

Press release: Barclays launches major Midlands trade centre to boost UK exports

- the centre follows the Barclays' Midlands Growth Fund, a £370 million lending fund for SMEs across the Midlands to boost jobs and growth
- new report reveals the characteristics of 'superstar' exporters – to further improve support for UK businesses

Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion Baroness Fairhead opened Barclays' new trade centre on Monday 3rd September, dedicated to helping over 1000 UK businesses to export more of their goods and services each year.

Staffed by 30 export and trade product specialists, the new centre will work to boost jobs and economic growth, enabling British businesses to start exporting sooner, or sell even more of their products in domestic and overseas markets.

The announcement is a great example of the private sector support that the Department for International Trade (DIT) is promoting as part of their new Export Strategy. This is part of a commitment to better signpost all support available to British companies.

The strategy also sets out the government's ambition to raise exports as a percentage of GDP from 30% to 35%.

A raft of measures, including the roll out of thousands of Export Champions, increased awareness raising of the £50 billion of finance available from [UK Export Finance](#) and a boost to the number of export opportunities listed on [GREAT.gov.uk](#) were also announced as part of the strategy.

The Birmingham-based team has already started to help a number of British businesses with their export activity into markets such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, as well as Far Eastern markets such as China, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Minister of State for the Department for International Trade, Baroness Fairhead, said:

Time and again we have seen the boost that exporting gives to UK businesses. By selling their goods and services around the world, companies can increase profits, employ more workers and create businesses which endure longer.

That is why our new Export Strategy aims to increase the substance,

availability and awareness of export support.

I am therefore delighted to be opening Barclays' new trade centre today, and would encourage businesses up and down the country to make the most of the team's expertise.

Jes Staley, Barclays Group CEO, said:

From manufacturing to agriculture, retail to digital, we are helping more UK businesses sell their goods and services to more people around the world. This trade centre is our latest initiative to make it easier for UK businesses to find their way in overseas markets, by providing the right finance, and all-important advice and guidance.

New research we have commissioned on this important subject, published today with the Policy Institute at King's College London, shows that one important way to boost UK exports is to create more 'superstar exporters', or UK firms who export 10 or more products to 10 or more overseas markets. Helping these businesses to export more in turn helps smaller firms in their supply chain to grow, and to create jobs. Helping firms to become superstar exporters can deliver wider benefits to the UK economy and Barclays is determined to play its part.

The key findings from the report are:

- superstar exporters support smaller firms to export through their supply chains
- non-manufacturing production sectors are weakly represented in terms of access to trade support
- export growth associated with DIT support appears to arise mainly from access to more overseas markets
- overseas trade missions can increase the likelihood that firms start and continue exporting to a new market
- firms receiving trade support are unevenly distributed across the country

DIT will consider the recommendations in the report as part of the department's commitment to listen to voices from across the business community with regards to trade and export support.

News story: New pocket guide for troops to access mental health support

The guide, jointly launched by Samaritans and the Ministry of Defence, gives advice on how to identify signs that someone may be having difficulties, suggests ways of offering support and gives information on where help can be found.

All military personnel and reserves, some 200,000 people, will have access to either a hard copy or digital version of the booklet.

The guide builds on the range of support already available to service personnel who are struggling with their mental health, including access to specialist mental health medical care, training and education on good mental fitness and the Combat Stress 24-hour Mental Health Helpline.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Mental health issues can affect anyone and I want to ensure no one in our military suffers in silence. It is vital that service personnel know where to turn to in times of crisis, and this guide will raise awareness of the support available.

By helping our people to spot the early signs that someone may be struggling, we give them the best chance of a full recovery.

Specifically designed to promote peer support amongst those serving, the guide champions “looking after your mates”, and covers:

- Identifying someone struggling to cope with mental health issues
- Understanding the complexity of suicide
- Knowing when to intervene, support and report
- Where to get further support, including the Samaritans service, whose volunteers are available any time, via phone and email or in person at the charity’s 201 branches, and the recently launched Combat Stress 24/7 Military Mental Health Helpline

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

While military mental health continues to be slightly better than the general population, we’re committed to ensuring that those who need help are able to get the support they need.

