

[Press release: Yorkshire Water fined for raw sewage leak](#)

On 27 November 2017, Yorkshire Water Services Limited appeared at Sheffield Crown Court and pleaded guilty to charges relating to a water pollution incident in Doncaster which led to the deaths of several hundred fish.

They were fined £45,000 and ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £24,762.56 as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

Proceedings were brought by the Environment Agency following the pollution incident in April 2014 where raw sewage was discharged from the defendant company's pumping station at Sandy Lane, Belle View in Doncaster, South Yorkshire into a water course and ultimately into 2 local ponds.

The discharge of sewage resulted in a raised level of ammonia in the water of the ponds and a reduced level of dissolved oxygen for a considerable period of time. The pollution from the illegal discharge was traced for over 3.5km downstream from the pumping station and a large number of fish died due to the toxic effects of ammonia.

Yorkshire Water Services Limited operates the pumping station under an environmental permit, and is required to ensure the site operates correctly. There was a breach of conditions of the permit on this occasion which caused an unlawful discharge.

Richard Moore, Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

Safeguarding the environment is an essential part of how all water companies must operate. The sentencing in this case shows we will continue to take companies to task where they fail to meet environmental standards.

[Press release: Consultation on further safeguards on investigatory powers launched](#)

The government has announced today that it is consulting on new safeguards for the use of communications data.

A [consultation](#), which will run for 7 weeks, is seeking views on amendments to

the UK's communications data and acquisition regime in response to a judgment handed down by the Court of Justice of the European Union in December 2016.

The proposed changes will introduce additional safeguards to ensure communications data can continue to be used to keep people safe from crime and terrorism while complying with the judgment.

Launching the consultation, Security Minister, Ben Wallace said:

Communications data is used in the vast majority of serious and organised crime prosecutions and has been used in every major Security Service counter-terrorism investigation over the last decade. Its importance cannot be overstated.

For example, it is often the only way to identify paedophiles involved in online child abuse and can be used to identify where and when these horrendous crimes have taken place.

As this is an issue of public importance, we consider it important to consult on our proposed changes to inform our legislative response and subsequent Parliamentary debate. All responses will be welcomed and carefully considered.

The new provisions include:

- the introduction of independent authorisation of communications data requests by a new body, known as the Office for Communications Data Authorisations, under the Investigatory Powers Commissioner Lord Justice Fulford
- restricting the use of communications data to investigations into serious crime
- additional safeguards which must be taken into account before a Data Retention Notice can be given to a telecommunications or postal operator
- clarification of the circumstances in which notification of those whose communications data has been accessed can occur
- mandatory guidance on the protection of retained data in line with European data protection standards

The communications data code of practice, which sets out how the safeguards governing the retention of communications data by telecommunications operators and its acquisition by public authorities will operate, is also being published today for consultation.

The government is clear that the December 2016 judgment does not apply to the retention or acquisition of data for national security purposes as national security is outside of the scope of EU law. Nevertheless, a number of the proposed changes will apply to certain national security applications for communications data to create a simpler, more practical regime.

Notes to editors:

Communications data is the 'who', 'where', 'when', 'how' and 'with whom' of a communication, but not what was written or said, and includes information such as the subscriber to a telephone service. It is an essential tool for the full range of law enforcement activity and national security investigations, for example to investigate crime, keep children safe, support or disprove alibis, and tie a suspect to a particular crime scene, amongst other things. It is used in 95 percent of serious and organised crime prosecution cases handled by the Crown Prosecution Service Organised Crime Division, and has been used in every major Security Service counter-terrorism investigation over the last decade.

The Investigatory Powers Act brings together and updates existing powers while radically overhauling how they are authorised and overseen. There is more information on GOV.UK.

The consultation is open for responses now and will close on 18 January 2018. The government proposes amending the IPA by secondary legislation made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

We have also published relevant [case studies](#).

[Press release: Managing hazardous materials advice for Astonfields businesses](#)

The advice and guidance Environment Agency staff gave to businesses on the Astonfields Industrial Estate, Stafford, will ensure that local businesses manage their hazardous waste and materials to help prevent pollution in the future.

