

Press release: Environment Agency offers stocking fillers for anglers

The Environment Agency is getting into the festive spirit by providing stocking fillers for anglers as its staff restock rivers with thousands of fish in the run up to Christmas.

Calverton fish farm, the Environment Agency's specialist fish breeding farm in Nottingham, produces between 400,000 and 500,000 fish each year. The farm breeds nine species of fish including Chub, Dace, Barbel, Roach, Bream, Crucians, Rudd, Tench and Grayling. The restocking activity is part of an annual programme, funded by income from rod licence sales.

Alan Henshaw, fisheries team leader at the Environment Agency said:

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and concerted restocking from Calverton has accelerated the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

New techniques in Pond Rearing have delivered significant improvements in the average size of the 18 month-old fish and many rivers and lakes throughout England have benefited from these stockings. The quality and range of fish produced as part of the restocking programme is testament to the hard work of the staff at Calverton farm.

All of this work is funded by money from rod licence sales to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries."

Some notable stockings that will take place:

- 34,781 mixed Chub, Dace and Roach stocked into the River Leadon in Gloucestershire.
- 29,750 mixed fish stocked into Rivers, Canals and Stillwaters across Cumbria and Lancashire in the North West.
- 600 Barbel into the River Dearne in South Yorkshire.
- 21,000 Roach, Bream, Crucians and Tench stocked into still waters and 7,600 Chub, Dace and Barbel stocked across rivers in Thames region.
- 6,400 fish comprising of 6 different species split between the River

Wid, Blackwater and Colne in Anglian East region.

- 4,250 Roach, Bream and Tench into the Blind Yeo in Wessex plus more than 3,000 additional fish split into other waters in the area.

More stockings will continue into the New Year.

Restocking of England's Rivers and Lakes by the Environment Agency happens for a number of reasons. This may be following a pollution incident where the original population has been lost, where recruitment is poor or in the creation of brand-new fisheries and Angling opportunities.

[News story: Over 900,000 more customers open fee-free basic bank accounts](#)

Over 900,000 new fee-free basic bank accounts were opened between July 2016 and June 2017, taking the total number of fee-free accounts open to nearly 5 million, according to the government's basic bank account report published today.

Basic bank accounts have been available in the UK for over a decade, but since September 2016 the UK's nine largest banks have been legally required to offer fee-free basic bank accounts, designed to improve financial inclusion for those who don't have a current account or who might struggle to open a standard account.

Other findings in this year's report include:

- there are just under 8 million basic bank accounts open in the UK
- for the second year running, Nationwide and Lloyds Banking Group opened the most fee-free basic bank accounts between July 2016 and June 2017
- Nationwide, Clydesdale Yorkshire Banking Group, and Co-op have a larger market share of basic bank accounts than personal current accounts
- Lloyds Banking Group accounts for almost half of the basic bank account market

Stephen Barclay, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

Making sure that everyone has access to the financial services that they need is at the heart of our plan to build a fairer society and an economy that is fit for the future. The government has legislated to make sure fee-free basic bank accounts are available

to those who need them and I am pleased to see that so many people – who might have previously been at risk of running up debt through bank charges – have access to a completely free account. It is important for a fair economy that banks continue to help all their customers to manage their finances confidently and responsibly.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises personnel keeping Britain safe over Christmas](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson meets personnel from the Household Cavalry and Isiah the horse

Gavin Williamson met members of the Household Cavalry at Horse Guards in central London, as they make preparations for their ceremonial duties across the festive period.

As well as providing the Queen's Life Guard for the official entrance to the Royal Palaces, and at Horse Guards, the same regiment was mobilised on London's streets after this summer's Westminster Bridge terror attack in support of the Metropolitan Police.

The Defence Secretary toured their historic Whitehall home with Colonel Crispin Lockhart, Chief of Staff for London District, after witnessing troops preparing their horses for guard duty.

While duty continues at home, more than 5,000 Armed Forces personnel will be working around the globe to help keep Britain safe. UK troops are involved in 25 operations in 30 countries. Around 1,000 people are working to fight Daesh and train the local security forces from locations in Iraq and the wider Middle East, as well as from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus. In the Caribbean, RFA Mounts Bay joins other Royal Navy warships deployed elsewhere over the festive period.

The Defence Secretary himself is due to travel to Poland shortly, where he will meet personnel on operations with NATO partners including the US. He said:

We live in a world where threats are constant and increasing, and that means we have to be professional, be dutiful and be committed. Our enemies do not go on holiday at Christmas so our Armed Forces remain vigilant. I am so grateful to the brave men and women of our

Armed Forces for providing that commitment, working to keep us safe while so many of us relax over Christmas. From here in central London to the seas of the South Atlantic, thousands of our people are making a sacrifice which should be warmly recognised by all of us.

In addition to operations in the Middle East and in the Caribbean, soldiers, sailors and airmen are working in locations ranging from Estonia to east Africa, and since 1969 the UK has had submariners on patrol for every minute of every day, providing the UK's nuclear deterrent.

In the South Atlantic, over 1,000 personnel are stationed in the Falkland Islands, while in Afghanistan, troops from the Army and other services are training the Afghan National Security Forces.

Press release: Review your charity's safeguarding and governance arrangements, Charity Commission advises

The Charity Commission is alerting all charities to the importance of providing a safe and trusted environment for anyone who comes into contact with them, including staff and volunteers.

[The new alert](#) follows a number of recent reports to the Commission of serious incidents involving concerns about the welfare of charity volunteers and beneficiaries, and media reports of safeguarding incidents in charities.

The alert reminds charities that, if something goes wrong in a charity, trustees are accountable and responsible for putting things right. The Commission says trustees should therefore assure themselves that their safeguarding practices are robust.

