

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Agriculture: Subsidies

### Written Answer

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons), Chair, Liaison Committee

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to reduce the complexity of environmental schemes for land holders.

George Eustice The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) took on responsibility for Environmental Stewardship and Countryside Stewardship schemes in October 2018, and has introduced a number of measures on agri-environment schemes to make it easier for farmers and land managers to apply and make it simpler for them to administer.

The RPA has made improvements to the online service, including making more offers available to apply for online and allowing applicants to download application packs. It has simplified both the rules regarding the evidence we require and the guidance manuals. In addition the RPA has made changes to the processing cycle which has reduced completion times for applications, agreements, claims and payments.

Looking forward we are considering ways to drive further online uptake, make improvements to the information on GOV.UK, and whether there are further simplifications we can make to the scheme to support the transition to a new Environmental Land Management Scheme, subject to exit negotiations and funding.

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