

UKEF appoints Carl Williamson as Head of Trade Finance

Carl joins UKEF from Lloyds Banking Group, where he spent 31 years in a variety of roles. Most recently he was a Relationship Director, managing and developing a portfolio of customers within the Manufacturing & Industrials sector. Prior to this he was Head of Cash Management and Trade Finance, delivering cash and trade products to large London corporates.

In this new role, Carl will head the Trade Finance Business as UKEF grows its support for exporters with a range of products including Working Capital, Bond Support and Export Insurance. He will be responsible for leading a business unit incorporating UKEF's 25 strong team of Export Finance Managers (EFMs), the Business Group Operations area and team of Short-Term Business Underwriters, as they drive the uptake and adoption of the export credit agency's products across the UK.

Gordon Welsh, Head of UKEF's Business Group, welcomed Carl to UKEF, saying:

I am very pleased to welcome Carl to UK Export Finance and look forward to working with him as we expand the reach of our unique financial offer. UKEF is at the heart of the government's support for exports, and the work of our EFMs and Short-Term Business teams is crucial as we ensure every UK company meets its export potential.

Carl Williamson, Head of Trade Finance at UKEF, added:

The right financial support can play a vital role in ensuring that a company is able to compete overseas and grow. For the last 100 years, UKEF has been at the heart of the government's support for UK exporters and I am delighted to be joining the department, and to be responsible for growing this important range of products and services.

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.

It exists to ensure that no viable UK export lacks for finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.

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

UKEF has a regional network of 24 [export finance managers](#), who support UK businesses export their goods and services.

UKEF support exporters with a range of products that include:

- 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

The latest information on UKEF's country cover positions can be [found here](#).

If you're a business owner and want to learn more about how UKEF could help you, [tell us about your business](#).

[Funding boost to support childcare and early education](#)

Councils across England will receive a funding boost to deliver free childcare places, enabling parents to work more flexibly and supporting children's early development.

Some of the additional investment will go to ensuring nurseries and childminders can support some of the most disadvantaged children, with an increase in hourly funding for all councils offering 15 hours free childcare for disadvantaged two-year-olds. The vast majority of areas providing free 30 hours places for working parents of three and four-year olds will also receive an increase in the hourly rate.

It will also see an increase to the minimum hourly funding rate so that no authorities will see less than £4.38 per hour per child for three and four year olds.

The Education Secretary Gavin Williamson also confirmed continuation of supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools for 2020-21, providing reassurance for these settings which tend to care for higher numbers of disadvantaged children, often most at risk of falling behind.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

A child's early education is crucial to their future success which is why we are increasing our hourly funding rates for councils so

that they can continue to deliver high quality and free childcare places.

Over one million children every year are now benefitting from the Government's record investment in childcare and early years education – which will have reached £3.6 billion by next year. This will give families the flexibility they need to be able to balance their work and family lives.

The increase in funding comes following the Chancellor's announcement of an additional £66 million investment in the early years as part of the spending review.

It will also see a handful of areas that have historically received higher levels of funding having their current funding rates for three and four-year-olds protected in 2020-21.

In recognition of the need for certainty about the 2020-21 financial year in maintained nursery schools, we have today announced the continuation of the additional funding which will be provided to local authorities to enable them to fund maintained nursery schools at higher rates.

This forms part of the Government's drive to ensure children have the best start in life through access to high quality early education and wider aims to support parents in creating a learning environment at home, through the [Hungry Little Minds Campaign](#).

This additional funding follows the announcement that we are investing a total of £14 billion additional funding in schools over the next three years to 2022-23. Schools found out earlier this month how the first part of that investment – £2.6 billion – will be allocated for the coming year. Every secondary school will receive a minimum of £5,000 per pupil next year and every primary school will receive a minimum of £3,750 next year, before receiving at least £4,000 from 2021-22.

Councils awarded £500,000 for digital technology innovations

Seven digital technology projects have received grants of up to £100,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Local Digital Fund.

The digital research and development projects will look at improving the efficiency of the planning system, predicting demand in children's social care and enabling better information sharing to drive improvements in local

services.

Local Government Minister Luke Hall MP said:

Councils across the country are working to embrace digital technology to adapt, innovate and drive improvements in public services for their residents.

I'm delighted to announce we're investing over half a million pounds from our Local Digital Fund into seven more collaborative projects to boost public services for all.

For the projects, lead councils partner with at least 2 others to share knowledge and ideas. This collaborative approach is an important part of the government's Local Digital Declaration to coordinate public bodies seeking digital solutions.

Different stages of projects have different names. Discovery projects explore problems and propose possible solutions, those called 'alpha' build prototypes and test solutions, and the 'discovery' stage builds a working service for public testing.

The fund is also paying for in digital skills and leadership training for council staff.

Projects funded and the local authorities involved:

1. Improving data and evidence on children in care; Greater Manchester Combined Authority – £100,000. A project to eliminate errors in statutory data returns to provide better, evidence-based decision making.
2. Reducing invalid planning applications; led by Lambeth Council, with Wycombe District Council, Southwark Council, Lewisham Council, and Camden Council – £98,500. Developing a system to limit the number of incomplete or invalid digital planning applications.
3. Researching what data early help children's services heads need to analyse performance; led by Richmond and Wandsworth Councils, with West Berkshire Council, and Croydon Council – £80,000. A project to explore how data can be used to improve the quality of early help children's services.
4. Improving code sharing between councils; led by Croydon Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council, Bracknell Forest Council, and Oxford City Council – £75,000. The project is will improve how computer code is shared between councils, making it easier for them to collaborate.

