

# News story: Britain's top armed forces-friendly employers honoured

51 businesses were last night honoured for their commitment to the military, including employing former service personnel, their families and reservists.

The MOD's Employer Recognition Scheme 'Gold Awards' awards were handed out by the Defence Secretary and HRH Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex, to businesses and organisations who have shown outstanding support for the military community and the Armed Forces Covenant.

Employers won awards for initiatives such as employing veterans, supporting individuals transitioning out of the armed forces into a new career, and providing flexibility for reservists.

The 51 winners have been recognised for their long-term commitment to the armed forces, with organisations from the public and private sector achieving the top grade. Each has signed the Armed Forces Covenant, and where possible, engages with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to promote the recruitment of service leavers, as well as honouring individual pledges of support.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Those who have served our country so courageously deserve the full support of organisations across the public and private sector.

The breadth and diversity of this year's Gold Award winners shows how business support for the armed forces continues to flourish. I offer my gratitude and congratulations to all the winners.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

When people leave the armed forces, they do so with unique skills and experiences that can benefit businesses and organisations across the country.

These awards show just how valued and in demand these skills are. I encourage more businesses to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant and show their support for our brave service leavers.

This week the Government will launch its first UK wide Veterans Strategy which brings together aspirations and commitments from across government for

championing the needs of the ex-service community.

The Government has a wide range of schemes in place to support service personnel and veterans. From encouraging employers to recognise the value the military community to business through the Armed Forces Covenant to committing £22million of funding for mental health over the next decade for service personnel and £10million for veterans.

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## [News story: Improvement plan proposed for Northamptonshire children's services](#)

The Government has proposed to appoint a commissioner to oversee improvements at Northamptonshire children's social care services, following concerns raised by existing commissioners and Ofsted about how the council supports vulnerable children and families.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government James Brokenshire have written to the leader of Northamptonshire County Council in a move designed to take swift and early action to improve its children's services.

They have today confirmed they are ['minded to'](#) appoint Malcolm Newsam CBE as a children's services commissioner, following Ofsted's [findings](#) that the quality of services have deteriorated.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We must make sure that vulnerable children and families are kept safe and instead of waiting for failure, we can prevent it by acting quickly to intervene where concerns have been raised about the quality of care.

Appointing a commissioner for Northamptonshire's children's services will help stabilise and improve the support for the children and families who need our protection.

Secretary of State for Communities Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Keeping vulnerable children safe is one of the most important duties local authorities carry out. Ofsted's report highlights serious concerns about the current performance of children's services in Northamptonshire and this cannot continue.

We are taking action today by recommending a children's commissioner joins the existing commissioner team at the Council. This will help to stabilise and improve the service so each and every child receives the protection they deserve.

The proposal to appoint a commissioner for children's services is part of the Government's children's social care strategy to spot early warning signs and take action quickly to support councils to make the necessary improvements where there is a risk of failure.

Malcolm Newsam CBE is an experienced director of children's services and has worked with many underperforming councils to oversee improvements with successful results. He was awarded a CBE in 2017 for services to children's social care.

Two commissioners, Tony McArdle and Brian Roberts, were appointed in May to oversee council services in Northamptonshire, following the discovery of serious failings and financial problems. The appointment of a children's commissioner would build on their initial work and provide additional support and expertise to tackle Ofsted's concerns, working with Lincolnshire County Council, which is providing peer support to the council as one of the Department for Education's Partners in Practice.

Through the work of this team, local government services in Northamptonshire could undergo a reorganisation and the new commissioner would look at how children's services could be delivered in the future. Findings will be reported back to the MHCLG and DfE Secretaries of State next year.

Since May 2010, 44 local authorities have been lifted out of intervention and have not returned – including Doncaster and Rotherham which were both rated 'Good' by Ofsted this year.

Northamptonshire County Council will now have the opportunity to make any representations to the Government on the appointment of a commissioner before a final decision, expected later this month.

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## **[News story: Fishing without a licence costs owner, master and fishing company over £75,000](#)**

The master of a fishing vessel, a director of the company that owns the vessel and the company itself were sentenced at North Shields Magistrates Court on Friday 9 November in a case brought by the Marine Management

Organisation (MMO).

E&J Shellfish Limited, which owned the vessel Catatonia, company director Ewan Inglis and master of the vessel Chris Ferguson were ordered to pay a total of over £75,000 by North Shields Magistrates' Court.

The court heard how sales notes showed that between January and September 2017 the Catatonia made 31 fishing trips when the vessel did not have a valid licence from the MMO for commercial fishing.

The MMO provided advice to E&J Shellfish Limited on completing the necessary paperwork prior to and after the transfer of the vessel to their ownership in January 2017. 18 of the fishing trips made without a licence were after the MMO had sent a letter to the vessel owners making it clear that it was unlicensed and that using it to undertake commercial fishing would be an offence.

