

Inspired by space? Win a chance to talk to Tim Peake

At 11.03am on 15 December 2015, Tim Peake ascended into the sky on a Soyuz rocket and became the first Briton ever to live aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Tim's mission, Principia, helped inspire a generation of schoolchildren to discover the opportunities offered by science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.

During the 6-month mission, the UK Space Agency worked with Tim on more than 30 outreach projects with a range of partners, including experiments to grow salad from seeds in space, create imaginative films inspired by spaceflight and exercise like an astronaut. Over 2 million students took part in the outreach programme with 1 in 3 UK schools taking part.

This new campaign, organised by the UK Space Agency and Tim Peake, will run from 10 December until 31 January 2021. It aims to uncover stories from people like Lowena Hull, 18, who is studying science at university after she designed code for an MP3 player which Tim then used on the ISS; or Michael Woodward who after following Tim's mission now works at Goonhilly Earth Station in Cornwall, where he maintains antennas used to talk to the ISS. One lucky participant will get the chance to win a group video call with Tim himself.

Tim Peake, British ESA astronaut, said:

I am excited to hear how my mission encouraged people to explore a future in STEM. When I was younger, I was inspired by scientists, explorers and aviators; they all helped me to pursue my dreams.

You don't have to be an astronaut to work in space. The UK space sector is an exciting place to work. Careers include coders, environmentalists, engineers and designers. I'm sure many of the young people we hear from will one day make an impact on the world through their career in space.

Tim may have inspired the subjects you or your students chose to study or the career you embarked on, or maybe you took up stargazing as a hobby. However he inspired you, whether you're a grown-up or a child, the UK Space Agency wants to hear from you by completing the Inspired by Tim survey or sending in a short video.

While onboard the Space Station in 2016, Tim hosted question and answer sessions with school students. These sessions saw children given their chance to put their questions to Tim from thousands of miles away, and have answers beamed back down to Earth.

Science Minister, Minister Solloway, Said:

“From the moment we caught a glimpse of Tim Peake gliding through the hatch of the International Space Station, we knew we were witnessing an historic moment that would open up the possibilities for UK spaceflight and inspire a generation like never before.

“As we mark 5 years since Tim’s remarkable mission, I can’t wait to hear first-hand how it has motivated the UK’s most talented young people – from ambitious astronauts to aspiring engineers – to embark on their own careers in our thriving space industry.”

A mission of firsts: Tim Peake’s time in space

- Ahead of his mission, Tim spent 5 years in training, learning how to cope with G-force and zero-gravity living; the rudiments of the spacewalk; and how to live in isolation with his future crew mates, including the American Tim Kopra and Russian cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko.
- Onboard Tim contacted young people via HAM radio, ran the London Marathon, and took part in cosmic classroom live link where half a million children watched the broadcast online.
- Tim spent 186 days on the Station, during which time he orbited the Earth 2,720 times and took part in 250 scientific experiments.
- On 15 January 2016, Tim became the first Briton to don the familiar white pressure suit and leave the safety of the ISS with just a tether in space. He spent almost five hours doing maintenance work on the exterior of the station.

The UK is a founding member of the European Space Agency and invests around £40 million each year in international space exploration programmes, including human spaceflight activities and missions to send UK-built rovers to Mars.

In addition, earlier this week the UK Space Agency announced over £7 million of funding to put the UK at the forefront of space innovation. The National Space Innovation Programme (NSIP) is supporting 21 high-risk, high-reward projects that support companies and universities with radical ideas for how we tackle climate change through earth observation or address satellite communications challenges, from providing greater connectivity to remote places to increasing the efficiency of our homes.

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Latvia: Paul Brummell

Press release

Mr Paul Brummell CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia in succession to Mr Keith Shannon.



Mr Paul Brummell CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia in succession to Mr Keith Shannon. Mr Brummell will take up his appointment in summer 2021.

