

# News story: Pensions cold-calling banned

- unsolicited calls about your pension will become illegal this week
- companies that break the rules can face fines of up to £500,000

Companies that make unwanted, unsolicited phone calls to people about their pensions may face enforcement action, including fines of up to half a million pounds, from today (9 January).

Pensions fraud can be devastating, leaving victims without the means to fund their retirement. One of the most common methods used by scammers to commit pensions fraud is through cold calls, which is why the government has taken action. Research by the Money Advice Service suggests that there could be as many as 8 scam calls every second – [the equivalent of 250 million calls per year](#).

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Pension scammers are the lowest of the low. They rob savers of their hard-earned retirement and devastate lives. We know that cold-calling is the pension scammers' main tactic, which is why we've made them illegal.

If you receive an unwanted call from an unknown caller about your pension, get as much information you can and report it to the Information Commissioner's Office. I'd also urge all savers to seek independent advice if you're thinking about making an important financial decision.

[According to the FCA](#), pension scammers stole on average £91,000 per victim last year.

Guy Opperman, Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, said:

Pension scams are despicable crimes, fleecing people of the retirement they've earned by doing the right thing, working hard and saving for the future. Banning pensions cold-calling will protect people from these callous crooks and ensure fraudsters feel the full force of the law.

If you receive a cold call about your pension, get any information you can, such as the company name or phone number, and report it to the [Information Commissioner's Office via their website](#) or on 0303 123 1113.

If you think you have lost money to fraud, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or [via their website](#).

## Further information

The ban prohibits cold-calling in relation to pensions, except where:

- the caller is authorised by the FCA, or is the trustee or manager of an occupational or personal pension scheme, and
- the recipient of the call consents to calls, or has an existing relationship with the caller

Anyone looking for help on their pensions can [visit Pension Wise](#), a free and impartial service that helps you understand the options for your pension pot. As of 1 January 2019, Pension Wise is delivered by the new Single Financial Guidance Body.

The Information Commissioner's Office are also available for comment. You can contact them on 0303 123 9070 or [via their website](#).

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## [Outbreaks of Koi herpesvirus \(KHV\) disease in 2019](#)



KHV is a serious viral disease of fish and is a listed disease in the United Kingdom. It affects all varieties of common and ornamental carp species (*Cyprinus carpio*) and can result in large scale mortalities. Fish with KHV disease may show the following signs, especially when water temperatures are between 16 to 28 °C:

- necrotic (white or brown) patches on the gills
- rough patches on the skin and sloughing mucous
- sunken eyes

You must [contact the FHI](#) if you suspect an outbreak of KHV. This includes fish with the above signs, or deaths of carp or carp hybrids.

There is no risk to public health.

## Controls lifted

Sites with KHV disease must undergo a formal monitoring programme for the duration of the calendar year immediately following the outbreak. The FHI visit these sites to look for evidence of disease and to inspect compliance with the conditions of the statutory controls in place. The controls are removed if the disease doesn't reoccur during this period.

Some sites choose to cull and disinfect their stocks, rather than undergo monitoring.

Diseases controls lifted at:

- Gatwick Koi – The Forge, West Sussex – 8 Jan 2019
- Koi Water Garden – Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire – 14 Jan 2019
- Bannister House Fishery, Lancashire – 4 Aug 2017
- Boating Lake, Northamptonshire – 12 Oct 2017
- Church Lane Lake, Essex – 6 July 2018
- Newstead and Annesley Country Park, Nottingham – 6 July 2018
- Parkers Fishery Pools, West Midland – 6 July 2018
- Mawgan Porth Pools and Lake, Cornwall – 9 July 2018
- Mill Farm Fishery, Hereford – 13 July 2018
- Holme Grange Fishery, Berkshire – 19 July 2018
- Clear Water Fisheries, Lancashire – 24 July 2018
- Trench Pool, Shropshire – 24 July 2018
- Old Hough Fishery, Cheshire – 25 July 2018
- Woodside Fishery, Hereford & Worcester – 31 July 2018
- Coopers Arms, Derby – 1 August 2018
- K Lakes, Skegness – 2 August 2018
- Martham Pits, Norfolk – 3 August 2018
- Ashland Lakes, Buckinghamshire – 7 August 2018
- Shadwell Pool, Greater London – 8 August 2018
- Locklands Lake, Lincoln – 9 August 2018
- Acton Park Lake, Wrexham – 13 August 2018
- Canvey Lake, Essex – 14 August 2018
- Stoneham Lakes, Hampshire – 17 August 2018
- Lakewood Fisheries, Scunthorpe – 29 August 2018
- Middle Pool, Shropshire – 18 September 2018
- Gatton Waters, Norfolk – 28 September 2018
- Watmore Farm Fishery, Hampshire – 2 October 2018
- Orchard Lakes, Hampshire – 3 October 2018
- Broadlands Lake Complex, Hampshire – 5 October 2018
- Mescar Fishery – Liverpool, Merseyside – 22 July 2019
- Orsett Reservoir – Greys, Essex – 24 July 2019
- Ash Ponds – Martock, Somerset – 01 August 2019
- Theydon Bois Valley Lakes – Epping, Essex – 06 August
- Newt Pond – Haverhill, Suffolk – 08 August
- Alders Farm Fishery – Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire – 12 August
- Priors Carp Fisheries, Essex – 13 August
- Marley Pit, Staffordshire – 15 August
- JCB Lakes – Rocester, Staffordshire – 30 August

