

News story: Bridging Payments for Environmental Stewardship customers

We are making bridging payments to farmers and land managers to ensure all those who claimed for 2016 and / or 2017 will have received at least 75% of their payment for those years by the end of September.

All eligible Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreement holders who claimed for 2016 and 2017 payments and have not yet received 75% of their claim for those years will receive a bridging payment by the end of September.

A bridging payment is an interest-free loan to customers in advance of their full year payment. Customers will receive 75% of the current estimated value of their ES revenue claim. When the full payment is processed and made, the amount paid through the bridging payment will be held back.

Where a 50% advance payment has already been made to a claimant, customers will receive a 25% top up when bridging payments are made.

Letters and emails are being sent to farmers and land managers awaiting payments this week, with a reminder to make sure bank account and contact details on the [Rural Payments Service](#) are up-to-date so that bridging payments can be made successfully.

Customers do not need to do anything to receive the payment, as Natural England will check records to identify eligible customers entitled to bridging payments.

Payment for environmental work undertaken is a government priority as set out in the Agriculture Bill published earlier this week. These payments are important to customers, and an improvement plan to the delivery of Environmental Stewardship and Countryside Stewardship payments is underway, with the Rural Payments Agency taking charge of delivery of both schemes from 1 October.

Press release: UK showcases climate change efforts at global summit

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Mark Field and the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change Nick Bridge are attending the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco on 13-14 September 2018. Governments, businesses and civil society have come together to discuss efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to transition to low carbon

economies.

Throughout the summit, the UK has showcased a range of national and international commitments to tackle climate change, from driving the development of the zero emissions transport sector, to our support for small states and vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Powering Past Coal Alliance has also announced ten new members from across the US, Europe, and Australasia. Jointly initiated by the US and Canada, the coalition of 74 governments, businesses, and other organisations is committed to ending the use of unabated coal power within the timeframe of the Paris Agreement.

Minister Mark Field said:

Climate change is a global problem and one that needs to be tackled at every level, from international, to national and local governments, and with a huge role to play for businesses and individuals.

The UK is looking beyond our strong record on climate action at home. We are working across the world to help reduce emissions and create a safer, more prosperous future for all people. We also want to help UK businesses capitalise on the growing investment opportunities as countries transition to clean, low carbon economies.

Nick Bridge, the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change said:

We are delighted that ten new members have this week joined our international alliance to end the use of unabated coal power. Rapidly decreasing our dependency on coal is crucial to meeting our global Paris Agreement commitments.

The UK has committed to ending unabated coal power generation by 2025 and we want to help other countries and organisations who share the same ambition.

Earlier this month, Minister Field attended the Pacific Islands Forum [3-6 September] where climate change was top of the agenda as an issue urgently facing small islands. The UK is one of the largest contributors of international climate finance and in the four years to 2020 will be giving developing countries over £5.5 billion to help them mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The visit also follows the UK-hosted international Zero Emissions Vehicle Summit [11-12 September] which brought together government and industry leaders to drive forward the development of the ultra low and zero vehicle

emission market, in order to reduce emissions and improve air quality. In July, the Government set out its ambition for at least half of new cars to be ultra low emission by 2030. All new cars and vans will be effectively zero emission by 2040.

The first ever Green Great Britain Week will be held from 15 October, designed to highlight the opportunities that clean growth offers and raise awareness of how business and the public can tackle climate change.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field on Twitter [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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[Press release: Opening access to the countryside](#)

The country's first ever specialist centre to open up access to the countryside for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs as well as disabled and able-bodied horse riders, cyclists and walkers was launched today at Oxfordshire's Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve.

The new National Land Access Centre, located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has been designed to demonstrate the use, maintenance and installation of gaps, gates and stiles meeting the new British Standard for improved countryside access.

The centre has been developed by Natural England, in partnership with The

British Horse Society, Centrewire and the Pittecroft Trust, to ensure those who usually struggle with access to the countryside can access the natural environment and enjoy England's beautiful countryside.

Natural England research shows there are around 519 million visits to paths, cycleways and bridleways in England each year.

However, mobility issues can be a major barrier to people heading to the countryside. Over 20% of England's population cannot use public rights of way, either because they cannot use stiles or kissing gates themselves, or they are accompanying someone who can't.

Deputy Chair of Natural England Lord Blencathra said:

This project is the culmination of many years of partnership working and determination to ensure that our countryside can rightfully be enjoyed by everyone.

Improved access will help to connect more people with their natural environment, giving them a chance to enjoy our countryside, its open space and fascinating wildlife— all key aspects of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

I am delighted that Natural England has played a key role in the partnership responsible for developing the National Land Access Centre, which has the potential to make such a difference to people's lives.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton said:

Getting out into the countryside is an experience that many of us take for granted, but for disabled people it can often be much more difficult to access nature. The National Land Access Centre will play an important role in ensuring everyone can enjoy the outstanding natural beauty our country has to offer.

John Cuthbertson, Chairman for the Disabled Ramblers, said:

I'm over the moon at the spirit of co-ordination and co-operation which has led to the development of the new National Land Access Centre.

Open access has got the ability to transform lives. We look forward to using the centre to test the new structures, helping to shape the future of access to the countryside.

Mark Weston, Director of Access for The British Horse Society, said:

We're very pleased to see the launch of the new National Land Access Centre, which builds on recommendations of the Bridlegate Trial started in partnership with Natural England in 2015.

The Centre will help to ensure the new British Standard becomes a reality, securing safe open access to the countryside not only for horse riders but for all users of the outdoors.

Today's launch of the National Land Access Centre also marks the 60th anniversary of Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, one of the first National Nature Reserves in the country to offer wider public access.

Since 1994, members of the public have actively been encouraged to explore the reserve through the removal of unnecessary stiles, gates and fences and the installation of easy-access gates. This is key to the National Nature Reserve Strategy, itself a year old in September, which seeks to see England's nature restored, enriched and reconnected to people.

Landowners, land managers, rights of way officers and other users will be able to book onto training courses at the National Land Access Centre to aid understanding of the new standard and its application. This will involve testing new equipment with a view to installing it across the nation.

The British Standard 5709:2018 for Gaps, Gates and Stiles requires 'the least restrictive option' to be made available to users. Its implementation will help ensure that everyone can access and enjoy the countryside.

Visitors to the centre will be able to access specialist equipment, try out new designs and touch and test real examples in situ to fully understand this new equipment in operation. They can learn about its installation and maintenance, and see what compliance with the British Standard looks like in practice.

More information is available about Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, Oxfordshire's National Nature Reserves and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

[Policy paper: The future for food, farming and the environment: policy statement \(2018\)](#)

Updated: Replaced the policy statement with a HTML version and added the timeline as a separate document.

This policy statement sets out our expectations for agricultural policy for England over the next 10 years. It also outlines how the [Agriculture Bill](#) will set the foundations to achieve this.

This document focuses on policy for England. We will be working with the rest of the UK to develop any necessary UK-wide legislation and administrative common frameworks.

Corporate report: Statement of the Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account, 2017 to 2018

This statement sets out the notional funding available from the consolidated fund for use by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) during 2016 to 2017 on its activities, and the funding that the NDA drew down from the consolidated fund during that period.