

£230m boost for RAF submarine-hunter fleet

The majority of the 153 BDUK jobs will be based at RAF Lossiemouth – the home of the Poseidon fleet – and will provide aircraft maintenance support and personnel alongside a comprehensive training package for aircraft crews. The remaining 46 jobs will be spread across sites at Bristol, Yeovil and Gosport.

Specialising in anti-submarine warfare, the Poseidon (P-8A) is the RAF's multi-role maritime patrol aircraft. Working alongside the Royal Navy and close maritime allies such as the United States and Norway, Poseidon locates, identifies and tracks potentially hostile submarines operating around UK waters.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our new Poseidon fleet continues to grow from strength to strength and is already defending the UK's maritime interests at home and abroad.

This contract with Boeing Defence UK secures our critical submarine-hunting aircraft capabilities whilst also creating a home-grown training enterprise and creating over 150 British jobs.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

This contract award and the creation of more than 100 jobs at RAF Lossiemouth is another great example of the benefits UK defence investment brings to Scotland.

The Moray station's fleet of Poseidon submarine hunting aircraft are vital to maintaining the security of the UK and our NATO allies. And the prosperity generated by defence employment in Scotland, alongside the UK Government's Plan for Jobs, will help us build back better from the pandemic.

This latest contract builds on the £470 million investment that the Poseidon programme has already driven to RAF Lossiemouth and the local area, creating and sustaining jobs and boosting the local economy.

The Poseidon fleet is operated from a new £100 million facility at RAF Lossiemouth, opened in September 2020. Over 300 jobs were supported during

the facility's construction. The facility has a three-bay hangar, accommodation for squadrons, training, mission support and two state-of-the-art flight simulators.

RAF Lossiemouth has also undergone a £75 million upgrade to the runway and other operating surfaces. It will be the future home of the UK's fleet of Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning surveillance aircraft, Scotland's crucial role in UK and NATO defence and security.

DE&S P-8A Poseidon team leader, Malcolm French said:

I am extremely proud of the P-8A delivery team and what is yet another example of great delivery by DE&S. Placed to a tight timescale, and encompassing exacting requirements, this contract helps enable the full range of capability that Poseidon brings to be realised, sees our modern aircraft fully supported, and our personnel being trained from state-of-the-art facilities.

Nine Poseidon, based on the Boeing 737-800, have already been ordered from Boeing by the UK. Five aircraft named the 'Pride of Moray', 'City of Elgin', 'Terence Bulloch', 'Spirit of Reykjavik' and 'Fulmar' are all now operating out of Lossiemouth, with four more to come later this year.

The new investment in the Poseidon fleet is supported by the £24 billion increase to defence spending over the next four years and will ensure the aircraft can continue to undertake its vital role in securing our seas and combating rapidly evolving threats.