As a result of the trips 18,458kg of razor clams were landed with a total value of £103,979.50.

The offences arose under sections 4 and 12 of the Sea Fish Conservation Act 1967 ("the Act") and Regulation 3 Sea Fish Licensing (England) Order 2015. The Act provides for directors of companies to also be found liable for offences.

E&J Shellfish Limited, Ewan Inglis and Chris Ferguson all pleaded guilty in court.

E&J Shellfish Limited was ordered to pay a total of £65,010 – a fine of £12,000 plus a further £50,000 in respect of the value of the fish, plus a victim surcharge of £170 and costs of £2,840.00. Ewan Inglis was fined £9,850 plus a victim surcharge of £170 and Chris Ferguson was fined £383 and order to pay a victim surcharge of £38.

The vessel later became licensed in November 2017 after the owners completed the relevant paperwork and took the necessary steps for a fishing vessel licence to be issued.

A spokesperson for the Marine Management Organisation said:

"Commercial fishing by English fishing vessels, wherever they may be, is only permitted under the authority of a licence issued by the Marine Management Organisation.

"The outcome of this enforcement action shows that the MMO can detect non-compliance with legal requirements by carrying out cross-checks of information such as sales notes.

"We're pleased the Magistrates recognised that undermining the regulatory regime is a serious matter."

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## [News story: New guidance for fishermen ahead of full discard ban](#)

The final phase of the [landing obligation](#), also known as the 'discard ban', comes into force in from 1 January 2019.

The Marine Management Organisation has provided guidance for the fishing industry to help them comply and to manage challenges with quota. Under the full [discard ban](#), fishermen must retain and land all quota species; non-quota species can continue to be discarded as can any fish that may represent a health hazard.

There are also specific optional exemptions to the discard ban for some quota species and these are set out in the regulations. Prohibited species and undersized specimens of non-quota species must be discarded.

There are also a number of specific gear technical requirements being introduced in 2019. These are mandatory for some Irish Sea fisheries from 1 January 2019 and for Celtic Sea fisheries from 1 July 2019. In addition, other optional technical gears can be used if fishermen want to meet exemptions which allow fish to be discarded.

For 2019, the UK Government has worked to maintain, and in some cases extend, exemptions allowing fish with high survival rates to be discarded as well as some unwanted catches that are difficult to avoid. In addition, the MMO will continue to apply a fair and proportionate approach to enforcement.

This the final phase of the discard ban and will bring an end to the practice of throwing dead fish back into the sea. The landing obligation was initially introduced in January 2015 for certain pelagic fisheries.

Fishermen are advised to check the guidance regularly as there may be further changes to the regulations following the December Council. Guidance on the landing obligation can also be found on the [European Commission's website](#).

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## [News story: Launch of the online toolbox](#)

Tony Porter, the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC), has launched his online toolbox – a collection of resources to help organisations comply with the [surveillance camera code of practice](#) and follow good practice and legal

requirements.

The toolbox comprises 4 tools:

[The buyers' toolkit](#), developed in conjunction with the British Security Industry Association and Alastair Thomas of [Alasthom.com](#), is for small and medium enterprises that are thinking about using surveillance cameras, yet as non-experts want to identify the best solution before they proceed and invest their time and money in a system. Following the guidance in the buyers' toolkit will help people make informed decisions about whether surveillance can be justified as a solution to their problems. If surveillance cameras are necessary, then the toolkit is full of advice and tips on how to get the best out of your prospective suppliers.

[The passport to compliance](#) is aimed at large public-space surveillance camera systems, such as town centre schemes operated by local authorities. It will take you through the necessary stages when planning, implementing and operating a surveillance camera system to ensure it complies with the surveillance camera code of practice. It should be completed for new systems, for upgrades of systems if it significantly alters or enhances the views obtained, when additional cameras are added to a system and/or when existing systems are extended.

[The self-assessment tool](#) will help you and your organisation identify if you're complying with the principles in the surveillance camera code of practice. The four self assessment tools which were previously available – for ANPR, CCTV, body worn video and drones – have now been condensed into one tool.

[The surveillance camera specific data protection impact assessment \(DPIA\) template](#) with associated guidance notes has been developed in partnership with the Information Commissioner's Office and replaces the Privacy Impact Assessment advice which was previously available on the SCC website. It reflects updated data protection requirements set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Tony Porter said:

I have a statutory remit to encourage compliance with the [surveillance camera code of practice](#) and to provide advice about it. To do this, I have worked with a range of organisations to develop various guidance notes, tools and templates which are now available on my website.

These tools will help your organisation comply with the code and its 12 guiding principles, which if followed, will ensure that surveillance camera systems are only operated proportionately, transparently and effectively.

I am grateful to Alastair Thomas, BSIA and the ICO for all their efforts in developing this toolbox.