It is specifically advising trustees to:

- review their charity's safeguarding governance and management arrangements and performance if they have not done so within the last 12 months.
- contact the Commission about safeguarding issues, or serious safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations which have not previously been disclosed to the regulator or the appropriate authorities.

The Commission's recently revised [safeguarding strategy](#) makes clear that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

Harvey Grenville, Head of Investigations and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, says:

The public rightly expects charities to be safe and trusted environments where people are protected from harm, including the charity's own staff and volunteers. So all charities need to be alert to the importance of safeguarding those who come into contact with them. What that means in practice will of course depend on the nature and circumstances of a charity's work. Trustees of charities in which, for whatever reason, individuals may potentially hold significant authority or power over others, including their colleagues, must take account of that in setting and implementing safeguarding policies. This includes environments in which individuals, by virtue of their formal position or their experience or personality, are held in high regard and respect by those around them.

The regulator has also published a [report of a case involving Oxfam](#); the Commission engaged with the charity over its handling of a number of concerning allegations about recent and non-recent safeguarding incidents involving senior staff, including allegations of sexual harassment.

The report concludes that the charity demonstrates elements of good practice in its safeguarding management and how it responds to allegations, but that there is further work for the charity to do around HR culture, and the overall governance and management of safeguarding in the charity. As result of the Commission's involvement, the charity has committed to a number of significant steps, including an externally led review of its HR culture. The full report is published on gov.uk.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, [see our annual report](#).
2. The Commission takes a risk-based approach to safeguarding matters and its role is to ensure that trustees of charities work with or provide services to vulnerable beneficiaries comply with their legal duties, and take reasonable steps to protect them and other persons that come into contact with the charity from harm and minimise the risk of abuse.
3. The Commission is not responsible for dealing with incidents of actual abuse and does not administer safeguarding legislation. It cannot prosecute or bring criminal proceedings, although it can and does refer

any concerns to the police, local authorities and the [Disclosure and Barring Service \('DBS'\)](#) each of which has particular statutory functions.

[News story: Regulatory alert to charities – safeguarding](#)

The Charity Commission ('the Commission'), the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is issuing this alert to charities as regulatory advice under section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

It has published this alert to charities following a number of serious incidents reported to the Commission, and recent public interest about accusations of harassment in the work place, including media reporting about some safeguarding incidents which have affected charity beneficiaries, charity workers or other persons coming into contact with charities.

The [Charity Commission's recently updated safeguarding strategy](#) makes clear that safeguarding should be a key governance priority for all charities, not just those working with groups traditionally considered at risk.

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances are, and the public expects charities, quite rightly, to be safe and trusted places.

We are reminding charities of the importance of:

- providing a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with it including beneficiaries, staff and volunteers
- setting an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding, so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and properly
- having adequate safeguarding policies, procedures and measures to protect people
- providing clarity as to how incidents and allegations will be handled should they arise, including reporting to the relevant authorities, such as the Commission.

The Commission's guidance makes clear that:

- trustee duties include avoiding exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk – this means taking reasonable steps to protect beneficiaries, employees and volunteers from harm
- on occasion, charities may be targeted by people who abuse their position and privileges to gain access to vulnerable people or their records for inappropriate or illegal purposes – trustees must be alert to this risk and the need to manage it
- safeguarding goes beyond preventing physical abuse, and includes protecting people from harm generally, including neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and the consequences of the misuse of personal data

Trustees need to be satisfied that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for safeguarding, in particular when working with other organisations to deliver services to their beneficiaries. Trustees should be satisfied that any partner organisation has in place adequate safeguarding arrangements, including appropriate policies and mechanisms to provide assurance on compliance. This is particularly relevant for charities which undertake overseas humanitarian or development work with affiliates or in a confederated structure.

If something goes wrong in a charity, the trustees are accountable and the Commission expects the trustees to take responsibility for putting things right. This is why trustees should assure themselves that their safeguarding practices are robust. If there are concerns about this or about how issues may have been dealt with in past, trustees should carry out a formal review, including on the adequacy and robustness of the charity's safeguarding measures, procedures and policies.

Trustees are advised to ensure that their charities:

- undertake a thorough review of their charity's safeguarding governance and management arrangements and performance if one has not been recently conducted within the last 12 months
- contact the Commission about safeguarding issues, or serious safeguarding incidents, complaints or allegations which have not previously been disclosed to the charity regulator

Failures by trustees to manage safeguarding risks would be of serious regulatory concern to the Commission. We may consider this to be misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity and it may also be

a breach of trustee duty.

How to ensure you protect your beneficiaries and others that come into contact with your charity

Specifically, our advice is trustees need to:

- know your duties and responsibilities – under charity law but also under other specific statutory duties or guidance which apply because of the type of work your charity undertakes
- ensure adequate measures are in place to assess and address safeguarding risks
- put in place adequate safeguarding policies and procedures, including relevant HR matters, appropriate for your charity's particular circumstances and which reflect both the law and best practice
- make sure your charity's policies and procedures are effectively applied in practice
- ensure there are mechanisms in place which provide trustees with assurance about your charity's compliance with those policies and procedures
- ensure those safeguarding policies, practice, and performance are robustly and regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and fit for purpose
- actively promote a safe culture and strong awareness of everyone's safeguarding responsibilities in your charity
- take steps to help deter and prevent safeguarding issues from occurring
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to promptly identify and act upon emerging safeguarding trends or issues
- ensure that serious incidents are reported to the Commission in accordance with its guidance and that safeguarding allegations, complaints or incidents are reported to other agencies in accordance with the law and best practice

The measures in place should be proportionate to the size of the charity and

the risks arising from the charity's activities.

For further advice and sources of guidance: