

News story: More people to receive help to stay warm in their homes thanks to new energy reforms

Homes across the UK will get extra support to keep warm during the colder months [thanks to reforms published today](#). Changes to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will make sure energy companies provide necessary support to people struggling to meet their heating bills. Plans to extend the scheme from April 2017 to September 2018 were also published today.

The reforms which were consulted on last year will usher in a simplified scheme, with energy companies required to provide struggling households with free energy efficiency measures to make their homes warmer and bring their bills down.

Minister for Energy and Industry, Jesse Norman said:

The Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty, and a key part of that is to help people keep bills down by living in more energy efficient homes. These changes will move the UK a further step towards the goal of insulating a further 1 million homes by 2020.

As well as an increased focus on low income and vulnerable homes, eligibility will be extended to social housing tenants in EPC bands E, F and G, and local authorities will also be able to help match people with energy suppliers.

Suppliers will also be required to install a minimum 21,000 solid wall insulations per year, up from the consultation figure of 17,000.

There will be continuing protection for the delivery of energy efficiency measures in rural areas, with a requirement that 15% of suppliers' Carbon Emission Reduction Obligation be delivered in these areas.

ECO has proved a very effective delivery mechanism with over 2 million measures installed in around 1.6 million properties between 2013 and the end of November 2016.

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Press release: Court gives waste offender time to clean up site

Colin Barnes had previously failed to clear the site ahead of the court hearing on Wednesday 25 January after his environmental permit was revoked.

Barnes, who traded as CT Barnes Autos, was taken to court by the Environment Agency after failed attempts to get him to comply with the law.

King's Lynn magistrates deferred sentencing him and have given him six months to clear the site. He is due back in the court on 26 July.

The permit held by Barnes, aged 59, of Podmore Lane, Scarning was revoked by the Environment Agency after he continually failed to run the site in line with the conditions in his permit. Following the revocation Barnes was required to remove the large amounts of waste remaining on site.

Mrs Megan Selves, prosecuting, said the deadline for removing all the waste was extended three times to dates suggested by the defendant, as waste officers tried to support him to do the right thing. But despite removing some of the waste, most of it remained two years later.

She told the court that Barnes had an environment permit to store waste vehicles and parts but it was revoked on 15 September 2014. All the waste should have been removed by 3 November 2014.

Barnes failed to respond to advice given by Environment Agency officers and despite agreeing to deadlines for when he could remove the waste, he has failed to comply and the waste remains on site,

He has repeatedly flouted the law and undermined the legitimate waste management industry.

Magistrates heard that Barnes had operated the site since 1977 as a vehicle repair and service business until 2006 when he obtained a permit and began depolluting and dismantling vehicles which had come to the end of their lives.

Since the issuing of the permit there has been a history of non-compliance so the permit was revoked.

Barnes told investigating officers that since the revocation he had been removing some of the waste but had to rely on others as he did not have a waste carriers licence at the time and they sometimes took a long time to collect it as the value of the waste had decreased.

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Rob Brodie said:

Unregulated waste activities can impact both visual and amenity and can cause harm to the environment and human health.

These offences were committed over 21 months and despite advice and guidance from us and agreements to extend deadlines for the removal of waste, very little of it was removed.

Mrs Selves said Barnes had a history of non-compliance with warnings from the Environment Agency and has previous convictions for similar environmental

offences.

Barnes pleaded guilty to:

Between 4 November 2014 and 2 August 2016 on land at Willow Lodge, Podmore Lane, Scarning, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2NS you did operate a regulated facility, namely a waste operation for the storage of waste motor vehicles and vehicle parts, without being authorised by an environmental permit granted under Regulation 13 of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Contrary to Regulation 12(1)(a) and 38(1)(a) Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010