

[News story: Government support to boost skills and prosperity](#)

The government today (1 October 2018) announced a package of measures to support business to boost skills, growth and prosperity in the new economy.

The Chancellor Philip Hammond pledged government support for apprenticeships, adult training, to boost management skills in small businesses, and to ensure the UK's world-class regulatory system is fit for the future.

Apprenticeships

The Chancellor announced [a package of reforms and £95 million increase to the Apprenticeship Levy](#) to ensure it continues to help business train people with the skills they need for the new economy.

Management skills for small firms

The government's recent productivity review found the UK's thriving small business community is facing a management skills challenge. To address this, the Chancellor announced £20 million will be invested in networks to enable small businesses to learn from each other and from world-leading firms. Over 100 mentors from companies, such as GSK, Amazon, KPMG and Siemens, have already signed up to offer their management expertise.

He said a further £11 million will pay for a training programme that will build the necessary management skills lacking in many SMEs. This will help 2,000 businesses in its first year, with an ambition to train 10,000 people per year by 2025.

Adult skills/National retraining scheme

The government wants to work with employers to give every worker the opportunity to upskill or retrain for the new economy. The Chancellor pledged £100 million for the first phase of the National Retraining Scheme, announced in the last Budget, which will be rolled out next year.

He said this will include a new careers guidance service with expert advice to help people identify work opportunities in their area and what they need to do to get the skills to land the job. This will be backed up with state-of-the-art courses combining online learning with traditional classroom teaching to help people develop the key transferable skills for jobs of the future.

Independent review into utilities regulators

The UK has a world-class regulatory system which protects the interests of consumers. But it needs to be fit to respond to the challenges of the future to remain cutting-edge. Therefore the Chancellor announced he will commission

the National Infrastructure Commission to carry out an independent study of the telecoms, energy and water regulators. This will ensure they have the ability to encourage investment, promote competition and innovation and meet the needs of consumers in the 21st-century.

Midlands Engine

The Chancellor also announced £2 million for the Midlands Engine Partnership to support a study into how best to redevelop the area around Toton in the East Midlands, to ensure it maximises the growth opportunities offered by HS2.

Collection: Food, Farming and Bio-security statistics

Working alongside our Defra group partner organisations: Animal and Plant Health Agency, Rural Payments Agency and Veterinary Medicines Directorate, we produce a wide range of statistics on the food we grow, sell and consume; farm productivity and management; farm commodity prices; health and welfare of farm animals and the control of animal and plant diseases.

[Our products](#)

[Our partners within Defra group](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Food statistics

- [family food statistics](#)
- [food chain analysis](#)
- [food statistics pocketbook](#)
- [food transport indicators](#)
- [overseas trade](#)
- [sustainable food system indicators](#)

Farming statistics

Farming

- [agriculture in the United Kingdom](#)
- [agriculture in England regional profiles](#)

Farm management statistics

- [aggregate agricultural accounts](#)
- [farm business survey](#)
- [agricultural productivity and competitiveness analyses](#)
- [productivity of the agricultural industry](#)

Commodities and farm-gate prices

- [agricultural price indices](#)
- [animal feed production](#)
- [cattle, sheep and pig slaughter](#)
- [cereal usage and stocks](#)
- [commodity prices](#)
- [egg production and prices](#)
- [fruit and vegetable wholesale prices](#)
- [milk utilisation by dairies](#)
- [milk prices and composition](#)
- [poultry and poultry meat statistics](#)

Land management and environmental issues

- [agricultural statistics and climate change](#)
- [agri-environment indicators](#)
- [agri-environment analysis](#)
- [farm practices survey](#)
- [fertiliser usage](#)
- [land under environmental management](#)

Land use and livestock

- [farm animal genetic resources](#)
- [horticultural statistics](#)
- [non-food crops](#)
- [orchard fruit](#)
- [organic farming](#)
- [structure of the agricultural industry](#)

Bio-security statistics

- [animal on-farm welfare inspections](#)
- [bovine TB](#)

Our partners within Defra group

- [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#)
- [Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\)](#)
- [Veterinary Medicines Directorate \(VMD\)](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)

- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)
- [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board \(AHDB\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The food, farming and biosecurity portfolio of official statistics is large (over 50 different products) and well established – with many of our datasets having a long historical archive. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

One key driver of the way that the portfolio will evolve will be the new policy context for this topic, for example as a result of the forthcoming Agriculture Act and, more broadly, as a consequence of exiting the EU, increased demand for statistics in areas such as food and food trade.

[Collection: Marine and fisheries statistics](#)

Statistics on the UK fishing industry and its operations, along with international comparisons, stock assessments and information on fish imports and exports, are available on the Marine Management Organisation's sea fisheries statistics website.

Research and data on marine and freshwater aquatic environments, biodiversity and fisheries are available on the Cefas website.

[Our products](#)

[Our partners within Defra group](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Currently official and national statistics related to marine and fisheries topics are produced by Defra's relevant arms' length bodies.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

- [UK fishing industry and its operations](#)

Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas)

- [Marine and freshwater aquatic environments](#)

Our partners within Defra group

- [Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\)](#)
- [Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science \(Cefas\)](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The current marine and fisheries portfolio of statistics is small and focuses on sea fisheries, although the environmental portfolio of statistics includes some official statistics on the state of the marine environment (e.g. the UK Biodiversity Indicators).

International and domestic agreements, such as [OSPAR](#) and the [UK Marine Strategy](#), produce a much more extensive set of indicators on the state of the marine environment and we are currently exploring the potential need for official statistics on the state of the marine environment.

As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

[Collection: Rural Communities statistics](#)

Defra provides a collection of high level statistics which present an overall picture of living in rural areas across England.

[Our products](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Developing our portfolio](#)

Our Products

Rural Communities statistics

- [rural urban classification](#)
- [rural economy – statistical indicators](#)
- [rural living – statistical indicators](#)
- [census rural analyses](#)
- [statistical digest of rural England](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The rural portfolio of official statistics is different to the remainder of the wider Defra portfolio in that much of it focuses on looking again at wider socio and economic statistics and drawing out insights by applying the official definitions of rural and urban communities to explore differences as well as rural specific trends. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of environmental statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

[News story: Rail passengers to benefit from 'one-click' compensation](#)

- new government measures to require train operators to make compensation claims easier for customers
- increased use of technology to help inform passengers they are entitled to claim
- government working with companies to ensure more consistency across network as figures show compensation paid at record levels

New rules making it easier for rail passengers to claim compensation for

delays and disruption have been announced today (1 October 2018).

The introduction of simple and speedy 'one-click' automated claims systems, available via smartphones and smartcard registration, form part of stronger obligations for future train operators under UK government-awarded franchises, ensuring that passengers are more aware than ever of their right to compensation.

This builds on extensive work by government to deliver improved compensation for passengers, following the extension of Delay Repay 15 to Northern services from the end of this year, working with industry to establish a new ombudsman to handle complaints, and introducing smart, paperless ticketing across the majority of the network by the end of the year.

Today's announcement coincides with the publication of reports by the Department for Transport (DfT) which show the total amount of compensation paid to passengers has risen 80% in the past 2 years, as the government has increased the requirements of train operators to publicise passengers' rights. Claims are also being dealt with more quickly, with 67% now resolved within 2 weeks compared to 48% in 2016.

The reports also highlight the need for increased use of technology; 53% of passengers state that they are now claiming for compensation online, up from 31% in 2016, with users of smartcards or mobile phone tickets most likely to make a claim.

The DfT is working with all train operators to better promote awareness of schemes such as Delay Repay and encourage them to bring in automated processes for informing passengers of their rights to claim.