

NATO Award for Dstl Fellow

News story

Dstl Fellow Bharatkumar (“Bharat”) Patel has received a NATO award for his significant scientific contribution to modelling and simulation and its impact on military capability.



Dstl Fellow Bharatkumar (“Bharat”) Patel (left) receiving his a NATO award from NATO Chief Scientist Dr Bryan Wells

The NATO 2021 STO Scientific Excellence Award recognises Bharat’s impact on the development of NATO’s S&T capabilities in the areas of Modelling and Simulation (M&S) and System Concepts & Integration (SCI), and their exploitation into military capability across the Alliance. More recently, his work has been applied to disruptive concepts such as linking simulation to live Command and Control (C2) systems for operational decision support, delivering defence M&S through a digital cloud-based ecosystem, trust in autonomy/AI, human-machine teaming, cyber effects and space exploitation.

The citation reads:

Mr Bharatkumar Patel has actively led and conducted excellent collaborative and innovative M&S research on behalf of the UK for over 25 years. As National Member in STO’s (Scientific and Technology Organisation) NATO Modelling and Simulation Group and in the SCI Panel, he took on many leadership roles. Since joining the STO, he has been chair, panel mentor, program committee member, technical team member in numerous NATO technical activities. He has significantly contributed to the development of NATO’s S&T capabilities whilst enabling exploitation into military capability. He has championed C2-Sim research that has successfully matured the underpinning technology and standard, ready to be exploited into military capability. He was instrumental in developing the MSaaS [Modelling and Simulation as a Service] concept and M&S ecosystem driven by a viable business model as well as leading on its

exploitation across the panels.

Bharat is an active member of numerous professional bodies including: Simulation Interoperability Standards Organization (SISO) – supporting HLA and C2Sim standardization into NATO; International Command and Control Institute (IC2I); Military Operations Research Society (FVEY); and The Operational Research Society, UK. Since 2019 he has been Co-Chair of the US/UK Synthetic Environment Working Group.

Reflecting on his achievement, Bharat said:

Although this is an individual award for the M&S and SCI areas of expertise, it also represents the excellent world class support I have received from Dstl colleagues and many others. This includes Industry/Academia and across the Ministry of Defence, from the Front Line Commands, Strategic Command, Defence Academy and the defence research and equipment community. Sustaining those relations has greatly benefited many Dstl research and MOD capability development programmes and provided the evidence to support critical business decisions.

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[New powers to protect access to cash](#)

- Millions of people in communities across the UK will see their ability to access cash protected in new powers set out by the government today (Thursday 19th May)
- For the first time, the UK's largest banks and building societies will be subject to new Financial Conduct Authority powers to ensure the continued availability of withdrawal and deposit facilities in local communities across the UK
- Measures will be legislated for in the upcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill which will protect consumers and enhance the UK's position as a global leader in financial services

Under the new rules, the financial regulator – the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) – will be granted new powers over the UK's largest banks and building societies, to ensure that cash withdrawal and deposit facilities are

available in communities across the country.

The FCA's new powers will allow it to address cash access issues at both a national and local level. To support the FCA, the government will in due course set out its expectations for a reasonable distance for people to travel when depositing and withdrawing cash. This will reflect the existing spread of cash withdrawal and deposit facilities in the UK.

Cash is the second most frequently used method of payment in the UK, and around 5.4 million adults rely on cash to a very great or great extent in their daily lives – further emphasising the importance of this legislation and new FCA powers.

Economic Secretary John Glen, who will be visiting Scotland on Thursday, said:

Millions of people across the UK still rely on cash, particularly those in vulnerable groups, and today we are delivering on our promise to ensure that access to cash is protected in communities across the country.

I want to make sure that people are still able to use cash as part of their daily lives, and it's crucial to ensure that no person nor community across the UK is left behind as we embrace a more digital world.

The Chancellor set out in his Mansion House Speech in 2021 that the UK must remain at the forefront of innovation and technology, and the government recognises the need to embrace the transition to a more digital world and realise the opportunities this brings individuals and businesses.

