

Helping to tackle lockdown waste crimes in the North East

The Environment Agency is urging residents and owners of land and property across the North East to be extra vigilant in the protection of their property, and also checking out the credentials of any independent waste carriers to avoid becoming victims of waste crime during the continued Coronavirus lockdown.

Don't get dumped on as it could cost you! If it sounds too good to be true – it probably is.

These uncertain times are the perfect opportunity for criminals to take advantage of unsuspecting victims especially when householders are creating more refuse and sorting through unwanted items during the clearance of outhouses and garages.

That coupled with the recent temporary closure of most Household Waste and Recycling Centres has meant that people have been desperate to clear some much-needed space and remove their clutter. So it may be tempting to answer that advert on Facebook for someone to come and clear the waste – but be aware.

The annual economic impact of waste crime in England is an estimated at £604M. The Environment Agency is working hard to address this. Its specialist crime unit uses intelligence to track and prosecute organised crime gangs involved in illegal waste activity and to ensure any necessary action is taken against them.

David Edwardson, the Environment Agency's Enforcement Leader for the North East, said:

Waste crime is something that not only affects the environment in which we live and work but it can be an awful experience for residents, landowners and businesses who fall victim to these acts of criminal activity.

This is why, as the regulator for the commercial waste industry, we are urging individuals, businesses and organisations to be cautious, extra vigilant and responsible with the management of their waste. This will prevent it getting into the hands of criminals – who cause damage and heartache to properties and the local economy.

Did you know that in a court of law it's not only the waste carrier who can be prosecuted if waste is fly tipped? It's expected that the customer knows

the final destination of the waste [duty of care]. If you pass your waste to someone else to take away for you, you must first check they are registered with the Environment Agency.

There is a risk to landowners too. Waste criminals can target your land and property. They may offer you cash to store waste, promising to come back and remove it but don't. Or they may dump the waste without your knowledge.

The threat to those land and property owners comes in various means from baled waste appearing unexpectedly through to people answering adverts on social media platforms placed by illegal unlicensed waste carriers promising to remove items for a one-off fee.

Large scale illegal dumping of waste is often co-ordinated through organised crime groups. These criminal groups approach property and landowners to lease warehouses, barns, open land, farms and private property. Lease agreements are put in place that appear to be legal and above board.

Organised crime groups then leave waste on land, where the clearance of the waste becomes the responsibility of the landowners, often at great expense. The criminals involved often provide false details to secure their lease agreements making them harder to trace and to recover costs from.

The Coronavirus is not an excuse for criminals to get away with operating illegally. The Environment Agency is still actively responding to reports of illegal activity and waste sites operating illegally during this pandemic.

Check out the Environment Agency's operational update at www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-operational-update-3-april-2020

David Edwardson continues:

We are working closely with our partners to deliver a programme of preventative measures to help protect individuals especially in these current times when criminals prey on people's vulnerability.

You may even be committing an offence yourself by allowing waste to be stored on your land or in your property without the relevant permissions which could leave you liable to prosecution.

There are hundreds of commercial properties across the North East thought to be empty, all of which are potential targets for waste criminals.

Northumbria Police's Designing Out Crime Officer, Sandra Killeen, said:

We all have to be accountable for responsibly disposing of our waste as it can have damaging effects on the environment and the economy.

We are working alongside our partners to ensure anyone linked to criminal activity and illegal disposing of waste sees the full consequences of their actions.

We are urging the public to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious.

James Copeland, Senior Environment & Land Use Adviser, said:

When accepting any material, especially waste onto farm, there are a number of waste regulations you must be aware of. Depositing unsuitable materials could leave you with an expensive clean-up costs or facing prosecution. There are a number of key checks and questions you need to ask when accepting waste and if in doubt, contact the competent authority for advice.

