

Press release: Waste company fined for permit breaches

A north east waste management company has been fined thousands of pounds for breaching environmental laws leading to a fly infestation which blighted the local community.

Niramax Group Limited appeared at Teesside Crown Court on Monday 15 January where it pleaded guilty to breaching its environmental permit, leading to a fly infestation at its site at Monument Park, Washington.

It also pleaded guilty to failing to comply with an enforcement notice by not removing waste as required at its site at Tofts Farm in Hartlepool after large amounts of waste tyres created a potential fire hazard.

The prosecution follows an investigation by the Environment Agency. They were fined a total of £16,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

Flies on the waste at the Washington site

Fly infestation

Lee Fish, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that at the Washington site a pre-arranged audit took place on 2 April 2015 where Environment Agency officers discovered a fly infestation.

Two of the bay doors to the waste shed were not operating satisfactorily which caused problems with pest control measures. Waste was not sufficiently divided between the four bays.

A second visit on 9 April saw the flies still present both outside and inside the waste storage shed. Efforts had been made to empty the waste from the bays. A visit on 12 April saw the site and issues had been cleared.

During the investigation Environment Agency officers spoke with neighbouring businesses and residents which confirmed the impact of the infestation.

Excessive tyre storage

At Hartlepool, where Niramax treats waste tyres, the Environment Agency originally attended the site in June 2015 after receiving complaints about dust.

On 28 July an Action Plan was signed by the operator to resolve a number of permit breaches, which included a dust management plan. And the large amounts of waste tyres on site were to be stored within bays in accordance with permit conditions and fire prevention guidance.

The operator agreed to return the site to compliance by 30 November 2015.

In February 2016, Environment Agency officers attended the site to assess its compliance with its permit. It was noted the site was still operating as it was in June the previous year and the bays were still buried under piles of waste tyres.

An enforcement notice was served on the company to clear the site of tyres by 14 June, 2016. On 15 June the Environment Agency visited the site, and while the amount of shredded tyre waste had reduced permit breaches were still evident – waste was not contained in the bays and no fire breaks were noted.

The bays were capable of storing 1490.4m³ and the contents were measured to be 2461.71m³.

Piles of waste tyres at the Hartlepool site.

'Negative impact on local areas'

The company told the court that they had been caught out by an unseasonably sharp rise in temperature. This meant their fly suppression methods proved inadequate.

At the tyre site they suffered when a fluctuation in the market made it more difficult to remove the shredded tyres from the site. They said they had done everything in their power to comply with the enforcement notice.

Rachael Caldwell, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency in the north east, said:

Environmental laws exist for a reason – to protect the environment and communities – so it is vital that waste operators meet the conditions of their permits.

In both of these cases there was a negative impact on the local areas, which is extremely unpleasant and unacceptable and not something communities should have to endure.

We always treat operators fairly and ensure they understand the potential impact their activities can have, and work together with them to help bring sites into compliance.

At Hartlepool we gave Niramax ample opportunity to bring their site back into compliance, and at Washington we gave them five days to act on what was a serious fly infestation.

But they repeatedly showed little regard for the detrimental impact on their neighbours and the environment. And during our investigation they even described our actions – to protect the environment and the community – as 'nit picking'.

I hope this case reassures our communities that we will do everything possible to ensure operators comply with their permit, and take enforcement action when they don't.

Press release: London teen has sentence increased for park rape



Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP

A 16 year old boy has had his sentence increased after Attorney General Jeremy Wright QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

The teenager from South East London, who cannot be named due to his age, was originally sentenced to 6 years in a detention centre last October at Woolwich Crown Court. The Court has increased the sentence to a 12 year extended sentence comprising of 6 years detention and a 6 year extended licence.

On 19 April 2017 the offender approached the 46 year old victim who was walking through Sutcliffe Park in Eltham. He showed her a knife that was concealed in his waistband and told her to 'walk normal'. He threatened to stab her in the face if she tried to run away.

After leading the victim to some bushes, he instructed her to remove the lower part of her clothing and he raped her. After the attack, the victim tried to run away but the offender caught up with her and grabbed her bag. There was a struggle over the bag before the offender managed to run away and the victim was able to call for help.

