

# PM meeting with European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen: 7 November 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak met with European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen at COP27.



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke to European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen at COP27 in Egypt today.

They reflected on the progress and challenges since COP26 in Glasgow, committing to work together to speed up the transition to renewables and mobilise finance for developing countries.

The Prime Minister noted that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and manipulation of energy prices had only strengthened the argument for ending our reliance on fossil fuels.

The leaders agreed the UK and European Union would remain steadfast in our military, economic and diplomatic support for Ukraine, and in countering Russian aggression.

On the Northern Ireland Protocol, the Prime Minister reiterated the need to find solutions to the very real problems it had created on the ground in Northern Ireland. They agreed on the importance of working together to agree a resolution.

Published 7 November 2022

---

# Northants waste firm pays out to charity after contaminating groundwater

- Augean South Limited agreed to pay £25,000 to Rockingham Forest Trust

A company which handles hazardous waste has made a payment of £25,000 to an environmental charity following the contamination of groundwater at its site.

Augean South Limited of Stamford Road, Kings Cliffe, Northamptonshire also paid £11,058.90 to cover the costs of the Environment Agency investigation.

The discharge in 2020 had a short-term impact on wildlife and saw some amphibian species decline but populations recovered by the following summer. Vegetation also naturally improved after the pollution.

Routine inspections in March 2020, detected high levels of chemicals in the groundwater adjacent to the treatment centre at East Northants Resource Management Facility. The site is operated by Augean South Limited.

After performing further tests, Augean notified the Environment Agency. Officers concluded Augean had negligently exceeded its environmental permits, contrary to regulations 12(1)(b) and 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

The Environment Agency accepted an Enforcement Undertaking submitted by Augean.

Enforcement undertakings are 1 of the civil sanctions available to the Environment Agency, enabling the wrongdoer to put right the situation and compensate for any environmental harm.

As part of this agreement, Augean donated £25,000 to the Rockingham Forest Trust, a local charity which promotes environmental projects in Northamptonshire.

It is believed that heavy rainfall during the winter and subsequent storms contributed to the chemical discharge.

The Environment Agency was satisfied Augean took appropriate action to resolve the situation. The company had acted in a timely manner to remove and clean the affected land, whilst continuing to monitor the groundwater and soil.

There have been no similar incidents since at the waste facility.

Members of the public with concerns about pollution should contact our 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

---

## ESFA publishes annual report and accounts for 2021 to 2022

News story

ESFA has published its annual report and accounts 2021 to 2022, which highlights that it has delivered on its funding body role



The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has published its annual report and accounts for 2021 to 2022.

David Withey, Chief Executive said,

In 2021-22 ESFA successfully distributed £65 billion of funding to education and skills providers. This included new funding streams to help mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to a total of £1.145 billion of educational recovery funding, helping learners catch up on lost learning.

Just as importantly, the agency's audit and assurance programmes have helped to ensure that the public is receiving value for money by monitoring how the funds are spent within sectors.

Other key highlights are the continuing work of the schools resource management advisers which continues to both support schools and academy trusts to plan and manage their financial oversight. We've also seen successes in the FE sector where the agency has taken a more collaborative and supportive approach with colleges and 2021-22 saw a reducing number of colleges entering intervention.

This provides an important foundation for our work in 2022-23 and beyond. ESFA has a critical role in maintaining the provision of a quality service in what is likely to be an increasingly challenging

fiscal environment given inflationary pressures on the system. While our regulatory-type functions will continue to play an important part in supporting effective reinsurance, I am also keen to build more effective partnerships with the sector that can enable early support for providers under financial stress.

We are here to support providers and I want to thank the sector for working with us to ensure that we continue delivering the best provision and outcomes for learners.

Martin Spencer, ESFA Chair said,

I am very pleased to have been appointed as Chair midway through the period covered by this report, taking over from Dame Irene Lucas-Hayes. I would like to thank Dame Irene for her support and leadership of the Board throughout her tenure.

We continued to perform strongly in 2021-22 and at the heart of our core purpose remains providing £65 billion of timely and accurate funding to our education and skills sectors, which this year we achieved with a 100% success rate for allocations and 99.9% for payments.

Following the implementation of the ALB review recommendations we felt it was important to take the time to reflect on our high level governance arrangements to ensure that we maintain appropriate oversight across all aspects of the refocused remit. As a board we will continue to work closely with the executive, offering our support whilst the agency continues to refine its functions and strategy.

Published 7 November 2022

---

## **Free flood advice workshops on offer to Yorkshire communities this Flood Action Week**

Press release

The Environment Agency is offering free workshops throughout flood action week to prepare communities across Yorkshire for flooding this winter.



Flood warden in high vis jacket

Yorkshire communities at risk of flooding are being offered a series of seminars and workshops to find out how they can better prepare for the risk of flooding this season.

