

Funding for cadets boosted to £43 million pounds over next two years to help build the maritime sector

Eligible seafarers will now get half of their training paid – providing a real investment in the future of maritime and securing future growth.

Previously, the subsidy was 30% but increases to 50% for all new and existing tonnage tax groups and Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) funding. This now means that maritime companies can take advantage of an extra £13m of funding to take on and train up cadets.

The DfT and HMT have increased the subsidy on training costs for cadets and ratings – which companies can obtain as part of their tonnage tax – to 50% from the current level of 30% for all new and existing tonnage tax groups and SMarT funded seafarers.

The new measures complement UK Government's commitment to protecting and supporting seafarers as announced in the seafarer protections nine-point plan, which commits to improving the longer-term working conditions of seafarers as part of a wider vision to boost seafarer protections and welfare. This includes the Seafarers' Wages Bill which will ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to the National Minimum Wage while in the UK's territorial waters.

This increase in training subsidies for cadets and ratings does this and emphasises UK Government's drive to grow and support the UK's highly skilled seafarer population to meet UK and global needs.

The extra money means there will be up for £20 million available this year increasing to £23 million next.

Funding for eligible seafarers is available this year and will be locked in until at least September 2024 providing an incentive and financial security for those looking to take up a career in maritime.

The increased subsidy rate will be available to any seafarer who meets the requirements and who is studying at a Maritime and Coastguard Agency approved college for an academic qualification that leads to the issue of an UK Unlimited Certificate of Competency.

Secretary of State Grant Shapps said:

Our incredible maritime sector is built by the thousands of workers who, every day, keep our shelves stacked and are responsible for 95% of all the UK's freight.

This funding will be critical to helping people upskill, take on a career in the sector, and help build a strong maritime sector for years to come.

Damien Oliver Commercial, Programmes & Maritime Business Development Director said:

This is an important milestone for investing in the future of maritime and our seafarers. These changes now mean that more funding is available to support seafarers with their training. We are also looking at additional support for those who have already attained a qualification so they can move onto the next one supported by further funding. We will do all we can to encourage and support people into this industry which does so much to support our every day life in the UK.

These changes will cover an interim period from April 2022 to September 2024. A new UK training system is then scheduled to be implemented, as recommended by the 2020 Maritime Skills Commission Report.

[New guidance to improve the accountability of the Electoral Commission published](#)

- Electoral Commission to be made more accountable to Parliament
- Move comes in response to Pickles review into electoral fraud
- Consultation on the draft guidance opens today

Today (22 August 2022) the Department for Levelling Up has opened the [consultation on new guidance](#) to improve the accountability of the Electoral Commission to UK Parliament. This guidance addresses the concern raised in Lord Eric Pickles' independent review into electoral fraud, that the current system of oversight of the Electoral Commission is not fit for purpose.

The report also highlighted cases such as Tower Hamlets – in which the 2014 Mayoral election was declared void by corrupt and illegal practices – as evidence of vulnerabilities in our system which must be addressed.

The Elections Act 2022 delivers the government's manifesto commitment to

protect the integrity of our democracy. As part of the Act, new guidance for the regulator will be introduced subject to the approval of the UK Parliament.

The draft guidance in the Statement states that the Electoral Commission should support Returning Officers in ensuring the secrecy of the ballot inside polling stations. This addresses cross-party concerns about the practice of so-called “family voting” or “community voting” in some areas of the country, where it is alleged that some voters are being pressured by their spouses or partners over who to vote for inside polling booths.

In May 2022, the independent organisation, Democracy Volunteers, asserted they had identified 5% of all voters they observed in Tower Hamlets elections were either causing, or were affected by, “family voting” and over 85% of those being affected by “family voting” were women, predominantly from Asian backgrounds.

Levelling Up Secretary, Greg Clark, said:

The public rightly expects efficient and independent regulation of the electoral system. The Pickles Report was clear that the Electoral Commission needed to change.

This is why we are improving the accountability of the Electoral Commission by giving Parliament greater visibility and scrutiny of the Commission’s work.

This guidance is a necessary step to increase the accountability of the Electoral Commission to UK Parliament whilst respecting its operational independence.

