

[Call for officials to pilot new equalities duty training](#)

Press release

An opportunity for officials to trial our new equalities training in September



We recently published an [article](#) summarising how we can support colleagues working to understand the equalities impacts of policy decisions. We are continuing to develop our equalities offer, and [we are now seeking volunteers from across the public sector to help us trial a new equalities duty training session.](#)

We will aim to run the trial in September for up to 20 officials.

The training will cover:

- What the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is and what it requires of organisations
- Understanding the evidence base in a policy area
- Where to find relevant data
- Engaging with experts, including academics, advocacy groups and think tanks

Due to limited space, we will prioritise officials who:

- Support teams with equalities considerations, including PSED compliance
- Lead on policy areas with a pressing need to consider the impact of policy on different communities

You can register your interest using this [online form](#). If you have any other queries, or would like to commission us to explore the equalities impacts in your policy area, please contact us via enquiries@openinnovation.gov.uk

Published 27 July 2022

Environment Agency flood defences now talk back

Press release

Flood defences in Devon and Cornwall are becoming chattier than ever, engaging passersby in conversations about flood risk and plastic pollution.



Learn more about flood defences when visiting the beach this summer by scanning QR codes

Text message conversations can be struck up with flood defences and other assets by scanning QR codes. The QR code is mounted on them or nearby in 4 locations, with a fifth to be added later this year.

Liz Taylor, flood resilience engagement advisor, said:

Finding new and interesting ways to engage people is key. And using Hello Lamp Post technology will help make us more relevant to a newer audience who prefer texting.

But the advice being shared through our growing network is relevant to everyone. How to stay safe in a flood. How defences work. And ways to start making lifestyle changes to cut down on plastic waste from our in-house team of experts.

We also hope to add advice on saving water from South West Water in the future. If you see one of QR codes during the school holiday, try it.

Interactive objects can be found at:

- Bude where signs give information about the flood risk in the area and

- the changing coast line, as well as a fun plastics quiz;
- Dartmoor which has signs in Buckfastleigh and on Dartmoor so people can find out more about how working with natural processes on the moor can reduce the impact of flooding on communities;
 - Exmouth where people can learn more about the recently completed tidal defence scheme and plastic pollution;
 - Truro which is a terrific location to learn what the tidal gate does and how to prepare for a flood.

Jessica Hickie, plastics and sustainability programme manager, said:

Be part of the solution during Plastic Free July 2022. Chat with the signs at Exmouth. Learn the simple actions you could take to tackle plastic pollution in your day to day life and protect our wildlife.

The actions include a simple litter pick, kitchen refills and finding out about a hard-to-recycle item. They have been put together by the Environment Agency on behalf of the [Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution](#). The project which aims to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in river and marine environments via behaviour change, targeting hotspots and finding effective solutions.

Editor's notes

Across Devon and Cornwall there are 45 signs. Since they have been installed the number of interactions is the equivalent of holding around 40 public engagement events. They have helped us save nearly 5 tonnes of carbon.

The next location to be added is East Budleigh where people can find out more about the Lower Otter Restoration Project.

Published 27 July 2022

[DASA Launches DTEP](#)

- The Defence Technology Exploitation Programme will help keep the UK at the forefront of defence technology
- Joining innovations and up to 50% of government funding with large suppliers
- Grants of up to £500,000 available per project

A £16 million programme to boost small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) defence innovation has been launched today.

With the innovation of SMEs, the resources of big suppliers and initial funding from government, the Defence Technology Exploitation Programme (DTEP) is designed to bring the key components together to allow pioneering projects to flourish.

The aim is to keep the United Kingdom at the forefront of defence technology, improving the capabilities available to our Armed Forces, the competitiveness of UK industry and growing potential exports benefits.

Individual grants of up to 50% of a project's value – to a maximum of £500,000 per grant – will be available through DTEP for collaborative projects between SMEs and larger suppliers, supporting the integration of novel technologies, materials and processes into MOD's supply chains.

DTEP will be open for proposals year-round, with cycles closing at 3-month intervals for assessment of submissions.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

Innovation within defence is crucial to maintaining competitive advantage for our Armed Forces.

The Defence Technology Exploitation Programme is a positive step in how we support SMEs and larger suppliers to work together to improve the resilience and competitiveness of the MOD's supply chain.

