

News story: Nine beaches designated as bathing waters on the south coast

Beachgoers can take to the seas this summer at nine beaches newly designated as bathing waters on the south coast.

Eight beaches in Cornwall, including Booby's Bay and South Fistral, and one in Bournemouth – Manor Steps received their designation today, bringing the total number of designated bathing waters across England to 423. At designated bathing waters, the Environment Agency help protect the health of swimmers, surfers and other visitors, by testing the water for levels of bacteria and publishing the results online. Across England there are currently 270 bathing waters with "excellent" water quality.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This is great news for anyone who enjoys a trip to the seaside. Britain's beaches are visited around 150 million times each year and the water at these nine beaches, along with more than 400 bathing waters around England, will be tested by the Environment Agency to help protect the health of visitors.

I would encourage everyone to use the online 'Bathing Water Data Explorer' to check the water quality at designated bathing spots before heading out for a dip in the sea.

The eight beaches to be designated in Cornwall will take the number of designated beaches in the county to 89. The newly designated bathing waters in Cornwall are:

- South Fistral beach in Newquay
- Booby's Bay near Trevoze Head
- Mexico Towan, Upton Towan and Godrevy, all situated on a long stretch of dunes in St Ives Bay
- Northcott Mouth beach to the north of Bude
- Gwynver Beach which forms part Whitesand Bay
- Tregonhawke in Whitsand Bay

In Bournemouth, Manor Steps Beach, part of the 15 kilometre coastline of Poole Bay on the Dorset coast, has also been designated as a bathing water.

Beachgoers can find a list of designated bathing waters around the UK and their water quality ratings on the [Bathing Water Data Explorer](#).

News story: UK aid provides healthcare and education to Palestinian refugees

The UK is supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) to help educate 500,000 children and provide health services for 3 million Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the brutal conflict in Syria.

Speaking at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference on UNRWA in Rome today (Thursday 15 March), Middle East Minister Alistair Burt highlighted the UK's continuing commitment to supporting Palestinian refugees and called on other countries to do more to alleviate some of the current pressures the agency is facing. He welcomed reform efforts to date and encouraged UNRWA to continue the pace of cost-efficiency reform.

Mr. Burt confirmed that the UK will deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned, to help meet the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

Minister Burt said:

The UK is unequivocally committed to supporting vulnerable Palestinian refugees by assisting in the provision of education and healthcare across the region which is a key part of our resolve to promote a two-state solution. UNRWA plays a unique and critical role in supporting regional stability, and it's absolutely right that Global Britain supports the sustainability of its services.

Today I'm calling on others to follow our lead to make sure that UNRWA's humanitarian and stabilising role continues uninterrupted. This is not just important for those Palestinians in need of aid, but also to maintain stability across the region which is in all of our interests.

Notes to Editors

- Over the course of the 2017/2018 financial year, the UK has provided around £50 million to UNRWA to support the agency's delivery of food, education and healthcare to vulnerable Palestinians across the Middle East. This makes us one of the top five donors.
 - The UK will provide at least £28 million to UNRWA next financial year, as previously outlined in our multi-year commitment to 2021.
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Press release: Anglers reminded close season runs from 15 March to 15 June

No fishing for coarse fish in rivers from 15 March to 15 June

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers the 'close season' for coarse fish in rivers comes into effect today (Thursday 15 March) and runs until 15 June. The close season prevents fishing for coarse fish, like barbel and chub, for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed. The close season applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England but does not apply to most still-waters and canals.

During the close season Environment Agency enforcement offices along with support from the Angling Trusts Voluntary Water Bailiffs will be out on rivers and streams making sure people are observing the close season. They will also be checking lakes and ponds to make sure people who are fishing have a valid rod licence. Anyone fishing without a fishing licence can expected to be prosecuted.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, said:

Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. This includes rescuing fish in distress, improving habitat and restocking rivers with 450,000 fish a year. The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders.

Our enforcement officers, supported by Angling Trust voluntary bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Last year the Environment Agency Enforcement Officers ran 670 close season patrols, reporting 122 anglers for illegally fishing in the close season.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws>. We will be finalising a review of the close season on rivers during 2018. Any changes that arise from this review will be implemented in 2019.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence.

Press release: Severn tolls abolition spreading prosperity across south east Wales

Today's news that Newport's property market is the fastest moving in Britain has been welcomed by the Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns.

The figures published by property portal Rightmove further evidences how the Welsh economy is going from strength to strength, significantly bolstered by the reduction of the Severn tolls and UK Government's commitment to abolishing them at the end of this year.

