

# Government expands opportunities in Darlington to help level up

- Recruitment drive in the north east accelerated as more jobs go live at the Darlington Economic Campus
- Opportunities will be promoted at Darlington College career fair, as the Government launches 'Closer to Home' recruitment campaign
- Latest recruitment drives follow the Chancellor's first working day at the Darlington Economic Campus on Friday

The Government will this week step up a recruitment drive for roles at the new economic campus in Darlington – as it continues to take action to level up the UK.

A number of new Treasury roles based at the new campus will go live as part of a drive to diversify the way the Government makes policy, broaden access to skills and talent and widen opportunities.

As part of the recruitment drive, a Career Fair will be held at Darlington College on Thursday with senior civil servants from the Treasury, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade providing a flavour of what it is like to work in government.

A Government advertising campaign will also begin targeting Wales, Yorkshire and The Humber as well as the North East, with adverts online, in local newspapers as well as outdoors, in places such as gyms, bus shelters and shopping centres.

The 'Closer to Home campaign' promotes Civil Service roles moving out of London and closer to communities that will put local people at the heart of Government decision-making, with vacancies available in numerous departments alongside the Treasury including Cabinet Office, Department for International Trade and others.

## **The Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:**

It is fantastic to see more job opportunities opening up this week at our brand-new Darlington Economic Campus.

We are giving talented people in the North East the opportunity to work in the heart of government, making decisions on the most important issues for our country.

These are exciting times to be part of the Civil Service. I

encourage as many people as possible – from Darlington and the wider region – to go along to the recruitment fair and find out more about joining our growing team.

**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Steve Barclay, said:**

There is a fantastic and diverse array of talent and skills throughout the UK and it's important that we get the word out about the opportunities that we're bringing to local areas.

Through moving roles out of London we are bringing the Civil Service closer to the communities it serves – meaning people across all corners of the country will be at the forefront of decision-making.

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak spent the day working at the Darlington Economic Campus on Friday (1 October) where he had lunch with some of the Darlington-based staff and unveiled the new Campus branding.

Announced at the March Budget, between 200-300 Treasury roles will be based at the campus. These will be filled by a mixture of people recruited directly to the campus and some existing staff who relocate.

**Further information:**

- Find more information about the Career Fair in Darlington, online](<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/darlington-economic-campus-career-fair-tickets-172847550677?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>).
- Pictures from the event will be available on the Treasury's Flickr account.
- The Darlington Economic Campus supports the wider Places for Growth programme which aims to move 22,000 civil service positions out of London and the South East by 2030.
- It will also include teams from the Department for International Trade, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Office for National Statistics, and the Department for Education.

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## **[Inquiry launched into issues raised by Couzens conviction](#)**

Home Secretary Priti Patel has launched an inquiry to investigate the issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens.

The Home Secretary shares the public's concern at the appalling circumstances of the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard, and that the abuse of power by a serving Metropolitan Police officer risks undermining public confidence in the police. She is determined to do everything in her power to deliver improvements within policing and across the criminal justice system.

The inquiry will be made up of 2 parts. The first part will examine Wayne Couzens' previous behaviour and will establish a definitive account of his conduct leading up to his conviction, as well as any opportunities missed, drawing on the Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) investigations, once concluded.

The second part will look at any specific issues raised by the first part of the inquiry, which could include wider issues across policing – including vetting practices, professional standards and discipline, and workplace behaviour.

Additionally, the Home Secretary will write to the independent police inspectorate HMICFRS to commission a thematic inspection of vetting and counter-corruption procedures in policing across England and Wales – including forces' ability to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour. She has asked for initial findings by the end of 2021, and these will be used to inform the inquiry into Couzens.

The inquiry will also draw on the conclusions of current investigations by the IOPC into various allegations and incidents throughout Couzens' career.

Given the need to provide assurance as swiftly as possible, this will be established as a non-statutory inquiry, but can be converted to a statutory inquiry if required.

The chair and terms of reference for the inquiry will be confirmed in due course.

The inquiry is as important for the brave, dedicated, and hard-working men and women in our police service, as it is for the public at large. They rightly want, and expect, their colleagues in policing across the country to uphold the same standards and values that they do – and this inquiry therefore seeks to deliver for them as well as the public.

In addition, the Prime Minister will launch a Home Secretary-chaired taskforce to drive cross-government action on tackling violence against women and girls to help maintain public confidence in policing. It will consider recommendations from the Inspectorate's review of the police's response to violence against women and girls, led by Zoe Billingham, as well as the tackling violence against women and girls strategy, the end-to-end rape review, and the forthcoming domestic abuse strategy.

It will also look at how the police currently assess risk, threat and harm to the general public when responding to and investigating non-contact sexual offences (for example, flashing), which we know may lead to more serious or repeat offending.

The new group will report into the Crime and Justice Taskforce chaired by the Prime Minister. Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse, and Maggie Blyth, the newly appointed top cop for violence against women and girls, will also attend. It will meet for the first time in the autumn.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Recent tragic events have exposed unimaginable failures in policing.

It is abhorrent that a serving police officer was able to abuse his position of power, authority and trust to commit such a horrific crime.

The public have a right to know what failures enabled his continued employment as a police officer and an inquiry will give the independent oversight needed to ensure something like this can never happen again.

The IOPC is [currently conducting](#) a number of investigations into matters linked to Wayne Couzens. These include the handling of allegations of indecent exposure by Kent Police in 2015 and the Metropolitan Police in 2021.

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## [Tougher penalties for protests causing disruption on motorways](#)

The government will bring forward tougher penalties and new police powers to crack down on disruption caused on motorways and other key transport infrastructure.

Home Secretary Priti Patel announced that a suite of amendments will be introduced to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill in the House of Lords.

