

Sixth Meeting of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group

On July 8, Secretary of State for International Trade Dr. Liam Fox MP and United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer met in Washington, DC and discussed the ongoing work of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group.

On July 10-11, the UK and United States held the sixth meeting of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group in London, which focused on strengthening our trade and investment relationship; laying the groundwork for a potential future trade agreement once the UK leaves the EU; and cooperating on global issues.

Since the Working Group last met in November 2018, USTR published its [negotiating objectives](#) for a trade agreement with the UK. At the Working Group, the UK restated its commitment to publishing its own negotiating objectives, scoping assessment and response to the public consultation before negotiations begin.

The Working Group discussed the progress made in recent months to ensure continuity of trade between our two countries as the UK leaves the EU, notably the signature of Agreements on Mutual Recognition, Marine Equipment, Wine and Distilled Spirits. In addition, both sides signed a bilateral agreement regarding insurance and reinsurance in December 2018.

The Working Group's discussions covered a range of trade topics including services; financial services; procurement; agriculture; sustainability/labor, environment; trade remedies; industrial subsidies; intellectual property; anti-corruption and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME).

In addition to the Working Group, the UK and the United States held the fourth meeting of the U.S.-UK SME Dialogue in Bristol on July 9. The discussion focused on opportunities presented by emerging technologies for services and digital trade; the obstacles SMEs currently face in trading between the UK and U.S.; and how these obstacles can be reduced, including through a potential future trade agreement. With more than 80 stakeholders in attendance, SMEs participated in a best practice exchange on doing business in the U.S. and the UK in the areas of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and mobile applications. This meeting followed the first sectoral-focused dialogue for marine technology SMEs in Southampton, UK in April 2019 and the participation of the UK in the May 11 Americas Competiveness Exchange (ACE).

Both sides agreed to hold the fifth SME Dialogue in the United States in early 2020. The U.S. and UK also agreed to explore a second SME best practices exchange in marine technology towards the end of 2019. Lastly, an invitation was extended to the UK for the 13th ACE forum for 2020.

Background

The Working Group was established in July 2017 by UK Secretary of State for International Trade Dr Liam Fox MP and United States Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer. Since its inception, the Working Group has been laying the groundwork for an ambitious and wide-ranging potential future free trade agreement once the UK has left the EU, as well as ensuring commercial continuity for UK and US businesses, workers, and consumers. The Working Group delegations were led by officials from the UK Department for International Trade (DIT) and USTR. It also included representatives from a wide range of UK and U.S. Government departments and agencies. Total trade between the two countries is already worth about £190 billion a year. We are each other's largest source of foreign direct investment and, according to U.S. statistics, the UK and U.S. have around \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies. Every day around one million Americans go to work for UK firms, while around one million Britons go to work for American firms.

[Vacancies: Inspectors of Air Accidents \(Engineering\)](#)

Can you be instrumental in determining causes of civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents worldwide? If so, this Inspector of Air Accidents (Engineering) role is for you, and we'd like to hear from you.

The purpose of this role is to investigate the engineering aspects of aircraft accidents and serious incidents involving civil aircraft operating in the UK and to UK registered or manufactured aircraft overseas.

A full job description and role profile is on the [Civil Service Jobs website](#).

Read about [a week in the life of an Engineering Inspector](#).

The deadline for applications 16 August.

[Construction begins on F35 infrastructure at RAF Lakenheath](#)

The start of construction was marked with a ceremony attended by senior representatives from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), USAF's 48th Fighter Wing and contractors Kier and VolkerFitzpatrick.

Ground was broken on the site which will include the construction of a flight simulator facility, a maintenance unit, new hangars and storage facilities.

DIO awarded a contract worth £160 million to the Kier VolkerFitzpatrick joint venture in November to deliver infrastructure at the Suffolk airbase.

Building work has begun so that the base will be ready to welcome the first of the new aircraft in late 2021.

The contract award is the first in a wider programme of work to support US Air Force operations in the UK, with more than US \$1 billion expected to be invested in the UK over the next 7 to 10 years.

At the height of construction, it is expected that there will be up to 700 people on site supporting the programme. The investment will also provide wider benefits both to the project and to the local economy.

Construction materials from the demolished buildings have been reused on site for subbase for carparks, roads and other hard standing areas. There will also be a concrete plant on site reducing carbon miles and traffic in the community.

