

# Government's Covid-19 charity support fund delivers hope to 6.5 million people across country

- New Minister for Civil Society Nigel Huddleston praises results of 'truly outstanding' impact report, which highlights that 6.5 million people have been helped by Government's £200 million Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF)
- Data shows CCSF helped local organisations survive and communities to thrive amid Covid-19 challenges

The new Minister for Civil Society Nigel Huddleston has hailed small charities as 'the backbone of our communities', as an [impact report](#) published today reveals that 8,200 organisations have supported an estimated 6.5 million people during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to £200 million in bespoke Government funding, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF).

The report, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and The (NLCF), highlights how the Coronavirus Community Support Fund has benefited communities in every region of the country, from Cornwall and Hertfordshire to County Durham and Merseyside. It has helped charities and social enterprises to carry out critical work and continue protecting the most vulnerable members of society in the wake of the pandemic.

This included children and young people (supported by 39% of grantholders), people with mental health conditions (40%) and older people (32%).

Today's results have shown that without the £200 million fund almost one fifth of the recipients would have been forced to close their doors, while over half revealed that they would have delivered significantly fewer services if it had not been for assistance from the CCSF.

Over 6,200 employees of these organisations were brought back or prevented from being furloughed, and over 4,200 new staff members were recruited, the report estimates. This is in addition to grantholders mobilising 136,000 existing volunteers and over 47,000 new volunteers that they had not worked with previously.

Minister for Civil Society Nigel Huddleston said:

I'm immensely grateful for the volunteers and charity staff who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. They have been truly heroic, and the backbone of our communities. Today's results demonstrate the significant role the Coronavirus Community Support Fund has played in towns and cities across the country. As part of our wider £750 million of direct support for charities during the pandemic, this government funding meant organisations could

continue their vital work helping more than six million people in need.

The CCSF has also played a major role in the Government's commitment to:

- Tackling loneliness: the data shows 63% of grantholders consciously promoted ways of building social connections during the pandemic, with 79% reporting that beneficiaries felt less lonely, and 70% reporting beneficiaries had more access to social contact. The Government is committed to tackling loneliness as part of its ongoing 'Lets Talk Loneliness' campaign, and has provided £34 million to organisations supporting people who experience loneliness.
- Supporting young people: for example, HQ Can supported 27 young people experiencing unemployment and mental ill health through mentoring, creative workshops and access to professional recording environments, resulting in ten receiving paid work experience opportunities.
- Promoting the benefits of volunteering: for example, One King Ministries in Havering provided activities and services for the elderly to support their wellbeing, reduce loneliness and help them with daily challenges. For some of the team, volunteering supported them through difficult personal circumstances such as bereavement, depression and suicidal thoughts.

The report also underlines the positive impacts felt by the army of volunteers who were mobilised during the pandemic. 84% of people who volunteered through the CCSF felt like they were making a difference, and 66% people felt it gave them a sense of purpose.

Blondel Cluff CBE, Chair of The National Lottery Community Fund, said:

This report provides rich insight into the impact made by £200 million of crisis funding remitted between June and November last year. With 6.5 million people receiving support from Coronavirus Community Support Fund grantholders, and more than 183,000 volunteers making their valuable contribution to Coronavirus Community Support Fund projects, these findings from this report help us appreciate the sheer scale of the response to the pandemic and the vital role played by communities in the health and well being of the country. We were proud to work alongside Government to distribute this funding and will use this evaluation to continue supporting communities as they repair and rebuild following the pandemic.

The Coronavirus Community Support Fund formed part of the Government's unprecedented £750 million package of support for the sector during the pandemic, which has benefited over 14,000 charities.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Ipsos MORI conducted an online survey with 6,712 CCSF grantholders and 9,466 volunteers between November 2020 and April 2021. An additional 266 depth interviews with CCSF grantholders were conducted, alongside 33 case studies.
- Numeric data presented in this release are extrapolated and should be considered as estimates. Full details, including an overview of the evaluation methodology and any limitations, are available in the [report](#).

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## [Rajasthan woman spends day as British envoy](#)

World news story

Twenty-year-old Aditi Maheshwari from Rajasthan has spent a full day leading the British High Commission in New Delhi after winning a competition.



