

Somerset rivers stocked with fish in run-up to Christmas

Every year, the Agency's Calverton Fish Farm near Nottingham breeds coarse fish for release into rivers and still waters across England to help boost fish populations.

Officers from the Agency's Bridgwater fisheries team spent a busy day on Thursday 17 December putting 2,900 fish into the River Sheppey and 1,450 into Marston Pond. The team also visited West Sedgemoor main drain to release another 1,259 fish.

Earlier they re-stocked 4 other rivers and still waters including the Frome, Yeo, Bird's Quarry and Rust Pond with various species including chub, roach, tench, barbel, dace, rudd, bream and crucian carp.

The Rivers Frome and Sheppey lost a large number of fish following pollution incidents in 2016 and 2018 and will particularly benefit from the re-stocking that will help fish numbers recover.

Jim Flory of the Environment Agency said:

Somerset boasts many angling clubs which is evidence that there is a healthy amount of fish in the county's waterway. But occasionally a helping hand is needed to restore the natural balance in the wake of an incident or decline.

The work of our National Fish Farm is funded by income from licence fees, so in the lead up to Christmas it's great to see the fish farm continuing to produce strong and healthy fish needed for re-stocking and recovery.

The restocking is part of an annual programme funded by income from rod licence sales. Restocking occurs in winter because water temperatures are low and this minimises any stress on the fish, giving them the best possible survival rates.

Restocking is done where numbers are low, have been depleted following a pollution incident or to create new fisheries and opportunities for anglers.

You need a rod fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel with a rod and line in England. Get yours from <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences>.

Record numbers of doctors and nurses working in the NHS

Professionally qualified clinical staff including paramedics are at record levels, as are scientific, therapeutic and technical staff.

Responding to today's NHS workforce statistics, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This winter will be challenging as we continue to fight this deadly virus, and I'm hugely grateful to all our staff who continue to save lives and provide care to those who need it.

I'm delighted that record numbers of doctors and nurses are working in our NHS, plus a record pipeline of future talent in nursing, medicine and general practice.

We are backing our NHS and thanks to their unrelenting dedication, we will not only beat COVID but secure the future of our health service and deliver on our manifesto commitment of 50,000 more nurses.

The final figures from this year's admission cycle show there were 29,740 acceptances to nursing and midwifery courses in England, 6,110 more than last year and an increase of over a quarter (26%). The number of new nursing applicants to English providers between 15 January and 30 June was 68% (4,600) higher than the same period last year.

In addition, recent figures for this year show the highest ever number of GPs entering training with 3,793 posts accepted, exceeding the mandated target of 3,250. Health Education England has increased GP trainee acceptances year on year for the last 7 years.

Over the summer the [NHS People Plan](#) set out how the NHS will put staff wellbeing at its heart with a new recruitment, retention and support package. It sets out practical support for wellbeing such as safe spaces to rest and recuperate, wellbeing guardians and support to keep staff physically safe and healthy.

The NHS recently announced £15 million to strengthen mental health support for nurses, paramedics, therapists, pharmacists and support staff. Staff will get rapid access to expanded mental health services that are being rolled out across the country as part of efforts to deal with the second wave of coronavirus.

Today, NHS Digital has published its [monthly NHS workforce data for September 2020](#).

Table summarising NHS workforce statistics in England

	Sept 2019	Sept 2020 full-time equivalent (FTE)	Annual FTE change	Annual change (%)
All staff	1,114,473	1,164,729	50,256	4.5%
Professionally qualified	591,712	618,858	27,146	4.6%
Doctors	116,416	122,446	6,030	5.2%
Nurses	285,871	299,184	13,313	4.7%

DBS Christmas and New Year Opening Times 2020

Our Contact Centre will be closed at certain times over the Christmas and New Year period.

We will be open as usual until December 24th (Christmas Eve).

Date	Opening hours
Christmas Eve	8am to 3pm
Christmas Day	Closed
Boxing Day	Closed
27th December	Closed
28th December	Closed
29th December	8am to 3pm
30th December	8am to 3pm
31st December	8am to 3pm
New Year's Day	Closed

We return to business as usual on January 2nd.

Our social media accounts will not be monitored between December 24th and January 4th.

Online services such as the [Update Service](#) and [online tracking](#) are available as usual over Christmas.

Defra update on GB-NI authorised trader self-identification

News story

Defra are working to compile a list of businesses that can take advantage of the authorised GB-NI trader 3 month grace period



Defra update

Defra are working to compile a list of businesses that can take advantage of the authorised trader 3 month grace period, as outlined in the [Command Paper](#) last week. The grace period will only cover certain goods: products of animal origin (POAO), composite products, food and feed not of animal origin, and plants and plant products.

If you move these goods from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), please continue reading to assess whether your business can be added to the list.

- 'Authorised traders' are supermarkets and their trusted suppliers
- The UK government will not discriminate against smaller suppliers or between different companies in recognising traders as authorised for the purpose of this grace period

A trusted supplier is one that independently moves its end product from GB to NI, for sale in NI.