It is completely unacceptable for anyone’s vote to be influenced or pressured inside a polling station. Protecting the secrecy of the ballot is of the utmost importance to the health of our democracy.

The government in its 2019 manifesto committed to protecting the integrity of our democracy. The new draft guidance therefore requires the Commission to have regard to matters such as tackling voter fraud, supporting Returning Officers in ensuring the secrecy of the ballot inside polling stations, and supporting participation by informing the public about the franchise and electoral registration, when carrying out its relevant regulatory functions.

The draft guidance also reflects the Pickles Report’s finding that the Commission needed to refocus on its core functions.

The consultation – closing on 5 December 2022 – will provide the statutory consultees with the opportunity to share their views on the draft guidance. Under the Elections Act, those consultees are the Commission itself, the Speaker’s Committee on the Electoral Commission and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee.

What happens next?

The government will consider all responses to the consultation and make any necessary changes before submitting the draft guidance to Parliament for scrutiny. Parliamentarians will have an opportunity to share their views on the draft before deciding whether to approve or reject the draft guidance in full.

Further information

The Elections Act 2022 makes provisions for a Strategy and Policy Statement that will contain guidance and principles for the Electoral Commission to have regard to in the discharge of its functions

See the [draft guidance](#).

The government will also engage the Parliamentary Parties Panel and other relevant stakeholders on the draft guidance.

[Scale-up visa will propel high-growth businesses](#)

The UK's top high-growth businesses will have greater flexibility and power to entice the world's top talent through the new [Scale-up visa](#), the government announced today (22 August).

UK businesses experiencing impressive success will be eligible to sponsor talented individuals, from scientists and engineers to architects and programmers, to support their growth and contribute to boosting the UK's economy.

Unlike other sponsored visas, the Scale-up visa allows businesses to employ high-skilled individuals who will receive 2 years' leave to remain in the UK without requiring further sponsorship or permission beyond the first 6 months.

This will further enhance the government's overall offer to businesses through the points-based immigration system to hire eligible employees from anywhere in the world. The Scale-up visa will give them greater flexibility to hire, often in-demand, talent they need so they can go to the next level, while boosting the UK's high-skilled pool.

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration Kevin Foster said:

Rapidly growing businesses, like small enterprises, tech and

financial services, need the right level of support to go to the next level. Through our Scale-up visa, we're enabling businesses to focus on their growth and innovation by giving them more freedom to bring in the diverse skills and experience they need, making them more attractive on an international stage.

By supporting our high-growth tech, financial services and small businesses, we are ensuring the UK remains a global hub for emerging technologies and innovation while enhancing productivity across the economy – creating jobs, growth and prosperity across Britain.

Irene Graham OBE, CEO of the ScaleUp Institute said:

The ScaleUp Institute welcomes the launch of the Scale-up visa. This is something we have recommended since our inception and should provide a much-needed fast track service to enable local growth companies to access the talent they need more quickly.

Scaleups add over £1 trillion a year and more than 3 million jobs to the UK economy, and are present in every community, hiring people from at home and abroad, as they drive growth into their local areas and beyond.

The visa should help with the skills demands. We look forward to continuing to work with the government as this service evolves to ensure it fully addresses scaling business needs and works effectively.

Scaling up is an important phase for high-growth businesses to continue growing and drive their international competitiveness. By bringing in sought-after expertise and skills, enterprises can boost their innovation and productivity and in turn keep contributing to the UK's economy.

Companies, including small businesses and those in the tech and financial services sectors, that have achieved growth of 20% or more in either employment or turnover year-on-year for at least 3 years and employed a minimum of 10 people at the start of the 3 years will be eligible to sponsor talented individuals through the Scale-up visa.

Eligible businesses will be able to attract highly skilled talent including:

- scientists
- engineers
- programmers
- software developers
- research and development professionals
- economists
- architects
- technicians

- financial and investment advisers
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[Crime news: duty rotas for January 2023 under 2022 crime contract](#)

News story

Providers without duty rota slots starting on 1 October need to return CRM12 forms.



We need all providers who know that they have passed verification to return CRM12 forms for duty rota slots under the 2022 Standard Crime Contract.

You may have completed verification but missed the deadline for duty rotas beginning on 1 October 2022. If that applies to you then the next available rota starts on 3 January 2023.

