

# News story: Improvements to Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme



The popular productivity funding scheme, which help farmers to buy the equipment they need to boost productivity, save time and increase yields.

The scheme has proved popular so far, with more than 3,500 grants worth £23.5 million being awarded to successful applicants.

However, Defra is aware that some farmers are experiencing issues with the delivery of a small number of items for livestock handling within the scheme's 150 day deadline.

From today, farmers who are facing difficulties with these items can pay for them in full and submit their claims within the 150 day deadline. They can then take delivery of their equipment after the 150 days and will receive payment once the item has been delivered. The Rural Payments Agency will be writing to those affected within the next few days.

Defra will also be opening a second round of funding, due to open in the Autumn, giving farmers who withdrew their applications, the option to have it reinstated now or in the next round. The Rural Payments Agency will be contacting grant recipients who have an offer for livestock handling equipment but have withdrawn because of issues with livestock handling equipment, to inform them of this option. Any other supply issues should be discussed with the RPA separately.

Most of the items offered through the scheme are readily available from different stockists, so applicants are encouraged to shop around when looking for items so that they can claim as quickly as possible.

More detail on the second round of grants will follow in the coming months. For more detail on the Countryside Productivity Scheme please see [here](#).

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1. 14 June 2018 Clarification on specific equipment that is affected by the

change.

2. 12 June 2018 First published.

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## **News story: Charity annual return 2018**

Last year we [consulted with the charity sector](#) about the annual return for 2018. Based on the outcome of this consultation we are introducing a tailored annual return later this summer. It will include some new questions that charities can start preparing for now.

We recognise that for some charities the new questions will create additional work. Certain questions will be optional this year to give you time to put in place the systems to collect the information more easily, requiring less effort in the future.

We will let you know when the new annual return system is available to use. You can sign up for [GOV.UK email alerts](#) to keep up-to-date with the latest information we publish on our website.

### **Overseas expenditure**

We will build on the current annual return questions about charitable expenditure overseas, to establish how charities transfer and monitor funds sent overseas.

We are doing this because all money transfer processes bear risks, and it's important that charities take appropriate steps to manage these.

We recognise that some charities will need to make changes to their record keeping to answer parts of this question.

For this reason the questions about methods of transferring money outside the regulated banking system, and about monitoring controls and risk management, will be optional to answer for the 2018 annual return.

These questions will be mandatory for the annual return 2019 onwards.

**When spending money outside England and Wales, did your charity transfer money outside of the regulated banking system?**

**What methods to transfer money did the charity use and what was the value?**

- cash courier
- other charities or non-governmental organisations and non-profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs)
- money service business (MSB)

- informal money transfer systems
- online payment methods (for example PayPal)
- other

**Does the charity have monitoring controls in place to monitor overseas expenditure?**

**Are the trustees satisfied that the charity's risk management policy and procedures adequately address the risks to the charity arising from its activities and/or where it operates?**

## **Income from outside the UK**

To get a better understanding of the income sources from outside of the UK, we are introducing questions about the breakdown of sources of income from each country a charity receives funds from.

The options we've provided for you to choose from are:

- overseas governments or quasi government bodies
- overseas charities, non-governmental organisations or non-profit organisations (NGOs/NPOs)
- other overseas institutions (for example private company donations)
- individual donors resident overseas
- unknown

Some charities will need to make changes to their financial systems to collect and sort the information more easily.

For this reason, we have made those parts of the question set relating to other private institutions outside the UK (other than charities, Non-Governmental Organisations and Non-Profit Organisations) and individual donors outside the UK optional to answer for the 2018 annual return.

These questions will be mandatory from 2019 onwards.

## **Salary and benefits in charities**

Our research into public trust and confidence in charities shows that the public is concerned about high levels of pay in charities.

Because of this we will be asking charities to provide more information about salaries to increase accountability.

In the annual return for 2018 we will ask for a breakdown of salaries across income bands, and the amount of total employee benefits for the highest paid member of staff.

But, in response to concerns raised during the consultation, we will not publish details of benefits given to the paid member of staff on the public register.



