

£22 million awarded to farmers to boost productivity

More than 3,600 farmers are set to benefit from £22 million in productivity-boosting equipment from round two of the government's Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme.

Under the scheme, farmers can apply for grants of between £3,000 and £12,000 to invest in new and innovative equipment – from livestock monitoring cameras to precision farming technology – which help businesses save time and money and improve productivity.

Farming Minister George Eustice confirmed today that all eligible applications have been approved as part of round two of the successful scheme, with the Rural Payments Agency writing to the 3,677 successful applicants from today.

The first round of funding opened in 2018, with £15 million spent to support farmers investing in technology to boost their productivity. Today's announcement means that £37 million has been allocated to farmers in the scheme's first two funding rounds, with a third and final funding round to open in autumn 2020.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

Boosting farm productivity is hugely important, and I'm delighted we've been able to fund all applications, supporting farmers to invest in game-changing technology.

As a former farmer I know that new equipment can provide a real boost, saving businesses time and money while improving yields.

When we introduce our landmark Agriculture Bill we will set out further measures to help farmers become more productive, efficient and resilient.

The Rural Payments Agency is encouraging farmers to speak to their suppliers to confirm the items they wish to order are available before accepting their grant by using the acceptance portal on GOV.UK by 10 November.

New items were added to the list of the equipment available for the second round of the Small Grants Scheme, with grants available to minimise soil compaction in fields, monitor ammonia levels in farm buildings, and increase machinery precision when applying slurry.

Farmers are encouraged to make early orders to leave time for deliveries to arrive and payment claims to be processed by the end of May 2020.

Rural Payments Agency Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

The Small Grants scheme is extremely popular with farmers, so it is fantastic to see the funding is being made available for all the eligible applications we received for round two. Harnessing innovative technology can provide a real boost for productivity across the farming sector in England, and I am delighted that we are able to help unlock access to new equipment for many farmers.

I would encourage all our customers to contact their suppliers early to ensure their items can be delivered ahead of the claim deadline.

More information on the Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme can be found [here](#).

[UK technology headlines at CEBIT Australia](#)

The UK will feature as the lead partner country for Australia's annual tech exhibition, [CEBIT](#) this week.

2018 saw the UK attract more venture capital investment than anywhere else in Europe, with £6.3 billion (AUD \$11 billion) in funding from investors – an injection of capital that is driving innovation and proving a magnet for global buyers, investors, and talent.

Joining the UK Department for International Trade (DIT) on the GREAT Britain pavilion (stand F45) will be [10 disruptive UK companies showcasing the very latest in technology innovation](#) in areas from cyber to smart cities and artificial intelligence, who are seeking business and partnership opportunities in Australia.

DIT will also run a series of workshops over the three-day conference to highlight the UK's capability and expertise in emerging technology and share the very latest insights and trends from the UK's burgeoning tech eco-system.

Tech scaleups and startups with ambitions to expand globally will benefit from DIT's overseas business segment presentation and their investment workshop: 'UK Calling – The Road to a Successful Expansion'. DIT's Technology Sector Specialist, Jeff Peel will lead the sessions and be joined by Kriti Sharma, UK Artificial Intelligence expert and leading global voice on ethical technology and Michael Priddis, Founder of Australian AI company Faethm who have recently expanded to the UK.

Michael Ward, British Consul General, and UK Deputy Trade Commissioner, Asia Pacific – Australia & New Zealand said:

The UK Department for International Trade is delighted to be the lead partner country at CEBIT this year. Unprecedented levels of investment in the UK tech sector is driving world-leading innovation in emerging technologies including AI, machine learning, robotics, data science, fintech, cybersecurity, and IoT.

Our GREAT Britain showcase at CEBIT is a tremendous opportunity for attendees to learn more about UK technology capability and expertise and how partnering with the UK can help drive their own business growth and success.

Ends

Companies exhibiting on the GREAT Britain stand:

[Chipside – Paul Moorby, CEO](#)

Chipside is a specialist software development company providing products and services to around a quarter of local and regional government traffic authorities which digitally transforms parking services, law enforcement and traffic management through a variety of platforms and systems. Their latest smart city contracts include London Borough of Newham, host of the London Olympics 2012.

[Conductrr – Robert Pratten, CEO, Maria Torres, Consultant](#)

Conductrr is a professional transmedia production and management tool used by game designers, instructional designers and transmedia storytellers. The business will showcase a suite of new features for its crisis simulation software to make its immersive training exercises more realistic and engaging.

[Audoo – Ryan Edwards, Founder and CEO](#)

Audoo is a technology company that is changing how music royalties are monitored, identified and distributed. The business actively uses six technologies for its website. These include SPF, Microsoft Exchange Online, and Office 365 Mail.

[Novastone Media – Douglas Orr, Founder and CEO](#)

Novastone Media builds white label messaging solutions enhancing engagement internally and with external parties. With its unique, patented asymmetric technology, Novastone enables companies to communicate with clients on their preferred platforms and transform the way conversation happens.

