

Press release: Defence Secretary announces £48 million Apache training contract

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today announced a six-year £48 million Apache helicopter training contract at the annual Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Land Warfare Conference.

This investment in Apache air and ground crew will support around 70 jobs in Dorset, Hampshire and Suffolk with Aviation Training International Ltd (ATIL). Around 700 Army personnel will go through the training scheme per year, including around 50 pilots and 400 ground crew.

While addressing the challenges which face today's armies, the Defence Secretary also announced new measures to meet global information and cyber threats by bolstering and reorganising the Army's Royal Corps of Signals and Intelligence Corps.

The Royal Signals will receive an additional regiment to enhance its cyber capabilities, so it can distribute information rapidly and effectively; while the Intelligence Corps will be organised to focus on counter-intelligence, security, and cultural understanding.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This £48 million contract will support UK jobs and provide world-class Apache training for our personnel. The Apache is a vital part of the British Army's fighting force that is helping to keep this county safe.

We are also preparing our forces for the battlefields of tomorrow in an era of complex global challenges by ensuring our formidable Signals and Intelligence Corps are ready for the information warfare of the 21st Century.

This investment is only possible thanks to a rising defence budget and a drive for efficiency and innovation which will help our Armed Forces stay at the cutting edge.

The Land Warfare Conference is the annual forum for Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Nicholas Carter, to discuss the global challenges facing land forces. This year's theme is Using Land Power Decisively in an Era of Constant Competition.

Yesterday, General Carter opened the conference with discussion about the value and future of land power in a changing, increasingly complex world. He challenged the conference to address issues of information warfare,

recruitment training, and innovation to keep land forces relevant on the 21st Century battlefield.

General Sir Nicholas Carter said:

The global strategic context is complex and dynamic; indeed its defining condition seems to be one of instability. The pervasiveness of information is changing the character of conflict opening new ways for state and non-state adversaries to exploit ambiguity, blurring the boundaries of peace and war.

This conference has seen an impressive group of panel chairs, speakers and serving personnel tackling some of the key issues surrounding the utility of land power in this era of constant competition.

[Press release: Church Commissioner Appointment: Loretta Minghella](#)

The Queen has approved that Ms Loretta Caroline Rose Minghella, OBE be appointed First Church Estates Commissioner in succession to Sir Andreas Whittam Smith, CBE.

Background

Loretta has been Chief Executive of Christian Aid since 2010, with overall responsibility for its strategy, plans and programmes across the world. She has since overseen responses to emergencies such as earthquakes and typhoons, the refugee crises in the Middle East and Europe, and hunger and famine in East Africa. She has also led Christian Aid's long term development work and advocacy on major issues affecting the world's poorest people, including climate change.

Loretta is a lawyer by training who, after practising as a criminal litigator, began a career in financial regulation in 1990. The first Head of Enforcement Law, Policy and International Cooperation for the Financial Services Authority, she also chaired the International Organisation of Securities Commissions' Standing Committee on Enforcement and Information-Sharing.

In 2004, Loretta became Chief Executive of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, in which capacity she oversaw the payment of over £21 billion in compensation to victims of bank and other financial failures. In recognition of her contribution in that role, she was awarded the OBE in the

New Year's Honours 2010.

A trustee of the Disasters Emergency Committee and of St Georges House Trust (Windsor Castle), Loretta is a member of the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group and a Sarum Canon at Salisbury Cathedral. Loretta has a BA (Hons) in Law from the University of Cambridge.

She lives with her husband and two children in London and attends St Barnabas Church, Dulwich, where she is, in her own words, an 'enthusiastic if not talented' member of the choir.

Press release: More than 105,000 businesses helped through start-up fund

More than 105,000 businesses have been launched with the support from the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA), a fund available to jobseekers with a business idea.

Successful applicants get access to a business mentor, financial support for up to 6 months and may be able to apply for a loan of up to £25,000 to help with start-up costs.

The latest NEA figures show that the North West had the highest number of start-ups (16,090), followed by London (12,870) and Yorkshire and Humberside (11,590).

Minister for Employment Damian Hinds said:

As these latest figures show, thousands of people across the country have great business ideas, and are taking the steps to turn them into a reality.

The NEA provides the right mix of expert, tailored advice and support to people of all backgrounds which can be invaluable in the early days of starting a company.

The figures also show that of the individuals launching a business:

- over two thirds were aged between 25 and 49
- 24% were over the age of 50
- 7% were aged between 18 and 24
- 40% were women
- 22% have a self-declared disability

- 13% were from a black and minority ethnic background

Sunderland-based Colin Young, 51, made use of the scheme to launch his business after being made redundant. The NEA helped him start North East Drone Services, a professional drone photography service.

After working as a TV and photography technician for 13 years, I decided to invest in myself with the New Enterprise Allowance.

I met with an adviser who not only helped me with my business plan, but also to plan for any pitfalls that I might not have considered.

The full regional breakdown of figures:

Region	Individuals with an NEA business start (entries are rounded to the nearest 10)
North West	16,090
London	12,870
Yorkshire and Humberside	11,590
West Midlands	10,210
Scotland	9,600
South East	8,040
South West	7,240
East of England	7,210
North East	7,180
Wales	6,130
East Midlands	6,100

105,500 businesses have been set up through the NEA scheme.

