

UK embarks on new era of spaceflight with launch of ground-breaking regulatory council

News story

New Spaceflight Safety and Regulatory Council to give advice on regulations for UK space.



- inaugural meeting of the Spaceflight Safety and Regulatory Council
- committee convenes to ensure UK regulations support future UK space launches
- regulations passed this summer enable launches to take off from home soil as early as next year

The UK continues its leadership in the new era of spaceflight as Transport Minister Trudy Harrison announces today (25 November 2021) a ground-breaking partnership to shape the UK's world-leading regulations.

The newly formed Spaceflight Safety and Regulatory Council, comprised of government members, industry experts and the Space Flight Regulator, will carry out vital work over the coming year to ensure the UK maintains the most progressive spaceflight regulations across the globe.

The current regulations were passed this summer, providing the framework to regulate the UK space industry and enable launches to take off from home soil.

They unlocked a potential £4 billion of market opportunities over the next decade, creating thousands of jobs and benefitting communities across the UK.

The launch of this legislation put the UK in the position of being the first country in Europe to launch spacecraft and satellites from home.

Committee members, from organisations including Virgin Orbit and UK Space, gathered today to attend the inaugural council meeting, marking a blast-off

moment in the UK's efforts to develop a world-leading space sector.

Members will provide advice and recommendations to government, ensuring the UK has the right regulatory environment to support a future of UK space launches.

Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said:

This important step shows our commitment to developing the UK space sector as we aim to become a global spaceflight leader.

Getting the right experts round a table to ensure our regulations remain fit for purpose is absolutely vital and this council will help us do just that as we aim to launch our first space missions from next year.

The new council will be responsible for keeping the regulations under review and providing recommendations to government on any changes which may be required as the sector continues to develop at pace in the UK.

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Minister for Employment urges industry to help un-pause the careers of women in menopause

Menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce, and this Older Workers Week (22nd – 28th November), Minister for Employment Mims Davies is calling on employers to strengthen their support to keep millions in work.

With almost one in four women cutting their careers short because of the menopause, the Minister has today called on businesses to tap in to local support for low income older workers through specialist advice offered by a national network of advisors known as 50 PLUS Champions.

Spread across the country, this dedicated team is there to support employers to retain their workers over the age of 50, including women experiencing the menopause. While menopausal symptoms vary widely between women, research shows the average woman takes 32 weeks of leave in her career due to the menopause, and without the support of employers this limits progression and can lead to long-term unemployment.

Minister for Employment Mims Davies MP said:

We know through this report, we're losing too many talented and experienced women from our workforce far too early – and we know we can and must change it.

Our new and expanded DWP team of Older Worker Champions is there to help – I urge employers to make the most of their knowledge and local links to help us retain women's skills and expertise and support them through this transition.

This is a clear win for all. Employers and sectors with better support and clearer understanding are able to keep female talent and boost inclusivity. So women who have worked hard in their careers, don't feel concerned that they may need to curtail their careers early due to the impact of the menopause.

50 PLUS Champion for North Lincolnshire, Anne Brewster, said:

This is an issue that's often not given enough attention but can be devastating for people.

Work is good for our health, it is a pity to lose good staff without perhaps knowing the reason why or what can be done to keep them.

If an employer comes to me, I can help them retain these talented people and together we can face up to this challenge.

The call came as labour market figures released last week revealed that the amount of over 50s on payrolls had climbed by almost a quarter of a million compared to a year ago, but that the amount of women in work was still consistently behind men for every year after 50.

Earlier this year in July, the Minister for Employment commissioned an [independent report](#) from leading employer organisations on the issue of the menopause and the workplace which has been published today (Thursday 25 November 2021). The government will be responding to their recommendations in the coming months.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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[International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2021: UK statement at the OSCE](#)

Thank you Chair. Gender-based violence is one of the most systemic and widespread human rights violations of our time. One in 3 women worldwide will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination increase the risk. The intersection of gender bias and disability stigma and discrimination means that women and girls with disabilities are 2 to 4 times more likely to experience non-partner sexual violence than women without disabilities. Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequality. It threatens the lives and wellbeing of girls and women and prevents them from accessing opportunities that are fundamental to both freedom and development.

