

[Dstl staff recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List](#)

Press release

A Dstl senior scientist and a Sopra Steria solutions architect have been recognised in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours List. Dr Christopher Timperley and Lawrence Wright received awards for their respective areas of scientific contribution to global and UK safety.



Dstl's Dr Christopher Timperley and Lawrence Wright

Dr Timperley is made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his service to UK Defence and Security. His work has been vital to the global non-proliferation policy and decision making in the campaign against chemical weapons. In particular his selfless dedication during his four year post as the first ever UK Chair of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Scientific Advisory Board through a period during the use of nerve agents in both Syria and Salisbury.

Christopher said:

I'm indebted to those that nominated me for this honour. It recognises the central role of chemistry in helping to secure a world free of chemical weapons, and the collective endeavours of talented colleagues, nationally and internationally. I also thank my wife and family for their amazing support over many years.

Lawrence Wright, who works at Dstl on behalf of Sopra Steria, has been appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his service to UK Science and Technology. He developed Dstl's High Performance Computing (HPC) environment whilst also delivering improvements to Dstl's information technology infrastructure.

Lawrence said:

I felt incredibly surprised and humbled when I received notification that I was being awarded this honour. As a member of service provider staff I would never have expected to be recognised in such a way. I hope it can be seen to represent the commitment and effort that all of my Sopra Steria colleagues – and indeed all staff in supporting roles at Dstl – put into enabling the organisation's vital work for the nation.

His high professional standards enabled Dstl to support the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) by providing access to a sophisticated HPC environment that provided both the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), with essential COVID-19 modelling and analysis data.

Dstl's Interim Chief Executive Doug Umbers said:

I am delighted and extremely proud, as both Christopher and Lawrence should be, to see that their professionalism and passion has made, and continues to make an immense impact on our nation's science and technology and safety.

Published 11 June 2021

[Letter from the Deputy Chief Medical Officer to UK vaccine study volunteers](#)

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[New plan to drive rapid recovery of](#)

Scottish tourism sector

- UK Government Tourism Recovery Plan to help sector build back better from the pandemic
- Plan aims to recover domestic tourism to pre-pandemic levels by 2022 and international tourism by 2023 – both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict
- New initiatives to boost tourism include £10 million National Lottery Days Out scheme to support attractions and a new rail pass to encourage domestic breaks

A new rail pass and vouchers for popular tourist attractions are at the heart of a plan to return domestic tourism across Scotland and the whole UK to pre-pandemic levels by 2022 and international tourism by 2023.

A rail pass for “staycationers” will be launched later this year, helping to make it easier and more sustainable for domestic tourists to get around the UK. The new pass will build on the success of the BritRail pass, which is sold through VisitBritain and currently gives international visitors flexible travel across the country, as well as providing discounted entry to tourist attractions.

A £10 million voucher scheme will be launched by The National Lottery this autumn to encourage trips beyond the peak summer season, with players having the chance to claim vouchers to redeem at tourist attractions across the UK between September 2021 and March 2022.

There will be a new focus on technology and data. The UK Government will explore how tourism data collected at the border can support the sector and we will look to create a tourism data hub to give the sector access to robust, accessible and timely data. The hub could track consumer trends in travel, such as the growth in “active tourism” such as watersports and hiking, and booking of sustainable tourism experiences. The data gathered will help inform policy and marketing whilst working to improve visitor experience.

The UK Government will develop a Sustainable Tourism Plan later this year to put the UK at the forefront of the global discussion on sustainable travel. This will look at further measures to reduce the impact of tourism on our environment whilst balancing the needs of local communities with the economic benefits generated by tourism.

In 2019, Scotland welcomed almost 3.5 million inbound visitors who spent £2.5 billion while here, helping secure the UK’s position in the top five countries globally for inbound visitor spending.

However, the sector has been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. £19 million has also been earmarked to promote destinations across the UK, with a £5.5 million domestic campaign already underway.

The UK Government has acted decisively over the past year to protect jobs and

businesses in Scotland's tourism, hospitality and leisure sectors, with the furlough scheme, self-employed income support scheme and VAT cuts.

The plan also looks ahead to 2022: a massive year for the UK showcasing the nation on the world stage with three major events. Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Festival UK 2022 and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will promote the very best of Britain at home and abroad. An additional bank holiday for the Queen's Jubilee will provide a further boost for tourism and hospitality.

UK Government Tourism Minister Nigel Huddleston MP said:

Our brilliant tourism sector is one of our country's greatest assets, making a huge contribution to our economy and delivering jobs across all communities. This is why we've provided it with £25 billion in support so far during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Tourism Recovery Plan is our blueprint for how the sector can build back better from the pandemic, even faster than forecasts predict.