This guide, alongside our extra investment in mental health care and the 24-hour Mental Health Helpline, will be invaluable in helping our people to help each other.

Samaritans and the MOD have announced several joint initiatives to offer training and support to serving personnel, veterans and their families who are struggling with mental health issues.

The Samaritans programme has been funded by £3.5m from LIBOR, and the guide is the latest part of this programme. A separate booklet is set to be launched for veterans, and the wider military community.

The next stage of the project will include the launch of other peer support tools, specially designed training courses for military personnel and a confidential webchat service. Training for Samaritans volunteers on how address mental health in a military environment will also be introduced.

Samaritans CEO, Ruth Sutherland, said:

Samaritans is committed to bringing the expertise we have gained in training people to provide peer support to the military, in order to prevent suicides. This is the first step in a journey to provide a variety of support for serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families.

The booklet will also help personnel spot signs that colleagues may be having suicidal thoughts and provides information on how such a situation should be approached, and where support is available.

The number of military personnel who take their lives continues to be below rates for the general population, with the military rate of suicide being 8 per 100,000, in 2017, compared to 18 per 100,000 in the general population in 2016.

The Ministry of Defence is now spending £220 million over the next decade to improve mental health services for serving personnel. In February of this year, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also announced the establishment of a 24-Hour Mental Health Helpline for serving personnel and their families, funded by the MOD and run by the charity Combat Stress.

The MOD's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy is designed to encourage all members of the armed forces to recognise the importance of mental fitness and encourages individuals to seek support if they are struggling with their mental health.

[Press release: Traffic officers hit](#)

the road to help motorists in Cornwall

As part of a trial announced earlier this year, Highways England's traffic officers have been patrolling a section of the A30 in Cornwall for the first time during the busy holiday periods, and have been on hand to deal with everything from live lane breakdowns, road traffic collisions and debris clearance.

During the summer holidays, Highways England crews have attended a total of 112 incidents during the 31 days of patrols. And on the last Sunday in July, the traffic officers' 'powers of recovery' averted major disruption on the westbound A30 as they were able to assist police by towing a broken down horsebox and vehicle to Okehampton Services.

The current patrols will come to an end on 10 September.

Rob Penney, South West Service Delivery Manager for Highways England, said:

The aim of the initiative is to provide further assistance to motorists on our South West network, and we're delighted to extend our service further south into Cornwall and to continue our close working partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police and Cornwall Council.

The patrols have provided real value, they've been well received, and there may be scope to increase the patrols in the future, dependent on a review of this trial period.

Earlier trial patrols took place over the Easter and May Bank Holidays. During five days over Easter the traffic officers dealt with and assisted 16 incidents on the A30 between Carland Cross and Lifford Down, and during the May Bank Holiday weekend, they attended 13 incidents over the three days, 11 of which saw them help broken down vehicles to safety.

Highways England already works in partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police, forming part of a multi-agency partnership in terms of safety and severe weather handling, and the trial is aimed at providing further support to Devon and Cornwall Police to help meet the demands of increased traffic volumes and related incidents on the A30 in Cornwall.

Welcome to Cornwall sign on the A30 near Lifford Down

Traffic officers currently assist drivers in any difficulty, co-ordinate the resources of the emergency services, manage traffic to reduce incident-related congestion and clear debris from the carriageways.

The traffic officers are currently patrolling the A30 between Carland Cross and Lifford Down and, based at Bodmin police station and Cornwall Council's Castle Cannyke depot during the peak holiday months, they have been much

closer at hand to provide assistance along both the A30 and A38.

Chief Inspector Adrian Leisk, head of roads policing for the Devon & Cornwall Police and Dorset Police alliance, said:

Devon and Cornwall Police is delighted to expand its partnership working with Highways England into Cornwall.