DIO is also working closely with Forest Heath District Council and Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to ensure that the opportunities to create employment and training are maximised and that they last beyond the end of construction. In the first 6 months of the project 6 apprentices were taken on and 22 new jobs were created. A 'meet the buyers' event was held recently for local companies to understand what work opportunities are available in the project.

RAF Lakenheath will be the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe.

USAF 48th Fighter Wing Commander, Colonel Will Marshall, said:

This ceremony is an exciting milestone for the Liberty Wing as we prepare this installation to welcome two squadrons of F-35A Lightning II aircraft and supporting personnel. Breaking ground on this project takes us one step closer to becoming a more lethal and ready force as U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa's premier combat wing.

DIO USVF Programme Director, Keith Maddison, said:

DIO is proud to be working with the US Air Force and Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to deliver this exciting project.

The infrastructure being delivered will benefit the local economy by providing a range of training and employment opportunities as well as demonstrating our long and proud history of supporting US Air Force capability in the UK.

Managing Director of Aviation and Defence at Kier, James Hinds, said:

We are very pleased to be delivering this prestigious project with VolkerFitzpatrick on behalf of the DIO. Throughout the project we will be working closely with the local supply chain to deliver this crucial infrastructure, allowing RAF Lakenheath to become the first permanent home in Europe for the US Air Force F-35 Fighter Jet.

Managing Director of VolkerFitzpatrick's Civils division, Chris Evans, said:

VolkerFitzpatrick is proud to continue their long standing track record working in collaboration with Kier, DIO and the USAF Lakenheath team on this significant project, which allows us to build on our substantial experience within the civil airports and defence sector. It is great to see works getting underway and I look forward to seeing the programme progress over the coming months.

Further Information

DIO website: www.gov.uk/dio

Twitter: [@mod_dio](https://twitter.com/mod_dio)

Read [DIO's blog](#).

[Electric car chargepoints to be installed in all future homes in world first](#)

Consultation proposing that new-build homes are fitted with an electric car chargepoint is launched.

Published 15 July 2019

From:

[Department for Transport](#), [Office for Low Emission Vehicles](#), and [The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP](#)



- all new-build homes could be fitted with an electric car chargepoint as record levels of ultra-low emission vehicles hit UK roads
- England set to be first country to introduce mandatory chargepoints in new homes, cementing position as global leader in race to net zero emissions
- government also consulting on 'smart' charging, to help allow consumers save money by charging EVs off-peak

All new-build homes could soon be fitted with an electric car chargepoint, the government has outlined today (15 July 2019) in a [public consultation on changing building regulations in England](#). The consultation comes alongside a package of announcements to support electric vehicle drivers and improve the experience of charging.

The proposals aim to support and encourage the growing uptake of electric vehicles within the UK by ensuring that all new homes with a dedicated car parking space are built with an electric chargepoint, making charging easier, cheaper and more convenient for drivers.

The legislation would be a world first, and complements wider investment and measures the government has put in place to ensure the UK has one of the best electric vehicle infrastructure networks in the world – as part of the £1.5 billion [Road to Zero Strategy](#).

The government has also set out today that it wants to see all newly installed rapid and higher powered chargepoints provide debit or credit card payment by Spring 2020.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

With record levels of ultra-low emission vehicles on our roads, it is clear there is an appetite for cleaner, greener transport.

Home charging provides the most convenient and low-cost option for consumers – you can simply plug your car in to charge overnight as you would a mobile phone.

The government has already taken steps to ensure that existing homes are

electric vehicle ready by providing up to £500 off the costs of installing a chargepoint at home.

Having supported the installation of almost 100,000 domestic chargepoints through grant support schemes, the government has also announced that it is [consulting on requirements that all new private chargepoints use 'smart' technology](#).

This means an electric vehicle would charge at different times of the day in response to signals, such as electricity tariff information. This would encourage off-peak charging, keeping costs down for consumers.

The consultation proposes using powers under the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act to require most new chargepoints to have smart functionality and meet minimum standards. It also launches a call for evidence on the longer-term options for smart charging.

For more information on electric vehicles and chargepoints, visit www.goultralow.com.

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[New measures announced to stamp out inappropriate behaviour in the armed forces](#)

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt has today announced a range of new measures to address inappropriate behaviour in the armed forces.