Full name: Paul Brummell

Married to: Adriana Mitsue Ivama Brummell

Children: one

Dates	Role
2018 to present	FCDO, Head, Soft Power and External Affairs Department, Communication Directorate
2014 to 2018	Bucharest, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2013 to 2014	Full-time Language Training (Romanian)
2009 to 2013	Bridgetown, British High Commissioner
2005 to 2009	Nur-Sultan, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2002 to 2005	Ashgabat, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2001	FCO, Deputy Head, Afghanistan Emergency Unit
2000 to 2001	FCO, Deputy Head, Eastern Department
1995 to 2000	Rome, First Secretary (Political, Press and Public Affairs)
1993 to 1994	FCO, Head, Science and Technology Section, Environment, Science and Energy Department
1992	UK Mission to the UN, New York, Conference Support Officer
1989 to 1992	Islamabad, Third later Second Secretary (Political)
1988 to 1999	FCO, Desk Officer, South America Department
1988	FCO, Desk Officer, Research Department

Let's talk about data quality



Last week, we published our [framework for data quality in government](#). We developed the framework in collaboration with the [Government Digital Service](#), using best practice drawn from across and outside government. We're holding a series of events to support its roll-out.

The launch event

On 3 December, we held a virtual launch event to introduce the framework. We discussed the content of the framework, why it's important, and what it sets out to achieve.

We also heard from a range of guest speakers. [Alison Pritchard](#), Director General for Data Capability at the [Office for National Statistics](#), explained that data is a high priority in government, and highlighted how the framework sets the foundations for this. [Lisa Allen](#), Head of Data and Analytical Services at [Ordnance Survey](#), discussed the benefits that come from establishing a data quality culture in an organisation. Finally, [Nicola Askham](#), Director at the [Data Management Association of the UK](#), explained that everyone has a role in achieving good quality data. The event was chaired by the Head of the Government Data Quality Hub, [James Tucker](#), and included an opportunity to ask questions of the panel.

We'd like to thank everyone who joined us for making the event a massive success. If you didn't manage to attend, the recording will be shared on YouTube shortly.

Carrying on the conversation

We know that the framework contains a lot of useful information, and that there's too much to cover in just one hour. So we're holding a second event on 13 January 2021 at 3pm to explore some of the themes in more depth. We will hear from colleagues across the public sector on how they have assessed,

improved and communicated data quality. We will then open the floor for a round table discussion about data quality in government.

Everyone is welcome. Please [register via Eventbrite](#) to join us, and pass this invitation on to colleagues who might also be interested.

You can also share your thoughts on data quality with us by completing [our survey](#) by 17 December.

Help us support you

We have an ambitious plan to support the public sector to understand, assess, and improve data quality, but we need your help to achieve this. If you want to talk to us about the framework or want to know more about our work, email us at DQHub@ons.gov.uk or tweet us at [@DQHubUKGov](https://twitter.com/DQHubUKGov).

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1. 10 December 2020

Added date of second event and included link to register for this.

2. 7 December 2020

First published.

[Joint statement by the UK and Singapore](#)

News story

Joint Ministerial Statement by the Republic of Singapore and the United Kingdom (UK) on the signing of the UK-Singapore Free Trade Agreement and negotiations on a UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement



The UK and Singapore are pleased to announce today the signing of the UK-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Both countries also agreed to start scoping the modules of a UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (DEA), with the aim of launching negotiations on the DEA in early Spring 2021.

1. The UK and Singapore are like-minded partners with shared historical ties and excellent economic relations. Singapore is the UK's largest trade and investment partner from ASEAN, while the UK is amongst Singapore's top three European trading partners and Singapore's top investment destination in Europe. As island trading nations, both countries share a strategic commitment to global trade, and the free flow of capital and investments. We enjoy broad-based collaboration in areas such as science and technology, climate and sustainability, defence, education and culture.
2. The UK-Singapore FTA will take our excellent economic relations further. It will cover more than £17 billion of bilateral trade in goods and services. Companies will continue to benefit from tariff elimination for goods trade, increased access to our respective services and government procurement markets, and reduction of non-tariff barriers in key sectors such as electronics, motor vehicles and vehicle parts, pharmaceutical products and medical devices, and renewable energy generation.
3. In particular, the UK and Singapore have committed to maintain the same timeline for tariff reductions as compared to the EU-Singapore FTA. Upon the UK-Singapore FTA's entry into force, tariffs will remain eliminated for 84% of all tariff lines for Singapore exports to the UK. Singapore Asian food products such as har gow (prawn dumplings) and sambal ikan bilis (spicy crispy anchovies) will continue to enter the UK tariff-free under flexible rules of origin, up to a combined quota of 350 tonnes annually. Singapore will also continue to bind our current level of duty-free access for all UK products entering Singapore, and maintain protections on iconic UK goods such as Scotch Whisky.
4. The UK-Singapore FTA will support financial services trade and investment in both countries, and provide opportunities for existing UK Qualifying Full Banks (QFBs) in Singapore to expand their footprint,

including through additional customer service locations. Both countries will continue to discuss strengthening their financial and economic cooperation and building links between their financial markets, including through the annual UK-Singapore Financial Dialogue.

5. Beyond the UK-Singapore FTA, the UK and Singapore have committed to commence and endeavour to conclude negotiations to deliver updated, high standard and ambitious investment protection commitments within two years and four years respectively of the UK-Singapore FTA's entry into force.
6. Both countries also plan to strengthen our trading relationship further. We will start scoping the modules of a UK-Singapore DEA, with the aim of launching negotiations in early Spring 2021 on a DEA that aspires to be a model for international digital trade rules and cooperation. It is the shared desire of both countries, as forward-looking and digitally advanced economies, to explore emerging and innovative areas in digital trade.
7. Under the DEA, the UK and Singapore will aim to ensure an open, thriving, and safe digital environment for our consumers and businesses. The agreement will promote the flow of data across borders while maintaining high levels of personal data protection. It will also promote interoperable digital systems to connect our thriving innovation ecosystems, harness the interaction between financial services and the digital economy, and help shape global standards for effective regulation in key areas such as cyber security and emerging technology. The DEA will also form a strong basis for our cooperation in the WTO and other multilateral fora in pursuing a likeminded approach to global trade rules.
8. The signing of the UK-Singapore FTA serves as a significant step in the UK's interest to seek membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Singapore supports and welcomes the UK's intent to submit its application to accede to the CPTPP in early 2021. This will bring us closer to the CPTPP's vision of advancing economic integration and supporting the liberalisation of trade and investment globally. As vice-chair of the CPTPP Commission, Singapore will work with the chair and other CPTPP members to form an Accession Working Group for the UK as expeditiously as possible.
9. As we approach the second anniversary of our Singapore-UK Partnership for the Future, we are confident that the UK-Singapore FTA and UK-Singapore DEA, and the UK's accession to CPTPP, will deepen the foundation for the UK and Singapore to take our strong and modern economic partnership into the 21st century.

[UK strikes Singapore and Vietnam trade deals, start of new era of trade with Asia](#)

- New continuity trade deals with Singapore and Vietnam will deepen relationships in the Indo-Pacific region and deliver vital certainty for UK business.
- Singapore deal paves the way for a cutting-edge relationship in digital as part of the government's plan to make the UK a global hub for tech and services trade post-Brexit.
- Agreements bring the UK a step closer to joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a high-standards agreement of 11 Pacific nations.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss was in Singapore today (Thursday 10 December) to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the thriving city-state.

The Secretary of State will now travel to Vietnam, one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, to conclude another rollover trade agreement.

As the UK's largest trading partner in South-East Asia, the Singapore continuity agreement will provide a gateway to Asia for UK businesses and lock in the benefits of our existing trading relationship, worth £17.6 billion last year.

It is the latest step in the UK's strategy to create a network of trade agreements with dynamic economies far beyond Europe, making the UK a hub for services and digital trade. The UK is already one of the world's biggest exporters of services, with remotely delivered services exports worth £207 billion in 2019.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and Singaporean counterpart, Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, also announced their intention to launch negotiations for a ground-breaking Digital Economy Agreement (DEA). This would be the first DEA that Singapore has struck with a European country.

This agreement would enable the UK to become a hub for digital trade with strong connections to Asia, cutting red tape for UK businesses and setting global standards in key areas such as cyber-security and emerging technology.

This follows the launch of the UK's first Digital Trade Network in Asia Pacific, to increase digital trade and investment opportunities and to forge new digital partnerships in the region, helping more British businesses

export digitally.

Singapore and the UK are both global leaders in the digital economy and 70% of UK services exports were delivered remotely to Singapore last year, worth £3.2 billion.

The International Trade Secretary will now travel to Vietnam to conclude a separate trade agreement, which will also maintain an important trading relationship that has tripled between 2010 and 2019 in nominal terms to £5.7 billion. 99% of tariffs will be eliminated after seven years, including on machinery and pharmaceutical products, our top exports to Vietnam.

