

Press release: Business checked in pollution patrol

Environment Agency officers visited 30 businesses in Washington, Tyne & Wear in an operation to tackle environmental pollution.

A team of eight officers spoke with business owners on the Swan Industrial Estates and the NEP Business Park to ensure they store and remove waste in accordance with the law as well as carrying out general pollution prevention inspections looking at drainage, and waste and oil storage. They also checked waste transfer notes and whether they were required to be a registered waste carrier.

During the exercise they identified a drain water pollution violation, a potential illegal waste site and a business that was illegally burning cardboard. Overall they found that most businesses were doing well.

Environment Officer, Katherine Dowling, who led the campaign, said:

It was a very useful and successful exercise. We're working hard to raise awareness and ensure businesses are following their duty of care responsibilities, including making sure any waste they produce is handled responsibly and legally.

This helps minimise the impact on communities and the environment that we all enjoy. It was pleasing to find that most businesses we visited are aware of and operating in line with the regulations.

The Environment Agency regularly receives reports from nearby residents of noise, litter and odour from the Industrial Estate, which is home to several waste operators and other businesses including metal works, fast food outlets, manufacturers, accident repair centres and IT centres.

The patrol specifically targeted non-waste operators in a bid to assess, record and reduce their potential contribution to pollution in the area.

Officers spoke to businesses about rats, litter, noise and odour and gave advice and guidance. All businesses will receive a follow up letter regarding their responsibilities under environmental legislation, which includes ensuring their waste is collected by a registered and licensed contractors with the correct paperwork.

Other follow up actions include writing to landlords and liaising with Sunderland City Council regarding fast food outlets.