Everybody has a part to play to help solve the waste crime problem and make sure waste is managed responsibly. Anyone who sees waste crime taking place, or who has been a victim of illegal baled waste deposit is advised not to approach as these people can be dangerous. Report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Also if people are paying for a company to take away waste from their property, then we would always advise them to check they are a registered waste carrier with the Environment Agency by visiting environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers .

[Historic Immigration Bill returns to Parliament](#)

News story

The bill takes back control of UK borders and paves the way for a new points-based immigration system.



The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2020 introduced on 5 March will have its Second Reading in the House of Commons today just 6 months since the British people voted to introduce a points-based immigration system.

This represents an important milestone in paving the way for the new immigration system that will deliver for the UK for years to come and puts an end to the European Union's rules on free movement.

The bill signals the government's commitment to delivering a fairer and skills led immigration system, attracting people based on the skills they have, not where they are from.

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel said:

This historic piece of legislation gives the UK full control of our immigration system for the first time in decades and the power to determine who comes to this country.

Our new points-based system is firmer, fairer, and simpler. It will attract the people we need to drive our economy forward and lay the foundation for a high wage, high skill, high productivity economy.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to build a future that works for the whole of the UK and for employers to focus on upskilling and investing in the workforce this country has.

This bill gives the UK flexibility and control over its borders so it can attract top talent from around the world to complement the skills already here.

Talented doctors, nurses and paramedics from all over the world are currently playing a leading role in the NHS's efforts to fight coronavirus and save lives and we thank them – and all our NHS staff – for the work they are doing.

Our new immigration system will make it easier and quicker for medical professionals around the world to work in the NHS through a new fast-track NHS visa.

Further information on the points-based system will be detailed in the Immigration Rules published later in the year.

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[Negotiations on the UK's future trading relationship with the US: Update](#)

More trade is essential if the UK is to overcome the unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19. New FTAs will be an important factor in facing that economic challenge, providing new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs who have faced significant challenges in this difficult period. An FTA with the US can help create opportunities for UK businesses, provide better jobs and boost the economy in every part of the country.

Both sides are hopeful that negotiations for a comprehensive trade agreement can proceed at an accelerated pace. Ambassador Lighthizer and I agreed that a second virtual round will take place in the weeks of 15 and 22 June, and that in advance of that negotiating teams will continue their work and meet virtually on a rolling basis, with meetings continuing throughout this week and beyond.

Negotiations over the past two weeks were conducted virtually but proceeded efficiently, with UK and US negotiators participating in extensive discussions in nearly 30 different negotiating groups covering all aspects of a comprehensive trade agreement. The discussions covered the following workstreams:

- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Legal Group – Disputes
- Trade Remedies
- Rules of Origin
- Investment
- Legal Group – Core Text
- Technical Barriers to Trade
- Competition
- Digital
- Telecoms
- Economics
- Customs
- Sectoral Annexes
- Cross cutting services
- Market Access for Goods, Overarching and Industrial Goods

- Good Regulatory Practice (GRP)
- Financial Services
- Sustainability, Environment and Labour
- General Coordination
- Market Access for Goods, Agriculture
- State Owned Enterprises
- Services Sectors
- Intellectual Property
- Procurement
- Sustainability, Anti-Corruption
- Market Access for Goods, Textiles
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS)
- Subsidies

The meetings were positive and constructive, reflecting the mutual commitment to secure an ambitious agreement that significantly boosts trade and investment between our economies, the first and fifth largest in the world.

Both sides recognised the unprecedented circumstances in which these negotiations took place, with significant emphasis placed on supporting the post-Covid economic recovery.

During the meetings, the teams discussed their respective objectives and agreed on ambitious next steps for coming talks. Our preparatory work makes it possible for the UK and United States to quickly advance negotiations in a number of substantive areas that will shape our future bilateral trade relationship.

A number of areas showed particular progress, including where both teams identified positive alignment between respective negotiating positions. They identified a mutually high ambition for services, investment and digital trade, among other areas.

