

News story: Lord Duncan opens National Decommissioning Centre

The National Decommissioning Centre (NDC) was opened today [11 January 2019] by UK Government Minister Lord Duncan and Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Scottish Government Energy Minister, in Newburgh in North-East Scotland's Energetica Corridor.

The government ministers joined industry and civic leaders to celebrate the launch of this long-term partnership between the Oil & Gas Technology Centre and the University of Aberdeen. The NDC is part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, from which it has received £180million in funding.

UK Government Minister Lord Duncan welcomed the centre's opening:

The National Decommissioning Centre is a real and tangible benefit to the region of the Aberdeen City Region Deal. This presents an exciting opportunity to establish a centre of excellence in the North-East of Scotland which will develop new capabilities, skills and jobs to meet the decommissioning challenge now and in the years ahead. It will be funded in partnership by the UK Government, Scottish Government, University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University and the private sector.

It's been two years since the Aberdeen City Region Deal started to make a huge difference to the region's economy. The Deal is helping to boost jobs and prosperity and is driving growth across the region. To date the UK Government has committed more than £1.1 billion to City Region Deals right across Scotland.

The opening of the National Decommissioning Centre

The centre will receive £90million in funding from both the UK and Scottish Governments as well as funding from the University of Aberdeen and the private sector.

The NDC aims to become a global leader in decommissioning as well as academic research into the area. The centre is home to the most powerful industrial laser of its kind at an academic institution in the UK and a supercomputer cluster.

The opening of the National Decommissioning Centre

News story: New figures reveal changes to the UK's veteran population

[New figures](#) released by the MOD provide an insight into how the UK's veteran population will change over the next decade.

The figures show that over the next ten years, the number of former service personnel in Great Britain is expected to decrease by around 1 million, to approximately 1.6 million by 2028. Estimates put the number of former service personnel currently residing in Britain at around 2.5 million.

As well as the reduction in size, the age and gender profile of the ex-forces community is also expected to change. The percentage of veterans of working age, between 16-64, is projected to rise from 38% to 44%, while the percentage of women is set to increase from 10% to 13%.

The new data projections will inform the first 'Strategy for our Veterans', jointly published by the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, which sets out the key areas of support for those who have left the armed forces.

Published in November 2018, the strategy identified six key areas where support is most needed over the next ten years, including: community and relationships, employment and skills, health and wellbeing, finance and debt, housing, and contact with the law. The UK Government consultation complementing the strategy is open until 21st February.

All relevant Government departments have a responsibility to ensure that the military community is treated fairly, and not disadvantaged by their service as part of the Armed Forces Covenant. This includes access to housing and healthcare, as well as employment and education support.

The 2021 census, which will for the first time allow citizens to identify whether they have served, will work alongside these new projected figures to help local authorities to better understand the needs of the veterans community, and to support them in the most efficient way.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

The figures reveal important insight into the potential needs of our future veteran community, and will help us to continue to step up our support for those who have served this country.

While the vast majority of ex-service personnel go to live happy, healthy and successful lives, it's right that we work across Governments to make sure veterans can access the services they need.

This week, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

announced that all social housing applicants will be given the chance to identify themselves as veterans, and those struggling with mental health will be given the same priority as their peers with physical injuries.

Last year, NHS England confirmed that every part of the country now has dedicated mental health services up and running for veterans, and announced the first 25 hospitals to become 'Veteran Aware', delivering specialist healthcare support to those who have served. This will be supported by £10 million of investment as part of the NHS's long term plan.

Any veteran in need of advice can call the [Veterans' Gateway](#) – a 24 hour helpline which acts as the first port of call for ex-service personnel and their families. The MOD has announced that the Gateway's 24/7 helpline will trial a new outreach service where it will proactively call those who have served, to check in on their wellbeing and remind them of where support can be found.

News story: Civil news: delegated functions for emergency homelessness JRs

We have made changes to clarify the scope of delegated functions to grant emergency representation for urgent homelessness judicial reviews.

These changes make it clear that these powers are available for any proceedings under:

- part VII Housing Act 1996
- section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948
- section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- section 47(5) National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990
- section 19(3) of the Care Act 2014
- section 36 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014

This reverts back to the position that was in place before September 2018.

Why are you doing this now?

Since 2013, providers have not had the power to grant emergency representation using delegated functions for judicial reviews. However, cases concerning urgent homelessness matters have always been exempt from this rule.

In September 2018, a technical change was made to the terms of this 'homelessness exemption'. Following constructive discussions with stakeholders, we have now decided to revert back to the position for these cases that was in place before September.

How are you making this change?

