

[Press release: £1.7 million funding boost to Public Service Mutuals](#)

Organisations that wish to become or grow as Public Service Mutuals can now apply for a share of up to £1.7 million in funding, Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, announced today.

A total of £1.2 million will be available to create new Mutuals, or strengthen existing ones, by providing access to advice across areas including legal, financial, marketing, human resources and business planning.

The remaining £500,000 will be used to pilot support programmes such as partnership working to help Mutuals collaborate with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations and others to broaden the service they offer. A mentoring scheme will also allow newly-formed Mutuals to benefit from one-to-one experienced advice and support, as well as a peer support network which will bring aspiring Mutuals together to share their experiences, challenges and successes.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

Mutuals are run under the influence of employees to support the delivery of public services and we want to help them thrive.

This £1.7m funding will deliver training, support programmes and mentoring to expand the high quality services Mutuals provide to communities across the country.

This round of funding will be available until March 2020 and follows the £572k that was awarded in 2017 to support Mutuals.

Organisations can check if they are eligible for funding by contacting the Mutuals Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on: mutuals@culture.gov.uk.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

*To apply for support from this programme you must currently, or intend to, fulfil our definition of a Public Service Mutual, which is an organisation that: i) has left the public sector (also known as 'spinning out') ii) continues to deliver public services and aims to have a positive social impact iii) has a significant degree of staff influence or control in the way it is run

*If you're an existing mutual, you must be in your first five years of operation, or delivering your original or extended contract which has not

been retendered, or both.

*You must be able to demonstrate how support from this programme will help your organisation grow or diversify its operations

*All applicants will be required to demonstrate their commitment to their project and the mutual model by providing matched funding, in cash, towards the support needed

*For more information on eligibility and support expectations, please contact mutuals@culture.gov.uk.

[News story: Expression of Interest: MOD Defence People Challenge – Market Interest Day](#)

Defence Innovation Initiative

In September 2016 the Defence Secretary launched the [Defence Innovation Initiative](#), which acknowledged that we needed a new approach to innovation in order to maintain our military advantage and recognised that the private sector drives the rapid pace of technological, social and cultural change.

Defence People Challenge Background

In the [Strategic Defence and Security Review \(SDSR\) 2015](#) the Government stated “Our Armed Forces rely on the skills, commitment and professionalism of our people. We place heavy demands on them. Recruiting, training and retaining the right mix of capable and motivated Service personnel is essential to deliver success on operations.” (Paragraph 4.51)

One of the priorities for innovation in Defence is about how we can recruit, train, retain and motivate the right number of people and make the most efficient and effective use of its workforce, providing the skills required to adapt to a rapidly changing environment. The Defence People Challenge will ask companies to consider how their products and services could make a real difference to how Defence approaches people management.

Are you a company working in this area? Would you be interested in discussing your ideas, technologies and solutions?

If the answer is “yes” then our upcoming Market Interest day could be of interest to you.

The event is taking place on Wednesday 7 February 2018 in London. At the

event we will be seeking to gain an understanding of what the marketplace can offer in this space and views from attendees to help shape our thinking before finalising the challenge and competition design.

The event aims are:

- to share the challenges externally with the current marketplace
- to collect wider external views in order to further assure/ refine the challenges based on the current market
- to encourage collaborative bids

If you would like the opportunity to help shape this upcoming competition, please [register your interest](#) now and save the date.

Please note that places for this event are limited and if the event is oversubscribed, we will have to limit the number attending from a single organisation.

Important date: The deadline for Expression of Interest is Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 17:00.

We will contact you after this date to notify you if you've been selected to participate and offered a place, and provide you with further information such as the venue and agenda. We will also provide documentation that will outline our understanding of the challenges we face in this area.

Registration is only an expression of interest and does not guarantee a place at the event.

The full competition launch event will be held on Tuesday 27 March 2018 in London and further details will be available on our website in due course.

