

[Press release: Green light for ultra-fast electric car charging innovation](#)

A new pioneering technology to ensure a next generation of safer, high-powered electric car batteries can be charged by drivers in ultra-fast time is just one of 12 innovation projects to receive the green light from the government's [Faraday Battery Challenge](#).

The PowerDrive Line project being led by Southampton-based company Ilika is focusing on solid state battery cell development, in particular how to manufacture at scale in the UK and how to build in ultra-fast charging technology of less than 25 minutes for a vehicle as is seen in some current battery systems.

In total [£22 million grants](#) are being rewarded to consortia across the UK as part of the latest round of funding through the Faraday Battery Challenge, part of the government's [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#).

The funding is key to realising the government's ambitions for innovative energy solutions as set out in our modern Industrial Strategy. The Faraday Battery Challenge brings together world-leading research and business to accelerate the research needed to develop battery technologies.

Other major R&D projects funded include:

- a revolutionary approach to battery management led by Williams Advanced Engineering
- a McLaren Automotive led consortium project that aims to accelerate the development of electrified powertrains
- a revolutionary battery recycling project that will develop the first UK industrial scale capability to reclaim and reuse battery essential metals. This project is being led by Cheshire-based ICoNiChem and involves Jaguar Land Rover
- an Aston Martin Lagonda project into the development of better performance battery packs.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Innovative battery technology is changing the way we live, travel and work and the Government is committed to putting Britain at the heart of this energy revolution.

Today's £22 million investment in world-leading R&D projects is an example of our modern Industrial Strategy in action and will help pioneering companies realise the economic benefits the global transition to a low carbon economy offers.

UK Research and Innovation chief executive Professor Sir Mark Walport said:

Effective, efficient and sustainable transport is key to addressing so many of today's challenges from industrial growth to social inclusion. Through advanced battery technology, we will unlock a new generation of electric vehicles, further improving vehicle performance and uptake, opening doors to innovative new transport ideas and significantly reducing environmental impacts. Today's investment shows we are catalysing collaboration between research teams and commercial partners across the UK to make this a reality.

Battery Challenge Director Tony Harper said:

This latest round of cutting-edge research and development projects illustrate the quality of innovations coming from our research and industrial base, and reinforce why the UK is a world-leader in battery technology development.

[Press release: A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon: preview of plans for Huntingdon](#)

The 43 year-old viaduct, which carries the existing A14 over the railway line and local roads currently dominates the skyline near the Huntingdon train station. Removing it, and creating link roads to and from the old A14, is an important part of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme, which is upgrading 21 miles of the A14 to three lanes in each direction, including a brand new bypass south of Huntingdon.

The plans will enable a major redesign of the Huntingdon train station area. A new public transport hub will be created, with bus stops conveniently located for the railway station. Removing the viaduct will also reduce noise and air pollution and will facilitate further improvements in Huntingdon town centre.

Main construction work is expected to start in 2019.

Chris Bayliss, A14 project manager at Highways England, said:

Work to upgrade the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon is progressing well and we are on schedule to open the new road to

traffic by the end of 2020.

The Huntingdon viaduct was built in 1975, and removing it will create new opportunities for Huntingdon. Once the new A14 is open to traffic, the old A14 will become a local road. The plans we are sharing today will make it even easier for people to travel around, as well as in and out of, Huntingdon.

We are holding six public events this June and encourage people to come see us for a chat and find out more about these exciting plans!

To find out more about the work in Huntingdon people are invited to come along to one of the events – details can be found on the [scheme webpage](#).

The £1.5bn A14 upgrade will add additional capacity, boost the local and national economy and cut up to 20 minutes off journeys.

The main construction work at Huntingdon will include a new Mill Common link road, the removal of the A14 viaduct and work around the train station, and a new Views Common link road. Preparatory work, such as archaeology and utility diversion, will start ahead of main construction work.

Chance to volunteer on the A14 community archaeology dig this summer

The A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon archaeology team is calling for volunteers to take part in a free summer community dig programme between 24 July and 25 August 2018.

This is a once in a lifetime chance for people to take part in one of the largest archaeological excavation projects ever undertaken in Britain.

Volunteers will work alongside archaeology experts from the A14 archaeology team and its contractors MOLA Headland Infrastructure, exploring evidence of industrial activity relating to the abandoned medieval village of Houghton, near Huntingdon, as well as Iron Age and Roman remains.

Each volunteer must be able to commit to five (not necessarily consecutive) days of excavation from 9am to 4pm.

To apply, email msearle@molaheadland.com before 25 June 2018, stating your preferred days.

For the latest information about the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, including job and training opportunities, visit the [scheme webpage](#) follow @A14C2H on Twitter and like our [Facebook page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact

centre on 0300 123 5000.

