

# UK-Russia Arctic Science Links webinar series 2020-2021

World news story

Between September 2020 and March 2021, SIN Russia in partnership with the NERC Arctic Office designed, developed and delivered the UK-Russia Arctic Science Links webinar series.



The UK-Russia Arctic Science webinar series was aimed at facilitating practical links between UK-based Arctic researchers and Russia's leading research institutions and connecting the UK Arctic science community to collaborative opportunities for future joint work across Russia despite the challenges of the pandemic. The webinar series is part of a long-standing programme of SIN-supported scientific exchanges and activities between UK and Russian Arctic research communities. Delivered jointly with multiple UK and Russian partners over the past three years, the programme has generated long-term collaborative projects, bilateral research networks, institutional partnerships involving top universities and institutes, an increase in joint publications and bespoke training opportunities for UK and Russian early career researchers.

The webinar series comprised four online events organised jointly with our partners: Yugra State University (Khanty-Mansiisk, Siberia), Tomsk State

University (Tomsk, Siberia), Kola Science Centre (Apatity, the Murmansk region), and the Open Ocean Project & Association Maritime Heritage (St. Petersburg).

Each webinar was a unique opportunity to hear directly from leading researchers about ongoing and upcoming Arctic-related science projects, discover a new research institution, hear about local research facilities and opportunities for fieldwork, and learn more about Russia's Arctic regions and what makes each of them a unique research environment.

The webinars were well-received by the research community and attracted a large audience, including early career scientists. In total around 320 people registered for the four events. A dedicated webpage was set up for each of the events with background info on the institutions and speakers and the recordings were made available online afterwards.

The webinars created time and space for UK and Russian researchers to explore opportunities for practical connections with new partners, participate in dynamic scientific discussions and engage in quality networking for future Arctic science cooperation. Discussions during the webinars demonstrated a clear mutual interest in strengthening science links further and helped research groups and institutions from both countries to establish direct channels of communication and map matching research priorities.

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## **[Geospatial Commission launches pilots to improve how data about land is used in the UK](#)**

Three pilots in Devon, West Midlands and Northern Ireland will test how to identify and improve key data that helps inform decisions on whether land across the UK is used for housing, infrastructure or net zero.

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## **[Geospatial Commission launches pilots](#)**

# to improve how data about land is used in the UK



Land is the UK's most valuable asset, worth £5.4 trillion in 2017. This finite resource faces competing demands from housing, planning, infrastructure, farming, food production, carbon sequestration, flood protection, habitat creation, underground mineral and geothermal resources.

Demands on land will increase with the need to reach target reductions in net zero greenhouse gas emissions, build more affordable and sustainable homes, and deliver over £600 billion of infrastructure investment over the next five years to Build Back Better.

The Geospatial Commission is working with its pilot area partners in Devon, West Midlands and Northern Ireland, investing £4.56 million as part of a new National Land Data Programme. The pilots will deliver a blueprint for land use data improvement priorities, evidence about how to overcome the data access challenges, and test the benefits of a common UK-wide platform for land use data.

Lord True CBE, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, said:

To make the right choices about how we use our land, we need to ensure that the relevant data are available. The National Land Data Programme pilots will provide insights into the current data access challenges to help improve data that supports effective decision-making and contributes towards critical government priorities, including working towards net zero and housing development.

Sir Bernard Silverman, GC Chair, said:

Having recently been appointed chair of the Geospatial Commission, I am excited to see the launch of the National Land Data Programme pilots. They will be critical in delivering improved access to better location data, one of the key commitments made in the UK Geospatial Strategy.

For more information about the year ahead, read the [Geospatial Commission Annual Plan 2021/22](#).

## Notes

1. Spending Round 2019 announced £200 million for the Shared Outcomes Fund to fund pilot projects to test innovative ways of working across the public sector, with an emphasis on thorough plans for evaluation.
2. Central departments across Whitehall are closely involved. Defra, BEIS, MHCLG, DfT and ONS all sit on the Programme Steering Board and the programme team is working to ensure policy alignment.
3. You can now [apply](#) for the opportunity to be part of the procurement for the programme's data sharing platform and external evaluation.
4. The programme will be delivered and evaluated by the end of FY 2022/23.

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Last updated 8 September 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 8 September 2021

Link to apply for the procurement for the programme's data sharing platform and external evaluation added to editors notes.

2. 31 August 2021

First published.

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## [Veterans' mental health services to receive £2.7 million boost](#)

Armed forces veterans will benefit from extra support including extra mental health services thanks to a further £2.7 million funding

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## [Veterans' mental health services to receive £2.7 million boost](#)

- Additional mental health services to be rolled out to veterans through Op COURAGE
- Support will be tailored to those dealing with complex mental or physical trauma or alcohol and substance misuse
- Dedicated care co-ordinators will be appointed to reduce suicide rates

Armed Forces veterans, including those who served in Afghanistan, will benefit from additional mental health support backed by £2.7 million for Op COURAGE – the Veterans’ Mental Health and Wellbeing Service.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid has today (31 August) announced an expansion of services to support those experiencing complex mental and/or physical trauma, or alcohol and substance misuse.

Dedicated care co-ordinators will be appointed to act as a single point of contact to better support veterans with complex mental and physical trauma. They will help them to navigate the health and care system, consult with health and care professionals, with the ultimate aim of reducing suicide rates within the veteran community.

**Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:**

Our serving Armed Forces and veterans represent the very best of us, with recent events in Afghanistan yet another reminder of their dedication and sacrifice.

Op COURAGE already provides excellent support for veterans’ mental health, but I know there is more we can do to get the right care and treatment to those who have given up so much to protect us.

This new funding will ensure support is in place where it is needed most, recognising the unique challenges veterans face.

This additional funding builds on the significant mental health support provided by NHS England in recognition of the unique needs of veterans and the challenges they face, including through the Veterans’ Trauma Network and Op COURAGE which has already received over 16,000 referrals to date.

It is estimated 38,000 members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans, suffer from alcohol and substance misuse. The funding will ensure dedicated substance misuse services are integrated as part of Op COURAGE, making it as easy as possible to access support.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

The campaign in Afghanistan was incredibly challenging but our personnel displayed the highest levels of bravery and professionalism whilst securing the rights and freedoms of millions.

Many of our people experienced things they will never forget, and we remain committed to supporting this veteran community through Op COURAGE. We are forever indebted to the heroics and sacrifice of our service personnel and veterans, and pledge to ensure they receive any support they need.

## **Minister for Defence People and Veterans Leo Docherty said:**

This targeted increase of support will help those veterans who may be struggling, particularly in light of recent events in Afghanistan.

For those who served in Afghanistan, and for all former service personnel, mental health support is available through Op Courage.

I urge any veteran to access this specialist support.

## **Background**

If you are struggling as a result of the recent events in Afghanistan, there is support available across the United Kingdom for veterans and those affected:

- In England, veterans and their families in England can get specialist help from the NHS Op COURAGE service.
- In Wales, you can reach out to Veteran Therapists in each Local Health Board through Veteran Wales.
- In Scotland, veterans can access veteran-led mental health and welfare support through Veterans First Point, part of NHS Scotland.
- In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office links individual veterans, veterans' groups, statutory and non-statutory bodies, and charities supporting veterans.
- Anyone in the UK or overseas can also contact the Veterans' Gateway helpline on 0808 802 1212, or visit the website for advice and signposting to further support, including for families and the bereaved.