The announcement follows the dangerous and thoughtless behaviour of Insulate Britain members, who have caused significant disruption and misery to millions of hard-working people in recent weeks.

The measures include a new offence of interfering with the operation of key infrastructure – including motorways, railways, and airports – where the impact will affect the distribution of essential goods, such as fuel and medicine. The new offence would carry a maximum sentence of an unlimited fine, a year imprisonment, or both.

It will also cover media printing premises, in light of the significant

disruption caused by Extinction Rebellion protesters to newspaper deliveries last year.

Other measures include:

1. Tougher sentences for obstructing highways – the government proposes to amend existing legislation so that those guilty of obstructing a highway face an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both. Currently, the offence of obstructing a highway carries a maximum fine of £1,000 and does not reflect the serious disruption caused by these dangerous actions. We will also close a loophole which allows protesters to cause further disruption on a road when it has been closed by the police for the purposes of clearing demonstrations and moving people on.
2. Criminal Disruption Prevention Orders – this measure will enable courts to impose restrictions upon the activities of individuals who repeatedly cause serious disruption or engage in criminal activity at a protest. These orders will give the courts the power to prevent an individual with a history of disruption or where there is intelligence suggesting they are likely to commit a criminal offence from attending particular protests
3. Penalties for blocking construction – a new offence of obstructing the construction of authorised infrastructure will be introduced, carrying a maximum penalty of an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both.

The government will also propose amendments to deal with the lock-on tactics used by groups including Extinction Rebellion and Insulate Britain.

Members of these groups have repeatedly physically attached themselves to roads, trains, planes, and other objects in order to frustrate the police, who are seeking to minimise disruption. The groups have also used increasingly sophisticated devices that are designed with the sole purpose of increasing the length and severity of disruption caused.

A new offence will be introduced to criminalise the act of locking-on and going equipped to lock-on, whereby it causes or is likely to cause serious disruption. The maximum penalties will be set at an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both.

In response to feedback from police, we will also introduce new stop and search powers to allow officers to search individuals and seize items that are likely to be used for lock-ons.

The new powers will:

1. Allow police to stop and search an individual, where the officer has a reasonable suspicion that the individual is carrying items, they intend

to use to cause serious disruption by locking-on.

2. Separately, enable police to stop and search any individual within a tightly-defined area – in which a protest is taking place – for items that could be used to cause serious disruption. The use of this power would be authorised by a senior police officer and safeguards will be in place to ensure its use is compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

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## [UK officials travel to Afghanistan, 5 October 2021](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister's High Representative for Afghan Transition and the Chargé d'Affaires of the UK Mission to Afghanistan held talks with the Taliban.



A government spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister's High Representative for Afghan Transition, Sir Simon Gass, and Chargé d'Affaires of the UK Mission to Afghanistan in Doha, Dr Martin Longden, travelled to Afghanistan today to hold talks with the Taliban.

They met senior members of the Taliban, including Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund and Mawlawi Abdul-Salam Hanafi.

Sir Simon and Dr Longden discussed how the UK could help Afghanistan to address the humanitarian crisis, the importance of preventing the country from becoming an incubator for terrorism, and the need for continued safe passage for those who want to leave

the country. They also raised the treatment of minorities and the rights of women and girls.

The government continues to do all it can to ensure safe passage for those who wish to leave, and is committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan.

Published 5 October 2021

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## [Carrier Strike Group Looks Forward to a Busy Autumn in Indo-Pacific and Middle East](#)

Having passed the midway point of its first operational deployment, the UK Carrier Strike Group is preparing for a return transit through the Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Mediterranean.

Since the end of May, the CSG has sailed over 32,000 nautical miles from the UK to Japan undertaking a range of air and maritime operations from the Black Sea to the Philippine Sea.

As a tangible demonstration of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt, over the past three months, ships from the Strike Group have conducted a series of engagements with regional partners including Brunei, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam.

In a further demonstration of this international deployment, over the next two weeks the CSG will navigate the South China Sea with ships and aircraft from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States.

### **Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:**

“CSG continues to demonstrate our enduring commitment to global security and international alliances, from the Indo-Pacific to the Middle-East and beyond.

“Our engagement with our allies and partners will endure long after the CSG's visits and exercises end, with the permanent deployment of HMS Tamar and HMS Spey to the Indo-Pacific and close cooperation with our Five Powers Defence partners around the world.

“Exercising and cooperation with like-minded allies is vital to tackle the common threats we face, contributing to a safer and more secure world.”

HMS Diamond – a Type 45 Destroyer from the CSG – will also shortly be participating in Exercise Bersama Gold, marking the 50th anniversary of the Five Powers Defence Arrangements alongside Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

The busy period of military engagement in the Indo-Pacific, has also been mirrored by diplomatic progress. In a landmark moment, the UK became a Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 5 August, the first new country in 25 years. This comes as the UK and Japan announced that formal negotiations will begin this month to increase bilateral defence cooperation.

**Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:**

“The UK is committed to strengthening our ties across the Indo-Pacific and the deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group demonstrates our commitment to the region, and our desire to build deeper economic, diplomatic and security partnerships.

“By visiting, working and exercising alongside our partners we are standing up for our mutual interests, supporting regional stability, boosting our ties and promoting new trading opportunities.”

Later this autumn, the CSG will visit India for joint maritime exercises as well as a programme of diplomatic engagements. The CSG will conduct other engagements in the region before travelling to the Gulf.

The Task Group will undertake F35 exercises with Oman and UAE air forces in the Gulf, and maritime training alongside the Royal Navy of Oman. Simultaneously the British Army will be taking part in exercises with Royal Army of Oman units which will link back to the ship to demonstrate interoperability between land and sea forces.