

Press release: Students showcase new skills at Highways England charitable event

A team of four Highways England staff is supporting the Brimsham Green School students as part of a programme focused on turning the students' fundraising ideas into a reality while completing personal challenges to develop their confidence, teamwork and resilience.

The students planned the a cake sale and a static bike race at a fundraising event, as well as making a presentation on their charitable efforts to a group of Highways England staff.

Student Harry Shearwood, aged 14, said:

This has been a really good way to raise money for a smaller charity and it would be great to do something like this again.

The mentors from Highways England have helped us with everything from planning and organising the event to our presentation skills and it's given us more confidence.

A few months ago I couldn't have imagined doing a presentation but because we were talked through what we needed to do and given tips on what to say it was much easier. Our people skills have improved a lot too.

Highways England mentor Desiree Li said:

We are very focused on helping young people to improve their skills and confidence so that they can see their potential, and this mentoring scheme is a great way of doing that while promoting Highways England as a great place to work.

Watching the young people develop from their initial shyness and lack of confidence to presenting to a group of colleagues is amazing and will have a lasting benefit for them. They develop a clear sense of their potential and the skills that they can offer their community.

This is the second year Highways England has supported the project. Staff were so positive about coaching a team of young people last year that this year we have two teams of mentors taking part.

Run by local youth charity Envision and backed by the Careers and Enterprise

Company, the 10-week Community Apprentice programme sets young people the challenge of making a difference in the community.

Brimsham Green School careers co-ordinator, Maria Filer, said:

We are delighted with how much the pupils have progressed during the programme. There have been some big changes in individual pupils and how the group has worked together as a whole.

The skills that Envision and Highways England mentors have helped to develop has raised their confidence, their skills level and given them an opportunity to raise money for a charity they feel strongly about.

The Brimsham Green team is in competition with other local schools and mentors are also in competition with those from other local businesses, as well as a second Highways England team based at Brunel House, Aztec West which is supporting Bradley Stoke Community School.

During December the project will culminate in a Boardroom challenge where students will present their achievements to a group of local business leaders and an overall winner will be announced.

Bristol charity Nilaari, which provides culturally appropriate services for young people and adults with mental health or addiction issues and preventing reoffending, will benefit from the fundraising efforts of Brimsham Green School.

The Envision fundraising day follows an event in the summer when the Highways England Regional Operations Centre at Avonmouth hosted its first school open day in a bid to inspire the next generation of transport professionals.

Around 24 year 6 pupils, aged 10 and 11, from Bristol inner city primary school, St Werburgh's, joined traffic officers, engineers and managers for a comprehensive tour of the ROC as well as taking part in business skills workshops and hearing about career options with Highways England.

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.

[News story: Ministry of Defence awards celebrate commitment to the environment](#)

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), part of the MOD, manages the defence estate and supports armed forces throughout the UK and abroad to live, work and train. The 27th annual Sanctuary Awards, held today (22 November 2017) in London, showcased the achievements of teams and individuals working to preserve and protect the defence estate, both at home and abroad.

Winners and runners up were selected from 5 categories and 2 overall winners were chosen to receive the Silver Otter trophy or the Sustainable Business Award.

This year's winner of the coveted Silver Otter trophy is archaeologist Roy Canham MBE. Roy won the Individual Achievement Award for his 40 years of work to survey and safeguard the over 2,200 historical sites across Salisbury Plain. From the 1970s, he worked with the then newly formed Imber Conservation Group to create a record of the many important archaeological sites on the plain. Roy also led work with the MOD, English Heritage and Wiltshire Council on designing measures to protect this historic landscape while also ensuring that the area could continue to be used by the armed forces for training.

The Sustainable Business Award was won by Army Basing Programme Salisbury Plain for their work to rebase service personnel and their families from Germany and re-role units within the UK by 2020. The scale of ABP's Salisbury Plain programme is unprecedented with an investment of over £1.3 billion, delivering 1,339 service family accommodation (SFA), 2,600 single living accommodation (SLA) units and extensive technical facilities.

