

[News story: Scottish shipyards begin building Royal Navy's latest patrol ship](#)

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer for Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the UK's Defence procurement organisation, pressed the button to cut the first sheet of steel for the HMS Spey at BAE Systems' Govan shipyard on the Clyde today.

Like her four sister ships HMS Forth, HMS Medway, HMS Trent and HMS Tamar, which are all either under construction or preparing for sea trials, HMS Spey will be built at Govan before she is transferred to the Scotstoun yard, where she will be fitted out for operations.

Work to build HMS Spey and the rest of the OPV fleet is sustaining 800 jobs and the vital skills needed to build the fleet of next-generation Type 26 Frigates, which will begin construction at Govan in the summer.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin, said:

The start of work on HMS Spey, the fifth Offshore Patrol Vessel, is another milestone in a significant programme of work which is sustaining hundreds of jobs in Scotland and the vital shipbuilding skills needed to build the Royal Navy's new Type 26 Frigates.

The on-going successful delivery of these ships is a key element of the Government's ten-year, £178 billion equipment plan to provide the UK's armed forces with the kit they deserve.

HMS Spey, which will be 90 metres long and displace around 2,000 tonnes, is one of two ships being built under a £287 million agreement signed between the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and BAE Systems in December 2016. She is due to be delivered to the Royal Navy in 2019 and enter service by 2021.

She is expected to carry a 30mm cannon and a flight deck capable of receiving a Merlin helicopter, in support of counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, anti-smuggling and maritime defence operations.

DE&S CEO Tony Douglas said:

The team at Defence Equipment and Support has driven the successful delivery of the OPV programme; today's steel cut is a proud moment not only for us, but for the Royal Navy and our industry partners too.

I am looking forward to continuing this long-standing and close

relationship when we begin manufacturing for the Type 26 fleet later in the summer.

Batch 2 Offshore Patrol Vessels have a maximum speed of 24 knots and can sail 5,500 nautical miles before having to resupply.

[Press release: Hitting the high note: government targets lucrative Chinese music industry](#)

The government is set to launch a 'Music Mission' to China to tap into the lucrative Chinese music market – worth £134 million in 2015 – and has announced the latest financial grants awarded as part of the Music Exports Growth Scheme (MEGS) to help promote the rising music stars of the future.

Music is big business in China, with digital revenues rising by 69% in 2015. UK artists currently make up around 5% of the top 100 chart entries in China and the Department for International Trade (DIT) wants to help British talent access this growing market with a week-long mission in Beijing (24 April to 1 May).

The China music mission is being organised by DIT in partnership with industry bodies AIM (Association of Independent Music) and the BPI (British Phonographic Industry), and will feature conferences, artist showcases and music company visits.

Alongside this activity, the latest round of Music Exports Growth Scheme funding has been awarded to further boost international music exports. A total of just over £140,000 has been made available to 12 UK acts ranging from singer songwriter Lucy Rose, whose songwriting started with her writing tunes on her family's piano, and Northern Irish singer Ciaran Lavery, an exciting talent from the tiny village of Aghagallon in County Antrim.

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, said:

The UK is a global leader in the music industry – from Adele to Ed Sheeran, music is one of our most important exports.

We are now launching our 'Music Mission' to China so we can tap into the lucrative Asian market as part of an outward looking Global Britain.

Alongside this, we are targeting grants at the musical stars of the future who will hopefully follow in the footsteps of the big names

who have led the way in our export successes.

Emmy Buckingham, Membership and International Manager at AIM, said:

Since our last mission to China in 2007 AIM has been encouraged by advances in Chinese copyright law which are creating valuable market opportunities. This trade mission comes at an opportune time to equip British music companies with the vital intelligence and contacts they need to develop their business in this complex region.

Through DIT's scheme, which is funded by the GREAT Campaign and run by the BPI – the UK record labels' association – dozens of artists have been awarded grants to build on their growing UK success and break into overseas markets.

Now in this ninth round of funding, MEGS has awarded nearly £2 million of government investment to promote over 130 UK artists internationally since its launch in January 2014.

Commenting on the latest MEGS award, BPI Director of International Chris Tams, said:

The beauty of the scheme is that it is helping a diverse range of artists, who have the talent but not always the means, to achieve their potential in overseas markets and, in the process, boost British music exports.

Since the scheme began 3 years ago, for every £1 invested we've seen an average return of around £10, which is hugely encouraging and underlines the vital role that government can play in supporting the success of British music around the world.

DIT re-launched the Music Export Growth Scheme in October 2016, making up to a further £2.8 million available in grants through to 2020 to help small and medium sized music companies – the vast majority independent, music labels, distributors and management companies export to overseas markets.

Applications for the next round of MEGS funding are being received from 1 May 2017.

For details please visit: www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx.

Further information

Contact the DIT Media and Digital Team on 020 7008 3333

Follow us: [@tradegovuk](https://twitter.com/tradegovuk), gov.uk/dit

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Notes to editors

Full list of MEGS recipient music companies and acts (Round 9 funding, 21 April 2017):

About AIM

The [Association of Independent Music](#) (AIM) is a trade body established in 1999 to provide a collective voice for the UK's independent music industry.