Published 15 July 2019 From: [Ministry of Defence](#) and [The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP](#)



- Review finds that the great majority of the Armed Forces serve with honour and distinction
- While the great majority of service men and women go above and beyond what their duty demands of them, there is an unacceptable level of inappropriate behaviour in some areas
- The MOD accepts all recommendations, including shifting culture and ensuring the complaints system is fit for purpose
- Senior military leaders will reinforce the need for high standards, with those responsible for setting day-to-day standards to take more responsibility

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt has today announced a range of new measures to address inappropriate behaviour in the armed forces.

Steps to be taken include instilling a shift in culture, led by those responsible for managing day-to-day discipline, as well as overhauling the complaints system so the most serious allegations are investigated quickly and if appropriate, outside the chain of command. New training and reporting to track culture change will also be implemented.

Today's announcement follows the publication of a review into inappropriate behaviour in the armed forces, conducted by Air Marshal Michael Wigston. The review, which was commissioned in April following a number of allegations of inappropriate behaviour, was designed to analyse the culture of the armed forces and make recommendations on further action to improve behaviours. The report found that while good behaviour was the norm and service personnel could for the large part be trusted to behave appropriately, there is still an unacceptable level of inappropriate behaviour in the military.

One of the key recommendations which will be taken on board will be the creation of a new 'Defence Authority', which will provide centralised oversight on how the recommendations are delivered and share best practice across Defence. It have a role in investigating allegations such as sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.

This change to the service complaints system is to ensure the most serious allegations are dealt with quickly and personnel have the confidence they need to come forward. This approach is based on similar systems which have proved successful in the Canadian, Australian and US armed forces, and will include stepped up resources dedicated to this effort.

It will also offer new routes to anonymously report inappropriate behaviour through the creation of a new hotline, a phone-based app and website forms. The Defence Authority will also be the central point for defence for the coordination of policy relating to inappropriate behaviour, as well as sharing best practice across defence.

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Whether it is crude comments, discriminatory treatment, or even offences of a sexual nature, inappropriate behaviour has no place in society, let alone in our armed forces.

This report sends a clear message and I am committed to ensuring its recommendations are delivered in full.

In addition to the report, I want to ensure non-commissioned officers are able to address poor behaviour when they see it. They are the moral compass of the Armed Forces.

The report's 36 recommendations are mainly aimed at preventing instances of inappropriate behaviour occurring, identifying leadership as a key element to change the culture across defence and make sure that everyone plays their part.

To address this, today the MOD has committed to embed a new culture and set of standards across the services.

This will include setting new performance standards, so military and civilian leadership are held accountable for the culture they set, mandated diversity and inclusion training and a new harassment survey, to be conducted in 2021, that will track data on the culture change across defence

Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

Any incident of unacceptable behaviour threatens our reputation, undermines the team and erodes our professionalism.

Such incidents will ultimately hamper the efforts of those risking their lives in the service of the nation and will undoubtedly be used by those who seek to undermine our national values and cohesion.

We each have a moral obligation to protect those in our care and a responsibility to challenge unacceptable behaviour – we now need to ensure everyone feels empowered to do so.

As a demonstration of how seriously the issue is being taken by the military and the MOD, the Chief of Defence Staff and Permanent Secretary have written to all senior commanders to update them on the review and stress the

importance of implementing its findings, particularly the importance of leadership in setting the conditions for good culture behaviour across defence.

The respective heads of the Army, Navy and Air Force are also writing to all staff on the outcome of the review.

Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, author of the report and incoming Chief of the Air Staff said:

The vast majority of people in the UK Armed Forces serve with courage, determination and professionalism; they are a great credit to our nation.

In stark contrast, my report found an unacceptable and persistent level of inappropriate behaviour in the UK Armed Forces. This behaviour harms people, damages our reputation and almost certainly impacts our ability to attract and retain the talent we need.

By implementing the report's recommendations, I am confident we can address the challenge of inappropriate behaviour in our Armed Forces. It requires a determined effort to change the culture, driven persistently from the top and at every level of leadership below that. Everyone has a part to play, and it's not optional.

A copy of the full report can be found [here](#).

The Senior Enlisted Adviser to the Chiefs of Staff Warrant Officer Glenn Haughton said:

Our reputation as the best armed forces in the world is hard won and unacceptable behaviour erodes the public's confidence in us.

Personnel at all levels need to play their part in ensuring that our values and standards are followed, creating an opening and welcoming culture to everyone who serves.