

[News story: Defence Secretary visits Appledore yard as warship competition ramps up](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson paid a visit to Babcock's Appledore shipyard this morning. Crown copyright.

The Ministry of Defence announced plans to procure a new class of frigates, the Type 31e, as part of [the National Shipbuilding Strategy which was launched last year](#). The warships will be built in the UK, with a set price cap no more than £250M per frigate for the first batch of five, with an investment decision to be made at the end of this year.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Visiting a shipyard that has built hundreds of vessels and meeting some of the next generation of apprentice shipbuilders leaves me in no doubt of the current resurgence of UK shipbuilding. The South West is crucial for our military, with a particularly special connection with our Royal Navy and Royal Marines, and it's good to see Babcock seeking to strengthen that even further with this bid.

The department has received over 20 expressions of interest from industry with Babcock today announcing it will lead a bespoke team of industry partners, including Thales, BMT, Harland & Wolff and Ferguson Marine in a bid for the new Type 31e.

The MOD spent £810 per person in the South West region last year, greater than any other region in the UK coming in at a total value of £4.4bn. The department's direct spend in the area is estimated to sustain 30,000 jobs, one in every 70.

Babcock's Appledore facility has been a particularly integral link in the production of the largest ships in the Navy's history, with their production of a number of significant 'blocks' of the UK's new aircraft carriers. Separately, the Appledore yard has recently been working to deliver a new class of offshore patrol vessels for the Irish Naval Service.

The Defence Secretary was given a guided tour of the yard and visited some of the 260 staff employed there and met with the apprentices showing their enthusiasm for the potential opportunity to build cutting-edge ships for the growing Royal Navy.

The frigates will be designed to meet the needs of the Royal Navy, but also with the export market in mind. The Government will work with industry to provide support to become internationally competitive, boosting the UK

economy and jobs, while also helping to create a more stable and well-protected world.

The Defence Secretary will go on to visit the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone, Devon, which is entering its 78th year of training Royal Marines. An average of 1,300 recruits, 2,000 potential recruits and 400 potential officers attend training courses at the centre every year, and the Defence Secretary will meet many of those set to join the Corps.

News story: Appointment of 10 members of the Youth Justice Board

Ben Byrne, Gillian Fairfield, Keith Fraser, Sharon Gray, Neal Hazel, Mairead Healy, Neil Rhodes, Bryan Tytherleigh and Alan Wood have been appointed as members, and Keith Towler who has been appointed as member with experience of the youth justice system in Wales, of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to England and Wales. The appointments are from 1 January 2018 for tenures of 3 and 4 years.

Appointments to the YJB are made under the Act by the Secretary of State for Justice and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments (CPA).

Charlie Taylor, Chair of the Youth Justice Board said:

I am delighted at the appointment of such a talented group of people to the YJB's board, who bring with them a wealth of experience of working with children across a range of organisations.

I would like to thank the outgoing board members for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to working closely with my new colleagues on reform which has a positive and meaningful impact on children in the youth justice system.

Biographies

Brian Tytherleigh

Brian was appointed as a YJB member in September for a period of four months. Brian has been a member of the Audit Risk Committee at the Children's Commissioner for England since 2016. Between 2006-16, he has held positions as Director of Operations at the National College of Teaching and Leadership and as Director of Business Development & Performance at the Children's Workforce Development Council.

Professor Neal Hazel

Professor Hazel is Chair of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Salford, following posts as Director of the Salford Institute for Public Policy and Director of the Centre for Social Research at the University. Neal is also former HM Deputy Chief Inspector of Probation for England and Wales.

Ben Byrne

Since 2016 Ben has been the Head of Early Help and Family Services at Surrey County Council, previously having been Head of Youth Justice and Youth Support in Surrey. He is a qualified social worker who has been a youth justice practitioner. Ben is recognised nationally for pioneering work in the youth justice sector and is a trustee of the National Association for Youth Justice.

Sharon Gray

Sharon is an Education Consultant at Wholehearted Learning, an active member of the SEND London Leadership Strategy and 'engage in their future' representing special schools (young people experiencing severe SEMH – social, emotional and mental health difficulties) across the country. She has been a member of the MOJ Medway Improvement Board, a Head Teacher of special (SEMH) and mainstream schools, primary and secondary for 18 years.

Dr Gillian Fairfield

Gillian has retired from the NHS after 36 years and was first appointed as a YJB Board Member in 2012. She has held posts as a medical practitioner, Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Health and Medical Director and Operational Director of a mental health Trust. She has also held the posts of CEO of two mental health and two acute NHS Trusts.

Keith Fraser

Keith is a retired Police Officer, who spent 14 years at Senior level, starting with the Metropolitan Police Service and from 2005 he was based in the West Midlands. He produced the 2016 to 2019 Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence strategy and business plan for the City of Wolverhampton, and is the Chair of Wolverhampton City's Statutory Youth Offending Management Board. He led an innovative preventative project, targeting over 7000 young people, working with Sport England and he was the strategic Police lead for the Princes Trust across the West Midlands. He is currently a trustee and patron of three children focused charities.

