

News story: Defence Secretary confirms 30,000 defence jobs in South West

During the visit to Devon, Sir Michael revealed figures showing the significant contribution Defence makes to the region, with the Ministry of Defence spending billions of pounds with industry and supporting one in 70 roles or 30,000 local jobs.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Creating an economy that works for everyone means investing and supporting jobs across the UK. Backed by a rising defence budget, we spent more than £4 billion with industry in the South West last year to help keep Britain safe.

Our commitment to the future of defence in the south west is enduring, a region that is vital to the Royal Navy and for the many serving personnel that live and work there.

I welcomed the opportunity to review with Peter Heaton-Jones and others how we can work together to ensure that the future use of Chivenor in a decade's time helps create jobs and investment.

While at the base, the Defence Secretary met with personnel from 24 Commando who have recently been engaged in climatic training, including deploying to Belize on exercise and a winter deployment to Norway. He also awarded two Long Service and Good Conduct medals to 3 Commando's Lance Corporal Kenny McBain and Staff Sergeant Daniel Moseley, from the Army's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in recognition of their hard work and 15 years of exemplary service.

24 Commando Royal Marines will remain in the South West when they relocate from RM Chivenor by 2027 as part of the Better Defence Estate strategy. The MOD is engaging closely with local authorities and other interested parties on the future of the base.

This visit allowed for further discussion with community members to make sure the release of the site will bring the best possible opportunities like jobs, housing and economic benefits to the local area.

[News story: MOD signs £14 million contract for lifesaving medical technology](#)

The Tempus Pro monitors, designed and manufactured by Remote Diagnostic Technologies (RDT), can help facilitate emergency treatment for Royal Navy, British Army, and RAF personnel if they are injured or taken ill on active duty.

The lightweight, robust and portable monitor, which is battery operated, can be used on land, at sea and in the air. It transmits medical data such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate in real time back to medical facilities and treatment teams, giving them a better understanding of a patient's condition ahead of time.



A demonstration of the Tempus Pro medical monitor.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

Our Armed Forces serve with incredible commitment and bravery, and the new Tempus Pro monitor will ensure that they will receive the best possible care and treatment should they be wounded or taken ill on operations.

Backed by our rising defence budget and our £178 billion equipment plan, our investment in these cutting edge medical monitors demonstrates how we are working with our NATO allies to provide lifesaving equipment to our frontline personnel.

This deal, which will sustain over 60 UK jobs, has already seen 444 monitors delivered to the Armed Forces, with plans for around 900 more to be purchased over the next five years. The contract is part of the MOD's Innovation Initiative, aiming to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in pursuit of maintaining a military advantage in the future.

Ministry of Defence **de&s**

Tempus Pro:

Deal to deliver around 900 lifesaving medical monitors to Armed Forces

900 DE&S is purchasing around 900 Tempus Pro medical monitors

£14m £14 million contract with Remote Diagnostic Technologies

60 The contract will help sustain 60 UK jobs in Basingstoke

Can be used remotely across the UK Armed Forces on ships, vehicles, aircraft and deployed medical facilities.

Procured through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency and used by our key allies including US and Canada.

The monitor can transmit medical data such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate in real time back to a treatment facility.

Remote Diagnostic Technologies' Tempus Pro medical monitor.

Tempus Pro can be used remotely on medical evacuation vehicles and aircraft, battalion aid stations, hospital ships and field hospitals. It will help to provide consistent and streamlined medical support, meaning the records of all sick and injured Armed Forces personnel can easily move with them as they progress through different levels of care. The monitors are being purchased through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

Chief Executive Officer of the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support body, Tony Douglas, said:

This state of the art piece of equipment shows how we are delivering proven, world-leading equipment to our Armed Forces. The Tempus Pro monitor is a step forward in innovation and safety,

demonstrating how we are committed to improving the medical care received by those keeping our country safe.

This deal also highlights DE&S' strong, collaborative partnership with industry, benefitting both our Armed Forces and the wider UK economy by sustaining around 60 UK jobs.

[News story: Innovative fibreboard recycling firm attracts £250,000 investment](#)

A North Wales company has secured a £250,000 investment from a global waste management services group to commercialise its pioneering process for recycling medium-density fibreboard (MDF).

The backing from [SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK](#) will allow [MDF Recovery](#) to take its technology to market after 6 years of research and development.

Their collaboration follows an Innovate UK project where they worked together on a 'closed loop' recycling option for waste MDF. The 2 companies established a pilot plant to refine the process and host demonstrations for potential industrial end-users.

[Find out how Innovate UK supports the manufacturing and materials sector in the UK.](#)

By allowing manufacturers to take the waste MDF back from customers and recover the wood fibre, the technology offers an innovative alternative to landfill or incineration for used MDF products and off-cuts.

Attractive option for the retail sector

MDF Recovery's solution generates a new secondary material source for the wood/natural fibre industry. Co-founder Craig Bartlett estimates it could recycle between 30,000 to 60,000 tonnes of MDF waste in the UK each year, and almost 3 million tonnes globally.

[Learn more about how Innovate UK has helped businesses to be successful.](#)

Craig said:

The SUEZ investment provides a significant boost to MDF Recovery in our quest to commercialise the technology to make single-use MDF a thing of the past. The recovered fibre produced by the process is of the same high quality as fibre obtained from virgin wood and can be used as a direct substitute in the manufacturing process.

The technology can be retro-fitted or designed into new plants and offers a robust solution for reworking waste and increasing the yield at the MDF manufacturing facility.

The business is in discussions with potential customers and partners. The technology could be particularly attractive to the retail sector, which uses large amounts of MDF in shop fittings.

