

PRESS RELEASE: Embargoed until 00:01 Monday 22nd October 2018**Responsible Car Wash Scheme launches at House of Lords**

The Scheme aims to tackle modern slavery and a lack of compliance within the industry. It will target labour abuse and lack of adherence to regulations at hand car washes, whilst enabling consumers to identify a compliant car wash.

Operators who are members of the Scheme will be able to be recognised by consumers as ones who: look after their workers, trade legally, adhere to environmental regulations and take care of their customers and their vehicles.

The Responsible Car Wash Scheme has been developed alongside, and with the support of, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), HSE and other Government bodies in response to concerns regarding irregular and sometimes illegal practices in the expanding hand car wash industry. Sir David Metcalf, Director of Labour Market Enforcement, has highlighted that hand car washes are at risk of being non-compliant with a raft of regulations and legislation, including modern day slavery in his recently published strategy.

The Scheme, which will be piloted across the Midlands in November, has been developed by the Downstream Fuel Association alongside the GLAA, Police, the Health and Safety Executive, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Environment Agency and the Car Wash Association. The involvement of anti-slavery charity Unseen has allowed the Scheme to take into account the indicators that need to be considered when visiting car wash sites. The Scheme is supported by five major supermarkets who are leading the way and want to ensure that their Operators are recognised for operating legally as well as ensuring that standards are raised across the industry.

It is estimated that there are up to 20,000 hand car washes in the UK and whilst some operate legally, Government agencies have seen issues at many sites including; modern day slavery, health and safety breaches, environmental breaches as well as operating without paying the appropriate tax.

Darryl Dixon from the GLAA said, "We have seen numerous problems across this industry, from modern day slavery, debt bondage, failure to pay proper wages, through to workers not being provided with any appropriate or personal protective equipment. Whilst enforcement is crucial, education is also essential to both operators, so that they can ensure they operate legally, but also to consumers, so they can make the simple decision of using a legal operator or not. This Scheme is a big step forward in addressing these issues."

The Scheme will provide a resource for operators, providing them with information and guidance so they can operate legally. Once a member of the Scheme, operators will be able to display a Responsible Car Wash Operator logo which will enable consumers to make a clear choice between a fully compliant operator, that has been through the accreditation process and verified by audits and spot-checks, to one that may not be. The consumer can then be reassured that the site operates with safe conditions for its workers as well as having ethical and compliant employment practices, that they protect the environment and deal with pollution appropriately, and, overall, trade legally and responsibly.

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or visit <http://www.rcws.org.uk>

Supported by:



Responsible Car Wash Scheme founder members:



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