In this unannounced day of action, more than 50 businesses were visited and inspected by Environment Agency staff. The inspections checked a number of things, including how hazardous materials are stored, how they are disposed of, whether the site and its drains are maintained and if businesses know what to do if something did spill into surface water drains.

James Perry, from the Environment Agency's Hazardous Waste Team, explains why

it's important to reduce the risk of pollution:

Hazardous materials used in industrial processes can be washed into the surface water drains by rain. These drains usually flow directly into a brook or a river which means hazardous materials can pollute the water, causing a problem for fish and other aquatic life. In serious cases, a pollution can also affect other businesses who use the water for their industrial processes or even affect drinking water.

By offering advice and guidance on measures businesses can take to reduce the risk of pollution, we're seeking to make sure the owners have robust processes in place to prevent a pollution and know what to do if something goes wrong. This is really important; at the Environment Agency we follow the 'polluter pays principle', so if something does happen, the company responsible will have to pay the costs of clean up and recovery.

The Marston Brook flows near the industrial estate and has suffered from low levels of pollution from materials washed into it from surface water drains for a number of years. It is hoped this day of action will reduce the level of pollution seen in the Marston Brook.

If anyone is concerned about the business practices at any site, or if there is a pollution in a river or brook, please contact the Environment Agency's 24/7 incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Press release: Strategic Review of Charges Consultation Launched

The Environment Agency is launching a public consultation today (Thursday 30th November) on the cost of its permits and business charges. Regulating business costs the taxpayer money, but under proposals laid out in the Strategic Review of Charges, the burden on the public purse would be significantly reduced. The proposed changes will mean that businesses pay for the full services they use rather than the public – a more financially-sustainable model that will lead to long-term environmental improvements.

This the biggest review of charges that the Environment Agency has ever carried out, and has involved a 12 month period of engagement with businesses and trade associations. There have been very limited changes to business charges since 2011, with costs kept below inflation (CPI).

The proposals are for a simpler and more consistent charging arrangement. Our

charges will reflect the amount of regulatory effort needed at a site. Businesses that are well-managed and low-hazard present a low environmental risk and would be charged less. Higher-risk or poor-performing businesses would be charged more.

If the new charges are implemented, the Environment Agency will also be able to invest more in our permitting service. This is vital to improve the standards of certain sectors, such as waste and nuclear industries.

Neil Davies, Environment Agency Director of Regulated Services, said:

Our work to regulate industry protects and enhances the environment. The proposed changes will mean that businesses pay for the full services they use rather than the public. This is more financially-sustainable, will lead to a better service to businesses and long-term improvements to the environment.

We have been engaging with trade associations over the last year while we were developing these proposals. Their input into this process has been really valuable and I urge them to take part in the consultation.

The consultation will run until 12 January 2018, with the proposed charges being introduced in April 2018 – the start of the financial year. To have your say: click [here](#).

[News story: Cabinet Office issues an Invitation to Tender for a fraud prevention and detection managed service](#)

This week the Cabinet Office issued the Invitation to Tender for the procurement of a service delivering all aspects of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). The NFI is the Cabinet Office's electronic data matching exercise that compares data within and between public and private sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud. The NFI has been successful in helping the public sector identify and stop fraud in their systems.

In this past year the NFI has already helped identify £100.6 million in savings across England bringing the total across the UK since 1996 to £1.63 billion.

The contract will cover data matching and IT services for the period 2018 to 2022, with the potential to extend to 2024.

The successful supplier will need to provide a robust system that meets government security standards and that can reflect any future changes to data protection legislation, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore, said:

The UK government is committed to finding fraud in public services, wherever it is and I am delighted that we are procuring such an essential service, which has found and prevented over £1.6 billion of fraud over the past 11 years.

We want the new supplier to be a real collaborative partner and together we will jointly drive innovation and continual development in what is a fast moving area.

We want to develop enhanced data matching/analytics techniques, build greater functionality for the NFI web application and access key data more frequently.

The tender is expected to be awarded in March 2018.

For more information on how to apply please [visit Tenders Electronic Daily](#).