A key poll taken at the first UK Government Severn Growth Summit in January revealed that 97% of delegates felt that the removal of the Severn tolls would be of benefit to Wales and companies on both sides of the border are already benefitting from the removal of VAT from the crossing tolls earlier in January.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

When I became Secretary of State for Wales I made it my number one priority to abolish the Severn tolls and send a direct message to industry, commuters and tourists in the UK and globally that Wales is open for business. This UK Government decision is about spreading prosperity across a natural economic region that has been severely hindered by the tolls for over half a century.

With tolls being abolished later this year, it is great to see the transformation of the joint economic and cultural prospects of South Wales and the South West of England already underway. It is just the start of a series of policies that will see the whole of South Wales benefit from an active intervention by the UK Government.

Scrapping the tolls will be the biggest economic stimulus in decades and will transform the economic and cultural prospects of the south Wales and south west England region, making it easier to do business, to increase inward investment and tourism and to create jobs.

Notes to editors

- The Severn Growth Summit was held in January at the Celtic Manor Resort where over 300 guests from both sides of the estuary joined the Secretary of State to discuss cross border growth opportunities

following the abolition of the Severn tolls.

- The Secretary of State for Wales will mark two years in the post on Monday 19 March with the abolition of the tolls highlighted as a key achievement of his tenure.

Press release: CMA announces two senior appointments

Andrea Gomes da Silva becomes Executive Director – Markets & Mergers. Currently the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) Senior Legal Director for Markets, Mergers & Regulatory Appeals, Andrea takes up her new post immediately. The role was made vacant by Andrea Coscelli's promotion to Chief Executive. In her new position, Andrea will join the CMA's Senior Executive Team and will sit on the CMA Board.

George Lusty, currently a Project Director at the CMA, is appointed as Senior Director, Consumer Protection, replacing Nisha Arora who has joined the Financial Conduct Authority. He will oversee work on the CMA's enforcement of consumer protection laws and coordinate relationships with the wider landscape of consumer organisations, joining the Enforcement Senior Leadership Team led by Executive Director, Michael Grenfell.

Welcoming the appointments, the CMA's Chief Executive, Andrea Coscelli, said:

I am very pleased to be able to announce these two appointments to our senior team from within the CMA, from a strong field of candidates. Andrea and George both bring extensive experience from outside the CMA, combined with a proven track record within it. They strengthen our team as we prepare ourselves for a bigger role following EU Exit, and to ensure consumers are getting a fair deal from a rapidly evolving business world.

Mr Coscelli added:

I am also grateful to Rachel Merelie who has been Acting Executive Director during an important period for the CMA.

Andrea Gomes da Silva said:

I am delighted to be taking up this role at an important moment for the organisation. Ensuring the CMA is fit for purpose for Brexit and remains able to deliver good outcomes for UK consumers through

its mergers and markets work matters greatly. I look forward to working with the many excellent colleagues in those areas, and with businesses, consumer groups and a wide range of others to rise to this challenge.

George Lusty said:

Having seen first-hand the difference that the CMA's work can make, I am incredibly excited to be taking on this role. I look forward to working with my talented and dedicated colleagues, and partner consumer organisations, to tackle unfair terms and practices facing people across the UK.

The CMA will shortly be running an open recruitment for Andrea's previous role.

Notes to editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. Andrea Gomes da Silva joined the CMA in 2015 from Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer where she started in 2001, becoming a partner in 2008. In 2013 she was seconded to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to work as part of the team producing the guidance on the CMA's new powers under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. Her previous employment was at Slaughter and May where she worked in both the London and Brussels office. At the CMA she has led on legal advice and analysis across the whole range of markets, mergers and sector regulation activities, including [ICE/Trayport](#), [Fox/Sky](#), [Tesco/Booker](#) and the [Energy Market Investigation](#).
3. George joined the CMA in 2014 as a Project Director, and has led a number of the CMA's major consumer and antitrust investigations. He led the CMA's response to its first 'super-complaint' from the consumer body Which?, concerning the [pricing practices of UK supermarkets](#), and the CMA's ongoing investigation into potentially misleading and unfair practices in the [gambling sector](#). George has also led investigations into alleged abuse of dominance by pharmaceutical companies concerning the prices they offer to the NHS. Before joining the CMA, George worked for the UK's Competition Appeal Tribunal as a Référénaire on a range of major competition and regulatory appeals and damages actions. A qualified solicitor, George began his career as an associate at international law firm Simmons & Simmons, specialising in civil and criminal antitrust investigations and utilities regulation.

4. The Executive Director – Markets & Mergers appointment was made in accordance with the requirements set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Rt Hon Greg Clarke MP, has made the appointment of Andrea to the CMA's Board. The SD consumer appointment was made in accordance with the requirements set down in the Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles.
5. Rachel Merelie, who has been Acting Executive Director, returns to her role as Senior Director, Delivery and Sector Regulation.
6. For more information on the CMA [see our homepage](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
7. Enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6191.