

[Office of Tax Simplification looks to expand board membership](#)

News story

The Office of Tax Simplification is currently advertising for two additional independent board members.



The OTS is currently looking to expand the independent membership of its board, with the creation of two additional positions.

Experience of tax is welcome, but ideally candidates will in particular bring skills and expertise relevant to the modern world of tax – such as customer transformation or service digitisation, alongside an open mind and keenness to simplify the UK tax system.

More details about the two roles and how to apply can be found [here](#).

The deadline for written applications is 25 September 2022.

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[The VMD's online services will be unavailable 26 to 30 August](#)

News story

The VMD's online services will be shut down from 5pm Friday 26 August for essential maintenance.

Access Veterinary Medicines Digital Services

Sign in to your account

Apply for Marketing Authorisations, send secure messages and report adverse events for businesses that you're associated with.

[Sign in](#)

Due to essential maintenance work the following services will be unavailable from 5pm Friday 26 August until 6am Tuesday 30:

- Special Import Service
- Export Certificates
- Animal Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Human Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Microchip Adverse Event Reporting
- Product Information Database
- Veterinary Medicines Digital Service

Along with access to the following Registers:

- Register of SQP Retailer Premises
- Register of SQPs
- List of Accredited Internet Retailers
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – AVAs
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – NFABBA, ESCCA
- Register of Veterinary-only GMP sites

In urgent cases where the VMD has previously issued a certificate for the animal(s) under your care, you may purchase and use an imported veterinary medicine prior to obtaining a certificate from the VMD. This is a special dispensation which only applies to the VMD online system during this essential maintenance period.

You should obtain an import certificate retrospectively as soon as possible and cease use if not subsequently granted.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

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Live firing exercise tests latest soldier systems

Using a specially designed obstacle course, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) team conducted a pilot study to assess the effects of the SA-80 L85A2 versus the L85A3 rifle with 6 soldiers from 5th Battalion, The Rifles.

The Soldier Weapon and Equipment Assessment Tool (SWEAT) tests the impact of soldier equipment on firing accuracy, consistency, speed and mobility.

These tests were executed as part of [NATO Science and Technology Organization \(STO\)](#) Research Task Group SAS-145. This research is overseen by STO's System Analysis and Studies (SAS) Panel, NATO's Expert Panel for Analytical Advice, which promotes the exchange of trial data and enhance interoperability within the Alliance.

SWEAT trial

Jon from Dstl said:

The idea behind the SWEAT course is that anyone can measure the effects of future soldier capability, such as a new weapons system, new boots, a new helmet or new body armour, and assess the effect that will provide upon the individual's lethality.

This course for the UK, in the future, will be used to measure the effects of new capabilities for soldiers.

The final objective of the trial is for it to be used and developed by NATO nations to develop their own courses that are similar enough to allow interoperability between nations.

A soldier from 5th Battalion, The Rifles, runs the obstacle course

Scientists make observations during the trial

The 2-day exercise took place on Salisbury Plain using a UK SA-80 L85 A2 and updated A3 variants of the individual weapon.

Participants ran the course twice to compare results.

The course consisted of 14 firing points and 36 actions, requiring soldiers to engage targets ranging from 25m to 400m from a variety of firing positions.

Elizabeth, of the US Army, observing on behalf of NATO, said:

It's doing something novel and innovative.

Taking different components that have been separated, so lethality, survivability and mobility – bringing them into a course that comprehensively tests soldier systems.

It's a much better evaluation than has existed before.

Find out more about [Dstl's areas of work](#) and [how we support the MOD and wider government](#) with cutting- edge science and technology.

[Dental merger raises competition concerns in parts of Yorkshire and Derbyshire](#)

Press release

An initial investigation by the CMA into an acquisition of dental practices has found competition concerns in parts of Doncaster, Yorkshire and Alfreton, Derbyshire.



Image credit: CMA

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) carried out a Phase 1 investigation into the completed purchase of Dental Partners Group Limited (Dental Partners) by Riviera Bidco Limited (Riviera) – owner of existing dental practice operator Rodericks Dental Limited (Rodericks).

