

# News story: New bill to improve patient safety

A safety organisation drawing on lessons from the airline industry will have new legal powers to investigate serious patient safety incidents in the NHS in England, under plans laid before parliament today (14 September 2017).

The draft [Health Service Safety Investigations Bill](#) will establish and enshrine in law the powers of the Health Service Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB).

The bill forms a key part of the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's plan to develop a more open, learning culture across the NHS.

The HSSIB will take forward the work of the current Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch (HSIB), which came into operation in April 2017 as a division of NHS Improvement.

Under the proposals, the HSSIB will be independent of the NHS and at arm's length from government. It will have far-reaching access to investigate serious safety incidents or risks to patient safety.

After each investigation is completed, the HSSIB will publish detailed reports which will:

- make recommendations for system-wide learning across the NHS
- help develop national standards on investigations
- provide advice, guidance and training to improve investigative practice across the health service

Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, said:

This draft bill represents a landmark moment for patient safety across our NHS, and is a historic opportunity to achieve widespread cultural change in learning from mistakes.

When significant errors occur, it is vital that health organisations react quickly and decisively to share lessons and make improvements. To achieve this we need to create an environment where patients, public and healthcare professionals all feel able to speak out about their concerns, without fear or favour.

A key feature of the HSSIB would be its new approach to investigations, which will protect the information it holds from disclosure.

The aim is to create a 'safe space' in which participants, including patients, families and staff, can share information in the knowledge that it will not be disclosed except in limited circumstances, or by order of the

High Court.

It is hoped that the safe space model will encourage more participants in investigations to speak out about safety concerns to help identify and address risks across the NHS. This approach is already used in the safety-critical rail, aviation and marine industries – all of which have achieved dramatic improvements in industry safety.

The draft bill also proposes to give the HSSIB the power to establish an accreditation system across the NHS – supporting trusts who receive accreditation to conduct safe space investigations. This will further reduce unsafe and costly practice, improve investigations, and embed a culture of learning and improvement throughout the health service.

Keith Conradi, the chief investigator of the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch and former head of the Air Accidents Investigation Branch, said:

We very much welcome the introduction of the draft Health Service Safety Investigations Bill.

It's a key step towards HSIB's independence and as the bill progresses, we look forward to hearing the variety of views and comments on the bill's content.

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## [News story: Autonomy on the front line: Defence Minister announces world-leading UK innovation at DSEI](#)

During her keynote speech on DSEI's Innovation Day, the Defence Minister announced twenty-five winners of the MOD's "Last Mile" challenge.

Earlier in the year, the Minister challenged industry and academia to design pioneering technology to get vital supplies to soldiers on the front line. Developing systems for unmanned delivery of combat supplies will reduce the risk to troops and improve efficiency.

The challenge looked to draw on the rapid progress of the private sector in the development of delivery drones and automated deliveries. More than 140 organisations from small-and-medium-size-enterprises (SMEs) to large defence companies submitted entries.

Winning ideas include disposable supply trailers, autonomous hover-bikes and airborne vehicle 'swarms'. Twenty five projects were chosen with a total contract value for this phase of almost £2 million, which will produce

demonstrator models of the concepts for testing by UK personnel.

Part of the MOD's £800m Innovation Initiative, and led by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), the contracts are worth £3.5 million over three years.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The Last Mile Challenge is a great example of how we are engaging with a real range of businesses and harnessing innovation to help our military right up to the front line. From these autonomous vehicles to next-generation body armour, we are investing our rising defence budget and £178 billion equipment plan in the technology that will keep our Armed Forces and the UK safe.

With 141 international delegates from 60 countries, DSEI showcases British business and innovation across security and defence on the world stage. The Defence Minister toured the exhibition and in a key note speech, announced the latest investment in advanced equipment for the UK's Armed Forces.

Building on ongoing work to cut red tape for SMEs, the Defence Minister also announced the launch of an overhauled Defence Suppliers Portal, which streamlines engaging and bidding for contracts with the MOD. Working more effectively with SMEs a key defence priority, and the MOD has committed to spending 25% of procurement money with SME suppliers by 2020

The Defence Minister also highlighted advanced combat clothing and body armour on display at DSEI 2017, as part of the Army's "Future Soldier Vision". Working with partners including the Royal College of Art, the project is developing advanced textiles, stronger and lighter body armour, and a new high-tech helmet with state-of-the-art communication systems. [Read more about that announcement here.](#)

And finally, the Defence Minister also announced the transformation of the Disposal Services Authority (DSA) into the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA). DESA will generate revenue for the UK and build closer collaboration between UK industry and international customers, providing the best possible financial return to the UK taxpayer.