- For example, a meat pie manufacturer that moves its own products from GB to NI, which delivers its products directly to a store for sale solely within NI would be in scope.

However, where a meat pie producer delivers products to a supermarket distribution centre in GB, which is then moved by the supermarket to NI, the producer would not qualify (but would not need to – the supermarket would be the authorised trader for that movement into Northern Ireland).

Self-identification by traders

Defra are compiling a list of authorised traders who can benefit from the 3 month grace period. Once identified the traders will be added to Defra's list of authorised traders that will be sent to the European Commission.

You can also self-identify to apply for inclusion on the authorised traders list.

If you self-identify as an authorised trader, complete the [authorised traders form](#). The form must be completed fully.

Make sure you provide your:

- business name
- company affiliation (if a supplier)
- Economic Operators Registration and Identification number (EORI)
- head office address
- NI distribution address (if relevant)

The form will ask further information on your operations. This information will be required to determine whether you are eligible for inclusion on the list.

Please email the completed authorised traders form to nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk by 17.00 pm (GMT) on 28 December 2020. They will attempt to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

If you have any questions about your eligibility, please email nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk. The emailed response will either:

- confirm that your business is included on the authorised traders list and detail your business's unique registration number

or

- contain a rejection letter with reasoning and steps to resolution. Businesses can challenge rejection decisions via email until 28 December

2020

If you have any queries relating to authorised trader requirements or the grace period, email nisupermarketandsupplierlist@defra.gov.uk.

We ask that you share this communication with colleagues or business associates who may be eligible for the authorised trader list.

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[Veterans step up to support those in need during COVID pandemic, new research finds](#)

The study, carried out by King's College London, found that 60% of veterans have volunteered in their community to help individuals affected by the pandemic.

Of those veterans already volunteering, 66% reported as having increased their time spent helping others, as a result of COVID.

The initial finding from the OVA sponsored study underlines the contribution that ex-service personnel make to society at large. Many use their skills learnt from the armed forces, as well as their public service ethos, to play an important role in their communities.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

These findings show the huge contribution that veterans make to their communities.

Their commitment to serving this country does not end when they leave the military.

It's humbling to see that so many have stepped up to help those in need during this extraordinary year.

As we approach Christmas, Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer is also urging veterans struggling with their mental health to reach out for support.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, particularly this year with the effects of COVID.

But help is available and I urge any veteran who may be struggling with their mental health or loneliness to access the range of support that is available.

A range of support is available for those struggling with their mental health over the Christmas period, including:

- The Veterans' Gateway, a first point of contact which puts veterans in touch with local support services. Anyone can call 0808 8021212 to reach their helpline, which is running 24/7 over Christmas and New Year, or text 81212.
- The Veterans' Welfare Service, part of Veterans UK, is trained to provide free, confidential advice and support on a wide range of issues. Anyone in need of support can call 0808 1914218 and ask for contact from the Veterans Welfare Service. Read details of the helpline's Christmas opening hours.
- Veterans can also call the free Samaritans helpline on 116 123, which is running 24/7 over Christmas and New Year.

Support for loneliness for veterans includes:

- Mind is a leading mental health charity that offers wide ranging support for a number of issues. Their befriending service can help veterans feel connected to others through frequent conversation and companionship. Find out more about Mind's services to prevent loneliness.
- The Royal British Legion offer localised support to prevent isolation in the veteran community, including a telephone buddy service and a home visiting service. Contact the Legion to find out more.

As well as the increased time spent volunteering, the King's study, called Veterans-CHECK, has today found that 88% of veterans gave to charity in the last 12 months. The study also found that 20% have given more to charity this year, because of their desire to help more during the pandemic.

Professor Sir Simon Wessely, Director, King's Centre for Military Health Research, King's College London said:

What this study shows is that our veterans have been affected by the COVID pandemic in similar ways to all of us.

But they have also continued to contribute to this country, much as they did during service, with so many of them now employed as key workers or volunteering.

I am sure everyone will want to acknowledge and thank the veteran community for all they are doing to support the nation at this time. The spirit shown by Cpt Tom Moore continues through the generations.

The Veterans-Check study will continue into the New Year, where it will report on the health effects on veterans during the pandemic.

In England, mental health services now includes:

- The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison Service (TILS), an enhanced service for veterans which helps tackle early signs of mental health difficulties
- The Veterans' Mental Health Complex Treatment service (CTS), which helps veterans who have complex mental health problems emanating from their military service
- Over 800 accredited 'veteran friendly' GP surgeries, which have been specially equipped to care for ex-forces personnel
- Over 50 Veteran Aware hospitals

The work of the OVA includes:

- Pulling together all functions of government, and working closely with the charity sector, in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served
- Ensuring that every single veteran and their family knows where to turn to access support when required
- Helping to generate a 'single view of the veteran' by making better use of data to understand veterans' needs and where gaps in provision exist
- Improving the perception of veterans