We know that violence against women and girls can be prevented. We've seen this in action through our 'What Works to Prevent Violence' initiative. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a UK-funded project with faith leaders and community action groups halved women's experience of intimate partner violence from 69% to 29%. UK-funded evidence helps to drive more concerted, coordinated and scaled-up global action across the international system to prevent gender-based violence. At the Generation Equality Forum in Paris this year, we launched the 'What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale' programme to systematically scale up proven approaches to prevent gender-based violence, taking an evidence-based and intersectional approach.

Earlier this month, the Foreign Secretary launched a [new campaign to end violence against women and girls and to tackle sexual violence in conflict around the world](#). We are exploring the possibility of a new global convention to condemn use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war as a 'red line' on a par with chemical weapons. And, next year, we will also host a major global summit on action to prevent sexual violence in conflict.

We know that crises and conflicts exacerbate gender-based violence. We've seen this during the current pandemic with the shocking increase in domestic and sexual violence. It's important to remember that climate change is also recognised as a serious aggravator of gender-based violence. Evidence shows that crises induced by climate change can exacerbate levels of domestic violence and other forms of violence. Gender responsive climate action is essential and it is vital that women and girls are front and centre in the policy making process.

At the OSCE, we've also seen some excellent examples of OSCE projects and activities that address gender-based violence. We need to continue and step up our efforts. We thank Sweden for making violence against women the theme

of ODIHR's Human Dimension Seminar last week. It was an important opportunity to share experiences and best practice with civil society, and of course our thanks to ODIHR, and to Poland too for hosting.

Gender-based violence is a global challenge, and we need a global response. The UK is committed to making this happen. Thank you Chair.

National Highways geared up to help delivery firms over Black Friday and Cyber Monday

Almost 98 per cent of England's major A-roads and motorway network will be free from roadworks between 8pm on Sunday 28 November through to 6am on Friday 3 December.

With many orders being processed after Black Friday, the removal of roadworks on major routes coincides with expected delivery dates to customers.

National Highways is also encouraging motorists heading out on the roads in search of a bargain to think about checking their vehicle before setting off.

National Highways Customer Services Director, Melanie Clarke said:

We know that many people will be purchasing goods on both Black Friday and Cyber Monday and that's why we're doing our bit to help.

We've worked hard to lift and complete as many roadworks as it's safe to do so to help make journeys as smooth as possible and that's why we're keeping around 98 per cent of the road network we manage free from roadworks.

And we're asking drivers to be prepared as well. We know from experience that almost half of breakdowns can easily be avoided if motorists carry out simple vehicle checks before their journeys.

So, before you set off, check traffic conditions, check your vehicle, and make sure you're aware of the signs and signals on motorways.

The removal of roadworks has been welcomed by the haulage sector. Mark O'Doherty, Director UK Linehaul, DHL Express UK said:

At this exceptionally busy time, we welcome the suspension of

almost 400 miles of roadworks to support us in keeping our network running efficiently, enabling swift delivery for our customers. This approach is something we would like to see more often going forward.

Natalie Chapman, Head of Policy – South at Logistics UK said:

For the logistics sector, the run up to Christmas is always our busiest trading period. After such a challenging year, the removal of roadworks, and the delays they can cause – which can slow the passage of vehicles and the goods they are transporting to their destination – is much appreciated, and will provide much needed reassurance for our sector.

Things to consider include:

- Check fuel: Make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- Check tyres: check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- Check engine oil: Use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- Check water: To ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- Check your lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

National Highways has advice about traffic conditions on its [website](#), twitter feeds, and information line (0300 123 5000).

