

## News story: First contract awarded through LINC platform

LINC was launched in autumn 2017 and is already opening the door to work at Sellafield.

B2B and React Engineering used the new platform to submit a proposal for work at the site, and came out on top within four days.

LINC is a new platform developed to help small businesses to win work to support the site's clean-up mission.

It was launched in autumn 2017 and is already opening the door to work at Sellafield.

Emma-Jayne Gooch, Head of Supply Chain Development & Innovation said:

The first opportunity published in the LINC scheme was a call for proposals on how Sellafield Ltd could achieve accreditation to ISO 44001, 'collaborative business relationship management systems'.

Through the LINC scheme we asked SMEs to get their heads together and propose how we could identify any gaps against the standard, how the standard could initially be piloted and then ultimately rolled out across the whole business.

We received 5 impressive submissions on 2nd December, a panel assessed the proposals on Monday 6th December and we announced the successful SMEs on Wednesday 8th

That is a speed of turnaround never experienced before by Sellafield Ltd.

The successful proposal was a collaborative offering led by B2B and supported by React Engineering.

John Doyle from B2B said: "We are used to complex and time consuming tendering processes.

"The LINC process, although robust, was very easy and simple to use to register.

"It provided a relatively low cost and simple route to market our services, whilst providing great opportunities to network with other SMEs who would not usually be in our network."

"There were many SMEs in the LINC list of companies that would have been great partners, but we did our own due diligence for matching up with a good

partner and React Engineering came top.”

LINC has been designed to provide Sellafield Ltd with direct access to SMEs in addition to supporting Sellafield Ltd’s contribution to the UK SME agenda.

All SMEs must be pre-registered with LINC before submitting a proposal. Details of registered SMEs will be published periodically to support and encourage further collaboration.

Non-SMEs are free to register with LINC but their participation will be limited to a supporting role only.

[Find out how to LINC with Sellafield](#)

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## **News story: Arrangement for exchanging information during the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group**

The UK and US have set up the Trade and Investment Working Group with an aim to deepen our bilateral trade and investment relationship. The group has been discussing:

- how to provide commercial continuity for US and UK businesses when the UK leaves the EU
- what both sides can do in the short term to facilitate bilateral trade and investment

We cannot complete a free trade agreement (FTA) before leaving the EU but the UK and US will work together to prepare the ground for a future FTA once the UK has left.

### **An opportunity for growth**

The US is our largest trading partner outside the EU, accounting for a fifth of all exports, and trade between the 2 countries is worth over £160 billion a year. It’s also the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK, standing at £252 billion at the end of 2015. Our economic prosperity is enhanced by the depth of our trade, financial, cultural and investment links with the United States.

### **Exchanging information**

To have successful discussions, the working group needs to exchange information. The UK and US have exchanged letters setting out our joint commitment to treat this information as confidential, unless both sides agree

otherwise. As discussions involve exchanging information on how we can deepen our trade and investment ties, it's important for both sides to trust that this can be exchanged in confidence.

The agreement we have reached:

- does not supplant the government's duty to consider requests under the Freedom of Information Act
- is compatible with the [Cabinet Office guidance](#) on how the government should exchange classified or sensitive information internationally, with other government or organisations

## **Sharing information outside of government and the working group**

Government has the discretion and autonomy to share information with bodies, groups or individuals. Under these arrangements, we have made the commitment to do so in a way that maintains the confidentiality of the information, unless the UK and US governments agree it can be treated otherwise. The same applies to the US government's treatment of information relating to the Trade and Investment Working group shared by the UK.

UK government information regarding the Trade and Investment Working Group that is not shared with the US is not subject to these arrangements and will be treated as all other government information of the same nature.

Read the UK and US governments' letters on the treatment of information exchanged during the the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group.

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## News story: Careless driver sent to prison

John Bond, 32, was convicted of causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drugs in September this year.

Bond failed to give way at a junction resulting in a collision between his van and another vehicle. His sister, Ms Bond, 22, who was sat in the front and not wearing a seatbelt, suffered a severe head injury and was pronounced dead at the scene. The other passenger, Ms Bond's boyfriend was also injured but not seriously.

The driver of the other vehicle suffered significant injury and was unable to work for 6 and a half months as a result of the accident. He has since been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Bond originally escaped prison, instead receiving a 2 year suspended sentence at Chelmsford Crown Court. The Court of Appeal today imposed an immediate custodial sentence of 2 years. He has been ordered by the Court to surrender himself by 4.30pm today. The period of disqualification from driving was also increased from two years to three years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General, who referred the original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient said:

"The original sentence failed to take adequate account of the tragic loss of a young woman's life. I believe that this sentence of immediate imprisonment properly reflects the seriousness of Mr Bond's offending."

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## Correspondence: Harnessing technology to meet increasing care needs

Advice to the Prime Minister on how to improve the use of technology in social care, and the Prime Minister's response.

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# Press release: Alun Cairns comments on the latest employment figures

Rising levels of employment are a clear demonstration that Wales is open for business, Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said today (13 December).

Figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the employment rate in Wales has increased 0.5% across the quarter.

## **The statistics show:**

- The unemployment level is up 6,000 (0.4 percentage points) over the quarter. The rate in Wales is now 4.7%, which is above the UK average of 4.3%
- The employment level in Wales is up 2,000 (0.5 percentage points) on the quarter. The employment rate is now 72.8%, which is still below the UK average (75.1%)
- Total employment for the UK is down 56,000 (0.2 percentage points) on the quarter but up 325,000 (0.7 percentage points) on the year. The employment rate is now 75.1%
- Total UK unemployment is down 26,000 (0.1 percentage points) on the quarter and down 182,000 (0.6 percentage points) on the year. The unemployment rate is now 4.3%, the joint lowest it has been since 1975

## **Secretary of State Alun Cairns said:**

Whilst it is great to see that employment levels have increased there is still more that needs to be done to ensure employment levels are sustainable.

The UK Government is working hard to create the right conditions for economic growth, investment and jobs in Wales by implementing policy such as scrapping the Severn Tolls. We will continue to do more to demonstrate the strength of the Welsh economy to business.

I'm convinced that increasing exports to new markets will not only grow the Welsh economy but will create jobs across Wales. I'm doing everything I can with the support of my cabinet colleagues to help companies in Wales maximise their exporting potential.