

[Press release: Gloucestershire school children learning to love nature with help from the Environment Agency](#)



School children in Gloucestershire are discovering life from rivers

School children in Gloucester and Cinderford are learning to love their rivers through funding provided by the Environment Agency.

More than 400 primary-aged children from seven schools are taking part in the Love Your River Gloucester and Cinderford Wild Towns projects to support river restoration and habitat improvements. Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Severn Rivers Trust and Severn Trent Water are key partners in the projects.

The EA is funding community engagement for the projects over three months, and this is being delivered by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. The children are learning about the water environment, including what lives in the river, the water cycle, pollution and how they can help to keep our rivers clean.

Karen Andrews for the Environment Agency said:

These are really exciting projects, and part of a bigger overall aim to improve rivers in the county, which should lead to better water quality and biodiversity.

Importantly, it's also helping to teach the next generation how to improve and look after our natural environment.

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[News story: UK wins global F-35 support assignment worth £500M](#)

The F-35 avionic and aircraft component repair hub in North Wales was awarded a second major assignment of work worth some £500M by the US Department of Defense.

Following the announcement in 2016 that the UK would be the location of the global repair hub for the initial tranche of F-35 components, today's news sees significantly more UK support work to the cutting-edge jets. This new assignment will support hundreds of additional F-35 jobs in the UK – many of them at the MOD's Defence & Electronics Components Agency (DECA) at MOD Sealand, where the majority of the work will be carried out.

It will see crucial maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for an even wider range of F-35 avionic, electronic and electrical systems for hundreds of F-35 aircraft based globally.

The winning solution builds on the innovative joint venture formed between the MOD (DECA), BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman called Sealand Support Services Ltd (SSSL). SSSL support work and services for F-35 are scheduled to commence from 2020.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This announcement keeps Britain right at the centre of the global F-35 partnership, the largest defence programme in history. It is a vote of confidence in our highly-skilled workforce and high-tech industry that provides us and our allies with the very best of what British engineering has to offer.

Our vision of Global Britain brings with it new and exciting opportunities to provide top quality goods made in Britain to the rest of the world.

This deal builds on the strong foundations of the UK's enduring defence partnership with the US. It is a significant boost for British jobs and those highly-skilled workers who enable these world-class fighter jets to continue keeping us safe and secure.

RAF F-35B Lightnings at RAF Marham. Crown copyright.

This assignment recognizes the world-class skills and critical support being provided at DECA – a MOD-owned Executive Agency. It places North Wales at the very heart of F-35 support delivery for the next 40 years and directly supports hundreds more high-tech F-35 jobs in the UK.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

With this announcement, MoD Sealand is once again proving its credentials as a vital component repair hub for the F-35 aircraft.

The UK's defence outlook is bolstered by the skills of thousands of people employed across the industry in Wales, including those supporting essential equipment to the Armed Forces.

I'm delighted that the skills of our labour force have been recognised with this reinforced investment in the north-east Wales economy, which will continue to provide a prosperous source of employment and growth to this region through the wider supply chain over the coming years.

Sir Simon Bollom, CEO of the MOD's procurement agency, Defence Equipment and Support, added:

In winning this work, the UK has demonstrated how the MOD can collaborate effectively with industry bringing together a highly skilled and experienced workforce to offer an innovative and best value support solution for the benefit of F-35 partners.

The UK also benefits from a long-term commitment to the F-35 programme and its unique defence relationship with the US. Together with our partners from DECA, BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman, SSSL will be able to offer the F-35 programme engineering excellence, world-class innovation and agility.

An RAF F-35B Lightning performing a hover manoeuvre. Crown copyright.

DECA has a long and illustrious history in providing avionics services to fast-jet aircraft. This further F-35 assignment reaffirms DECA's role in providing services and support to the world's most advanced fighter aircraft for decades to come.

DECA's Chief Executive, Geraint Spearing said:

It is particularly pleasing that we will provide such a critical and substantial element of the Global F-35 component sustainment solution. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our workforce and will secure these world class skills in support of defence and security for many years to come.

