

Press release: Thousands of farmers in stewardship agreements to be paid in July

Payments will be made in full to eligible farmers in agri-environment schemes who are still waiting to be paid, the government has confirmed today (19 June).



Farmers and land managers in Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreements do important work to protect the countryside. However, a significant number of agreement holders have not yet received full payment for work they have undertaken.

ES and CS customers with unpaid annual revenue claims, some dating back to 2015, will receive a payment for the full amount they are owed by the end of July.

This is a Treasury-funded payment, which will be made to farmers and land managers while their annual revenue claims from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget are processed.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

Today we are announcing that outstanding revenue claims for agri-environment schemes will be paid in full.

We are determined to build on the improvements that we have already put in place, keep up a regular cycle of timely payments, and restore confidence in these schemes which are so important for our environment.

The RPA is writing to all unpaid customers this week to provide an update on

payments. Once individual claims have been processed, the RPA will write again to customers to confirm any adjustments to be made to the final payment.

Taking land out of production for species-rich meadows, building ponds to provide a water source for wildlife, or planting trees for carbon sequestration are a few of the options under ES and CS that farmers and land managers are currently paid for.

The future Environment Land Management (ELM) scheme, which will replace CS and ES once we leave the EU, will undergo tests and trials with farmers and industry groups before being rolled out. It is expected to be fully operational in late 2024.

[News story: Individuals to be protected from 'devastating impact' of problem debt](#)

A new Breathing Space scheme will protect individuals with problem debt, with those in mental health crisis to get further protections while they receive treatment.



- new Breathing Space scheme will protect individuals with problem debt by freezing interest payments and halting enforcement action from creditors
- those in mental health crisis will see further protections while they receive treatment
- scheme will cover wide range of debts, including local and central government debts

Individuals and families struggling with problem debt will be given extra

help and time to get their finances under control, City minister John Glen announced today.

The new plans will see the introduction of a 60-day Breathing Space period from 2021, where people with problem debts will be protected from enforcement action from creditors and will see their interest frozen.

During this period individuals must engage with professional debt advisers, so they can find a long-term solution to their debts and get back on track with payments.

As part of these plans, and to acknowledge the links between problem debt and mental health issues, the government is also confirming that individuals receiving NHS treatment for mental health crisis will not need to seek debt advice during the 60-day period. This will remove a key barrier to access for this group. They will continue to receive the same Breathing Space protections, which will last for the whole of their treatment.

City minister, John Glen, said:

Problem debt can have a devastating impact on people's lives, putting a huge burden on individuals which can lead to family breakdown, stress and mental health issues.

No one should be stuck in an endless cycle of debt and facing the ever-looming threat of invasive debt collectors.

That's why I'm introducing this new scheme, giving everyone access to the advice, time and support they need to both get their finances under control and get away from the perpetual stress and worry debt can cause.

Helen Undy, Chief Executive of the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, said:

This scheme could genuinely save lives. Everyone experiencing a mental health crisis should have the opportunity to recover free from escalating debt fees, charges and the threat of bailiffs arriving at their door.

We are delighted that the government acted on our call to protect people from being hassled about debts while they're receiving crisis care, and we look forward to working with ministers to put these plans in place over the coming year.

Phil Andrew, CEO of StepChange Debt Charity, said:

People looking for a sustainable way to repay their debts have traditionally had little protection, leaving them vulnerable to

inconsistent approaches by different creditors that can harm their chances of recovery – something as a debt charity we've long felt needed reform.

Breathing Space and statutory debt repayment plans will fundamentally improve how people seeking to repay debt are treated, putting them in a far less precarious position. We're particularly pleased to see the Government's confirmation that debts owed to government itself will be included in the scheme.

Accessing Breathing Space through debt advice also adds a valuable incentive to help ensure more people in debt get the support they need.

Joanna Elson OBE, chief executive of the Money Advice Trust, the charity that runs National Debtline, said:

Breathing Space will provide a powerful incentive for people to seek debt advice, safe in the knowledge they will be given the time and statutory protections they need to begin to resolve their financial difficulty.

The decision to include local authorities and other public sector creditors is particularly welcome – and means this new scheme could well be a game-changer in our efforts to tackle problem debt as a society.

We look forward to working with government and other partners to ensure that Breathing Space is implemented successfully, and to continue to contribute to the government's plans for Statutory Debt Repayment Plans as these are developed further.

Crucially, the scheme will cover a broad range of debts including arrears owed to central and local government. This will mean council tax arrears, personal tax debts and benefit overpayments will be included.

As well as Breathing Space and the support for those in mental health crisis, the package also includes a Statutory Debt Repayment Plan for those with problem debt, which offers similar protection to the Breathing Space scheme, helping individuals to repay their debts over a manageable timeframe. The plan will adjust as people's life circumstances change, which could mean decreasing monthly payments if their disposable income has changed.

