

A National Strategy for Disabled People to remove barriers and increase participation

The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit is working with government colleagues, disabled people, disabled people's organisations, charities and businesses to achieve practical changes that will remove barriers and increase participation.

A key focus is the development of a National Strategy for Disabled People. This will put fairness at the heart of government work, to level up opportunity so everyone can fully participate in the life of this country.

The strategy will build on evidence and data, and critically on insights from the lived experience of disabled people.

It will include existing commitments, such as to increase special educational needs and disability funding and support pupils, students and adults to get careers advice, internships and transition into work, whilst identifying further opportunities to improve things.

Our objectives for the National Strategy for Disabled People are to:

- develop a positive and clear vision on disability which is owned right across government
- make practical changes to policies which strengthen disabled people's ability to participate fully in society
- ensure lived experience underpins policies by identifying what matters most to disabled people
- strengthen the ways in which we listen to disabled people and disabled people's organisations, using these insights to drive real change
- improve the quality of evidence and data and use it to support policies and how we deliver them

As the coronavirus pandemic is the current priority for the government, we are reviewing our plans for the development of the strategy. We want to ensure we have enough time to get this right and undertake a full and appropriate programme of stakeholder engagement. People's views and insights will be crucial as we work with colleagues across government, disabled people and other stakeholders on possible solutions.

[Letter to the ACMD on emergency legislation to enable the supply of controlled drugs](#)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

[Regional Stakeholder Network to give disabled people a stronger voice](#)

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[Disability Unit putting lived experience at the heart of its work](#)

The Cabinet Office's Disability Unit is working to achieve practical changes for disabled people, which remove barriers and increase opportunity.

A focus of this work is understanding the lived experience of disabled people, together with relevant evidence and data. To do this we are working across government, with disabled people, their organisations, charities and other stakeholders to gain their valuable insight.

We want to reach as many people as possible, including those who may not usually engage with the government, providing a variety of ways to engage with us according to people's preference or accessibility requirements.

The current situation with the coronavirus pandemic makes face to face engagement impossible at present. We are working on plans to develop a digital engagement programme so we can undertake some engagement in the meantime. We recognise that many disabled people are not able to access digital means of communication, so this is a temporary approach. We will be undertaking extensive regional and local engagement once we can meet face to face again.

Some examples of the engagement we are undertaking include:

- a [Regional Stakeholder Network](#) of disabled people and organisations across England – to share their views throughout the year on a wide range of issues that matter most to disabled people
- a new forum between some of the leading disabled people's organisations, some of the Regional Stakeholder Network chairs and other smaller disabled people's organisations – to provide an opportunity to meet with the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, and to bring the voices and expertise of disabled people into the heart of government policy making
- a series of roadshows around the country to allow disabled people to talk directly to policy makers and to share their insights and lived experiences
- meetings between the 10 disability charities that make up the Disability Charities Consortium and the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, and the Disability Unit – to bring the voices and expertise of disabled people into the heart of government policy making
- digital engagement to increase our reach and connect with more individuals and smaller organisations in particular – online surveys and video meetings will be helpful in complementing more traditional face to face engagement and may be more accessible for some people, and will be vital in the coming weeks with current restrictions because of coronavirus

Technology provides opportunities, but can be a barrier for some, therefore we are working to identify the most inclusive and accessible ways to work with stakeholders during this period and in the future.

[DASA awards £2m to fast-track autonomous vehicles in harsh](#)

conditions

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) can today announce it has awarded 21 contracts worth a total £2.1 million to boost how autonomous vehicles and systems operate in challenging environments.

[DASA](#), on behalf of the [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory \(Dstl\)](#), launched the [Autonomy in a Dynamic World](#) competition last year seeking proposals for innovative solutions and novel techniques to improve the way autonomous systems work in conditions such as rugged landscapes, dense vegetation, varying wind speeds and sea states – and man-made conditions such as congested and contested electromagnetic spaces.

The call also sought solutions to the Human-Autonomy Teaming (HAT) problem – the effective integration of humans, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics into military systems.

All these factors affect the military effectiveness of current autonomous technologies.

Project manager Helen Mullender said:

The work being funded is to mature autonomous systems with the capability to operate on demand, under all conditions that may be encountered.

Military operations are undertaken in all kinds of challenging environment. The inclusion of autonomous systems in these operations will demand their ability to operate effectively and efficiently regardless of the environment.

DASA delivery manager Laurence Bickerton said:

DASA is pleased to be working with Dstl and some of the best and brightest minds in industry to provide a step change in the capability of unmanned autonomous military systems.

In society, we are becoming increasingly dependent and trusting of unmanned, autonomous and semi-autonomous systems to operate our machinery, cars and even our home deliveries.

Similarly, in defence, autonomous systems are driving a revolutionary change in military operations, transforming the battlespace with improved intelligence and mobility.

The competition is funded through the MOD's Chief Scientific Adviser's Research Programme's Autonomy Incubator project that aims to: Identify and

develop underpinning research and technologies to support the development and fielding of unmanned systems across defence which may be matured through the Dstl Autonomy Programme and other Research and Development programmes.

The organisations that have been funded are:

- Animal Dynamics (3 proposals funded)
- Archangel
- Autonomous Devices Ltd (2 proposals funded)
- Beamagine SL
- Blue Bear Systems Research Ltd
- Createc
- Deep Vision
- Fleetonomy.ai
- Frazer-Nash Consultancy
- Horiba Mira
- Imperial College London
- Plextek Service Ltd (2 proposals funded)
- QinetiQ Business Unit Farnborough
- SeeByte Limited
- Sonardyne International Limited
- University of Dundee
- Zenotech Ltd

DASA – the MOD’s innovation hub – finds and funds exploitable technology to give Her Majesty’s Armed Forces and UK security a strategic advantage over adversaries while supporting the nation’s prosperity.

DASA works with scientists from Dstl, academia, and industry to rapidly develop these new technologies.