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.

Scottish Troops to pioneer Army's new Ranger Regiment

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has announced today that The First Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland will lead the British Army's new Ranger Regiment.

This boost for Scotland comes under new plans announced as part of 'Future Soldier', the Army's most radical transformation in over 20 years.

1 SCOTS will become 1st Battalion, The Ranger Regiment and will operate alongside three other battalions.

The Ranger Regiment sits at the heart of the Army's new expeditionary posture and will be routinely deployed alongside partner forces around the world to counter extremist organisations and hostile state threats. It is part of the newly established Army Special Operations Brigade. Training and selection will commence from the 1st December 2021.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Future Soldier is reinforced by the ambition outlined in the Defence Command Paper to transform the Army into a more agile, integrated, lethal, expeditionary force.

We have underpinned this generational work with an extra £8.6bn for Army equipment, bringing the total investment to £41.3 billion.

Our army will operate across the globe, equipped with the capabilities to face down a myriad of threats from cyber warfare through to battlefield conflict.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

Britain's fantastic Armed Forces have a long and distinguished history in Scotland and the Army's most significant modernisation in a generation ensures that this will continue as we tackle the threats of the 21st century as one United Kingdom.

Basing more battalions and a greater proportion of the Army here, along with retaining Glencorse Barracks and growth coming to Kinloss and Leuchars – thanks to £355 million investment – demonstrates powerfully how important defence is to Scotland and Scotland is to the defence of the UK and our allies.

We are incredibly fortunate in the UK in having such committed, skilled and willing military personnel and I'm grateful for all

their efforts to keep us safe. I'm also proud that Scottish capabilities – in defence, space, cyber and maritime industries – will continue to contribute immensely to the UK's security.

This shift to a globally engaged posture will mean more personnel are deployed for more of the time, with a new network of Land Regional Hubs based on existing training locations in places such as Oman and Kenya.

The Ranger Regiment's cap badge will take its inspiration from the Peregrine Falcon and everyone will wear a metal badge, irrespective of rank.

Major General Bill Wright, Scotland's Senior General Officer said:

Scotland will gain a major unit and Future Soldier will also see a higher proportion of the British Army based in Scotland. This provides an opportunity for more Scottish soldiers to be based nearer home, whilst delivering a broader range of exciting roles.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland will continue to be based in Scotland with 2 SCOTS staying in Edinburgh and 3 SCOTS staying in Inverness until 2029 before moving to Leuchars – forming an integral part of a new Security Force Assistance Brigade. The Scots Dragoon Guards will remain as a Light Cavalry Regiment based out of Leuchars.

Glencorse Barracks has been saved from closure, and an additional sub-unit will be based at Kinloss. Redford Barracks closure has been delayed by four years to 2029, with plans to close Fort George, Inverness continuing as planned.

Future Soldier will see £355 million of investment in the Army estate in Scotland, delivering over £1 billion of prosperity benefit.

The Army's footprint in Scotland will be reinforced by a significant proportion of the £3.35 billion from the Defence Estate Optimisation budget and £1.2 billion of Army investment in remaining sites.

Reserve Forces across the UK will be given increased responsibility. This includes the 6th and 7th Battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry who, in 2023, will form part of the new 19th Brigade, responsible for generating forces for home-based resilience tasks, especially in times of crises.

The Scottish Gunners, (19 Regiment, Royal Artillery) will form a critical part of a new Deep Recce Strike Brigade Combat Team. Based on Salisbury Plain, the Brigade Combat Team will provide the British Army with an extremely long-range surveillance capability and precision fires.

Launched as part of the Government's Integrated Review in March 2021, Future Soldier outlines how the Army will be organised and structured in the future, and how it will deal with emerging threats across the world. The latest

announcement follows ongoing work by the Army to implement the changes across the Army.

The complete guide to Future Soldier is available online at <https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/events/future-soldier/>