# Press release: National Parks review launched

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today committed to conserve and enhance England's most cherished landscapes as a new review launches into the nation's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

Nearly 70 years after the country's National Parks were first established, opening up the countryside and allowing more people to connect with nature, an independent panel will look at how these iconic landscapes meet our needs in the 21st century – including whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks to expand.

The review, led by writer Julian Glover, will also explore how access to these beloved landscapes can be improved, how those who live and work in them can be better supported, and their role in growing the rural economy.

Weakening or undermining their existing protections or geographic scope will not be part of the review, which will instead focus on how designated areas can boost wildlife, support the recovery of natural habitats and connect more people with nature.

Undertaking a review is one of the key commitments of the government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#), which outlines our vision for improving the environment over a generation by connecting people with nature and helping wildlife to thrive.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The creation of National Parks almost 70 years ago changed the way we view our precious landscapes – helping us all access and enjoy our natural world.

Amid a growing population, changes in technology, and a decline in certain habitats, the time is right for us to look afresh at these landscapes. We want to make sure they are not only conserved, but enhanced for the next generation.

Sir Arthur Hobhouse's landmark report in 1947 paved the way for the creation of England's network of designated landscapes, with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act passed in 1949.

The Act, described at the time as a "recreational gift to Britain's returning Second World War service men and women", set out to recognise, conserve and enhance access to landscapes deemed to be "of national importance and quality".

These days the rugged mountains, unspoilt coastlines and vast moorlands of

the nation's 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks attract more than 260 million visitors a year from at home and abroad.

Julian Glover, who will lead the review, said:

Our protected landscapes are England's finest gems and we owe a huge debt to past generations who had the wisdom to preserve them.

The system they created has been a strength, but it faces challenges too. It is an honour to be asked to find ways to secure them for the future. I can't wait to get started and learn from everyone who shares an interest in making England's landscapes beautiful, diverse and successful.

Chair of National Parks England, Margaret Paren, said:

National Parks are iconic and inspirational cultural landscapes. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan refers to their establishment as among the outstanding environmental achievements of the past 100 years. We very much welcome the announcement of the review and intend to play a full part.

Our National Parks offer so much to the country. And as we approach the 70th anniversary of the founding legislation we look forward to a future where their beauty is enhanced; they are loved and accessible for everyone; and they continue to support thriving communities in these working landscapes.

Chair of the National Association of AONBs, Philip Hygate, said:

The world has changed significantly since the designation of Gower, the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but our fundamental requirement for beautiful, inspiring places in which to live, work, and relax is probably greater now than ever before.

The National Association for AONBs is delighted to support this exciting review and will work closely with Julian Glover and the review panel to help ensure that all of England's special landscapes are equally recognised for the value they provide to the nation, and their fundamental importance to future generations.

AONBs and National Parks are some of our most cherished sites, spanning from the Lake District, which was recently announced as a UNESCO World Heritage site, to the picturesque Cornwall AONB.

They cover a quarter of England's land and are home to over 2.3 million people – with more than 66 per cent of us living within half an hour of a National Park or AONB. They also generate over £20 billion for the rural

economy, and support 75,000 jobs.

## **Julian Glover**

Associate editor at the London Evening Standard and author of the biography *Man of Iron: Thomas Telford and the Building of Britain*. He has worked as leader writer and columnist at the Guardian and as a Special Adviser in Number 10 and the Department for Transport.

He will be supported by an advisory panel bringing a vast breadth of experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues.

The panel will be comprised of:

## **Lord Cameron of Dillington**

Cross-bench peer, farmer and landowner. As the former Chair of the Countryside Agency, he is a strong advocate for rural affairs. He is currently the chair of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Committee and the Advisory Council for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. He is also on the Steering Board of the Government's Global Food Security Programme.

## **Jim Dixon**

Chief Executive of the Peak District National Park Authority for 12 years, before stepping down in 2014. He is currently a writer on countryside issues, including for the Times, and a trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **Sarah Mukherjee**

Former BBC environment and rural affairs correspondent and previous Director of Environment at Water UK. She is currently Chief Executive of the Crop Protection Association. She is a trustee and advisory group member for several charities, supporting both environmental stewardship and education in farming.

