

# Civil Service starts guaranteed interview scheme for veterans

The initiative, known as the 'Great Place to Work for Veterans', delivers on a manifesto commitment and is the most recent step in a wider commitment from the government to make the Civil Service a more welcoming place for veterans.

As of this week, recruitment campaigns in the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Defence, the Cabinet Office and the Home Office, including UK Border Force, will begin to include the option for veterans to indicate that they wish to apply under the initiative.

Any veteran who opts into the scheme and meets the minimum criteria required for a role will be guaranteed to move to the next stage of selection, such as an interview or online test.

The scheme is designed to encourage more veterans to join the Civil Service when they leave the armed forces ensuring the Civil Service fully benefits from the wide ranging skills and talents in the armed forces community. It will also boost the employment prospects of those who have served, helping them to advance their careers beyond the armed forces.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has been established to push the veterans agenda across government.

So it's fantastic that the Civil Service is leading the way in offering more opportunities to veterans.

Many ex-service personnel already work in the civil service, bringing invaluable skills and experience learned from the armed forces to the heart of government.

The new scheme expands on the Going Forward into Employment Programme, which helps veterans and their spouses into junior roles in the Civil Service. This new scheme will open up roles at all levels across the Civil Service and in locations right across the United Kingdom.

There will not be a time limit for those leaving service on when they can use the initiative.

David Richmond, Director of the Office for Veterans' Affairs and a former Commanding Officer of 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland', commented:

I loved just about every moment of my military career; it was a

privilege to serve alongside wonderful individuals and be part of a great team with a strong sense of purpose. We enjoyed superb training that prepared us for every job, and this has served me extremely well in my civilian career, which latterly has been with the Civil Service.

My training has given me a framework within which to apply critical thinking and the communication skills to influence at the most senior levels, not to mention the technical skills learned and experiences gained along the way. The great place to work for veterans scheme will encourage more veterans to join the Civil Service and to continue to serve the country in a new role.

Lee Bushby, veteran and civil servant, said:

Joining the Civil Service after nearly 25 years in the Army, there can at times be some misunderstanding of the wealth and depth of talent that a veteran can bring to the table; for me when I reflect back on my career I can see that resilience was a key skill that the Army gave me and this alongside my leadership and strategic planning experience that I gained as senior Warrant Officer Communications Specialist working in Headquarter operational environment, gave me the tools I needed to succeed in my second career.

The work of the OVA includes:

- Pulling together all functions of government, and better coordinating charity sector provision, in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served
- Ensuring that every single veteran and their family knows where to turn to access support when required
- Helping to generate a 'single view of the veteran' by making better use of data to understand veterans' needs and where gaps in provision exist
- Improving the perception of veterans

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## **UK Government agrees to plans for £26.5 million Angus Fund**

Agreement has been secured for proposals to spend the Angus Fund, a £26.5 million UK Government capital investment fund for projects in Angus, which is part of the [Tay Cities Deal](#).

Following proposals from Angus Council, the UK Government has agreed to

invest up to £5.6 million to promote North Angus and Montrose as a clean growth zone where new technologies can be used to improve energy efficiency. This includes support for developing a Drone Port at Montrose which will benefit the emerging off shore wind developments and create a regulated testing area to attract companies from across the UK.

A further £5.9 million will be invested into low carbon projects across the region, such as utilising electric and hydrogen vehicles as low emission transport methods, and reducing the carbon impact of housing.

An additional £15 million of UK Government funding will support the development of agritech, which will support the region's vital agricultural sector. This will develop technologies that can increase sustainable crop production, improve food security and nutrition, and reduce agriculture's carbon footprint with the aim of achieving net zero, or carbon-negative, production systems.

UK Government Minister Iain Stewart said:

These are an exciting set of proposals for Angus with the ability to transform the region into a powerhouse for clean growth and green jobs.

From the outset the UK Government was determined that the Tay Cities Deal should deliver for the people of Angus, and our £26.5 million investment will do just that.

We have now committed more than £1.5 billion to City Region and Growth Deals across Scotland to create opportunities and secure the future of our economy.

The funds will be used to stimulate the Mercury Programme, Angus Council's visionary £1bn partnership programme across the Tay Cities region between government, public, private and community sectors. Angus Council Leader, Cllr David Fairweather said:

This is welcome and exciting news for the people of Angus and the projects being developed within the Angus Fund will be innovative and showcase Angus assets. We had already committed to the Mercury Programme in our Council Plan at the last Full Council meeting, but this funding will ensure a strong start and increased pace of growth.

The purpose of the Mercury Programme is to increase productivity through clean growth, protecting places for future generations to live, work and visit.

