

[News story: Defence Secretary congratulates NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg](#)



UK Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson with the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg. Crown copyright.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I congratulate Jens Stoltenberg on the extension of his term as NATO Secretary General, he is a great friend and ally of the UK. NATO is the cornerstone of our defence and the UK a leading member of the alliance, one of just a handful of nations to meet the commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence.

Next year, our current Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, will take over as Chairman of the Military Committee – the most senior military officer in the alliance. I look forward to continue working closely with the Secretary General to ensure that NATO is in the best possible shape to tackle the threats facing us all.

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[Press release: PM's Chanukah message: 12 December 2017](#)

I want to send my very best wishes to everyone celebrating Chanukah in our

Jewish communities here in the UK and all around the world.

Chanukah recalls a time, over two millennia ago, when the Jewish people successfully resisted a vile attempt to wipe out their religion and culture.

It marks the triumph of freedom over hatred. And it calls on us all – whatever our religion or background – to defend the values and way of life that we share.

So as the Menorah candles are lit, let us renew that pledge today.

Let us celebrate that in Britain you can practice your faith free from question or fear.

Let us take pride in the extraordinary contribution made by members of the Jewish Community in all areas of national life.

Let us redouble our efforts to fight anti-Semitism in all its forms – including unequivocally condemning those who abhorrently use criticism of the Israeli government to question the right of Israel to exist.

And let us draw hope from the message of Chanukah, confident in our values and determined to defeat hatred and extremism wherever it is found – today and for every generation to come.

[News story: Civil news: how to get your bill paid on first submission](#)

We have identified five common issues that prevent us paying a bill first time and these are detailed in new guidance on our training website.

‘Avoiding secondary billing requests’ is a new ‘quick guide’ module to help avoid your CCMS bill being included in the 26% we return using a further information document request.

Dealing with incorrectly returned claims

If you think we have asked for information that you believe has already been provided you can challenge this request using the recently upgraded ‘Civil Claim Fix’ service.

Other useful guidance

There is a wide range of advanced billing guidance on the CCMS training website. These give step-by-step instructions on:

- completing appeal bills

- court assessed bills
- high cost billing
- outcomes The advanced guides are intended as a next step once you are comfortable with the basics of CCMS.

Drop us a line if you would find advanced guides in other areas of CCMS work useful.

Further information

[CCMS training website: closing cases and submitting bills](#) – scroll down to the ‘advanced billing guides’ for the module on ‘avoiding secondary billing requests’

LAACivilClaimFix@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk – to contact our ‘Civil Claim Fix’ team

digital.assist@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk – to provide feedback on the quick and advanced guides

News story: Happy Anniversary DASA

DASA was launched in conjunction with the Defence Innovation Initiative in Glasgow by MinDP. Having evolved from CDE, DASA was given the remit to find and fund exploitable innovations in order to give government departments any advantage it can to protect the country from its adversaries.

By running competitions and collaborating with industry and academia, we help to rapidly develop innovative solutions to the most pressing national security or defence challenges.

Here are some of our highlights from the past year.

We’ve invested

We’ve assessed over 715 proposals, funded 147 projects and invested £17.3m in innovative ideas that will support our front line services. We’ve launched 8 new competitions this year and are managing a further 7 on behalf of our customers who include The Home Office, Department of Transport, MOD and Dstl.

The majority of proposals and funding goes to UK businesses, but we do accept international applications. Around 75% of funding has been allocated to industry and we believe by investing in grass roots innovation we help to stimulate the UK economy.

We provide access

We pride ourselves in being accessible and easy to work with. This year we've delivered 18 Accelerator competition events and held 100+ face to face meetings around the country to support innovation proposals.

Our Innovation Network Events offer potential suppliers the opportunity to hear and talk directly to the customer, technical, security and defence experts as well as the DASA team.

We've exhibited, presented and attended at 4 major exhibitions including DSEI, DPTRE, Innovate and UK Security Expo. Our innovation partners have also visited numerous conferences, symposiums and meetings around the country to promote our services.

We're trying new things

Our offer is growing and we accept proposals from anyone with a good idea, at any level of development with an exploitation pathway.

To facilitate this we're trying new things and have piloted new approaches to make it quicker and easier for innovators to access our service including the Open Call for Innovation One Page Pitch, short form contracts, multi technology readiness level proposals, hackathons, sandpits and symposiums.

These new trials have proven very popular. For example, we launched the One Page Pitch, where an innovation summary is submitted and assessed within a fortnight, at DSEI in September. In just 10 weeks, we received 199 proposals and 60% were asked to submit a full proposal to the Open Call for Innovation.

We're agile

One of our key aims is to help innovators bridge the innovation gap and see great ideas become real solutions. Several of our new themed competitions this year offered a new fast track approach.

Our new operating model helped us to respond quickly to the UK terrorist attacks this summer. We scoped and launched our [Improving Crowd Resilience competition](#) in just 8 weeks.

We support

We have a network of 750 cross government experts who support our competitions. This year we have recruited and trained over 280 new assessors.

Our core team has doubled and from January our Innovation Partners will be based regionally so that suppliers won't have to travel far to get support.

We also have an exploitation team which actively look for routes to market to help innovations become a reality.

We're open to new ideas

We fund the best ideas – with 58% of funding allocated to SMEs and micro organisations. Moreover 40% of those funded have never applied to us before. Our attractive terms and conditions, include:

- 100% ownership of IP
- 100% funding (no match funding required)
- a quick decision process
- short form contracts
- access to exploitation routes

We are still evolving.

To keep up to date with new competitions, events and exhibitions please subscribe to our twitter, LinkedIn or website alerts.

[News story: Review of the pre-pack industry measures](#)

The Government is undertaking an assessment of the impact of the voluntary industry measures introduced in November 2015 to improve the transparency of connected party pre-pack sales in administration and will be contacting a variety of interested parties to seek their views.

The industry measures arose from the recommendations of the 2014 independent [Graham Review](#), which found that pre-pack sales were a useful business rescue tool, but that there was evidence of less successful outcomes where the pre-pack sale was to a connected party.

As well as industry reforms, the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 created a power for Government to make regulations to impose conditions on property sales to connected parties in administration (including via a pre-pack). This power expires in May 2020.

The assessment will look at the impact of reforms on all connected party sales in administration and will help to inform decisions on whether further regulation is needed prior to the expiration of the regulation making power.