[Qumodo – Benjamin Gancz, CEO and Co-founder, Cosima Calder, Data Scientist](#)

Qumodo conducts bespoke research and development into human interaction with artificial intelligence. It offers specialist products to aid the detection and prevention of terrorism and child sexual exploitation. In March 2019, Qumodo won a highly contended contract to supply its specialist AI-based data analysis software, Q-Ecosystem, to every police force in the UK.

[On TAAP – Steve Higgon, CEO](#)

On TAAP is a software licensing business built around digitisation and all aspects of the digital transformation journey. It processes real-time data, data insights through business intelligence and cross-platform mobility amongst other things. On TAAP has delivered its technology to Tesco in the UK to help with the Food Surplus initiative. Launched in 2015 the technology is now deployed across the UK and Ireland and has helped distribute in excess of 20 million meals to 7,500 charities.

[Unifi.id – Paul Sheedy, CEO](#)

Unifi.id specialises in the smart building sector, including high-rise buildings, education and hospitality. It provides digital engagement through Smart card long-range card detection, data interrogation and communication protocols.

[Unmanned Life](#)

Unmanned Life is the global multi-award-winning AI for Autonomy SAAS Platform enabling industries to be fully autonomous, deploying Autonomy-as-a-Service for Industry 4.0 over wireless networks including 5G, across major verticals like Supply Chain Logistics, Telco, Public Safety, Smart Cities and Manufacturing.

[HYPERVSN](#)

HYPERVSN is an award-winning British Company responsible for developing innovative and disruptive 3D holographic system that provides an immersive experience for viewers. It creates, displays and manages 3D holographic visuals that appear to be floating in mid-air.

[Digital Shadows](#)

Digital Shadows minimises digital risk by identifying unwanted exposure and protecting against external threats. Organisations can suffer regulatory fines, loss of intellectual property, and reputational damage when digital risk is left unmanaged. Digital Shadows SearchLight™ helps you minimise these risks by detecting data loss, securing your online brand, and reducing your attack surface. Digital Shadows was named 'Leader' in the 2018 Forrester New Wave for Digital Risk Protection.

Key UK tech statistics

- The UK tech sector is the largest in Europe. It is growing 2.6 times faster than the wider economy and is worth nearly £184 billion pounds (AUD \$335 billion)

- In 2018 it again attracted more venture capital investment than anywhere else in Europe, with £6.3 billion (AUD \$11 billion) in funding from investors
 - The UK also had a landmark year for exits achieving sales, IPOs and mergers worth £40 billion (AUD \$73 billion), more than every other country in Europe
 - At the same time jobs in digital tech rose at five times the rate of the rest of the economy
 - London is Europe's most attractive city for EU tech workers, ahead of Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin
 - The UK has created 35% of all unicorns from Europe and Israel (60 out of 169).
 - The UK Tech sector is made up of over 223,000 tech companies
 - London is the second most connected tech ecosystem on the planet and the centre of Europe's tech sector
 - Hosts 3,527 tech meetups
 - Employs 2.1 million people in its digital tech economy
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[UK Government statement on death of Daesh's leader](#)



The UK has played a leading role in the Global Coalition Against Daesh, working hand in hand with international partners to defeat Daesh. Since the Global Coalition commenced in September 2014, it has helped to liberate more than 7.7 million and 110,000 sq km across Iraq and Syria from Daesh.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The death of Baghdadi is a significant milestone in the coalition's work to defeat Daesh but it is not the end of the threat.

Daesh has imposed terrible suffering on innocent civilians. The UK will continue to work with our international partners to bring this to an end.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

ISIS is one of the most murderous terrorist organisations of our generation. Their leaders have twisted Islam to groom thousands of people into joining their evil cause.

I welcome the action that has been taken. The world will not miss Al-Baghdadi.

The UK has played a leading role in the Global Coalition Against Daesh, working hand in hand with international partners to defeat the group and we will continue to do so

Further information

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[Suicide bereavement support to be made available across England](#)

People who have lost someone close to them due to suicide will benefit from dedicated bereavement care. The government has announced plans to roll out services on the NHS across England.

The plans mean anyone affected by a family member or friend taking their own life will have access to practical and emotional support in the days and months following their death.

Ten areas will benefit from the £1,082,000 fund, with support ranging from one-to-one sessions with trained volunteers or counsellors, group support, or signposting to specialist mental health services.

The 10 areas receiving funding are:

- North Cumbria – £256,000
- Derbyshire – £71,000
- West Yorkshire and Harrogate – £173,000
- Nottinghamshire – £63,000
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland – £64,000
- North Central London – £87,000
- North West London – £113,000
- South West London – £69,000
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West – £98,000
- Devon – £88,000

Statistics show that 9% of people affected by suicide will also attempt to take their own life and 8% will drop out of work.

