



environmental
services
association

PRESS RELEASE

Environment Agency storage approach provides some relief to pressured waste sites

LONDON, 7 April 2020 – For immediate release

The Environmental Services Association (ESA), the voice of the UK's recycling and waste management industry, has welcomed a Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) issued by the Environment Agency, which takes a pragmatic, flexible, approach to the storage of waste materials in the event of onward supply chain disruption caused by the COVID 19 crisis.

Identified early-on as a critical area for the sector, the ESA asked the regulatory authorities to consider short-term flexibility around planning and permitting conditions to allow services to continue in the event of a reduced workforce, or inability to move recyclable or waste material to its normal destinations caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The ESA has also raised a number of additional areas in which a regulatory response is required, for example, around removing the need for physical signatures on waste documentation. These are expected imminently.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Jacob Hayler, said: *"The Regulatory Position Statement released today is important because it relieves some of the pressure facing waste facility operators, who may accumulate more material than usual if outlets such as Materials Recycling Facilities, Energy-from-Waste plants or export operations go offline, or have reduced capacity, due to staff shortages. These measures also help to ensure that recyclable and waste material will be put to its intended use in the event of onward supply chain disruption, rather than being sent to the nearest available disposal facility.*

There are still some issues facing operators, however, such as the need to obtain landlord approval for increased storage, which may introduce additional hurdles to overcome and cause delay.

This regulatory position is clearly not a licence to relax standards and there are many conditions which must be met in order to continue to comply with the regulations. It is also not an invitation for criminal operators to stockpile material and the EA, supported by legitimate operators, must remain vigilant to this and not relax enforcement."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- A. The **Environmental Services Association** (ESA) is the trade association representing the UK's resource and waste management industry, which is leading the transformation of how the UK's waste is managed.
- B. We work with all levels of government, regulators and the public to deliver a more sustainable waste and resource management solution for the UK. ESA's recent Circular Economy report '*Going for Growth – A practical route to a circular economy*', which outlines how a Circular rather than a linear economy can help manage resources sustainably, can be downloaded [here](#).
- C. ESA's Members manage waste on behalf of the whole of society and we are recovering more than ever before. For example, the industry has helped quintuple the UK's household recycling rates over the last decade.
- D. **The sector at a glance:**
 - Total turnover: **£11 billion**
 - Direct Employment: **106,000 people** (*including waste collection, treatment and materials recovery*)
 - Municipal waste handled each year: **27 million tonnes**
 - Energy generated (across landfill gas, anaerobic digestion and energy from waste) each year: **approximately 11,867 GWh**, which is 3.5% of the UK's electricity
 - **9,083 GWh of that was renewable electricity** (taking out non-biodegradable portion of EfW) which is **11%** of UK's renewable electricity
 - Greenhouse **gas emissions down by 70% since 1990**.
 - The **top seven companies account for approximately 40% of turnover**. Many hundreds of SMEs provide either localised or more specialised services
 - Waste & recycling is the **most highly rated of all council services** by the public (2016 survey)

For further details please visit www.esauk.org

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