

News story: Level 4 & 5 technical education to be reviewed

The Department for Education has today (31 October) confirmed its intention to conduct a review into higher level technical education.

The review will look across Level 4 & 5 education, focusing on how technical qualifications at this level can better address the needs of learners and employers.

This includes ensuring that learners can progress from the government's new T Levels, and other full time education, into the workplace. It will also consider how these qualifications work for those in the workforce looking to upskill or retrain.

Employers, providers, learners, and others with expertise in this area will all feed into the review, which is part of the Government's commitment to support routes to higher-earning technical roles and address the skills needs of the economy.

It follows the recent announcement of the first T level subjects that will be taught from 2020.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

High quality technical education helps young people and adults get into new, fulfilling and better paid careers. That's good for them and good for our economy. This is the way we build a better, higher skilled workforce.

We are already taking steps to improve technical education with investment in apprenticeships and the creation of T levels. This review is the next logical step in that process.

Further Information

This review builds on the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#), the recommendations of the Sainsbury Panel, and will be shaped by the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 and Higher Education Research Act 2017.

The review covers the whole of Level 4 and 5 education, with a particular focus on technical qualifications.

Stakeholders can engage with us by contacting Level4-5.Team@education.gov.uk

Level 4 qualifications are:

- certificate of higher education (CertHE)

- higher national certificate (HNC)
- level 4 award
- level 4 certificate
- level 4 diploma
- level 4 NVQ

Level 5 qualifications are:

- diploma of higher education (DipHE)
- foundation degree
- higher national diploma (HND)
- level 5 award
- level 5 certificate
- level 5 diploma
- level 5 NVQ

[News story: Changes to the trade mark search tool](#)

Through our commitment to continuous improvement, we've made a few additional enhancements.

Earlier this year, as part of ongoing work to our digital services, we implemented changes to our online trade mark search service. The functionality of the three search options stayed the same, but their look and style was changed, especially to the search by word, phrase and or/ image. We introduced tabs to categorise details with the option to also 'display content without tabs'.

Your feedback informed us that having the search pages default to the tab based layout, resulted in not enough information being shown. This added additional clicks to the user journey meaning it took longer to find information.

To rectify this, if you choose to 'display content without tabs', your browser will now remember your choice on your next visit. You can also revert back to 'displaying content with tabs' at any time. Additionally, we have made the following changes:

- selecting 'Open all' will expand all the case classes and terms – your browser will remember your choice on your next visit
- you will now have the ability to copy and paste the trade mark logo / text if you choose to 'display content without tabs'

- when displaying content without tabs, series marks are displayed vertically on a single page
- selecting 'New search' from the trade mark case details page will now return you to the 'Search for a trade mark' start page, enabling you to select a different search method.
- when you start a new search from the 'Search for a trade mark' start page your browser will now clear all the terms you entered for a previous search

We would welcome your [feedback](#)

Press release: Natural flood management – part of the nation's flood resilience

The Environment Agency has today (31 October) published data, case studies and evidence about the role of natural flood management in reducing flood risk. Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk is not a new concept but this is the first time that all the evidence has been brought together, with the intention of enabling more uptake.

'The evidence behind natural flood management' contains more than 60 case studies from across England and explores how successful the approach is, how it could be used elsewhere and what research may still be needed.

Natural flood management is when natural processes are used to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Examples include: restoring bends in rivers, changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water and creating saltmarshes on the coast to absorb wave energy.

At Hesketh, on the Lancashire coast, a 'managed realignment' scheme has created more than 300 hectares of saltmarsh which protects 143 residential properties, 3 commercial buildings and 300 hectares of farm land. Coastal schemes such as this not only dissipate wave and tidal energy but can also reduce impact on defences, reduce tidal surges and lead to slightly lower water levels at defences.

The study includes a project in Debenham, Suffolk, where modelling has shown that installing a range of natural flood management features along the River Deben could provide more than 30,000 m³ of water storage – thereby reducing annual average damages to properties and farmland by 31%.

On Lustrum Beck, in Stockton-on-Tees, modelling showed that providing 100,000 m³ of storage in the upstream catchment, using wetlands, features to reduce run-off and river restoration, could reduce flows by more than 10%.