Aditi, who aspires to join the Indian Administrative Service, is the fifth winner of the India edition of the 'High Commissioner for a Day' competition, organised annually since 2017 to celebrate the International Day of the Girl Child (October 11).

As the UK's top diplomat in India, Aditi experienced a broad variety of diplomatic activity. She observed the India-UK Energy for Growth Dialogue alongside Ministers Raj Kumar Singh and Kwasi Kwarteng. She met with beneficiaries of a leadership programme for aspiring female politicians funded by the Chevening Alumni Programme Fund; climate experts from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), who signed the UK in India Pledge for Progress, to show their leadership in gender equality; and young leaders from the not-for-profit Global Youth. Aditi's packed day also included a hands-on demonstration of the I-PACE – Jaguar's zero emissions, all-electric performance SUV to be used by world leaders at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow next month.

**Aditi Maheshwari, High Commissioner for the Day, said:**

I had applied for the competition last year as well and I'm really pleased that I got the opportunity. The interaction with senior diplomats and with women from 'She Leads' leadership programme were the two personal highlights of the day for me. I also enjoyed being driven around in an electric vehicle by the High Commissioner. The amount of work that both the UK and India are doing to tackle issues like climate change and gender inequality made me really hopeful as a young woman. I will cherish this day for a long time to come.

**Alex Ellis, Deputy High Commissioner for the Day (on other days, High Commissioner to India), said:**

It was a pleasure for me to work with Aditi throughout the day. Her confidence and thoughtfulness on important issues like climate change and women's rights shone through. The UK is working with India to provide a platform for young women like Aditi to help them reach their potential. I am pleased that so many young girls sent in their entries for this year's competition which focussed on climate change. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change and are often left out of decision making on it. The UK is committed to hosting an inclusive COP26 that advances gender equality by calling on all countries to implement the Gender Action Plan agreed at COP25.

"I wish Aditi the very best for the future and hope that she enjoyed this experience as much as I did."

**Further information**

- Aditi Maheshwari was High Commissioner for a Day on Friday, 8 October. Applicants for this year's competition were invited to submit a 1-minute video answering the question: 'How can young people best support tackling the global challenge of climate change?' Aditi's winning entry can be found here.
- About the winner: Aditi Maheshwari hails from Chittorgarh, Rajasthan and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Physical Science from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She is an avid reader, particularly non-fiction and current affairs from around the world.
- UK and India gender equality work: The UK and India are working together to help ensure women and girls can reach their full potential. In India, the UK is working with state governments, law enforcement agencies,

education authorities and British businesses to promote gender equality. Examples of ongoing collaborative programmes include:

- Establishing a Gender Resource Centre in Bhopal, in collaboration with Madhya Pradesh Police and sharing UK expertise to help sensitise law enforcement personnel on gender issues.
- The 'Pledge for Progress' campaign launched in November last year. As part of this joint commitment, over 100 business and civil society partners committed to promote gender equality and together take practical steps to tackle gender challenges, and have since come together for six events to exchange UK-India expertise on gender equality.
- Financial inclusion programmes focusing on financial and digital literacy, which have given 12 million Indian women access to credit to build livelihoods. Projects have helped set up or scale 10,000 women-owned micro businesses, created 6,000 jobs, and supported over 270 micro-entrepreneurs.
- The UK is also helping empower Indian women as leaders and trail-blazers through the fully-funded Chevening scholarship and fellowships scheme: 60% of mid-career professionals selected for Chevening fellowships from India this year are women.

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Published 11 October 2021

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**[West Midlands on track to create an](#)**

## extra 52,000 digital tech jobs and grow by £2.7 billion

- Area predicted to create extra 52,000 tech roles by 2025
- Region could add £2.7 billion to the economy by 2025

The West Midlands has been named the country's fastest-growing tech sector and the region's thriving digital industries are expected to create thousands of new jobs by the end of 2025.

According to a new government report released ahead of [Birmingham Tech Week](#), the region has been recognised as a top performer for digital growth and is predicted to create an additional 52,000 roles in the sector over the next four years – a bumper increase of 55 per cent since 2019.