AIM represents over 800 music companies, from the largest independent labels in the World to underground stalwarts, DIY artists, start-ups and independent distributors. AIM promotes this exciting and diverse sector globally and provides a range of services, discounts and events to members, enabling them to grow, grasp new opportunities and break into new markets.

AIM was instrumental in the creation of Merlin, the global digital rights which ensures that independents have a vehicle to protect and enhance their ability to compete in the ever changing world of digital music. In 2006 AIM worked with sister organisations across the globe to set up the Worldwide Independent Network (WIN), in response to business, creative and market access issues faced by the independent sector everywhere.

The AIM Independent Music Awards is the leading awards ceremony for independent music, shining a spotlight on the great wealth of talent to come out of the most exciting and forward thinking sector in the UK. The AIM Awards is proud to recognise the real heroes of music; those who do things their own way, make incredible music and inspire us all with their creativity, commitment and spirit.

The [BPI](#) is the record labels' association that promotes British music and champions the UK's recorded music sector. Its membership is made up of around 390 independent labels and the UK's 3 'major' companies, which collectively account for around 80% cent of domestic music consumption and one in six artist albums sold worldwide.

Press release: Charities 'missing vital opportunity' to show how they benefit the public

The Charity Commission has today (21 April 2017) published the [findings of its work to scrutinise charity accounts](#), finding that 54% of those reviewed did not meet the public benefit reporting requirement. The regulator says these charities are missing a vital opportunity to tell their story and explain their impact.

As part of its regular programme of charity accounts scrutiny, the regulator analysed a random sample of 107 charity accounts against 2 criteria:

- how charities are reporting on the public benefit requirement
- whether the accounts meet readers' needs

Separately, the Commission scrutinised a random sample of 109 accounts of charities with incomes of under £25k to examine their overall quality.

Public benefit

The Commission found that 54% of charities (58) did not meet the public benefit reporting requirement. Out of these charities, 13 failed the requirement as they did not describe the difference that their charity had made; 21 charities did not include the statement that they had complied with the public benefit requirements and read our guidance and 24 charities did not do either.

The report includes an example case study from the sample, demonstrating that it can be easy for trustees to get this right and explain succinctly and clearly how their work benefits the public and the difference that they make.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission of England and Wales, said:

Many charities do a great job of explaining how their work benefits the public. But this review indicates that too many charities are missing out on an important opportunity to tell the public why their work matters, and what difference they are making. We know from wider research how important it is for donors and supporters to know how charities are spending their money. Your report and accounts say a lot about your charity's attitude to accountability and transparency and so don't miss out on this opportunity. The easiest way to improve the quality of your accounts and report is to use our templates; we know the charities that do use our templates produce accounts of much better quality.

Do charity annual reports and accounts meet the reader's needs?

The Commission also examined whether the charities' accounts meet basic user needs, based on a range of criteria, including whether the annual report explains the activities the charity had carried out during the year to meet its purposes and whether the accounts had been appropriately scrutinised in an audit or independent examination.

This work found that 75% of the accounts were of acceptable quality in meeting the basic needs of readers. There were some areas of particular strength; for example, all of the charities that required an audit had filed an audit report.

However, 25% (27 charities) did not meet the basic standard, for example because the accounts were inconsistent or not transparent.

Small charity accounts

The Commission found that of the 109 small charity accounts scrutinised, 55% were of acceptable quality ([see 'Notes to editors'](#)), indicating a possible slight improvement in the quality of reporting (47% was achieved in the previous 2 years).

The regulator found a range of reasons for some charities falling short of requirements; for example, 5 charities provided incomplete accounts that did not include information on their assets and liabilities.

The report finds that those charities that use the accounts templates often present accounts of a much higher quality, and is encouraging smaller charities to make use of the available templates.

The Commission says it has provided guidance to the trustees of the charities that did not submit accounts of acceptable quality and will be using opportunities, such as its quarterly newsletter CC News, to share the key lessons arising from its account scrutiny work with other charities.

The [full reports](#) are available on GOV.UK.

Ends

PR 33/17

Notes to editors

1. The report sets out the criteria used to determine acceptable quality.
2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).

[News story: Government publishes £1.2 billion plan to increase cycling and walking](#)

The government has published its [£1.2 billion long-term plan to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys](#).

The government wants cycling and walking to become the norm by 2040 and will target funding at innovative ways to encourage people onto a bike or to use their own 2 feet for shorter journeys.

Plans include specific objectives to double cycling, reduce cycling accidents and increase the proportion of 5 to 10 year-olds walking to school to 55% by 2025.

