

a better place for everyone



We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place – for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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Foreword

Corporate Social Responsibility has, until recently, been the sole preserve of big business. That is why it is heartening and encouraging that the Environment Agency in the North West has decided to produce a report on their own performance.

social, environmental and economic performance and It also provides tangible evidence of the contributions

provides the reader with a comprehensive overview and waste have been managed, how the wider community is influenced through, for example,

education programmes and the supply chain initiatives, and how staff, including health and safety and diversity,

The Report represents a good start for the Environment Agency in terms of demonstrating the holistic range of impacts it has in the region, and shows what is possible build on this good work by setting out how stakeholders are actively involved in the work of the Environment Agency, and what they think of the progress the organisation is making against its stated aims and targets.

Sustainability Northwest looks forward to the Environment Agency's next report and congratulates the organisation on providing an example to the wider public sector.



Introduction

To promote good governance and environment management systems we are pleased to publish our first corporate responsibility report.

Our behaviour demonstrates what we expect from others. It is essential to lead from the top and that is why I commissioned this report. It is important to me because:

- We are environmental regulators and therefore must have good internal environmental management processes ourselves.
- We employ over a thousand people, ranging from scientists – chemists and biologists – to flood defence engineers, along with environmental specialists who

can tell us about the quality of our water or waste and operational delivery teams who have to respond quickly to pollution and flood events.

- We need to be a trusted partner in achieving sustainable development. We are committed to working with business, public bodies and community organisations to encourage people to change.
- The public procurement system touches thousands of businesses and that presents a huge opportunity to influence what those businesses do and how they do it.

This document will tell you what we are doing to improve our corporate responsibility towards you: our staff, our partners, our suppliers and our community.



As ever it is about balance. What we do is framed by statutory responsibilities and government guidance. Regulation is a major role for the Agency and will remain so. We aim to build confidence that we will carry out our regulatory tasks, efficiently and effectively, taking account of both the costs and benefits. This means we will target our actions to focus on where it will achieve the greatest environmental gain and go beyond regulatory compliance.

However regulation alone cannot change people's attitudes or behaviour. In the longer term, we all want to achieve a fully integrated approach to sustainable development. To reach this goal we must change, along with business, public agencies and individuals.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. At the back of the report you will find an address to send your comments. Your suggestions are valuable to us and we will take them into account as our corporate responsibility journey continues.

Robert Runcie

Regional Director of the Environment Agency. North West Region

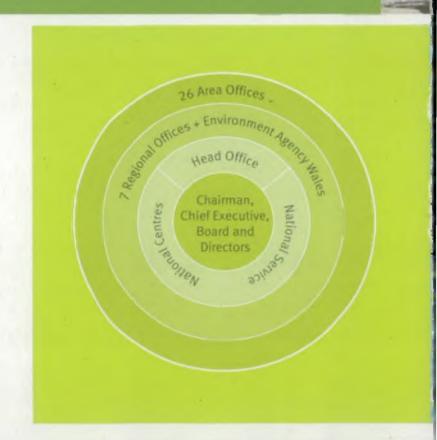
Our landscape is varied and beautiful, from mountains and lakes in Cumbria, to the seaside at Blackpool and the industrial heritage of Manchester.



"We cannot deliver our vision for a better quality of life and improved environment on our

own. Many of the partners we work with on a day to day basis, from local authorities to small local voluntary groups, share our commitment and it is essential that we work together to continue to deliver real improvements to the Region."

Keith Ashcroft Environment Agency





Our organisation is divided into eight Regions – Southern, Thames, South West, Midlands, Anglian, Wales, North West and North East. Each one has a Regional Office, managed by a Regional Director. They provide co-ordination and technical and administrative support to the Area offices.

We have 26 Area offices across England and Wales. These are responsible for the operational management of the Area and for making sure that the needs of the local community are met. With most of our workforce based at Area level, emergencies and incidents can be responded to quickly and efficiently.

Our North West Region covers 14,000km², from Cheshire in the south to its northern border with Scotland. Around seven million people live in the Region, most in the urban areas of Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

Our landscape is varied and beautiful, from mountains and lakes in Cumbria, to the seaside at Blackpool and the industrial heritage of Manchester. Agriculture covers 80 per cent of the Region, and important habitat and wildlife areas include nearly 400 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Our Region has significant environmental challenges. with 25 per cent of England's derelict land and a third of the poorest quality rivers in England and Wales. We are working hard with other organisations to repair the damage caused by previous industrial activity and to protect and improve the Region's environment for future generations.