This year's awards have an international feel with winners and runners up representing areas of the military training estate from all over Great Britain and the world. Winners and runners up are:

Individual Achievement Award

- Winner and Silver Otter Winner: Roy Canham MBE, Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire
- Runner up: LCpl Sheona Macmillan, Project (ANEMOI), Falklands

Heritage Project Award

- Winner: Ballykinler WWI Practice Trenches, Ballykinler, Northern Ireland
- Runner up: Ancient Akrotiri Project, Dreamer's Bay, Cyprus

Sustainability Project Award

- Winner: Army Basing Programme, Salisbury Plain

- Runner up: Typhoon Propulsion Support Facility, RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland

Environmental Project Award

- Winner: 25 years of Foxglove Covert Nature Reserve, Catterick Garrison
- Runner up: Longmoor Conservation Group Natterjack Toad Project, Home Counties

Utilities Project

- Winner: Maximising MOD Energy Efficient Behaviours – A Partnership Project

The awards were presented by DIO Chief Executive Graham Dalton and Julie Taylor MOD Director General Head Office and Commissioning Services.

Julie Taylor said:

I am pleased to present the Sanctuary Awards this year. It is important that we recognise our staff, partners and volunteers throughout the defence community who play such a vital role in helping us to promote sustainability and preserve the MOD estate. There was a fantastic variety of projects which showcased a great deal of innovation, creativity and community spirit. Congratulations to each of the winners and the runners up.

Graham Dalton commented:

DIO takes its role in maintaining the defence estate on behalf of the MOD very seriously and it is encouraging to see so many others working with us and playing such an active part. There were many worthy winners and nominees and you should all be very proud of your achievements. Thank you to all of you for your support and your hard work.

This year's Sanctuary magazine was also launched at the awards ceremony. Published annually, the magazine demonstrates how the MOD is showcasing sustainability and protecting and maintaining the defence estate throughout the UK and overseas. You can access [Sanctuary Magazine](#) online.

You can also read blogs from each of the winners on the [Inside DIO blog](#)

Press release: LPC welcomes acceptance of its recommended minimum wage rates

The Low Pay Commission, the body that advises the Government on the level of the minimum wage, today welcomed the acceptance of its recommendations for the rates to apply from April 2018. These include a 4.4 per cent increase in the National Living Wage, the rate for workers aged 25 and over, from £7.50 to £7.83.

The LPC welcomes the Government's acceptance of our recommendations, which we are required to make on the National Living Wage and the other rates of the National Minimum Wage. On the former we are asked to make recommendations such that the rate reaches 60 per cent of typical earnings by 2020. For the latter, which affect those below the age of 25 and apprentices, we recommend rates as high as possible without damaging employment.

The core decision was whether the most recent economic evidence met the condition of sustained economic growth to enable the NLW to be uprated in line with the path to 60 per cent of median earnings. Commissioners weighed the available evidence carefully, judged that it did, and agreed to keep a steady course to 2020. The recommended rate of £7.83 is in line with the indicative rate of £7.85 that we set out last October.

For young people aged between 18 and 24 years old, Commissioners judged that economic conditions warranted larger percentage increases. There have been ongoing improvements in their employment and unemployment position, and their earnings have been growing faster than those of workers aged 25 and over for three years.

This is good news for the millions of low paid workers who are paid at the minimum rates.

1. The Low Pay Commission is an independent body made up of employers, trade unions and experts whose role is to advise the Government on the minimum wage. The National Living Wage is the legally binding pay floor for workers aged 25 and over. The other minimum wage rates comprise: the 21-24 Year Old Rate, the 18-20 Year Old Rate, the 16-17 Year Old Rate and the Apprentice Rate.
2. The LPC's remit prescribes different requirements in relation to the NLW than for the four other bands of the minimum wage. For the NLW we are asked to make recommendations on the pace of increase towards a target: an 'ambition...that it should continue to increase to reach 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020, subject to sustained economic growth'. For the other rates we are asked to 'help as many low-paid workers as possible without damaging their employment prospects'.

