

News story: UK Government extends guarantee for Scottish farmers and crofters

The Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS) supports hill farmers and crofters in difficult to farm areas. The UK Government has confirmed that it will guarantee applications made in 2019, offering financial support and certainty for farmers and crofters in Scotland for another year.

The Government has also guaranteed other CAP Pillar 2 projects signed before the UK leaves the EU, as previously announced by the Chancellor. These moves will give farmers certainty in the short to medium term, while we develop a post-Brexit agriculture strategy which works for Scotland and the whole of the UK.

Speaking ahead of his visit Lord Duncan said:

Crofters and farmers are the lifeblood of the Highland economy. Battling challenging conditions they produce world-class food while serving as custodians of the natural environment. Put simply, they shape Scotland, and merit support and certainty as we leave the EU.

It is for that reason that the UK Government is guaranteeing an additional £42 million to extend the Less Favoured Areas scheme for an extra year. This will mean payments of up to £10,000 each for Scotland's eligible hill farmers. This will give farmers greater certainty while we develop a strategy to support our agriculture sector once we leave the EU.

Lord Duncan will also host a roundtable later this year with Scotland's farming sector, to hear about their priorities as we leave the EU.

In Scotland, 85 per cent of Scottish agricultural land is classed as Less Favoured Area (LFA), compared to just 17 per cent in England. This underlines the difficult physical and climatic conditions facing Scotland's farmers and crofters.

Lord Duncan announced the funding during a visit to Deskie Farm in Ballindalloch, Moray, where he met representatives of Scotland's farming sector.

Press release: CMA demands action from hospitals on private healthcare information

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has [issued directions](#) to 7 hospitals, demanding that they start providing this information by the end of October 2017.

Following its investigation into the private healthcare sector, all hospitals treating private patients were required by the CMA to publish information about the quality of the service they provide. This includes patient feedback on treatment, the performance of healthcare professionals and information on infection rates, mortality rates and readmissions to hospital.

Hospitals were required to submit this information to the Private Healthcare Information Network (PHIN) quarterly from September 2016, for publication from April 2017. The CMA is now starting formal action against 7 hospitals that have failed to make sufficient progress in meeting this requirement. These are Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, and Sandwell and Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

Senior Director of Remedies at CMA, Adam Land said:

It is essential that patients are given the necessary information on issues like quality of care so they can choose the right hospital for their needs.

Although progress is being made, certain hospitals have failed to submit any information to PHIN for publication. The CMA is now starting formal proceedings against those hospitals which have made least progress towards compliance. We will take further action against any hospital that is not fully compliant.

Andrew Vallance-Owen, Chairman of the Private Healthcare Information Network said:

Lessons from the last year have shown an absolute and urgent need for greater transparency in private healthcare in the UK. PHIN wholeheartedly supports the action taken by the CMA.

It's time for private healthcare to do what other industry sectors have been doing for years which is to quantifiably measure success, identify and improve poor care, and allow good care to stand out.

Ultimately this is about empowering patients with information that will help them understand and choose the best care for them or their families.

The CMA will continue to ensure all private healthcare providers comply with this order to give patients accurate and complete quality information so they can choose the right hospital for them.

Notes to editors

1. On 2 April 2014, the CMA [published its final report](#) on the Private Healthcare Market Investigation.
2. On 1 October 2014, the CMA made the [Private Healthcare Market Investigation Order 2014](#) (the Order) as part of a package of measures. Article 21 of the Order requires every operator of a private healthcare facility to supply to the Private Healthcare Information Network (PHIN) certain private patient data for processing and publication.
3. When remedies are in place, CMA's statutory duty is to monitor compliance and investigate breaches. Directions to comply are enforceable by courts.
4. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For more information on the CMA see our [homepage](#) or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
5. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or call: 07774 134814

[News story: New head of alliance delivering nation's Carriers amongst appointments welcomed by Defence Secretary](#)

Admiral Lister will take a sabbatical from his Royal Navy career to lead the Aircraft Carrier Alliance's (ACA) continued delivery of the most powerful warships ever built for the Royal Navy.

The two 65,000 tonne aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, will lead the UK's maritime forces for the next fifty years. With the former having now sailed into her home port of Portsmouth and the latter being officially named next week, Admiral Lister will continue to drive the programme forward and guide the second Carrier through to delivery.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Following HMS Queen Elizabeth's historic entry into Portsmouth, our focus is now on her final preparations for commissioning and the delivery of our second mighty carrier, HMS Prince of Wales. With his substantial experience, Admiral Lister is the logical choice to keep up that momentum.

Our two new aircraft carriers and F-35 Lightning jets are an investment in British security, prosperity and our global role. They will transform the UK's ability to project power around the world whether independently or working closely with our allies.

Sir Simon brings his knowledge of complex engineering projects and leadership of major programmes. During his career, he has served as the Royal Navy's Chief Naval Engineer Officer and will leave Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) where he led the delivery of the maritime equipment programme and fleet support.

Announcing Sir Simon's appointment, Sir Peter Gershon, Chairman of the ACA said:

Simon has extensive knowledge of the Aircraft Carrier programme having been our Vice Chairman since 2013. I'm delighted that he'll take this full time role and wish him every success.

An alliance between the Ministry of Defence and industry, the ACA has brought together the best of British industry, with construction across six cities and involving more than 10,000 people. This includes 700 businesses and suppliers, 800 apprentices and nearly 8,000 jobs at shipyards around the UK.

The role became vacant following the appointment of Ian Booth as the first Chief Executive of the new Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA), which the Secretary of State also confirmed today. Following the successful completion of the first phase of sea trials for HMS Queen Elizabeth and her arrival in her home port of Portsmouth, Booth has been appointed into this critical role, reflecting his proven track record in delivering complex defence programmes.

