

[News story: Defence People Innovation Challenge Launch Event](#)

Updated: Presentation slides now added.

The [Defence People Innovation Challenge](#) officially launched on the 27 March 2018 at a Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) launch event in London.

Suppliers were invited to attend the event and submit ideas which are focused on the five sub-challenges; Recruitment, Skills and Training, Retention, Motivation and Rehabilitation, as outlined in the competition summary document.

View the [Morning presentation slides](#)
(PDF, 2.49MB, 67 pages)

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View the [Afternoon presentation slides](#)
(PDF, 2.83MB, 52 pages)

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People are central to Defence. We employ 195,520 full time military and civilians and 32,240 Part Time Reserves (as at 1 January 2018). We rely on the skills, commitment and professionalism of our people and place heavy demands on them. Recruiting, training and retaining the right mix of capable and motivated people is essential to success both on operations and at home.

Spending on People accounted for around 30% out of £36 billion Defence spending in 2016-17. Defence must continually keep its costs and activities under review to ensure that the best result is achieved with the resources available. This includes exploring all opportunities to consider how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our people and the supporting processes, behaviours and cultures.

The Defence People Innovation Challenge is intended to pull through innovative thinking from the private sector to help both address the challenges and consider how to integrate and exploit the benefits within current Defence structures.

Up to £3 million is available for this challenge in the first year with further funding available in future years.

The competition closes at midday on Wednesday 16 May 2018.

If you have any queries on how to enter this competition, please email the DASA inbox accelerator@dstl.gov.uk.

[News story: New offshore patrol vessel named HMS Trent](#)

Within the next few days the 90-metre warship, which is the third to be named following HMS Forth and HMS Medway, will take to the water for the first time and make the short journey across the Clyde from Govan to Scotstoun where she will be fitted out for sea trials.

The ship's sponsor, Mrs Pamela Potts, officially named the ship by pressing a button to smash a bottle of gin, which was distilled close to the River Trent, against the hull. Trent's lady sponsor Mrs Potts is the wife of Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, Director General of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.

HMS Trent will, alongside her sister ships Forth, Medway, Tamar and Spey, make a significant contribution to the defence of the UK by performing vital counter-terrorism, anti-smuggling and other maritime security operations to secure the UK's borders.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Guto Bebb, said:

As the third of five Offshore Patrol Vessels being built in Scotland, HMS Trent will soon be part of a fleet of highly capable ships. These new vessels will keep the UK safe by conducting counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, anti-smuggling and other vital maritime operations. UK Defence has invested in an unprecedented ship-building production line in Glasgow and the city's shipyards with their 1,700 highly skilled engineers and technicians, benefiting from full order books for the next two decades.

The sixth Royal Navy vessel to bear the name, HMS Trent will be armed with a medium-calibre gun and a flight deck capable of accommodating a Merlin helicopter.

DE&S Chief of Materiel (Ships), Sir Simon Bollom, said:

This is another welcome milestone in the delivery of the Royal Navy's new Offshore Patrol Vessel fleet – one which we are celebrating alongside our partners in the Royal Navy and industry.

We look forward to the delivery of the remaining OPVs and good

progress in the Type 26 build programme.

The work to build the new OPV fleet is sustaining jobs and the shipbuilding skills vital to the construction of the new Type 26 Frigate fleet. The first Type 26, HMS Glasgow, is currently under construction in Govan.

Following a period of rigorous sea trials, HMS Trent is expected to be delivered to the Royal Navy in the second half of 2018.

News story: Defence Secretary reviews tax on Armed Forces in Scotland

The Defence Secretary's intervention follows the decision by the Scottish Government last month to create new income tax bands and increased tax levels, which will see personnel in Scotland worse off than the rest of the UK.

The Defence Secretary has reassured servicemen and women that he would look to mitigate against the negative impact of Scottish taxes. Up to 8,000 service personnel are set to be hit by the tax rise.

On 21 February 2018, the Scottish Parliament ratified their income tax rates and thresholds applying to Scottish taxpayers. As a result those earning more than £26,000 will pay more tax in comparison to their counterparts in the rest of the UK.

Scotland plays a key role in the defence of the UK and its contribution is set to increase. Some, 1,400 submariners will move to HM Naval Base Clyde by 2020, creating the new single home of the entire UK Submarine Service. Army numbers are also increasing with the return of troops from Germany.

An additional 400 personnel will move to RAF Lossiemouth as it adds a fourth Typhoon squadron and prepares to receive the entire UK fleet of nine submarine hunter Poseidon P-8 Maritime Patrol Aircraft from the early 2020s.

News story: Burial service for soldiers of the first world war

Burial for Private Thomas Edmundson

A burial service will be held on Wednesday 14 March at Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Belgium, for Private (Pte) Thomas Edmundson. Pte Edmundson was killed in action during the first world war while serving with the Durham Light Infantry.

His remains were discovered near the town of Zonnebeke and were identified using DNA testing.

He will be buried with full military honours on 14 March.

The service has been organised by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre and will be attended by British Defence Staff, members of the family, regimental representatives from the Rifles Regiment and local dignitaries. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission will be providing the headstone.

Burial Service for 2 Soldiers of the First World War

A burial service will be held on Thursday 15 March at Orchard Dump Cemetery, France, for 2 soldiers of the first world war.

Their remains were discovered during excavation work near the town of Gavrelle. One soldier belonged to the Durham Light Infantry; intensive research and DNA testing has been carried out but unfortunately, to date, his identity has not been established. The other soldier served with the Bedfordshire Regiment, but it has not been possible to identify him.

They will be buried with full military honours on 15 March.

The service has been organised by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre and will be attended by British Defence Staff, regimental representatives from both The Rifles and Royal Anglian Regiments and local dignitaries. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission will be providing the headstones.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises contribution female military personnel make to keeping Britain safe](#)

Updated: caption

On a visit to RAF Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with women on the front line of the RAF's transport operations, including a Voyager air to air refuelling and troop transport pilot, logisticians and engineers. Mr

Williamson also recognised the hard work that has gone into making the armed forces more diverse.

Over 10% of the military is now made up of women, with the RAF leading the way with 14% female representation. Increasing numbers of women are also joining the armed forces, with over 12% of new recruits this year being female, up from 11.2% last year. The MOD is committed to reaching its target of 15% of the military being female by 2020. 42% of MOD civil servants are also female.



Defence Secretary meets with female RAF personnel on International Women's Day

Speaking at the event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women play a crucial role across our Armed Forces and it is important we reflect on the amazing contribution they make every single day keeping the British people safe.

It is vital that we have the very best people our society has to offer and that they also represent the society that they defend. Today has been a great opportunity to meet some of those inspiring women who make our Armed Forces the best in the world.

Women are an essential and valued part of Defence and play a key role in keeping Britain safe. Over the last year, female members of the armed forces have contributed to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, delivered essential

humanitarian aid to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and most recently helped with the military's support to snow relief in the UK. In December 2017, six Army officers also become the first all-female group to cross Antarctica.



(Left to right) Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson and Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor pictured in front of an A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The military is currently in the process of opening its ground close combat roles to women, a historic move first announced in June 2016. The Royal Tank Regiment has already opened its close combat roles to women and last year the RAF became the first service to open all of its trades and branches to women, with the RAF Regiment starting to take female applications in September 2017.

By the end of this year, all infantry regiments in the Army and the Royal Marines will have opened their close combat roles to women. While visiting Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with a number of women who are working across a number of trades in the RAF, including Voyager Pilot Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor, an engineer and Logistic Mover Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson.