

National Apprenticeship Awards 2019 regional winners announced

Now in their 16th year, the National Apprenticeship Awards showcase the diverse and growing range of sectors engaged with apprenticeships, whilst celebrating the achievements of outstanding apprentices, apprentice employers and individuals to inspire others to follow in their footsteps and champion apprenticeships across England.

The awards were open to apprentices, individuals who promote apprenticeships and employers of all sizes from all sectors. Categories were refreshed in 2018, creating additional opportunities for entrants to demonstrate the impact apprenticeships have made to individual's lives and their workplaces. Those recognised as regional winners are apprenticeship exemplars, highlighting best practice across recruitment excellence, high quality training practices, diversity and career progression.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Huge congratulations to all of the regional winners. The National Apprenticeships Awards are a great opportunity to showcase the fantastic apprenticeship programmes available across the country and the amazing apprentices working in a range of exciting professions like hospitality, aviation and banking.

Apprenticeships change lives, improve businesses and support local communities, so it's great to see such a diverse range of employers and apprentices being recognised for their great work.

I wish them all the best of luck for the final award ceremony in November.

Keith Smith, Director, Apprenticeships Group, ESFA said:

The National Apprenticeship Awards are important to the whole sector because they truly demonstrate how apprenticeships fire up careers, whilst recognising how apprenticeships enable employers to grow their own talent, reduce staff turnover and enhance the skills their company needs to succeed.

The regional stages of the competition is an exciting time for employers, apprentices, individuals and stakeholders who all recognise the importance of skills to help our economy to thrive and grow locally, regionally and nationally.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the regional ceremonies – the winners, those that were highly commended, sponsors and hosts.

I know judges had a difficult time selecting winners – the depth and breadth of applications was astonishing and I look forward to seeing who wins across the English regions.

For more information on the National Apprenticeship Awards 2019 visit our [AppAwards website](#).

The awards form a key part of the Department for Education's wider 'Fire it Up' campaign which aims to raise awareness of the greater variety of apprenticeships on offer for people of all ages and backgrounds and ignite positive conversations around apprenticeships across England.

East of England regional ceremony

There were 17 apprentice employers and individuals recognised at the East of England regional ceremony on Wednesday 11 September at Newmarket Racecourse.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Maycast-Nokes Precision Engineering Ltd;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is VolkerWessels UK Limited with Flagship Housing Group highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with Hertfordshire County Council highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with Maycast-Nokes Precision Engineering Ltd highly commended.

Individual category winners are:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Joshua Reed from Milan Barbershop and Rhian Prince from Atalian Servest is highly commended;
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Tatiana Peters from MBDA and Samuel Blinkhorne from Leonardo is highly commended;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Jessie Stowe from Astex Pharmaceuticals; Jasmine Jayne Studholme from Greene King PLC is highly commended.
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Jessie Stowe from Astex Pharmaceuticals and Sally Harvey from Spire Healthcare is highly commended;
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 is Joanna Moles from The John Henry Newman School and Ben Gaskins from Poultec Training is highly commended.

Jessie Stowe from Astex will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the

overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

South East regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentice employers and individuals recognised at the South East regional ceremony held on Thursday 12 September at Mandolay Hotel, Guildford.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Invotra Limited; Darke & Taylor Ltd is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is DAF Trucks Limited; PBA now part of Stantec is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Specsavers Optical Superstores Limited; Royal Navy is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Royal Navy; Specsavers Optical Superstores Limited is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Ben Cornmell from Waltham Black Ltd and highly commended is Josephine Allen from Oxford Learning Institute, University of Oxford
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Mariola Balczerowska from Arla Foods and highly commended is Kieran Barnes from Wood and Wisdom
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Mairna Marzoug from Brighton & Hove City Council and highly Commended is Hayden Taylor from Unloc Learning Limited
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Rebecca Godfrey from Abbott Diabetes Care Ltd and highly commended is Krishnan Patel, Hanson UK
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Dominique Unsworth from Resource Productions and highly commended is Jason Goodchild; Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