We will set the same standards and levels of environmental protection to ourselves as we apply to others through the regulatory framework.

Energy

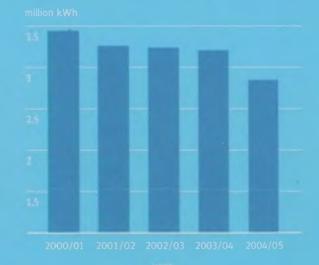
We are responsible for making sure that everyone looks after the air, land and water so that tomorrow's generation inherit a cleaner, healthier world and we must play our part.

We use electricity in our offices, depots and pumping stations and we are always looking at ways of reducing this.

We have motion sensitive lighting, solar panels at some offices and turn the boilers down. Our increased use of computerised Building Management systems has also led to efficiencies.

In 2004/05 we used less than 3 million kWhs of electricity. By being more energy efficient at all our sites we have reduced our electricity usage each year since 2001/02.

Reduce building energy by 10% from a 2000/03 baseline 2005



"Our Green Office Group meets regularly and is a great way to share ideas about how to improve our environment. I've picked up lots of tips over the years, especially on how to save energy and water

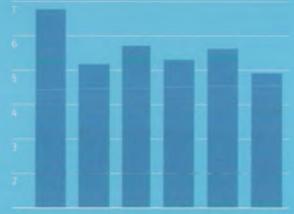
Kath Denyer **Environment** Agency

conserving

Water

Conserving water on our sites is one way of showing the importance we place on improving the environment.

Initiatives to reduce water usage in our offices have included the installation of waterless urinals, and the use of greywater systems at many of our sites. (greywater is water which has already been used for one purpose, for example bathing, being used for another purpose, for example toilets) We also check for leaks on a regular basis.



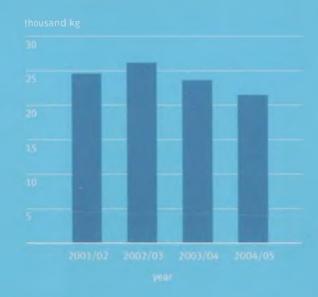


Waste

We have provided recycling bins in our offices and given advice to our staff on what can be recycled. Since 2002/03 100 per cent of our computers and other Information -Technology equipment have been re-used or recycled. About one third, after safety testing, were re-sold.

As well as paper, card and plastic recycling, many of our sites compost waste such as teabags and fruit and vegetable peelings. Some of our sites also have battery recycling bins.

We now have a National Internal Waste Management Project that will make sure we are consistent in disposing of and recycling waste across our organisation. The process will set the same standards and levels of environmental protection to itself as it applies to others through the regulatory framework. The internal waste project will deliver a nationally consistent approach to our internal waste management practices. It will also make sure that we are legally compliant with the changes in waste legislation.





Transport

We promote the use of public transport and car sharing. Car share mileage rates have been introduced and other transport choices are promoted. These include; a bicycle business mileage allowance, interest free loans for bicycle purchases and public transport season tickets.

If a member of staff needs a lease car we encourage them to select the least environmentally damaging vehicle possible that will allow duties to be carried out safely. A model has been devised to assess the environmental impact of all the exhaust emissions a vehicle produces. Only those vehicles with an Environmental Impact Index less than 28 will be included on the list of vehicles. available to our Lease Car Drivers.

In the North West 17% of our fleet vehicles run on Liquid Petroleum Gas LPG. In addition, a new lease car policy was introduced in June 2004 with the aim of encouraging staff to select one of the top 2 green cars available. If a member of staff does choose one of these cars they pay a reduced contribution towards its rental.

In addition every badged vehicle service or inspection involves an exhaust test. Energy tyres are fitted to our lease vehicles as standard. Drivers of high mileage lease cars or badged vehicles attend driver efficiency training. Additionally, we have an active policy to assess and promote new technology, including demonstrations of hybrid vehicles.





"Procurement in our Region is very dynamic. It's aim is to deliver sustainable outcomes. The team ethos involves the supply chain, technical staff and procurement

in helping to support our environmental policy."