The Environment Agency and partners are offering a series of free online events as part of this year's Flood Action Week, running from Monday 7 November to Sunday 13 November.

The programme is designed for community groups and partner organisations with an interest in how they can prepare for, respond to and recover from flooding.

Sessions also cover community emergency resilience, climate change adaptation, natural flood management and flood volunteering.

**Carolyn Jarvis, Flood Resilience Adviser at the Environment Agency said:**

Working alongside fantastic partners, we've designed these workshops to provide free, accessible flood preparedness information. This is a great opportunity for people to become more informed and find out how they can help their local community respond to the impacts of flooding which we will all experience with more frequency.

Flooding can be devastating, and this Flood Action Week we are urging people to check their flood risk and find out the simple steps they can take to be prepared for flooding this winter.

People can view the programme of events and [sign up for the free sessions here](#).

This Flood Action Week (7 November – 13 November) the Environment Agency is urging people to take three simple steps:

Those at risk are encouraged to follow the advice to 'Prepare. Act. Survive', specifically:

- If there is an initial flood alert – prepare by packing medicines and insurance and other important documents and visit the flood warning information service.
- If there is a subsequent confirmed flood warning – act by moving family, pets and belongings to safety. Turn off gas, water and electricity.
- If there is a severe flood warning – survive immediate danger by following the advice of emergency services or calling 999 if needed

Published 7 November 2022

---

## England's treasured island seabird populations to be protected with new government funding

The UK government has today announced £156,000 to protect England's much-loved island seabird populations against the threat of invasive predators.

This is one of the first instances globally of a central government providing funding to protect seabird islands against these specific threats, setting the UK as a global leader for seabird island biosecurity.

The UK's islands such as Coquet Island and the Isles of Scilly are internationally important for millions of seabirds, with Coquet Island being the only breeding place in the UK for Roseate terns which are a red listed species. However, some key breeding populations are in decline due to multiple threats including invasive mammals such as stoats and mice.

The eggs and chicks of ground-nesting seabirds including puffins, razorbills, gannets, terns and European storm-petrels are particularly vulnerable, and their populations can quickly be decimated by invasive mammals.

The funding will be delivered through the AfterLIFE plan from July 2023. It will ensure existing biosecurity measures across England's seabird islands are maintained and enhanced so we can continue to protect the recovery and secure the future of important seabirds.

It will also fund new measures including:

- The employment of a full time Biosecurity Officer
- A conservation detection dog team that will train dogs to search for and indicate the presence of brown rats
- Information campaigns targeting island visitors
- Training of volunteers to support biosecurity implementation across England's seabird island Special Protection Areas

- Frequent surveillance checks

These measures will build on the Biosecurity for LIFE project, which Defra has supported since 2018 and has implemented key biosecurity measures such as surveillance checks and volunteering programmes on seabird island Special Protected Areas.

**Minister for Biosecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs Lord Benyon said:**

“British seabirds are part of what make our coastlines so beautiful, and it’s vitally important we continue to do all we can to protect each unique species and allow them to recover and thrive.

“Defra’s contribution to the AfterLIFE Plan will ensure important measures continue to safeguard our treasured seabirds against invasive mammals that have the potential to obliterate entire populations.”

**RSPB’s Seabird Recovery Officer and Biosecurity for LIFE project executive Laura Bambini said:**

“The Biosecurity for LIFE project has worked with a diverse range of organisations, communities and individuals to set up critical biosecurity measures in place on England’s internationally important seabird islands. Having worked with Defra, Natural England and key stakeholders in other UK nations to secure the maintenance of these measures in the long term, we are pleased now to see the development of national island biosecurity programmes underway across the UK. This is important for building resilience in our seabird populations which are in a precarious situation due to the pressures they face at sea.”

“This announcement is significant, ahead of the UN’s CBD COP in Montreal, as it sets the UK Government as leaders in island biosecurity, in one of the very few instances globally of a government using core funds to protect seabird islands from the threat of invasive non-native mammalian predators.”

**RSPB’s Principal Marine Policy Officer Kirsten Carter said:**

“The islands of the UK are amazing, their relative isolation has allowed seabirds and other wildlife to thrive. But these wild and sometimes rugged places are delicate, protecting them requires constant vigilance as the precarious balance that has allowed wildlife to flourish can be easily disrupted with catastrophic consequences.”

“We have seen how even just a single inadvertently introduced predator can have a devastating effect on an island where the native species have no natural defences. This is why today’s announcement to fund the Biosecurity AfterLIFE is so important, it enables the protection of these inspiring places for future generations.”

In light of the ongoing outbreak of bird flu, conservation efforts such as AfterLIFE are vital for boosting the resilience of our vulnerable seabird populations. This work aligns with Defra’s development of an English Seabird Conservation and Recovery Plan which will assess the vulnerability of and

threats to England's seabirds and propose actions to address them, due to be published in Spring 2023.