

# News story: Third Tide-Class Tanker Arrives in UK

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge comes just weeks after her sister ship, RFA Tidespring, met up at sea with aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time.

The 39,000-tonne tankers can carry up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,400 cubic metres of fresh water in support of Royal Navy operations all over the world.

The detailed customisation work to prepare RFA Tidesurge and her sister ships for operations is being undertaken at the A&P shipyard in Falmouth, sustaining around 300 jobs.

Minister for Defence Procurement Guto Bebb said:

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge in Cornwall marks another key milestone in the Tide Class programme. Tidesurge will soon join her sister ships in providing the integral support which powers our warships and helps our Royal Navy maintain a truly global presence.

While in Falmouth RFA Tidesurge will be fitted with UK specific armour, self-defence weaponry and communications systems, with the total UK work content, including A&P, in the Tide Class programme worth around £150 million and sustaining further jobs at 27 UK-based companies.

The customisation work is expected to take around four months after which RFA Tidesurge will begin final sea trials before entering service in Autumn this year.

Meanwhile, RFA Tidespring, which was preparing to conduct a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) refuelling when it met with HMS Queen Elizabeth in February, is currently acting as the training tanker for the Navy's Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) and will take part in exercise Joint Warrior in the Spring. RFA Tiderace, which is currently docked at A&P Falmouth, is undergoing preparations for her capability trials which are expected to commence in early April.

Sir Simon Bollom, Chief of Materiel (Ships) at Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

I'm proud to say that the delivery of the tanker programme will provide vital support for the Royal Navy, providing it with fuel and fresh water, while also being able to undertake a wide range of maritime operations, including humanitarian relief.

The fourth of the Tide Class vessels – RFA Tideforce – is expected to be delivered later this year.

A&P Group has held the contract to support and maintain RFA ships at home and abroad since 2008. Under the Cluster Support Programme, A&P Group provides maintenance support to groups of MOD vessels, which include RFA Argus and the RFA Bay Class vessels Mounts Bay, Cardigan Bay and Lyme Bay.

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## **News story: Women to have dedicated midwives throughout pregnancy and birth**

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that the majority of women will receive care from the same midwives throughout their pregnancy, labour and birth by 2021.

The first step towards achieving this will see 20% of women benefiting from a 'continuity of carer' model by March 2019. Research suggests that women who use this model are:

- 19% less likely to miscarry
- 16% less likely to lose their baby
- 24% less likely to have a premature baby

To help achieve this, the NHS plans to train more than 3,000 extra midwives over 4 years. There will be 650 more midwives in training next year, and planned increases of 1,000 in the subsequent years.

Mr Hunt said:

There are few moments in life that matter more than the birth of a child, so the next step in my mission to transform safety standards is a drive to give mums dedicated midwives, who can get to know them personally and oversee their whole journey from pregnancy to labour to new parent. The statistics are clear that having a dedicated team of midwives who know you and understand your story can transform results for mothers and babies – reducing stillbirths, miscarriages and neonatal deaths, and the agony that comes with these tragedies.

This profound change will be backed up by the largest ever investment in midwifery training, with a 25% expansion in the number of training places, as well as an incredibly well deserved pay rise for current midwives.

There will also be further investment in maternity support staff, including:

- professionalising the Maternity Support Worker (MSW) role – a defined role and national competency framework will be developed and a voluntary accredited register will be established to provide assurance to the public that they are appropriately trained to high standards
- working with the Royal College of Midwives and other partners to develop new training routes into midwifery – this will help talented support workers to develop and move quickly to become registered midwives and help the midwifery profession attract and retain talented staff

These measures support Mr Hunt's ambition to halve the rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths, and brain injuries that occur during or soon after birth by 2025.

Sarah-Jane Marsh, Chair of the NHS England Maternity Transformation Programme, said:

Taken together, this set of announcements has the potential to be the turning point in the health of a generation, and we look forward to welcoming thousands more midwives to the NHS frontline.

Midwives are the lifeblood of maternity care and these additional numbers will make a huge impact, enabling the majority of mothers in this country to have the same midwives throughout their entire maternity journey, including during childbirth.