Both sides also set out a mutual commitment to creating new opportunities for businesses on both sides of the Atlantic and to delivering benefits for workers, consumers and farmers. This includes the confirmation that both sides will quickly pursue a standalone Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Chapter and will continue the UK-US SME Dialogue.

In the same manner as this negotiating round, discussions in the second round will cover all areas to be included in a Free Trade Agreement.

The Government is committed to negotiating a comprehensive agreement with the US and we look forward to making further progress at the next round of negotiations. The Government will make a further statement on progress following the second round of talks.

Funding and manufacturing boost for UK vaccine programme

- Global licensing agreement signed between Oxford University and AstraZeneca
- AstraZeneca will work to make up to 30 million doses available by September for the UK, as part of an agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total
- government backs top scientists at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London with new funding of £84 million
- funding includes £65.5 million for the vaccine being developed at the University of Oxford and £18.5 million for Imperial College London, as coronavirus vaccine trials accelerate

UK's top researchers rapidly working to find a coronavirus vaccine will benefit from £84 million of new government funding, Business Secretary Alok Sharma has announced today (Sunday 17 May).

The funding comes as Oxford University today agrees a global licensing agreement with AstraZeneca, the UK-based pharmaceutical company, for the commercialisation and manufacturing of their potential vaccine.

This means that, if the Oxford vaccine is successful, AstraZeneca will work to make up to 30 million doses available by September for people in the UK, as part of an agreement to deliver 100 million doses in total.

This will mean the UK will be the first country to get access to the vaccine, should it be successful.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Our scientists are at the forefront of vaccine development. This deal with AstraZeneca means that if the Oxford University vaccine works, people in the UK will get the first access to it, helping to protect thousands of lives.

The agreement will deliver 100 million doses in total, ensuring that in addition to supporting our own people, we are able to make the vaccines available to developing countries at the lowest possible cost.

The UK continues to lead the global response to find a vaccine, and the government is backing our scientists to do this as quickly as possible.

Pascal Soriot, Chief Executive Officer, AstraZeneca, said:

AstraZeneca is at the forefront of the response to COVID-19, and we are proud to be working with Oxford University to help make this vaccine available as quickly as possible. I would like to thank HM Government for its commitment to the vaccine and welcome its leadership and generosity for its help in expanding access beyond the UK. Our company is working hard to establish parallel supply agreements with other nations and multilateral organisations to ensure fair and equitable access around the world.

Professor Sir John Bell, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, said:

The University of Oxford is immensely proud of the scientists at the Jenner Institute and the Oxford Vaccine Group who have worked tirelessly to discover and develop this vaccine in record time. We now have a partner in AstraZeneca who are ideally positioned to help us evaluate the vaccine, manufacture it and distribute it to UK citizens as well as to the rest of the world. They share our commitment to true global access to end this pandemic.

Professor Robin Shattock of Imperial College London said:

This funding will greatly accelerate our efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of our vaccine and make it available to at risk populations as rapidly as possible. Access to such support allows us to move at unprecedented speed.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to research and develop a vaccine. The government has already pledged £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the highest contribution of any country. This is part of the UK committing £388 million to the international drive to develop vaccines, tests and treatments. In June, the UK will also host the upcoming global pledging conference for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

Expert Advisory Board members

The expert advisory group advises, challenges and support the Vaccine Task Force in their goal to ensure that the UK population has access to clinically effective and safe vaccines as soon as possible.

