

# News story: Enforcement Undertakings accepted from United Utilities

United Utilities have paid £155,000 to environmental charities as part of two Enforcement Undertakings (EUs). The EUs were offered to the Environment Agency after the company admitted causing sewage to pollute two watercourses in the summer of 2016.

EUs are a new kind of restorative enforcement sanction. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable.

In July 2016, a blockage in a sewage detention tank in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, caused sewage to overflow to the River Goyt, resulting in discoloration to the river downstream to New Mills, and sewage fungus being deposited on the river bed for at least a kilometre. Although no fish were found to have been killed, there was a short-term but significant impact on invertebrate life and the river habitat, in which fish such as trout and bullhead normally thrive.

In August 2016, a blockage in a sewer in Millbrook, Tameside, caused an overflow through a dislodged hatch cover, resulting in a similar impact on a shorter stretch of Swineshaw Brook which runs to the River Tame.

The EU offers were accepted by the Environment Agency in October 2017 and were completed in January 2018. United Utilities made a total of £155,000 in donations to the Wild Trout Trust, the Ramblers Association and the Healthy Rivers Trust. This money will be used to fund environmental improvements and research in the affected catchments and to restore endangered footpaths.

The company also spent a further £10,000 removing rubbish from Swineshaw Brook and also paid the Environment Agency's incident response and investigation costs in full. In response to both incidents United Utilities had acted quickly to stop the pollution and resolve the cause. As part of the EUs the company also committed to improving their infrastructure and asset maintenance schedules in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

Mike Higgins, an Environment Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

They offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to voluntarily make things right. We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause

severe pollution or who act deliberately of recklessly.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

---

## **News story: London school helps to shape Relationships and Sex education**

The City of London Academy in Southwark has been participating in the Department for Education's call for evidence, asking parents, teachers and young people to help shape the new Relationships and Sex education curriculum. Staff and pupils at the school have engaged with age-appropriate content such as mental wellbeing and staying safe online.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb met with teachers and pupils to discuss why the lessons are important and to hear their views on these issues. These steps will help to set guidance for all schools on how to teach these subjects so that it helps young people face the challenges of the modern world.

Academic standards are rising in England, with around 390,000 more London pupils in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010 and 93 per cent of London schools given this rating at their last inspection.

Making sure young people have the knowledge they need to stay safe and develop healthy relationships is part of the government's drive to raise education standards even further.

Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

It has been a pleasure to meet the teachers at the City of London Academy and to talk to the pupils benefitting from an education that teaches them the importance of healthy and stable relationships.

There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and across the country, schools like the City of London Academy, with 64 per cent of pupils being entered for the EBacc, are raising standards for pupils.

We want to continue to raise the bar and that's why we have committed to update relationships and sex education to meet the needs of young people today. Our call for evidence closes next week and we want as many people as possible to have their say on what the new curriculum should include.

The current statutory guidance for teaching Relationships and Sex education was introduced in 2000. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. The guidance is being updated after legislation was passed by Parliament earlier this year to make relationships education compulsory in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex education compulsory in all secondary schools.

The eight-week 'call for evidence' has been gathering views from people across England from all backgrounds on the content of this subject. It will establish:

- how parents expect their children to be taught this topic in a safe and age-appropriate way; and
- what teachers think they should be teaching their pupils to help them navigate the modern world they are growing up in;
- what children themselves think they would benefit from understanding the most, and the online risks they are concerned with.

Head of the School Dr Jeffery Quaye said:

I welcome the Department of Education's decision to make Relationship and Sex Education as statutory requirement for schools from 2019/2020. Here at City of London Academy Southwark, we observed that by placing more emphasis on relationship instead of the mechanics of reproduction, we have raised students' awareness of sexting and sexual harassment. Also, our students have developed better understanding of the benefits of healthy relationships, staying safe online and managing emotions. Through balanced curriculum changes and a new framework of teaching students, we have seen noticeable evidence of mutual respect, empathy, self-confidence and wellbeing enhanced amongst our students.