Pat Else Environment Agency

Take a virtual reality tour of a fictitious company with our CD-ROM training package.



"We work closely with the Environment Agency, improving the region's rivers and coastal waters. We've welcomed the Agency's move to modernise regulation, working in partnership with businesses."

Jeff Lang Chief Operating Officer (Wastewater)

Go to our web site at www.environment-agency.gov.uk and click on the North West Environment page.

The 'North West Environment' web pages provides a summary of the state of the environment in the North West. They promote awareness of the environment in our Region and provide useful information for students, the general public, schools, colleges and businesses.

The web pages focus mainly on topics relevant to our own work. They provide a benchmark for us to report on environmental change and improvements. In addition to reporting regularly on a number of indicators we also include examples of how we are tackling the main environmental problems in the North West. We give examples of some of the successful results that have been achieved. To look at the pages go to our web site at www.environment-agency.gov.uk and click on the North West Environment pages.



Environment Agency Corporate Responsibility North West Region 17

World Environment Day 5 June – Every pledge makes a difference.



"It's important that we understand and are willing to change our impact on the environment. By

supporting world environment day we provide a focus on our individual impact on the environment and an opportunity to make a change. I now recycle more and my household produces less waste due to the pledges I've made over the last couple of years."

Ionathon Shatwell **Environment Agency** World Environment Day (WED) is held on 5 June each year and is a United Nations initiative, which began in 1972. It has attracted a great deal of activity world-wide, but until recently in the UK its profile has been low. For the first time in 2003 European Union Green Week was planned to coincide with WED and all European Union environment agencies were asked to focus activities and to raise awareness during this period.

People were encouraged to pledge to make at least one small change to their daily lives to improve the environment, to be completed within a set timescale that will help the UK to meet its environmental targets. Each pledge has a measurable effect against a set target.



The events that we took part in included the following:

A plot was booked at the RHS Tatton Flower Show (21-25 July). Our garden covered environmentally friendly gardening and the use of sustainable materials. For example, drought tolerant plants, composting and using recycled goods in the garden. The garden was designed and built, in partnership, by Reaseheath Agricultural College.

In partnership with the North West Development Agency, United Utilities and Mersey Basin Campaign (with the help of Groundwork trust) we were involved in the clean up of various sites. These sites were: Carr Mill Dam, St

Helens; Alkrington Woods Access, Manchester and Dukesfield, Runcorn. These events were used as a team building opportunity between us and our partners.

In the week prior to WED (24–29 May) our South Area office took part in a week of activities with Liverpool Diocese (part of the EDEN project).

Working with Landlife (the wildflower centre), both our Central and North Area offices distributed wildflower seed packs to local schools. Each school wrote in with their pledges and received packets of seeds to create their own wildflower areas.

modernising

"Our business is about restoring the environment by cleaning the nuclear legacy we have inherited. It is a complex and challenging task. We work closely with the Environment Agency to ensure that our vision, aims and priorities for the environment are aligned. I appreciate their open and robust challenge which adds value to our business by enabling us to refocus our operations in keeping with our aims. The Agency also recognises the work that we do to integrate and balance the safety and environmental implications of our clean-up strategies."

Dave Mason
Director of Environment, Health and Safety
British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, Sellafield

The business world rightly expects, from us, greater regulatory efficiency, and bureaucracy to be kept to a minimum to help keep compliance costs down. These potentially conflicting demands can be met with regulation that helps businesses and individuals to improve, rewards good performers, but is tough on those who do not meet acceptable standards.

Applying the right approach is essential to achieving environmental objectives. Direct regulation of the kind, which has traditionally been used to control abstractions from, and emissions to the environment will continue to have an important role. However, we will become smarter through the use of risk-based approaches, greater standardisation and charging mechanisms. Other instruments will be used where more appropriate. including environmental taxes, trading schemes, negotiated agreements and education programmes.

"The Environment Agency have provided a robust regulatory service to our business; they have regulated our sites in a fair and professional manner and they have worked with us in trying to resolve some of the many Landfill Directive and PPC issues. The local business relationship is good."

Phil Holland General Manager SITA UK





"I have worked with local communities residents and am happy getting my hands dirty building paths on nature reserves or sitting in meetings getting project funds

all the difference by helping clean up grot spots or

Working together to create a better North West.

