

News story: Launch UK brings together UK commercial space sector

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson and Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad spoke alongside the UK Space Agency CEO Katherine Courtney at the Launch UK conference at the Royal Aeronautical Society on 21 February.

A key strand of the government's Industrial Strategy is for the UK to hold a greater share of the commercial spaceflight market, worth an estimated £25 billion over the next 20 years, by developing competitive, commercial and safe spaceflight proposals for UK-based satellite launch services and sub-orbital flights.

The conference brought together potential UK spaceports and spaceflight vehicle operators – the component parts of the consortia that are working to provide commercial launch services from the UK.

The UK Space Agency has made grants worth £10 million available to help develop the capability for spaceflight. The consortia are being invited to provide their business cases for funding to develop key technologies or infrastructure in the UK.

The conference took place as new legislation – the Spaceflight Bill – was delivered to the House of Commons and the House of Lords today to facilitate and regulate commercial spaceflight.

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

“We really do stand at the dawn of a very exciting era. This is a big and incredibly exhilarating moment for this country.

“The traditional space sector is changing and the way we access space is changing too, which is why this is a truly important moment for us. It's vital that we don't miss the exciting opportunities that are now ahead of us.”

Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad said:

“We are boldly legislating where no British government has legislated before.

“It's clear we are galvanised and ready to grasp this huge opportunity for our country. We want to move quickly but we also want to get it right too.

“It's our ambition as a government, as a collective industry, as a country that the UK is the best place in Europe for space flight operations.”

Seven potential regional spaceports gave presentations and a panel of industry experts discussed innovations in commercial spaceflight, looking ahead to 2025, while there was also an opportunity for networking.

Katherine Courtney, CEO UK Space Agency, said:

“With our partners across government we continue to create a supportive environment for commercial innovation and cutting edge science.

“Together, we are working to embrace the emerging small satellite launch market to capture a share of the £25bn global opportunity. I’m confident that 2020 will see the first launches from British soil, and we’re working hard to make that a reality.”

Press release: Shoreham flood scheme enters next phase

A major flood defence scheme that will significantly reduce flood risk to over 2,300 properties in Shoreham and East Lancing has taken a step towards completion this week, with piling works at 2 of the project’s 10 phases now finished.

The huge jack-up barge, that has been working to install one of the new tidal flood defence piled walls in the town centre since November, will leave the site next week having completed its phase of the work.

Of the planned 10 construction phases, 3 have been worked on since the project started in October 2016, and work so far has been progressing well. The scheme will significantly improve the current ageing flood defences, and when the whole project is complete, in 2018, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to thousands of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area. It will also protect important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway line and Shoreham Airport.

Russell Long, Flood Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Work on the scheme is progressing well, and further phases of work are set to begin later in the year. We are aware of the impact that the development of these schemes can have on local communities, and we thank the residents of Shoreham for their understanding during the works.

The Adur Ferry Bridge will need to be closed for a few hours when the jack-up barge leaves Shoreham next week (week commencing 27 February), and shuttle buses will be provided during this time. Exact timings of this operation will depend on weather and site conditions, and we will do all we can to keep the community informed of our plans. I’d encourage residents to monitor [@EnvAgencySE](#) on Twitter, go to www.shorehamadurtidalwalls.co.uk, or

visit the project's visitor centre to find out more.

The Shoreham scheme's dedicated project visitor centre is located at Beach Green Car Park, Shoreham-by-Sea, and is open between midday and 5pm on weekdays.

For further information, you can view the webpage [Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls Scheme](#) or you can call 03708 506506. You can also request information by email at shorehamwestbank@ea.gov.uk or by writing to

SSD Enquiries
Environment Agency
Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
BN11 1LD

Notes:

The visitor centre may be closed during scheduled visits from schools and interest groups.

For all media enquiries please call 0800 141 2743.

Press release: New business champions to support rights of disabled consumers

Eleven new sector champions, who will help to tackle the issues disabled people face as consumers, have been announced by the Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health today (21 February 2017).

The champions, who represent a range of different sectors and businesses, from gaming to retail, will use their influential status as leaders in their industries to promote the benefits of being inclusive to disabled people.

There are currently more than 11 million disabled people in the UK and the spending power of their households – 'the purple pound' – is almost £250 billion. But many businesses are missing out on this potential customer base by having everyday products and services which aren't available to disabled people – who, as a result, are regularly excluded from experiences and opportunities that many others take for granted.

The sector champions will amplify the voices of disabled customers and employees within their own industries, increasing accountability and challenging inequality. They will also be able to highlight specific changes and improvements that will make a difference to the millions of people who often miss out.

The Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Penny Mordaunt, said:

As a public advocate for accessibility, these champions will help businesses realise the value of disabled consumers and the importance of catering to every customer's needs.

These industries must become fully inclusive. Not being able to access the high street, products and services, transport or simply to access a local area with our national values: it must change.

The new sector champions will drive improvements to the accessibility and quality of services and facilities in their sector, helping to showcase best practice and show other businesses the merit of making disabled customers a priority.