Year 11 pupil, Keana Nicholas Pipe said:

I think learning PSHE is important to help students know what to do if they find themselves in any difficult situations. I think it's important to learn about consent because and through the classes I now feel more confident. I know who to ask for advice and how to make an informed choice.

The move to make Relationships and Sex education compulsory was welcomed by the teaching profession and organisations such as Barnardo's, Stonewall, the Catholic Education Service, NSPCC, Terrence Higgins Trust and the End Violence Against Women coalition.

Teachers, parents and young people are invited to have their say on relationship education in schools [here](#)

The call for evidence closes on Monday 12 February.

---

## **Press release: Committee welcomes report of the Cross-Party Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy**

This is a strong, cross-party set of proposals from the working group, which offer a standard of protection and independent support in line with those that the best employers offer their staff.

We welcome the strengthening of the roles of the independent Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards and House Committees, and, for the first time, a shared and binding behaviour code.

For these proposals to fully address unacceptable behaviour, they must be rooted in the leadership, culture and practice of the House. This report is an important and welcome first step.

---

## **News story: Government funding boost for bus industry in drive to improve air quality**

Funding will be awarded to 20 local authorities as part of the Clean Bus Technology Fund, which was launched in 2017 and is run by the Joint Air Quality Unit.

[Speaking at the UK Bus Summit at London's QEII Centre](#) on 8 February 2018, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani set out how the money will enable older vehicles to meet minimum emissions standards, and contribute to better air quality.

Speaking at the Bus Summit, Transport Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Buses and coaches are hugely important to those who rely on them and to the communities in which these people live and work.

Road transport is going to change dramatically over the next couple of decades – and we have to make sure that the bus industry is ready to benefit from those changes.

We have to move away from nose-to-tail car traffic at peak times, endless engine idling, stop-start travel and rising pollution and carbon emissions. Rather than contributing to the problem – buses and coaches very much form part of the solution.

The money will allow councils to retrofit vehicles with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide, as part of a drive to help ensure that more buses and coaches can contribute to improving air quality in UK cities.

Environment Minister Theresa Coffey said:

Poor air quality affects public health, the economy and the environment, which is why we are determined to do more.

I am delighted to see so many high quality applications to the Clean Bus Technology Fund and, as a result, the government has decided to bring forward funding meaning that we will award nearly £40 million to retrofit more than 2,700 buses.

This is another way which the government is delivering on its commitment to improving the environment within a generation and leave it in a better state than we found it.

Alongside this, the Department for Transport will use the [Bus Services Act](#) as a way of encouraging councils and bus companies to look at measures to encourage the public to use buses.

In 2016, government invested £30 million through the [Low Emission Bus Scheme](#), which helped put over 300 new low emission buses on the roads, with a further £11 million and 150 buses being announced in 2017.

## Winners

| Clean Bus Technology Fund 2017 to 2019 winners | Number of buses | 2017/18 funding | 2018/19 funding |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. West Yorkshire Combined Authority           | 156             | £1,368,000      | £1,474,200      |
| 2. Bristol City Council                        | 81              | £1,047,800      | £1,167,000      |
| 3. Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council      | 49              | £828,000        | £674,180        |
| 4. Leeds City Council                          | 75              | £0              | £1,371,000      |
| 5. Transport for West Midlands                 | 364             | £1,500,000      | £1,500,000      |
| 6. Leicester City Council                      | 109             | £1,101,581      | £1,101,581      |