The news follows a November 2018 announcement that the UK has ordered 17 more F-35B aircraft, which will be delivered between 2020 and 2022, to join the 17 British aircraft currently based at RAF Marham and in the US, as well as another already on order.

Also, in November 2018, the MOD awarded a £160M contract to Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to deliver infrastructure to ready RAF Lakenheath for 2 squadrons of US Air Force F-35s. The Suffolk airbase will be the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe and continues the base's long and proud history of supporting US Air Force capability in the UK.

[News story: Minister for Crime plans to protect shop workers from violence](#)

The Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, is examining options for providing further protections for shop workers from violence and abuse.

The call for evidence is intended to help strengthen the evidence base and look at all options for addressing these crimes.

Chairing a meeting of the National Retail Crime Steering Group today, which includes members such as the British Retail Consortium and the Association of Convenience Stores (ACS), Victoria Atkins will discuss proposals for a call to evidence. These include how to protect retail workers from abuse and violence that often occur from age-restricted sales, such as cigarettes and alcohol.

The Home Office's Commercial Victimization Survey estimated that in 2017, workers from the wholesale and retail sector were victim to around 510,000 incidents of assaults and threats, more than twice the number recorded in 2016 (203,000 incidents).

The National Retail Crime Steering Group brings government, police and industry together to improve the response to crimes affecting the sector, including assaults and theft. Today the group will focus exclusively on the response to violence and abuse toward shop workers.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Victoria Atkins, said:

No-one should be subject to violence and abuse in their workplace and I have every sympathy for retail staff who have been the victims of these appalling acts just for doing their jobs.

It is important to tackle this issue. Today's exceptional meeting of the National Retail Crime Steering Group is rightly focussing solely on violence and abuse toward shop staff, to understand what more we can do to protect those in the industry.

ACS chief executive, James Lowman, said:

The safety of people working in local shops is our number one priority and we are determined that our work with the Home Office delivers lasting change and safer local shops.

This includes securing a strong response from the police and criminal justice system to ensure offenders are brought to justice, and to send a clear message that violence against shop workers is not acceptable.

The Home Office will additionally provide £50,000 of funding for a sector-led communications campaign to raise awareness of the wide ranging offences that may be used to address this behaviour.

[News story: Call for evidence: Home Office's visa casework 'onshoring' \('Network consolidation'\)](#)

UK Visas and Immigration's strategy for managing visa applications includes the 'onshoring' of decision making from overseas visa sections to its centres in the UK. This process, which it refers to as 'network consolidation', has been underway for some time, with some overseas visa posts already closed and the work 'onshored' and others are set to close over the next few years.

I have just begun an inspection of network consolidation and am now inviting anyone with relevant knowledge or 'before and after' experience of the onshoring of this function to write to me by 1st March 2019 with their evidence.

My intention is to examine the evolution of network consolidation from UKVI's

previous 'hub and spoke' model; where decision making was done at a number of 'hubs', the majority overseas, each of which dealt with applications received from several countries, the 'spokes'.

I will look at resource planning and governance of the network consolidation programme; the origin, planning, governance and delivery of the closure of particular visa posts, comparing the projected benefits against the actual outcomes; UKVI's performance in the UK compared with overseas; staff and other resource issues; and stakeholder management.

However, the other key element is the 'customer experience', which is why I am making this call for evidence.

You can email your response to NetConCfE@icibi.gov.uk

or write into:

Network Consolidation Inspection Team ICIBI 5th Floor Globe House 89
Eccleston Square London SW1V 1PN

Please note that submissions may be cited in the final report although personal information will be removed..

[News story: Division and merger of international trade mark registrations.](#)



From 1 February 2019, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) enabled international trade mark applications to be [divided and merged](#).

The change allows applicants, who are refused part of their mark, to apply for the new international trade mark. The acceptable elements of their application will be protected. Applicants can then address the remaining parts of their application.

The new rule allows holders to then merge the two parts of their trade mark back to together once the objections are resolved. Once merged, holders would pay only one renewal fee.

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