

News story: Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visits Joint Forces Command

General Sir Chris Deverell KCB MBE ADC Gen Commander Joint Forces Command meets with Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson CBE at Northwood HQ Photo: Crown copyright. all rights reserved

The Secretary of State travelled to Defence Intelligence at Wyton and the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood, gaining first hand insight into these organisations, their place within JFC, and how they support the defence of the nation.

At the Pathfinder Building in Wyton, the headquarters of the Joint Force Intelligence Group (JFIG), the Defence Secretary met with Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence, Paul Rimmer, Commander Cyber and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Air Vice Marshal Ian Vallely, and Commander JFIG, Brigadier Ben Kyte.

Secretary of State saw how all aspects of Defence Intelligence are coordinated to provide the understanding he and others in government need to make decisions. Operators briefed him on, amongst other things, Cyber, Geospatial Intelligence, and what is known as Time Dominant Analysis; the continual process for providing rapid analytical response to events through the fusion of classified and open source information.

Commander JFC then accompanied the Defence Secretary to Northwood Headquarters, where he toured the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). Over a working lunch with the Chief of Staff (COS) Policy and Finance, Paul Wyatt, and COS Operations, Air Vice Marshal Gary Waterfall, he heard about the history of PJHQ and how it fits into today's operating environment, in support of MOD Head Office and other government departments.

This discussion covered the high number of operations being conducted by UK forces, with coalition partners, around the globe, and the significant range of contingency plans that are maintained by PJHQ.

The Defence Secretary also met PJHQ staff in the Operations Control Room, hearing from planners about how they ensure that the UK Armed Forces are readied for operations, and from operators on how events are managed on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis.

Topics included Op Ruman, the UK's rapid response following the hurricanes in the Caribbean towards the end of last year, and Op Trenton, the UK's contribution to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), both superb examples of what the 3 UK armed forces can do when operating jointly.

Commander JFC and the Defence Secretary also discussed the role of JFC and its strategy, the guiding principle of which is to secure advantage for the joint force through innovation, integration and information. With his focus

on modernising defence, the Secretary of State was particularly interested in the steps JFC is taking to make innovation happen in JFC, the role that the command plays in integrating the capabilities available to defence, and the digital acceleration that the command is in the process of delivering, through Miltech.

The Defence Secretary said of his visit:

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting Joint Forces Command earlier this week. Organisations like the Joint Force Intelligence Group and the Permanent Joint Headquarters are a big part of the reason why the UK's armed forces make such a significant contribution to the defence of the nation, and our allies, in difficult and demanding circumstances around the globe.

Commander JFC also commented:

It was a great pleasure to host the Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson, at Wyton and Northwood, where he had the opportunity to meet some of the superb people who work tirelessly to provide intelligence for defence and command UK armed forces on operations.

His visit also allowed us to showcase the work Joint Forces Command is doing to secure advantage, through innovation, integration and information, and thereby contribute to modernising defence.

Press release: Pubs Code Adjudicator publishes statutory advice on MRO tenancy terms

Paul Newby and Fiona Dickie have today published [statutory advice](#) to provide clarity on the terms of Market Rent Only (MRO) tenancies following recent arbitration awards.

The PCA and Deputy PCA have reiterated the important point that a MRO proposal does not have to be by way of a new agreement. The advice stresses that it is the content rather than the form that is important.

Whatever the form of the individual MRO proposal, the terms have to be reasonable and consistent with the core principles of the Pubs Code; that there should be fair and lawful dealing and tied pub tenants should be no worse off than they would be if they remained tied.

“MRO is not the same as a negotiation on the open market and the pub-owning business should not take advantage of the fact that a tied pub tenant has limited negotiating power.

“The PCA will be likely to find it unreasonable for the pub-owning business to offer unattractive MRO tenancy terms if the intention is to persuade the tenant to stay tied,” the advice states.

The PCA expects pub-owning businesses to have meaningful negotiations with their tenants seeking a MRO tenancy. Tenants should not need to rely on arbitration by the PCA to get their Code MRO rights. Referrals for arbitration should be the exception and not the norm in the future.