Tech growth in the region grew by an average of 7.6 per cent a year between 2014 and 2019, the fastest region in the UK. Going forward it is expected to generate at least £2.7 billion for the local economy by 2025.

It comes as new figures compiled by job search engine Adzuna and investment analysts Dealroom for the UK's Digital Economy Council and Tech Nation show tech companies in the West Midlands are on track to raise more venture capital investment in 2021 than they did a year earlier, and tech job vacancies advertised in the region have almost doubled since December 2020.

Tech companies in the West Midlands have raised £454 million in venture capital funding already this year, compared to £358 million last year, while tech vacancies have increased from 5,099 in December 2020 to 9,287 in October 2021.

Digital Minister Chris Philp said:

As Birmingham Tech Week kicks off it's great to see the digital sector in the West Midlands entering a golden era.

There are high-quality and well-paid job opportunities for those who want to pursue a career in tech and the region is fast-becoming a powerhouse of digital talent.

We are determined to level up the country and we are working around the clock to back digital businesses with pro-innovation policies to boost digital skills and create jobs so everyone can benefit from this dynamic sector.

The growth figures, published as part of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Assessing the UK's regional digital ecosystems report, highlight the region's flourishing digital sector as Birmingham's annual celebration of digital, technology and innovation kicks off.

The DCMS report looks at regional growth in the digital economy and will be used to support the government's work on levelling up so it can work with the sector to capitalise on untapped areas of potential and create more wealth and jobs.

To make sure people in the region have the skills to match local employment needs, the government is supporting the West Midlands Local Digital Skills Partnership to bring the public, private and third sectors together to boost people's digital skills and make sure people from all backgrounds have access to training.

The work is paying off with a new report last month showing there is increased awareness of digital opportunities among young people, there are more digital skills and career opportunities available and there has been a boost in business confidence.

Alongside local and national investments in digital skills, including the Digital Entitlement so adults who need them can undertake new digital qualifications free of charge, the Kickstart scheme for young people, and the confirmation last week of more government-funded scholarships in AI and data science, the rollout of gigabit broadband will provide Britain's tech innovators with the bandwidth to process ever-increasing amounts of data and utilise new advances in internet-connected technologies.

As more people work remotely, it will also give tech entrepreneurs the reliable connectivity they need to start and run businesses from anywhere in the UK, even in remote areas.

Thanks to the government's bold measures to encourage investment and bust barriers, gigabit coverage in the West Midlands has exploded from less than three per cent in 2019 to 63 per cent today.

The West Midlands was recently named as one of the areas set to benefit from the government's £5 billion Project Gigabit – the biggest broadband rollout in British history.

Around 194,000 hard-to-reach homes and businesses across Shropshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire will be given access to gigabit broadband, thanks to a government investment of between £183 and £311 million, with procurement set to start in November 2022.

The region also benefits from having the highest proportion of households with internet access at 97 per cent.

Dr George Windsor, Head of Data and Insights at Tech Nation, said:

With 1 in 8 job opportunities now in the digital sector, it's clear that strong employer demand is prompting astonishing growth in tech roles across regions and UK nations.

Following the launch of the government's UK Innovation Strategy this summer, the rapid growth of the West Midlands' tech sector is

testament to the quality of digital talent, innovation policies and opportunity in this thriving region of the UK.

We at Tech Nation have been delighted to welcome tech scaleups from the West Midlands into our Applied AI, Libra, Upscale and Fintech cohorts over the past month – such as Birmingham-based 3D printed vitamin healthtech Nourished and AI driverless vehicle company Conigital – as they work across industries to shape the UK – and the world – for the better.

Kim Leary, Birmingham Tech Week Chair, said:

The tech sector in our region is booming. We have a huge number of successful start-up and scaling businesses and a growing ecosystem powering FinTech to EdTech.

Everyone has been working hard to shine a spotlight on the West Midlands so there's a real sense of celebration and collaboration across the City. For me, this is particularly exciting to see and I'm proud that Birmingham Tech Week is able to play a vital role in this.