But as we transition to a digital payments system, it is critical to acknowledge that cash access remains vital to millions of people in communities across the UK, particularly those in vulnerable groups, and no one should be left behind.

The government passed legislation to enable the widespread adoption of cashback without a purchase as part of the Financial Services Act 2021, which was possible as a result of the UK's departure from the European Union.

And last month the government announced its intention to legislate to provide the Bank of England with the powers necessary to ensure the UK's wholesale cash infrastructure – which includes the network of cash centres integral to the sorting, storing and distribution of notes and coin – remains effective, resilient, and sustainable, and continues to support access to cash across the UK. Taken together, these measures will ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is viable for the long term.

These powers will be legislated for in the upcoming Financial Services and Markets Bill, which will protect consumers and enhance the UK's position as a global leader in financial services.

Further information

- The government held a [consultation on access to cash](#) from 1 July to 23 September 2021
- Currently, around 96% of the population are within two kilometres of a free-to-use cash access point. This includes free-to-use ATMs, bank branches and Post Office branches.
- The government's plans for legislation will allow HM Treasury to specify which banks and building societies the FCA's powers will apply to for the purpose of ensuring continued access to cash across the UK.
- In December 2021, the sector announced that it had developed a voluntary industry model that accounts for the different types of facility that provide cash access, including initiatives to provide shared services, to protect access to cash. Under the model, a coordination body assesses the cash needs of local communities and makes recommendations for alternative services to be put in place as appropriate. The government intends to enable HM Treasury to designate cash coordination bodies for FCA oversight. This has been facilitated through the Cash Action Group, which was convened by UK Finance and consists of major retail banks and building societies, consumer groups, Post Office, and LINK.
- Ten years ago, cash was the most frequently used means of payment in the UK, representing around 20 billion transactions per year in 2010. According to UK Finance, in 2020 cash remained the second most frequently used payment method in the UK and was used in around 6 billion payments.
- The Financial Services and Markets Bill will legislate for these powers and will be introduced in due course, when parliamentary time allows
- [Wholesale cash policy statement](#)

[In-depth Veolia-Suez merger review finds competition concerns](#)

This loss of competition could then lead to more costly and lower quality services, and in turn to higher council tax bills, as local councils and some

businesses would have less choice when procuring key waste and water management services.

Veolia and Suez are 2 of the largest suppliers of waste management services to councils and businesses in the UK. Both companies are active across the waste management supply chain – from the collection of waste to the operation of facilities for composting and incineration, to landfill sites. The companies also supply water and wastewater management services to industrial customers.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched an inquiry into the deal in October 2021 and it was referred for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation, which is led by an independent inquiry group, in December 2021.

The CMA's investigation is focussing on 8 markets within the waste and water management sector in which the 2 companies currently compete. In carrying out its assessment, the CMA has taken into account that Veolia and Suez, which are the only suppliers in the UK who are active across the entire waste management chain, are 2 of the few companies that are able to service the largest and most complex waste management contracts with councils.

The CMA's in-depth investigation has considered a wide range of evidence, including a number of concerns raised by customers and other market participants.

The CMA has provisionally found that the merger raises competition concerns in seven of the 8 markets within the waste and water management sector on which its in-depth investigation has focussed. In each of these markets, the merging businesses currently compete closely and would face limited competition after the merger. The CMA is concerned that this would result in higher cost or lower quality services for councils, with knock-on effects for taxpayers, as well as businesses across the UK.

Stuart McIntosh, Chair of the CMA inquiry group, said:

We all use waste and recycling services in some way, so it's vital that these markets are competitive and provide good value for money. This is all the more important at a time when local authority budgets are already stretched and waste management services have to evolve to help achieve Net Zero targets.

We've heard from a number of customers, including local authorities, who are concerned that this merger could reduce competition in markets where choice is already limited, leading to higher prices or poorer services.