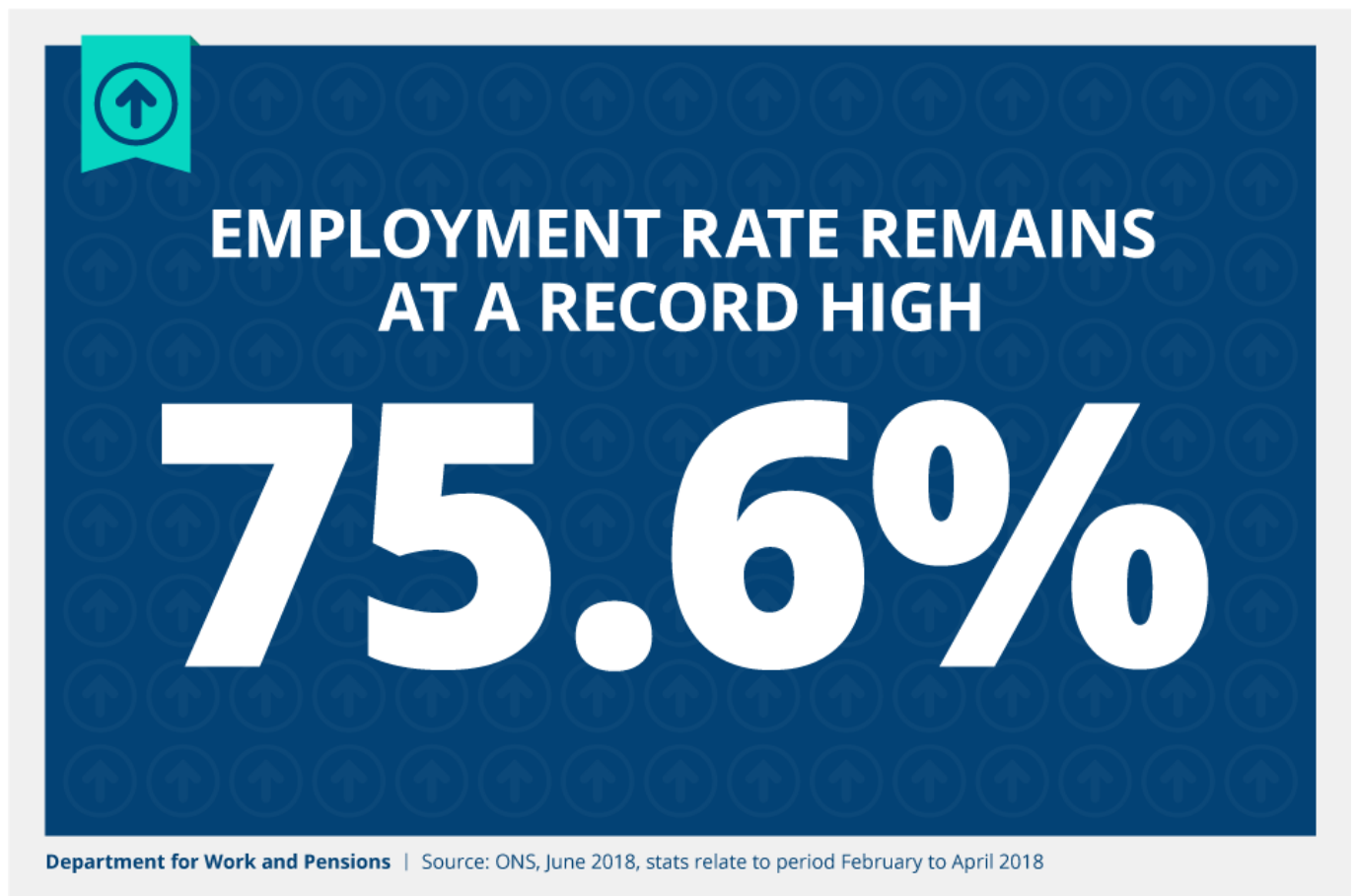
Media enquiries

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

[Press release: Employment rate remains at record high](#)

The unemployment rate is now 4.2% – down 0.4% since last year – with the number of people out of work falling by 115,000.

The figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) come as Black, Asian and minority ethnic employment (BAME) is at a record high. The BAME employment gap – the difference between the employment rates of the ethnic minority population and the overall population – is at an all-time low of 10.1% points.



Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey said:

The employment rate has never been higher – with over 3.3 million people moving into work since 2010.

It's a great British success story with businesses from Exeter to Edinburgh creating jobs – helping, on average 1,000 people find a job each and every day since 2010.

And with the increase in the personal tax allowance, this government has ensured that people are keeping more of their money before they begin paying tax – meaning more take-home pay, that's more money in your pocket for you and your family.

Minister for Employment, Alok Sharma said:

At 75.6%, the employment rate has never been higher, with more people in work than ever before. And with a continued fall in unemployment, we have a strong jobs market that's set 17 new employment rate records since 2010.

It's also very welcome news that the ONS has reported that regular pay has outpaced inflation for the third month in a row.

The increase in personal allowances means that the typical basic rate taxpayer is now paying £1,075 less in income tax than in 2010. Thanks to the National Living Wage full time minimum wage workers have had an annual boost of £2,000 since 2016.

