

National Highways to inspire next generation of talent through world's best-selling video game

Launching today (Monday 6 September) students across the country will be able to jump in and explore three of National Highways (formerly Highways England) proposed schemes that have been created in the game.

They can learn about everything road designers have to take into account when they're planning schemes like the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements and the A303 past Stonehenge.

Through the in-game activities students will get a sense of the range of skills used by National Highways to build some of the biggest road projects in a generation, including: archaeology, biology, ecology, civil engineering, communications technology and coding.

Five games and a creative mode have been developed, along with lesson plans that teachers can use with their students aged 7-11 (key stage 2) and 11-14 (key stage 3).

Natalie Jones, National Highways Talent Delivery Lead, said:

We want to inspire the next generation of talented engineers and scientists, on whom the country's infrastructure and national economy will one day depend. Our ambition is to seek out the next James Dyson or Dame Sarah Gilbert and help put them on the path to a fascinating life and career.

With the help of Minecraft and the in-game activities, students will get first-hand experience of what would go into building a huge bridge or digging a giant tunnel. In real life these are multi-million pound structures that are carefully designed and then built by experts. These skills and expertise help to create the motorways and main roads that keep us all moving, whether going to work, delivering goods or keeping families and friends connected.

The educational package is aligned to the national curriculum and is available to all teachers and schools, the only requirement is that they have access to Microsoft Education Centre. The five activities include:

- Lower Thames Crossing – Tunnel Digging: Students will be using a Minecraft model of the proposed LTC tunnel to learn about tunnelling and excavate and build a portion of the tunnel.
- Lower Thames Crossing – Signs game: Using a model of a different section of the planned LTC scheme, students will be using MakeCode to programme

road signs to respond to different scenarios, including severe weather and flooding.

- A428 Black to Caxton Gibbet improvements – Natural Habitats game: Students will be using a section of the Caxton Gibbet roundabout to create a new stretch of road whilst keeping animal habitats safe. (*Not available at launch)
- A303 Stonehenge – Across the Ages: Students will be taken on an historic journey through different time periods with Stonehenge as the backdrop, including; Mesolithic Era, Neolithic Era, Bronze Age, Roman Britain, WW1, present day, and the planned A303 Stonehenge road scheme.
- A303 Stonehenge – Biodiversity game: Using a Minecraft model of a green bridge section of the proposed scheme, students will explore the biodiversity of the area by photographing the flora and fauna in the landscape.

Each proposed scheme also has a Creative Mode aimed for use by schools during lunchtime or after school clubs. The creative game will ask a different set of questions, and students can spend as much time as they want building and designing things in relation to the questions.

The Minecraft maps and games were created by Blockbuilders C.I.C, an expert company aimed at engaging young people into planning, the environment and local history using Minecraft.

Megan Leckie, Co-Director at BlockBuilders Youth Engagement, said

We are very proud of the unique educational games we have created with National Highways, using Minecraft Education Edition. Creative platforms such as these open up a whole new world of learning for young people, where they can be directly engaged with their local environment and find out more about engineering.

To discover more about National Highways Minecraft STEM learning package, to receive the educational resource pack or register interest in National Highways holding a Minecraft workshop with the developers at your school, visit the [Minecraft STEM learning page](#)

To keep up to date with the latest news from National Highways follow @NationalHWays on Twitter or visit the [National Highways website](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Special 50th Anniversary pass out event for Ministry of Defence Police new recruits

On Friday 3 September the Ministry of Defence Police's (MDP's) first pass out parade event in almost two years took place at its Headquarters at Wethersfield in Essex, to celebrate the achievements of our latest new recruits and half a century of the MDP, ahead of the Force's 50th anniversary on 1 October.

British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) covered the event, which featured displays by our firearms and dog teams, music from the British Army Band Colchester, and student awards, following 18 weeks of intensive training for the new recruits.

[BFBS news coverage](#)

Ministry of Defence Chief Operating Officer, Mike Baker, was the guest of honour, leading the ceremonial inspection alongside Chief Constable Andy Adams.

Other special guests included senior MDP officers and civilian staff and members of the Police Committee, the Defence Police Federation, and the Retired Officers' Association.

For previous new recruits who have passed out of initial training during the pandemic there were no opportunities for friends and family to attend formal ceremonies, and so Friday's event was a memorable day for the Force, the students, and their loved ones, made even more poignant by its special recognition for the Force's 50th year.

As Chief Constable Andy Adams said:

Whilst much of the focus at this ceremony will be on our latest course of new recruits, and for them on their future, it is important we recognise that they join a Force with a proud history.

