

Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Written Ministerial Statement

Press release

A Written Ministerial Statement has been laid today in Parliament announcing a change of operating model for the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE).



MOD Main Building in London. Crown copyright.

In 1993 the Ministry of Defence (MOD) entered into a Government owned Contractor operated arrangement with Hunting-BRAE whereby Hunting-BRAE operated the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) on behalf of the Government. In 1999, following a competitive tender, a new 25-year contract was awarded to AWE Management Ltd (AWE ML).

On the 1 July 2019 the MOD triggered the Successor Arrangements clause with AWE ML to consider alternative viable management options ahead of the current contract expiration. Following an in-depth review, the MOD concluded that AWE plc will become an Arms-Length Body, wholly owned by the MOD.

The change in model will remove the current commercial arrangements, enhancing the MOD's agility in the future management of the UK's nuclear deterrent, whilst also delivering on core MOD objectives and value for money to the taxpayer.

The decision was taken in order to simplify and further strengthen the relationship between the MOD and AWE plc, enhancing the MOD's ability to invest in the development of the workforce, technology and infrastructure, and therefore in the future of AWE plc.

The MOD recognises the achievements of everyone involved with AWE and thank AWE ML and its shareholders for their support in stewarding the organisation through crucial phases of delivery and planning.

Published 2 November 2020

[Artificial intelligence and intellectual property: call for views](#)

News story

AI and machine learning are enabling. They are already transforming the global economy. We want your views on the implications for IP.



The UK is voted one of the best intellectual property (IP) environments in the world. To keep it that way we are keen to look ahead to the challenges that these new technologies bring. We need to make sure the UK's IP environment is adapted to accommodate them.

We want to understand the implications Artificial Intelligence (AI) might have for IP policy. We also need to understand the impact the IP framework might have for AI, in the near to medium term.

On 7 September 2020, the IPO launched a [Call for Views on AI and IP](#) posing a series of important questions. These include questions relating to AI and patents, trade marks, designs, trade secrets and copyright.

We want your ideas, expertise, and insight to help us prepare for the future. We want your views to help the UK remain at the forefront of the AI and data revolution.

Please submit your responses to the consultation by 11.45pm on 30 November 2020.

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Regulator's new "5-minute guides" will support charity trustees to meet duties

The Charity Commission, the charity regulator for England and Wales, has launched a new set of simple, easy to understand guides, designed to help trustees run their charities in line with the law.

The new guides cover five key aspects of charity management – a 'core syllabus' covering the basics that the regulator expects all trustees to be aware of.

They explain the basics of:

This 'gateway' level guidance will make it easier and quicker for all trustees to check what is expected and to find more detailed information if needed, which is all the more important as charities respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Commission's research and testing with trustees have helped shape their design and content.

The publications come as part of the Commission's programme, outlined in its [2020/21 Business Plan](#), to deliver updated core guidance and an improved website, so that it is easier for trustees, who are overwhelmingly unpaid volunteers, to access the information they need. This is in line with the Commission's strategic priority of ensuring trustees have the tools and understanding they need to succeed, and helping them maximise the difference they make.

The new tools have been launched to coincide with [Trustees' Week](#), the annual celebration of charity trustees and the contribution they make to society.

Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said:

Volunteer trustees are the bedrock of the charity sector. Without their commitment and dedication charity would simply not be possible. When I started at the Commission, I said our guidance and advice needed to become more available and accessible to trustees, to help them deliver on the causes they support and champion. These new 5 minute guides are an important milestone in our delivery on that promise.

The Commission stresses that whilst the guides may be basic, they are designed to serve the needs of experienced trustees as well as those new to the role. It says that years of experience cannot immunise even the very best trustees from running into questions or problems.

In a [blog](#), Helen Stephenson sets out how she hopes the new guides will aid

trustees, particularly as they face unprecedented challenges presented by the pandemic.

Helen Stephenson added:

Our 5-minute guides are designed with real trustees and real situations in mind. They recognise that good governance is not a bureaucratic detail – it underpins the delivery of a charity’s purposes to the high standards expected by the public – and is all the more important in the midst of this pandemic which is impacting civil society so heavily. I hope trustees, both new and experienced, read and use them to help them fulfil their charity’s purpose for the public benefit.

Trustees’ Week runs from 2-9 November 2020. More details can be found at www.trusteesweek.org.

Ends.

Notes to editors:

1. In preparing and refining the guides, the Commission has undertaken both qualitative and quantitative user testing with trustees, including via a representative online survey and via targeted focus groups. It has also engaged with charity sector bodies.
2. The Charity Commission is the registrar and regulator of charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society. The Commission is an independent, non-ministerial government department.