Angus Council seeks to achieve this by becoming a sustainable, low carbon region that leads the development and implementation of innovative clean

technologies. These technologies will deliver increased economic growth while significantly reducing our carbon footprint and contributing to national reductions in carbon use.

Funding approval for projects remains provisional on the development of acceptable Full Business Cases and the continued oversight and management of the overall Tay Cities Deal.

The Tay Cities Deal is a partnership between local, Scottish and UK governments and the private, academic and voluntary sectors which seeks to create a smarter and fairer Angus, Dundee, Fife and Perth & Kinross. The Deal plans to invest £700 million into the region over 10-15 years of which £300 million is being put in by the Scottish and UK governments.

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## [Union connectivity review](#)

On [30th June \(2020\)](#) the Prime Minister announced a review would be undertaken [into union connectivity](#), exploring ways to improve connectivity between our 4 nations and bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects.

I have now published the [terms of reference for this independent review](#). Chaired by Sir Peter Hendy CBE, the review will make recommendations on how the UK government can level up transport infrastructure and improve connectivity between Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, boosting access to opportunities and improving people's everyday connections.

Working closely with the devolved administrations, Sir Peter will look at road, rail, air and sea links, and how they could be improved to fuel the UK's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Sir Peter brings extensive experience and knowledge to the role with over 45 years working in the transport sector – including as Chair of Network Rail and successfully running London's transport network during the Olympics.

The review will look at how the quality and availability of transport infrastructure between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can support quality of life in communities across the UK while also aiding economic recovery. This will in turn lead to recommendations on whether and how best to improve connections, and whether that includes the need to invest in additional infrastructure by the UK government. Among other things, Sir Peter will look at the feasibility and conduct a detailed initial assessment of options for improved road and rail connections between England and Scotland, and England and Wales, as well as improved air links across the UK.

The review will also look to the future – considering the role of future technologies and assess environmental impacts of current and future infrastructure. Sir Peter will be expected to publish his final recommendations in Summer 2021.

This announcement follows a recent pledge by the UK government to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in the devolved nations – working with the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK government will identify opportunities for ‘spades in the ground’ ready projects to help build up communities and create jobs quicker for people across the United Kingdom.

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## Call for evidence on ‘Air Quality Partners’ to support local authorities

Press release

New approach aims to broaden the range of organisations responsible for improving air quality locally.



The government has launched a call for evidence today (5 October) on which public bodies should be designated to become Air Quality Partners to help cut emissions.

This approach will ensure all relevant public bodies, not just local authorities, are playing their part in helping to reduce pollution at a local level, ensuring a better joined-up delivery.

Under the new approach, the Environment Secretary will have the power to designate Air Quality Partners which have some responsibility for sources of local pollution (such as a specific stretch of road or site that emits pollution). Air Quality Partners will be required to assist in developing and implementing an action plan to cut the pollution output.

The call for evidence asks for views as to which public authorities should be designated. A public authority may be relevant for designation where:

- It carries out duties of a public nature
- It is responsible for a source of local air pollution

- It is able to take certain actions to reduce local concentrations of pollution

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Local authorities are best placed to tackle certain issues at a local level, but we want to ensure they don't shoulder the burden alone and that all relevant public bodies are pulling in the same direction to help clean up our air.

I encourage all local authorities to provide their thoughts on which organisations we should designate under powers we are bringing in through the Environment Bill, to help reduce local pollution levels.

Through the Bill we aim to update the Local Air Quality Management Framework (LAQM) to broaden the range of organisations that play a role in improving local air quality across the country.

This call for evidence aims to harness the knowledge of local authorities to better shape how these plans are implemented ahead of a full consultation once the Environment Bill becomes law.

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## [UN Human Rights Council 45: Interactive Dialogue with the Fact Finding Mission on Libya](#)

Thank you Madam President,

We welcome the update from the chair of the Fact Finding Mission, a much-needed step towards our ultimate goal of ending impunity in Libya.

The UK remains gravely concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in Libya, the ongoing military build-up around Sirte and challenges posed by Covid-19. Civilian casualties and attacks on medical facilities and schools are unacceptable. Mass grave sites must be secured until proper investigations are possible.

We reiterate our condemnation of all human rights violations and abuses, and

violations of international humanitarian law, including indiscriminate attacks; unlawful killings; sexual and gender-based violence; silencing of journalists, activists and human rights defenders; and mistreatment of vulnerable people, including migrants.

Approaching the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325, we reiterate our commitment to pursuing the full and effective participation of women in political and public life in Libya.

The UK welcomes recent ceasefire announcements and engagement in political dialogue. We urge all parties now to commit to a ceasefire and the UN-led political process, which remains essential to improving human rights in Libya.

Mr Chairman,

What do you need from the international community to ensure you have the resources and access to conduct your important work?