

News story: Third Tide-Class Tanker Arrives in UK

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge comes just weeks after her sister ship, RFA Tidespring, met up at sea with aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time.

The 39,000-tonne tankers can carry up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,400 cubic metres of fresh water in support of Royal Navy operations all over the world.

The detailed customisation work to prepare RFA Tidesurge and her sister ships for operations is being undertaken at the A&P shipyard in Falmouth, sustaining around 300 jobs.

Minister for Defence Procurement Guto Bebb said:

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge in Cornwall marks another key milestone in the Tide Class programme. Tidesurge will soon join her sister ships in providing the integral support which powers our warships and helps our Royal Navy maintain a truly global presence.

While in Falmouth RFA Tidesurge will be fitted with UK specific armour, self-defence weaponry and communications systems, with the total UK work content, including A&P, in the Tide Class programme worth around £150 million and sustaining further jobs at 27 UK-based companies.

The customisation work is expected to take around four months after which RFA Tidesurge will begin final sea trials before entering service in Autumn this year.

Meanwhile, RFA Tidespring, which was preparing to conduct a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) refuelling when it met with HMS Queen Elizabeth in February, is currently acting as the training tanker for the Navy's Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) and will take part in exercise Joint Warrior in the Spring. RFA Tiderace, which is currently docked at A&P Falmouth, is undergoing preparations for her capability trials which are expected to commence in early April.

Sir Simon Bollom, Chief of Materiel (Ships) at Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

I'm proud to say that the delivery of the tanker programme will provide vital support for the Royal Navy, providing it with fuel and fresh water, while also being able to undertake a wide range of maritime operations, including humanitarian relief.

The fourth of the Tide Class vessels – RFA Tideforce – is expected to be delivered later this year.

A&P Group has held the contract to support and maintain RFA ships at home and abroad since 2008. Under the Cluster Support Programme, A&P Group provides maintenance support to groups of MOD vessels, which include RFA Argus and the RFA Bay Class vessels Mounts Bay, Cardigan Bay and Lyme Bay.

News story: Women to have dedicated midwives throughout pregnancy and birth

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that the majority of women will receive care from the same midwives throughout their pregnancy, labour and birth by 2021.

The first step towards achieving this will see 20% of women benefiting from a 'continuity of carer' model by March 2019. Research suggests that women who use this model are:

- 19% less likely to miscarry
- 16% less likely to lose their baby
- 24% less likely to have a premature baby

To help achieve this, the NHS plans to train more than 3,000 extra midwives over 4 years. There will be 650 more midwives in training next year, and planned increases of 1,000 in the subsequent years.

Mr Hunt said:

There are few moments in life that matter more than the birth of a child, so the next step in my mission to transform safety standards is a drive to give mums dedicated midwives, who can get to know them personally and oversee their whole journey from pregnancy to labour to new parent. The statistics are clear that having a dedicated team of midwives who know you and understand your story can transform results for mothers and babies – reducing stillbirths, miscarriages and neonatal deaths, and the agony that comes with these tragedies.

This profound change will be backed up by the largest ever investment in midwifery training, with a 25% expansion in the number of training places, as well as an incredibly well deserved pay rise for current midwives.

There will also be further investment in maternity support staff, including:

- professionalising the Maternity Support Worker (MSW) role – a defined role and national competency framework will be developed and a voluntary accredited register will be established to provide assurance to the public that they are appropriately trained to high standards
- working with the Royal College of Midwives and other partners to develop new training routes into midwifery – this will help talented support workers to develop and move quickly to become registered midwives and help the midwifery profession attract and retain talented staff

These measures support Mr Hunt's ambition to halve the rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths, and brain injuries that occur during or soon after birth by 2025.

Sarah-Jane Marsh, Chair of the NHS England Maternity Transformation Programme, said:

Taken together, this set of announcements has the potential to be the turning point in the health of a generation, and we look forward to welcoming thousands more midwives to the NHS frontline.

Midwives are the lifeblood of maternity care and these additional numbers will make a huge impact, enabling the majority of mothers in this country to have the same midwives throughout their entire maternity journey, including during childbirth.

[Press release: New funding announced today will keep the city of Salisbury and its businesses thriving](#)

The government will make available £2.5m to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury.

The money has been agreed by the government's Ministerial Recovery Group – set up to ensure a range of national government resources and support is offered to help Salisbury respond to the attack in the city. This includes looking at economic measures and what can be done to keep it a thriving and popular city centre and tourist destination.

A £1m package of government funding to support businesses and to boost tourism and visitors, includes:

- £220,000 towards the immediate response to the incident for Wiltshire County Council;
- £367,500 to provide immediate support to businesses impacted by the incident;
- Up to £100,000 to the local Emergency Fund to support businesses impacted by the incident, as well as broader efforts to promote recovery and growth in Salisbury;
- £200,000 package of tourism promotion, including using the GREAT campaign to promote the city and encourage visitor numbers;
- Up to £100,000 to the local authority to help with public health costs associated with the incident.

David Lidington, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, said:

The people of Salisbury have shown great strength and resilience in the face of a cowardly and indiscriminate act.

The Government is committed to supporting this historic British city as it recovers and we will continue to do everything possible to help Salisbury moving forward.

The message is clear: the city is safe and its shops, restaurants and beautiful sites remain open for business.

Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

This funding is crucial to help support Salisbury to recover and get back to business as usual. The focus now is supporting the city's businesses; particularly those directly affected by the incident and to do all we can to encourage visitors and shoppers to visit the city.

We need to market and promote the city to ensure that national and international tour operators and visitors continue to choose Salisbury as a destination of choice.

