

# News story: UK Space Agency hosts Government Chief Scientific Adviser

Dr Vallance, who took up the role of GCSA in April, visited the Satellite Applications Catapult, where he met UK Space Agency Chief Executive Dr Graham Turnock along with UK Space Agency directors Catherine Mealing-Jones and Chris Castelli, Stuart Martin, Chief Executive of the Satellite Applications Catapult and Keira Shepperson, a member of the UK Space Agency Audit Committee.

He was also given a tour of STFC RAL Space's R100 building by STFC RAL Space Director Dr Christopher Mutlow where he met Ben Olivier, Chief Executive of Thales Alenia Space UK, and Professor Andrew Holland from the Space Action Network (SPAN).

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

"The Harwell Space Cluster boasts world-leading skills, with a rapidly growing group of 80 space organisations employing 800 people. From start-ups to multinationals, and academia to national R&D facilities, the cluster is a vital part of the UK Space Agency's ambition to grow Britain's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030.

"It was fantastic to have the opportunity to introduce Dr Vallance to some of the jewels in the crown of the UK space sector."

Dr Patrick Vallance said:

"My first impression is I'm impressed by the business opportunity in the space sector being bigger than people might realise. The second is the ability to have a facility like the Harwell Space Cluster that supports businesses by providing the sort of infrastructure and basic scientific and technical knowledge that businesses can't just get going themselves is critically important.

"There's a very strong academic sector that feeds into the space sector and that's a really important basis for growth in this area. If there was ever an opportunity for a business sector to grow this looks like one of them."

The role of the GCSA is to advise the Prime Minister and government on all matters related to science and technology and to ensure that policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking.

The GCSA is head of the Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession and Co-chair of the independent [Council for Science and Technology](#) which provides high level advice to the Prime Minister.

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# News story: Cannabis-derived medicinal products to be made available on prescription

The Home Secretary decided to reschedule these products after receiving advice from experts during the two-part review he commissioned on June 19. It means that senior clinicians will be able to prescribe the medicines to patients with an exceptional clinical need.

The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) will now develop a clear definition of what constitutes a cannabis-derived medicinal product so they can be rescheduled and prescribed. Only products meeting this definition will be rescheduled. Other forms of cannabis will be kept under strict controls and will not be available on prescription.

In the meantime, clinicians will still be able to apply to the independent expert panel on behalf of patients wishing to access these products. The Home Secretary also confirmed today that all licence fees for applications made to the panel will be waived, and no fees will be charged in respect of applications which have already been granted.

The government is clear that today's announcement does not pave the way towards legalising cannabis for recreational use. The penalties for unauthorised supply and possession will remain unchanged.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Recent cases involving sick children made it clear to me that our position on cannabis-related medicinal products was not satisfactory.

That is why we launched a review and set up an expert panel to advise on licence applications in exceptional circumstances.

Following advice from two sets of independent advisers, I have taken the decision to reschedule cannabis-derived medicinal products – meaning they will be available on prescription.

This will help patients with an exceptional clinical need, but is in no way a first step to the legalisation of cannabis for recreational use.

In the first part of the review commissioned by the Home Secretary, the Chief Medical Advisor, Professor Dame Sally Davies, concluded that there is

evidence that medicinal cannabis has therapeutic benefits.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) carried out the second part of the review, considering the appropriate schedule for cannabis-derived medicinal products, based on the balance of harms and public health requirements.

The ACMD recommended that such products meeting a clear definition of what constitutes a cannabis-derived medicinal product should be placed in Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. It agreed that there is evidence of medicinal benefits from some of these products in certain circumstances and clinicians in the UK should therefore have the option to prescribe cannabis-derived medicinal products for their patients.

In line with the ACMD's recommendations, DHSC and the Home Office will develop additional frameworks and clinical guidelines to ensure that cannabis-derived medicinal products can be prescribed safely to patients but cannot be traded illicitly.

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## **[Press release: £45 million investment in rural broadband](#)**

Rural businesses and communities are set to benefit from improved broadband access as part of a £45 million boost by the government.

The new funding for the government's [Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme](#)

adds to the £30 million investment announced last year, increasing the total pot of funding available to £75 million.

The money will be made available through grants to local authorities that have already applied for funding, in areas where broadband services at speeds of 30Mbps or faster are not available or planned. The funding will be used to support full fibre wherever possible.

It follows the launch of the Government's [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) this week which outlined plans to prioritise hard-to-reach rural areas for roll out of full fibre connectivity.

Visiting North York Moors National Park today, Lord Gardiner will announce that North Yorkshire is one of the local authorities to receive funding through the scheme with a grant offer of over £11 million.

Rural Affairs Minister Lord Gardiner said:

I am delighted to announce today that North Yorkshire has been awarded a grant of £11 million towards improving its broadband infrastructure.

Rural areas should not be left behind in the connectivity slow lane, missing out on the opportunities high speed broadband can bring. The funding made available through the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme champions our countryside communities and businesses by opening up access to broadband of at least 30 Megabits per second, in some of the most hard to reach areas.

The increased funding for the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme follows a positive response and a high number of applications from local authorities. It is part of planned investment of at least £3.5 billion into our rural economies by 2020, supporting the quarter of businesses in the UK which are based in the countryside.

The scheme is delivered by the Rural Payments Agency and supports those rural areas which are not currently scheduled to receive broadband as part of commercial delivery plans or under the Government's [Superfast Broadband Programme](#), which expects to give access to superfast broadband to around 97% of UK premises over the next few years.

With nearly a fifth of people living in the countryside, it is important that the needs of rural communities are heard loud and clear across government. In addition to driving forward high speed internet, the government is championing housing availability and supporting job creation.

Lord Gardiner is today visiting the North York Moors National Park as part of National Parks Week where he will also meet a number of young workers and apprentices. North York Moors supported 120 apprentices through its Apprenticeship Programme, amounting to over 50,000 working days.

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