We are making this update by amending the authorisations under section 5 of LASPO.

The updated authorisations also make it clear that providers are permitted to make determinations on financial eligibility for emergency representation when using delegated functions.

There is no need to refer the case to the Legal Aid Agency to make this initial assessment of financial eligibility.

Further information

[Work out who qualifies for civil legal aid](#) – to download tables of delegated authorities

[News story: New investment for businesses to tackle ocean plastics crisis](#)

Plastic pollution is creating an environmental crisis in the oceans.

According to [the United Nations](#) (pdf), more than 8 million tonnes of plastic enter the water every year, killing up to 1 million sea birds and 100,000 mammals, turtles and fish.

Unless significant action is taken, the [amount of plastic in the seas will triple by 2025](#).

New investment partnership

To tackle the plastics problem, Innovate UK and [Sky Ocean Ventures](#) have joined forces to offer UK businesses £6 million in simultaneous public and private funding.

Innovate UK will provide up to £3 million in grants to enable the UK to lead the fight against waste, catalyse new ideas and quickly get products and services to market. Part of this is from the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund – a £20 million programme led by [UK Research and Innovation](#).

Sky Ocean Ventures will offer the same amount in private investment. Set up by [Sky](#), the firm looks to support young companies and create meaningful change by highlighting environmental disaster caused by plastic pollution in the oceans.

This follows [a recent report by Beauhurst](#) that companies receiving both Innovate UK grants and follow-on equity typically raise more money and achieve higher valuations.

Ideas to reduce plastic waste

The first part of the funding competition is inviting applications from projects that reduce plastic waste and pollution of wider environment and promote a circular economy.

Projects could include:

- developing new, sustainable polymer materials
- developing sustainable plastic alternatives
- alternative business models and supply chains that use less plastic
- supporting circularity through improved resource use and design
- new product designs
- technology-enabled models that change consumer behaviours
- new recycling processes, including collecting, sorting and processing of waste plastics
- increasing the value of recycled polymers
- scalable, technology-enabled remedial solutions

Applications should identify where revenue generation and growth will occur in the UK as a result of the innovation being developed and exploited.

Workable solutions before it's too late

On the competition, Energy and Clean Growth Minister, Claire Perry said:

Heart-breaking images of wildlife suffering due to plastics waste have been a stark reminder that harmful pollution can have a devastating impact on our oceans.

That is why, this time last year, [the Prime Minister committed us](#)

[to eliminating all avoidable plastic waste by 2042.](#)

We are investing more than ever before to find alternative materials to harmful plastics. We want innovators and businesses to get behind this too, helping us find new ways to cut down waste and pollution while growing their business to have global impact.

Ian Campbell, Interim Executive Chair of Innovate UK, said:

Plastic waste has created a crisis that needs a global resolution. We need businesses, investors, government and researchers pulling in the same direction, creating workable solutions that people will be able to see on the shelves before it's too late.

Fred Michel, Group Director, Impact Investment and Sky Ocean Ventures, added:

Our aim is to enable entrepreneurs to support innovative new ideas at the earliest stages with both investment and mentorship. We will use the reach and voice of Sky's platforms to highlight their solutions and help consumers change behaviours.

Competition information

- the first part of the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 13 March 2019
- micro and small businesses are eligible to apply, working alone
- applicants must be based in the UK and intend to carry out the work here
- we expect projects to have total costs of between £100,000 and £200,000 and to last up to 12 months
- funding is for feasibility studies, industrial research or experimental development
- successful applicants could get up to 100% of their project costs. This will be split between Innovate UK and Sky Ocean Ventures

[**News story: Master and vessel owner ordered to pay £15,624 for fisheries offences**](#)



Kindred Spirit (LT1048) is a 13 metre stern trawler owned by Roger Klyne and skippered by Stephen Fisher. The court heard that the vessel had overfished its non-sector quota for anglerfish in both July and August 2017. The total value of the overfish was £10,575.44.

Two charges for exceeding monthly quota limits were brought before the court. The defendants pleaded guilty to both charges.

Mr Klyne was fined £10,000, ordered to pay £3,014.74 in costs and a victim surcharge of £170. Mr Fisher was fined £2,400 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £40.

A spokesperson for the MMO said:

In cases like these the MMO will always take proportionate and appropriate action, including prosecution, to ensure offenders do not profit from such illegal activity and to protect fish stocks for the wider fishing industry and future generations.

In following national guidelines for sentencing environmental crimes, the court set a level of fine that was expressly aimed at depriving the defendants of the economic benefit of the offences. The court said it wanted to make it clear that it should not be cheaper to offend than to comply with the law.

Published 11 January 2019