## **Dame Fiona Reynolds**

Formerly the Director-General of the National Trust and current Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge and Chair of the Green Alliance. She is the author of *The Fight for Beauty* (2016), a history of thought and public policy on landscapes and environment in Britain.

## **Jake Fiennes**

Estate Manager of the Raveningham Estate for the last 24 years, promoting nature conservation alongside arable farming. He will be joining the 25,000 acre Holkham Estate in autumn 2018 as their General Manager for Conservation. He is also a trustee and advisory group member of several organisations including the National Farmers' Union's Environmental Forum and the Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

Read the full [terms of reference](#).

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## [News story: Hot weather health warnings: 2018](#)

Heatwave temperatures across the country have prompted PHE to again warn people to look out for those most at-risk in the summer sun.

When temperatures climb to the sorts of levels seen in many parts of the country some people can struggle to cope.

The over 65s, young children and those with heart and lung conditions can all find normal activities a strain when temperatures get this high. That's why PHE is today (Tuesday 26 June 2018) urging people to keep an eye out for anyone they know who may be at risk.

Dr Thomas Waite of PHE said:

We know that when weather like this hits, many people will head outdoors and make the most of the sunshine – but for others, temperatures like these, over more than a day or 2, can be really uncomfortable and pose a significant risk to health.

This is because their bodies may struggle to adapt to working harder, as all our bodies do when the weather gets this hot, and they can become ill.

It's vitally important that we keep an eye on friends, family and neighbours who may be at risk, and chances are we'll all know someone if we're all going to stay well this summer.

For others, the best thing to do is avoid the sun during the hottest parts of the day, carry water with you when travelling and if going out to large events, and we know lots of people will be watching football this week, think what you can do stay cool. It's also worth remembering to think about keeping homes cool as this can aid sleeping at night and give the body time to recover from the heat of the day.

The top ways for staying safe when the heat arrives are to:

- look out for others, especially older people, young children and babies and those with underlying health conditions
- close curtains on rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler and remember it may be cooler outdoors than indoors

- drink plenty of water as sugary, alcoholic and caffeinated drinks can make you more dehydrated
- never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants, young children or animals
- try to keep out of the sun between 11am to 3pm
- take care and follow local safety advice, if you are going into the water to cool down
- walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat, if you have to go out in the heat
- avoid physical exertion in the hottest parts of the day
- wear light, loose fitting cotton clothes
- make sure you take water with you, if you are travelling

## Previous updates

25 May 2018

With a Met Office forecast for a spell of warmer weather for the coming days Public Health England (PHE) is urging people to think now how they'll handle summer heat this year.

The latest forecast from the Met Office suggests that this weekend there could be high temperatures in many places. Although temperatures like this can be pleasant for many, there are some older people, young children and those with heart and lung conditions whose bodies will struggle to cope and could feel the ill-effects.

Dr Thomas Waite, a public health consultant at PHE, said:

Much of the advice on beating the heat is common sense and for many people spells of warmer weather are something they very much enjoy.

This bank holiday weekend is a really good time to think about what you can do to protect you and your family and friends' health throughout the summer and warmer weather.

It is also currently Ramadan. If you start to feel unwell, disoriented or confused, or collapse or faint, advice is to stop fasting and have a drink of water or other fluid. This is especially important for older adults, those with poorly controlled medical conditions such as low or high blood pressure, diabetes and those who are receiving dialysis treatment. The Muslim Council of Britain has confirmed that breaking fast in such conditions is allowable under Islamic law. Also, make sure to check on others in the community who may be at greater risk to ensure they are having a safe and healthy Ramadan. Guidance is available on [NHS Choices](#).

For some people, such as older people, those with underlying health conditions and those with young children, the summer heat can bring real health risks. That's why we're urging everyone to keep an eye on those you know who may be at risk this summer. If you're able,

ask if your friends, family or neighbours need any support.

Frank Saunders, the Met Office's Chief Meteorologist said:

Although some places will see cloud and heavy thunderstorms over the bank holiday weekend, many areas will be dry with plenty of sunshine. Where it's sunniest, particularly in the south and south east, it'll feel very warm with temperatures rising into the mid to high twenties and possibly a very localised 30 Celsius in the strongest sunshine.