## **An explosion in tech jobs**

As the UK starts to recover from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the digital economy in the West Midlands is enjoying a growth spurt. Analysis by Tech Nation shows Birmingham is the second top ranked city for cost of living versus salary for tech roles, with these roles making up 22% of all job openings in 2020 – growth of 17% from 2018.

## **A burgeoning startup scene**

The West Midlands has been successful in attracting large digital sector employers, particularly in Birmingham. The region is also home to 1,308 startups, which are transforming industries such as Ed-tech, digitisation and manufacturing, according to Tech Nation's Data Commons.

## **A top-five tech city**

Birmingham has an average advertised salary of £51,774 for digital tech roles according to Adzuna. The highest paying jobs in the city include data architect, average advertised salary of £76,052; technical architect, average advertised salary of £74,043, and python developer, average advertised salary of £63,480.

## **ENDS**

About DEC: The [Digital Economy Council](#) is a non-statutory advisory committee of independent members set up to provide advice to the government. Its purpose is to harness the expertise of industry and the wider tech community



to develop a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.

About Tech Nation: [Tech Nation](#) is the growth platform for tech companies and leaders. Tech Nation has years of experience facilitating and helping UK tech companies scale. Over 20 cohorts and 600 companies have successfully graduated from Tech Nation's growth programmes. Alumni include Skyscanner, Darktrace, and Monzo.

About Adzuna: [Adzuna](#) is a job search engine. It was founded in 2011 by Andrew Hunter and Doug Monro, formerly of eBay, Gumtree, Qype and Zoopla and is backed by leading Venture Capital firms Passion Capital, LocalGlobe, Index Ventures and Smedvig Capital.

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## Blood donation to be made more inclusive

- A question on sexual activity of partners in areas where HIV is widespread, including Sub-Saharan Africa, will be removed from the donor safety check form
- Change is based on recommendation following the latest scientific evidence
- Changes will have no impact on the safety of blood donated in the UK and will allow more people to make life saving donations

People who want to donate blood, particularly Black African donors, will be able to do so more easily from the end of 2021.

The government has today outlined plans to remove the question on sexual activity in Sub-Saharan Africa asked in the donor safety check.

Currently, prospective donors are asked if they have recently had sex with a partner who may ever have been sexually active in an area where HIV is endemic, which includes most of sub-Saharan Africa. If they have, the donor will be deferred for three months after the last sexual contact with that partner.

This can mean Black African donors and other potential donors in long-term relationships have been unable to donate blood.

People who are Black African, Black Caribbean and of Black mixed ethnicity are more likely to have the rare blood sub-group, such as Ro, that many Black

sickle cell patients need. This change will provide more opportunities for people to donate for the ongoing need for rarer blood types and help improve and save lives in the UK. Removing the question will help to improve inclusivity and equity for Black African, and other, donors.

The safety of those donating and those receiving blood and blood products remains the government's highest priority.

Removing this question from the donor safety questionnaire will not compromise the safety of blood supply in the UK. This step has been taken following research conducted by the FAIR (For Assessment of Individualised Risk) steering group and supported by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO), who both agreed that the question can safely be removed.

Other questions remain on the donor form to ensure individual, high risk behaviours, including recent travel to countries where HIV is endemic, are picked up and those donors are deferred from donation.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

This is another progressive step forward, focusing on individual behaviours, rather than blanket deferrals, and reducing limitations for people to donate blood.

This will make it easier for black donors in particular to donate blood, ultimately saving lives.

We are creating a fairer system for blood donation. And as we recover from this pandemic, we are committed to levelling up society, which includes improving access to services for everyone.

The change follows recommendations from the FAIR steering group, a collaboration of experts in the UK blood services and LGBT+ charities led by NHSBT established in 2019. The steering group looked at the implications of the question and concluded it could safely be removed.

In the UK, all donations are tested for a multitude of possible infections, including HIV, and there are robust monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure safety of donors and recipients. It is estimated that the risk of an HIV infectious donation not being detected corresponds to one in 23 million.

The new changes will be reviewed twelve months following implementation by the FAIR steering group and SaBTO.

Minister for Patient Safety, Maria Caulfield, said:

By constantly examining the latest evidence relating to blood donation, we are able to bring forward more inclusive policies to allow more people to donate blood easily, and safely.