Booth brings a wealth of public and private sector experience to a key programme for the UK's defence and security. In addition to his previous leadership of the ACA, Booth also previously ran the Typhoon airframe programme and was Managing Director of both the Astute Submarine programme at BAE Systems and the joint venture Fleet Support Ltd.

A key commitment of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the SDA was created in April 2017 to focus on building and supporting the UK's nuclear submarines.

Booth will now turn his proven skills to that task of replacing the UK's four Vanguard Class submarines with the new Dreadnought Class – a £31 billion project equivalent in scale to Crossrail – which will provide the UK with its continuous at sea nuclear deterrent for the next 30 years. Booth will also oversee the delivery of the remainder of the powerful Astute Class attack submarines and lead day-to-day support of the existing fleet of Trafalgar, Astute and Vanguard Class submarines.

[News story: UK agrees new military training programme with France](#)

The Defence Secretary will agree the new programme of UK-French training during his first bilateral meeting with Florence Parly, the newly appointed French Minister for the Armed Forces in Paris later today.

In September, over 1,500 British soldiers from 16 Air Assault Brigade will be joined by troops from 11eme Brigade Parachitiste on NATO exercise Swift Response in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. Meanwhile, French troops also plan to join 1,000 UK personnel from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment on Exercise Askari Storm in Kenya in November, training on the prevention of instability and the spread of violent extremism.

During the visit, the Defence Secretary will also praise the French troops who have been deployed to Estonia as part of the UK-led enhanced Forward Presence battalion in the country since April this year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The UK and France have a long enduring relationship and that will continue as the UK leaves the European Union.

We are deployed together in NATO, fighting against Daesh in Iraq and Syria and training together across the globe.

This announcement is the latest in a string of partnerships that highlight the enduring strength of the UK-French defence relationship.

Earlier this year, the UK and France signed a €100million agreement to develop future long range weapons and are working together on an unmanned combat air system. And as the UK prepares for HMS Queen Elizabeth to reach operational capability in 2020, France is expected to play her part in supporting the Carrier Strike Group, as the UK did with the French carrier Charles De Gaulle in the Gulf during 2015 when HMS Kent was integrated into her task group.

The UK and France also run a personnel exchange programme. Improving how we work together, there are currently over 40 personnel working in reciprocal roles across the three services.

The Defence Secretary has also announced that the RAF Red Arrows will start their European and Gulf tour in France on 15th September, Battle of Britain Day, with a flypast in Cannes.

[Press release: UK security and defence collaboration with Japan steps up a level](#)

In light of serious challenges to the rules-based international order – most recently the unprecedented threat posed by North Korea – the Prime Minister Theresa May is set to announce a significant step up in cooperation.

Japan is already the UK's closest security partner in Asia, and the Prime Minister will say that even closer cooperation will ensure we can continue to stand alongside our Japanese friends and allies to further our shared interests and meet our shared challenges in an uncertain world.

The Prime Minister is expected to say that Japan is a natural partner for the UK on defence and security issues, as two outward-looking countries both firmly committed to supporting the rules-based international system and the promotion of democratic values.

As responsible members of the United Nations and through our cooperation on the Security Council, we work together in pursuit of important common foreign policy goals, including finding a peaceful solution to the North Korean problem and ensuring the rigorous implementation of sanctions against the North Korean regime. Our military personnel also work alongside one another in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, and we are jointly leading pioneering de-mining and peacekeeping work across Africa.

Highlighting the importance both sides are placing on working more closely together than ever before, the Prime Minister will today attend a meeting of the Japanese National Security Council in Tokyo – becoming only the second ever foreign leader to do so and the first European leader ever to be granted such privileged access.

The two leaders are expected to agree a new “Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation” with the UK, which will include.

- **Defence:**

While recognising that our work together on defence is already particularly strong, with our Typhoon fighter jets exercising in Japan last year for example, the Prime Minister will announce that we are now taking this even further with the deployment of HMS Argyll to the region in December 2018, and UK troops exercising jointly with their Japanese counterparts next year. This will be a first for non-US troops on Japanese soil.

- **Cyber Security:**

Following PM Abe's visit to the UK's National Cyber Security Centre earlier this year, the UK and Japan will agree to cooperate on cyber security ahead of the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and share best practice and expertise, including through an exchange of expert visits. The UK's support, built on decades of expertise in managing cyber crime and other malicious cyber activity, will help enhance Games security.

- **Counter Terrorism:**

The two countries will agree much improved information-sharing and will strengthen cooperation on aviation security and tackling violent extremism. We will also offer practical support to Japan's Olympics counter-terrorism preparation, sharing best practice on mass event safety and security through expert exchanges.

The Prime Minister will visit the headquarters of the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) at Yokosuka outside Tokyo today, where she will receive a briefing from Japanese and UK military personnel on-board IZUMO, the largest vessel in the JMSDF. The briefing will focus on the strength of the UK-Japan defence relationship, including joint mine countermeasures work in the region.

Speaking at the National Security Council today, the Prime Minister will say:

It is a great honour to be invited to attend this meeting of Japan's National Security Council.

As two outward-facing countries with many shared priorities and shared challenges, Japan remains a natural partner for us on defence and security issues.

I am determined that our defence and security cooperation will continue to go from strength to strength, enhancing our collective response to threats to the international order and to global peace and security, through increased cooperation on defence, cyber security, and counter-terrorism.

And that must include confronting the threat that North Korea poses and ensuring the regime stops its aggressive acts.