In March 2004 we signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding with Manchester City Council to help to deliver a better quality of life for the local residents of Manchester. The 2004/05 action plan has been so successful that, we are signing up to a 2005/06 action plan to further contribute to the regeneration of Manchester's urban environment.

We have been working together with several organisations who have all committed to take joint action in an effort to improve the threatened waters of Bassenthwaite Lake in Cumbria. The organisations – the Lake District National Park Authority the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, English Nature, United Utilities, and the Rural Development Service have all signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to support the current Bassenthwaite Lake Restoration Programme.

By working with partner organisations and from successful grant applications we have achieved almost £9 million in external funding. A key project which contributed to this total is the Improving Coastal and Recreational Waters for all (ICREW) project. This is a partnership project with 5 European countries, funded by the European Union Community Initiative Interreg.

The Flood Awareness Campaign for England and Wales is now in its seventh year. Over that time we have achieved considerable success in building awareness of flood risk at both a national level and among people in at risk areas.

The 2004 flood awareness campaign was launched on Thursday 7 October 2004 with a national direct mail and public relations campaign, which targeted communities in flood risk areas across England and Wales. A new flood map was also launched, which provided people across the country with information about the level of risk posed to their property.

The campaign theme "Act Now. Be Prepared for Flooding" provides an urgent reminder of the risks of flooding that face the five million people at risk in England and Wales. It also gives practical advice on how people can prepare their homes before the onset of winter.

In the North West, we have a total of 148,000 properties in Flood Risk Areas of which we provide a flood warning service to 103,000 (66 per cent).

Of the 18,175 property owners who were targeted to receive the Automated Voice Messaging service, 8,050 properties (44 per cent) have taken it up.

Research indicates that public awareness of flood issues is being raised year on year in the North West. Independent evaluations confirm that the flood warning campaign plan has been right and that the hard work put into campaigns is paying off.



"The NWDA and the Environment Agency's Memorandum of Understanding recognises our shared commitment to working in partnership to ensure a sustainable future for England's Northwest. We greatly value our strong relationship with the Environment Agency, which was further strengthened this year in our joint effort to effectively deal with the economic and environmental implications of the floods in Carlisle."

Steve Broomhead Chief Executive Officer Northwest Development Agency

Customer standards we aim to achieve

We have listened to the views of customers to develop the principles on which we provide services. When consulted, our customers stated a preference for challenging but

- Answering telephone calls
- Responding to enquiries and requests for information

- Flood information service
- Flood Warnings
- Attending incidents assessed as having a major effect on the environment
- Feedback on incident reports
- Permit applications

Our Service	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
General Service and Standards				
Answering telephone calls	96%	96%	95%	94%
Responding to general enquiries and requests for information	100%	100%	98%	99%
Responding to complaints	98%	96%	99%	98%
Water Resources				
Responding to an application for a licence to abstract or impound water from a river, lake or borehole — abstraction or impoundment licence. We will make a decision within three months of receiving a completed application	100%	98%	99%	X
Flood Defence				
Responding to an application for a consent to carry out work in, over, under or near a watercourse — a land drainage consent. We will decide within two months of receiving a fully completed application	100%	100%	99%	100%
Fisheries				
Responding to requests for advice on fisheries matters (that require a considered response or a site visit)	100%	100%	56%	98%
Responding to reported incidents of illegal fishing or suspicious handling of salmon. A response within two hours of being told during normal working hours, and within four hours at all other times	97%	98%	100%	99%
Responding to reported incidents of fish being killed. A response within two hours of being told during normal working hours, and within four hours at all other times	98%	100%	99%	100%
Responding to an application to introduce fish into inland waters (a consent to stock fish). We will normally provide a decision within 10 working days				

2001/02 %	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
100%	100%	100%	Х
100%	100%	98%	59%*
82%	77%	89%	100%
86%	68%	96%	94%
100%	100%	100%	100%
49%	99%	96%	100%
89%	98%	95%	X
	% 100% 100% 82% 86% 49%	% % 100% 100% 100% 100% 82% 77% 86% 68% 100% 100%	100% 100% 100% 100% 100% 98% 82% 77% 89% 86% 68% 96% 100% 100% 100% 49% 99% 96%

^{*} Strategic Permitting Groups were set up in the summer of 2003 to deal with these permits. The training of staff and the changes necessary to set up the teams led to delays in issuing permits in 2004/05





"The Agency allowed me to take two weeks paid paternity leave on the birth of my son, which was wonderful.

