

Our Megan scoops prestigious skills award

Megan Robertson won the 'Intermediate Apprentice' category at the National Skills Academy for Nuclear (NSAN) Awards.

The awards are organised by UK Nuclear Skills and Cogent Skills. They highlight excellence in the nuclear sector and recognise rising stars of the present and future.

Megan has worked for Sellafield Ltd for 3 years as an apprentice nuclear operator.

She said:

When I started my apprenticeship, I was quiet and unsure about what I could achieve. I'm now much more self-confident, proud of the skills that I have developed and delighted to of won this award.

Two other Sellafield Ltd employees were recognised on the night. And Sellafield Ltd itself, alongside training partner Gen2, were finalists in the 'Best Employer and Provider' category.

Luke Doran, a 5th year process engineer degree apprentice, was shortlisted in the 'Higher and Degree Apprentice' category.

He said:

Being a finalist shows my hard work hasn't gone unnoticed and it gives me a great deal of pride in what I've managed to achieve.

I'm incredibly grateful for the support I've received throughout my apprenticeship.

Luke Crampton, who is working towards his chartership in IChemE design systems was also shortlisted for 'Graduate of the Year'.

He said:

I was delighted to be shortlisted for this award and grateful to the company for putting my name forward.

The nuclear industry provides technical challenges which put my skills to the test while helping to better myself as an engineer.

Sellafield Ltd and Gen2, our engineering and technology training provider, were shortlisted in the Best Employer and Provider Category.

Sellafield Ltd has approximately 600 apprentices on its books with qualifications ranging from level 2 (GCSE equivalent) to level 6 (degree level) across 15 schemes.

The company also has more than 120 graduates on a 2-year programme across 24 disciplines.

Gen2 has 5 training centres across Cumbria working with over 300 clients delivering a range of short courses and apprenticeship programmes with progression routes into employment and higher education including honours degrees.

Donna Connor, head of education and skills for Sellafield Ltd said:

Being shortlisted in this category is testament to the recruitment and support provided by Sellafield Ltd and the excellent training provision of Gen2 in West Cumbria.

We have such a diverse range of apprenticeships, including nuclear welding inspection, fire and rescue and business administration, and this award emphasises the exciting career opportunities at Sellafield Ltd and the nuclear industry.

Having 3 people shortlisted and Megan going on to win, highlights the excellent calibre of apprentices on our books – I couldn't be prouder.

Amanda Towers, Managing Director of Gen2 said:

We were extremely proud to have been shortlisted for this category.

It's testament to the long standing collaboration and partnership between Gen2 and Sellafield Ltd and our shared purpose to ensure we provide high quality training for many hundreds of Sellafield apprentices.

We believe the success of the partnership is due to the shared understanding of nuclear sector, passion for training development and delivery and a flexible and responsive approach that enables training solutions which are high quality and fit for purpose.

Energy Bills Support Scheme explainer

Published 1 April 2022

Last updated 29 July 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 29 July 2022

Full details explaining the design and delivery of the Energy Bills Support Scheme have now been published in the government's official government response to this year's technical consultation.

2. 30 May 2022

Following the recent announcement from the Chancellor, the financial support for energy bills has been doubled to £400 and payment will now be made as a grant, which will not be repayable.

3. 11 April 2022

Updated with an additional question following the launch of the Energy Bills Support Scheme consultation.

4. 1 April 2022

First published.

ICIBI Inspection Plan 2022-23 Published

News story

The Chief Inspector publishes his Inspection Plan 2022-23.



Commenting on the publication of his Inspection Plan for 2022-23, Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration David Neal said:

I have today published my second Inspection Plan, outlining the work that I intend to carry out over the upcoming year. For completeness, the Plan also includes reports that are with the Home Secretary awaiting publication and inspections that were started in 2021-22 and will report shortly.

I am grateful to the ministers, officials and external stakeholders with whom I consulted while developing this Plan, which includes a range of topics from across the Home Office's immigration, asylum, nationality, and customs functions.

My programme for 2022-23 will build on themes that have emerged from, and return to some of the areas examined in, the inspections that I have conducted over my first year in office. The Plan includes a small number of inspections that were originally planned for 2021-22 but whose commencement was delayed in order to accommodate priority additions to last year's programme. At a time of great challenge and change, I intend to retain the capacity and flexibility to launch inspections into emerging areas of interest or concern. In line with the UK Borders Act 2007, it is also open to the Home Secretary to commission me to carry out an inspection on any topic during the course of the year.

I look forward to working closely with the Home Office to deliver this programme and to driving improvements in the operation of the UK government's border and immigration functions through independent scrutiny and objective, evidence-based recommendations.

[ICIBI Inspection Plan 2022-23](#)

David Neal

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, April 2022

Published 1 April 2022

UK co-hosts Afghanistan Pledging Conference 2022: Foreign Secretary's speech

Secretary-General, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for joining this critical event.

As a direct result of the Taliban's violent takeover, Afghanistan is the scene of the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

...More than twenty million people in dire need of humanitarian support...Over one million children at risk of dying from hunger.

Even while we respond urgently to the crisis in Ukraine, we can't neglect the people of Afghanistan.

That is why the United Kingdom is proud to be co-hosting this conference with the United Nations, Qatar, and Germany, to strengthen the international response which has already saved lives this winter.

