

Press release: MOD Sealand to be innovation hotbed for Defence

The two MOD executive agencies have agreed to look at various new, innovative ways in which they can work together across a range of science, technology and engineering areas to make MOD equipment programmes more cost effective, more resilient for longer and better suited to the operational needs of the UK Armed Forces, in particular.

Dstl has set up a 'pathfinder' function within DECA's main facility at MOD Sealand to begin planning for the rapid establishment of a joint Dstl/DECA collaboration team. This will see staff from both organisations taking part in exchanges, apprenticeship opportunities, education, continuing professional development, 'best practice' benchmarking visits and inter-Agency networking.

Over time they intend to find new ways of working to support the UK Government's Prosperity Agenda through collaboration with industry, wider Government and the devolved Governments of the UK, as well as allied and partner nations.

Gary Aitkenhead, Dstl Chief Executive, commented:

This is an exciting venture and will further enable Dstl to optimise and expand its capacity and capability through working with our strategic partners. It also provides Dstl with a firm presence in North Wales with significant opportunities for our employees and those seeking a science and technology career in the region. We will also be looking to grow our supply chain network in the North West and in Wales, and look forward to developing relationships with high quality business there.

Geraint Spearing, DECA Chief Executive, said:

This initiative provides both Agencies with a fantastic opportunity to collaborate in supporting UK MOD and deliver effective, sustainable solutions into the future. We are looking forward to working closely with Dstl through this partnership, focussing not only on technologies and support solutions, but also importantly on skills development which is high on our agenda both regionally and nationally.

DECA has a long and illustrious history in providing specialised services in support of UK Defence ensuring delivery of repair, maintenance, overhaul, upgrade and managed services for in-service and future military platforms across Defence. Most recently, securing a further £500m assignment to provide

pivotal avionics and aircraft component support to the RAF and Royal Navy's new F-35 fast jet aircraft which will fly from RAF Marham and the UK's two new aircraft carriers.

Dstl is an executive agency of MOD, run along commercial lines. It is one of the principal government organisations dedicated to science and technology in the Defence and security field, with six sites: at Porton Down, near Salisbury; Portsmouth West, near Portsmouth; Fort Halstead, near Sevenoaks; Sandridge, near St Albans; Langhurst, near Horsham; and, Alverstone, near Gosport. Dstl works with a wide range of partners and suppliers in industry, in academia and overseas.

[News story: Consultation on awarding organisation controls for centre assessments](#)

Ofqual has today (25 February 2019) published [a consultation on proposed changes to the way awarding organisations manage and oversee centre assessments](#). These changes are intended to ensure that appropriate controls are in place so that standards are consistent, whenever and wherever an assessment is taken.

Our rules allow awarding organisations to devolve some responsibility for assessments to schools, colleges and training centres, including through a practice commonly known as Direct Claims Status. However, we have found evidence to show that the variety of approaches currently in place to manage this provide different levels of oversight. We have also found that the terms 'moderation' and 'verification' are often used interchangeably and inconsistently with our rules.

[This consultation](#) recognises that centre assessment is central to the way many different qualifications function, and does not look to end it. Instead, we propose to:

- clarify our existing definition of moderation, and provide a new, separate definition for verification
- require awarding organisations to produce centre assurance strategies that explain how their centre assessment arrangements work
- set minimum requirements in certain qualifications
- set minimum requirements for awarding organisation verification processes, including a minimum of two monitoring visits and an additional unannounced visit per centre every year

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator, said:

We have conducted a detailed review of the use of centre assessment and believe that there are risks that can be managed better. We know that there are circumstances in which learners and employers can benefit from centre assessment, particularly in terms of the potential speed a qualification can be awarded. But the controls that awarding organisations have in place with centres must be sufficiently robust for the public to have confidence that assessment standards are being maintained between training providers and over time.

Ailin O’Cathain, Head of Policy, Federation of Awarding Bodies, said:

We welcome the opportunity to feed back on the proposals on Moderation and Verification of centre assessments. We will be working closely with our members in the coming weeks to gather their views and feed back on the proposals. It will be important to view the proposals in relation to the validity of qualifications, which is something our members are committed to.

It will also be important to focus on the manageability of the proposed requirements. We will need to ensure they add value without placing a disproportionate burden on awarding organisations or the centres we work with.

Mark Dawe, Chief Executive, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, said:

While to many it sounds like a technicality, the differences between verification and moderation are critical, particularly in terms of the timely confirmation of apprentices and students achievements. Ofqual have been very clear in their proposed approach and the potential issues.

As well as the regulatory approach, assessment organisations will need to commit to process speeds, whatever form of assessment is used.

We are interested in hearing from anyone concerned with how qualifications are assessed, including awarding organisations, training providers, business groups, colleges, trade bodies, schools organisations, employer partnerships and learners.