John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood & Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency, said:

I often think improving flood resilience is like a mosaic, many different pieces need to come together to complete the resilience picture. Natural flood management is an important part of that mosaic when used alongside more traditional engineering. These projects also provide fantastic opportunities for community involvement and leadership.

Many of our flood schemes already feature a mixture of hard and soft engineering and natural flood management. It can be a cost-effective and sustainable way to manage flood risk alongside traditional engineering, while creating habitat for wildlife and helping regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

Natural flood management works best when a 'catchment based approach' is taken, where a plan is developed to manage the flow of water along the whole length of a river catchment from its source to sea. This way, natural processes can be used upstream and on the coast to compliment engineered flood defences – such as walls and weirs – in populated areas.

Natural flood management not only reduces flood risk it can also achieve multiple benefits for people and wildlife, helping restore habitats, improve water quality and helping make catchments more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The Environment Agency hopes that the evidence directory will help flood risk managers, local authority engineers, non-governmental organisations and community flood action groups to incorporate natural approaches to flood risk management in to their plans to reduce flood risk.

Earlier this year the government announced [a further £15m](#) for natural flood management schemes across England.

'The evidence behind natural flood management' was launched at the CIWEM (Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management) Conference in London.

News story: The VMD Customer Satisfaction Survey 2017/18: Improving our service to you

On 30 October 2017 the VMD launched its customer satisfaction web survey for 2017/18. If you work for, or on behalf of, Marketing Authorisation holders and holders of Manufacturing, Wholesaler Dealer, Autogenous Vaccine, Blood Bank, Equine Stem Cell and Overseas Manufacturing Authorisations you are invited to complete this survey.

The deadline for completion of the survey is Friday 17 November 2017.

We would welcome returns from any individual in your company who regularly deals with the VMD. Seeking feedback from those people who use the Regulatory services of the VMD is something extremely important to us. We are very keen to understand better how well we meet your needs; what we do well and where we could improve. In this way both VMD and you as stakeholders, can be confident that we are striving to continuously improve our service in line with your needs and expectations.

Mo Gannon & Associates Ltd, an independent market consultancy which specialises in agriculture and animal health, is carrying out this survey on our behalf. Mo Gannon has been involved in the previous surveys so can compare and contrast the findings with those from previous years to help us collect evidence for the areas where we have improved in response to previous feedback and also where further improvement or remedial action may still be needed.

Anonymity is guaranteed so that no individual or company will be identified against any statement. However, the VMD will be informed of how many individuals from each particular company have completed the survey. Once Mo Gannon & Associates Ltd has closed the web survey and analysed the responses, they may make a request to those of you who agreed to further contact, to add clarity to your responses. The VMD will not be involved, and the feedback given to the VMD will be anonymous.

Ultimately, we will use the findings from the survey and any follow up discussions to improve the services we provide. We will also make the results of the survey and any planned improvements available to you.

A link to the [news item](#) with a summary of the results from the previous survey and the associated action plan is included for information.

If you have not received an email with a link to the survey, or have any questions about any aspect of the survey, please contact David Lewsey in our Business Support team on 01932 338332 or by email d.lewsey@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk.

[Press release: Jail and suspended sentences for permit breaches that led to fire](#)

Corporate officers working for Nottinghamshire Recycling Limited (NRL) and 2 who worked for Park Farming Limited (PFL) have been sentenced today (Monday 30 October 2017) in Sheffield Crown Court after breaching environmental permits at 3 sites in Worksop, Nottinghamshire, and Kiveton and South Anston in South Yorkshire.

The environmental offences committed helped maximise the companies' financial gain at the expense of the environment, and led to a series of fires on 1 of NRL's sites at Shireoaks Road in Worksop in 2013 and 2014.

Repeat offenders

All 3 sites were operated illegally despite the fact that NRL had previously been convicted in 2011 for offences it had committed at Shireoaks Road.

Kevin Malcom Burgess of Manton Forest Farm, Worksop, Warren Richard Steele of Drury Lane, Doncaster, David Vincent Berry of Orchard Court, South Normanton, Edward Charles Freeman of Stephen Hill, Sheffield, Martin Crowther of Chapel Rise, Anston, Sheffield and Peter Charles Sanderson of Peak Close, Bramley, Rotherham, were sentenced on Monday 30 October 2017 at Sheffield Crown Court.