The UK has led by example.

Under our G7 Presidency, we rallied our allies in calling on the Taliban to respect the freedom and human rights of all Afghans.

We've doubled UK aid to Afghanistan, disbursing £286 million – \$380 million – this financial year. And I am pleased to announce that we will match that with the same amount in the financial year which starts tomorrow.

As part of a global effort, we have provided health services for over 300,000 people.

We have provided over 6 million people with emergency health, food, water, shelter and education support through the UN Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.

I want to thank the UN agencies and NGOs for working hard to deliver in these tough times.

We worked closely with partners in the UN Security Council to agree the humanitarian exception to the UN Afghanistan sanctions regime.

But there is more we can, and must, do together.

Now is the time to dig deep by pledging to support the Afghan population, particularly those most in need.

The UN has launched its largest ever appeal, for Afghanistan this year.

We need to work through the UN to deliver real change for the Afghan people,

upholding their rights and holding the Taliban to account.

Our friends and partners in the region continue to play a critical role.

I'd like to thank countries across the region that have offered support and delivered urgent humanitarian aid. I especially welcome the OIC's new trust fund.

We know there are no easy fixes to Afghanistan's problems.

Whilst humanitarian assistance is vital now, it won't be enough to restart Afghanistan's economy.

All Afghans have the right to basic services like education and health.

And we want to see Afghanistan able to grow so it can in time finance its own development.

But our potential to provide support will depend on how constructively the Taliban engage on key issues like the rights of women and girls and also ethnic and religious minorities.

Women and girls are amongst the most marginalised groups. They have been denied opportunities in education and employment – which are key drivers of equality.

No nation can succeed if half of its population is held back.

Women and girls must be allowed the chance to study at all levels. Children have the right, regardless of where they are born, to build their own future through education.

Most Afghan women suffer violence in their lifetime, and more girls are being pushed into early marriages.

That isn't acceptable, and it is why we must put women and girls at the heart of our response.

Afghan women are fierce advocates for their country and deserve the opportunity to realise their potential.

The UK is committed that at least 50% of those we reach with our aid should be women and girls.

We'll continue to monitor the Taliban's actions, especially in this area.

We have to work in unison to deliver a better future for Afghanistan.

And by stepping up to the plate, we can enable freedom to flourish.

Our aim cannot be merely for the Afghan people to survive – we want them to thrive.

And that's the key to building a better and safer future for us all.

Thank you for your support.

[New housing services for thousands of UK military families comes into force](#)

Five contracts, which provide a new national call centre and enhanced maintenance and repair services to military homes, were awarded last June by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

The contracts are worth £640-million in total and make up part of the MOD's £3-billion Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) programme, which has replaced the previous National Housing Prime contract.

The new accommodation contracts will directly benefit the many families who live in military homes across the UK, providing a step-change in how services are delivered to them.

In developing the new contracts, DIO collaborated closely with military personnel, their families and the Service Families Federations to ensure that their needs were fully considered.

From today, Pinnacle Group Ltd will operate the National Service Centre, which will be the single point of contact for Service families.

The £141-million contract is expected to create or sustain 350 jobs and will deliver more responsive and accessible accommodation services through greater use of modern communications technology. Families will be able to make service requests and track their progress in real time and will also have more choice when arranging appointments.

Four Regional Accommodation Maintenance Services (RAMS) contracts have also started today. Jointly worth £499-million, they will provide repair and maintenance services to military homes. They are being delivered by Amey in the Northern Region, which includes Scotland, Northern Ireland and North Wales, and in the Central Region, which includes Mid and South Wales; and by VIVO in the South East and South West of England.

The contracts require suppliers to adopt recognised industry standards and incentives will be introduced for suppliers to ensure that the interests of customers come first. These will be supported by robust mechanisms to address poor performance. This includes specific targets for 'first time fixes' for repairs, and quicker response times for most repairs, both of which should reduce disruption for Service families.

It also includes targets for customer satisfaction that, for the first time, will directly impact on the profit suppliers make. As well as setting minimum

standards, the contracts will reward suppliers for exceeding the minimum.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said:

These contracts are critical to the delivery of key services to our Armed Forces and Service Personnel.

They also support hundreds of jobs and community prosperity and will provide a crucial step towards modernising our Defence estates.

Air Commodore James Savage, DIO Head of Accommodation, said:

Our Armed Forces and their families have no real choice where they serve, no matter how remote, and when and how frequently they move, so it's vital we ensure their homes are of the right quality and available for them wherever and whenever they are assigned.

Their needs must be at the heart of what we do.

These contracts are designed to be very different. They have been developed with Service Personnel and families firmly in mind to better meet their needs.

Enhancing customer service will be their focus, with clear customer satisfaction targets for suppliers to meet, financial consequences for falling short and incentives to exceed the minimum standards.

Each contract is for seven year's duration with an option to extend for up to three years, and to terminate after three years, depending on contractor performance.

In addition to the core services, the RAMS contracts will deliver further improvement projects and refurbishment work with an estimated value of up to £855-million.

Over the last two financial years, DIO has spent £350-million on improvement works to its housing stock and plans to deliver a further £171-million worth of upgrades this financial year.

[A guide for Service families about applying for, maintaining, moving in and out of and living in UK Service Family Accommodation](#)