

The future of Defence Armed Forces recruiting reaches a new milestone

News story

Bidders are selected to participate in competitive dialogue.



Military personnel on Parade. Copyright: Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence has invited four bidders to compete in dialogue with the winning bidder set to deliver the tri-Service recruiting solution for the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. The new recruiting solution will place the candidate at the heart of the recruitment process while ensuring the Armed Forces achieve the right quality and quantity of candidates to satisfy demand while remaining agile and responsive to change.

Last summer, the Armed Forces Recruiting Programme engaged with industry and issued a Contract Notice and Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). Following PQQ evaluation, the Programme down-selected to four preferred bidders; these bidders will now embark on three rounds of Competitive Dialogue. Once Competitive Dialogue is complete, a winning bidder will be selected, with the contract awarded in 2024 and Service Commencement April 2025.

The final recruiting solution will develop and foster an engaging, vibrant and inclusive candidate experience that meets the needs of the Armed Forces. This will be achieved by transforming the traditional recruiting systems, using examples of industry best practice, whilst retaining the rich heritage of the single Services.

Further information about this award can be found on the [Defence Sourcing Portal](#).

Published 11 April 2022

Welsh business secures £2 million export contract

- UK manufacturer Global Attractions wins its largest ever contract in South-East Asia with government backing
- Its world leading soft play centres are sold to the world from Wrexham
- The seasoned Welsh exporter uses government support to fuel its ambitious export led growth plans

Children in Thailand will soon be crawling over Welsh-made soft play centres as a Wrexham-based manufacturer secures a £2 million export contract with UK government help.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) has been working with Global Attractions to help them expand to the far corners of the Earth and boost British business.

The contract is the company's largest ever contract and is expected to help create local jobs as we build back stronger from the pandemic.

Global Attractions is the latest UK company to benefit from UKEF support. Last year, UKEF provided £12.3 billion for over 550 companies, which is estimated to have supported over 100,000 UK jobs directly and in the supply chain – showing how effective UKEF is in delivering for the country.

Minister for Exports, Mike Freer, said:

Companies that export are more productive, more profitable, and pay higher wages – which is essential for us to build back better from the pandemic.

I am delighted that UK Export Finance has delivered yet another multi-million pound export contract which will create jobs and boost GDP.

Andy Davies, Finance Director at Global Attractions, said:

Securing finance solutions for our customers unlocks vital overseas trading opportunities for us. The collaboration between UK Export Finance and the London Forfaiting Company has allowed us to find that solution, providing opportunities for us to grow and help our customers to fulfil their projects.

The vision of our parent company, SPI Global, is for Global Attractions to be the number one full concept supplier within the play & leisure industry worldwide. The fast-growing market demand

coupled with our main manufacturing unit being right here in Wales, the export facility provided by UKEF will be significant in achieving that goal.

UKEF support for the project, provided through the London Forfaiting Company, allowed Global Attractions to offer its buyer favourable repayment terms, helping the company win the contract ahead of overseas competitors.

Global Attractions, a designer, manufacturer and distributor of family entertainment units, secured the international contracts to build and export soft play centres to shopping malls in Pattaya City and Bangkok.

The company won the contracts internationally due to its high-quality British designs and expertise coupled with a competitive financing package backed by the UK government. This builds on projects delivered for global businesses for over 25 years including McDonald's, IKEA, KFC and Ferrari World Abu Dhabi – all from its base in Wrexham.

Its soft play centre will feature in one of the Pattaya City's largest malls, with 4 floors dedicated to family friendly activities that attract 1 million residents in the city just south of Bangkok.

This deal has opened a new trading market for Global Attractions. The company is now capitalising on this success by securing another deal to supply a soft-play centre to be shipped and installed in Bangkok, also with UKEF support.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

It is great to see a Welsh business, Global Attractions, win contracts worth over £2 million and I'm delighted that they have achieved this with the help of UK Export Finance.

There is phenomenal growth potential for this business in South-East Asia, and it's wonderful to see Global Attractions thriving despite the difficult circumstances that this pandemic continues to bring.

UK Export Finance is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working along-side the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Established in 1919, it exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for a lack of finance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and get paid for export contracts.

UKEF has a number of products available to support small businesses across Wales. Local exporters who want to know more about UKEF's support should contact their local [Export Finance Manager](#) to support their exporting journey.

UKEF support was provided through its [Bills & Notes Guarantee](#), which ensures UK exporters get paid immediately for their goods and services while the buyer benefits from longer repayment terms.

Government announces new crackdown on fly-tipping

Households will no longer have to pay to get rid of DIY waste under plans set out by government to change the rules that currently allows some Local Authorities to charge for DIY waste from households. Under the proposals, household DIYers would not be charged to get rid of waste including plasterboards, bricks and bath units.

This is part of a fresh move to crack down on fly-tipping, which has increased since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Government banned backdoor charges on local residents disposing of household rubbish at household waste centres in 2015 and since then guidance has made clear that this includes DIY household waste.