Rebecca Godfrey from Abbott Diabetes Care will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

London regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentice employers and individuals recognised at the London regional ceremony held on Friday 13 September at Glaziers Hall, London.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Troup Bywaters + Anders; Blue Structural Engineering LLPs highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is London Borough of Hackney; Southwark Council is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is BT; IBM UK Ltd is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is London Borough of Hackney; Southwark Council is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Sophie Barrett, Royal National Theatre and highly commended is Joel Baldwin, also from Royal National Theatre
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Maddy Morrison, Sky Sports News and highly commended is Ben Miles, Google UK Ltd
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Charlie Headdock, ENGIE Regeneration Ltd and highly Commended is Callum Elsdon, BT
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Shajida Akthar, Accenture and highly commended is Natalie Preston, Southwark Council
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Helen Everett, Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School and highly commended is James Mackley, BT

Shajida Akthar from Accenture Care will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

North East regional ceremony

Eighteen apprentice employers and individuals were recognised at the North East regional ceremony held on Monday 16 September at the Hilton in Newcastle:

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Intellect (UK) Limited; Tees Components Limited is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Home Group Limited; County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service is highly commended;

- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK Ltd; Lookers plc is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Home Group Limited; Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK Ltd is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Julie Mills, Northumberland Community Bank and highly commended is John Dickeson, HC one
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Ben Lumsden, Ibstock Brick Ltd and Highly Commended is Niall Bennison, Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Emma Beauchamp, Gestamp and Highly Commended is Emma Coulson, Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Gavin Malone, Newcastle Building Society and Highly Commended is Emily Adams, Hays Travel
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Karen Marshall, Accenture Technology Centre and Highly Commended is Karen Hookham, Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust

Gavin Malone from Newcastle Building Society will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

North West regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentices, employers and individuals recognised that the award ceremony in the North West, taking place at the Titanic Hotel in Liverpool on 18 September.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is JLES Group Limited; Arthur Padgett Limited is highly commended;

- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is WEC Group Limited; A-Plant is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Cumbria County Council; Elinor UK is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Cumbria County Council; WEC Group Limited is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Michal Halamicek from acdc and highly commended is Leonni Robinson from Wirral Borough Council;
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Paula Baron from Canal & River Trust and highly commended is Chloe Johnson from Rochdale Borough Council;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Aaron Oreschnick from Pizza Hut Restaurants and highly Commended is Howard Jackson from IBM UK Limited;
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Emilia Hoyle from Heat Trace Ltd and highly commended is Samuel Cowell from Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust;
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Sarah Herdan from Stockport Council and highly commended is Rebecca Lomax from Bentley Motors Ltd.

Emilia Hoyle from Heat Trace Ltd will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

Yorkshire and the Humber regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentices, employers and individuals recognised that the award ceremony in the Yorkshire and The Humber ceremony, taking place at the Leeds Marriot Hotel on 19 September.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Clifton Green Primary School; TT Electronics is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Zenith Vehicle Contracts Limited; Covance Laboratories Limited is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Lloyds Banking Group; Anchor Hanover Group is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Lloyds Banking Group; Covance Laboratories Limited is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Joe Groves from Rob Wordsworth T/A Wordsworth Interiors and highly commended is Nathan Richardson from Gold Crown Bakeries Ltd;
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Rebecca Wright from IMG Factory 2050 and highly commended is Connor Coupland from A One+;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Natasha Palmer from Minster FM and highly Commended is Joshua Bray from Lloyds Banking Group;
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Matthew Turner from Gemini Accident Repair Centres and highly commended is John Mitchell from HMRC;
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Nina Stobart from Phillips 66 Ltd and highly commended is Alan Milner from Make It York.

Matthew Turner from Gemini Accident Repair Centres will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

West Midlands regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentices, employers and individuals recognised that the award ceremony in the West Midlands, taking place at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Coventry on 24 September.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Advance Appliances Limited; EPX Technical Services is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Lander Automotive Ltd; KMF Group Limited is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Mitchells & Butlers; Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is KMF Group Limited; Lander Automotive Ltd is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Aiden Wakelam from Mitchells and Butlers and highly commended is Ben Webb-Rushton from Aspire Housing;
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Thomas Lomas from JC Bamford Excavators Ltd and highly Commended is Ritik Sharma from HydraForce Hydraulics Ltd;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Louise Meredith from JC Bamford Excavators Ltd and highly Commended is Reece McCallister from Capgemini;
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Alex Ingram from Lookers and highly commended is Rose Galea from Wincanton Holdings Limited;
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Susan Gough from Lloyds Banking Group and highly commended is Claire Clarke from Marston's.

Alex Ingram from Lookers will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

South West regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentices, employers and individuals recognised that the award ceremony in the South West, taking place at Cadbury House in Bristol on 26 September.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Thatchers Cider Company Limited; Combe Pafford School is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Devon County Council; Royal National Lifeboat Institution is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Royal Air Force; Wincanton Holdings Limited is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is Thatchers Cider Company Limited; Royal Air Force is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Hannah Oatley from Silcoa and highly commended is Leanne Finch from South West Apprenticeship Company (Hosted by Sixways Clinic);
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Lucy King from Airbus Operations Limited and highly Commended is Michaela McDonald from Passmore Care Services;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Michael Jones from Thales UK Ltd and highly Commended is Ryan Holland from Airbus Operations Limited;
- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Eleanor King from Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust and highly commended is Josh Penston from Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;

- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Tilly Cuttler from J.P. Morgan and highly commended is Iain Thompson from TXM Plant Limited.

Eleanor King from Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust will go into the public to vote, which will open after all regional Rising Star winners have been announced, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

East Midlands regional ceremony

There were 18 apprentices, employers and individuals recognised that the award ceremony in the East Midlands ceremony, taking place at the Leicester Marriot Hotel on 27 September.

Apprentice employer winners include:

- The BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT Award for SME Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Derry Building Services; NetSupport Limited is highly commended;
- The British Army Award for Large Employer of the Year 2019 winner is PepsiCo (Walkers Snack Foods Plc); Bombardier Transportation UK Ltd is highly commended;
- The QA Award for Macro Employer of the Year 2019 winner is Vision Express (UK) Limited; easyJet Airline Company Limited is highly commended;
- The PeoplePlus Award for Recruitment Excellence 2019 winner is easyJet Airline Company Limited; PepsiCo (Walkers Snack Foods Plc) is highly commended.

Individual category winners include:

- The NOCN Group Award for Intermediate Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Tia Whelan from UK Gas Services Ltd and highly commended is Chantel Fry from EMH Group;
- The Royal Navy Award for Advanced Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Ben Copperwheat from Lockheed Martin and highly commended is Andrew Tang from Derby City Council;
- The Nuclear Decommissioning Site Licence Companies Award for Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year 2019 winner is Kat Paricos from Unilever

and highly Commended is Matthew Hitchcock from Keyclad Ltd;

- The Lloyds Banking Group Award for Rising Star of the Year 2019 winner is Katie Edney from easyJet Airline Company Limited and highly commended is Luke Thoel from Imperial Commercial;
- The Royal Air Force Award for Apprenticeship Champion of the Year 2019 winner is Neilish Champaneri from Derby Homes and highly commended is Lee Sursham from Ford & Slater DAF.

Katie Edney from easyJet Airline Company Limited go into the public to vote, which will open on 4th October, to recognise the overall, national winner of the Lloyds Banking Group Award for the Rising Star category.

