

Department agrees to rectify payment error

A man who was initially denied thousands of pounds in farming grants because he was given the wrong information on how to fill out a form by a government department has been awarded the money after we investigated his complaint.

The man attended a DAERA office in 2018 to get help with his online application for a Single Farm Payment. He said that he was told by a staff member if he ticked a particular box on the application form the he would receive the payment.

Unfortunately by the time he found out that this advice was incorrect he had missed the deadline for re-submitting the form. He appealed to an Independent Panel who recommended that the Department's original decision should be changed, and that he should receive the funding. The Department did not accept the Panel's recommendation.

The man believed he had lost out on over £3,000 for 2018, and missed out on further payments for 2019 and 2020.

Investigators from the Ombudsman's office contacted the Department to try and resolve the man's complaint.

As a result the Department looked again at the case. It accepted that there were shortcomings in their original investigation into the incident and that it was now happy to rectify the error and accept his application.

The Department wrote to the man and provided him with full payments for the years 2018-2020.