

£34 million boost to frigate weapon systems sustains 150 UK jobs

During the next five years, Royal Navy ships will undergo a series of technical upgrades to their Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems and threat countermeasure capabilities, the latter of which will help ensure the ships continue to counter the threat of hostile anti-ship missiles.

The contract was awarded to Systems Engineering & Assessment (SEA) in Devon.

Sustaining 150 UK jobs across Barnstaple, Beckington and Bristol in the south west of England, the upgrades will ensure that critical systems on Type 23 frigates continue to operate reliably, and that upgrades can be seamlessly adopted and installed until their out of service dates.

The Type-23 frigate carries out a wide variety of operations, including securing the UK's vital maritime trade routes East of the Suez Canal and safeguarding British interests in the South Atlantic. This week the Royal Navy deployed HMS Somerset to play a leading role in protecting critical energy infrastructure, working with Norway and our allies in the North and Norwegian Seas.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Alec Shelbrooke, said:

These crucial upgrades will help to ensure our Royal Navy ships remain equipped with the latest counter-threat capability.

Supporting 150 jobs at sites across the UK, this contract is another example of how we are investing in the future, sustaining UK jobs and securing cutting-edge defence capabilities.

Type 23 frigates will have electronic upgrades to Seagnat, a system which safeguards the vessel against incoming missiles by firing a variety of decoys to defeat incoming missiles.

Some ships will also undergo a further technical upgrade to their Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems – a close range, quick reaction Anti-Submarine weapon system which launches torpedoes from tubes mounted in the vessel's magazine.

The contract was placed by the Maritime Equipment and Warfare (MEWT) team at Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the procurement arm of the UK Ministry of Defence.

DE&S' Director Ships Support Rear Admiral Jim Higham:

I'm incredibly proud of our team which has worked so hard to place this contract, ensuring Type 23 has the battle-winning capability

it needs to perform their critical role in the Royal Navy fleet now and into the future.

In addition to Type 23 updates, the contract will also upgrade Seagnat systems during the next five years on Type 45 destroyers and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) tankers, which provide fuel, food, fresh water, ammunition and other supplies to Royal Navy vessels around the world.

The contract also secures five further years of support for the systems on board the vessels with improved provision for spares.

The equipment supported under this contract (Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems, Seagnat and Air Weapons Handling) are used on various ships in the Royal Navy such as Type 23 frigates, Type 45 destroyers, Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC), Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels and Albion-class Landing Platform Docks.

Richard Flitton, Managing Director at Systems Engineering & Assessment said:

This major contract, SEA's largest to date, demonstrates the systems knowledge and maritime domain expertise within our UK-based team and builds on our long-standing partnership with the Royal Navy.

[New interim Chief Executive of Maritime and Coastguard Agency announced](#)

Press release

Damien Oliver has been appointed as the interim Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).



Damien Oliver

Damien will begin his new role on Monday 17 October, which follows the current MCA Chief Executive Brian Johnson's retirement.

Chairman and board member Christopher Rodrigues said:

Damien has had a number of high-profile roles within the MCA since joining in 2001 and he will bring a wealth of maritime experience and knowledge.

Damien has been responsible for major projects and programmes, procurement, commercial management and innovation, maritime business development which includes the UK Shipping Register and Shipping Concierge within the MCA.

More recently, he has led on the programme to replace the current Coastguard aviation arrangements with the second-generation search and rescue aviation contract (UKSAR2G). And also been in charge of the project to replace the radio network infrastructure for HM Coastguard".

I am delighted that Damien Oliver will be fulfilling the role of interim Chief Executive, he will help us to maintain the momentum achieved under Brian's leadership.

I wish Damien every success in this vital role.

Damien Oliver said:

It is a great privilege to be appointed as interim CEO of the MCA. I am very much looking forward to leading the Agency through the coming months.

Transport Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Damien has achieved great things during his impressive career with

the agency to date, and I look forward to seeing the direction he gives to the organisation as interim Chief Exec.

The UK's maritime industry is among the most advanced in the world, but growth is still so important. We'll continue working together to build a more environmentally-friendly sector, support job creation, and promote the UK flag around the globe.

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[Joint targeted area inspections to focus on early help for children and families](#)

Press release

Ofsted, CQC and HMICFRS have published guidance for the thematic focus on early help for families, as part of their programme of joint targeted area inspections (JTAs).



Local areas' multi-agency arrangements for helping children and families early will be the focus of upcoming thematic JTAs carried out by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), starting in November 2022.

These JTAs will consider how different agencies across children's social care, education, health, and the police, work together to reduce risks to children and families, and meet their needs early.