Speaking after the hearing, the Attorney General said:

This attack left the victim fearing for her life. The original sentence failed to take proper account of the seriousness of the offence and the danger this young man poses to the public. I am pleased the Court has now seen fit to increase his sentence, and I hope it can bring some comfort to the victim and her family.

Press release: £29 million extra to boost councils' support for vulnerable children

Councils in England will receive an additional £29 million to boost their support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and care leavers, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid confirmed today (16 January 2018).

Today's funding builds on the work government is already doing through its [safeguarding strategy](#) to address the specific challenges faced by some of the most vulnerable children in society, and the professionals who care for them.

This funding will enable some councils to step up their support by providing homes for asylum seeking children that are currently resident in other local authorities that are operating at full capacity.

It will also allow councils to reduce local resource pressures to the benefit of their wider communities.

Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

We have a proud history of hosting, supporting and protecting those in need, including some of the most vulnerable children. This new funding will enable more councils across England to provide support to those children who need a place to call home.

The funds will also bring a range of benefits to the whole community by increasing the number of foster carers available and reducing pressures on existing services.

We are grateful to councils who continue to provide care and support to vulnerable children, and it's encouraging to hear of the enthusiasm among councils in welcoming more children to their areas, especially where they haven't had an opportunity to do so previously.

Today's announcement of £29 million will increase capacity to support asylum-seeking children and builds upon government's existing projects around refugees and migration, including:

- The £100 million Controlling Migration Fund to alleviate pressures on local services such as housing, education and health services resulting from recent migration. Many of the projects funded also support migrants to integrate into their communities, for example by providing English language classes. £16 million from the Controlling Migration Fund is included in the total announced today.
- We increased the funding we provide to local authorities by 20% for unaccompanied asylum seeking children under 16, and by 28% for unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged 16 or 17. We also increased the funding we provide for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children who go on to attract leaving care support by 33%.

Case studies

Shropshire

Shropshire will use £170,000 of funding to welcome more children into the area, in part to reduce pressures on neighbouring local authorities. Council leaders are developing specialist support to achieve this, including training for foster carers and expanding English language teaching across the county. In 2016 to 2017 the county supported 14 unaccompanied asylum seeking children, with an ambition to welcome an additional 42 children in the coming months.

North Yorkshire

A groundbreaking new approach to welcoming asylum-seeking children in North Yorkshire will provide young people with a chance to integrate fully with their communities through an intensive 12 week programme involving introductions to the region and British culture, fast tracked English language lessons and peer mentoring.

Devon

Devon will use £145,000 to support community volunteers and local residents who want to help welcome child refugees to their communities

Croydon

Croydon propose specialist training and support for over 360 existing foster carers to help them understand cultural barriers and to promote the integration of vulnerable children into British society.

The government is currently conducting a review of the funding arrangements for England's 4,560 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in partnership with local authorities.

Further information

The Controlling Migration Fund is designed to support local areas facing pressures linked to recent immigration.

See further details of the successful bids for funding being announced today in the [Controlling Migration Fund unaccompanied asylum seeking children successful bids table](#) (PDF, 106KB, 6 pages)

See further information on the additional funding allocation to help local authorities build their capacity to care for these vulnerable children in the [UASC additional funding allocations table](#) (PDF, 55.8KB, 6 pages)

The £28.9 million announced today includes £19 million announced by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid in the House of Commons on 19 December 2017.

£9 million has been allocated today towards specific projects from the Controlling Migration Fund, the additional £20 million will be shared between all local authorities currently supporting more than 10 asylum seeking children.

This government believes we must do more to make sure nobody is excluded and everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Bringing the country even closer together is a shared responsibility. For its part government is fully committed to helping people in more isolated communities to engage with the wider world, help new arrivals to this country to learn about and respect British culture and values and help more people to learn English. We will be bringing forward our strategy to further strengthen community integration shortly.

The [National Transfer Scheme](#) was launched in July 2016 to ensure a fairer allocation of unaccompanied asylum seeking children across the UK. A significant number of local authorities from all regions in England have participated in the scheme so far. As a result the National Transfer Scheme has successfully transferred a large number of children away from local authorities with a disproportionate number of unaccompanied children in their care.

The next wave of allocations from the [Controlling Migration Fund](#) will be announced in the coming months.