We share those concerns and want to make sure that commercial customers and councils don't get a worse deal – leaving taxpayers to foot the bill at a time when household budgets are already under huge pressure.

The CMA welcomes responses from interested parties to its provisional findings by 9 June 2022 and its notice of possible remedies, which sets out potential options for addressing its provisional concerns, by 2 June 2022. These will be considered ahead of the CMA issuing its final report, which is due by 17 July 2022.

For more information, visit the [Veolia / Suez merger inquiry page](#).

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

The CMA provisionally found that the anticipated merger would lead to Substantial Lessening of Competition (SLC) in the following areas:

- collection of non-hazardous waste for municipal customers
- operation and maintenance services for sorting of waste for municipal customers
- operation and maintenance of Energy Recovery facilities (ie incineration) for municipal customers
- supply of incineration services for customers in 2 local areas
- collection of non-hazardous waste for commercial and industrial customers
- operation and maintenance services for water and wastewater treatment facilities to industrial customers
- provision of mobile water services to industrial customers

[New 'super' National Nature Reserve created to protect rare wildlife](#)

A vast new 'super nature reserve', spanning large parts of Somerset and encompassing some of the country's most precious habitats, has been created today (19th May).

The declaration of the new Somerset Wetlands 'super' National Nature Reserve (NNR) by Natural England and partners will protect 6,140 hectares of precious saltmarsh, heath and wetland habitats, home to nationally significant wildlife populations.

The area is a stronghold for many different species of wetland and ground nesting birds like the Skylark, Bittern and Avocet. It is also a significant site for a huge variety of insects such as the hairy dragonfly, silver diving beetle and the raft spider – the second largest spider in the UK.

With the increasing need for a bigger, better and more joined-up approach to nature conservation, today's announcement is an important moment for nature recovery. The site will knit together a total of six nature reserves and

other nature managed land in the Somerset Levels, Coast and Moors and will join England's developing Nature Recovery Network.

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

The creation of this very large National Nature Reserve is an important moment for Nature recovery in England. This is not least because it presents a practical demonstration of what can be done by working in partnership across the landscape at scale to reverse Nature's decline. Natural England intends to encourage other projects with similar ambition.

Seventy years from the creation of our first National Nature Reserves in England these wonderful places are needed now more than ever, as we face into the challenges of global warming, wildlife decline and reconnecting people with the natural world.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Today is a landmark moment for nature recovery in Somerset. A new super National Nature Reserve will not only protect wildlife and help tackle climate change by restoring peatlands and improving habitats, it will provide people with greater opportunities to visit these beautiful wetlands with consequent spin offs that will benefit the local economy too.

And crucially, this vast project will play an important part in reversing the decline in nature through our Nature Recovery Network, as set out in our ambitious Environment Act.

Rosie Hails, Director of Nature and Science at the National Trust, said:

The huge challenge posed by the twin climate and nature crises is such that ambitious solutions are urgently needed at scale. The launch of a new Super National Nature Reserve represents a significant step forward in working across boundaries to address the most pressing environmental issues while, crucially, bringing nature closer to people.

We're proud to care for national nature reserves across the country, and the making of a new 'Super' reserve is a fitting way to mark 70 years since the first designation. Today, the creation and protection of space for wildlife to thrive couldn't be more important.

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts said:

Working across whole landscapes is essential to tackling the twin nature and climate crises. Super National Nature Reserves provide a great opportunity to engage a wide range of people, including private landowners, to tackle some of the issues affecting our nature reserves that need action to be taken at a landscape scale.

If we are to achieve nature's recovery, we need to create and restore wild places across the countryside, giving wildlife the chance it so desperately needs to spread and thrive. Natural solutions such as wetlands and peat bogs which store carbon are crucial for a healthier future. From booming bittern to red squirrels, wildflower-rich meadows and dramatic coastlines, we're proud that Wildlife Trusts in England care for a massive 53 National Nature Reserves – arguably our best places for people to enjoy nature.

