

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION UPDATE

This is a short guide to environmental legislation changes that are relevant to the University of Reading's operations.

This guide aims to provide a concise update on environmental legislation and introduces upcoming guidance and regulations relevant to the University's UK operations. More information is available by following the links which signpost out to internal or external guidance. Alternatively contact Sustainability Services who can advise on compliance and procedures within the University.

Starting with the big issues we have...

BREXIT

The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 (EUWA) aims to provide legal certainty by converting EU law into UK legislation at the point of exit.

For those aspects of EU environmental law that can't be directly converted into UK law, a certain amount of gap filling with secondary legislation will be needed. 25-33% of EU derived laws will not work post-Brexit. If a deal is struck before the 29th March 2019 then there will be a

transition period where EU laws still apply and the gap filling in UK law takes place.

Theresa May has confirmed the government is planning to introduce a wide-ranging Environment Bill, covering air quality and a range of other issues designed to tap into the "opportunities" presented by Brexit. A draft Bill is expected before the end of December 2018.

Legislation to keep an eye on include:

- REACH Regulations
- The Circular Economy
- CLP Regulations
- Renewable Energy Directive

New Environmental Watchdog:

Leaving the EU will mean the UK loses the enforcement powers of the European Court of Justice and the European Commission. The Government has proposed that a new environment watchdog will take on this role however opposition have accused the proposals as 'toothless' and 'ineffective'.

EUROPE SUPPORTS GLYPHOSATE BAN

The European Parliament has announced its support

for a full ban on glyphosate-based herbicides by 2022.

MEPs say the EU should draw up plans to phase out the substance, starting with a complete ban on household use and a ban in use for farming when biological alternatives (that is, "integrated pest management systems") work well for weed control. They also suggest that glyphosate should be completely banned in the EU by 15 December 2022.

EU & UK MERCURY REGULATIONS 2017

In May the EU ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Although the EU Mercury Regulation 2017 has direct effect in the UK, the government proposes that the Control of Mercury (Enforcement) Regulations 2017 will designate enforcement and penalties.

Mercury has been subject to strict control under UK legislation for many years. Consequently, the government anticipates that there will be negligible impact on UK businesses. The Control of Mercury (Enforcement) Regulations 2017 will, however,

create a new criminal offence for anyone who imports, exports or manufactures mercury-added products listed in Annex II of the EU Mercury Regulation 2017.

[University Environmental Guidance Note: Mercury.](#)

DECARBONISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In April the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) announced a voluntary 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020/21 across public and higher education sectors in England.

The Government wants the public and higher education sectors to lead by example through reducing bills and driving decarbonisation across the UK economy.

The move aims to support the UKs committed to at least a 57% reduction in emissions by 2032 and a reduction of at least 80% reduction by 2050.

The University has signed up to this commitment in order to support the sector in reducing its environmental impact, encouraging others to emulate its success in already reducing carbon emissions in excess of 30%.

More information regarding the University's progress with cutting carbon can be found [here](#).

DEFRA'S CLEAN AIR PLANS UNDER SCRUTINY

ClientEarth took legal action against the UK Government for a third time over its persistent failure to deal with illegal air pollution across the country.

The successful challenge concluded that the Government's plans fall short of what is needed to bring air pollution within legal limits and protect human health.

An October 2018 deadline has been set for Defra to comply with the order however it is thought likely that BREXIT will delay proceedings.

www.clientearth.org/uk

THE PLANT HEALTH (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2018

This Order amends the Plant Health (England) Order 2015 which contains measures to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful plant pests and diseases. It amends measures intended to prevent the introduction into and spread within the EU of *Xylella fastidiosa*. - a bacterium which causes disease in a wide range of broadleaf trees widely grown in the UK, and many herbaceous plants.

MEDIUM COMBUSTION PLANT & SPECIFIED GENERATOR CONTROLS

These Regulations makes amendments to the 2016 Environmental Permitting Regulations in order to transpose EU Directive 2015/2193 on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants. Limits will be placed on emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulates (PM) (dust).

Permit conditions also require the testing of emissions periodically to demonstrate compliance with the relevant emissions levels.

This will potentially affect equipment that the University owns, therefore The University will be investigating this to ensure that internal processes remain compliant.

A register of environmental legislation, relevant to University operations is managed by Sustainability Services. If you would like more information about what environmental legislation is relevant to your area of work and the requirement thereof, please get in touch with us sustainability@reading.ac.uk or call on 0118 378 6837 (Ext. 6837).