The financial support is paid as a weekly allowance of £65 a week for 13 weeks and then £33 for the following 13 weeks (a total of £1,274 over 26 weeks).

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[**News story: Jellyfish collagen pioneers set up biomaterial plant in**](#)

[Wales](#)

Cardiff is now home to the first commercial manufacturing plant for extracting high-purity collagen from jellyfish.

The 7,500 square foot facility – established by medtech and biomaterials company [Jellagen](#) at Capital Business Park, Wentloog – will serve the research, medical, biotech and pharmaceutical markets.

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body and provides structural support for cells in the body's tissues and organs. It has been used in medical device and research applications for many years. It is usually sourced from pigs, cows, rats and horses.

Manufacturing in bulk quantities

As these mammals carry a risk of disease, Jellagen is moving away from traditional sources to develop a next generation collagen. This is with the help of £225,000 in grant funding from Innovate UK.

The company carries out sustainable harvesting of jellyfish off the west coast of Wales and operates a depot at Pembroke Dock.

Professor Andrew Mearns Spragg, Chief Executive and Founder, said:

This is a key milestone in Jellagen's evolution. To be able to manufacture jellyfish collagen in bulk quantities enables us to supply and meet the needs of world-leading medical device, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

Jellyfish collagen is, in essence, the root of all collagens and is compatible with a broad range of cell types. This makes it ideally suited to support the growth of a wide range of human cells and enables it to be an effective biomaterial for applications such as cell culture, wound care and regeneration.

Investment from Finance Wales

The next step for the business is [ISO13485](#) certification, allowing it to produce material suitable for medical application and devices and to sell to the market. This will be in place by the end of 2017.

Since it was founded in 2013, Jellagen has raised more than £2.4 million in funding from grants and investment. That has included £1.8 million through the [Angels in MedCity](#) programme, with involvement from Finance Wales.

Last year the firm won the [Life Sciences Hub Wales](#) Boost Cymru competition to find the most innovative new life sciences business in Wales.

News story: Department for Education Reports Gender Pay Gap

The Department for Education has today become the first Government department to publish its gender pay gap and bonus pay gap, setting an example to other employers on promoting gender equality in the workplace.

The department has reported a mean pay gap – the difference between average salaries for men and women – of 5.3% and a median pay gap of 5.9%. This is compared to the UK's national gender pay gap of 18.1% which is the lowest since records began in 1997.

The pay gap data will be published by all government departments and large private companies by April 2018 – shining a light on our workplaces to see where there is more to do and helping people make informed decisions about their career.

Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening said:

I'm proud that the Department for Education has taken an important step in reporting its gender pay gap, setting an example to other employers as we build a stronger economy where success is defined by talent, not gender or circumstance.

The UK's gender pay gap is at a record low, but we are committed to closing it. As one of the UK's largest employers, the public sector has a vital role to play in leading the way to tackle the gender pay gap which is why the DfE's step to publish our gender pay gap matters.

Through transparency we can find out what the situation is, where there is best practice and create pressure for more progress.

The Department for Education is committed to reducing its gender pay gap and has introduced a range of initiatives to support women in the workplace, including:

- Support for women returning to work: through shared parental leave, job sharing or part time opportunities. The department has also updated its guidance on supporting staff returning from maternity or adoption leave.
- Helping women progress in their careers: through talent management schemes such as the Positive Action Pathway, open to all from protected characteristic groups.
- Providing networks: the departmental women's equality network, Network

58, runs upskilling events, promotes campaigns and holds talks to support women in the workplace.

- Monitoring pay: to identify any pay differences and take targeted action where appropriate.
- Improving the recruitment process: the department has anonymised the application process to reduce unconscious bias and ensuring that all interviewers have undergone unconscious bias training.
- Focus on gender equality: the department has made gender equality a central part of the departmental Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

These initiatives have helped to create a culture that supports women in the workplace and have been supported by strong leadership across the organisation, helping to close the gender pay gap.

In April, the UK became one of the first countries in the world to require mandatory gender pay gap reporting, a key part of the government's work to eliminate the gender pay gap. Private, public and voluntary sector employers with 250 or more employees will be required to publish their gender pay gap and bonus pay gap by April 2018. The published gender pay gap data can be viewed [here](#).

The detailed information published today shows the department has also reported a mean bonus pay gap of only 0.8% and a 0.0% median bonus pay gap. Its bonus awards are based on performance and this 0.0% pay gap reflects the fact that men and women's performance is valued equally and fairly.

Breaking down the gender pay gap data by quartiles has helped the department to identify exactly where attention should be focused. Over half (55%) of the department's senior civil servants are female and there is a higher proportion of women than men in the department's top pay quartile. However, there is also a higher concentration of women to men in the department's lowest pay quartile, which has contributed to the gender pay gap. Through the initiatives referenced above, the department will work to continue to support women's progress in the workplace.

The gender pay gap mandatory reporting requirements are part of wider work the Government is doing to support women in the workplace. This includes £5 million to support returners, offering 30 hours of free childcare, and introducing shared parental leave and new rights to request flexible working. There is also extensive cross-Government work to get more women into the top jobs at the UK's biggest companies and to get more girls taking STEM subjects at school.