[Find out how to apply for funding.](#)

News story: Defence Secretary announces 1,500th signing of Armed Forces Covenant

Building materials supplier Travis Perkins were revealed as the 1,500th signatory during the third annual Partnering with Defence employer conference at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London today.

Speaking at the conference, Sir Michael said:

By signing the Covenant, Travis Perkins joins firms across Britain committed to ensuring those who serve or have served our country are better supported.

Reaching this milestone also shows growing recognition of the unique skills and experience that reservists and former service personnel offer their organisations.

Amongst their commitments, Travis Perkins has pledged to provide Armed Forces personnel and veterans with a variety of work experience placements in their centres, branches, and stores across the country and are supporting members of the Royal Engineers in gaining NVQ qualifications for their construction skills.

Travis Perkins currently employs nine reservists and other members of the Armed Forces community across the country.

Maria Walding, a Compliance Manager at Travis Perkins, who is an Army Cadet Force adult volunteer, said:

The Travis Perkins Group has fully supported and values my role as a Reservist. I am proud to say I work for a company that consistently gives military personnel the chance to use their existing skills and build a lasting career outside of the military.

Travis Perkins CEO John Carter said:

As a business, Travis Perkins has long recognised the valuable skills and attributes those with a serving background can contribute, not only to our own workforce but also to the wider economy.

We are delighted to not only be here to celebrate the Group's commitment and ongoing support of the Armed Forces in our signing of the Armed Forces Covenant, but incredibly proud and honoured to be recognised along with our community of ex forces and serving colleagues, as the 1500th organisation to do so.

Travis Perkins joins a growing number of businesses that are making tangible pledges to the Armed Forces community.

Earlier this week Defence Minister Mark Lancaster also announced that the UK's main broadband providers including Virgin Media, Sky, Talk Talk, BT, EE and Plusnet, representing 95 per cent of Britain's broadband market, had committed to waiving fees on contracts that personnel had to cancel when posted abroad or to another part of the UK, often at short notice.

Since 2013, the Covenant has helped to deliver these key improvements for the Armed Forces community:

- A new agreement with mortgage lenders allowing personnel posted abroad to rent out their homes without facing higher mortgage costs or having to change their mortgage;
- Fairer mobile phone contracts, freezing the accounts of Armed Forces personnel and their families posted overseas and removing cancellation fees;
- Better deals in motor insurance, allowing personnel to keep their no claims bonuses and avoid cancellation fees when posted overseas at short notice;
- Employer networks in a wide range of sectors to support Service leavers through their transition to new careers;
- Better access to banking, such as savings accounts to Service families posted overseas;

- Tackling commercial disadvantage previously experienced by the Armed Forces community in relation to credit rating and access to mortgages on offer. For example, if their Service overseas forces them into a situation where they will need to rent out their home, members are now free from the need to switch to a 'buy to let' mortgage;
- Better access to mentoring, work placements and employment opportunities for personnel leaving the Services;
- Increased funding and sponsorship of military charities and sports events such as the Invictus Games;
- Flexible paid or unpaid leave for mobilised Reservists;
- Employment support for Veterans, Reservists, Service spouses and partners, as well as support for Cadets;
- Discounts and special deals for individuals and their families.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation, enshrined in law, ensuring that those who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged by their service.

News story: British military chief welcomes largest number of female Afghan officer graduates

Updated: new pictures

Speaking today at a graduation ceremony for new Afghan officers at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) in Kabul, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Gordon Messenger welcomed the increasing female participation in the Afghan security forces.

This year's class has the largest number of female graduates to date, with 23 officer cadets graduating today.



Female officer cadets march at the graduation ceremony.

The ceremony took place the day after General Messenger, the MOD's Gender Champion, participated in International Women's Day events in Kabul, including meeting with British Council and Embassy staff who work closely with the Afghan Government and Civil Society to create a better future for women and girls, including increasing awareness of gender issues in Afghanistan's security institutions.



A British officer presents an Afghan cadet with their graduation award.

This work includes supporting efforts to make the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) a more attractive career choice for women, including improving accommodation arrangements for female ANAOA cadets. Training in the prevention of sexual violence in armed conflict is also provided to cadets as part of the Academy's programme.

Britain is also working to strengthen the role of women in the Afghan security forces through the training of future female leaders at ANAOA. The 23 graduates from the class of 2017 join the 57 female officers who have previously passed the intensive and sought after training. Today's ceremony also saw the Academy's total number of graduates going over 2000.



General Messenger attends the graduation ceremony at ANAOA.

With Afghans in the lead for providing security throughout the country and training their next generation of future leaders, Britain is helping to 'mentor the mentors' at the ANAOA, where over 30 British personnel provide advice and assistance to Afghan trainers.

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Gordon Messenger said:

Today's largest ever female graduate class demonstrates the progress the Afghan security forces are making in allowing women to help defend their country.

Britain's enduring commitment to Afghanistan means we're helping them in this task, as well as offering broader support to Afghanistan's security institutions.

UK assistance at ANAOA is an important part of NATO's non-combat Resolute Support Mission, which trains, advises and assists Afghan security forces, building their capacity to provide security for the country.

Britain recently increased the number of personnel in Afghanistan, with 500 people now providing advice to Afghan instructors, developing the fledgling Afghan Air Force, advising Afghan security institutions and providing security as part of the Kabul Security Force.

As part of the UK's long term commitment to Afghanistan, Britain has pledged

over £200million to support the ANDSF.

As Her Majesty The Queen today [unveiled](#) a Memorial in London recognising the contributions of the UK Armed Forces and all UK citizens who deployed in the Gulf region, Iraq and Afghanistan from 1990-2015, General Messenger on his visit laid a wreath at the Graves of the Fallen in Kabul.



General Messenger lays a wreath at the Graves of the Fallen in Kabul.