[News story: Sell out success at Severn Tolls event](#)

A sell out audience from both sides of the River Severn will be on hand at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport later this month when the UK Government hosts the first Severn Growth Summit (22 Jan).

350 delegates have signed up to attend the inaugural event hosted by the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns to explore how links between the South Wales and South West England economies can be strengthened following the announcement of the abolition of the Severn Tolls later this year.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am delighted to see such a positive response from communities to this first sell out event. The fact the event has sold out so quickly is a clear demonstration of the appetite to bring people and industry closer together on both sides of the border. That is what the Severn Growth Summit is all about.□

This event signals the start of an important conversation that will transform the joint economic and cultural prospects of South Wales and the South West of England. Boosting the local economy by over £100m each and every year□ by this major UK Government policy decision is a clear message that Wales is open for business.

I look forward to welcoming partners from both sides of the Wales-England border to the Summit and hope that we seize this opportunity to think big to make our economies stronger, more dynamic and fit for the future.□

[Press release: British Embassy Tallinn celebrating 100 years of friendship between the UK and Estonia](#)

On 10 January British Ambassador to Estonia Theresa Bubbear announced the launch of a series of events that the British Embassy will hold throughout 2018 to celebrate the Estonian Centenary and 100 years of friendship between our two countries. These will include “Pop-up Embassy” visits to each of Estonia’s 15 counties, an online exhibition on the Royal Navy’s support during Estonia’s War of Independence and a competition for school children to win invitations to this year’s Queen’s Birthday Party.

“I am delighted that the Embassy can play a part in celebrating the Estonian centenary and I do hope that many people can take part in our events to learn more about the UK and the long-lasting friendship between our countries. We are celebrating 100 years of friendship, but also looking ahead at the next 100 years” British Ambassador Theresa Bubbear said at the launch event.

“We will always remember the special role of British naval and air forces during the Estonian War of Independence. No country or an individual can survive on its own, the co-operation is everything. It has been like that in the past and in the globalizing world the ties are going to be even stronger between Estonia and the UK” told Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sven Mikser.

For more information on “pop-up embassies” and other Centenary related activities of the British Embassy please follow the Embassy on social media (British Embassy Tallinn at Facebook, @UKinEstonia on Twitter).

An online exhibition on the Royal Navy’s support during Estonia’s War of Independence is being created in collaboration with Estonian Maritime Museum, Estonian National Archive and Estonian National Library and will be located at www.UKandEstonia.ee. The Maritime Museum will be hosting a sister exhibition at Sea Plane Harbour in autumn.

[Press release: British Ambassador Moazzam Malik visit Papua and West Papua](#)

British Ambassador to Indonesia Moazzam Malik was visiting Papua and West Papua as part of his regular provincial visits in Indonesia. The Ambassador visited Sorong, Manokwari and Jayapura for meetings with key Government interlocutors at the local and provincial levels, businesses, civil society groups, and universities.

Ambassador Moazzam Malik said:

I am pleased to be making my third visit to the region since becoming Ambassador. I am here to discuss issues of mutual interest such as climate change, education and development. I am particularly excited to return to UNIPA University so I can encourage more Papuans to consider studying in the UK, including through the UK funded Chevening Scholarships.

The UK fully supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Indonesia. We regard Papua as an integral part of Indonesia. We also support the efforts the Government and civil society organisations to address the challenges in Papua and hope to see it enjoy the same level of peace, stability, and prosperity as other parts of this nation.

Notes to Editors:

- Chevening scholarships are the UK government’s global scholarship programme funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisation. Indonesia is the fourth largest countries for the Chevening scholarship programme and around 80 awards will be available. Find out more at www.chevening.org

- We want the brightest and best Papuans to come to the UK to study, including through Chevening and LPDP scholarships, to help Papua achieve its full potential
- For more information on the visit please contact Embassy's Spokesperson Faye Belnis at +62 (0) 811 87777 62