The £1.2 billion is allocated as follows:

- £50 million to provide cycling proficiency training for further 1.3 million children
- £101 million to improve cycling infrastructure and expand cycle routes between the city centres, local communities, and key employment and retail sites
- £85 million to make improvements to 200 sections of roads for cyclists
- £80 million for safety and awareness training for cyclists, extra secure cycle storage, bike repair, maintenance courses and road safety measures
- £389.5 million for councils to invest in walking and cycling schemes
- £476.4 million from local growth funding to support walking and cycling

In addition, the government is investing an extra:

- £5 million on improving cycle facilities at railway stations
- £1 million on Living Streets' outreach programmes to encourage children to walk to school
- £1 million on [Cycling UK's 'Big Bike Revival' scheme](#) which provides free bike maintenance and cycling classes

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are making cycling and walking more accessible to everyone because of the substantial health and environmental benefits – it will also be a boost for businesses because a fitter and healthier workforce is more productive.

We have already tripled spending on cycling since 2010 and we are now publishing a long-term investment plan because we are

absolutely committed to increasing levels of cycling and walking.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said:

As the days are becoming longer and warmer we want to encourage people to make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys – improving people’s health, reducing travel costs, cutting congestion and cleaning up the environment in the process.

Today we have set out our long-term approach to encourage more people to cycle or walk and overcome the barriers which stop them from doing so.

Joe Irvin, Chief Executive Living Streets said:

Publication of government’s first ever statutory ‘Cycling and walking investment strategy’ is a historic moment. Making it easier for people to walk their everyday journeys will improve our health, economy and social welfare. We now need to turn good intentions into practical progress and help government step up to the new ambitions.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Cycling UK:

Cycling is a fantastic transport choice, helping you to stay active and healthy as part of your daily routine, and saving you money on travel costs. Cycling UK’s Big Bike Revival will help tens of thousands of people back into cycling by getting your bikes checked over, fixed up and back into use. We are grateful to the Department for Transport for supporting this initiative for this, our third year of national activities to help get more of the UK cycling more often.

Xavier Brice, Chief Executive Sustrans, said:

The first ever ‘Cycling and walking investment strategy’ is a significant step forward by the government. There is an overwhelming body of evidence that demonstrates that investment in cycling and walking has many health, social and economic benefits and must be prioritised. The challenge now is to deliver the change needed locally and nationally.

Under the [Infrastructure Act 2015](#) , the government is required to set a ‘Cycling and walking investment strategy’ for England. This is the first of a series of shorter term, 5 year strategies to support the long-term ambition

to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys by 2040.

[News story: Defence Secretary announces £539 million investment in new missiles systems](#)

The deal ensures our Armed Forces have the best equipment available to protect the new Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers and the extended fleet from current and future threats.

The half a billion-pound contracts will sustain over 130 jobs with MBDA in the UK, with missile modification and service support being carried out in Stevenage, Henlow, Bristol and Bolton.

Secretary of State, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

This substantial investment in missile systems is vital in protecting our ships and planes from the most complex global threats as our Armed Forces keep the UK safe.

Backed by our rising Defence budget, these contracts will sustain high skilled jobs across the UK and demonstrate that strong defence and a strong economy go hand in hand.

As part of a £41 million contract, the Meteor air-to-air missiles will arm the UK's F-35B Lightning II squadrons. It will provide the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy with a world beating missile that can engage with targets moving at huge speed and at a very long range. The weapon will enter service on Typhoon with the RAF in 2018 and the F-35B from 2024, and will be used on a range of missions including protecting the Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers.

Meteor missile fired from a fighter jet. Image courtesy of MBDA Systems.

Meanwhile, a £175 million in-service support contract for the anti-air Sea Viper weapon system will ensure that the Royal Navy's Type 45 Destroyers can continue to provide unparalleled protection from air attack to the extended fleet. Under the contract, the missiles will be maintained, repaired and overhauled as and when required to ensure continued capability. The Sea Viper missile defends ships against multiple threats, including missiles and fighter aircraft.

The final contract is a £323 million deal to purchase the next batch of cutting-edge air defence missiles for the British Army and Royal Navy,

offering increased capability at a lower cost. Designed and manufactured by MBDA UK at sites in Bolton, Stevenage and Henlow, the next-generation CAMM missile will provide the Armed Forces with missiles for use on sea and on land. CAMM has the capability to defend against anti-ship cruise missiles, aircraft and other highly sophisticated threats. Signalling our continued investment in Type 26 programme, CAMM will provide the anti-air defence capability on the new Type 26 Frigates for the Royal Navy and will also form part of the Sea Ceptor weapon system on the Type 23 Frigate and will also enhance the British Army's Ground Based Air Defence capability by replacing the in-service Rapier system.

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

Work on these cutting-edge missiles, which will help to protect the UK at home and abroad and secure jobs across the country, demonstrates the importance of Defence investment. That is why, working closely with our industry partners, we continue to drive innovation and value into everything we do; securing next generation equipment for our Armed Forces at the best possible value for the taxpayer.

Dave Armstrong, Managing Director of MBDA UK, added:

MBDA is delighted by the continued trust placed in us by the Ministry of Defence and the British military. The contracts announced today for Meteor, CAMM and Sea Viper will help protect all three UK Armed Services, providing them with new cutting-edge capabilities and ensuring their current systems remain relevant for the future. They will also help to secure hundreds of high-skilled people at MBDA UK and in the UK supply chain, maintaining the UK's manufacturing base and providing us with a platform for exports.