Local authorities who look after unaccompanied asylum seeking children receive £41,610 a year for under 16 years old, and £33,215 a year for those aged 16 and 17. We also provide local authorities with £200 per week for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children who go on to leaving care leavers support.

[Press release: Girls' education to be central pillar of UK foreign, development and defence policy](#)

Championing girls' education to promote global stability will be at the heart of UK foreign, development and defence policy to positively transform the lives of women and girls in conflict settings, senior ministers have agreed.

At an event today (16 January) at the Foreign Office, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, Minister of State for the FCO and the PM's Special representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon and Defence Minister Mark Lancaster will launch the UK's fourth National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security. The plan sets out how the UK will support women in conflict zones around the world to play an active role in ensuring peace and security in their communities.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt said:

From Somalia to Syria, and from Burma and Afghanistan, women have been instrumental in the development of the UK's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

It's a sad truth that women suffer disproportionately all around the world during times of crisis. It's essential to harness the huge potential of the next generation to work towards a more secure, more prosperous future. We know that women can be agents of change which is why DFID is placing women at the very heart of its peace, security, education, and humanitarian programmes.

Minister of State for the FCO and the PM's Special representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Conflict affects whole communities, but women and children are often the worst affected.

This year the Foreign Secretary and I will focus on ensuring that girls in the poorest countries in the world receive at least 12 years of quality education because this is the single most powerful spur to development and progress.

Without question women must have a seat at the table. We know that when women and girls participate in political processes, conflict

resolution and mediation their contribution helps to build a more sustainable peace.

Defence Minister, Mark Lancaster said:

Protecting human rights goes to the very heart of who we are as a nation, and our Armed Forces are leaders in this on an international level.

Our National Action Plan sets out to create a better future for women across the globe: in which there is zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, and in which women and men make a full contribution to the peace and security of all.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict and crisis and they are part of the solution. For example, evidence shows that when women participate meaningfully in peace agreements they are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.

This NAP sets a bold new direction, putting women and girls at the heart of Britain's work to prevent and resolve conflict for the next five years.

Three new countries have been added to the plan Nigeria, South Sudan, Iraq in addition to DRC, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Burma and Afghanistan. The NAP sets out that to build sustainable and lasting peace and create stable societies, women around the world must be able to participate in peace processes and peacekeeping missions.

Read the nap [here](#)

Notes to Editors:

- The NAP will focus on seven strategic outcomes where the UK can really make a difference (decision making; peacekeeping; gender-based violence; humanitarian response; security and justice; preventing and countering violence extremism; and UK capabilities) which are linked to the four pillars of Women, Peace and Security (prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery).
- The NAP is part of HMG's wider efforts on gender equality, which includes investing in teachers to provide quality education – making sure that children aren't just in school but are learning the foundational skills they need for work and life.
- The Ministry of Defence has been training and mentoring thousands of African, Kurdish and Iraqi forces on combatting sexual violence in conflict situations.

- Through the NAP the UK will tackle violence against women and girls, and will ensure security and justice actors are held accountable to all the populations they serve including women. The UK support is also helping to drive up women's political participation in some of the most challenging contexts across the world.
- As part of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, DFID's work is designed to meet the needs of women and girls and insist partners engage with women at all stages of design and delivery.
- UK aid for the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh for example is helping provide: access to female bathing cubicles and sanitary items for more than 35,000 girls and women; counselling and psychological support for over 10,000 women suffering from the trauma of war and over 2,000 survivors of sexual violence; and medical help for over 50,000 pregnant women to give birth safely.

[Press release: Appointments to the Board of the Environment Agency](#)

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove, has appointed Judith Batchelar OBE, Robert Gould, John Lelliott OBE and Caroline Mason CBE for first terms to the Board of the Environment Agency. He has also reappointed Lynne Frostick and Gill Weeks OBE for second terms to the Board.

Robert Gould's and John Lelliott's appointments will run from 1 February 2018 until 31 January 2021. Judith Batchelar and Caroline Mason's appointments will run from 1 April 2018 until 31 March 2021. Gill Weeks and Lynne Frostick's reappointments run from 8 September 2017 until 7 September 2020 and 6 March 2018 until 15 March 2021 respectively.

Secretary of State Michael Gove said:

I am delighted to welcome John, Robert, Caroline and Judith. They will bring a strong and broad mix of skills and experience to the Environment Agency.