Duty solicitor CRM12 forms

All providers who have completed the verification process but have yet to secure a rota slot will receive a Bravo message with a CRM12 form to complete. Providers who have not completed verification will also have received a CRM12 form. They will need to complete verification by 1 October to join the January rota.

Use Bravo to contact us if you haven't received a CRM12 but believe you should have done.

Deadline is 5 September

All forms attached to the message need to be completed with duty solicitor details and returned by 11.59pm on Monday 5 September 2022.

Eligibility for January rota

Providers will only be eligible to join the January rota if they have accepted their contract by 1 October 2022.

Duty rota changes

Providers with members on October duty rotas should keep an eye on GOV.UK for the deadline to make changes in time for January 2023 rotas.

Further information

[LAA eTendering system](#) – to access Bravo message boards

[Duty solicitors: rotas, information and guidance](#)

[Crime contract 2022 tender](#)

[Standard Crime Contract 2022](#)

[Crime news: 2022 crime contract uploads and October duty rotas](#)

Published 22 August 2022

[Boost for farming innovation](#)

Artificial Intelligence technology to optimise welfare in pigs, agri-robots to help speed up vegetable harvests and automation to increase fruit crop yields are just some of research and development projects to receive funding through the Farming Innovation Programme, it was announced today (Monday 22 August).

Details of these new innovative projects comes as further support was announced for farmers and growers with novel ideas to help grow food production, encourage sustainable practices and increase productivity, with the next rounds of the [Feasibility Projects](#) and the [Small R&D Partnership Project competitions](#) due to open shortly.

The £16.5 million of funding will help drive innovation in agriculture and horticulture and is part of the Government's £270 million [Farming Innovation Programme](#).

It is run in partnership with UK Research and Innovation, building upon their successful [Transforming Food Production challenge](#).

Farming Innovation Minister Steve Double said:

We want to help unlock greater potential in our already brilliant farming and horticulture sector. Today's first round of projects demonstrate how – with the right funding and support – there are great productivity and environmental sustainability gains to be made.

Our £270 million investment in farming innovation is designed to help take the UK's world-leading research ideas and turn them into practical solutions to support healthy soils, abundant pollinators and clean water alongside profitable food production.

Katrina Hayter, challenge director for the Transforming Food Production challenge, said:

You only need look at the sheer breadth of projects that have received funding to see there are so many opportunities for innovation across the food sector. From animal health to crop productivity, the introduction of strategic support technology and the precise application of chemicals, it's exciting to see so many concepts beginning to come to life.

When brought together, it shows how the whole food system can benefit from new ideas, with knowledge-sharing and collaboration at its core. We are keen to ensure farmers and growers remain at the heart of projects, bringing their valuable real-life experiences to the project consortia to ensure that each innovation stays focused on helping improve the day-to-day challenges faced by those in the food sector. We now look forward to supporting these projects further as they develop.

The Farming Innovation Programme aims to spark new ideas and collaboration across the sector to address long-term challenges such as producing nutritious food more efficiently whilst helping the sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net zero goals. Farmers, growers, foresters, businesses and researchers are being invited to collaborate and submit applications for these two new competitions:

- A £5.5 million competition for 'Feasibility projects' will offer grants for projects worth between £200,000 and £500,000 to support research and development through the difficult testing phase of an idea to see if it is worth investing in further
- Winners of the 'Small R&D Partnership' competition will receive a share of the £11 million grant funding for industrial research projects worth between £1 million and £3 million to further develop new solutions that will ultimately address major on-farm or immediate post farmgate challenges or opportunities such as enhancing productivity and

sustainability.

Details of the successful applications from the first round of Small R&D Partnership Projects, Feasibility Projects and Research Starter Projects, that were launched in October 2021 [were shared by UKRI today](#). These include:

- Farmsense's use of innovative sensor technology and AI to optimise welfare in pigs;
- Blue Planet II, a new project which aims to build upon its highly successful autonomous technology to further increase fruit crop yield and quality;
- A new project from 'Muddy Machines', whose agri-robot concepts aim to speed up vegetable harvesting with sustainability and reliability at their core.

Altogether Defra expects to spend around £600 million on grants and other support for farmers to invest in productivity, animal health and welfare, innovation, research and development over the next three years.