Chair: Patrick Vallance – GCSA, Government Office for Science

- Jonathan Van Tam – Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England
- Charlotte Deane – Deputy Executive Chair of the EPSRC
- Robin Shattock – Head of Mucosal Infection and Immunity, Department of Medicine at Imperial College
- Sarah Gilbert – Professor of Vaccinology, Jenner Institute & Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine

- Janet Downie – CEO at RoslinCT
 - Kate Bingham – Managing Partner at SV Health Investors
 - John Bell – Government Life Science’s Champion and Regius Chair of Medicine at the University of Oxford
 - Jeremy Farrar – Director at Wellcome Trust
 - Menelas Pangalos – Executive Vice-President, BioPharmaceuticals R&D at AstraZeneca
 - Ian McCubbin – Independent Pharma Specialist and Chair of Manufacturing Advisory Group
 - Andrew Pollard – Professor of Paediatric Infection and Immunity at the University of Oxford
 - Richard Hatchett – CEO, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)
 - June Raine – Chief Executive at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency
 - Andrew Witty – WHO Vaccine Special Envoy
 - Jeff Almond – former Vice President and Head of Discovery Research and External R&D at Sanofi Pasteur
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Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre to open 12 months ahead of schedule

- Up to £93 million government investment to open the UK’s first dedicated Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre 12 months early
- A further £38 million will establish a rapid deployment facility this summer
- The new Centre is a key component of the government’s coronavirus programme in boosting the UK’s capacity to develop and mass produce vaccines

The race to manufacture millions of doses of a coronavirus vaccine has been boosted with a multi-million-pound government investment, Business Secretary Alok Sharma has announced today.

The government will invest up to £93 million to accelerate construction of the new Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) which, when completed, will have capacity to produce enough vaccine doses to serve the entire UK population in as little as six months. The funding will ensure the centre opens in Summer 2021, a full 12 months ahead of schedule.

The new Centre, which is already under construction, is a key component of the government’s coronavirus vaccine programme – ensuring that once a vaccine is available it can be produced quickly and in mass quantities.

To be located on the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire, the new Centre will be the UK's first not-for-profit organisation established to develop and advance the mass production of vaccines. This will boost the UK's long-term capacity against future viruses. The centre will also accelerate the production of vaccines for existing illnesses such as the flu virus.

While the Centre is being built, the government will establish a rapid deployment facility thanks to a further investment of £38 million to begin manufacturing at scale from Summer 2020. This facility will support efforts to ensure a vaccine is widely available to the public as soon as possible.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

As the biggest contributor to the international coalition to find a vaccine, the UK is leading the global response. Once a breakthrough is made, we need to be ready to manufacture a vaccine by the millions.

The new Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre and temporary facility will build 'fill and finish' capacity, bringing the UK vaccine programme together from discovery to distribution.

The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre's Chief Executive Dr Matthew Duchars said:

Today's announcement by the Business Secretary is an important endorsement for the work the Vaccine Manufacturing and Innovation Centre will deliver in shoring up future domestic supply of vaccines in response to a pandemic.

This investment will rapidly accelerate the construction of the facility, enabling us to bring it online a year sooner. In addition, the capacity will be significantly increased, so that enough vaccines could be made for everyone in the UK within a matter of months of opening.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive Sir Mark Walport, said:

The Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre is an essential new weapon in the UK's arsenal against diseases and other biological threats, ensuring sufficient vaccines get to the public in the fastest possible time.

The UKRI-funded teams at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London have developed potential coronavirus vaccines at unprecedented speed. By working with partners including government, VMIC and the Vaccines Taskforce to fast-track the manufacturing

capability, we are ensuring that momentum will continue all the way from lab to patient.

The UK is at the forefront of international efforts to research and develop a vaccine. The government has already pledged £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the highest contribution of any country, and the UK is hosting the upcoming global pledging conference for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on 4 June. This is part of the UK committing £388 million to the international drive to develop vaccines, tests and treatments.

The announcement follows the government appointing leading figure in the life sciences sector Kate Bingham as chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce – the group set up by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Business Secretary to lead UK efforts to find and manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine.

Notes to Editors

1. Plans for the Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre have received a total public and private sector funding of £207 million, including today's new £131 million investment.
2. The Vaccines Taskforce is supported by an Expert Advisory Board, led by Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van Tam, to coordinate efforts to accelerate the development and manufacture of a COVID-19 vaccine.