I am also thrilled that Gill and Lynne will be continuing to help us with meeting the challenges ahead.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

I am looking forward to working with John, Robert, Caroline and Judith on some of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. It was a highly competitive selection process and they will each bring a broad range of experience and expertise to the Environment Agency.

All appointments to the Environment Agency Board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointments comply with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the Environment Agency's executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

The Environment Agency is a Non-Departmental Public Body set up under the Environment Act 1995 to take an integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement in England. It has major responsibilities in flood management, water resources and quality, climate change, land quality, chemicals, pollution prevention and control, waste, conservation and biodiversity, fisheries conservation, air quality and navigation.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. All the appointees have confirmed that they have not undertaken any significant political activity during the past 5 years apart from Robert Gould, who is a member of West Dorset District Council and a former leader of both Dorset County Council and West Dorset District Council.

Environment Agency Board members receive remuneration of £350 per day. Judith Batchelar, Robert Gould, John Lelliott and Caroline Mason will each receive £16,800 per year based on a time commitment of four days per month. Gill Weeks will receive £21,000 per year based on a time commitment of five days per month. Lynne Frostick will receive £25,200 per year based on a time commitment of six days per month.

Biographical details

Judith Batchelar OBE

Judith Batchelar is Director of Sainsbury's Brand, Corporate Responsibility and Public Affairs at J Sainsbury plc, where she has worked since 2004. She previously worked for Safeway, Marks and Spencer, Mars Confectionary and Bass plc. Judith is also a Co-Chair of the Agri-food Technology Leadership Council, an Industrial Governor of the British Nutrition Foundation and an Ambassador for the Woodland Trust. Judith was appointed OBE in 2015 for services to farming and the food industry.

Lynne Frostick

Professor Lynne Frostick is both a chartered geologist and a geographer with an academic background in environmental science. She was Professor of

Physical Geography at Hull University from 1996 to 2014 and is now Professor Emerita. She has published over 100 papers and books on environmental physics, modelling and hydraulic engineering. She was the first female Honorary Secretary (1988 – 1991) and second female President (2008-10) of the Geological Society of London. She was a member of the North East Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (1997 – 2006) and a leading member of the 2007 independent Hull Flood Review Group. In 2009, she was named both Yorkshire's environmental champion and Woman of Outstanding Achievement for leadership in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). She chaired the Government's Expert Group for Women in STEM for 8 years and sat on the Athena Swan committee based in the Royal Society. She has been awarded an honorary DSc by both Royal Holloway University, London and the University of Hull. Lynne joined the Board of the Environment Agency in 2015.

Robert Gould

Robert Gould was Leader of Dorset County Council from 2014 to 2017 and a member from 2009 to 2017. He has been a member of West Dorset District Council since 2004 and was Leader from 2004 to 2014. Robert was a member of the Local Government Association's Improvement and Innovation Board from 2015 to 2017. He previously managed the family farm after working in industry and property management.

John Lelliott OBE

John Lelliott retired as Chief Financial Officer of the Crown Estate in 2016. He is currently a Board Member of the Covent Garden Market Authority where he chairs the Audit and Risk Committee. He is also Chair of the Natural Capital Coalition and Non-Executive Director of the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospital Foundation Trust where he chairs the finance committee and is a member of the audit committee. John was appointed OBE in 2017 for services to the Crown Estate and the voluntary sector.

Caroline Mason CBE

Caroline Mason is Chief Executive of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, one of the UK's largest independent grant-making foundations. She was previously Chief Operating Officer of Big Society Capital and Chief Operating Officer of Charity Bank. Before that she was co-founder and COO of Investing for Good, an enterprise offering social investment advice. Caroline is also a Board Member of the European Venture Philanthropy Association. Caroline was appointed CBE in 2013 for services to social investment.

Gill Weeks OBE

Gill Weeks is an industry expert within the field of waste and resource management. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management and a Chartered Environmentalist. Gill joined the Board of the Environment Agency in 2014. She currently chairs the Environment and Business Committee and is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee. Gill is also the Board lead on waste and industrial processes. From 2006 to 2013 Gill was Regulatory

Affairs Director at Veolia Environmental Services and was acting Policy Director at Environmental Services Association 2010-11. Gill was appointed OBE in 2011 for services to the waste management sector.