- Sivyers Lake, Middlesex – 13 September
- Froghall Fisheries, Louth, Lincolnshire – 16 September
- Bishops Bowl Fishery, Southam, Warwickshire – 18 September
- Harry's Fishery, Lancashire – 20 September
- Denne Farm, Horsham, West Sussex – 30 September
- Abingdon Pits, Abingdon, Oxfordshire – 16 October
- Stanborough Lakes, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire – 18 October
- Kippax Park, Leeds – 26 September 2018

## Further information

You can:

## Background

Koi herpesvirus disease (KHV) is a listed disease under [The Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009](#). KHV outbreaks have been subject to statutory controls in the UK since 2007. The UK maintains a surveillance programme for this disease.

When the FHI confirm an outbreak, they take steps to control and, wherever possible, remove the disease. This may involve movement controls on susceptible species in the affected area, enhanced biosecurity, culling of fish, and cleaning and disinfecting of the premises.

Once statutory controls are in place the site operators must write to the FHI to get permission to move live fish into, out of, or within the designated area, and to make material changes to the site or site activities. This also applies to fish eggs and gametes.

Published 8 January 2019

Last updated 12 February 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

### 1. 12 February 2021

Controls now lifted and the list has now been updated to show this.

### 2. 28 February 2020

Amendment made to the 'Disease controls have been applied at' list

### 3. 5 February 2020

Controls lifted – amended the webpage accordingly

### 4. 21 October 2019

A new outbreak listed

### 5. 16 October 2019

A new outbreak listed

6. 1 October 2019  
A new outbreak to publish
7. 20 September 2019  
List updated with a new disease outbreak.
8. 18 September 2019  
A new out break listed
9. 16 September 2019  
A new disease outbreak published
10. 13 September 2019  
Adding disease outbreak Sivyers Lake, Croysdale Avenue, Sunbury-On-Thames, Middlesex 13 September
11. 30 August 2019  
Added JCB Lakes – Rocester, Staffordshire – 30 August
12. 15 August 2019  
List updated with new confrimed disease outbreak.
13. 13 August 2019  
List updated with the confrimed outbreak at Priors carp fisheries.
14. 12 August 2019  
Added Alders Farm Fishery – Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire – 12 August
15. 8 August 2019  
Added Newt Pond, Haverhill, Suffolk
16. 6 August 2019  
Added Theydon Bois Valley Lakes, Essex
17. 2 August 2019  
Added Ash Ponds, Somerset
18. 26 July 2019  
Disease controls have been applied at Orsett Reservoir, Greys, Essex – 24 July
19. 24 July 2019

Added details of new outbreak: Mescar Fishery, Liverpool, Merseyside – 22 July

20. 27 March 2019

CD02/2019 now lifted following disinfection and fallow period

21. 25 March 2019

Included the controls lifted section on the main page.

22. 21 March 2019

CD01/2019 now lifted following a full disinfection of the site and Fallowing period

23. 14 January 2019

List updated with new outbreak.

24. 8 January 2019

First published.

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## [News story: New asylum accommodation contracts awarded](#)

The new Asylum Accommodation and Support Services Contracts (AASC), which were designed following engagement with local authorities, potential providers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have been awarded today, following an open and fair procurement exercise.

The new contracts offer a range of improvements, with a particular focus on assisting individuals through the asylum system. They will ensure that vulnerable asylum seekers have access to the support they need and set clear requirements on the standard and condition of accommodation.

Under the new contracts, providers will be required to have proactive maintenance plans, to make sure that they regularly inspect properties and report back to the Home Office on the findings of these inspections. When issues are identified, providers will be expected to resolve them within set timescales.

The Home Office formally awarded contracts to the following providers:

- Midlands and East of England: Serco
- North East, Yorkshire and Humberside: Mears Group

- North West: Serco
- Northern Ireland: Mears Group
- Scotland: Mears Group
- South: Clearsprings Ready Homes
- Wales: Clearsprings Ready Homes

Migrant Help have also been awarded the contract for the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility Assistance services (AIRE), which will be a single integrated and national service for asylum seekers.

The AIRE service will provide advice and guidance to service users on the asylum process, their rights and signposting different services.