Defence Secretary announces boost for multi-billion-pound SKYNET 6 programme

Speaking at the DSEi conference today, the Defence Secretary outlined an ambitious and global vision for defence. He highlighted the UK's decisive contribution to the fight against Daesh and RFA Mounts Bay's role providing critical humanitarian relief in response to Hurricane Dorian.

Following the announcement that the MOD will receive an extra £2.2bn as part of the Spending Round last week, the Defence Secretary laid out his plan to invest in new capabilities across all five warfighting domains – land, sea, air, cyber and space.

In particular, the Defence Secretary announced the launch of a new competition to operate and maintain the UK's next-generation military satellite communications system, SKYNET 6.

Speaking at the DSEi conference today, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Fifty years ago Britain put its first satellite, SKYNET1, in space. Today we're having to deal with increasing threats to satellite-based navigation and the need for robust communications has never been more vital.

That's why we're developing SKYNET6 which will give our forces unparalleled capacity to talk to each other in any hostile environment.

50 years on from the launch of the first SKYNET satellite (SKYNET 1A) in November 1969 and following the success of subsequent SKYNET programmes, the MOD is upgrading its military satellite system providing secure, long-range communications to the armed forces and UK allies.

This upgraded system could be used to facilitate the transmission of secure communications from a ship at sea, support Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) operations, allow fighter jet pilots to receive or upload operational data in real-time, or enable land forces to conduct missions in remote environments.

Satellite communication systems are vital to operating effectively in hostile environments in which secure communications are required or commercial communication systems may have been disabled or are insufficient.

This contract, named SKYNET 6 Service Delivery Wrap (SDW), covers the operation of the UK's constellation of satellites and ground stations, and the provision and management of ground terminal infrastructure.

Further contracts, covering other aspects of the SKYNET 6 programme, worth approximately £6bn, will be announced in the coming months.

Julian Knight, Head of Networks at the MOD's Information Systems and Services organisation (ISS) said:

We are about to enter a vital phase of the SKYNET programme. This competition is a significant opportunity for industry to work at the very heart of our programme – delivering improved flight and ground operations.

We are seeking an innovative partner that will ensure effective and consistent Defence Satellite communications and will look to continually maximise performance and value for money.

The successful bidder will also negotiate the MOD's access to commercial satellite services, as well as managing the UK's contribution and access to systems owned and operated by the UK's allies.

SKYNET 6 SDW will require many of the same highly-skilled jobs currently employed by SKYNET 5 programme and will continue to contribute to the department's prosperity objectives.

[Highways England's A1 Birtley to Coal](#)

[House improvement application for examination](#)

The Planning Inspectorate accepts Highways England's A1 Birtley to Coal House improvement application for examination

[Defence Secretary keynote speech at DSEi 2019](#)

Defence Secretary outlines global influence of UK defence in keynote speech at the 2019 Defence and Security Equipment International.

[Defence Secretary keynote speech at DSEi 2019](#)

I don't intend to speak for too long. The kit, not the speeches, are the real reason you're here today.

But if you're going to take home one message from the UK, it is this – we are global. We are alive to the global threats. And we have the world class industrial base and the game-changing capability to deal with the danger.

To prove the point I want to briefly dwell on the success of our Defence and security sector. It is a story seldom told.

This is a sector that brings in sales worth more than £19bn to our economy. A sector that is the second largest in the world – accounting for 19 per cent of global export value over the past decade.

A sector that according to reports supports around 260,000 jobs directly and indirectly in the UK.

What's more our Defence is the spine of our nation, spreading wealth across our entire union from the South of England to the North of Scotland. Our average expenditure with UK industry equated to £290 spent on the security of every person living in the UK.

There is always the challenge of selling to wider Government what we in Defence do. It is true that what our Armed Forces do is often over a distant horizon, or below the deep ocean.

But the reality is, what we do, makes an enormous global difference. Defence is often upstream focusing on keeping danger away from these shores.

On this day, 18 years ago, terrorists hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, and flew them into the twin towers in New York.

