

Press release: PM announces major counter-terrorism training exercise in Scotland

The Prime Minister has today announced a major counter-terrorism training exercise will take place in Scotland later this year to test multi-agency response that would come into force in the event of a terror attack.

During a [visit today](#) to [Police Scotland](#), which will act as the lead force throughout the operation, she met a range of officers involved in counter-terrorism, including some who were involved in Police Scotland's response to last week's [attacks in Westminster](#).

The training is part of the UK government's National Counter-Terrorism Exercise Programme and brings together partners from policing and security, the armed forces, UK government departments and the devolved administrations to test responses to a major terrorist attack.

The Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The UK government considers national security across the whole of the UK as a top priority.

Training operations such as this one play a significant part in making sure police forces and other response agencies are able to fully draw on the latest intelligence and resources from the UK's security forces to protect against terrorism anywhere on our soil.

As the second largest force in the country, Police Scotland are a key player in our fight against terrorism. I'm grateful to them for the exceptional work they have been delivering so far to prepare for this very important counter-terrorism exercise.

Lessons learnt from these operations are fed back to the full range of operational partners, government departments and devolved administrations to further strengthen the UK's response to a terrorist attack on UK soil.

Only second in size to the [Metropolitan Police Service](#), Police Scotland works closely with other forces across the UK and has an important role to play in the development of UK-wide policing practices.

This system of agencies allows an effective joint response to tackle terrorism and serious and organised crime throughout the UK.

Police Scotland has automatic access to the UK's [National Crime Agency](#) and its international networks, as well as the UK security agencies' resources and their interception and surveillance abilities.

Equally, it can draw on intelligence from the [National Cyber Security Centre](#), which does crucial work in protecting the UK's infrastructure and keeping us safe online.

The training exercise, which will take place in October, will also involve areas in the north of England.

Cross-agency counter-terrorism responses take place regularly, with exercises ranging from low capability testing to full scale national operations, and this latest event is part of a routine run.

News story: National Apprenticeship Awards 2017

In its fourteenth year, the National Apprenticeship Awards 2017 will search for England's top apprenticeship employers and apprentices; whilst recognising those individuals that make a significant contribution to apprenticeships.

The awards are open for entries for apprentices and apprentice employers to be named 'the best of the best' on a regional and national level, in 10 categories:

Employer Categories

- Small Employer of the Year (1 to 24 employees)
- Medium Employer of the Year (25 to 249 employees)
- Large Employer of the Year (250 to 4,999 employees)
- Macro Employer of the Year (5,000+ employees)
- Newcomer SME of the Year (up to 249 employees)
- Newcomer Large Employer of the Year (250+ employees)

Apprentice Categories

- Intermediate Apprentice of the Year
- Advanced Apprentice of the Year
- Higher or Degree Apprentice of the Year

Apprenticeship Champion

- Apprenticeship Champion of the Year

The Apprenticeship Champion of the Year is open to individuals who go above and beyond to champion Apprenticeships, this category includes apprentices themselves but is also open to those who have made a significant contribution to apprenticeships, for example, those individuals providing careers guidance and working in schools, colleges and other organisations.

Once again the very best employer category entries will also have the additional bonus of featuring in the prestigious annual Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers list.

Sue Husband, director of the National Apprenticeship Service said:

“These awards are a top accolade for all the hard work apprentices and employers are putting into apprenticeships. They are real examples of the many benefits apprenticeships bring to apprentices themselves and their employer. As winners ‘the best of the best’ gain public recognition for their achievements and really are inspiring ambassadors of apprenticeships.

“The 2016 National Apprenticeship Awards final, once again, showcased fantastic talent, commitment and determination from everyone dedicated to improving skills through apprenticeships. We are looking forward to sharing and celebrating further successes for 2017.”

The application site has opened today (27 March 2017); apply online at apprenticeawards.co.uk. Guidance documents for employers and apprentices making applications are available to download from the awards application site. Only entries submitted through the online system will be accepted.

For those considering entering the 2017 awards – a series of webinars to find out more about the process will be announced shortly.

This is the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months – Rebecca Long- Bailey

Rebecca

Long- Bailey MP, Labour’s Shadow Secretary of State for Energy, commenting on the Government

announcement today that the tax payer will incur nearly £100m in costs and damages due to the mishandling of nuclear decommissioning contracts, said:

“By

cancelling just two years into a 14 year contract, the Government has shown dramatic levels of incompetence in the procurement process of this deal.

“British

tax payers who stand to lose nearly £100m should be asking themselves not just

whether they are willing to put up with such ineptitude but also whether the Government actually has a well thought out and long term nuclear decommissioning strategy.

“This is of course the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months after the Concentrix tax credits scandal earlier this year. With Concentrix, a similar pattern of Government behaviour emerged, they failed to recognise key failures in service provision and were forced to cancel the contract.”

[Louise Haigh responds to BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom](#)

Louise

Haigh, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy, commenting on BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom, said:

“It's right that Ofcom has taken this so seriously. The sluggish upgrade of our digital infrastructure has already left swathes of the UK behind; and now it's clear that BT failed to give proper notice that it was not going to meet roll out deadlines, failed to pay compensation and then did not comply quickly and fully with the information demands Ofcom made of them.

“It's just not good enough that time again promises on advertising speeds and roll-out have been broken. It's right that BT is being made to pay for these failures.”

[Notice: DN40 2QJ, Sandstop Quarries Ltd: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the surrender letter and decision document for:

- Operator name: Sandstop Quarries Ltd
- Installation name: Sandtop Recycling
- Permit number: EPR/DB3405CP/S002