

News story: Defence Secretary confirms 30,000 defence jobs in South West

During the visit to Devon, Sir Michael revealed figures showing the significant contribution Defence makes to the region, with the Ministry of Defence spending billions of pounds with industry and supporting one in 70 roles or 30,000 local jobs.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Creating an economy that works for everyone means investing and supporting jobs across the UK. Backed by a rising defence budget, we spent more than £4 billion with industry in the South West last year to help keep Britain safe.

Our commitment to the future of defence in the south west is enduring, a region that is vital to the Royal Navy and for the many serving personnel that live and work there.

I welcomed the opportunity to review with Peter Heaton-Jones and others how we can work together to ensure that the future use of Chivenor in a decade's time helps create jobs and investment.

While at the base, the Defence Secretary met with personnel from 24 Commando who have recently been engaged in climatic training, including deploying to Belize on exercise and a winter deployment to Norway. He also awarded two Long Service and Good Conduct medals to 3 Commando's Lance Corporal Kenny McBain and Staff Sergeant Daniel Moseley, from the Army's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in recognition of their hard work and 15 years of exemplary service.

24 Commando Royal Marines will remain in the South West when they relocate from RM Chivenor by 2027 as part of the Better Defence Estate strategy. The MOD is engaging closely with local authorities and other interested parties on the future of the base.

This visit allowed for further discussion with community members to make sure the release of the site will bring the best possible opportunities like jobs, housing and economic benefits to the local area.

[News story: MOD signs £14 million contract for lifesaving medical technology](#)

The Tempus Pro monitors, designed and manufactured by Remote Diagnostic Technologies (RDT), can help facilitate emergency treatment for Royal Navy, British Army, and RAF personnel if they are injured or taken ill on active duty.

The lightweight, robust and portable monitor, which is battery operated, can be used on land, at sea and in the air. It transmits medical data such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate in real time back to medical facilities and treatment teams, giving them a better understanding of a patient's condition ahead of time.

Remote Diagnostic Technologies' Tempus Pro medical monitor. RDT Ltd Copyright.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

Our Armed Forces serve with incredible commitment and bravery, and the new Tempus Pro monitor will ensure that they will receive the best possible care and treatment should they be wounded or taken ill on operations.

Backed by our rising defence budget and our £178 billion equipment plan, our investment in these cutting edge medical monitors demonstrates how we are working with our NATO allies to provide lifesaving equipment to our frontline personnel.

This deal, which will sustain over 60 UK jobs, has already seen 444 monitors delivered to the Armed Forces, with plans for around 900 more to be purchased over the next five years. The contract is part of the MOD's Innovation Initiative, aiming to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in pursuit of maintaining a military advantage in the future.

The Tempus Pro medical monitor in action. RDT Ltd Copyright.

Tempus Pro can be used remotely on medical evacuation vehicles and aircraft, battalion aid stations, hospital ships and field hospitals. It will help to provide consistent and streamlined medical support, meaning the records of all sick and injured Armed Forces personnel can easily move with them as they progress through different levels of care. The monitors are being purchased through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

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

This state of the art piece of equipment shows how we are delivering proven, world-leading equipment to our Armed Forces. The Tempus Pro monitor is a step forward in innovation and safety, demonstrating how we are committed to improving the medical care received by those keeping our country safe.

This deal also highlights DE&S' strong, collaborative partnership with industry, benefitting both our Armed Forces and the wider UK economy by sustaining around 60 UK jobs.

[News story: Reimagining railways: innovation funding announced](#)

Up to £9 million innovation funding competition to improve the railway for customers.

In a message to the [Railway Industry Association's](#) Innovation Conference, Rail Minister [Paul Maynard](#) announced up to £9 million to support UK businesses as part of a new innovation competition to develop solutions for national and international railways.

The funding is being made available by the [Department for Transport](#) (DFT) through Innovate UK.

Creating better railways

The competition aims to help deliver the industry's [Rail Technical Strategy](#) and its [Rail Capability Delivery Plan for 2017](#), which outlines the joint industry vision for using technology to create better railways.

