

[Press release: David Rutley tours UK food and drink industry](#)

Food Minister David Rutley met with food and drink businesses in Yorkshire and Edinburgh this week to see first-hand the extensive innovation within the sector.

In Yorkshire, the Minister toured the [Nestlé](#) York factory to hear about the company's innovative sugar reduction technique, before visiting [Morrisons](#) Bradford site to see an integrated supply chain in action and its commitment to source local produce where possible.

During his day in Edinburgh, Minister Rutley heard more about the Scottish food and drink industry, meeting with the [Food and Drink Federation](#) (FDF) Scotland and members of the [Scotch Whisky Association](#).

He also toured the site at independent bottling company [Broxburn Bottlers](#), where he learnt about the processes involved in the bottling aspect of the supply chain.

Food Minister David Rutley said:

The UK's food and drink industry is renowned for its high levels of quality, innovation and productivity – and it was exciting to see this in action during my visit to manufacturers and retailers in Yorkshire and Scotland.

I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with businesses from across the sector – and the whole of the UK – to champion our iconic food and drink products both at home and on the global stage.

This week's trip follows a recent visit to [Tate & Lyle's](#) original refinery in London's East End.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary Lends Support to Military Charity Campaign to Honour Commonwealth Soldiers](#)

To mark the centenary of the First World War, the Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt will lend his support to the forces charity There But Not There to

honour the over three million Commonwealth soldiers, sailors, airmen and labour corp who served.

There But Not There will install three 6ft figures of First World War soldiers in the Foreign Office to represent the unique contribution of Commonwealth servicemen from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Australasia and Canada and shine a light on the little known stories of our Commonwealth heroes.

The campaign, which launched in February, is raising money for a range of military and mental health charities. To date, it has raised over £4 million.

Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt said:

It is fitting that in the centenary year of the First World War we honour the immense contribution of our Commonwealth soldiers. Their bravery was key to securing the Allied victory. These men fought thousands of miles from their homeland, for a country they had never been to, but for a purpose they believed in. This installation will honour their heroism, shine a light on their stories and remind us that in the darkest hour people of all backgrounds can come together for a common cause.

General the Lord Dannatt, Patron of There But Not There and former Chief of the General Staff said:

The First World War had such an impact on towns and villages across the United Kingdom that the contribution of servicemen and women from across the Commonwealth is too often overlooked. Their sacrifice was immeasurable, as was the effect that it had on their own communities.

The Tommies in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stand in recognition of this service as we approach one hundred years since the guns fell silent.

We are humbled to see the figures appear all over the country as well as outside the FCO and would implore members of the public around the world to get even further behind the campaign by ordering their own 10" perspex Tommy to have at home, as the profits from these will support veterans that continue to suffer from the hidden wounds of war.

[There But Not There FCO installation](#)

Over nine million servicemen died in the First World War, including nearly a million from the Commonwealth.

Millions of Commonwealth soldiers helped secure the Allied victory, including

that of Ghanaian soldier Alhaji Grunshi, the first soldier in British service to fire a shot in the First World War.

One third of all indigenous peoples of Canada served in the Canadian forces during the war. Many distinguished themselves, including Francis Pegahmagabow an expert marksman and scout who was awarded the Military Medal three times.

Almost two million Indian servicemen served in the First World War, including Hardutt Singh Malik, the first Indian to fly with the British Royal Flying Corps. Malik initially failed to qualify for the Corps but went on to be the sole Indian aviator to emerge alive from the war.

These are just a few examples of the millions of Commonwealth soldiers who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today, and who were fundamental to sustaining the war effort.

The Foreign Secretary's support for There But Not There, comes as the Ministry of Defence announced that Britain's military will increase the number of Commonwealth recruits to 1,350 per year, introduced over several years. The importance of the Commonwealth to the military is underlined by the fact that Britain already employs some 4,500 Commonwealth citizens in the Armed Forces.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@Jeremy_Hunt](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Press release: New Northumberland flood scheme complete

A major new £600,000 flood scheme which protects homes and businesses in a Northumberland town from tidal flooding is complete.

The previous 180m flood wall in the Cowpen area of Blyth has been upgraded and extended to create a 380m wall to reduce the risk of flooding to the town.

When taking climate change into account these new defences, from Crawford Street to Quay Road, will protect over 1,000 properties into the future while also offering immediate improved protection from tidal flooding to 58 properties.

The work has been funded by the Environment Agency but was built by Port of Blyth as part of their wider redevelopment of the adjacent Bates and Wimbourne Quay terminals.

While the Environment Agency has advised on the specifications and design of the flood wall, the Port of Blyth will own and maintain the wall. The Environment Agency will carry out annual inspections of the new structures.

‘Great example’ of effective partnership

Leila Huntington, the Environment Agency’s Flood Risk Manager for the North East, said:

We’re delighted this flood wall is now complete and hope it provides peace of mind to local residents that they have increased protection from tidal flooding now and into the future.

This is a great example of an effective and efficient partnership project and we have worked closely with the Port of Blyth to create something which means a greater standard of flood protection at a reduced cost.

I’d like to thank local residents for their patience throughout this work. We’re committed to increasing protection for our communities at risk of flooding and are continuously looking for opportunities to collaborate with our partners and provide the best possible solutions.

Alan Todd, Port Director at the Port of Blyth, added:

We’re delighted that these works are now complete and offer immediate improvements to the flood defences for the town, its

residents and businesses.

We are now able to focus on further phases of the redevelopment which will see the Bates and Wimbourne Quay terminals become one terminal, offering increased opportunities for growth and significant inward investment.