However, around a third of Local Authorities still charge for certain types of DIY waste, using rules designed for construction waste. The changes outlined in a technical consultation published today will change this rule and could save households up to £10 for an individual item – for example, a sheet of plasterboard.

Fly-tipping is a crime which blights communities, poses a risk to public health and the environment, and costs up to £392 million a year. Local authorities dealt with 1.13 million fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21, up by 16% from 2019/20.

Alongside this, a call for evidence on the use of booking systems at recycling centres will be launched today – some of which were brought in when restrictions were imposed during the pandemic – amid concerns these could be making it harder for people to dispose of their waste and increasing the risk of fly-tipping.

Finally, a number of councils in England will also be awarded grants to tackle fly-tipping through trial projects, including CCTV to target hotspots.

Environment Minister Jo Churchill said:

When it comes to fly-tipping, enough is enough. These appalling incidents cost us £392 million a year and it is time to put a stop to them.

I want to make sure that recycling and the correct disposal of rubbish is free, accessible and easy for householders. No one should be tempted to fly tip or turn to waste criminals and rogue operators.

Furthermore, the funding that we have announced for Local Authorities today will help them trial innovative new projects to put a stop to fly tipping. We will learn from the successes – and replicate them.

There were over 60,000 fly-tipping incidents with construction, demolition and excavation material in 2020/21, an increase of 18% from 2019/20.

A number of local authorities charge for construction waste such as paving slabs and roofing materials, but the Government is today consulting (LINK) on amending legislation so that householders cannot be charged for of DIY waste at recycling centres.

In addition, new council grants totalling £450,000 will help fund a range of projects such as:

- CCTV: The use of covert and overt CCTV cameras at hot-spot locations can help to reduce the numbers of people dumping waste illegally, while also providing further evidence to help identify those that continue to offend.
- Artificial intelligence: Buckinghamshire Council plans to use a combination of AI enabled Rapid Deployable Cameras (RDC) and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to provide an alert to any visible left items at fly-tipping hotspots in real-time and link them to the vehicle that deposited them, allowing officers to rapidly investigate.
- Delivering education to communities on fly-tipping: Funding for Durham Council for CCTV will lead to individuals being directed to the council's self-funded digital educational tool for those issued with an on-the-spot fine for fly-tipping. The tool aims to educate and encourage long term behaviour change and completion reduces the amount of the fine.
- 'No bags on the street' policy - Newham Council will receive funding to prevent bags being on the street in front of business premises which can attract additional waste. They will scale up their trial of containers to house residential and commercial waste, which resulted in a 24% reduction in fly-tipping. Single items, such as furniture and mattresses, accounted for 16% of total fly-tipping incidents in 2020/21, rising by 7% from the year before. To tackle this, the Government is considering measures such as ecodesign, ecolabelling and extended producer responsibility – where manufacturers are responsible for the costs of dealing with waste created by their products.

Executive Director of the Environmental Services Association (ESA), Jacob Hayler, said:

There is no single 'silver bullet' to tackle the scourge of fly-tipping so we are pleased to see the Government announcing a range of new measures today to help deter this deeply anti-social criminal behaviour.

In addition to helping individuals recycle their household waste materials at HWRCs, of particular importance is stopping this material from falling into the hands of organised waste criminals leading to larger scale fly-tipping, which is why the ESA also strongly supports digital waste tracking and reform of the licensing regime for carriers, brokers and dealers of waste material. This protects both the environment and legitimate recycling and waste operators.

Marcus Gover, WRAP CEO said:

The latest IPCC report clearly states that 'it's now or never' if we are to act on global warming. This stark reminder that how we use the world's natural resources is threatening our very existence signposts material efficiency and recycling among priorities.

Minimising waste is central to this and the introductions of grants to reduce fly tipping across England and Wales are necessary to help prevent the continual environmental cost of this illegal activity.

These new plans build on extra funding given to the Environment Agency to tackle waste crime as well as new powers to stop illegal waste sites posing a risk to the environment, including the ability to lock up sites and force rogue operators to clean up all their waste.

The action announced today comes after [plans to reform the waste industry, were launched in January](#). Digital waste tracking will mean those handling waste will record information from the point waste is produced to the stage it is disposed of, recycled or reused, making it easier for regulators to detect illegal activity and tackle fly-tipping and other waste crime.

Our reform of the licensing system for waste carriers, brokers and dealers will increase the competence and background checks needed to operate as a waste carrier, broker or dealer, and make it easier for regulators to enforce against non-compliant operators whilst making it harder for un-registered operators to find work in the sector.

PM's remarks during joint clip with President Zelenskyy: 9 April 2022

Thank you very much Volodymyr. Thank you for having me today at this incredibly difficult time for you and your country. I want to begin by once again saluting the bravery of the people of Ukraine in defying the appalling aggression that we have seen. In the last few weeks the world has found new heroes, and those heroes are the people of Ukraine.

