

Press release: Illegal Waste Carriers to be stopped in their tracks

The Environment Agency and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) have officially agreed to carry out joint operations across England to cut the transportation of illegal waste and to improve road safety.

The memorandum of understanding signed today by chief executives, Sir James Bevan and Gareth Llewellyn will see the Environment Agency and the DVSA using their combined enforcement powers to tackle the transportation of waste to illegal or poorly-performing permitted sites.

The agreement will involve:

- DVSA staff located within EA teams to ensure a coordinated and effective approach,
- sharing of information to increase the effectiveness of roadside enforcement on waste industry vehicles up and down the country;
- providing enforcement teams with intelligence relating to waste industry operators
- identifying high risk or illegal goods vehicle operators involved in waste transport
- reducing the number of seriously and serially non-compliant waste industry vehicles on England's roads.

The Environment Agency and DVSA have worked together for a number of years to stop waste crime, making sure companies are operating legally and vehicle safety is improved. This agreement will enable the two organisations to tackle waste crime more efficiently by intervening earlier in the waste chain and using prevention tactics.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive, Environment Agency said:

We want to protect people and communities from the impact that vehicle and waste crime can have and create a level playing field for all operators.

This Memorandum of Understanding with the DVSA will help both organisations work with the waste industry to improve compliance and vehicle and driver safety standards.

To help us with this, we are encouraging people to check with the Environment Agency if the company they are employing to take their waste away is a fully registered waste carrier.

DVSA's Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

DVSA priority is to protect you from unsafe drivers and vehicles. I am delighted that we will be working with the Environment Agency to tackle those who illegally transport waste. By combining our enforcement powers and intelligence we'll be able work with those who break the rules more effectively.

DVSA traffic examiners will issue fines to those waste carriers we find to be operating in an unsafe manner. These operators are putting themselves and other road users at risk and pose a danger to our environment.

Anyone who suspects that an operator is transporting waste in an unsafe manner should report their concerns to DVSA on 0300 123 9000 or enquiries@dvsa.gov.uk.

Members of the public can check if a waste company is registered with the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 and at www.gov.uk/waste-carrier-or-broker-registration.

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[News story: Unemployment rates](#)

continue to drop and are now at the same level as the rest of the UK

Alun Cairns has welcomed the latest job figures which show that unemployment rates in Wales have dropped in the last quarter and are now at the same level as the rest of the UK.

These latest figures show good progress on bringing the unemployment rate down but more still needs to be done to increase the rate of employment.

The UK Government is determined to continue to develop the right conditions for economic growth, investment and jobs in Wales.

I'm convinced that increasing exports to new markets will not only grow the Welsh economy but will create jobs across Wales. I'm doing everything I can to help companies in Wales maximise their exporting potential.

Press release: United Utilities fined £666,000 for polluting river with raw sewage

United Utilities has been ordered to pay a fine of £666,000 in after pleading guilty to polluting a river with untreated sewage effluent in Greater Manchester.

The Environment Agency took the prosecution against the water company after sewage polluted the River Medlock having a significant impact on fish population and water quality over a distance of four kilometres.

It was a member of the public who initially reported the pollution in the River Medlock at Park Bridge, Ashton-Under-Lyne on 14 October 2014 to the Environment Agency's incident hotline.

Officers found that the pollution had deposited grey sludge on the River Medlock's bed over four kilometres resulting in significant impact on fish stocks and water quality in the river.

In total United Utilities estimated that 21,700 cubic metres of sewage discharged into the water.

A report commissioned by United Utilities found that the incident had a detrimental impact on brown trout and had the potential to reduce the fish

population the following year.

When the pollution was first reported, United Utilities Officers were attending a high-level alarm at the Sewage Tank and had identified a fault which meant the tank was not emptying to the foul sewer network as quickly as it should have been. This resulted in untreated raw sewage entering Glodwick Brook and the River Medlock, which is contrary to the permit conditions in place.

United Utilities admitted that their control centre had received an alarm about the discharge three days before, but the fault had not been recognised.

In sentencing on Friday 8 September, HH Judge Potter said the company's negligence had resulted in significant harm to the River Medlock.

Mark Easedale, Environment Manager for Greater Manchester, said:

The Environment Agency take pollution incidents very seriously and this case should send a strong message to companies of the potential consequences if they damage the environment.

We appreciate reports from the public to the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 which allows our staff to respond swiftly to protect people, wildlife and the environment – also to investigate environmental offences which may have occurred.

The sewage that was discharged had a significant impact on the River Medlock, killing brown trout, which are a key indicator species of good water quality. The case demonstrates just how important it is that water companies and wider industries maintain their equipment in order to prevent pollution to the environment.

We work closely with United Utilities who have undertaken extensive work to reduce their impact on the environment. It's important that we continue to work with partners in order to safeguard the environment and ensure such incidents are avoided in the future.

In mitigation United Utilities told the court of the steps they had taken to prevent a reoccurrence of this incident.

The company were fined a total of £666,000 and ordered to pay costs of over £32,000.

[Speech: Why I'm determined to win the](#)

war against 'silent killer' sepsis

Looking back over my 5 years as Health Secretary, one conversation that left the deepest mark was very early on with a young couple from Devon.

Scott and Sue Morrish came to London to tell me about the tragic death of their 3-year-old son Sam, who died just a few days before Christmas in 2010 after a repeated failure to spot that he was suffering from sepsis. Scott and Sue quietly and eloquently explained the story of his illness, and finally treatment that came too late.

They said that when they tried to raise the issue with their local NHS, the 'shutters came down' and no one wanted to talk to them.

I have talked to the hospital concerned and believe the culture has now dramatically changed. But the fact is that in the UK, around 123,000 people of all ages develop sepsis every year, with potentially 30,000 avoidable deaths.

It is often referred to as the silent killer because the early symptoms – fever, lethargy and pallor – can be mistaken for other problems.

The key is to spot the problem early and administer antibiotics and fluids quickly to halt the infection in its tracks.

But in Sam's case, no fewer than 4 healthcare providers had missed opportunities to identify the condition and administer the treatment that could have saved his life.

Today, on World Sepsis Day, I remember the conversation with Sam's parents and pay tribute to their courage and determination – alongside other sepsis campaigners like Melissa Mead – to raise awareness and change practices within the NHS.

Their campaigning has already triggered a much tighter, more systematic approach to identifying and treating the condition.

Many hospitals have now put in place clear guidelines and training to ensure that every member of their medical team is trained to spot the signs and symptoms of sepsis and treat them effectively. And practical measures like routinely checking patients arriving at Accident & Emergency departments for signs of sepsis are estimated to have saved almost a thousand lives in recent years.

But do I think even more deaths could be prevented? The answer is, undoubtedly, yes. That's why we are now setting out further measures to improve standards in hospitals, surgeries and other healthcare settings.

It will mean more training resources, greater awareness and better recording and identification of sepsis cases across the NHS. Every part of the NHS will be expected to be on the highest alert to tackle this killer condition.

But everyone needs to help win the fight against sepsis – by being aware of the facts.

If you do one thing this week, please [watch and share the awareness video](#) that we've developed in partnership with Melissa Mead and the UK Sepsis Trust.

By understanding what sepsis is and how it shows itself in people of different ages, we can all arm ourselves with the information to keep our loved ones safe.

Let's be smart about sepsis – and together, we can finally win the war against this silent killer.