

Defence publishes its Zero Tolerance approach to sexual offences

Press release

As part of Defence's commitment to crack down on unacceptable sexual behaviour and sexual offences, a new Zero Tolerance policy has been announced.



This policy aligns the Royal Navy, RAF, and Army under one approach to dealing with incidences, that will be implemented across the UK Armed Forces to enable services to better support victims and secure justice for them.

Key changes to existing policies include that those found guilty of sexual offences are to be administratively discharged from service with no option to serve elsewhere. The policy also stipulates that sexual relationships between instructors and trainees are unacceptable and will result in discharge of the instructor.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Leo Docherty said:

Sexual offences and sexual relationships between instructors and trainees have no place in Defence, or wider society, and a zero tolerance approach will ensure our commitment to providing a better working environment for our serving personnel is met.

We are sending a clear message that the women and men of the Armed Forces must uphold our values and standards.

As we set out in our response to the House of Commons Defence Committee's Report into "Women in the Armed Forces: From Recruitment to Civilian Life", it is a Defence-wide goal to stamp out sexual offences and ensure that the Armed Forces continues to be a place where people are proud to work and have faith in their justice system.

The Zero Tolerance policy is one of a range of measures intended to tackle

unacceptable sexual behaviour in the Armed Forces. It is intended to improve the career experiences of serving personnel, providing clearer, tri service direction to those in a position to prevent and address instances of sexual offence. We have already taken important steps to ensure that all reported offences are subject to prompt, thorough, efficient, and independent investigation. The policy also sends a clear signal to everyone in the Armed Forces that these offences will not be tolerated.

Where proven, personnel convicted of a sexual offence will be discharged from the Armed Forces.

The policy has been produced with input and consultation from a wide range of stakeholders across Defence and the Service Justice System and is just one on a number of new policies being introduced this year to stamp out unacceptable behaviours.

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[Oligarchs' aircraft and ships targeted through new legal powers](#)

- UK puts in place new legal powers to prevent Russian oligarch access to UK aviation and maritime technical services
- sanctions strengthened on oligarchs Eugene Shvidler and Oleg Tinkov
- sanctions imposed in relation to Crimea will be extended to non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions

The UK has today (Wednesday 30) made new legislation to prohibit maintenance on aircraft or ships belonging to specific sanctioned Russian oligarchs or their businesses.

Through these new powers, laid in parliament through a Statutory Instrument (SI), the UK can now prohibit sanctioned oligarchs from benefitting from the UK's world leading aviation and maritime industries and engineers.

The new laws have been used immediately to sanction Russian businessmen Eugene Shvidler and Oleg Tinkov.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

There is no doubt that Putin and his elite have been surprised by the strength of our sanctions.

We will continue to ramp up the pressure so long as Russian troops are in Ukraine, targeting not only the businesses of oligarchs but

also their assets and international lifestyles.

Tough sanctions will help Ukraine get the best possible peace settlement and ultimately ensure Putin's invasion fails. That is our focus.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

Today's legislation adds new routes at our disposal to deprive oligarchs' access to their luxury toys.

Our economic and transport sanctions are working to suffocate those most complicit in Putin's regime ensuring that no one on UK soil can support Putin's inhuman assault in Ukraine.

The new legislation has also extended the finance, trade and shipping sanctions imposed on Crimea to non-government controlled territory in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, on 24 February, the UK has sanctioned banks with £500 billion of global asset value and more than £150 billion of net worth from oligarchs and their family members.

The UK government will continue to utilise deeper and broader measures to cripple those who support Putin's regime and his callous war, working in lockstep with the G7 and our international allies.

Background

- asset freeze – An asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person and which are held in the UK. It will also prevent funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.
- travel ban – A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual to be an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.
- transport sanctions – Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.

Notes to editors

The UK and our international partners have imposed the largest and most severe package of sanctions ever on any major economy. The government has

designated over 1,200 individuals and entities close to Putin – including 76 oligarchs and 16 banks with a global net worth of £150 billion and £500 billion respectively.

The new Government Information Cell (GIC) identifies and counters Russian disinformation which enables the government to negate the Kremlin's attempts to target and undermine democratic societies via disinformation campaigns.

[Businesses urged to boost cyber standards as new data reveals nearly a third of firms suffering cyber attacks hit every week](#)

- New report today shows cyber attacks are becoming more frequent with organisations reporting more breaches over the last 12 months
- Data shows two in five businesses use a managed IT provider but only 13 per cent review the security risks posed by their immediate suppliers

Businesses and charities are being urged to strengthen their cyber security practices now as new figures show the frequency of cyber attacks is increasing.

Almost one in three businesses (31 per cent) and a quarter (26 per cent) of charities suffering attacks said they now experience breaches or attacks at least once a week.

Although the [Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2022](#) report from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) revealed the frequency of cyber attacks is rising, the number of businesses which experienced an attack or breach remained the same as 2021 levels. Almost a third of charities (30 per cent) and two in five businesses (39 per cent) reported cyber security breaches or attacks in the last 12 months.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has issued a [note](#) declaring it is not aware of any current specific cyber threats to UK organisations in relation to events around Ukraine, but is encouraging organisations to follow [simple steps in its guidance](#) to reduce the risk of falling victim to an attack.

