

## [The system for school place planning is broken – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Minister,**

commenting on the expected rise in families not getting their first choice of school on secondary school offer day, said:

“The system for school place planning is broken.

“The Tories’ unjustified fixation with Free Schools means new schools are opening in areas which do not need them and just last week the NAO reported that the Government are not doing enough to ensure all parents can exercise choice when selecting the right school for their children.

“The Tories need to sort this mess out instead of obsessing over a handful of new grammar schools which will only help a minority of children.”

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## [News story: Introduction of Insolvency Rules 2016](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016 will be introduced on 6 April 2017.

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## [News story: Basic Payment Scheme 2017 opens for applications](#)

The 2017 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) is now open for applications, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) announced today (1 March 2017).

By applying online through the [Rural Payments service](#), farmers and agents can now quickly check and update existing personal and business details, as well

as view and transfer land and entitlements.

RPA Interim Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

Last year a record 80% of applications were received online and we hope to increase this figure for 2017.

Help and support in applying for BPS is available every step of the way through our online guidance or at the end of the phone.

## **Apply now**

From today, farmers and agents can complete their declarations and confirm all information before submitting their completed application online.

Anyone who applied online for the Basic Payment Scheme in 2016 will be emailed all they need to apply online for BPS in 2017. Those who did not apply online in 2016 and did not use an agent will soon be sent a paper form and guidance on how to apply online.

## **Support available from the RPA**

Further support is available from RPA this year through useful 'How to' videos. Farmers and agents can find step-by-step guides on transferring land, transferring entitlements and a general overview of how to apply online.

[BPS 2017 video](#)

The application deadline for BPS 2017 is midnight on 15 May 2017.

Further guidance and scheme rules can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

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## **[People across Wales could benefit from change to care home charging](#)**

The Welsh Government's five year plan, 'Taking Wales Forward', committed to more than doubling the capital limit used in charging for residential social care, from £24,000 to £50,000. If the regulations presented are passed by the Assembly, the limit will move to £30,000 from 10th April this year – increasing in phases up to £50,000 thereafter.

Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans, is today encouraging individuals who may benefit from the change, or their families, to contact their local authority.

Rebecca Evans said:

“People who need residential care and who have capital over a certain amount are required to use this to pay for the full cost of their stay.

“This Government is committed to supporting older people, and those requiring care, which is why our five year plan ‘Taking Wales Forward’, pledged to significantly increase this capital limit. This frees up more of people’s money for them to use as they wish.

“From 10th April people who require residential care and have capital up to the new amount of £30,000, will not have to use this to pay for their care. Instead their local authority will be responsible for funding their care, only charging a contribution based on a person’s available income.

“As people who pay for the full cost of their residential care usually have private arrangements in place with their care home, local authorities will often be unaware of how much capital individuals have. I am therefore encouraging anybody who thinks they, or a family member, may benefit from the change to contact their local authority.

“People do not need to wait until the 10th April to do this. Individuals can contact their local authority now, to check whether they might benefit and prepare everything ready for the change in April.”

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## **[Press release: Environment Agency unveils new paintings to promote fishing](#)**

The Environment Agency has unveiled three paintings by top wildlife artist David Miller to promote angling. The images front the 2017/18 fishing licences which go on sale today (1 March). The three fishing licence designs depict salmon (*Salmo salar*), mirror carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) in their natural habitats.

You can see the images, and download posters here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rod-fishing-licence-campaign>

The Environment Agency has also launched “Get a Fishing Licence” on GOV.UK to

simplify the process of buying a fishing licence:

[www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence](http://www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence). This is part of a series of improvements to the service, which include:

- Free licences for junior anglers, up to the age of 17, announced in November 2016
- The fishing licence now lasts for 12 months from the day it is bought, rather than expiring at the end of March each year
- The use of three rods now needs just one licence, rather than two.

People are required to buy a fishing licence in order to fish legally in England, Wales and along the Border Esk in Scotland. Sales of licences for the 2015/16 season raised [£21 million](#). The money was used to restock rivers with 452,220 coarse fish, encourage over 35,000 people to try angling for the first time and bring 2,043 successful prosecutions against crimes like poaching.

Artist David Miller said:

I'm delighted to have provided the images for the fishing licences again this year, not only because it gave me the opportunity to paint three species for the first time but also because all the money raised goes back into supporting fisheries. Of the three I was particularly pleased with the brown trout, my favourite UK game fish, and one I love to fish for on small rivers and streams.

Judy Proctor, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

We hope David's stunning images encourage people to give fishing a go. Angling creates over 37,000 full time jobs and generates over £1 billion for the UK economy, but at its heart it's a much loved outdoor sport connecting people with nature. We've listened to anglers' concerns and improved the fishing licence to make the process of getting out and fishing legally simpler.

People who don't buy a fishing licence are not only cheating other anglers and the future of the sport but running the risk of criminal conviction and a fine. The Environment Agency urges anyone to report fisheries crime as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For those who can't access the internet, fishing licences can still be bought by phoning 0344 800 5386 or over the counter in the Post Office.

ENDS

Notes:

The Environment Agency publishes a detailed breakdown of how fishing licence money is spent in the annual fisheries report on GOV.UK. Read it here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-report-shows-how-21-million-of-rod-licence-money-helps-angling>

More on the changes to licences here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-fishing-for-children>