It will also provide asylum seekers with a single point of contact, independent from the accommodation providers and the Home Office, to report issues.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it and these new contracts will make sure that asylum seekers are treated with dignity and respect in safe, secure and suitable accommodation.

They will deliver compassionate support through a new integrated service and make the asylum system more accessible and easier to navigate.

We consulted extensively with local authorities and NGOs to make sure that the contracts not only protect vulnerable asylum seekers but also deliver value for money for the taxpayer.

The contracts also require accommodation providers to develop and maintain close working relationships with local authorities, and include the need to consult and liaise with them on the location of properties in the area.

The AASC contracts, which will replace the existing COMPASS contracts, have an approximate value of £4 billion and are for 10 years.

The new contracts will commence in September 2019 and the Home Office will continue to work closely with the new providers, COMPASS providers and local authorities to ensure a smooth transition.

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**[Press release: Man sentenced for North](#)**

# East fish kill incident

Graham Simpson, 61, from Ellingham in Northumberland, appeared at Berwick Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 8 January, where he pleaded guilty to two separate offences of polluting a tributary of Long Nanny Burn.

He was fined £2,261 and ordered to pay costs and a victim surcharge amounting to £3,922.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Matthew Treece told the court that on 18 May 2017 Graham Simpson reported a spill of around 3,000 litres of liquid fertiliser from an overturned tractor mounted sprayer at Home Farm, Ellingham.

Environment Agency officers attended and found the fertiliser had gone into a tributary of the Long Nanny through two highway drains. Simpson had covered the drains with soil to try to stop the fertiliser entering.

However, water quality samples along Long Nanny found high levels of ammonia. Officers also saw thousands of dead fish, with the official mortality count at 2,110 caused by the increased levels of ammonia in the water.

## **Stream affected for four days**

The elevated levels of ammonia lasted 24 hours over a length of almost 10km from the source at Ellingham to the confluence with the North Sea, and affected the watercourse for four days. Dye tracing confirmed the source of the pollution.

In interview Mr Simpson said he had hit the steps of one of the farm buildings which overturned the sprayer and spilled the fertiliser, which travelled down the road and into the drains. He believed a malfunctioning rear axle may have caused the issue, but the sprayer was not adequately checked before he started the work. He took immediate action to block the highway drains with soil and apply sawdust to the road surface to absorb the spill.

In a second incident, on 29 September the same year, the Environment Agency received an anonymous report of a fuel spill in the same area, again affecting the tributary of the Long Nanny. Investigations revealed kerosene was polluting the stream.

In interview Simpson said he was transporting a fuel storage container with kerosene heating fuel oil inside, to top up his home heating system. The tank was unsecured on top of a pallet which was on a fork lift truck, and when he turned a corner the tank slipped off the pallet in to the ground causing the spill. He had put down absorbent straw pellets to reduce the impact of the spill but the oil had already entered the stream. He was remorseful about both incidents. He now carries drain mats which are designed to temporarily seal drains.

## **Serious pollution incident**

Laura Mollon, Water Quality Lead for the Environment Agency in the North East, led the investigation. She said:

The first incident was a serious pollution incident which affected 10km of stream and killed thousands of fish, including more than 60 critically endangered eels.

The watercourse had not even started recovering when the second incident happened, which again polluted the stream, this time with oil.

This shows why it's so important that landowners and farmers check their equipment thoroughly before starting any work on their land and take great care when transporting and spraying substances.

Pollution incidents such as this, caused by negligent or reckless breaches of environmental permits, have a serious negative impact on our environment and are something we work hard to prevent.

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## **[News story: Trustees Reappointed at the British Library](#)**

### **Tracy Chevalier**

Tracy Chevalier FRSL is the author of ten novels. She is best known for the international bestseller *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which has been translated into 39 languages, sold over 5 million copies worldwide, and made into a film. Her most recent books are the historical novel *At the Edge of the Orchard*, and *New Boy*, a retelling of *Othello* for the Shakespeare Project. Her new novel, *A Single Thread*, will be published in 2019. She is President of the Royal Literary Fund, a Trustee of the British Library, former Chair of the Society of Authors and of the Public Lending Right Advisory Committee, and holds honorary degrees from her alma maters, Oberlin College and the University of East Anglia. She grew up in Washington DC and in 1984 moved to London, where she lives with her husband and son.

### **Dr. Simon Thurley**

Dr. Simon Thurley is a leading historian, curator and heritage expert. Between 2003 and 2015 he was chief executive of English Heritage. Previously he ran the Museum of London and before that was Curator of the Historic Royal

Palaces. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research and Visiting Professor of the Built Environment at Gresham College. His books include *The Building of England*, *Men from the Ministry*, *Houses of Power* and *Whitehall Palace*. He holds several non-executive posts including being a member of the shadow board for the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. In 2012 was awarded a CBE for services to heritage.

This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Tracy and Simon have declared no such activity.