Small businesses should adopt the [Cyber Essentials](#) scheme to protect against the most common cyber threats such as phishing attacks and use the [Small](#)

[Business Guide](#) to improve cyber security practices. Larger organisations should use the [Board Toolkit](#) to get company executives to act on cyber resilience and charities should follow the [Small Charity Guide](#) to boost cyber security operations.

Cyber Minister Julia Lopez said:

It is vital that every organisation take cyber security seriously as more and more business is done online and we live in a time of increasing cyber risk.

No matter how big or small your organisation is, you need to take steps to improve digital resilience now and follow the free government advice to help keep us all safe online.

Following a wave of high profile attacks over the past year including on Kaseya, Colonial Pipeline and Microsoft Exchange, there has been increased attention on the cyber security of supply chains and digital services.

Four out of five senior managers (82 per cent) in UK businesses now see cyber security as a 'very high' or 'fairly high' priority, up from 77 per cent in 2021. This is a significant increase and the highest figure seen in any year of the cyber security breaches survey.

The report also found four in ten businesses (40 per cent) and almost a third of charities (32 per cent) were using at least one managed service provider but only 13 per cent of businesses reviewed the risks posed by immediate suppliers.

The government is aiming to [strengthen critical businesses' cyber resilience](#) by updating the [Network and Information Systems \(NIS\) Regulations](#) which set out cyber security rules for essential services such as water, energy, transport, healthcare and digital infrastructure.

This will make sure the legislation remains effective and keeps pace with technology. It includes proposals to expand the NIS Regulations to include managed service providers which essential and digital services depend on to operate, to minimise the risk of attacks.

The government is committed to protecting the UK from cyber threats, which is at the centre of its £2.6 billion [National Cyber Strategy](#), by investing in cyber skills, expanding the country's offensive and defensive cyber capabilities, and prioritising cyber security in the workplace, boardrooms and digital supply chains.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Cyber Security Breaches Survey is an Official Statistic and has been produced to the standards set out in the Code of Practice for

Statistics.

- The Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2022 was carried out for DCMS by Ipsos MORI with the fieldwork conducted between October 2021 and January 2022.
- It is part of the government's National Cyber Strategy.

National Highways funding innovative new trial to treat carriageway spillages more quickly

When a major incident happens, essential police investigations involving detailed forensic work are often required.

While this forensic work takes place, access for National Highways teams to treat any spillages like oil and diesel is restricted.

Yet it can take just 90 minutes for fluids such as these to damage the road surface.

And if the surface cannot be treated in time, it means resurfacing work is required, adding to further congestion and delays for motorists caught up in the aftermath of the incident.

Now National Highways is joining forces with the Forensic Collision Investigation Network (FCIN) and Kier Highways for a special trial, involving significant research and development, and adopting ground-breaking innovation.

The trial, worth more than £270,000, is funded from the National Highways Innovations Designated Funds programme and incorporates techniques in a 'real-world' testing environment.

Forensic evidence such as tyre marks and debris – usually found on the road following a major incident – will be placed on the trial area, alongside diesel and oil samples, where specialists will test fluid-based treatments to see if they can absorb the spillages without destroying the evidence at the same location.

The products and their application will be put through their paces under strict testing conditions on the new 200-metre road surface at Santa Pod Raceway near Northampton.

National Highways On-Road Service Delivery Manager, Sian Norman said:

We're always looking to improve how we design, build, maintain and

operate our road network.

This trial is incredibly exciting because it means we can look in detail at how some of the products work in treating spillages and what impact it might have on any forensic evidence on the road.

During any incident, we work very closely with police colleagues to make sure the area is kept sterile for forensic investigation but we're always aware that we need to get the road back open as soon as it is safe to do so.

By investing in innovation, we can explore new technology and solutions to reduce disruption to road users and communities that live alongside our network.

We're really pleased to be working with the Forensic Collision Investigation Network and look forward to seeing how the trial progresses.

The estimated cost to the economy of a full carriageway closure during a busy period for around two hours is nearly £750,000.

If the road is fully closed for four hours, that increases to almost £3 million.

Following the trial, it is hoped that a new Standard Operating Procedure will be rolled out across England's police forces to ensure that the new approach is used consistently around the country.

Once in place, it will help to reduce closure times and costs incurred to motorists from congestion.

Head of the FCIN, Frances Senior said:

The Forensic Collision Investigation Network are delighted to work with National Highways on this innovative research.

All road users will have been impacted by post collision road closures at some point in time, but the police response to these incidents is often a painstaking and detailed process. Forensic examinations on our road network are unlike other forensic examination scenes, which can be processed slowly with more control over the elements and mitigating the impact on the public.

In partnership with National Highways and Kier Highways, we will jointly test our scientific methodology and approach, enabling us to obtain valuable data from which we can evaluate the impacts of spillage treatments on likely forensic evidence types.

I'd like to thank National Highways, Kier Highways and Santa Pod Raceway for enabling this trial to happen, our collective ambition

to preserve and maximise forensic evidence whilst reducing the impact of road closures on the network will be hugely beneficial for everyone involved in major incidents.