Keith Towler

Keith was the Children's Commissioner for Wales from 2008-15, and, since then, acts as an independent consultant for children and young people's rights. Keith is Vice Chair of the National Independent Safeguarding Board for Wales and Chairs CWVYS, the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services. He was a member of the International Play Association Working Group

which assisted the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Family Justice Review.

Neil Rhodes

Neil is former Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police and is currently a YJB Board member as well as the Finance and Performance Committee Chair for the Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospital Trust.

Mairead Healy

Mairead is the Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight Youth Trust and previously was the Chief Executive of a leading Irish youth charity. She is an appointee of the Expert Reference Group on Children's mental health tasked with developing a national framework on suicide and self-harming.

Alan Wood

Alan was appointed as a YJB member in April last year for a period of 8 months, and received a Knighthood in the 2018 honours for his work as Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services at Hackney Council. Alan was the Chief Executive of The Learning Trust and President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services. In 2013 he was appointed as Commissioner for Children Social Care in Doncaster.

News story: Changes to domestic violence evidence requirements come into effect

Changes to evidence requirements in private family law disputes have come into effect. There will no longer be a time limit on abuse evidence, which previously stood at five years.

Additionally, the range of documents accepted as evidence of abuse has been widened to include statements from domestic violence support organisations and housing support officers.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

We have listened to victims' groups and carefully reviewed the criteria for legal aid for victims of domestic abuse in family cases.

Today's changes will ensure that vulnerable women and children get legal support, so their voice is properly heard in court.

Legal aid is available to people involved in private family disputes if they are victims, or are at risk of becoming victims, of domestic violence or child abuse. To qualify, applicants must provide objective evidence of the abuse while their case is also subject to means and merits tests.

Today's changes follow a review of the evidence requirements set out in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012.

The changes are the latest in a series of reforms the government is making to support victims of domestic violence, having previously announced a £17 million fund to support 41 projects across the country to tackle violence against women and girls.

The landmark Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill will also ensure that no stone is left unturned in protecting and supporting domestic violence victims and children.

[News story: Changes to patents fees on 6 April 2018](#)

Changes to UK patents fees will come into force on 6 April 2018.

The IPO has today published a [summary table and guidance for business](#) so that businesses can familiarise themselves with the fee changes.

Our previous [news article](#) gives further information on the government's policy development leading up to this change.

[Press release: Reduced tolls on Severn bridges begin 8 January 2018](#)

Drivers who use the Severn bridges are reminded changes to the TAG payment system take place from 8 January 2018.

Those who pay by top-up with a Trip TAG through online banking will need to update their payment details to Highways England's account from 8 January

2018. Account holders will still be able to pay through the website or phone.

Drivers paying by direct debit will not need to take any action – their accounts and balances will be transferred automatically and their payments adjusted to reflect the new charges.

The changes have been shared by letter with holders of TAGs – the prepayment system that allows regular travellers to cross without stopping to pay manually.

Clive Perkin, Highways England Divisional Director of Strategy and Planning, explained:

We're very proud to be taking over the responsibility for these iconic bridges which provide such important links between Wales and England.

We're also looking forward to welcoming staff currently employed by Severn Crossing PLC into Highways England.

From midnight on 8 January vehicle charges will be exempt from VAT, reducing the overall charge for individual crossings from £6.70 to £5.60.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The UK Government's decision to reduce the tolls will cut costs for commuters and tourists, and present exciting opportunities for businesses operating in Wales and over the border.

I'm absolutely sure that reducing and then removing the tolls will boost Welsh employment and strengthen Wales' position within the United Kingdom – that is why I made it my number one priority as Secretary of State.

After 8 January the crossings will operate as normal with just a few small changes to signs at the toll plazas.

Staff currently employed with Severn Crossing PLC have all been offered employment with Highways England.

Details of the changes and actions necessary are available on the [Severn Crossings website](#).

Background information: Severn Bridges (M4 and M48) daily charges after 8 January 2018

Vehicle Category	Current daily toll charges	Daily charges after 8 January 2018
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Vehicle Category	Current daily toll charges	Daily charges after 8 January 2018
Category 1 (Cars and other vehicles up to 9 seats)	£6.70	£5.60
Category 2 (Goods vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, small buses)	£13.40	£11.20
Category 3 (Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, large buses)	£20.00	£16.70

- Category 1: £5.60, with the Season/Shared TAG at £98.56 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).
- Category 2: £11.20, with the Season/Shared TAG at £197.12 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).
- Category 3: £16.70, with the Season/Shared TAG at £330.66 (10% discount based on 22 trips per month).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.