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## [Greens welcome National Grid support for bringing forward petrol and diesel ban](#)



Green Party

27 March 2018

The Green Party of England and Wales today expressed their support for the announcement by the National Grid's Director of Electric Vehicles that they

would support the government bringing forward its 2040 ban on new petrol and diesel car sales by a decade. [1]

Speaking today, Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley noted that this was a further sign that the Green message was resonating:

“Phasing out petrol and diesel sooner will be better for everyone. Not only will it make the air we breathe cleaner and healthier, but it will make a significant dent in the UK’s carbon emissions. We support the National Grid in this announcement. The government should show some ambition and deliver what is clearly possible.”

**ENDS**

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/mar/27/national-grid-backs-plan-for-earlier-petrol-and-diesel-ban>

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## **Press release: New funding announced today will keep the city of Salisbury and its businesses thriving**

The government will make available £2.5m to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury.

The money has been agreed by the government’s Ministerial Recovery Group – set up to ensure a range of national government resources and support is offered to help Salisbury respond to the attack in the city. This includes looking at economic measures and what can be done to keep it a thriving and popular city centre and tourist destination.

A £1m package of government funding to support businesses and to boost tourism and visitors, includes:

- £220,000 towards the immediate response to the incident for Wiltshire County Council;
- £367,500 to provide immediate support to businesses impacted by the incident;

- Up to £100,000 to the local Emergency Fund to support businesses impacted by the incident, as well as broader efforts to promote recovery and growth in Salisbury;
- £200,000 package of tourism promotion, including using the GREAT campaign to promote the city and encourage visitor numbers;
- Up to £100,000 to the local authority to help with public health costs associated with the incident.

David Lidington, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, said:

The people of Salisbury have shown great strength and resilience in the face of a cowardly and indiscriminate act.

The Government is committed to supporting this historic British city as it recovers and we will continue to do everything possible to help Salisbury moving forward.

The message is clear: the city is safe and its shops, restaurants and beautiful sites remain open for business.

Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

This funding is crucial to help support Salisbury to recover and get back to business as usual. The focus now is supporting the city's businesses; particularly those directly affected by the incident and to do all we can to encourage visitors and shoppers to visit the city.

We need to market and promote the city to ensure that national and international tour operators and visitors continue to choose Salisbury as a destination of choice.

In addition, the Home Office has agreed £1.6m in special grant payments for Wiltshire Police to meet the initial exceptional costs of the response – and further funding as the investigation continues.

The government remains committed to working alongside the local authority and emergency services to help the area meet any further exceptional costs arising from this incident – this will include meeting the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites.

We are continuing to work closely with the local NHS trust to make certain they have the expertise and funding needed to provide the care their community needs and we will continue to work through any requests for additional support for costs incurred.

The mental health needs of the local community may not be clear for some time but we are absolutely committed to ensure effective plans are in place and

the community's needs are met now and in the future.

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## **Press release: Minister for Europe meets Belarus counterpart**

It is the first visit to the UK by a Belarus Foreign Minister since 1993.

The UK and Belarus have been developing our bilateral relationship since the lifting of EU restrictive measures in February 2016.

The ministers used the visit as an opportunity to discuss increasing trade between the UK and Belarus, share perspectives on regional political and security issues, and Sir Alan encouraged Belarus to undertake further political and economic reform, with an emphasis on human rights and democracy.

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

I was the first British Foreign Office Minister to visit Belarus since Belarus became an independent, sovereign state when I travelled to Minsk in September. Now Foreign Minister Makei has come to London for another historic visit – the first of a Foreign Minister of Belarus for nearly 25 years.

His visit provides a valuable opportunity to make progress on a range of issues from trade to reform to regional security. I am pleased to have discussed a number of issues with FM Makei, and I encouraged Belarus to take further steps to improve political freedoms, including human rights, and economic reform. Some progress has been made in these areas but I believe it is in Belarus' long term interest to go further.

I also explained to FM Makei the UK's grave concerns over the Salisbury incident and reminded him that Russia's actions are of concern to all nations, including their friends and neighbours.

### **Further information**

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