The JTAs follow research commissioned by Ofsted in early 2022 '[Early help: concepts, policy directions and multi-agency perspectives](#)'. The independent study, produced by Research in Practice, discussed current early help

provision in England, government policy, and how agencies work together to prevent longer-term intervention. Today's guidance refers to this report and the independent review of children's social care's recommendation that government combines targeted early help and help for children in need.

Yvette Stanley, Ofsted National Director for Regulation and Social Care:

Getting the right response at the right time is critical for children and families. All agencies have their part to play in helping children and families early.

Working with CQC and HMICFRS, our JTAIs will help establish a shared understanding of how multi-agency partners work effectively together to help families before significant harm happens, and take timely action to protect children.

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[UKHSA and ONS release estimates of excess deaths during summer of 2022](#)

[Initial analysis](#) by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows that across the 5-heat periods in the summer of 2022, the estimated total excess mortality (excluding coronavirus (COVID-19)) in England was 2,803 for those aged 65 and over. This is the highest excess mortality figure during heat-periods observed since the introduction of the Heatwave plan for England in 2004.

In July, some places in England recorded temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius for the first time in recorded history and UKHSA issued its first ever Level 4 Heat Health Alert. From 17 to 20 July, when temperatures were at their highest, there were an estimated 1,012 excess deaths in those aged over 65.

The heat-period in the summer of 2022 with the highest excess mortality overall was from 8 to 17 August, which saw an estimated 1,458 excess deaths (excluding COVID-19) in those over the age of 65.

These figures demonstrate the possible impact that hot weather can have on the elderly and how quickly such temperatures can lead to adverse health effects in at-risk groups.

Similarly, ONS analysis from the same timeframe – June to August 2022 – for all age groups and for England and Wales, shows a recorded 3,271 deaths above

the 5-year average. This represents a 6.2% increase. This is slightly higher than the UKHSA figure as it does not exclude deaths from COVID-19, those under the age of 65 and does include data for Wales.

Isabel Oliver, Chief Scientific Officer at UKHSA, said:

These estimates show clearly that high temperatures can lead to premature death for those who are vulnerable. Higher excess deaths occurred during the hottest days this year and a warming climate means we must adapt to living safely with hotter summers in the future.

Prolonged periods of hot weather are a particular risk for elderly people, those with heart and lung conditions or people who are unable to keep themselves cool such as people with learning disabilities and Alzheimer's disease.

Sarah Caul, Head of Mortality Analysis at the ONS, said:

During the UK summer of record-breaking temperatures, there was an increase in deaths. However, these spikes around the hottest days were followed by periods of below average mortality. This is likely to be a result of short-term mortality displacement, especially among older age groups, where people died a few days or weeks earlier than expected. This trend is consistent with what we have seen in previous summers with heatwave periods.

It is also the case that despite peaks in mortality during heatwaves, the majority of days in the winter period (December to March) show a higher number of deaths than we see during summer.

Government injects funding boost for cutting-edge vaccine site in Darlington

- Government's Vaccine Taskforce has granted £10.65 million in additional funding to support the launch of Darlington RNA vaccine innovation centre
- the 'RNA Centre of Excellence', hosted by technology innovation organisation CPI, will support the development, scale-up and manufacture of new RNA therapies and vaccines, the same technology used for the Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccinations

- CPI has also established an RNA Training Academy, to support companies by providing the industry with the skills required in RNA technology

The government has today (Friday 7 October) announced £10.65 million in funding to boost the development of RNA technology, the vaccine innovation that protected millions around the world from COVID-19. The funding will support the launch of a new innovation centre by CPI in Darlington, advancing the technology that is currently under development for the treatment of various cancers, flu vaccines and personalised medicines including gene therapy.

The Vaccine Taskforce granted the funding – administered by Innovate UK – for CPI’s RNA Centre of Excellence, which has the potential to make homegrown breakthroughs in the fight against a number of diseases, producing RNA material for clinical trials which will be crucial to future vaccine development.

The Centre is the only site in the UK currently able to develop and manufacture messenger and self-amplifying RNA vaccines and therapies with the capability to manufacture millions of doses of a vaccine, if required for a future healthcare emergency.

It will provide state-of-the-art equipment and world-leading expertise to support industry with the testing, scale-up and clinical production of RNA technologies – showcasing the UK’s capability in this area and helping to promote the UK as an attractive destination for further investment.

Minister for Science and Investment Security Nusrat Ghani said:

The UK’s exceptional capabilities in Life Sciences were showcased on the world stage when we became the first nation globally to approve a working COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic.