It gave me the opportunity to look after my daughter when mum and the baby were in hospital and be at home to help everyone settle in."

John Hunt Environment Agency We believe that diversity is as important in the workplace as it is in the natural environment. Diversity in this context means differences — differences of background, personality, and workstyle as well as differences of gender, ethnicity, age and disability. We are committed to developing a working environment where all staff are able to make the most of their skills, abilities and potential, and where differences are valued and managed positively.

All staff are expected to behave in the workplace in ways that are consistent with our diversity policy and are encouraged to challenge behaviour that undermines these principles. The main principles are:

- Treating people as individuals with fairness and with respect.
- Making decisions that affect people's employment, development and progression on the basis of merit, ability and potential.

• Being clear that all forms of unfair or unlawful discriminatory behaviour are unacceptable.

We have a Regional diversity action plan in place and there is a commitment from our Regional Management Team to make sure we communicate with our diverse communities.

In 2004 we introduced a toolkit for fair and effective recruitment. This gives guidance to enable the most appropriate candidate for the role to be selected.

It is a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act that we ensure our buildings are, as far as is practicable, fit for disabled staff and visitors.

We have carried out site and facility improvements to ensure compliance over and above the statutory requirements. Examples of some of the building improvements are given below:

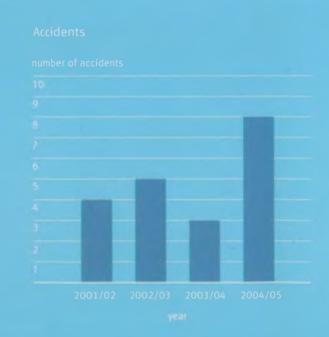
- Installation of a lowered reception desk and contrasting stair/step noising to assist the visually impaired.
- Improved building and lift accesses including the addition or widening of door vision panels, door handles and hand rails.
- Improved toilet facilities such as levered water-saving taps, improved cubicle access, energy efficient lighting.
- Improved external site access for example access ramps, textured paving to indicate crossings and car bumpers to facilitate pavement access for wheelchairs together with speed ramps and zebra crossings.

Recommendations are made suggesting how similar accidents could be avoided in the future. The lessons learnt are cascaded around the Region.

We are committed to working in a way that protects the health, safety and welfare of staff, contractors and the public. It is our policy to promote and take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard all those who may be involved in or affected by our actions.

We will maintain the health and safety awareness of all staff by setting up reliable health and safety practices and operations. Our goal is continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

In 2000 there was a significant improvement in the quality of accident reporting with the introduction of the Agency-wide accident reporting and management system (SHERMS). In the North West, there has been a steady improvement in our accident statistics over this period.





NB – In 2004/5 we changed our reporting to include all lost time accidents. In previous years we have only reported accidents resulting in absence of 4 days or more.

When an accident occurs a representative is nominated suggesting how similar accidents could be avoided in the future. The lessons learnt are cascaded around the Region so that everyone can benefit from the findings. They are also sent to the Health and Safety Information Manager at Head Office to be cascaded to other Regions.



"The Agency arranged for Health Fairs to visit our offices. There were all kinds of interesting things to take a look at

including measuring your fitness levels, what's involved in a healthy diet and how much exercise you should take."

Debbie Brandwood **Environment Agency**

Let's brag a little.

ISO9001/ISO14001 - In April 2002, we were successful in and quality management system standards ISO14001: 1996 and ISO9001:2000 for the way we work. ISO14001

Agency won an award for excellence in ethical purchasing. with the development of proactive contract strategies that





Action Energy is an organisation established to promote energy awareness. Their aim is to raise awareness of the capital finance available to improve performance of energy using equipment. They also advise organisations of ways to measure energy efficiency and achieve economies. Part of the package available is an independent energy audit which can confirm that systems are efficient and that

current ways of measuring performance are good. When we were audited it confirmed good energy management and that our offices were well below the benchmark for prestige office accommodation. However, some suggestions were made to further improve our performance and these are being followed up.



Would you like to find out more about us, or about your environment?

Then call us on 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri, 8-6)

email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk or visit our website www.environment-agency.gov.uk

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs) floodline 0845 988 1188

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