

News story: Historic day for the military as all roles are opened to women

The historic day was marked at a land power demonstration on Salisbury Plain, involving some of the first women to join the Royal Armoured Corps.

Mr Williamson announced that as of today, women already serving in the Army are able to transfer into infantry roles. Those not currently serving will be able to apply for infantry roles in December of this year, with new recruits starting basic training in April 2019.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed that women are now able to apply to join the Royal Marines, with selection starting before the end of this year. Training courses will begin at Royal Marines Commando training centre in Lympstone in early 2019.

Speaking at the demonstration event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson praised the day as a defining moment in the history of the armed forces.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women have led the way with exemplary service in the armed forces for over 100 years, working in a variety of specialist and vital roles.

So I am delighted that from today, for the first time in its history, our armed forces will be determined by ability alone and not gender.

Opening all combat roles to women will not only make the armed forces a more modern employer but will ensure we recruit the right person for the right role.

While women have for many years given exemplary service, including in combat facing roles, females were unable to serve in ground close combat roles until the ban was lifted by the then Prime Minister in 2016.

The Royal Armoured Corps was the first ground close combat branch to open its doors (in November 2016) to female soldiers and officers, followed by the RAF Regiment in September 2017.

Since November 2016 the Army has around 35 women either serving or being trained to join the Royal Armoured Corps, with a number of personnel already being deployed in their new role to Estonia and Oman.

While the military does not necessarily expect large numbers of women to

apply for ground close combat roles, the changes are aimed at creating opportunities for individuals from all backgrounds and making the most of their talents. By making all branches and trades of the military open to everyone, regardless of their gender, the armed forces are building on their reputation of being a leading equal opportunities employer.

News story: Commander JFC awards outstanding individuals

Individuals from Joint Forces Command (JFC) have been awarded Commander JFC Commendations.

News story: Historic day for the military as all roles are opened to women

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has today announced that all roles in the military are now open to women.

News story: £93 million missile project secures over 100 Belfast jobs

The £93 million Future Air Defence Availability Project (F-ADAPT) was awarded to Thales UK during Minister Andrew's visit to Belfast today. The contract will secure over 100 jobs in the city and provide the UK Armed Forces with a potent defensive ability.

The project will enhance the High Velocity and Lightweight Multi-role Missile systems which are designed to intercept a wide range of air and surface threats such as enemy drones, helicopters and armoured vehicles. The upgrades include thermal imaging which ensures the High Velocity Missile system can be used 24 hours a day and 'Friend or Foe' identification, which will maximise

intelligence on potential threats and targets.

The F-ADAPT, secured by the MOD's procurement agency Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), will ensure that this critical capability is maintained during peacetime training but can also be rapidly deployed for operations into the 2020s.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Defence investment benefits every corner of our United Kingdom and Northern Ireland is no exception. This £93 million deal will secure over 100 local jobs and demonstrates the ingenuity and skill of Northern Irish industry.

In these uncertain times, it is crucial we protect ourselves from the rapidly evolving spectrum of global threats. These cutting-edge missile systems will fortify our military advantage over adversaries and help protect UK Armed Forces across the world and into the next decade.

DE&S Director Weapons, Richard Smart said:

The F-ADAPT is crucial in safeguarding our Very Short-Range Air Defence capability and the team at DE&S has worked collaboratively with industry to deliver the enhancements needed to ensure this project continues to support our troops for years to come.

Thales has a long and illustrious presence in Belfast dating back to 1952. Thales in Belfast is a world leader in the design and development of light weight weapon systems for tactical air, land and sea platforms. The company has over 500 local employees and has secured contracts worth hundreds of millions from the Ministry of Defence in recent years. The Belfast office contributed to Thales UK's record exports in 2017 which were worth over £500 million. The local economy also benefitted from a £6 million investment from Thales Alenia Space in 2016 which transformed the capital city into a global centre for excellence in electric propulsion systems.



Defence Minister Stuart Andrew at Thales Belfast. Crown copyright.

Northern Ireland plays an important role in UK defence, providing over 4,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces, supporting over 600 industry jobs and is renowned for its defence manufacturing industry. Industry has committed to more than double its revenue from the aerospace, defence, security and space activities in the region to over £2 billion a year. Northern Ireland companies are part of the overall Ministry of Defence equipment and support plan to spend £180 billion over the decade to 2026-27 which will enhance prosperity across the UK.

[News story: £93 million missile project secures over 100 Belfast jobs](#)

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew has announced a multi-million-pound deal to modernise and boost the British Army and Royal Marines' very short-range air defence capability.