Those who are involved in centre assessment will also be an important source of feedback, and we particularly welcome their input.

[The consultation](#) is open until 20 May 2019.

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[News story: New standards set out YJB's child first approach](#)



Colin Allars, YJB Chief Executive, said:

These [standards](#) set out a child first, outcome-focused approach with ambitious expectations for the way children should be treated and supported when they come into contact with the youth justice system. Their publication is a significant milestone for the Youth Justice Board and is the first of seven priorities to be delivered

under the current business plan.

We are confident that these standards will provide those working with children with more opportunities to innovate whilst retaining the safeguards children and the system require.

Numerous colleagues and professionals contributed to the development of these standards, which take effect on 1 April 2019. Work to engage the sector included a consultation which closed on 26 November last year. The consultation received 61 responses and these were immensely helpful in shaping the standards.

You can [read our response to the consultation](#) online. We acted on the majority of comments and suggestions and made many improvements as a result. Some have been reflected in the standards themselves and others will be covered in the 'how to apply' section and case management guidance.

Further reading:

Published 25 February 2019

[Press release: Peppino Fiori: repeat offender subject to confiscation order](#)

In August 2018 Fiori was sentenced to 12 months immediate custody for possession with intent to supply fake Viagra. This sentence came just two years after a conviction for the same offence – in 2016 he had been sentenced to 12 months custody.

Fiori has been given 3 months to pay the confiscation order and will be sentenced to 18 months custody if he should default.

Approximately 60,640 doses of unlicensed medicine were seized, following investigation by the Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This included 2,200 doses of generic Tramadol, a powerful class C drug. It is thought that Fiori's hoard was worth more than £60,000.

Tariq Sarwar, MHRA's Head of Operation, said:

This confiscation follows a successful investigation by our Financial Investigation Team.

People who sell medicines illegally online are only interested in one thing – your money, not your health.

We will continue to track down and bring to justice those who are willing to put others' health in jeopardy and pursue them to take away their ill-gotten gains.

If you need advice or treatment for a condition, visit your GP. Make sure you obtain medical products from legitimate high street outlets or online retailers displaying the distance selling logo.

MHRA is currently running the #FakeMeds campaign to warn people against buying potentially dangerous or useless unlicensed medicines sold by illegal online suppliers. Visit www.gov.uk/fakemedes for tips on buying medicines safely online and how to avoid unscrupulous sites.

[Press release: Church bells to be back-up warning for flooding in Starcross](#)

Church bells will be the back-up warning for flooding in Starcross.

The Environment Agency has worked with Starcross Flood Group, St Paul's Church and flood wardens to create a contingency plan unique to the village if all usual forms of communication fail.

The chances of residents not getting warned by traditional electronic methods via the flood warning service are remote. But every flood plan has a contingency and Megan Debenham, the Flood Group Co-ordinator for Starcross, suggested using the 18th and 19th-century bells in St Paul's Church.

Community fundraisers and funding from the Environment Agency has restored the bells and surrounding masonry to their former glory and the bells returned to their tower on Tuesday 19 February 2019 after an absence of 4 months.

Jane Fletcher-Peters of the Environment Agency said:

As well as building flood defences, we also work with communities to create a flood plans – a set of actions of what to do in the event of flooding.

These plans always have a contingency for warning residents. While flood wardens knocking on doors is the most obvious solution, if flooding is at night, then residents could be asleep or wary of answering the door.

So we work together to find practical solutions like shining car headlights into houses and making people aware if that is accompanied by knocking, it could be a flood warden at the door.

Starcross is very much a boating community so it made sense that if the church bells were sounded to warn of flood, ringers would adopt an SOS peal familiar to residents.

Tim Miles, churchwarden of St Paul's Church, said:

We are very excited to welcome the bells back to the church and will sleep soundly knowing they are ready if needed to warn villagers of flooding.

Starcross' use of the church bells comes 13 months after the Environment Agency began £4million of work to better protect more than 600 properties from coastal flooding in the area. The Environment Agency installed 2 new floodgates at Church Road and Generals Lane slipway and raised the car park levels and extended the slipway at the Fishing and Cruising Club.

In Cockwood the harbour wall was raised along Dawlish Road in line with predicted sea level rises. There are also 2 tidal gates as part of the scheme that the community will operate on the Environment Agency's behalf.

There are 5.2 million homes and businesses in England at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency monitors flood risk and issues alerts and warnings accordingly:

- Flood Alert – Prepare. Flooding is possible
- Flood Warning – Act. Flooding is expected. Immediate action required
- Severe Flood Warning – Survive. Severe flooding. Danger to life

Check your flood risk, know what to do if flooding was expected, and be ready to respond. Check your flood risk and keep up to date with the latest situation at www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding, call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or follow [@EnvAgencySW](https://twitter.com/EnvAgencySW) on Twitter for the latest flood updates in Devon and Cornwall.