

## Today's productivity figures again confirm the Tories' failure on productivity growth – Peter Dowd

"Today's productivity figures again confirm the Tories' failure on productivity growth, a crucial component of rising living standards.

"This is yet more worrying news given figures this week showing inflation rising and wage growth slowing, squeezing household incomes.

"The ONS says productivity growth "remains weak", and Philip Hammond has previously admitted that the UK's productivity gap is "shocking". Yet the Tories have no plan to tackle the problem.

"Only Labour can end the Tories' rigged economy with a serious plan to invest in our future to raise our productivity, and create the high wage, high skill economy of the future."

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## Actions matter, and this Government has done nothing to show it will actually support the UK steel industry – Gill Furniss

**Gill Furniss MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Steel, Postal Services and Consumer Protection**, commenting on reports that Tata steelworkers have voted to accept Tata's new pension scheme deal, said:

"This was always going to be a tough decision but we should recognise the fantastic work trade unions have done in getting the deal that has been accepted today. Thousands of steelworkers at Port Talbot now have job security for the next five years and they deserve the certainty that today's result brings.

"Steel is a vital foundation industry for the UK. That is why it is important that

today we have got a way forward for the Port Talbot steelworks, and that is why Labour will keep pressing the Government to give the steel sector the support it deserves.

“That means not marking steel ‘low-priority’ in the Brexit negotiations and not giving steel just one mention in the whole industrial strategy green paper. Actions matter, and this Government has done nothing to show it will actually support the UK steel industry.”

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## [News story: Susan Park appointed as Director General, Universal Credit operations](#)

The Universal Credit Programme, led by Neil Couling, has completed the national roll-out of the Live Service, and is rolling out the Full Service to a further 5 jobcentres each month. There are now 450,000 claimants on Universal Credit, with the Full Service available in 46 jobcentre areas. The roll out of Full Service to 50 jobcentres each month begins in October.

To prepare DWP’s Operations for this, Permanent Secretary Sir Robert Devereux has today announced some new operational roles.

While Neil continues to lead the overall programme, Susan Park will take on a new operational role, as Director General Universal Credit Operations with accountability for the operation of Universal Credit, across both jobcentres and service centres.

Sir Robert Devereux said:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Susan Park.

She is an extremely talented public servant, with over 20 years in operational delivery and is uniquely placed to lead the scaled up roll out of Universal Credit Full Service from this autumn.

Director General, Universal Credit operations Susan Park said:

It’s a privilege to take on the role of Director General, Universal Credit Operations.

Universal Credit is changing welfare for the better and helping

people across the country to improve their lives.

I look forward to working with colleagues across the department to deliver the Full Service roll out of Universal Credit to millions of people across Great Britain.

Susan joined the Civil Service in the 1980s, and has worked for the DWP since it was established in 2001. She has a wealth of experience in operational delivery most recently as the director of the Child Maintenance Group from 2012 before taking up post as Director of Work Services in January 2015.

Read more about [Universal Credit Full Service and Live Service](#).

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## **Press release: Valentine's Day of action against illegal waste activity**

Environment Agency enforcement officers, on the 14 February, paid unannounced visits to 14 sites across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Hampshire and West Berkshire in a bid to stamp out waste crime and protect the environment from the threat of pollution.

Named Operation Arrow, officers targeted sites suspected of operating in the waste business without the required environmental permits, flouting the law and committing crime.

Waste that ends up at unregulated sites is often stockpiled in vast quantities and for long periods of time. The waste can pose a significant risks to the environment, blighting communities with smoke fumes and causing noise and odour complaints. Illegal waste operators also undermine the work of legitimate waste companies, creating an unfair playing field for business.

Helen Page, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

We want to make sure the right waste goes to the right place – to protect the environment and local communities. Site visits on our days of action are just one of the ways we are tackling waste crime to help make sure this happens.

We are really pleased with what we achieved. Of the 14 sites visited, 5 were found to be operating illegally. The information we have gathered is helping us target our work at those involved in organised environmental crime and where their activities pose the greatest risk to the environment.

Everyone can do their bit to reduce waste crime by making sure that

any waste for disposal is collected by a licensed waste carrier and taken to a properly permitted, legitimate waste site.

To check if someone is registered please visit [environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers](http://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers).

For all media enquiries please phone 0800 141 2743, or email us at [southeastpressofficel@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:southeastpressofficel@environment-agency.gov.uk)

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## **Press release: Information – The King of Modern War!**

Stalin was wrong! Artillery is no longer the King of War. Information technology has transformed the modern battlefield at sea, in the air and on land, and it is arguably the new King of War. In April the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) will help to demonstrate this as part of the Royal Navy led Information Warrior exercise.

Information Warrior builds on the impressive success of last year's Unmanned Warrior exercise. It focuses is on how information can be used offensively and defensively to give the UK's armed forces a battle winning advantage.

As part of the Royal Navy's Project X programme, Dstl is working on smaller, more agile and user-friendly secure communications. This will enable new concepts of operations by delivering greater situational awareness. The Royal Marines will put this system to the test during the exercise to ensure that it allows their command to communicate effectively with troops on the ground.

Dstl's Open Architecture Combat System (OACS) is another enabling technology, making it much easier for new applications – developed by a wide range of providers – to be integrated into ships' combat systems. OACS underpinned the success of Unmanned Warrior 16, and will be used during Information Warrior to allow artificial intelligence applications such as STARTLE to be deployed.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a major theme of Information Warrior. One of the first potential applications of AI is STARTLE. This uses AI-based reasoning to help operators analyse air movements to identify potential threats in seconds. Other Dstl projects will apply AI and Big Data to enhance the analysis of imagery from Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to assess potential landing sites and routes to support landing forces.

Cyber resilience is another major theme. Dstl's technical experts are supporting the RN to ensure that its forces are secure and resilient to cyber threats, in accordance with the national cyber security strategy. Consequently, Information Warrior will exercise the Royal Navy's ability to

defend itself against cyber threats, as well as conventional threats, ensuring that our cyber defences and skills remain state of the art in this rapidly evolving area.

Better information exploitation (IX) is another priority for Information Warrior. Dstl's support in this area includes the Adaptive Tactical Information eXploitation (ATIX) and Every Platform A Sensor (EPAS) projects. ATIX uses all the available data sources, applying data analytics, machine learning and statistics to improve the commanders' understanding of complex situations. This enables them to make more effective decisions. Currently much of the data gathered by sensors is not used. EPAS will address this by extracting useful information on events, such as ship tracks, from every available source. This builds a comprehensive store of data that can be analysed in real time, or at a later date.

Discussing Information Warrior, Dstl's Chief Executive, Jonathan Lyle, said:

"Information has transformed the face of conflict. Dstl is excited to be part of the Royal Navy's Information Warrior exercise – in which our scientists will be demonstrating and testing some of the latest innovations in cyber, information systems, Big Data and artificial intelligence research."

Regular updates on the progress of the Information Warrior exercise can be found on the Royal Navy's [website](#).