The announcement follows the recent consultation on these proposals and the regulations on the Breathing Space scheme will now be put to Parliament before the end of the year, so that it can be implemented in early 2021.

The announcement builds on previous government work to alleviate the impact of problem debt, including reforming the regulation of consumer credit, widening access to professional debt advice and help to build individual

financial capability.

[Press release: UK and Colombia mark new climate partnership with £8.5 million investment](#)

- £130 million of UK investment already helping to achieve this, including tackling deforestation in the Amazon
- both countries reaffirm commitment to Paris Climate Agreement just days after UK became one of the world's first major economies to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050

The UK today marked a new climate partnership with Colombia and committed £8.5 million to protect the country's unique ecosystem and fight climate change.

The agreement was signed by Colombian Environment Minister Ricardo Lozano and the UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, as the President of Colombia Iván Duque visited the UK. The agreement committed both nations to accelerating the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

The partnership with the South American country comes less than a week after the UK government took the most significant action on climate change of any G7 country in history. The Prime Minister legislated to bring greenhouse gas emissions down to net zero by 2050.

As part of the £8.5 million investment, £3.5 million will help protect Colombia's ecosystem – the second most biodiverse in the world, with over 30,000 plant and lichen species. Royal Botanic Gardens Kew will build a public database of useful plants, helping entrepreneurs make money sustainably from their domestic plant species.

An additional £5 million will help towards turning Colombia's finance industry green – sharing the City of London's expertise – and introducing low emission vehicles into Colombia's major cities.

UK Energy and Clean Growth Minister Chris Skidmore said:

The UK is leading the world in the fight against rising temperatures, reducing our emissions by over 40% since 1990 and legislating for net zero emissions by 2050 – one of the first major economies to do so.

But we can't tackle this threat to our very existence on our own.

It is only through international cooperation that we can protect our precious planet. That's why we've signed this important new agreement with the government of Colombia to work together to protect their unique environment and help them reach even more ambitious climate targets – setting an example to other countries in South America.

Colombia has committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2030, and by 30% by 2030 if it receives international financial support.

Deforestation and change in land use account for a significant amount of Colombia's emissions and the country is facing a new set of challenges to protect the Amazon.

The UK has worked with Colombia in tackling deforestation, investing around £70 million in projects which include helping farmers switch to more sustainable farming methods and helping more than 11,000 families to better care for Colombia's forests.

UK Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, said:

The UK and Colombia are both committed to the global effort to stop climate change. The Amazon rainforest provides the lungs of the planet and the Colombian government is facing a continued challenge in protecting it from destruction.

The UK pledges lasting support to President Duque in his efforts to safeguard such vital environmental assets. This represents the thriving relationship we have with Colombia, spanning across a multitude of areas from sustainable growth to education and their vital role in the Venezuela crisis.

President of Colombia, Iván Duque, said:

For the first time Colombia and the United Kingdom are signing up to a joint agenda for tackling climate change, the fight against deforestation, the sustainability of sectors such as energy and transport, and the strengthening of measurement systems for climate change. Both countries share the global commitment to mitigate the impact of climate change and are strategic allies in this area.

The Colombia-UK Partnership for Sustainable Growth commits both countries to work more closely together to advance low carbon investments and improve resilience against the worst effects of climate change. Both countries have also reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement of keeping global temperature rises below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts for 1.5 °C.

The UK recently published the [International Research and Innovation Strategy](#), which sets out how we will collaborate internationally to tackle global challenges and support economic growth.

Notes to editors

1. Colombia Background: Colombia played a crucial role in setting up the Cartagena Dialogue, (a grouping of progressive countries founded by UK, Colombia and Australia) and are active in the High Ambition Coalition. Colombia is a member of the Pacific Alliance (a trading group with Peru, Chile and Mexico).
 2. Partnership Background: The Memorandum of Understanding puts in place annual high-level meetings in order to advance efforts on decarbonising, halting deforestation, preserving biodiversity and promoting green finance. It also commits the UK and Colombia to work together on climate change, sharing UK expertise internationally.
 3. UK investment in Colombia: UK Partnering for Accelerated Climate Transitions (PACT) has today announced £5 million to Colombian projects, including green finance and asset disclosure, sustainable infrastructure and mobility, and renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. A separate £3.5 million Newton Fund investment will include:
 - £2.5 million for the British Council / Royal Botanic Gardens Kew to expand knowledge on native Colombian plants and fungi and developing a market for underutilised indigenous species
 - £200k for a soil genome skills facility led by the University of Sheffield
 - £355k for the Royal Academy of Engineering Leaders in Innovation Fellowships to build entrepreneurial capacity of Colombian innovators and researchers
 4. International Climate Finance Background: Alongside other developed countries, the UK has committed to jointly mobilise \$100 billion per year in climate finance to developing countries from public and private sources. As part of this commitment, we pledged to provide at least £5.8 billion of International Climate Finance (ICF) between 2016 and 2020, placing us amongst the world's leading providers of climate finance. This includes a joint commitment of \$5 billion with Germany and Norway for countries who bring forward ambitious projects to halt deforestation. The UK's ICF helps developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce deforestation and pursue clean economic growth. The ICF is focused on transformational change, reflecting the scale of the challenge of climate change.
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Speech: Questions to UN Peacekeeping Heads of Military Components