This builds on the considerable success of the operational activity on the M5, A38 and A30 in Devon, where Highways England Traffic Officers have supported police resources in dealing with road traffic collisions and other incidents which have the potential to cause disruption on our strategic road network

This 'one team' approach will undoubtedly help support communities and businesses who rely on a resilient and capable road network in Cornwall, particularly during the busiest periods of the year.

Highways England's Traffic Officer service patrols England's motorways and major A roads, helping to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

Traffic officers are not an enforcement agency, but they do have the power to stop and direct traffic, close lanes and carriageways and manage traffic, and road users must obey their directions.

As well as incident management, they also deal with broken down and abandoned vehicles on the strategic road network, recovering vehicles that are causing a blockage or hazard, and ensure that the scene of an incident is safe, for road users and working partners.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a Highways England traffic officer go to the [traffic officer information page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Consultation due to

Launch on major upgrade to the A38 in Derby

People interested in plans to upgrade the A38 in Derby are urged to have their say as Highways England prepares to launch a consultation this week on proposals to upgrade a busy bottleneck in the city.

The project, valued at around £225m, will make journeys between Birmingham and the M1 and through Derby quicker and simpler by separating long distance traffic from those making local journeys.

The Kingsway, Markeaton and Little Eaton roundabouts will be replaced with two underpasses and a flyover respectively, which will collectively help to reduce congestion on this busy route.

The consultation is the next step in making the scheme a reality and runs from Friday, 7 September until Thursday, 18 October 2018.

Highways England project manager, Paul Nagra, said:

This upgrade is an important development for the A38 and the tens of thousands of people that rely on the road every single day.

Once this work is complete it will provide smoother and more reliable journeys along this important route helping support future investment and economic growth opportunities in the area.

The design has now been developed in more detail and people attending the consultation can have their say on the proposals.

Anyone interested in the scheme can attend any of the public information events that are running between 7 September and 22 September at various locations throughout Derby.

For more information about the events and about the consultation, please visit the [scheme website](#).

Alternatively email A38derbyjunctions@highwaysengland.co.uk.

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Press release: Minister for Asia and the Pacific unveils plans to curb Pacific Ocean plastic pollution

Britain has pledged to champion Climate Risk and Resilience at next year's UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit, and has confirmed that its three missions in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu will all be free of avoidable single-use plastics.

The uninhabited Henderson Island was recently established to have the worst levels of plastic rubbish on its shores of anywhere in the world, and marine plastic pollution elsewhere in the region is a growing problem. The UK's three additional diplomatic missions in the region will be barred from using avoidable single-use plastics, and will help promote further joint work on climate change issues in the region.

Making the announcement at the Pacific Islands Forum, Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

Climate change poses a clear and present danger to the people of the Pacific islands like nowhere else in the world. The UK is already working with Vanuatu through the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance to tackle the scourge of plastic pollution, and it is important our own representatives lead by example by cracking down on single-use plastics.

But addressing climate change needs massive transformational change and I am proud of Britain's contribution through the Green Climate Fund. We will be building on this by working much more closely with all the Pacific islands through our missions in the region in the coming years.

The UK is among the largest contributors of international climate finance and in the four years to 2020 will be giving developing countries over £5.5 billion to help them mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This will build on commitments made at the Commonwealth Head of Governments Meeting in London earlier this year which saw the creation of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.

The government has today also announced that the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are the first of six countries to receive support through Defra's £6 million Commonwealth Litter Programme, partnering with countries in their efforts to reduce single-use plastics and other litter entering the oceans.

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will eliminate avoidable single-use plastics from its UK operations by the end of the year, and from its global operations by 2020. It is the first UK government department to announce such a ban and the commitment makes the FCO global a leader in the fight against plastic pollution.

Notes to editors

1. Britain has in the past had missions in Tonga and Vanuatu and is now re-establishing High Commissions in each, along with a new High Commission in Samoa. They will collectively deliver significant bilateral and regional impact and help increase UK influence in multilateral fora.
2. Initial estimates suggest that the FCO globally is consuming at least 3.45 million items of avoidable single-use plastics.