| <b>Clean Bus Technology Fund 2017 to 2019 winners</b> | <b>Number of buses</b> | <b>2017/18 funding</b> | <b>2018/19 funding</b> |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 7. Oxford City Council                                | 83                     | £938,910               | £724,020               |
| 8. Coventry City Council                              | 104                    | £0                     | £1,500,000             |
| 9. Nottinghamshire County Council                     | 112                    | £1,373,265             | £0                     |
| 10. Transport for Greater Manchester                  | 170                    | £1,500,000             | £1,500,000             |
| 11. North Tyneside Council                            | 69                     | £862,600               | £339,000               |
| 12. Nottingham City Council                           | 171                    | £1,500,000             | £1,196,517             |
| 13. Transport for London                              | 500                    | £1,500,000             | £1,500,000             |
| 14. Sheffield City Council                            | 117                    | £560,000               | £1,386,800             |
| 15. Sefton Council                                    | 149                    | £1,499,586             | £1,497,277             |
| 16. Southampton City Council                          | 145                    | £539,183               | £1,500,000             |
| 17. Derby City Council                                | 152                    | £1,500,000             | £798,330               |
| 18. Essex County Council                              | 60                     | £1,072,500             | £0                     |
| 19. South Tyneside Council                            | 29                     | £232,500               | £252,000               |
| 20. Newcastle City Council                            | 43                     | £180,000               | £510,000               |
| Totals  | 2738                   | £19,103,925            | £19,991,905            |

## **Further information**

In November 2016 the Department for Transport announced a further £100 million to support low emission buses. Of this, £40 million was put towards the Clean Bus Technology Fund, and £60 million was dedicated to new low emission buses. From the £60 million, £11 million was used to fund the best of the bids which had initially narrowly missed out on funding from LEBS, supporting the purchase of a further 150 low emission buses. The remaining £49 million will be used to fund the next round of the Low Emission Bus Scheme.

By 15 September this year (2018), 5 local authorities are required to set out their final plans for bringing nitrogen dioxide concentrations within legal limits in the shortest possible time. A further 23 local authorities are required to set out their initial plans by the end of March, with final plans by the end of the year.

In August 2017, the [Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership launched the Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme](#), with government funding support.

---

## **[Speech: Government funding for cleaner](#)**

# buses

Thank you David [Begg, Chair] for that welcome.

It's a real pleasure to join you for today's (8 February 2018) summit.

This is my first formal speech since joining the Department for Transport in the recent reshuffle, and I was delighted to take on responsibility for government bus and coach policy.

Bus and Coach Minister Nusrat Ghani speaking at the UK Bus Summit.

## **Importance of industry**

I'm a huge advocate for buses.

Catering for over 5 billion passenger journeys a year.

That's two thirds of all public transport trips.

Buses are the most effective and affordable way to keep busy towns and cities moving.

And we're very fortunate to have such excellent coach services in this country too.

Providing a comfortable, reliable and great value alternative to long distance train and car travel.

Put simply, this industry is indispensable.

No other form of public transport offers anything like the benefits that you offer.

Whether it's capacity, geographical coverage, ease of use, cost, efficiency – I could go on.

For me most importantly, buses provide a unique answer to most of the local transport challenges that we face.

Yet so fundamental are they to British life that they're often taken for granted.

That's something that I want to change, with your support.

I want to champion buses and coaches.

To shout about the benefits of bus travel.

How they bind our towns and cities together.

How they provide essential links for rural communities, such as the one I

represent in Wealden, East Sussex.

And how they'll become even more vital in years to come.

## **Congestion and air pollution**

Of course, one of the biggest obstacles to growth is road congestion.

And that's nothing new.

Buses have been hampered by congestion since the days of the horse-drawn omnibus.

But I want to use the [Bus Services Act](#) as a way of encouraging authorities and bus companies to make services more attractive, and create a shift away from car use.

I know it's a big challenge.

But road transport is going to be revolutionised over the next 3 decades.

New vehicle technologies.

New infrastructure.

The phasing out of fossil fuels.

And digital communications transforming the way passengers plan and use transport....

All of which provide an unprecedented opportunity for buses.

We have to hammer home our message:

That rather than contributing to the problem of nose-to-tail traffic and harmful pollution.

Buses and coaches are a part of the solution.

You'll certainly have the government's support.

We have already committed £3.5 billion for measures to improve air quality.

Last year we published plans to tackle traffic pollution, and announced a £220 million [Clean Air Fund](#) in the Budget.

Later this year we'll be unveiling our Clean Air Strategy.

And hosting an international zero-emission vehicle summit.

