

Press release: Integrating the Science and Technology Support for the UK's Defence and Security

An integration has been agreed between the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Home Office's Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST). This has been decided following a review to examine the best way to provide enduring and appropriate science and technology (S&T) support to the Home Office and the MOD. The integration will improve the resilience of the S&T support that makes such a major contribution to the nation's defence, policing, security and resilience.

Commenting on today's announcement, Dstl's Chief Executive, Jonathan Lyle said:

Combining our capabilities will improve the science and technology support for the MOD and Home Office, and enhance the nation's defence and security. Dstl and CAST already work closely together on key projects such as forensics, body armour and detection systems. We intend to continue to build on this existing close relationship to make the integration process a success.

The Head of CAST, Andy Bell, added:

This development will enable a more joined-up, coherent approach to science and technology provision for security, policing and resilience in the UK. The move will mean that our customers have access to a wider range of scientific and engineering expertise across government, industry and academia, giving broader access to innovative ideas and solutions. There is a lot of hard work to be undertaken before we complete the move, and we will be providing full support to our staff throughout the transition.

The integration is expected to start in 2017 and end by 2020. CAST's staff and work will move to become part of Dstl, and be primarily based at Porton Down, near Salisbury. An integration programme team will work jointly across Dstl and CAST to support the transfer of staff and capabilities during the transition period, ensuring continuity in support of national security, defence and policy.

Dstl Media Enquiries

Email

press@dstl.gov.uk

Media enquiries
01980 952361

Out of hours
07884 732999

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From:
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Independent report: Natural Capital Committee's fourth state of natural capital report

This report sets out the work done by the committee since March 2016. It also makes a series of recommendations to government on developing the 25 year environment plan.

The Natural Capital Committee is an independent advisory body to government. You can read more information about the work of the [Natural Capital Committee](#).

News story: Rural Payments Agency pays 93% of Basic Payment Scheme claims in January

From:

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24 January 2017

The Rural Payments Agency reaches its public target to pay 93% of eligible 2016 Basic Payment Scheme claims more than 2 months ahead of schedule.

More than 80,000 (93%) farmers in England have now received their 2016 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) money.

This means the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has paid 93% of eligible claims more than two months ahead of its end of March target.

The payments are worth £1.48 billion and include a range of 2016 BPS claim types and sizes, including cross border, young farmer, those inspected and farmers with common land.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

I know how important these payments are to farmers and I am pleased that the RPA is ahead of schedule meeting their target of making 93% of payments well before the end of March.

This is good progress. However I am very clear that the Agency will remain fully focussed on paying all remaining eligible claims as quickly as possible.

BPS Operational Delivery Director Paul Caldwell said:

We know how much these payments matter to farmers and the progress made so far underlines our commitment to getting money into bank accounts as quickly as possible.

We've worked hard to make sure farmers receive their payments, but we know there is still more work to do. I remain absolutely focused on ensuring the Agency continues to pay every eligible claim.

BPS payments are made direct to bank accounts, so farmers should make sure RPA has the most up-to-date account details. Once a payment has been made a remittance advice is sent in the post, confirming the amount paid.

More information on 2016 BPS, including scheme rules and details of how payments are calculated, is available at www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2016

[News story: Almost £1 million awarded](#)

to 66 water rescue charities

Water rescue charities around the UK have been awarded £913,000 by Maritime Minister John Hayes today (24 January 2017).

This is the third round of funding provided under a 5 year, £5 million scheme, announced as part of the 2014 budget statement.

The grant supports charities running local lifeboat and rescue services, helping those in danger on and around inland and inshore waterways, including during flooding and other incidents. The money can be used to buy new lifeboats and other equipment such as lifejackets and safety gear.

Maritime Minister, John Hayes, said:

Every day countless volunteers in water rescue charities across our island nation carry out vital work during emergencies, not only around our coasts but also keeping our rivers, lakes and inshore waters safe.

It is imperative that we value and support their tireless efforts. I am delighted to be able to announce the latest round of funding, ensuring they have the equipment and resources they need to provide their round-the-clock lifesaving services.

An expert panel – including representatives from the devolved administrations, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, and the Royal Yachting Association – assessed applications submitted to the Department for Transport on the basis of:

- how the equipment or training will be used to support lifesaving, search and rescue operations and flood response capability locally and nationally
- whether the funding will deliver wider community benefits
- how the equipment and skills will bring sustainable benefits

Bids for funding were accepted from UK charities as defined in the Charities Act 2006. Other criteria are set out in the [guidance notes published on GOV.UK](#).

The annual £1 million fund also covers administration of the scheme.

List of new grant recipients

Inshore and inland rescue boat grant recipients, 2016 to 2017

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