

Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE appointed as new SDA Chief Executive Officer

Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE will replace Ian Booth, whose five-year appointment as CEO of the SDA comes to an end on 3 September 2022.

The SDA is an executive agency of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and was established in April 2018 to manage the procurement, in-service support, and disposal of UK nuclear submarines.

Vice Admiral Sir Chris will take on this vital role within defence and ensure the SDA continues to provide support to the Defence Nuclear Enterprise and Continuous At Sea Deterrent by safely delivering available, capable and reliable in-service submarines and systems.

On behalf of Director General Nuclear and the First Sea Lord, the SDA CEO will lead the day-to-day support and maintenance operations of Trafalgar, Astute and Vanguard Class submarines; and lead the design and construction of all new UK submarines including the Astute Class, the Dreadnought Class and the development of the next generation attack submarine concept.

Incoming CEO of the SDA Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE said:

I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed as the new CEO of the SDA. I am looking forward to working with my new team on this area of vital Defence interest and continuing to deliver for the Royal Navy. Best of all, I am really looking forward to returning to my submarine roots.

Vice Admiral Sir Chris started his career as a Royal Navy Logistics Officer, before taking on various roles, including the Military Assistant to Director General Fleet Support and the Commander Logistics on HMS ARK ROYAL.

After reaching the rank of Commodore, he became the Head of Capability Improvement in the MOD and was promoted to Vice Admiral in 2019 where he was appointed as Defence Equipment and Support's Royal Navy lead for the acquisition and in-service support of the surface fleet.

Director General Defence Nuclear Vanessa Nicholls said:

I am delighted to welcome Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner KBE to the Defence Nuclear Enterprise as the new CEO of the SDA. He brings a wealth of operational experience to the role at a pivotal time for the UK Submarine Programme. I look forward to working with him.

Competition for Vice Admiral Sir Chris' position was held earlier in the year. As with all senior Civil Service appointments, fair and open competition was ensured, with recruitment of the role being overseen by the Civil Service Commissioner.