have been running a hospital and improving infrastructure to keep internally displaced citizens safe.

More than 300 British troops are currently deployed across South Sudan and, with a £40.8million contribution last year, the UK is the third-largest humanitarian donor to the country.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The UK is a nation that leads from the front – promoting security, championing prosperity, and protecting human rights. We stand with the people of South Sudan, particularly those who suffer horrific crimes such as sexual and gender-based violence. We all want Africa's newest country to seek a peaceful and prosperous future.

Last month, UK troops in Bentiu completed upgrades to 15km of roads used to deliver vital food and aid. This means women will no longer be forced to make the long journey by foot each day, exposing them to risk of attack.

During his visit, the Defence Secretary also met with President Salva Kiir Mayardit, to discuss how efforts were going to bring peace to South Sudan following the signing of a peace agreement in October.

He also visited a UN Protection of Civilian (PoC) camp in Malakal to hear the stories of some of those who have been affected by the conflict and spoke with UK-funded aid workers to discuss the challenges they face daily.

Gavin Williamson visiting a UN Protection of Civilian (PoC) camp in Malakal.
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Mr Williamson then went to a UK aid funded female only safe space which has been created for victims of sexual violence to find out what more the UK's military can do to support those who have suffered horrific crimes such as rape and kidnap. He finished the South Sudan leg of the visit by travelling to Bentiu to officially hand over control of a Level 2 Field Hospital, which had been built and run by the UK, to Vietnamese medical staff who are on their first UN deployment.

Gavin Williamson visiting a UK aid funded female only safe space which has

been created for victims of sexual violence. Crown copyright.

Following South Sudan, he travelled to Somaliland to meet with President Bihi. The first British Cabinet Minister to visit Somaliland, Mr Williamson discussed the shared priorities of security and economic development as well as counter terrorism and the role UK military plays in mentoring the Somaliland coastguard.