

Press release: Dr Lucy Mason appointed Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator

As Head of the [Accelerator](#), Lucy will be responsible for building strong relationships between defence and security departments within the UK Government, industry, academia and other partners, to accelerate the delivery of innovative ideas for the security and prosperity of the UK.

Launched in December 2016, the Accelerator fast-tracks innovative, game-changing ideas by funding their development and connecting suppliers to end users at an early stage of development. By matching them with expert Innovation Partners to and guiding them through the process, we help turn their ideas into marketable products and defence and security capabilities.

Backed by a rising defence budget and the [£800 million Innovation Fund](#), the Accelerator is a key conduit for transforming Defence's creative culture as part of the Defence Innovation Initiative. This investment helps deliver future battle-winning technologies, keeps our Armed Forces safe in challenging environments and creates prosperity. The Accelerator will also work with security departments from across government to strengthen the national security of our nation.

Lucy joins the Accelerator from the Home Office where she most recently led the science and technology, and private sector engagement work strands for the review of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy.

Rob Solly, Division Head for the Defence and Security Analysis Division within the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and Interim Head of the Accelerator said:

I'm delighted to welcome Lucy as Head of the Accelerator. Lucy's passion for innovation and strong leadership skills will be vital in taking the Accelerator through to full operating capability; ensuring innovative ideas can be taken forward for the benefit of our Armed Forces and the security of the UK. Her expertise in horizon scanning and security technology and her knowledge of digital ethics and identity, social and behavioural science, make her a perfect candidate for this role.

Over the last two months, the Accelerator has launched two routes to funding: Themed Challenges and the Enduring Challenge, and is developing new collaboration mechanisms to be launched later this year.

Our themed competitions help our customers find solutions to specific challenges. These are announced throughout the year. The first Innovation Fund challenge was launched in February to revolutionise the human-

information relationship for Defence.

The Enduring Challenge, launched in January, casts the net wider to provide a route into defence and security for any supplier who thinks they have an idea that can benefit UK Defence and Security, at home or abroad.

It exists because we can't possibly know all the potential solutions and novel approaches out there – whether that's more advanced technical capability, how we work or operate, or how we train our people.

This year the Enduring Challenge has secured £6 million, including a second phase of new funding. The first phase will look at ideas in their early stages, while the second phase will nurture promising projects, as well as offering an alternative route for more advanced ideas and technologies.