A Flood Warning service is available for Blyth residents considered to be at risk of flooding, one for the North Sea at Blyth and another for the North Sea at Blyth Town Centre.

To check if you are at risk of flooding and to sign up for free flood warnings call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or [visit the gov.uk website](#)

Press release: UKEF supports Angolan healthcare and power infrastructure development

Baroness Fairhead announces €450 million in UK Export Finance (UKEF) support for UK firms to build three new hospitals and upgrade two power stations, improving healthcare and power provision in Angola.

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, said:

I'm delighted that the UK Government, through UK Export Finance, is supporting these two projects. It enables a Scottish exporter to enter a global marketplace and deliver reliable power to millions of people in Angola. It also showcases how British expertise can assist the development of vital healthcare services.

This is a great example of how our ambition to grow exports, as set out in the Export Strategy, is helping British businesses break into overseas markets through support such as that provided through UKEF, our award-winning export credit agency, our teams led by HM Trade Commissioners in market and our GREAT.gov.uk website.

Opportunities for UK healthcare and construction suppliers

This is the first time UKEF, the UK's export credit agency, has supported projects in Angola.

€380 million will go to support a contract between Angola's Ministry of Health and ASGC UK, the UK branch of international construction firm ASGC, to build three new hospitals. The company will lead on the design, construction and equipping of the Mother and Child Hospital and Paediatric Haematology Institute, both based in Luanda, and the Cabinda General Hospital. The projects will create significant opportunities for UK healthcare and construction suppliers.

Once complete, the Mother and Child Hospital will have over 300 beds available, and the Cabinda General Hospital over 200, providing much-needed healthcare services to major population centres in Angola. The haematology unit will provide a range of specialist services including radiology, intensive care and a paediatric ward.

IQA Group, headquartered in Paisley, will upgrade two power substations in Viana and Gabela over the course of two years, significantly reducing North West Angola's dependence on oil-generated power. UKEF will provide a guarantee to support a €70 million loan issued to the Angolan Ministry of Finance for the project.

This is the first international contract for IQA Group, which was established in 2002 and is now the UK arm of Spanish multinational Elecnor, and which is leading a consortium to deliver the work for the Ministry of Energy and Water in Angola.

Supporting economic growth and development

The project will have a transformative effect on the region's power network, giving thousands of Luanda's residents, as well as industry in the region, improved access to electricity to support economic growth and development.

Baroness Northover, the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Angola and Zambia, said:

I have visited Angola regularly in the last two years in support of UK- Angola business co-operation, and am acutely aware of the growing opportunities there. It is wonderful that these important projects have come to fruition and I look forward to seeing more in the future.

Gregory Smyth, Managing Director, IQA Group, said:

IQA Group has ambitious plans for international growth, building on

our success in the UK, and we're pleased that UKEF, along with the DIT team at the British Embassy in Luanda, is supporting us as we enter new markets. Support from UK Export Finance is a central part of our international offer, and is supporting our operations and jobs in Scotland.

Paul Woodman, Managing Director, ASGC, said:

UKEF's support forms a crucial component of our strategy, enabling us to grow revenues and deliver value for clients such as the Angolan government. The government's commitment to the growth of UK exports is continuing to help us build confidence with overseas customers and with UK suppliers.

Background

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Our mission is to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. We provide finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.

Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: aerospace, healthcare, infrastructure, telecommunications and transport.

UKEF has a [national regional network of 24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.

Our range of products includes:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Our [country cover positions](#) outline our current cover policy and risk appetite for each country.

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Press release: New gritters take to the road

The first delivery of the new gritters took place in October and will improve safety for drivers and workers due to the vehicles improved technology, ergonomics and enhanced visibility.

Despite weighing 26 tonnes and measuring a maximum of 2.5 meters wide, there have been a number of incidents where gritters have been struck by other vehicles.

Research carried out by Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) shows that vehicles stand out more if painted in one block colour and are solid in shape, which is where the new design has come from.

The new vehicles also contain innovative technology which includes being able to pre-programme them with information specific to each gritting route. This enables salt to be spread onto the road automatically, taking into account any specific requirements for bridges, landscape and other road features, allowing drivers to give their full attention to driving at all times.



Our winter fleet manager Jane Wilkins said:

Safety is our top priority and we are always looking at ways we can improve our winter resilience. Using the research carried out by TRL and our own data, we have looked carefully at the number of incidents involving gritters to see what more can be done to improve safety and the service we provide.

The roll out of this £30 million programme started this year with 34 new vehicles in East Anglia. The remainder of the 157 vehicles, will be replaced over the next two years.

We're working closely with gritter manufacturer Romagrip on the roll-out of the new fleet.

Romagrip technical director Stephen McKeown said:

We are excited to be working with Highways England, manufacturing a new generation of winter vehicles with numerous safety and technical advances. It is a pleasure to work with an organisation that strives to develop and improve their service, actively partnering with us to achieve these goals.

It is clear to see that the specification of these vehicles has been derived from consciously deciding to improve safety for both

operators and other road users, and that the innovation to improve efficiency and functionality has also been thoroughly considered.

Romaquip is committed to delivering the best quality machines to all of our customers, we welcome this improvement and look forward to working with Highways England over the years to come.



Romaquip technical director Stephen McKeown hands over the keys to Nick Harris, Highways England's executive director of operations

We currently have 535 winter vehicles patrolling the 4,400 miles of motorways and major A roads across the country.

General enquiries

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

Media enquiries

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