

## **News story: HCA ready to provide support or advice on testing ACM cladding**

Following the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower the Government is asking local authorities and other registered providers of social housing to identify whether any panels used in new build or refurbishment are a particular type of cladding made of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM).

The Homes and Communities Agency stands ready to provide support or advice on this testing where required. If you require such support please contact:

[responsesupport@hca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:responsesupport@hca.gsi.gov.uk)

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## **SNP Westminster frontbench team and spokespeople**

New SNP Westminster Leader Ian Blackford has announced the new SNP frontbench team. Here's the list in full.

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## **Press release: Government supports high-flying British Aerospace industry**

The Department for International Trade has helped GE Aviation win a multi-million dollar contract by guaranteeing a loan through the government's export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF).

Worth \$18.7 million, the contract sees GE upgrade engines for cargo and charter airline Atlas Air. With the work carried out in GE's Prestwick workshop in Scotland they will supply and install energy efficient Performance Improvement Program (PIP) kits to 3 engines in the Atlas Air fleet.

This initial contract has led to a second multi-million dollar agreement for UKEF to finance upgrades of 3 more engines in the coming months.

The announcement comes as International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, attends the Paris Air Show where the Department for International Trade is exhibiting.

International Trade Minister, Mark Garnier, said:

Our civil aerospace industry is world leading and the Department for International Trade is committed to doing all it can to boost exports and support UK businesses in this sector – including through UKEF where this deal will help do just that, as well as protecting jobs in Scotland.

I'm pleased to be flying the flag for the UK at the world's oldest and largest Air Show. It's a real opportunity to meet with potential investors and promote the strengths of the UK aerospace industry.

While at the Paris Air Show, Mark Garnier met with a range of businesses and discussed positioning the UK aerospace sector for the next generation of technology driven growth.

The UK leads the way in whole aircraft capability, particularly in:

- wing design and manufacture
- propulsion
- land gear
- major systems
- airline interiors

It is also well placed to provide access to:

- skilled talent
- excellent academia
- research and development
- world-class manufacturing processes
- competitive suppliers

UKEF, Atlas Air and GE may extend the programme, which could see further support worth millions of dollars for the future supply and installation of PIP kits to 33 more of Atlas Air's engines over the next 4 years.

Last year (2016) the UK aerospace industry generated revenues of £32 billion with £28 billion of production exported.

Highlighting the strengths of this important sector, the Department for International Trade's investment showcase is in the design of an aircraft

cabin. There are 8 windows highlighting some of the international aerospace businesses located in the UK including:

- Boeing
  - Thales
  - Airbus
  - Bombardier
  - Rolls-Royce
  - GE Aviation
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## [News story: Plato mission brings opportunities for UK space sector](#)

Plato (Planetary Transits and Oscillations of stars) was adopted at the European Space Agency's Science Programme Committee meeting today (20 June 2017), following its selection in February 2014. That means work to build the science instrument payload can begin and in the coming months industry will be invited to bid to ESA for the contract to supply the spacecraft.

The UK Space Agency is investing £25 million in the development of the novel scientific instruments on board.

Dr Katherine Wright, Head of Space Science at the UK Space Agency, said:

Investment in Plato builds on UK science and engineering strengths in this area and secures us a leading role on this pre-eminent space science mission for the next decade. Plato has the exciting potential to discover Earth-like planets around other stars, which may eventually lead to the detection of extra-terrestrial life.

Planned to launch in 2026, Plato will monitor thousands of relatively bright stars over a large area of the sky, searching for tiny, regular dips in brightness as their planets cross in front of them, temporarily blocking out a small fraction of the starlight.

Astronomers have so far found over 1,000 planets beyond our Solar System (exoplanets), but none as yet has been shown to be truly Earth-like in terms of its size and distance from a Sun similar to our own.

Plato's innovative design is set to change all that. Its suite of multiple small telescopes and cameras, reminiscent of the compound eye of an insect, will allow it to 'stare' at a large number of the nearest and brightest stars, with the aim of discovering Earth-sized planets orbiting Sun-like stars in the 'habitable zone' – the distance from the star where liquid water could exist at the surface.

This will allow them to be studied with unprecedented accuracy and assessed for their potential to host life. An important part of this investigation will be to perform an intricate study of the structure and properties of the host stars themselves, providing key complementary information needed for the proper characterisation of rocky Earth-like exoplanet worlds.

UK scientists and engineers in collaboration with the UK Space Agency are leading participants involved in all aspects of the mission. Prof Don Pollacco, of Warwick University, leads the Plato Science Management Consortium. Scientists and engineers at UCL's Mullard Space Science Laboratory are responsible for the design and manufacture of the electronics for the camera system that sits behind the telescopes, and for characterising the camera detectors to optimise their performance.

The detectors are charge-coupled devices (CCDs), produced by the e2v company in Chelmsford under contract to ESA. A team of UK scientists, coordinated by Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy, is also developing the Exoplanet Analysis data processing system on the ground.

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## **News story: MHRA chair recognised in 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours**

Professor Sir Michael Rawlins, MHRA chair, honoured in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

We are delighted that the chair of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), Professor Sir Michael Rawlins, has been appointed Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE).

The honour, which was announced in the 2017 Birthday Honours List over the weekend, is for services to the safety of medicines, healthcare and innovation and comes after more than three decades at the forefront of innovation, development and leadership in the public health sector.

Since taking up the position of chair at MHRA in 2014 Sir Michael has overseen the Agency's work as an effective regulator of medicines and medical devices across the UK. He has promoted the first-class science and research carried out in each of the Agency's centres; the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC), the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD) and MHRA.

Professor Sir Michael Rawlins said:

It is a tremendous honour to receive this prestigious award, and is

a great recognition of the work the Agency carries out to protect public health.

Innovation has been a key focus for the Agency over the past few years with the launch of our Innovation Office and the early access to medicines scheme (EAMS), and I have been proud to have been part of this beneficial development in the health sector.

## Background

1. Sir Michael Rawlins, currently chair of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and also UK Biobank, was the founding Chair of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Under his leadership, NICE became an internationally renowned organisation, pioneering processes which have been copied the world over. It has facilitated faster NHS uptake of new technologies and procedures, offering opportunities to patients in a way not experienced before. He has previously served as Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and President of the Royal Society of Medicine.
2. The [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#) and the [Clinical Practice Research Datalink \(CPRD\)](#). MHRA is an executive agency of the [Department of Health](#).