In addition, the Home Office has agreed £1.6m in special grant payments for Wiltshire Police to meet the initial exceptional costs of the response – and further funding as the investigation continues.

The government remains committed to working alongside the local authority and emergency services to help the area meet any further exceptional costs arising from this incident – this will include meeting the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites.

We are continuing to work closely with the local NHS trust to make certain they have the expertise and funding needed to provide the care their community needs and we will continue to work through any requests for

additional support for costs incurred.

The mental health needs of the local community may not be clear for some time but we are absolutely committed to ensure effective plans are in place and the community's needs are met now and in the future.

Press release: Minister for Europe meets Belarus counterpart

It is the first visit to the UK by a Belarus Foreign Minister since 1993.

The UK and Belarus have been developing our bilateral relationship since the lifting of EU restrictive measures in February 2016.

The ministers used the visit as an opportunity to discuss increasing trade between the UK and Belarus, share perspectives on regional political and security issues, and Sir Alan encouraged Belarus to undertake further political and economic reform, with an emphasis on human rights and democracy.

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

I was the first British Foreign Office Minister to visit Belarus since Belarus became an independent, sovereign state when I travelled to Minsk in September. Now Foreign Minister Makei has come to London for another historic visit – the first of a Foreign Minister of Belarus for nearly 25 years.

His visit provides a valuable opportunity to make progress on a range of issues from trade to reform to regional security. I am pleased to have discussed a number of issues with FM Makei, and I encouraged Belarus to take further steps to improve political freedoms, including human rights, and economic reform. Some progress has been made in these areas but I believe it is in Belarus' long term interest to go further.

I also explained to FM Makei the UK's grave concerns over the Salisbury incident and reminded him that Russia's actions are of concern to all nations, including their friends and neighbours.

Further information

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[Press release: More families helped to change their lives for the better](#)

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak has welcomed the progress made by the Troubled Families Programme over the past year to help families with multiple and complex problems improve their lives, to reform local services and to reduce pressure on the public purse.

The [second Troubled Families annual report](#) published today (27 March 2018) details how the programme is working with families as a whole to provide the stability and practical support they need to overcome complicated issues including 'worklessness', uncontrolled debt and truancy.

This programme of whole family working has achieved significant progress with:

- more than 90,000 families meeting the improvement goals agreed with local services against each of the problems they need to overcome – up more than 48,000 on the previous year
- almost 14,000 of families where progress has been achieved, 1 or more adult has succeeded in moving into continuous employment – an increase of over 4,800 since last year
- reduced demand on children's social care services; the programme's focus on preventative services is starting to show positive results with families getting the type of help they most need, including reducing the number of cases that need to be escalated to children's social care

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak said:

This report details the hard work that's been happening across the country over the past year to help families with a variety of challenging problems improve their lives, reduce their dependency on local services, and in doing so deliver better value for taxpayers.

Adults who were once far from the job market are now moving into work. Children are getting the right support they need and local leaders are encouraging and challenging all services working with children and their families to act early and offer whole family support, to stop their problems becoming worse.

Rather than responding to each problem, or single family member separately, assigned Troubled Families key workers champion working with the whole family. This means they receive support from coordinated services working together to identify and solve their problems as early as possible, rather than merely reacting to crises.

Since the current programme began in 2015, local authorities and their partners have worked with 289,809 eligible families. This compares with only 2,000 families who had received whole family support in England between January 2006 and March 2010.

In addition to working successfully with families struggling with a variety of chaotic issues in their lives, the report outlines how the programme is also driving real long-term change across local services including police, housing, social care and Jobcentres. Services and professionals are now better connected and working in partnership.

Rather than circling around families with multiple and separate assessments and appointments, local authorities are using the programme to work across organisational and cultural boundaries to achieve better lives for the families in need and produce savings for the public purse.

Following a review of the programme's funding model, the annual report also sets out how a new payment structure will be piloted in 11 selected local authorities, with upfront payments made to help support families and accelerate change across local services. This new 'Earned Autonomy' model builds on the existing Payments by Results system in which local authorities are paid for each family who either achieves 'significant and sustained progress' or moves into continuous employment.

Case study

Staffordshire's local Troubled Families Programme has driven service reform and reduced demand on children's social care services. Since 2015, of the 891 families that have achieved continuous employment or significant and sustained progress through the Troubled Families Programme (up to 31 January 2018), 15 families – less than 2% – required further early help intervention and just 12 families – required any future children's social care intervention

Further information

This is the second annual report of the current Troubled Families Programme and meets the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's statutory duty to report annually on performance. See [Supporting](#)

[disadvantaged families: annual report of the Troubled Families Programme 2017 to 2018.](#)

The current Troubled Families Programme was rolled out in England in April 2015 and replaced the first programme which had been in place since 2012. The programme will continue support for disadvantaged families with complex problems and will work with up to 400,000 families by 2020.

The annual report confirms that the programme continues to reach families with complex and multiple problems. In the year before starting the programme, troubled families had the following characteristics compared to the general population:

- children were nearly 8 times more likely to be classified as a Child in Need
- adults were 7 times more likely to have a caution or conviction
- adults were 5 times more likely to be claiming benefits
- children were nearly 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school

In addition:

- over two fifths of troubled families had a family member with a mental health issue
- just under a quarter of troubled families had a family member affected by an incident of domestic abuse or violence

The 11 areas that will pilot the new Earned Autonomy funding model are: Barking and Dagenham, Brighton and Hove, Bristol, Camden, Cheshire West and Chester, Durham, Islington, Kent, Leeds, Liverpool and Staffordshire.

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