I'm grateful to the members of the fair steering group, and SaBTO for their continuous work to improve blood donation policies.

Blood donation guidelines are set by DHSC and based on recommendations from SaBTO, which advises Health Ministers in all four UK nations, the UK blood services, and the NHS more widely on the most appropriate ways to ensure the safety of blood, cells, tissues and organs for transfusion or transplantation.

In June, further progress towards greater equality was made through a landmark change to blood donation by lifting a blanket deferral for men who have had sex with men in the last three months.

These changes will have no impact on the safety of blood in the UK as donation will focus on individual behaviour so only those who are at low risk will be able to give blood.

The Chair of SaBTO Professor James Neuberger said:

As SaBTO Chair, I welcome the announcement made by ministers to remove the question from the blood donor safety check that asks donors whether they have recently had sex with a partner who may ever have had sex in an area where HIV is endemic.

SaBTO members reviewed the findings from the FAIR steering group and unanimously agreed that removal of the question would not negatively impact on the safety of blood supply. This is a positive step towards equality, informed by evidence, helping to create a fairer system for blood donors without affecting the safety of the blood supply.

Su Brailsford, Associate Medical Director at NHS Blood and Transplant and Chair of FAIR said:

We are proud to have one of the safest blood supplies in the world and I'm pleased that the latest evidence-based advice on donor eligibility has been accepted in full, creating an even more equitable, better experience for all donors.

Coming into effect by the end of 2021, we hope this change will also remove the unease long-felt by some donors about this – in particular the Black African community whose needs we are working hard to listen to and better address, those of African heritage, and their partners, who are all disproportionately affected.

All blood, plasma and platelet donors are now routinely encouraged to consider past infection and current sexual behaviour before coming to donate and if now is the right time to make an appointment. Please check our website for the latest guidance on

eligibility before you attend to avoid disappointment.

Chamut Kifetew, Health Equalities Lead at Terrence Higgins Trust, said:

We're glad this decision has been made that will enable more people, particularly those of African heritage, to safely donate much needed blood products in England. It is based on the latest evidence to preserve the safety of the blood supply, helps maximise the number of potential donors and brings England in line with Scotland and Wales.

The removal of the question is particularly important as it eliminates one of the barriers which has until now played a role in preventing the recruitment of more donors from Black communities. Now we need to see the work done to address wider health inequalities faced by Black people in the UK.

Deborah Gold, Chief Executive of National AIDS Trust, said:

We are delighted that the Secretary of State has confirmed this outdated, unnecessary and actively discriminatory question will be removed from blood donor screening forms. The science is clear that this is unnecessary and does nothing to improve safety. Instead, it actively prevents much needed donors coming forward to give blood, particularly from black communities. The change is long overdue, and we warmly welcome today's announcement.

Eamonn Ferguson, Professor of Health Psychology, at University of Nottingham said:

I am very proud to have contributed to the ongoing work of the FAIR committee to support this widely welcomed, inclusive and safe recommended change in donor selection.

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## [UK Carrier Strike Group's return to Singapore off to flying start with Air Force and Navy interactions](#)

Launching from the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, F-35B Lightning jets

took to the skies with the Republic of Singapore Air Force's (RSAF) F-16 fighters yesterday (9 October).

Exercising together in the international waters of the southern reaches of the South China Sea, the jets conducted simulated air combat training and formation flying. Meanwhile, ships from the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and the Republic of Singapore Navy conducted a manoeuvring exercise in the international waters in the South China Sea.

These activities kicked off the Strike Group's engagements with Singapore, which will be led by flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth visiting the city-state tomorrow (11 October), as a demonstration of the deep and longstanding UK-Singapore relationship.

UK's Minister for Asia, Amanda Milling and Royal Air Force (RAF) Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, are also in Singapore tomorrow, and will meet with senior military officials from Singapore onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Amongst her engagements in Singapore, Minister Milling will also lead the UK's contribution to a think-tank roundtable, covering themes of ASEAN, regional security and prosperity, and the UK's role in the Indo-Pacific.

Whilst onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Air Chief Marshal Wigston will receive an operational update from 617 Squadron detailing how the F-35 Lightning has been integrated and operated throughout the deployment.