Carla Vicente, Kier Highways project manager, said:

We have worked closely with National Highways and FCIN to find a suitable location where we could create a mock collision site. We needed an area where we can replicate the strategic road network and safely trial sustainable products and new techniques that can treat spillages during an ongoing investigation.

This currently isn't common practice due to investigation sites needing to remain a sterile environment under a full closure. If the trial is successful and we can find a new product, application method and develop a way that allows the treatment of spillages to happen without compromising any evidence, the road can be opened quicker, reducing time, cost and disruption to customers.

Tarmac, one of the UK's leading sustainable building materials and construction solutions business, has resurfaced a stretch of the Santa Pod racetrack where cars often reach speeds of more than 300mph.

Richard Vine, Tarmac's regional director for contracting, said:

We are delighted to be supporting National Highways by using some typical highway surfaces, including Stone Mastic Asphalts (SMA) in one lane, a high-friction surface course in lane two and a third surface of hot-rolled asphalt and pre-coated chippings.

This will enable specialists to test many different scenarios. Anything that can be done to minimise the disruption of road closures caused by spillages is worthwhile.

National Highways Designated Funds programme is divided into four funding streams aimed at making the biggest difference and delivering lasting benefits; environment and wellbeing, users and community, safety and congestion and innovation and modernisation.

Other achievements include 124 biodiversity initiatives, 150 safety improvements on single carriageway roads to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured and over 6,500 lights and traffic signals converted to LED.

Find out more about [National Highways Designated Funds initiatives](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Extra protections for seafarers as government introduces new maritime laws

- new powers mandating ferries operating in and out of the UK pay national minimum wage to be brought forward
- 'minimum wage corridors' to be explored with like-minded countries to ensure workers are paid an agreed minimum wage
- Transport Secretary calls on Insolvency Service to disqualify P&O Ferries Chief Executive

The UK government has today (30 March 2022) announced a suite of new measures to protect seafarers, following P&O Ferries' decision to summarily sack 800 workers earlier this month.

The Transport Secretary confirmed he will bring forward new legislation to ban ferries that don't pay their workers the National Minimum Wage (NMW) from docking at British ports. It means all ferry staff working in and out of British ports, and when in UK waters, will earn the NMW, closing a legal loophole between UK and international maritime law that P&O Ferries ruthlessly exploited.

To ensure seafarers are protected straight away, the Transport Secretary has instructed ports to refuse entry to ferries not paying workers the NMW from today – immediately replicating the effect the new laws will have when introduced in the coming weeks. Also, HMRC will continue to target their enforcement activity, investigating any ferry operators that they suspect do not pay their workers minimum wage.

As a leading maritime institution, the government has called on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to hold an international summit to discuss workers' rights at sea and to revise the status quo on seafarers' basic pay rates around the world.

The Transport Secretary has also written to France, the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark to propose bilateral agreements that would ensure routes between the countries become 'minimum wage corridors' where nationals from either country must be paid an agreed minimum wage. This means that when travelling on the Short Strait, seafarers are always paid an agreed minimum wage.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We can boast some of the highest maritime standards in the world, but for too long some employers have managed to avoid showing workers the most basic respect.

Ensuring a fair wage for our seafarers means UK workers are not undercut by employers and it reiterates the UK flag as one of the most respected in the world.

P&O's behaviour has appalled the nation and I want to make it absolutely clear we will not tolerate their actions or allow anyone else to follow suit – and this package of measures will act as a strong deterrent.

Following the conduct of Peter Hebblethwaite, the Transport Secretary has asked the CEO of the Insolvency Service to consider whether the P&O Chief Executive should be disqualified as a director.

It comes as the Business Minister Paul Scully announced plans for a new statutory code on the practice of 'fire and rehire' to clamp down on controversial tactics used by employers.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

P&O's use of aggressive employment tactics has been completely unacceptable and we are clamping down on employers who flagrantly fall foul in protecting the rights of their workers.

By ensuring ferry staff working in and out of British ports are paid the National Minimum Wage, this new package will protect UK workers from being ruthlessly exploited by employers, while making sure they receive a fair day's pay.

Today's updates mean more than 21,000 seafarers across the UK will no longer be undercut and puts the UK ahead of any EU state in its protection on pay.

British seafarers are recognised as some of the most highly skilled worldwide and the UK's [Maritime 2050 strategy](#) sets out a plan for a fairer global maritime industry.

Ian Hampton, Executive Director, Stena Line, said:

Stena Line welcomes the package of changes proposed to address the present inequalities that exist for seafarers working on regular ferries services to and from the UK.

We have a long-held strategy of employing local seafarers onboard our vessels. Today's announcement protects that strategy and in addition creates the necessary consistency and equality needed across the sector.

Buoyed by the highest number of maritime training providers out of any country, the government is launching a new recruitment website for seafarers and maritime employers to connect, supporting the recovery and development of the transport industry. This will specifically target P&O Ferries workers made redundant, as well as the sector at large.

See the Transport Secretary's statement to Parliament on [P&O Ferries: new powers to protect maritime workers](#), 30 March 2022.