It's been a challenging year for the tourism sector, especially for our cities, but I know they stand ready to welcome visitors back and I encourage everyone to rediscover the UK's fantastic tourism offer.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart MP said:

Tourism is a cornerstone of Scotland's economy, so it's fantastic that this ambitious UK Government plan is helping the sector recover.

Scotland has a huge amount to offer tourists, from our vibrant cities to our spectacular scenery. The launch of a new rail pass will encourage people from across the UK to come and explore our beautiful country while giving the tourism and hospitality sectors a much-needed boost.

[Surge testing to be deployed in Cheshire West](#)

Press release

Working with local authorities, NHS Test and Trace is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing in Cheshire West.



NHS Test and Trace – in partnership with the local authority – has deployed additional testing and genomic sequencing in Northwich and Winsford in Cheshire West.

Surge testing commenced yesterday (Thursday 10 June) in Cheshire West, following the identification of a small number of confirmed cases of the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant. All the confirmed cases have been instructed to self-isolate and their contacts have been identified.

Everyone in Cheshire West, who lives or works in these areas is strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

Enhanced contact tracing will be used for individuals testing positive with a variant of concern (VOC). This is where contact tracers look back over an extended period to determine the route of transmission.

By using PCR testing, positive results are sent for genomic sequencing at specialist laboratories, helping us to identify COVID-19 cases with a VOC and then prevent their spread.

If you have symptoms you should [book a free test online](#) or by phone. You can then go to a testing site or have a kit sent to your home. If you have no symptoms, you should visit the [Cheshire West and Chester Council website](#) for more information.

People in this area should continue to make use of free twice-weekly rapid tests, commonly known as lateral flow devices, alongside the PCR test as part of surge testing.

Published 11 June 2021

Defence Secretary meets with NATO Allies on board HMS Queen Elizabeth as Carrier Strike Group visits Italy

The historic deployment continues to provide the perfect platform for the UK to forge ever-closer relationships with defence partners, after Defence Secretary Ben Wallace met with Italian Defence Minister Lorenzo Guerini and Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar on board the UK's flagship as it docked in Augusta, Sicily.

Ahead of next week's NATO Summit in Brussels, the visit provided the Defence Secretary with the opportunity to discuss with two fellow Alliance members how our three nations can work together both directly and as part of NATO to tackle global threats and uphold regional security in the Mediterranean.

Mr Wallace updated his counterparts on the recently published Integrated Review into security, defence, foreign and development policy and the accompanying Defence Command Paper which cites the cast-iron commitment the UK has to the NATO Alliance.

He also reiterated the forward-leaning and collaborative role the UK will play with partners when it comes to tackling shared challenges such as securing peace in Libya. Instability in Libya in recent years has allowed Daesh to capture territory while people smugglers use the country as a staging post to send migrants on the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean into Europe.

The three NATO defence ministers also discussed how they could work together to help Libya achieve lasting security, stability and peace. The Defence Secretary's visit was then completed with a head-to-head meeting with Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar on recent defence collaboration, including Carrier Strike Group escort vessel HMS Defender's visit to Istanbul earlier this week.

Their discussions came after Mr Wallace had spent a day in Libya alongside Foreign Minister James Cleverley meeting with the Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba and other Libyan officials to discuss UK support for their nation as they move forward with the peace process and elections planned for later this year.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It was a fantastic opportunity to see my counterparts Lorenzo Guerini and Hulusi Akar on board the ITS Cavour and the UK's own aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth today. We share both a commitment to the security of the Mediterranean and building the capabilities required to act, as shown by our recent exercises as

part of the CSG deployment.

Before joining Mr Akar on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, Mr Wallace and Mr Guerini discussed UK-Italian defence cooperation on board Italian Navy destroyer ITS Cavour, which has in the last 10 days integrated with the Carrier Strike Group as it sails through the West and Central Mediterranean.

As close NATO Allies, the UK and Italy share a commitment to democratic values and a focus on innovation and the importance of new technology to maintain an edge over those who would threaten those values – both nations are the only two European NATO members that operate the latest cutting-edge F35B jets from an aircraft carrier. Earlier this week, F-35 Lightning jets from Italy and Israel joined those from the US and UK deployed on the Carrier Strike Group for training in Exercise Falcon Strike.

Elsewhere across Italy, ships from Carrier Strike Group conducted port visits and local engagements with HMS Diamond in Taranto, RFA Fort Victoria in Messina and USS The Sullivans in Gaeta. With warships from Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and now Italy, the UK Carrier Strike group is a truly multinational force.

The Carrier Strike Group deployment sees HMS Queen Elizabeth lead 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.

The seven-month global deployment will extend through the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean and on to the Indo-Pacific, interacting with more than one fifth of the world's nations.

It comes after the Prime Minister announced in November an increase in Defence funding of over £24-billion across the next four years, enabling our Armed Forces to adapt to meet future threats.