

News story: Major counter-terrorism exercise concludes

Exercise Border Reiver, which has been more than a year in the planning, has concluded following 3 days of activity across central and eastern Scotland and Northumbria.

The exercise, announced by the Prime Minister during a visit to Glasgow in March, forms part of the UK Home Office's National Counter-Terrorism Exercise Programme.

Exercises like this take place throughout the year and throughout the country, allowing the emergency services, governments and other agencies to practice and plan for a variety of terrorist incidents.

Speaking after the exercise, Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

On too many occasions this year, our emergency services have united in their response to horrific terrorist atrocities with the utmost professionalism.

The country has seen first-hand why it is vital that we work together – governments, police, fire and ambulance services and the private sector – to ensure we are fully prepared for terrorist attacks.

This week's exercise was an opportunity to test and practice our plans. It formed one of a series of counter-terrorism exercises that this government funds every year and which take place across the country.

We set an intentionally challenging cross-border scenario which brought together Police Scotland and Northumbria Police, countless agencies from across the UK and both the UK and Scottish governments, testing our ability to work across separate legal systems in response to what could have been a sustained attack in both Scotland and England.

I took part, chairing a meeting of COBR on Tuesday where UK and Scottish government ministers worked together to consider how best to support the front line emergency services and the wider investigation.

There were around 1,000 people involved in the exercise over 3 days and all were a credit to the organisations they represented.

I thank all those involved in the exercise for their efforts in ensuring its success, and for responding to the attack scenario in the same collected manner we have come to expect from our brilliant

emergency responders. Be assured that the lessons learned from this exercise will be used to inform plans to respond to any future attacks.

I also extend my gratitude to the Royal Bank of Scotland, who hosted the initial stage of the exercise at their headquarters in Edinburgh and to their staff for contending with the noise and the road closures the exercise brought with it.

I have come away from this week reassured that the terrorist threat will always be met with a strong and unified response across the whole of the United Kingdom.

Police Scotland, Northumbria Police, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service, North East Ambulance Service, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Transport Scotland, NHS Scotland, NHS England and the Ministry of Defence took part in the exercise, as did Scottish and UK government ministers and officials.

City of Edinburgh, Angus and Northumberland County Councils also tested their responses to a terrorist incident in their areas.

[Press release: Highest impact investor recognition for Innovate UK](#)

The OBN Awards 2017 celebrate the best of UK life sciences and Innovate UK was judged the winner of the Highest Impact Investor award for its work in supporting innovative companies in the industry over the past year.

The announcement comes as [Innovate UK confirmed that a further 46 projects in the health and life sciences sector](#) will share £15 million in funding from its latest competition.

Innovate UK's Director of Health & Life Sciences Ian Campbell attended the ceremony, and said:

This was awarded unanimously by the judging panel and based on the special contribution that Innovate UK is making to growing and scaling SMEs.

As we celebrate Innovate UK's tenth anniversary, we are grateful for the recognition that this award gives us as a funder and supporter of high value UK businesses working in health and life sciences.

We were also encouraged to see so many Innovate UK supported businesses nominated or winning awards at the OBN ceremony.

Innovate UK is at the forefront of supporting UK business as they seek solutions and new approaches to healthcare, food production and quality. We committed to spend up to £117 million (21% of our core budget of £561 million) on health and life sciences in 2016/17.

The projects Innovate UK funded that have had success in the past year include:

The OBN Awards, which are in their 9th year, were presented in a ceremony at Oxford Town Hall (October 5) and recognise outstanding scientific innovation within biotech, medtech, digital, synthetic biology, the companies that support the industry and the fundraisers that make it happen.

Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency. Innovate UK drives productivity and growth by supporting businesses to realise the potential of new technologies, develop ideas and make them a commercial success.

Innovate UK is the trading name of the Technology Strategy Board, which is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and incorporated by Royal Charter in England and Wales with company number RC000818. Registered office: Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FL.

Contact: pressoffice@innovateuk.gov.uk or 07766 901150.

About the [OBN Annual Awards](#)

The OBN Awards, now in its 9th year, celebrate innovation and achievement across the UK life sciences industry.

About [OBN](#)

OBN is the membership organisation supporting and bringing together the UK's emerging life sciences companies, corporate partners and investors.

[Press release: Bradford rapist will spend longer behind bars](#)

A rapist from Bradford will spend longer in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal

as unduly lenient.

Lee Duffy, 26, was aged between 19 and 22 when he carried out his violent attacks against 3 separate women aged between 16 and 19.

Duffy was convicted of 4 counts of rape and 3 counts of causing actual bodily harm at Bradford Crown Court in June this year. He was originally sentenced to 8 years in prison, but the Court of Appeal quashed that sentence and he will now serve 13 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“These crimes deserved a tougher punishment and I am pleased the Court has seen fit to increase the prison term. This demonstrates our commitment to victims of sexual offences that they will be taken seriously.

“I hope the increased sentence brings some closure to the victims, and they can begin to move on from what will have been a traumatic time.”

[Press release: More than £3m invested in space exploration](#)

A further £230,000 of funding has been awarded to studies into experiments that could be built and flown to the International Space Station (ISS), which could potentially support future human exploration of space.

The £3 million from the UK Space Agency Aurora Science programme, which is exploiting the data from robotic exploration, including our major investment in ESA’s ExoMars mission, will target questions of past and present life on Mars, investigating the presence of water and the geochemical environment as well as atmospheric trace gases and their sources.

Science Minister, Jo Johnson, said:

“Science enables and shapes the UK’s future in space exploration. This government funding will play a vital role in ensuring UK academics can continue to study the secrets of our solar system, from the polar regions of the Moon to the potential of life on Mars.

“Research and innovation are at the core of our Industrial Strategy, and by investing in these types of projects, we are reinforcing our position as a world leader in these important and exciting areas.”

The £3 million has gone to 17 academics and individual scientists working at UK research organisations. The scientific objectives of the first mission in the Aurora programme, ExoMars, are to understand Mars’s environment and its atmosphere.

In addition, £230,000 of funding has been awarded to the UK microgravity and space environments community in academia and industry. Four proposals have been funded, which will study concepts and designs for experiments which will deliver high quality science on the ISS as part of a national science programme.

British ESA astronaut Tim Peake was involved in many experiments during his sixth-month mission on the ISS from December 2015 to June 2016, including several with contributions from UK scientists.

Libby Jackson, Human Spaceflight and Microgravity Programme Manager at the UK Space Agency, said:

“Microgravity science in the UK has grown rapidly since we joined the ISS programme back in 2012. Any future mission to the ISS represents a really exciting opportunity to build on this and to ensure that the UK science community is properly placed to capitalise on the research opportunities that such a flight would offer.”

The studies undertaken will address how high quality science can be implemented within the constraints of the ISS and provide an accurate cost for the full flight experiment.

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News story: RAF football team play Irish Defence Forces

The Royal Air Force Ladies football team travelled to Dublin to play an Irish Defence Forces team and promote defence relations between Ireland and the UK.

In wet and blustery conditions in late September, the Royal Air Force team started well, dominating possession and creating chances. However, a shot from the Irish side caught the RAF goalkeeper off guard to make it 1-0. The second half brought a flurry of chances for the visitors, but the Irish Defence Forces team put away another goal to end the match 2-0. A well-disciplined match, with strong and competitive performances from both sides, it was fantastic preparation for the Royal Air Force team in their campaign to retain their Inter-Services title in March 2018.

Following the match, the Irish Defence Forces team hosted their Royal Air Force visitors to dinner where the teams exchanged gifts, and Senior Aircraftwoman Rachael Rutherford was awarded player of the match.