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

Both these agreements are vital for the UK's future as an independent trading nation. Not only do they lock in billions of pounds worth of trade, they also pave the way for new digital partnerships and joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This will play to the UK's strengths, as we become a hub for tech and digital trade with influence far beyond our shores, defining our role in the world for decades to come.

This is an important part of our vision for a Global Britain that sits at the centre of a network of deals with dynamic nations across Asia Pacific and the Americas as a global hub for services and technology trade.

International trade will help us to overcome the challenges of coronavirus and drive economic growth across our United Kingdom.

The deal also secures benefits for UK fintech firms in Singapore – Singapore has agreed to start a review in 2021 to consider an increase in the limits imposed on e-wallet payments, which affect UK firms operating in Singapore, as well as to discuss opportunities for UK firms to apply to become Digital Wholesale Banks in Singapore. This is in addition to additional customer services points permitted for UK retail banks already operating in Singapore, as part of this agreement.

The agreements with Singapore and Vietnam mark another step towards the UK joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership CPTPP, which accounted for 13% of global GDP in 2019, rising to 16% if the UK were to join.

Both economies are founding members CPTPP and have publicly shown their support for the UK acceding to this fast-growing trade bloc. Joining would provide British businesses with an unparalleled gateway to the Pacific region.

CPTPP sets modern rules in sectors such as digital, financial, professional and business services, which play to the UK's strengths. Our membership will help turn the UK into a global hub for businesses and investors wanting to trade with the rest of the world, which would not have been possible as part

of the EU.

In under two years we have agreed trade deals with 57 countries that account for £193bn of UK bilateral trade. This is unprecedented. No other country has ever negotiated so many trade deals simultaneously. The Government's ambition is to secure free trade agreements with countries that cover 80% of UK trade within three years.

Antony Walker, Deputy CEO at techUK, said

techUK welcomes the ambition to sign a Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) with Singapore. This will not only deepen digital trade with Singapore but will also help to strengthen digital trade across the region. This is a great opportunity for the UK and Singapore to join forces in defining a gold standard agreement in digital trade.

The UK and Singapore share strong ambitions in digital trade. This year, Singapore has concluded two state-of-the-art digital trade agreements, one with New Zealand and Chile (DEPA) and the other one with Australia (DEA). The DEA goes further than any comparable bilateral digital chapter, breaking new ground in areas such as creating a safe online environment and cooperation on competition policy. The agreement is also accompanied by a number of MoUs on digital economy topics, such as data innovation, AI, trade facilitation and digital identity. Given the fast-moving nature of technology, these additional MoUs provide a flexible and adaptive framework.

Gerard Grech, CEO of Tech Nation, said

The UK and Singapore have strong track records in scaling innovation across industries and geographies, and so Tech Nation welcomes today's landmark trade agreement as a significant milestone for the global tech sector.

Our two nations have shared ambitions in tech and innovation and the trade agreement will make it even easier for tech businesses to find success in our respective countries. Tech leaders see a natural fit with the UK and Singapore markets given their focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, technology and ease of doing business.

This combination creates the stage for more future success together, when it comes to leading the world in incubating, scaling and commercialising technology.

A Deliveroo spokesperson said

As a British tech firm that operates in Singapore, it is great news that the UK and Singapore have not only agreed to roll over our current Free Trade arrangements but also that they now plan to go even further by agreeing a Digital Economy Agreement.

By reducing barriers to digital trade and developing a deeper understanding of how technology is evolving in both markets, this new agreement can help fast-growing tech companies like Deliveroo as we work with more and more restaurants across Singapore to get their great food direct to customers doors.

James Shanahan, CEO of Revolut Singapore, said

Digital trade between the UK and Singapore is now more important than ever as businesses increasingly shift online in the post-pandemic economy. This agreement will also foster greater trust and commonality between and amongst regulators in both countries.

Revolut – with its over 13 million customers worldwide – welcomes the free trade agreement and increased cooperation between the UK and Singapore. We look forward to taking even more of our product to our customers in Singapore and creating more jobs in Singapore, the UK and beyond.

[Read the Joint Statement here](#)

Notes to Editor

Singapore was a partner in the UK's first FinTech Bridge, and the UK and British trade minister Lord Gerry Grimstone spoke at the Singapore Fintech Festival yesterday (9 December).

Sources: ONS UK Trade: All countries, non-seasonally adjusted, Q2 2020; IMF World Economic Outlook October 2020; ONS Trade in services by modes of supply, UK: 2019.