50 years ago, Mr F A Seward became the first Chief Constable of the Ministry of Defence Police. He too presided over parades such as this; where officers were attested with an oath of office following completion of basic training, which included teaching the principles of policing, first coined by Sir Robert Peel in 1829.

As police officers, our new colleagues are still required to uphold the oath they take, working to deliver the same fundamental

principles. In doing so they are guided to understand, as all new police officers before them have, to whom they are accountable and where their loyalty lies. Those aspects of their role in society are as valid today as they were 50 years ago.

So, as we celebrate the achievements of these new recruits here today, we do so in recognition of a tradition of public service, which has its origins in the nineteenth century, at a point in time when we also celebrate half a century of the MDP. The officers before you will now become part of upholding our traditions into the next half century of our history, and they should feel very proud to be part of the MDP as the Force moves forward.

See yourself as a future MDP officer?

Our recruitment campaign re-opens for candidate registration and pre-screening on 20 September. Visit www.mod.police.uk to find out more.

Follow #ForceWithADifference and #MDP50 on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

[50 years delivering unique specialist policing – #MDP50 Campaign Launch](#)

[Reflections on 50 years of the MDP by Chief Constable Andy Adams](#)

[A brief history of the Ministry of Defence Police, July 2021, Medium](#)

[Talk Through: the magazine of the Ministry of Defence Police](#)

[Pacer train becomes family support centre for Airedale Hospital](#)

- Airedale General Hospital has received a retired pacer train to expand hospital services
- NHS Trust won a Department for Transport competition to ‘Transform a Pacer’ and will use it as a site to offer support and respite to families visiting the hospital
- competition marked the end of the line for the unpopular Pacer trains on the Northern network

A retired Pacer carriage was lowered into the grounds of Airedale General Hospital over the course of Sunday morning (5 September 2021), ready to start a new life serving the community after completing millions of miles on the railways.

The local NHS Foundation Trust submitted a winning bid to save the vehicles

from the scrap heap and use them to create a positive environment that could benefit the local community. The hospital will transform its carriage into a mixed-use, non-clinical space to improve the experience of patients using Airedale General Hospital.

This will have a particular focus on helping children and families, as well as those suffering with dementia, providing a unique communal environment to support patients during their stay.

The 19-tonne carriage was lifted into position by a crane and onto a specially constructed site, ready for restoration.

The vehicle is the third and final of the retired trains to be delivered to community projects as part of the Department for Transport's ['Transform a Pacer' competition](#) in the North of England.

Previously, a vehicle was delivered to a primary school in Bradford to create a new science laboratory, and a second was delivered to a mental health charity based in Huddersfield Station.

The competition means that after 3 decades of service to northern communities, retired Pacer trains will now serve them in new and exciting ways focused on bringing the community together.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris said:

It has been great to witness all 3 of these Pacer carriages taken off the tracks and into new homes to serve communities across the North.

Instead of being a home for disgruntled commuters, this train will now have a new life bringing happiness and support to families visiting Airedale Hospital.

Kirsty Randall, matron for the children's ward, said:

We're really excited to have the Pacer train carriage on site and can't wait to start using it with our patients and their families.

We're planning on using the space for children and young people who need to be in hospital but not necessarily on the ward at all times.

The space will give these children and young people a space that feels less medical, which will really help our younger patients to have a more positive hospital experience.

The train delivered to Airedale NHS Foundation Trust was provided by rolling stock company Porterbrook and has been in service since 1986, travelling over 3 million miles across the network in that time. It was installed with the

help of Network Rail teams, who managed the logistics of putting it into place.

Mary Grant CEO of Porterbrook said:

Our Pacer trains have connected communities across Yorkshire over many years. Now that they have left frontline passenger service, I am proud that one of these vehicles will have a new lease of life at Airedale Hospital.

As good corporate citizens of Britain's railway, we are committed to whole life asset management. Repurposing retired rolling stock is just one way that Porterbrook can help make Britain's railway more sustainable. We hope that families attending Airedale Hospital enjoy using this retired rail vehicle.

[Foreign Secretary statement on the sentencing of Maria Kolesnikova and Maksim Znak](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has provided a statement following the sentencing of Maria Kolesnikova and Maksim Znak in Belarus



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The sentencing of Maria Kolesnikova and Maksim Znak shows the Belarusian authorities continuing their assault on the defenders of democracy and freedom.

Locking up political opponents will only deepen the pariah status of the Lukashenko regime.

Published 6 September 2021

Policy paper: Environment Bill 2020

Documents related to the 2020 Environment Bill. The Bill will bring into UK law environmental protections and recovery.