Thank you very much Mr President, and thank you for your guidance to restrict today's session to questions. I will do so. I have to say, following our Polish colleagues intervention, he's already taken some of my questions so I think you're in a very bad time yourself going last. You'll have to really think of something new. Thank you also to Force Commanders here. May I, like my Polish colleague, pay tribute to the men and women who serve in blue for this Security Council and for this United Nations and pay tribute to those who've lost their lives in doing so, but also ask you please to pass on the thanks of this Council to your own troops for all that they're doing in sometimes very difficult circumstances. It is very, very helpful and important for this Council to hear ground truth from you so I hope you'll feel enabled and emboldened to answer any questions fully and without any need to be diplomatic.

My questions:

So a general question if I might, to either or both of you, and that is to ask what impact you're seeing on the ground and in the support provided from UN HQ as a result of the Secretary-General's reforms of the peace and security architecture? What impact do you see on the ground?

A second general question; there's a lot of focus on improving performance of uniformed components in Missions. Do you have access to the data you need to be able to drive forward performance improvement efforts on the basis of evidence?

A question to General Ngondi, specifically on UNAMID; I echo the question my Polish colleague asked about cooperation between the Mission and Sudanese authorities since the removal of President Bashir. I also just wanted to ask you after the looting the Janina camp, what what lessons learned exercise was carried out and what you've you've taken from from that? Recognising of course, as you say General Ngondi, there's been a suspension of handing over of team sites for now, what do you take away from that?

And finally on UNFICYP: You mentioned General Pearce, the work UNFICYP does in talking, liaising between the two sides. The most recent mandate calls on cause there to be a mechanism established for direct contact between the two sides to resolve security and other issues as is fairly commonplace in other sort of UN Missions settings. I just wondered if you could tell us anything about how those efforts to establish that are progressing or if not what the blockages might be?

Thank you Mr President.

Press release: Record number of schoolgirls make digital waves but women still under-represented in the cyber security sector

- Women make up just 11% of the global cyber security workforce
- Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, David Lidington MP, calls for more to be done to encourage women into the cyber security industry
- As well as reaching out to the cyber-pros of tomorrow, NCSC launches new online training tool to meet security demands of today

Cyber-savvy female students who took part in an online competition founded by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) were praised today in a speech by David Lidington. Speaking at the 'Women in Security Network' conference, the Minister for the Cabinet Office also warned that more needs to be done to open up opportunities in cyber security for women.

Nearly 12,000 girls aged 12 – 13 from across the UK took part in the competition in 2019, which was launched by the NCSC as part of the CyberFirst initiative. The competition breaks down gender barriers by encouraging girls to engage with cyber security before they make their GCSE choices, with over 24,000 female students having taken part since the competition was launched in 2016. Promising youngsters from across the UK have been attending cyber security courses throughout the year, with some securing bursaries and apprenticeships through the CyberFirst programme.

However, with women accounting for just 7% of the cyber security workforce across Europe, David Lidington called for more to be done to encourage women into the sector:

There remains a severe lack of diversity in the cyber industry. Cyber security is among the most important aspects of our national defence today, so we need talent from every part of society enriching our workforces.

Women have been pioneers in security and technology, and we want to see this reflected in the cyber security sector too.

As well as reaching out to the cyber professionals of tomorrow, the NCSC has developed an online learning tool to give workers of today the skills they need to protect themselves from potential cyber attacks.

Aimed at SMEs, charities and the voluntary sector, the brand new, targeted 30-minute programme 'Stay Safe Online: Top Tips for Staff' educates users about how attacks happen, where vulnerabilities lie and how to defend themselves. During his speech, David Lidington said the new training package will empower any user – not just cyber experts – to play their part in boosting their organisations' cyber resilience.

Commenting on the new software, Clare Gardiner, NCSC Director of Engagement, said:

We all have a part to play in making the UK the safest place to live and work online. Employees are vital in helping keep their organisations' networks safe and need to be aware of how to protect themselves.

Our recent Cyber Survey discovered that 25% of organisations don't see cyber security as a top priority and we hope this tool will empower staff to start conversations around best practice.

Once people are more cyber literate as a whole, we hope to see this having a positive impact on the diversity of people that are interested in working in the sector.