Today's figures also show:

- private sector employment is now at 27.04 million, up by over 3.7 million since 2010
- the number of women in work is at a record high of 15.26 million
- youth unemployment has fallen by over 40% since 2010
- the number of workers aged 50 plus has reached a record 10.18 million

Separate figures released today show that [more than 920,000 people are now receiving Universal Credit, with 37% in employment](#). The rollout of Universal Credit remains on track and the [business case summary](#) published last week confirms an estimated £8 billion boost to the economy every year when it is fully rolled out, with an additional 200,000 people moving into work.

The government has reformed welfare to make work pay, backed businesses to take more people on, and built a stronger, fairer economy. But we want to help even more people benefit from a well-paid job. That's why we are:

- introducing a [modern Industrial Strategy](#) to help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK
- helping people stay in work longer with our [Fuller Working Lives strategy](#), which supports employers to recruit, retrain and retain older workers

- tackling inequalities in employment highlighted by the [Race Disparity Audit](#), through targeted support in 20 areas around the country and £90 million announced by the Prime Minister to help young people

We are also arranging work experience sessions for students through Jobcentre Plus in over 1,400 schools. The scheme is being rolled out across the country, to ensure young disadvantaged kids aged 12 to 18 get opportunities including work experience to learn about the world of work and consider future career options. So far, the partnership between Jobcentre Plus and local schools has resulted in around 12,000 sessions for pupils, parents and teachers helping to prepare pupils for the world of work.

Read the [Labour Market Statistics – June 2018](#) from the Office for National Statistics.

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[News story: CMA raises concerns over towbar merger](#)

The companies, Horizon Global Corporation (Horizon) and Brink International B.V. (Brink), design, produce and distribute towbars across Europe and – while they do not have any manufacturing facilities in the UK – they supply a large number of towbars to the UK market.

As part of its investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has found that there are very few comparable companies of a similar size offering all types of towbars.

The CMA found that the companies together control a large share of all towbar supply to the ‘original equipment’ sector – made up of large car manufacturers operating throughout the UK and Europe – and are strong rivals in this area. There is only one major competitor to Horizon and Brink in the supply of towbars to these businesses.

It also found issues in the supply of detachable towbars to the UK-wide ‘independent aftermarket’ sector, which is made up of smaller, independent businesses such as auto-repair centres. This is because Brink supplies a key component for the manufacture of this type of towbar to 2 or more of its competitors in this market.

The CMA has therefore decided that the proposed merger may substantially lessen competition. The companies now have the opportunity to offer ways to address these concerns. If they do not make such an offer by the 19 June, or if what is suggested does not sufficiently address the CMA’s concerns, the merger will be referred for a more in-depth ‘phase 2’ investigation.

More information about this merger inquiry can be found on the [Horizon / Brink case page](#)

[News story: International Business Festival kicks off in Liverpool](#)

- There are 4 stages for business leaders to secure investment, boost knowledge and develop export opportunities
- £500 million worth of deals are expected to be secured during the festival

The [International Business Festival](#) has opened in Liverpool today with over 30,000 visitors expected over the next 12 days. The festival, the biggest event of its kind in the world, will run from 12-28 June at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool. The festival connects ambitious businesses with influencers, innovators and industry leaders from across the globe and will build on the work of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#).

The festival is a collaboration between key industry partners, including Liverpool City Region, HSBC, British Airways, the Department for Business and the Department for International Trade.

The programme is centred around 9 high-growth industry sectors, from creative industries to urbanisation and cities. Each day offers 4 dynamic areas of activity for delegates to participate in:

- Knowledge Hub
- Futures Stage
- Investor Programme
- UK innovation Hub

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

This is the largest business festival in the world and with thousands of visitors expected over the next 12 days, this is a great opportunity for business of all sizes to connect with potential clients and build new networks across the globe.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we want to be the best place in the world to start and grow a business and I want to see all businesses take advantage of the opportunities the International Business Festival presents.

Discussing the international opportunities that the Festival will bring, International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Businesses and investors from across the globe are descending on Liverpool this month for the International Business Festival offering an unparalleled platform to showcase the best of British business. From Sustainable Energy to Future Transport, UK firms are leading the way at a time of unprecedented global opportunity which has seen UK exports rise to over £625 billion.

My international economic department will be at the Festival encouraging international investment and offering support to British exporters – from our award-winning export credit agency, UK Export Finance, to our network of International Trade Advisors – to make sure the UK capitalises on this opportunity.

Building on the work of the government's flagship modern Industrial Strategy,

the event gives companies looking to grow the space, support and expertise they need to build new networks and expand into new markets, with the event expected to secure £87 million worth of export contracts. The 2016 event generated an estimated £250 million in sales and organisers expect this year's event to secure £500 million worth of business deals.

The festival is hosted every 2 years in its home city of Liverpool. One of the most vibrant and developing cities in Europe, Liverpool is a UNESCO World Heritage City and a winner of the European Capital of Culture title. As Britain's second largest regional economy outside of London and the South-East, the Liverpool City Region is home to more than a quarter of a million businesses, and a key player in the UK government's Northern Powerhouse strategy – it is a city with true entrepreneurial spirit. Liverpool is connected to the world via 2 nearby international airports – and just over 2 hours by train from central London.