We welcome today's announcement which we hope will enable more strategic management of land for wildlife, and we're looking forward to celebrating the Festival of National Nature Reserves.

The announcement today demonstrates how the Government is delivering on the Environment Act – a key target laid out in Act is to halt the decline in our wildlife populations through a legally binding target for species abundance by 2030.

The local tourism industry and residents are also set to benefit from this declaration, which will provide more people with access to nature by making it easier for residents of local towns such as Bridgwater and Glastonbury to access the sites, as well as improving the health and wellbeing of the local community and provide economic benefits through developing wildlife tourism opportunities.

The declaration today is at the centre of celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the creation of England's first nature reserve on 19 May 1952. Today there are 219 sites, spanning 101,531ha. These 'nature hotspots' are key to restoring nature across England and helping to bring green space and wildlife to everyone, including those who live in towns and cities.

There will be a 'Festival of Nature Reserves' this summer to celebrate with a programme of events at nature reserves. To find out more about the festival and how to get involved in events across the country, visit <http://www.nnrfestival.com/>

[Community to rescue pubs, clubs and](#)

farms backed by £2.2 million government funding

- Eight more projects set to benefit from the government's Community Ownership Fund
- Pubs, historic buildings and sports facilities included in projects to be taken over by community groups
- Part of wider £150 million funding package to level up communities by empowering them to take ownership of local landmarks

A boxing club, historic pub and city farm are among eight community projects across England and Northern Ireland set to be rescued by more than £2.2 million of government levelling up funding.

These grants will help community groups take control of venues in their area that are at risk of being lost forever and transform them into vibrant hubs for the benefit of local people.

This is all part of the government's drive to level up local communities across the country, create more jobs for local people, boost local businesses and build up local economies as a result.

Projects include the Victoria House in Oldham, built in 1874, which will be turned from a derelict hall into a boxing and personal development centre, offering support for vulnerable young people as well as fitness and wellbeing opportunities for all. Without this funding, the centre would have been forced to move.

Spaces within The Grade II listed Granville Hotel, designed by one of Ramsgate's most famous residents EW Pugin, will also be saved from decay and restored to help protect the Kent town's heritage. Funding will renovate the bar and restaurant area, reviving the seafront venue and creating a new space for artists, start-ups and local businesses.

The family-run Old Red Lion theatre pub, one of London's oldest pubs, said to have been founded in 1415, is set to receive funding. The pub has a long history as a cultural bright spot in the local area and with this funding it will be relaunched as an arts venue and space for community work.

Minister for Levelling Up, the Union and Constitution, Neil O'Brien MP said:

From bringing historic buildings back to life in Ramsgate to creating a community farm in the centre of Bristol, the Community Ownership Fund enables local people to take on projects that benefit their communities and save venues that would otherwise be lost forever.

Through this fund we are empowering local people, restoring their

pride in the places where they live and levelling up communities across the United Kingdom.

The fund is already helping communities across the country seize ownership of prized local assets that are at risk, including the [UK's most remote pub](#) in Scotland and [Gigg Lane](#), home of Bury FC.

The first round of successful projects was announced at the Spending Review in autumn last year. Applications to bid for round 2 of funding through the Community Ownership Fund will open in June this year.

The eight vibrant and exciting projects being funded through this latest tranche of Community Ownership Fund grant are:

- a community in Yorkshire taking ownership of the Countryman's Inn pub
- one of London's oldest pubs, the Old Red Lion in Islington relaunching its theatre pub venue
- the Oxford Arms pub in Herefordshire transforming into a vibrant community hub
- regenerating 30 acres of land at Hartcliffe City Farm in Bristol to benefit the local community
- a historic church in Somerset providing a community arts and social centre
- a boxing and development centre in Oldham, which aims to support young people and families
- Pugin's heritage building being restored into a vibrant community place for local people to enjoy stunning views which dining by the marina
- in Northern Ireland the regeneration of St Columb's Hall creating a community centre in the heart of Derry-Londonderry

See the full list of [successful bids](#)