Today's announcements come after [a range made by the Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon yesterday including bomb disposal robots.](#)

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**[News story: MOD and Royal College of](#)**

# Art collaborate on cutting-edge new uniform

The Future Soldier Vision (FSV) is part of the MOD's plan to give British soldiers' high-quality, cutting-edge equipment.

The Royal College of Art's (RCA) researchers and designers worked on the clothing to ensure prototypes were fitted to the body, easy to run in and comfortable to wear. The RCA supplied a number of sets of prototype combat clothing which were assessed at the Specialist Weapons School, Warminster, to examine future uniform concepts.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

From new materials to high-tech helmets, innovation is all about giving our personnel the kit they need by working with world famous partners like the Royal College of Art. You might not expect the MOD to work with an art and design university, but it is this kind of non-traditional partnership which will keep our Armed Forces equipped with cutting edge technology.

So far, kit being designed for FSV includes advanced combat clothing, with new materials like four-way stretch 'phase-change material' and silent hook-and-loop pockets. The enhanced body armour will be stronger, as well as having a new high-tech helmet with state-of-the-art, built-in communication systems.

FSV aims to give industry an example of an integrated soldier system that balances military need with cutting-edge technology. This includes technology that delivers distributed power and data, scalable and integrated protection, augmented surveillance and target acquisition, and a range of functional fabrics incorporated into the clothing.

Head of Programme for Textiles and Reader in Smart Textiles at the RCA Anne Toomey said:

The RCA was pleased to have this opportunity to demonstrate how our innovative design approaches can enhance value and impact across sectors through optimising existing materials performance and fabrication.

As the RCA grows its research activities to embrace new materials and fabrication technologies, we will be able to further extend this reach upstream. We plan to become the world's first STEAM institution, operating a design-led approach to future innovation with materials through the development of our new Materials Science Research Centre.

MOD and Royal College of Art Collaborate on cutting-edge new uniform. Crown Copyright.

Defence Science & Technology Laboratory has worked with a number of small and non-traditional suppliers, such as the RCA, to develop options for improved soldier system components.

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## [Press release: Autonomy on the frontline: Last Mile challenge winners announced](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) set industry and academia a challenge to design pioneering technology to get vital supplies to soldiers on the front line and the winners have now been chosen.

Part of MOD's Innovation Initiative, and led by MOD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), the contracts are worth around £3.5 million over 3 years.

Dstl, in partnership with industry and academia, delivers defence and security science and technology (S&T) research for MOD and other government departments and allied organisations, looking to find the best solutions to UK defence and security challenges of today and the future.

Supplying troops in challenging environments – often dubbed 'the last mile' – using unmanned technology may reduce risk and cost. As announced at last year's Farnborough Airshow, Dstl is working with the US Department of Defense to accelerate and demonstrate the effective use of these new robotic and autonomous systems technologies, with UK troops testing prototypes by 2019.

Drawing on commercial technology and conceptual ideas, from online delivery systems to futuristic unmanned vehicles, more than 140 organisations from small and medium-sized enterprises to big defence companies submitted entries for the Last Mile challenge.

Winning ideas include autonomous hover-bikes, unmanned air and ground vehicles, novel means of autonomously loading and unloading, navigating and delivery ordering, management and control using 'uber-like' and other app-based technologies.

Twenty-five projects were chosen from organisations from the UK and worldwide with a total contract value for the 6-month first phase of almost £2 million to advance the technology towards a system solution for 'tactical resupply in a box'. The subsequent year-long phase will then go on to produce demonstrator system prototypes of the concepts, including evaluation with the

British Army in October 2018 as part of the Army's Warfighter Experiment 'Autonomous Warrior (Land)' (AWE18), in addition to a potential demonstration in the US.

UK jobs will be created or secured from the project, with the majority of companies chosen being from Britain. The Innovation Initiative and £800 million Defence Innovation Fund aims to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship, to find twenty-first century solutions to rapidly emerging threats.

Dstl's lead for the challenge, Peter Stockel, said:

The number and quality of the entries for this competition was outstanding and the competition was fierce. We chose the best from across the proposals to enable the system solutions we want for prototype demonstration and evaluation. This was a fully open competition, with many of those down-selected happening to come from the UK. This illustrates the strength of our national capability and the benefit of recent investments in this important and rapidly developing technology sector. However, it was great to also be able to pick some great propositions from around the world. The brief is to rapidly demonstrate system solutions which aim to reduce the logistic burden on our Armed Forces, provide new operational capability and reduce casualties; so we're pleased with the response and keen to see the potential capability benefits being assessed by our military during AWE18.

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## [Corporate report: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF\) implementation reports](#)

Details on the activities supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) programme. This includes a information on:

- development and delivery of the operational programme
- applicant facing tools including e-systems guidance
- scheme governance and management control systems
- programme monitoring committee
- selection criteria draft and adoption