It will invite applications on 2 priority areas that:

- create high-value, low-cost railway innovations, which increase the value of rail services to passengers while driving down operational expense
- improve customer experience through station design and performance

For the travelling public this should mean a more sustainable rail industry that offers better services, better journeys and better value.

Accelerating innovation in rail

Mr Maynard said:

We are delivering the biggest modernisation programme in rail since the Victorian era. But industries like automotive and aerospace spend many times what rail spends on research and development. This has to change. We have got to accelerate innovation in rail. It's what passengers deserve and expect.

This is why we are working with Innovate UK to launch a rail innovation competition offering investment of up to £9m, which will help to deliver the industry's Rail Technical Strategy.

We want participation both from within the rail sector and from organisations with little experience of working in rail. Winning back customer confidence is a big challenge for the industry and successful innovation will play a big role in delivering that.

UK businesses of any size can apply for funding. Each project should include at least one small or medium-sized enterprise (SME).

Competition information

- the competition opens on 20 March 2017, and the deadline for registration is midday on 10 May 2017
- we expect projects to last up to 12 months and to range in size from £150,000 to £1 million
- projects must involve at least one SME, be collaborative and be business-led
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a briefing event will be held on 21 March 2017

[Consultation outcome: Persistent Organic Pollutants: draft Stockholm Convention UK implementation plan 2017](#)

Updated: Added link to the updated National Implementation Plan that has been published.

We want to know what you think about the proposed new actions in our updated national implementation plan. This plan sets out the progress made since 2013

in reducing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). It also proposes new actions for improving progress and implementing the requirements for new POPs that have been added.

This implementation plan sets out how the UK is meeting its commitment for the [Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants](#). This global treaty protects human health and the environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Press release: New chair appointed to The Pensions Advisory Service

The appointment was made without holding a competition and has been made in agreement with the [Commissioner for Public Appointments](#) who was content given the fact that a new body is to be created that will replace The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS).

Ann will oversee the continued delivery of free, professional and impartial guidance on pensions and support for people if they have a problem or complaint about their workplace or private pension.

The Pensions Advisory Service delivers its information and guidance service through a variety of channels including telephone, web chat, written and online enquiries, outreach events and on its website. It is also responsible for delivering Pension Wise's telephone services.

Minister of State for Pensions, Richard Harrington said:

Ann Harris brings a wealth of experience and skills to The Pensions Advisory Service which does excellent work in helping the public with pension inquiries.

With more than 178,000 customers, and more than 2.7 million visits to its website in the past year, TPAS' services are very much in demand so it's vital it attracts a senior leader of such high calibre.

Ann Harris OBE said:

I am delighted with my new appointment as TPAS Chair.

This is an exciting time for TPAS, as it prepares for the proposed transition to a new single finance guidance body.

I am determined that it continues to deliver its core business of giving people professional, independent and impartial help with their private pensions.

About The Pensions Advisory Service

The TPAS service is free to the public. It is delivered by in-house pension specialists and a nationwide network of volunteer advisers who have typically worked in the pensions industry in roles that have required a high level of technical knowledge.

Single finance guidance body

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Treasury have recently [consulted on a single guidance body](#) bringing together:

The consultation sets out a proposal to create a single body providing debt advice, money guidance and pensions information and guidance. The body would complement financial guidance provided by the third sector and industry, provide more targeted support for consumers and generate efficiencies.

This new body will make it easier for consumers to get the guidance they need.

Ann Harris OBE – Biography

Ann previously worked for 40 years as a civil servant, latterly holding senior Civil Service roles in finance and programme management. She was awarded an OBE in 2009, for her services to DWP.

Ann's roles outside DWP include acting in a trustee role for the Civil Service Pension programme, management board and operations committee. Ann is also an audit committee member for the Gambling Commission and volunteers regularly for her local Citizens Advice Bureau, where she is a volunteer trustee. She previously served with TPAS as a non-executive director for 18 months prior to becoming chairperson.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5122

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