The tailored help will be implemented in every region across the country by 2023 to 2024, as part of a commitment set out in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

The type of support on offer will vary from region to region so it links in with existing local services.

In South West London, a designated suicide bereavement liaison officer, to be hosted by Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster Mind, will be created. The liaison officer will receive referrals for support from police and health care professionals and will proactively contact the bereaved to offer one-to-one support.

In West Yorkshire and Harrogate, a single point of access for those in need will be created to grant people a quicker, streamlined route to vital care.

This will sit alongside one-to-one sessions and group support, support with coroners, signposting, peer-led groups and memorial events, and training for organisations and employers on how to support their workforce if they have been bereaved by suicide.

National mental health spend reached £12.5 billion last year with the NHS Long Term Plan committing an extra £2.3 billion every year over the next 5 years to transform mental health care.

DHSC is working with partners across government, businesses and communities to reduce the national suicide rate. Every area of the country will receive funding for suicide prevention and bereavement services, by 2023 to 2024, from the total pot of money of £57 million allocated through the Long Term Plan.

Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Nadine Dorries said:

When a loved one takes their own life, those left behind can suffer indescribable pain and grief – something I have experienced first-hand.

Every suicide is a tragedy, which is why I am determined to tackle its root causes. But it is also important to support those coming to terms with a loss, ensuring they have access to the right types of sensitive support.

This funding is part of our wider commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan to implement designated suicide bereavement care – making a real difference to people's lives.

Claire Murdoch, NHS national director for mental health, said:

Suicide is a tragedy for both the person and their family and friends – with lives devastated as a result.

These new post-crisis bereavement services will be a lifeline for families and staff who are at heightened risk themselves of experiencing mental health problems.

Vibrant new parks set to benefit communities with government funding

Thousands of people are set to benefit from new pocket parks or the revival of rundown green spaces as Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick launched a £1.35 million fund today (27 October 2019).

Championing the crucial role parks and green spaces play at the heart of our communities, Mr Jenrick opened bidding for the pocket parks programme, which helps support communities to transform unloved, neglected or derelict urban spaces into new green spaces.

Community groups can now bid for new parks or reimagined spaces that will be used for everything from children's play areas, to vegetable patches and community events, benefiting the mental and physical health of people who use them.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We want to improve the mental and physical health of local people by providing a sustainable and affordable sanctuary away from the hustle of urban life.

That's why we have launched this fund to encourage projects led by community groups to renovate parks and encourage community activities of all kinds.

Establishing more pocket parks is part of our wider ambition to ensure that communities have a real sense of identity and place, and that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy green spaces nearby. This government is determined to protect our nation's parks for future generations to enjoy.

Funded projects will be led by community groups, in partnership with local authorities, to refurbish parks and encourage community activities. Those wanting to develop new parks can bid for up to £15,000. While up to £25,000 is available for plans to refurbish existing parks.

Parks Minister Lord Younger said:

Parks and green spaces are a key asset in towns and cities up and down the country and provide great value to our communities.

The pocket parks programme has seen great success in supporting community-led groups to take over neglected and derelict spaces for the whole community to use.

Our ambition is to extend its transformative effect with a further round of the pocket parks programme and ensure parks and green spaces remain at the heart of our communities. It is now for community-led organisations to take the lead and encourage everyone to apply.

This latest action forms part of the government's ambition to ensure that communities have a real sense of identity and place, and that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy green spaces nearby.

In addition to the pocket parks programme, the government has:

- awarded £9.7 million of new funding to local authorities giving them the resources they need to better maintain, protect and increase their recreational spaces
- awarded over a million pounds to the National Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Future Parks Accelerator initiative to test new and innovative approaches to managing and funding parks
- extended the Green Flag Award licence by a further five years meaning the people behind Britain's best parks and green spaces will continue to be recognised and awarded for their tireless dedication

Alongside these crucial actions, the government will continue to work with the Parks Action Group, which represents leaders from across the parks sector and provide support and funding for community empowerment programmes, professional development for the parks workforce and alternative park management models to ensure our parks are fit for the 21st century.

Further information on pocket parks

£1.35 million funding to help create new pocket parks and refurbish those that have fallen into disrepair was announced at Conservative Party Conference 2019 earlier this month.

In November 2018, the government announced a £1 million 'pocket parks plus' fund to help communities transform 157 neglected and derelict spaces and create 31 new green spaces in urban areas across the country.

An additional £2.75 million was made available for the pocket parks plus programme to support communities to take the lead in transforming their neglected and derelict spaces.

The [pocket parks plus programme](#) called on local communities to bid for a share of up to £15,000 to build new 'pocket parks' and up to £25,000 to renovate existing parks. Bidding for funding closed January 2019.

In March 2019, nearly 200 communities (198 in total) were awarded funding to create new pocket parks and refurbish existing parks.

See [more information, and how to apply to the fund](#).