For many it was the first awakening of the full horror of global terrorism. But it was because of our investment in Defence, because of the strength of our capability, that the UK was able to fight alongside our allies. And because of key procurement decisions we were able to operate side-by-side across the globe.

Look at how we've been taking the fight to Daesh in the past few years with our Typhoons, attacking the terrorists both day and night with power and precision, while our cyber capability eroded their communication channels and exposed the so-called caliphate for the sham it always was.

Our expertise was on display last year too when Russia deployed nerve agent on British streets to murder British civilians. We immediately called on our internationally renowned medical and scientific community at DSTL in Porton Down.

Their chemical and biological know-how identified the deadly use of novichok. But you do not grow the corporate knowledge of the UK's defence capability overnight. Which is why when that knowledge is channelled into the British forces' next generation needs, we provide world leading products to go alongside.

In more recent times, when the arteries of worldwide trade have been threatened by hostile Iranian state action in the Strait of Hormuz, we've enlisted the global capacity of our Type 23s and Type 45s, built on shipyards on the Clyde, to defend the red ensign.

And, with Hurricane Dorian ravaging the Caribbean, we were the first nation to send support, dispatching RFA Mounts Bay, equipped with amphibious vehicles and helicopters to work alongside international aid colleagues, providing residents in the Bahamas with much needed humanitarian help.

A stark demonstration of Britain's ability to match global capability with global presence to deal with any eventuality. But that what's so remarkable about the British defence industry, is that we have strength and depth.

We don't just make the big platforms. We machine engineer the parts. We shape the electronic systems behind them. We devise the niche capability and we innovate with the very best. For example, here today we have remarkable companies like Wiltshire-based companies Avon Protection, a world leader in Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE).

Not only does it supply the UK and its NATO allies with kit, it is also the primary supplier of Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear respiratory equipment to the United States Department of Defense Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Special Operations.

Then we have dynamic firms like Reaction Engines in Oxfordshire currently building a hypersonic engine capable of reaching orbit. And my Lancashire constituents would never forgive me if I didn't mention their contribution, building the aft fuselage, horizontal and vertical tails of every F-35 built as well as on the tried and test Typhoon.

We're surrounded by brilliant examples of British expertise in the hall today. As the UK's new Defence Secretary we do however need to break the traditional cycle where our appetite didn't match our stomachs which led to the annual hollowing out of capability and plans, which ultimately lets down the men and women of our Armed Forces.

We have to invest in our global defence force if we want to make a global difference and last week's Spending Round announcements signalled our intent.

For those who didn't catch the headlines it's worth summarising. UK Defence secured an extra £2.2 billion. An increase of 2.6 per cent above inflation between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Well above government's commitment to grow the defence budget by 0.5% above inflation every year of this Parliament. It means that by 2020/2021 this year's £39 billion defence budget will rise to over £41 billion by 2020/21, the first time it's topped the £40bn mark.

It means that we'll continue to exceed our NATO commitment to spend 2 per cent of GDP on Defence. It means that the UK remains the largest NATO defence spender in Europe by far.

Above all, it means more money to keep investing in key capabilities such as offensive cyber, nuclear deterrent and shipbuilding. Defence will always continue to require sustained investment for the long-term.

But we're already making sure we put our money where our mouth is. Look at what's happening across the domains.

Let's start with shipping. Today 11 major warships are in build or on contract not to mention our next-generation of nuclear deterrent submarines.

We're looking to build Type 31 frigates and we're building Type 26 global combat ships, whose designs have won plaudits and contracts in Australia and Canada.

And with HMS Queen Elizabeth off to Westlant, our carrier strike is back after an absence of a decade, giving us the unparalleled ability to project power and influence across the seven seas.

We're also investing in cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence. Yesterday on board the HMS Argyll I witnessed the first exercise involving our Maritime Autonomy Surface Testbed (MAST).

Effectively this is the next generation underwater drone swarm, operating autonomously but collectively, to scout ahead of a ship and spot trouble in advance.