The sector champions are:

- Helen Drury, Corporate Responsibility Manager at Intu (retail)
- Suzanne Bull MBE, CEO of Attitude is Everything (music)
- Huw Edwards, Public Affairs Director at UKActive (leisure)
- Chris Veitch, Co-founder of Access New Business (tourism)
- Robin Sheppard, Chairman of Bespoke Hotels (hotels)
- Dan Brooke, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at Channel 4 (media)
- Sam Phillips, CMO at Omnicom Media Group (advertising)
- Michael Connolly, Regional Training and Standards Manager at OCS ltd (transport – airports)
- Jane Cole, Managing Director at Blackpool Transport Services (transport – buses)
- Trudie Hills, Disability Manager, Lloyds Bank (banking)
- Dr Jo Twist OBE, CEO of UKIE (gaming)

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5123

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you when submitting VHCC family work

From:

First published:

21 February 2017

You can prevent delays to Very High Cost Case family work by making sure you avoid a few common mistakes.

We have checked through correspondence received by the VHCC family team in recent weeks and believe the following tips could help you avoid unnecessary delays.

Avoid sending documents by both email and DX

This often causes confusion and additional work for the team, meaning that it takes longer for them to issue a response.

Unless otherwise requested choose just one way of sending documents i.e. email or DX.

Download and use the template to register a VHCC case

As you work through the registration template remember that the VHCC team requires the following:

- certificate reference numbers
- number of hearing days and advocate meetings to date
- number of future hearing days/advocate meetings
- date of final hearing (if known)
- full breakdown of costs to date

If information is missing the VHCC team will need to ask for additional information, which will mean delays. A link to the page hosting the template is available below.

Use correct process for enquiries

Enquiries about cases managed within CCMS need to be dealt with in the CCMS environment. Non-CCMS cases enquiries can be dealt with by emailing:
vhcc.queries@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk

Avoid emailing caseworkers directly as this can cause unnecessary delays.

Further information

[Family high cost cases](#) – scroll down to ‘when a case becomes high cost’ for link to ‘email template’ to help you register your VHCC case

Speech: David Davis: Estonia and the UK will remain close partners after Brexit

Britain and Estonia share much in common. From our belief that healthcare should be offered to all, regardless of background, to the importance we place on the defence of western values and democracy.

And it is in that spirit of shared values and friendship that I come to Tallinn today.

The message I bring with me is a simple one – Britain will always prioritise the important relationship between our two nations, now more than ever as we seek a strong partnership with the EU even after we leave its institutions.

Our deep relationship extends back decades, starting during the War of Independence in 1918 when the UK sent a Royal Navy flotilla to secure Estonia's freedom.

The British servicemen who gave their lives in that conflict are commemorated in the Estonian Defence Forces military cemetery in Tallinn.

And that strong military partnership continues today. Not only are we fully signed up members of NATO, but we are also two of only 5 countries that meet the spending target of 2% of GDP on defence.

Our troops fought together under the NATO banner in Afghanistan, and are now working together to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

And you need look no further for an indication of the importance Britain places on our relationship than the fact that in April this year, we will be deploying 800 UK troops to Tapa.

That collaboration will be of no less importance when we leave the European Union, because in the face of growing concern about the threat to security across the continent we must bolster our efforts to defend the western world.

So our servicemen and women will continue to work proudly alongside yours in the years ahead, providing vital reassurance and deterrence along NATO's eastern border.

But our relationship runs further than our important shared interests in defence.

Estonia is one of the top travel destinations in the world and last year around 115,000 tourists visited Estonia from the UK.

In that context, I understand that the 15,000 Estonians currently living in the UK want certainty about their rights once the UK leaves the EU. And while Estonians' existing rights are not affected the British government wants to get a deal done to secure long term rights quickly that protects the rights of all EU citizens living in the UK, and British citizens living in the EU. Indeed we would have liked to have come to such an agreement already, and have been clear it will be an absolute priority once formal negotiations begin.

It's in no one's interest to see any new barriers to trade. The UK is Estonia's 4th biggest export partner in services, and trade between our two nations is worth more than €1bn a year.

The UK is important for the Estonian start-up community. Many have their headquarters in London, including the Estonian-founded money transfer firm TransferWise.

So as the Prime Minister outlined last month, Britain is seeking a new, strong partnership with the European Union. A partnership that maintains the close relationship we have with member states and builds further on them.

That partnership is one that will be to our mutual benefit. We are absolutely clear that we want the EU to succeed economically, politically and socially – and we want to remain a good friend and neighbour.

I'm confident that if we approach negotiations over the UK's exit and new partnership with the EU in a spirit of goodwill, we can deliver a positive outcome that works for all.

Estonia and the UK will remain close partners. And my message to you, as the first UK Cabinet minister to visit Estonia since the UK voted to leave the EU, is that our important relationship will not diminish after our exit. Indeed, it will grow stronger still.