Defendants linked to NRL continued to act illegally after the company had previously been convicted in 2011. Documents discovered during the course of the Environment Agency's investigation clearly demonstrated that company officers were fully aware that the sites were being operated illegally.

Risk to human health

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Chris Badger told the court that NRL and PFL repeatedly operated outside the terms of their environmental permits for financial gain. He added that NRL officers created significant risk to the environment and harm to human health. Among other permit breaches, waste was stored in huge quantities outside of the businesses' permitted areas. Waste was blended at both the Worksop and Kiveton site in an attempt to avoid higher rates of landfill tax.

The company paid no heed to repeated warnings about the illegal storage of waste at all 3 sites, and the fire risks at Worksop. The defendants' conduct resulted in 5 fires at NRL's Worksop site during 2013 and 2014.

Large stockpiles of various waste deposited illegally by the companies at the

3 sites still remain and continue to have an environmental impact. Both NRL and PFL entered administration during the period of the investigation. They have since gone into liquidation.

'Deliberate', 'negligent' and 'reckless'

His Honour Judge Robert Moore said that the conduct of four of the companies' directors in breaking the law had been deliberate, while a fifth had acted negligently. The actions of a site manager were judged to have been reckless in aiding and abetting the offending that took place at Kiveton and South Anston.

In mitigation, the judge noted that all defendants had pleaded guilty to the charges that they faced and applied an appropriate reduction to their sentences. He also commented that the defendants had not made personal financial gain as a result of the offences. All 6 defendants were of previous good character.

The sentences imposed by the judge were as follows:

1. Kevin Burgess – 21 months' immediate custodial sentence. Disqualification from being a director for 7 years.
2. Edward Freeman – 8 months' custody suspended for 2 years with a requirement to perform 150 hours of unpaid work. Contribution towards prosecution costs of £5,000.
3. Warren Steele – 6 months' custody suspended for 2 years with a requirement to perform 100 hours of unpaid work. Contribution towards prosecution costs of £5,000.
4. Peter Sanderson – 8 months' custody suspended for 2 years with a requirement to perform 150 hours of unpaid work. Contribution towards prosecution costs of £5,000.
5. Martin Crowther – 12-month community order with a requirement to perform 80 hours of unpaid work. Contribution towards prosecution costs of £1,500.
6. David Berry – 12-month community order with a requirement to perform 100 hours of unpaid work. Contribution towards prosecution costs of £5,000.

Commenting after the hearing, Environment Agency Waste Regulatory Specialist Iain Regan said:

This was a large and complex investigation, and one in which Nottinghamshire Recycling Limited at various stages deliberately attempted to mislead us as the regulator. Companies like NRL distort the waste market by unfairly undercutting legitimate waste businesses, making it difficult for compliant firms to compete. This causes erosion of the legal waste sector and standards, resulting in an industry which is vulnerable to domination by illegal operators who have no concern for protecting the public or the environment.

We hope this case assures the legitimate waste industry and the

public that we will investigate businesses who deliberately or recklessly flout the law, and that the sentences passed today send a clear message that behaviour as exhibited by NRL, PFL and their management is unacceptable. □

The EA has brought this case to a successful outcome by dedicated hard work and professionalism.

Offences

1. Operating a regulated facility except under and in accordance with an environmental permit, contrary to Regulations 38(1)(a) and 41(1) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 – Kevin Burgess, Warren Steele, David Berry, Edward Freeman and Peter Sanderson. Worksop offence.
2. Keeping controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health, contrary to Sections 33(1)(c), 33(6) and 157 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Kevin Burgess, Warren Steele, David Berry and Edward Freeman. Worksop offence.
3. Operating a regulated facility except under and in accordance with an environmental permit, contrary to Regulations 38(1)(a) and 41(1) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 – Kevin Burgess, Warren Steele, David Berry and Edward Freeman. Martin Crowther, at the same place and time, did aid, abet, counsel and procure those persons to commit the said offence. Kiveton offence.
4. Operating a regulated facility except under and in accordance with an environmental permit, contrary to Regulations 38(1)(a) and 41(1) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 – Kevin Burgess. Martin Crowther, at the same place and time, did aid abet, counsel and procure Kevin Burgess to commit the said offence. South Anston offence.