We are now committed to boosting these capabilities even further, ensuring we are thoroughly prepared for future health emergencies and remaining at the forefront of the development of new therapies. This is why we are making this significant investment in CPI’s brilliant RNA facility in Darlington, a site with the potential to make enormous homegrown breakthroughs in the fight against disease.

The Centre will also form an important part of the UK’s commitment to future pandemic preparedness, as the government will retain priority access to the facility for up to 10 years. This will allow vaccine developers to utilise the site as required to provide additional manufacturing capacity in the event of a future health emergency or pandemic.

As part of the Centre, CPI has also established the RNA Training Academy, providing interactive courses in RNA technology alongside bespoke training at CPI facilities to ensure that companies can access the industry skills they require in the UK. The Academy has already gained accreditation to provide

continuing professional development.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said:

CPI is a fantastic example of a local organisation at the cutting-edge of biosciences and its new Centre of Excellence will be another string to the bow of the growing cluster on Darlington's Central Park and our world-leading life sciences sector.

This latest boost comes on the back of the amazing work of the sector in the fight against coronavirus. This funding will help our scientists make even more leaps forward and breakthroughs, having a huge impact on lives across the UK and beyond. Funding of our research centres, labs and manufacturing space will help create high-quality, highly-skilled and well-paid jobs in the innovative industries of the future for local people.

While we're seeing difficulties across the globe which are making times tough for many, our region continues to move forward and make huge progress thanks to investments like these – meaning the long-term future of Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool is bright.

This funding illustrates the proactive steps the government is taking to realise the 2021 [Life Sciences Vision](#), and to continue furthering its ambitions to secure the UK's reputation as a life sciences superpower. The investment also delivers on the government's levelling up agenda, supporting highly skilled jobs and helping bring greater prosperity and productivity in the north-east region.

The Vaccine Taskforce previously supported the construction and development of CPI's centre with funding of £26.48 million, and to date, the government has invested over £405 million to secure and scale up the UK's vaccine manufacturing capabilities, supporting the UK's ability to respond to future pandemics.

Notes to editors

- Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- The Vaccine Taskforce has now transferred its core functions to the UK Health Security Agency and the Office for Life Sciences

About the CPI

- [CPI](#) is a social enterprise that partners with industry, academia, government, and the investment community to catalyse the delivery of healthcare and sustainability innovations that benefit people, places

and our planet

- CPI works with the [pharma industry](#) to develop next-generation medicine manufacturing innovations to deliver tomorrow's vaccines and therapeutics. The organisation offers world-leading facilities and expertise in small molecules, biologics, oligonucleotides, and complex medicines to accelerate drug development and scale-up and offers complementary drug delivery systems like lipid nanoparticles
- it creates agile, efficient, and sustainable supply chains by convening actors across the pharma industry ecosystem in a pre-competitive space and boosting the adoption of industry 4.0 advanced processes and digitisation
- CPI hosts one of the largest pools of experts in RNA manufacturing in the UK. This RNA expertise will be shared with the pharma industry and budding scientists through the [RNA Training Academy](#). Apprentices, technicians, scientists, and executives will be able to access a series of courses on the development and manufacture of RNA, RNA encapsulation, and final formulation. The first course will be delivered on 25 October 2022
- CPI is a founding member of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, a network of world-leading technology and innovation centres that help business, researchers and government deliver industrial transformation in the UK

Additional quotes

Public Health and Mental Health Minister Dr Caroline Johnson said:

The UK's world-leading clinical research and innovation has been vital in our fight against COVID, giving people across the world the protection they and their loved ones need.

The opening of this new Innovation Centre will provide potentially life-saving therapies and vaccines for thousands of patients, while delivering research into a wide range of potentially ground-breaking treatments cementing the UK's status as a life sciences superpower.

Innovate UK CEO Indro Mukerjee said:

Innovate UK has been proud to actively support the UK's pioneering vaccine development and manufacturing. We are pleased to have

partnered with the Vaccine Taskforce and to use catapults and expert resources across the Innovate UK system to support their work.

Frank Millar, CEO of CPI said:

CPI played a key role in the development and scale-up of COVID-19 vaccine technology as part of the government's Vaccine Taskforce. As a founding member of the UK's High Value Manufacturing Catapult, we act as a catalyst for delivering healthcare and sustainability innovations and transformation across industries.

Thanks to the successes of our partnership with the VTF, our new RNA Centre of Excellence and Training Academy in Darlington will support industry through world-leading skills developments and the delivery of complex medicines to fight the next healthcare emergency and benefit patients through novel treatment options.

We're delighted to be enabling UK Life Sciences to acquire new capabilities from Teesside, building on the region's long history of biomanufacturing.