The investigation looked at the potential impact of the merger in the areas

where both businesses currently offer NHS or private dental treatments. While sufficient competition will remain after the merger in most cases, the CMA found that the merger would raise competition concerns in the provision of general NHS dental treatments, such as check-ups and fillings, in areas within Doncaster and Alfreton.

The removal of Dental Partners as an independent competitor could lead to reduced choice for patients in these two areas, where the availability of NHS dental appointments is already limited.

Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, the businesses accepted that the merger would raise concerns in these 2 areas and asked the CMA to move straight to a discussion of potential remedies to address these concerns.

Riviera now has 5 working days to formally offer proposals to the CMA to address the competition concerns identified. The CMA would then have a further 5 working days to consider whether to accept these in principle instead of referring the case to a Phase 2 investigation.

Sorcha O'Carroll, CMA Senior Director of Mergers, said:

Residents in parts of Doncaster and Alfreton rely on accessing quality NHS dental treatment when it is needed – we're looking at this deal to ensure this can continue.

It's now for the businesses involved to address our concerns, to prevent a loss of competition in these areas and resolve any need for further investigation.

For more information please see the [Riviera Bidco Limited / Dental Partners Group Limited case page](#).

1. More information on the CMA's fast track procedure can be found in section 7 of Mergers: [Guidance on the CMA's jurisdiction and procedure](#).
2. The CMA is, in most cases, required to issue a Phase 1 decision within 40 working days. Merging parties are required to formally offer proposed remedies (undertakings in lieu (UILs)) within 5 working days after receiving the CMA's Phase 1 decision and the CMA then decides, within 10 working days after the Phase 1 decision, whether to provisionally accept the UILs offered. The CMA then has 50 working days (subject to an extension of up to 40 working days) to consider whether to finally accept these remedies.
3. The CMA's concerns relate to the provision of NHS treatment by the parties within parts of Doncaster, Yorkshire and Alfreton, Derbyshire. The cost of treatments through these appointments is strictly regulated by the NHS – so patients will pay the same if they are able to get

treatment.

4. All enquiries from journalists should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
5. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.

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[STEP forward to fusion](#)

UK Atomic Energy Authority has confirmed several partners this month to help advance its ambitious STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme as it seeks to demonstrate the commercial viability of fusion energy.

Led by Atkins and energy transition specialists Assystem, the Tranche 1 Engineering Delivery Partner will play a critical role in STEP's ambitions to design and build a commercial-scale prototype fusion energy plant through to March 2024. The partners will inform the development of the concept design for STEP, which is one of the programme's key objectives in Tranche 1.

Tristram Denton, Head of Commercial and Programme Development for STEP, said: "Fusion has great potential to deliver safe, sustainable, low carbon energy for generations to come, and STEP is leading the way. It's an ambitious programme operating at the forefront of science, technology and engineering.

"It's clear we must make significant changes to address the effects of climate change, and STEP's delivery partners will play a crucial role in our quest to making fusion a reality."

Meanwhile, UKAEA has teamed up with Oxford Sigma (OS), Frazer-Nash Consultancy (FNC) and TÜV UK to train the next generation of fusion engineers in tackling the engineering challenges of commercial fusion energy.

Training material developed in conjunction with UKAEA's partners will ensure fusion engineers are equipped with state-of-the-art skills on designing for, and mitigating against, radiation damage in fusion energy devices.

Terry Thompson, STEP Control Systems Lead, UKAEA, said: "Through UKAEA's collaboration with OS, FNC and TÜV UK we have managed to bring together a body of material which represents the leading edge in relation to international understanding of radiation effects and good design practices,

which will drive forward the development of the first fusion power plants and fusion energy as a commercial reality.”

Mark Anderton, Engineer at Oxford Sigma, added: “The skills and guidance provided in the training package we’ve produced in partnership with UKAEA, Frazer-Nash, and TÜV UK are invaluable resources for the next generation of engineers. It is an exciting step forward in achieving fusion whilst simultaneously supporting the young people tasked with our future.”

The announcement of STEP’s site location is expected later this year following UKAEA’s recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The STEP site will become a global hub for a wide range of engineering, technological and scientific expertise, leading to massive economic opportunities for the UK.

For further information, visit: step.ukaea.uk