[eAlert: 2 November 2020 – Improved Woodland Creation Planning Grant launched today](#)

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Lift-off for new generation of space scientists

- New apprenticeship opportunity is designed to help students get a job that's out of this world, with training including spacecraft manufacturing and satellite integration
- Growing space sector to aims create 30,000 new jobs in the industry over the next decade

Apprentices in England will soon be able to boldly study what no students have studied before in the UK, thanks to a new Government-backed space engineering apprenticeship, the Science Minister announced today (Monday 2 November).

Launching in January 2021, the Space Engineering Technician apprenticeship will help young people gain the technical skills needed for a career in space and follows a successful collaboration between the UK Space Agency, Airbus and the University of Leicester.

The UK space sector is hungry for engineers and technologists who understand the demands that come with working in space, and over the next decade the sector aims to create 30,000 jobs. This new opportunity will offer students, for the first time, the chance to focus on topics like spacecraft manufacturing; building skills in design, problem solving and testing.

Currently, apprentices training in space roles gain qualifications as general apprentices and craft apprentices. The Science Minister recently visited Airbus in Stevenage where she met apprentices working on satellite panel manufacturing, as well as those developing techniques to be used by the Rosalind Franklin the Mars sample fetch rover.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

This new qualification is an incredible opportunity for young people which will equip them with the vital skills they need to help unlock the secrets of our solar system.

The UK's space industry is booming, and these new apprentices will become the next generation of engineers that will help us achieve our country's space ambitions.

The Space Engineering Technician apprenticeship is the first to be recognised by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and

approved by The Department of Education. The first cohort of students is expected to start their training from January 2021.

The success of establishing this level 4 apprenticeship has paved the way for the development of a degree equivalent (level 6) space engineering diploma which is expected to be available to students from next September.

The University of Leicester has played an integral role in designing the new apprenticeship, utilising expertise in space teaching and research, which spans over 60 years.

Dr Nigel Bannister, Associate Professor in the University's School of Physics and Astronomy, said:

From large multinationals to small enterprises, companies in the UK are at the forefront of the commercial space revolution – it is therefore essential that the right training is offered for future recruits into the industry.

The international space sector is undergoing a major transformation as space becomes more accessible, and this new standard enables employers to recruit people with the skills needed to grow their business and ensure their workforce is trained in the latest technologies and techniques.

For apprentices, it represents a new route into a fantastically exciting sector – one which we are becoming ever more reliant upon in our daily lives. I hope it will also Airbus, which has been employing apprentices in space manufacturing for more than 30 years and has trained more than 120 apprentices over the last nine years using the general standards, can now use the more focused standard to ensure they are training more rigorously for their future workforce.

Richard Franklin, Managing Director of Airbus Defence and Space in the UK said:

Four years ago, we looked at how we could design and develop a space technician qualification that would enable students to gain specific engineering skills in space manufacturing.

Working in partnership with the UK Space Agency and the University of Leicester we have created the Space Engineering Technician apprenticeship. This is an exciting new route into space and helps the Government achieve its ambitions – whether that's the next mission to Mars or helping to build Earth observation satellites to monitor climate change.

Kathie Bowden, lead for Skills and Careers at the UK Space Agency, said:

The space employer Trailblazer group have worked together to set standards for the sector which will help build the workforce for this growing sector. These standards will help more companies take advantage of the enthusiasm and energy that so many young people have to pursue a rewarding career in the sector.

BAE Systems PLC, Thales Alenia Space UK, Nammo Westcott Ltd, Reaction Engines Ltd, STFC RAL Space, United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and Oxford Space Systems have supported the process to allow over 900 space sector companies access to the qualification.

Jennifer Coupland, chief executive at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education said:

We're delighted to achieve lift-off with this new apprenticeship. It's incredibly exciting to think apprentices will be given opportunities to develop and manufacture equipment for the space industry. They could one day work on anything from satellites monitoring climate change to spacecraft sent on missions to distant planets.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Gillian Keegan said:

It's fantastic to see the UK Space Agency, Airbus and the University of Leicester have joined forces to offer the first Space Engineering Technician apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships are a great way to learn the skills needed to start a career in a huge range of exciting sectors. This exciting new opportunity will play a key role in helping the UK to become a world leader in the space industry.

The UK space sector is thriving, generating an income of £14.8 billion, employing 42,000 people and supporting a further £300 billion of economic activity through the use of satellite services.

The space engineering apprenticeship will ensure we have the talent needed for the UK space industry's continuing growth.

Apprenticeships will play a vital role helping to provide the skills businesses and our economy need to recover and grow after coronavirus. To support more people to take up a high quality apprenticeship so they can secure a great career, the Government is offering all employers £2,000 for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and £1,500 for each newly recruited apprentice aged 25 and over. This includes taking on an apprentice who has been made redundant.