

[News story: Companies House has been recognised as a Disability Confident Employer](#)

Disability Confident Employers are recognised as going the extra mile to make sure disabled people get a fair chance. We've been recognised for our commitment to:

- an inclusive and accessible recruitment process
- communicating and promoting vacancies
- offering an interview to disabled people
- providing reasonable adjustments as required
- supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- making a difference for disabled people

Our campaign

Throughout November 2018, our internal communications team ran a Disability Confident campaign. The objectives of the campaign were to:

- increase awareness of the benefits of employing disabled people
- encourage disabled people to increase their own confidence and that of their employer

To support this campaign, we posted relevant content across our external social channels such as [Twitter](#), showcasing our commitment to being an inclusive employer and a great place to work.

Our 'We're Disability Confident' campaign.

How Disability Confident will help us

Recognising that 83% of people will acquire a disability while already in work, we also want to know how best to keep the disabled people who are already with us. The Disability Confident scheme can help give our organisation the skills and confidence we need to recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

Being Disability Confident will produce benefits for our organisation, for our customers and the communities we serve, and for disabled people themselves.

This accreditation will help us draw from the widest possible pool of talent, and secure high-quality employees who are skilled, loyal and hardworking. It'll also improve employee morale and commitment by demonstrating that we treat all employees fairly.

Our Disability Confident Employer status also helps customers and other businesses identify us as an employer who's committed to equality in the workplace.

Achieving Leader status

To complete Level 3, we've enlisted the help of Julian John from Delsion. Julian is keen to work with organisations to increase the Disability Confident footprint in Wales. Here's [a recent TEDx talk delivered by Julian John](#).

Julian's willing to work with us to ensure Companies House gains the Disability Confident Leader status, becoming a leader in this field in Wales. We'll be meeting with him later this month.

More information about Disability Confident

You can read a series of [personal stories from civil servants recounting their experiences of working with a disability](#).

[Find out more about Disability Confident](#) and [Companies House equality and diversity policy](#).

[News story: UK and Australia agree continuity of Mutual Recognition Agreement](#)

An arrangement which helps boost British trade with Australia will continue when the UK leaves the European Union, supporting jobs in both countries.

The Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment (MRA) was signed by the International Trade Secretary and the Australian High Commissioner to the UK in London today (Friday 18 January).

The agreement maintains all relevant aspects of the current EU-Australia MRA. It helps facilitate trade flows between the two nations and means UK exporters can ensure goods are compliant with Australian technical regulations before they depart the UK, saving businesses time, money and resources. Australian exporters to the UK benefit in the same way.

Total UK exports in sectors covered by the deal are worth an estimated £2 billion. Today's signing marks a crucial step in the important trading relationship between the UK and Australia, one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Today's signing will ensure UK and Australian businesses can continue to benefit from existing arrangements for mutual recognition as they do currently, even if the UK leaves the European Union without an agreement.

On top of this, the UK and Australia have both committed to seeking a new ambitious, comprehensive free trade agreement that will allow UK and Australian companies to enjoy an even closer trading relationship after the UK leaves the European Union.

The agreement covers sectors accounting for an estimated 34% of UK goods exports to Australia, including key industries such as the automotive sector where total trade between the UK and Australia was worth over £850 million on average in the five years to 2017.

The deal will also help protect key growth sectors such as the UK's health tech industry with British medicinal supply exports to Australia worth an estimated £437 million over the same period.

This deal has been welcomed by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, which collectively represents 20,000 companies of all sizes, from start-ups to multinationals, across engineering, manufacturing, technology and the wider industrial sector.

The UK and Australia will today also sign an agreement today which will provide further certainty to the UK wine industry post-Brexit.

This agreement, which allows trade in wine to continue between the two countries, also covers winemaking techniques, labelling and certification requirements. It will allow around £250 million of Australian wine to continue to enter the UK, providing greater choice to consumers, and benefitting many businesses involved in the supply and distribution of wine.

Notes to Editors

- The agreement will now be laid before Parliament under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010.
- The Department for International Trade has already laid the groundwork for future trade negotiations with Australia after the UK leaves the EU on 29 March. The Department is currently analysing responses to its 14-week public consultation on future trade agreements.
- All figures are based on internal DIT estimations of bilateral goods trade covered by specific directives in the MRA using HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics. 5-year average trade flows (2013-2017).

[Press release: Statement on proposed](#)

undertakings by News UK in respect of The Times and Sunday Times



On 10 January 2019 News UK submitted an application to DCMS requesting that the Secretary of State accept proposed undertakings in place of conditions put in place in 1981.

The proposals seek to vary the sections of the 1981 conditions which require that ultimate control over the resources, including journalists, available to The Times and The Sunday Times are kept separate.

The changes requested by News UK would permit a greater sharing of resources and services, including journalists, between the two papers. News UK believes that such sharing is a necessary step to mitigate the financial challenges that the two titles will face in the future.

The application will now be considered by the Secretary of State in a quasi-judicial manner through a fair and transparent process. The Secretary of State has today published details on the process including details on how to comment on the application, available [here](#).