3. Our full recommendations for April 2018 and underpinning analysis will be published today in our [19th report](#), once it is laid in Parliament, as will [a letter from the LPC Chair to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#).
4. We said in our report in [March 2016](#) that, in the absence of economic shocks or other strong evidence, we thought that the default for the NLW would be a straight line rolling path to the 60 per cent target – evenly spreading our (annually updated) estimate of the increase in relative value needed to hit the target over the remaining years to 2020. Our recommendation today reflects this approach, and the cash level is in line with the indicative figure we set out last October – £7.85.
5. The new rate will increase pay for typical minimum wage workers (working 30 hours per week) by just over £500 per year. An increase of 4.4 per cent is, after the introduction of the National Living Wage in April 2016, the largest increase in the main rate of the minimum wage since 2006.
6. We estimate that the £7.83 rate will raise coverage – the number of workers paid at or below the NLW – by up to 530,000, from 1.6 million jobs (6.4 per cent of the cohort) in April 2017 to 2.1 million (8.6 per cent) in April 2018. Looking at progress towards the 60 per cent target, we estimate that the £7.83 rate will represent an increase in the relative value of the NLW for workers aged 25 and over of 1.1 percentage points, up from 56.9 per cent of the value of typical earnings (October 2017) to 58 per cent (October 2018).
7. Rates for workers aged under 25, and apprentices, are lower than the NLW in reflection of lower average earnings and higher unemployment rates. International evidence also suggests that younger workers are more exposed to employment risks arising from the pay floor than older workers. Unlike the NLW (where some consequences for employment have been accepted by the Government), the LPC's remit requires us to set the other rates as high as possible without causing damage to jobs and hours.
8. We have also provided an indicative rate for the National Living Wage from April 2019. This is inevitably uncertain because pay forecasts are likely to change, but using those available in October we project that the on-course rate will be £8.20. Using OBR forecasts published today, the projected figure is £8.18. For 2020, the LPC's projected rate for 60 per cent of median earnings is £8.61, within a range of £8.55 to £8.66. Using its forecasts published today, the OBR wage growth projections give a slightly higher estimated figure for 2020, of £8.57.
9. The National Living Wage is different from the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage. Differences include that: the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage are voluntary pay benchmarks that employers can sign up to if

they wish, not legally binding requirements; the hourly rate of the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage is based on an attempt to measure need, whereas the National Living Wage is based on a target relationship between its level and average pay; the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage apply to workers aged 18 and over, the National Living Wage to workers aged 25 and over. The Low Pay Commission has no role in the UK Living Wage or the London Living Wage.

10. The members of the Low Pay Commission comprise:

Press release: Foreign Secretary welcomes Ratko Mladić's conviction for Srebrenica Genocide

The United Kingdom strongly supports the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and welcomes its decision to sentence former Bosnian Serb Commander Ratko Mladić to life imprisonment as a consequence of his crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992-1995.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Today's decision shows that, however hard they might try, those who perpetrate atrocities cannot out run justice. Ratko Mladić's conviction for genocide in Srebrenica will not bring back the thousands who lost their lives but it does demonstrate that the architects of their suffering will be held to account.

The atrocities perpetrated in the Balkans in the 1990s marked one of Europe's darkest periods. We must join together to ensure it never happens again.

Further information

Press release: Environment Agency

crack down on illegal waste carriers in North London

It was a busy day for the team who stopped a number of waste carriers to see if they had a permit to carry waste, had the correct duty of care paperwork and were describing the waste they were carrying correctly. Officers also checked whether waste was being transported to authorised and legitimate sites where it would be handled correctly.

Senior Environmental Crime Officer Julia Leigh said:

We had a great response from various waste carriers that were stopped, thanking us for carrying out these road stops as they are frustrated with illegal operators undermining their legitimate businesses. It also gave us an opportunity to remind people of the need to use registered waste carriers and comply with their duty of care.

Multi-agency days of action are a valuable tool in preventing and disrupting waste crime. The Environment Agency want to make it very clear to people that everyone has a duty of care to ensure their waste is managed and disposed of correctly by the people they give it to.

Waste being transported with no authorisations is likely to end up at illegal waste sites. Such sites store waste in vast quantities and for long periods of time posing significant risks to health and the environment, like pest infestations and fires, which could lead to water and land contamination plus air pollution from smoke. Illegal waste sites are often the cause of odour complaints too.

Julia Leigh added:

Everyone, including householders, need to make sure that when they have waste removed that they use a registered waste carrier and ensure there is a waste transfer note for the waste taken. If they don't they risk being fined £5,000. Illegal operators have been filling up sites and leaving the landowner to pay for the clear-up costs. Depending on what waste has been left the cost of this can run into hundreds of thousands of pounds, if not more.

Our enforcement days make sure that the right waste goes to the right place. People who manage waste illegally cost the taxpayer millions every year in clean-up costs. They undercut legitimate business, pose a direct threat to sustainable growth in the waste management sector and take valuable resource from the public sector.