Switching from sea to land, our Army is upgrading not only our Challenger 2 and Warrior vehicles but bringing in multi-role armoured vehicles to operate alongside AJAX, with a main gate decision due at the end of October.

Together these vehicles will deliver the Army's new transformational Strike Force, contributing to NATO Readiness and creating as well as sustaining more than a thousand jobs.

Companies like Qioptiq, less than 100 miles from my own constituency are involved in the sighting systems. They are here exhibiting today.

As a former infantryman, I'm delighted we're doing more to lighten the load of our soldiers in the field.

MOD has been working with BAE Systems to develop lighter ammunition, replacing the brass in the cartridge cases with stainless steel or titanium, reducing the load our troops have to carry by up to 26 percent along with the costs of transporting rounds to the front line.

We're applying the same blue-skies thinking to the air domain as well. Last year at Gatwick and Heathrow we saw the peril drone technology poses to our airspace.

Today I can announce that, from early next year, the RAF will be working with Leonardo on a three-year programme, looking at how to detect, track, identify and defeat rogue drones as this technology continues to evolve.

And I'm pleased that we've signed a statement of intent with Italy who, alongside Sweden, will support joint working on the Tempest and our Future Combat Air Strategy.

I'm looking forward to working with Italian and Swedish counterparts, as well as others, to put the Tempest programme into hyper-drive and take Global Britain into the stratosphere.

Fifty years ago Britain put its first satellite, Skynet1, in space. Today we're having to deal with increasing threats to satellite-based navigation. So the need for robust communications has never been more vital.

That's why we're developing Skynet6 which will give our forces unparalleled capacity to talk to each other in any hostile environment.

And I can announce the launch of a new competition for an industry partner to operate and manage the Ground Stations, infrastructure and technology involved in this programme.

And just as we upgrade our capability in space we're also bolstering our strength in cyber too.

The nature of warfare is changing. In an Information Age the challenge is not just to prepare for contingency but to operate and engage constantly.

That means we need to be able not just to repel threats from our online

frontline but the ability to strike out. We need to gather, co-ordinate and exploit the information we receive across all the domains much more effectively.

That's why we're initiating a major programme of change, managing our people differently, adjusting the way we run our operations and maintaining our long-standing association of working with GCHQ in this area so we can be more agile in tackling dangers and grasping opportunities.

But we know that you only produce great kit if you have great partnerships between policy makers and product makers. That's why I want to see a step-change in our partnership with industry.

We're determined to go out of our way to help you giving you the certainty and confidence you need to create great capability. So as well as investing we're planning for the future.

A few days ago we published our Defence Technology Framework. It will help concentrate our collective minds by assessing the technologies needed to drive our defence modernisation and deliver battle-winning technologies.

Now you need to help us. So we're helping you. But we expect something in return We need industry to show willing. Willingness to strengthen your competitiveness, willingness to benefit our own procurements, willingness to seize those export opportunities.

The Army's newly announced industrial engagement framework marks the start of that journey. But the end point will see a fundamental shift in mindset from the regional to the global.

Britain has long been a nation of makers, from the steam engine to the turbo jet, from Watt to Whittle.

We remain a world leading exporter and as DSEI shows, the potential of our Defence sector is limitless.

But seizing our opportunities, realising our potential, demands we think big. It demands we all have a vision.

My vision for Defence is one that returns pride to the places in which things are made.

A vision where our kit is wanted not simply because it carries a stamp saying made in Britain. But because it carries a stamp that proudly proclaims made in Barrow or made in Birkenhead.

It's a vision where every part of the country is famed for its particular brand of expertise from air to autonomy. So we might be living through challenging times but if you're looking for solutions you've come to the right place.

Tomorrow is here today.

I hope you leave with the message that UK Defence is on the up, that our Defence industrial base remains the spine of our nation, allowing our forces to be the tip of our spear for Global Britain.