Paul Newby, Pubs Code Adjudicator, said: “I understand that both sides of the industry have been looking for clarity on this issue and I am very pleased that following arbitration awards made by the Deputy PCA and myself we can now provide this statutory advice.

“The ability for a tied tenant to go free of tie is an important right introduced by the Pubs Code. Tenants have been facing high costs in pursuing MRO and we need to ensure these unnecessary barriers are eliminated.

“This advice gives a strong yet simple steer on what pub-owning businesses can reasonably ask from their tenants in a MRO-compliant tenancy and is a major step forward in delivering the MRO rights that Parliament has given tenants. I expect it to lead to meaningful negotiations that mean arbitration becomes the exception in the future.”

Fiona Dickie, Deputy Pubs Code Adjudicator, said: “The Code is legally complex and uncertainty surrounding the meaning of the MRO process has caused frustration. This advice will be a useful tool in clarifying for the benefit of all what the Code requires and how its two core principles should be applied in practice to the MRO proposal.

“It is designed to support effective, balanced negotiation between tenants and pub-owning businesses, and reduce the number of cases that are referred for arbitration. I am confident that the arbitration process will now more efficiently and proportionately resolve any remaining MRO disputes where the parties cannot reach an agreement.”

Note to editors The full statutory advice is available on the PCA website www.gov.uk/pca

[News story: HMRC services during the](#)

cold weather

The adverse weather this week has been affecting our staff and contact centres across the country.

HMRC staff are working hard to keep as many services open as possible, but we have had to close some of our sites.

This means that waiting times on our phones lines may be longer than usual, and we have closed a small number of specialist phone lines.

We expect these services to be up and running again during the weekend and to be fully operational by the start of next week.

Our online services are still available, as is support through Twitter [@HMRCcustomers](#) and on [Facebook](#).

Thank you for your continued patience.

News story: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey results launched

Sellafield Ltd produced a video to highlight the findings and encourage more of its employees to read the survey report.

The Sellafield Ltd survey was part of survey carried out across the entire Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) estate. Both the NDA and Sellafield Ltd are committed to improving respect and inclusion across their businesses.

[Sellafield Ltd's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey video.](#)

David Peattie, NDA's Chief Executive said:

The evidence on ED&I speaks for itself, as does the experience of businesses across the world. Organisations that take it seriously attract and keep the best people, perform better and are more successful. So treating everyone equally and with respect isn't just the right thing to do, it's good for our mission.

The findings will provide Sellafield Ltd with a great baseline on which to focus their efforts on improvements.

One of the major areas of concern highlighted in the survey was that 1 in 4

people who responded said that bullying was tolerated in the workplace. The business needs to address this – because bullying and harassment is not acceptable in anyway.

Jon Seddon, Finance Director and Chair of the newly established Sellafield Ltd EDI Council, said:

We know that we need to take Equality, Diversity and Inclusion seriously. It is something that we've neglected in the past, but it will be a big focus for us as the business transforms. And that's not because legislation says we have to, but because we know it's the right thing to do, both for the business and for individuals.

It's clear from the results that we have been too quiet on ED&I in the past. There is much that requires deeper analysis, and we'll be working on that. The first thing that's clear is that we need to talk about ED&I more.

One of the first areas Sellafield Ltd will focus on is mental health, with a campaign already launched to remove the stigma attached to mental health issues.

Press release: Minister Field to visit Paris for talks with the OECD

FCO Minister Mark Field will meet Angel Gurría, Secretary General of OECD on Monday (5 March) for discussions on their work on the Asia region.

Mr Field will also meet representatives today (2 March) from the French Government for talks on UK-French cooperation on the current challenges in the Asia region, including Burma and North Korea, and will attend a meeting at the British Embassy with Ambassadors and representatives from ASEAN countries. Minister Field will also discuss international energy priorities with International Energy Agency Executive Director Fatih Birol.

Speaking ahead of the visit to Paris, Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said;

I look forward to productive meetings in Paris, including with Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, to explore how their work can support UK priorities in the Asia region. The UK is already a strong supporter of the OECD's South East Asia Regional Programme and my visit will be an opportunity to strengthen our work further.

I am also looking forward to discussing important issues across the Asia region with my French counterparts. There is increasing convergence with our French colleagues on many of these issues and we deeply value the work we do together.

Further information