A Written Ministerial Statement will be laid in the House on Monday 21 January 2019.

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Press release: Thousands of fish saved from salt water during tidal surge

The barrier at Herbert Woods boat yard in Potter Heigham, Norfolk Broads, is raised when surge tides are expected. This is to prevent salt water from entering the boat yard where shoals of freshwater fish, which gather in the

boat yard during the winter, are protected from salt water.

Earlier this week Environment Agency teams carried out salinity tests in parts of the Broads system and as levels of salt were high, the barrier was shut on Monday.

Officers then used a specialist underwater sonar camera to assess the fish numbers in the boatyard and it is estimated hundreds of thousands of fish had sheltered there. The barrier was re-opened today and no fish deaths have been reported.

Steve Lane, fisheries technical specialist, said:

If we had not closed the barrier, there is no doubt we would have had to carry out a significant fish rescue and it is likely there would have been some fish deaths. Thankfully Environment Agency teams worked together to take action when this salt water surge occurred.

We are continually grateful to Herbert Woods boat yard for their assistance and understanding in operating the barrier, and also to the private boat owners for their co-operation and help to protect the fish. We would also like to thank the anglers who have been out checking in the last few days to see if there have been any fish in distress.

The Environment Agency uses water quality monitors called sondes to track the salt as it moves up the river, thereby giving them enough time to raise the barrier.

During September to March, it is more common to see surge tides push saltwater into tidal rivers and with the added factor of strong winds, this can mean an influx of salt water infiltrates the boat yards and dykes, trapping the fish.

If you see any fish in distress, call the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[Press release: Welsh Secretary welcomes Defence Secretary to Welsh bases leading the way in training and](#)

education

In a visit spanning the length of the country Gavin Williamson, Alun Cairns and Nigel Adams will inspect some of the Welsh bases contributing to the UK's vital defence capabilities. From speaking to those undertaking fast jet training in Hawk aircraft at RAF Valley to exploring the School of Technical Training at St Athan, the UK Government Ministers will see first-hand what Wales has to offer in defence, security and innovation.

On their visit to RAF St. Athan, the UK Government Ministers will meet high-ranking representatives from the Welsh-based RAF and army. At the meetings they will discuss their ambition for the future of the south Wales base.

RAF Valley on Anglesey is home to the No 4 Flying Training School, responsible for training the UK's next generation of world-class fighter pilots. On what is the Defence Secretary's first visit to the base, the UK Government Ministers will have the chance to meet some of the 2,210 regular UK Armed Forces personnel based in Wales and hear of their experiences on the Anglesey base and further afield.

With a total investment of £945 million from the UK Government's Ministry of Defence into Welsh businesses in 2016/17, Wales is now one of the most competitive places in the world from which to innovate, build business and deliver security. Speaking to commanders at RAF Valley and St Athan, UK Government Ministers will reinforce this vital support for the Welsh defence sector and outline their visions for its future.

Secretary of State for Defence, Gavin Williamson said:

The 2,210 regular and 1,080 reservist Armed Forces personnel in Wales make a tremendous contribution to the security and prosperity of the United Kingdom. Wales is home to our 160 Brigade HQ, a light infantry unit, the fast jet pilot training school at RAF Valley and their ground engineering school at MOD St Athan, as well as vital training facilities around Brecon.

Defence invests £945 million each year with businesses in Wales supporting 6,300 jobs, from General Dynamics in Merthyr Tydfil, building armoured vehicles for the Army, to the high tech work of Qinetiq in Aberporth, and the Defence Electronics and Components Agency in Flintshire, which supports our new world-beating RAF F-35 fast jets.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said:

RAF Valley and St Athan are prime examples of how the UK defence sector not only protects us from global threats but also fosters

prosperity, creating thousands of highly-skilled jobs and generating millions of pounds in exports.

After seeing first-hand the world-class talent, not only here in our bases but also as part of our ongoing deployment on the ground in Afghanistan, I am more determined than ever to secure and strengthen Wales' military footprint.

UK Government Minister for Wales, Nigel Adams said:

The first-class training available at the bases across Wales is a true testament to the strength of the Welsh defence sector.

With Welsh-based soldiers, aircrew and sailors deployed worldwide the skill and expertise produced here can be seen and felt globally. The UK Government is committed to preserving Wales' reputation for producing military excellence and I look forward to working closely with the Defence Secretary to drive forward this success.

Following the visit to the two RAF bases, the UK Government Ministers will learn of the invaluable support provided to veterans in south Wales. Helping veterans to re-engage with their families and communities, Woody's Lodge provides a welcoming space for veterans to receive expert support and advice.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said:

Following the recent launch of the UK-wide Veteran's Strategy by the UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Office, it is inspiring to visit an organisation that for many years has been working towards achieving some of the strategy's core aims here in south Wales.

Woody's lodge supports Veterans to face some of the wide variety of challenges and issues that Veterans can come across when they leave the armed forces. By visiting such organisations, the UK Government can gain a better insight into these challenges and ensure that we are fully informed to deliver a strategy that works.

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