(from top) RSS Vigour and RSS Formidable from the Republic of Singapore Navy and the UK Carrier Strike Group's HMS Queen Elizabeth exercising together on 9 October 2021. [Photo: Royal Navy]

The Carrier Strike Group, which set off on its maiden operational deployment in May (2021), has sailed the Atlantic Ocean, through the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific – participating in a range of activities with partners and allies enroute.

The deployment highlights the UK's commitment to defending democratic values, enhancing defence and security cooperation and promoting free trade around the world – key themes in the UK Government's Integrated Review, published earlier this year.

While in Singapore, the crew onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth will host Singapore officials and industry leaders from a range of sectors – including defence and security, trade and business, and science and research – supporting the development of closer UK-Singapore cooperation and the UK's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region.

To mark International Day of the Girl tomorrow (11 Oct), female engineers on HMS Queen Elizabeth have also participated in a 'virtual Q&A' with girls from Singapore, answering their questions about careers in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sector.

All activities involving HMS Queen Elizabeth will be conducted in full compliance with the Singapore government's Covid-19 measures, including testing, mask use and safe distancing. All CSG personnel will remain on the ship throughout the duration of the visit.

Singapore is one of over 40 countries which the Carrier Strike Group will visit or exercise with during its global deployment.

In July (2021), the Strike Group navigated through the Singapore Strait, with a number of ships conducting an exercise with the Republic of Singapore Navy in international waters in the southern reaches of the South China Sea. At the same time, replenishment ship RFA Tidespring also made a contactless pit stop to Singapore to embark supplies for the Group's movement further east.

Commodore Steve Moorhouse, Commander United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group, said:

The Carrier Strike Group's deployment has been designed to recognise the importance of the region globally. The Group's presence also demonstrates our support for the freedom of navigation passage through vital trading routes and our commitment to an international system of norms that benefits all countries.

So thank you Singapore for your support to the Carrier Strike Group's deployment, for contributing to air exercises alongside our jets and supporting HMS Queen Elizabeth's pit stop at Changi. We are proud to play our part in continuing to grow and deepen the Singapore-UK relationship.

Her Excellency Kara Owen, British High Commissioner to Singapore, said:

2021 is a pivotal year for our engagement with the region, with the UK becoming ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner since 1996, and launching negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Singapore has been a longstanding partner and supporter of the UK's engagement in this region, and HMS Queen Elizabeth's visit testifies to our close and enduring bilateral relationship. During her time here, she will support our ongoing efforts to further grow the SG-UK Partnership for the Future, in areas from defence and security, to trade and prosperity, and science and research.

## **Notes to editors:**

Free-to-use photos of the Carrier Strike Group (CSG21), are available to download [here](#).

As part of its maiden operational deployment, the CSG21 will sail over 26,000

nautical miles, engaging with 40 countries from the Mediterranean to the Indo-Pacific and back again.

The fifth generation HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier, at 65,000 tonnes, is the largest surface vessel ever constructed in the UK. She leads six Royal Navy ships, a Royal Navy submarine, a US Navy destroyer and a frigate from the Netherlands in the largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation. It is equipped with the fifth generation F-35B Lightning multi-role aircrafts. They are being jointly crewed by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and the US Marine Corps.

From defending democratic values and tackling shared threats, to seizing new trade opportunities through engagements with Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Japan, India and others, the deployment marks a step-change in UK engagement in the region.

The UK is already investing significantly in the region having been conferred ASEAN Dialogue Partner status, commencing negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and rapidly progressing trade talks with Australia, New Zealand and India.

The UK's commitment to these enduring defence and security responsibilities in the Indo-Pacific will be enhanced this Autumn by the deployment of two of the newest and greenest Royal Navy warships, as HMS Tamar and HMS Spey set sail from the UK for their permanent assignment in the Indo-Pacific.

## **About the British High Commission, Singapore**

The British High Commission in Singapore works to develop and sustain the important and longstanding relationship between the UK and Singapore. We do this to build our prosperity, to safeguard our national security, to champion British values and to support British nationals overseas. For more information, including on events and travel advice, please see our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

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