When I was here just a few weeks ago and we were in another room I think in your palace, the defence intelligence we had suggested Russia thought Ukraine could be engulfed in a matter of days and that Kyiv would fall in hours to their armies. And how wrong they were. I think that the Ukrainians have shown the courage of a lion, and you Volodymyr have given the roar of that lion.

I thank you for what you have been able to do, your leadership has been extraordinary. I think what Putin has done in places like Bucha and Irpin, his war crimes have permanently polluted his reputation and the reputation of his government.

It's clear – and we discussed this at length – it's clear that he has suffered a defeat but his retreat is tactical and he is going to intensify the pressure now in Donbas and in the east.

That's why it's so vital as you rightly say Volodymyr that we, your friends, continue to offer whatever support we can. Together with our partners, we are going to ratchet up the economic pressure and we continue to intensify week by week the sanctions on Russia. Not just freezing assets in banks and sanctioning oligarchs, but moving away from use of Russian hydrocarbons.

We will give you the support that you need, the economic support but also of course the defensive military support in which I'm proud to say the UK helped to lead the way. Just the other day we raised I think £1.5bn at a donor conference from friends, partners around the world, dozens and dozens of countries that now want to support Ukraine.

We want to liberalise trade with Ukraine as we go forward to help your economic circumstances, barley and other commodities – there are things we should be doing. We want to help with demining your country, getting rid of the savage traps that the Russian army has left behind.

To come to your central point Volodymyr, I think we are evolving a vision now for the future. Heraclitus said war is the father of all things – that was an exaggeration, war isn't the father of everything – but what this war is certainly producing is a clarity about the vision of a future for Ukraine.

Where together with friends and partners, we – the UK and others – supply the equipment, the technology, the know-how, the intelligence, so that Ukraine will never be invaded again. So Ukraine is so fortified and protected that

Ukraine can never be bullied again. Never be blackmailed again. Never be threatened in the same way again.

In the meantime, there is a huge amount to do to make sure that Ukraine is successful, that Ukraine wins, and that Putin must fail.

Over the last few hours I've been able to see quite a lot of your beautiful country, and it's an amazing country. I've also seen the tragic effects of the war. An inexcusable war, an absolutely inexcusable and unnecessary war.

But having been here in Kyiv for just a few hours, I have no doubt Volodymyr, listening to too listening to your team, your redoubtable team, I have no doubt at all that an independent sovereign Ukraine will rise again thanks above all to the heroism, the courage of the people of Ukraine. Thank you very much and slava Ukraini [glory to Ukraine].

[Prime Minister pledges UK's unwavering support to Ukraine on visit to Kyiv: 9 April 2022](#)

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson meets President Zelenskyy in Kyiv and pledges to stand by the Ukrainian people.



- Prime Minister meets President Zelenskyy in Kyiv and pledges to stand by the Ukrainian people
- Leaders have discussed the support for Ukraine's long-term survival as a free and democratic country
- PM set out new military aid and an additional \$500bn World Bank guarantee to support Ukraine's economy

The Prime Minister is in Kyiv today [Saturday] to demonstrate the UK's

steadfast solidarity with Ukraine and hold in-depth discussions with President Zelenskyy on military and economic assistance.

He reiterated that the UK will do everything in its power to support Ukraine's brave fight against Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion and ensure its long term security and prosperity.

The Prime Minister set out new military assistance of 120 armoured vehicles and new anti-ship missile systems, to support Ukraine in this crucial phase while Russia's illegal assault continues. This is in addition to the £100 million worth of high-grade military equipment announced yesterday, including more Starstreak anti-aircraft missiles, another 800 anti-tank missiles, and high-tech loitering munitions for precision strikes.

The Prime Minister also confirmed further economic support, guaranteeing an additional \$500m [£385m] in World Bank lending to Ukraine, taking our total loan guarantee to up to \$1 billion. This comes alongside the £394m the UK has provided in grant aid, and will help ensure the continued running of vital humanitarian services for Ukrainians.

The UK has responded to the request of the Ukrainian government by liberalising tariffs on the vast majority of imports from Ukraine and providing customs easements, as part of our commitment to the country's economic stability.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It is a privilege to be able to travel to Ukraine and meet President Zelenskyy in person in Kyiv today.

Ukraine has defied the odds and pushed back Russian forces from the gates of Kyiv, achieving the greatest feat of arms of the 21st century.

It is because of President Zelenskyy's resolute leadership and the invincible heroism and courage of the Ukrainian people that Putin's monstrous aims are being thwarted.

I made clear today that the United Kingdom stands unwaveringly with them in this ongoing fight, and we are in it for the long run.

We are stepping up our own military and economic support and convening a global alliance to bring this tragedy to an end, and ensure Ukraine survives and thrives as a free and sovereign nation.

Published 9 April 2022