5. Predictive modelling to understand future demand for children's social care; led by Suffolk County Council, with Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council – £74,000. The project will help councils to anticipate demands on their services.
6. A new system for processing revenue and benefits data; led by Teignbridge District Council, with East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Basildon Council, and Brentwood Council – £71,000. The project will explore the development of a cost-effective system focused on residents' needs.
7. Cross-local government user research; led by Croydon Council, with Hackney Council, Kent County Council, and Hertfordshire County Council – £25,800. The project will look at how one council can use another council's user research to improve statutory services.

See [more information](#) on the Local Digital Fund, projects previously funded and how to apply.

Only councils in England are eligible to lead on applications; councils in other parts of the UK are still eligible to partner on applications.

[Six-monthly report to Parliament on Hong Kong: January to June 2019](#)



The report covers a broad range of political and economic developments and an overview of UK-Hong Kong bilateral activity over the reporting period.

Writing in his foreword, the Foreign Secretary, The Rt. Hon Dominic Raab MP reflects on events since 1 July not covered in the report itself.

He encourages all parties to:

look ahead to the path towards de-escalation and political resolution. Protesters must end the violence. The police response must be proportionate in their handling of protesters and safeguard the right to peaceful protest. And there must be a meaningful dialogue between all parties, with a credible political track to protect the rights and freedoms set out in...the Joint Declaration.

The Foreign Secretary concludes by writing:

Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rule of law is what guarantees its future prosperity and success. It is incumbent on all sides to respect it.

Further information

Read the report in full: [Six monthly report on Hong Kong: January to June 2019](#)

Follow the British Consulate-General Hong Kong on [Facebook](#) and twitter [@UKinHongKong](#)

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First Poseidon aircraft delivered to the RAF

The MOD is investing £3 billion in nine state-of-the-art jets which will enhance the UK's tracking of hostile maritime targets, protect the British continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent and play a central role in NATO missions across the North Atlantic.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The arrival of the world-class Poseidon aircraft marks a step-change in the UK's maritime patrol capability.

Using the world's most advanced sensors and operating for long periods, these aircraft will transform the quality of intelligence available to our armed forces and protect our vital nuclear deterrent.

Following an unveiling ceremony in Seattle, the aircraft was flown to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida where RAF personnel are being trained to operate the aircraft.

On arrival Michelle Sanders, DE&S Delivery Team Leader, signed the paperwork to formally transfer the aircraft, named Pride of Moray, to UK ownership.

Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, Chief of the Air Staff, said:

Poseidon is a game-changing maritime patrol aircraft, able to detect, track and if necessary destroy the most advanced submarines in the world today.

With Poseidon MRA1, I am delighted and very proud that the Royal Air Force will once again have a maritime patrol force working alongside the Royal Navy, securing our seas to protect our nation.

First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin, said:

Poseidon marks a superb upgrade in the UK's ability to conduct anti-submarine operations. This will give the UK the ability to conduct long range patrols and integrate seamlessly with our NATO allies to provide a world-leading capability.

This will maintain operational freedom for our own submarines, and apply pressure to those of our potential foes. I look forward to working with the RAF and our international partners on this superb capability.

The Poseidon MRA1 is designed to carry out extended surveillance missions at both high and low altitudes. The aircraft is equipped with cutting-edge sensors which use high-resolution area mapping to find both surface and sub-surface threats.

The aircraft can carry up to 129 sonobuoys, small detection devices which are dropped from the aircraft into the sea to search for enemy submarines. The systems survey the battlespace under the surface of the sea and relay acoustic information via radio transmitter back to the aircraft.

The aircraft will also be armed with Harpoon anti-surface ship missiles and Mk 54 torpedoes capable of attacking both surface and sub-surface targets.

Michelle Sanders, DE&S Delivery Team Leader, said:

Seeing the first Poseidon MRA1 handed over to the Royal Air Force

is an incredibly proud moment for all of the team at DE&S.

Close, collaborative working with colleagues in Air Capability, the US Navy and industry has helped us deliver this very capable aircraft.

As leading members of NATO, the UK has signed agreements with both the US and Norwegian militaries to cooperate closely on operating their Poseidon fleets across the North Atlantic.

In August this year, Defence Minister Anne Marie-Trevelyan hosted Norwegian State Secretary Tone Skogen at RAF Lossiemouth to deepen the two country's partnership on the Poseidon programme.

To maintain the skills required to deliver this vital capability, the RAF has embedded aircrew within MPA squadrons in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

The first aircraft will arrive in Scotland in early 2020, with the fleet to be based at RAF Lossiemouth in Moray. All nine aircraft will be delivered by November 2021.

The aircraft will be flown initially by 120 Squadron which was originally stood up on 1 January 1918 and was the leading anti-submarine warfare squadron in WWII. 201 Squadron will also join the programme in due course.

The Poseidon MRA1 programme is bringing significant economic benefits to the communities near RAF Lossiemouth. A total of £460 million is being invested in the station to prepare for the arrival of the new aircraft, including the construction of a £132 million strategic facility for the fleet to be completed next year.

The programme will also bring around 700 additional personnel to Moray, taking the total number of employees there to approximately 2,500.