The opportunity here is to position the bus industry as a leader in environmentally friendly transport.

As a catalyst for greener, smarter travel.



And as the most practical answer to the long term mobility needs of our towns and cities.

## **Low emission buses**

Britain is already a pioneer in low carbon buses.

And the industry can be proud of what it's achieved in recent years.

We've got great companies like ADL, Wrightbus and Optare manufacturing green buses.

We have almost 6,000 low carbon buses in service.

The highest number of electric buses in Europe.

And we also have the largest hybrid fleet of over 3,000 vehicles.

And in 2015, our Low Emission Bus Scheme helped put more 300 green buses on roads across Britain.

And that was followed in November 2016 with a further £100 million investment.

We welcome further interest and participation in these schemes.

The sooner we get more low emission buses on the road, the faster we'll reap the benefits.

So today I'm pleased to [announce that we'll be awarding nearly £40 million of that funding to 20 local authorities as part of the Clean Bus Technology Fund.](#)

This will be used to retrofit buses with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide.

Originally we invited authorities to apply for a funding total of £30 million now and £10 million in 2 years' time.

But we received a large number of strong applications for this round.

And we wanted to start realising the air quality benefits as quickly as possible.

So we've made the full amount – just under £40 million – available now to fund two-year projects.

It will enable older vehicles to meet the minimum standards in the Clean Air Zone Framework, particularly in areas exceeding statutory limits.

And I am going to announce the successful bidders:

West Yorkshire.

Bristol and Bath.

Gateshead.

Leeds City.

Transport for West Midlands.

Leicester City.

Oxford City.

Coventry.

Nottinghamshire.

Transport for Greater Manchester.

North Tyneside.

Nottingham City.

Transport for London.

Sheffield City.

Sefton MBC Air Quality.

Southampton City.

Derby.

Essex.

South Tyneside.

And finally, Newcastle City.

I'm grateful to all the bus companies who had a hand in the applications.

Ultimately, we see dedicated ultra low emission buses as the long-term answer – but retrofitting offers a very attractive alternative for now.

Not all local authorities were successful with their bids.

But there will be further opportunities for councils to receive money for retrofitting through the Clean Air Fund.

As local authorities prepare to set out their initial plans for reducing nitrogen dioxide concentrations by the end of March, retrofitting technology will help ensure that more buses help clean up the air in our cities.

And as we look to the future, technology will give us other opportunities to improve the efficiency of buses.

For example, if we know how much passenger demand there is for a particular route or service, we can look at providing the appropriate size of vehicle for the job....

Not just cutting the number of empty seats.

But cutting costs and emissions too.

## **Bus Services Act**

I've already mentioned the Bus Services Act, and how it's designed to make bus services more attractive to the travelling public.

That's something I will be focusing on in the months ahead.

New enhanced partnership powers will enable local authorities and bus operators to work together to improve services.

And new franchising powers, replacing the existing Quality Contract Scheme, will also improve the management of buses in the regions where they apply.

I'm keen to see the open data provisions in the act benefit passengers too.

One of the existing barriers to passenger growth is that it can be difficult to obtain information on bus fares, routes or times.

Where the information does exist – on the web, for example – it can be inconsistently presented, or be buried in unwieldy and hard-to-decipher timetables.

But by making data open and accessible, software firms can create apps that package and deliver the relevant information to smartphones at the click of an icon.

So the open data should make it easier for passengers to use the bus network.

We published guidance on implementing the measures in the Act last November.

And we'll publish further regulations and guidance this year.

## **Conclusion**

So – to sum up – I see the future as full of opportunity.

If buses are crucial to our transport system today...

Then as road transport is transformed over the coming decades...

They will become more important than ever.

And I'll be doing everything I can to spread the message.

I'll be getting around the industry over the next few months, and meeting as many of you as possible.

To hear your views on how we can best support growth.

But one thing is absolutely clear.

The key to success is partnership. Government and bus industry, local authorities and operators working together. For the benefit of the passenger, for the benefit of bus operators, and for the benefit of Great Britain.