Today's launch builds upon the successful BEIS-funded National Aerospace Technology Exploitation Programme (NATEP) and a pilot of DTEP conducted with Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI). An example of work supported by this pilot is CCP Gransden, based near Ballygowan, collaborating with Thales and Ulster University on a project to replace the Starstreak surface-to-air missile system's metallic canister with a composite version – reducing reliance on global supply chains for the over 50 components currently needed.

Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator, Anita Friend said:

DTEP has been designed to help SMEs join defence supply chains and offers SMEs and larger suppliers the opportunity to come together to solve defence problems.

For an SME, DTEP offers not only funding but also the opportunity to deliver new innovations into the UK defence supply chain and a way to develop and scale up their business. DTEP is also beneficial for larger companies, offering early access to new technologies or processes that they may be able to help commercialise.

Applications to DTEP can be made by UK-based SMEs looking to form a collaboration with a UK-based higher-tier supplier to help integrate and take

the novel solution to market. The key areas of interest for proposals are set out in detail on the DTEP portal and are aligned with the recently published [Defence Capability Framework](#).

DASA DTEP Business Relationship Managers will be available at all steps of the process, from project formation until after project completion. They will support SMEs through signposting, mentoring and offering other support services.

DTEP will be delivered by the MOD's Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), in partnership with the Innovate UK group, and it is a core commitment in the [Defence and Security Industrial Strategy](#) and [SME Action Plan](#).

DTEP guidance can be accessed [here](#).

[Launch of new innovative defence programme backed by £16 million](#)

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Background

- The DTEP page can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-defence-technology-exploitation-programme>
- The specific areas of interest follow the MOD's Enduring Capability Challenges. More information can be found in the Defence Capability Framework [here](#).

- More details on the CCP Gransden, Thales and Ulster University programme can be found [here](#).
 - Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. The Innovate UK group is an ecosystem of expertise, funding, and powerful connections driving value through innovation. Innovate UK and Innovate UK KTN are working in close partnership with the MOD and DASA on the delivery of the DTEP programme.
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[Rogue director abuses bounce back loan](#)

Rupinder Kaur Thaker (42), from Chadwell Heath, Essex, was appointed director of TKML Limited in April 2016 at the same time the company was incorporated.

Five years later TKML Limited entered into creditors' voluntary liquidation and the company's insolvency triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Investigators first uncovered several inconsistencies in the explanations provided by Rupinder Thaker when asked about the company.

The entry for TKML Limited on the company register stated the nature of business as take-away food shops and mobile food stands, and Rupinder Thaker's occupation as a publicist. But in the report to creditors the company was described as providing catering services and décor supplies for wedding ceremonies.

Further enquiries found that between May 2019 and when the company went into insolvency in June 2021, Rupinder Thaker had failed to preserve and/or maintain adequate accounting records or failed to deliver them to the liquidator. This meant investigators could not verify several substantial transactions.

More than £250,000 paid out of the company bank account remains unexplained, questions persist around what TKML Limited did with a £45,000 bounce back loan and whether the company was entitled to a loan of that size, and whether £11,000 stated by Rupinder Thaker as being owed to her and a connected company were accurate.

On 12 July 2022, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted a 7-year disqualification undertaking from Rupinder Thaker after she did not dispute that she failed to ensure that TKML Limited preserved and/or maintained adequate accounting records, or in the alternative, failed to deliver up adequate accounting records to the Liquidator.

Effective from 2 August 2022, Rupinder Thaker is banned from directly, or

indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

TKML Limited's Liquidator is considering the bounce back loans and recovery of funds.

Lawrence Zussman, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations, said:

Despite repeated requests for books and records, Rupinder Thaker failed to provide the liquidator with any evidence that could have helped explain the legitimacy of the company's financial affairs. Especially the £45,000 bounce back loan intended to support viable businesses during the pandemic.

Rupinder Thaker has been removed from the business environment for 7 years and her lengthy disqualification provides a stark warning that failing to maintain company books and records is a serious offence.

Rupinder Kaur Thaker is from Chadwell Heath, Essex, and her date of birth is January 1980.

TKML Limited (Company Reg no.10126155).

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#)

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on: