

Press release

PM announces national endeavour to strengthen the UK's nuclear deterrent

The Prime Minister will today [Monday 25th] declare a 'national endeavour' to secure the future of the UK's thriving defence and civil nuclear industry.

From: [Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street](#) ([/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street](#)), [Ministry of Defence](#) ([/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence](#)), and [The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP](#) ([/government/people/rishi-sunak](#))

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- Prime Minister to announce public and private investment to reinforce the nuclear workforce and support 40,000 expected new jobs
- Government will commit more than £200m over the next decade to ensure Barrow thrives as the home of UK nuclear submarine-building
- Defence Secretary will publish flagship Defence Nuclear Enterprise Command Paper later today to set out full scale of the UK's national nuclear endeavour
- UK's energy security and national security depend on nuclear – and the industry needs more skilled British workers

The Prime Minister will today [Monday 25th] declare a 'national endeavour' to secure the future of the UK's thriving defence and civil nuclear industry, as he visits Barrow-in-Furness and announces a significant package of investment in skills, jobs and communities.

Domestic nuclear capability is vital to our national defence and energy security, underpinning our nuclear deterrent and securing cheaper, more reliable energy for UK consumers. The nuclear industry is growing rapidly, requiring 50% more highly skilled workers in the next ten years – and we need to train a new generation of British talent.

The Government is partnering with industry, including BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, EDF and Babcock, to invest at least £763 million by 2030 in skills, jobs and education. The investment will create more than 8,000 career opportunities to help the sector fill 40,000 new jobs by the end of the decade – and will support plans to double the number of nuclear apprentices and graduates and quadruple the number of specialist science and nuclear fission PhDs.

As the home of the UK's Astute-class nuclear submarines – the most advanced attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy – and the

new Dreadnought programme and UK AUKUS submarine production, the Cumbrian town of Barrow-in-Furness is also central to the UK's defence nuclear ambitions. The Prime Minister will therefore announce today the creation of a Barrow Transformation Fund, with the Government committing an immediate £20 million and a further minimum of £20 million a year over the next 10 years to make Barrow an even more attractive place to live, work, and build a nuclear career.

Building on these new investments, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps will later today publish the Government's Defence Nuclear Enterprise Command Paper, setting out for the first time the full breadth of activity to sustain and modernise the UK's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent – a cornerstone of national and global security for more than 55 years.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

“ Safeguarding the future of our nuclear deterrent and nuclear energy industry is a critical national endeavour. ”

“ In a more dangerous and contested world, the UK's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent is more vital than ever. And nuclear delivers cheaper, cleaner home-grown energy for consumers. ”

“ That's why we are investing in Barrow, the home of UK submarines, and in the jobs and skills of the future in the thriving British nuclear industry. Today we usher in the next generation of our nuclear enterprise, which will keep us safe, keep our energy secure, and keep our bills down for good.”

The Defence Command Paper will establish the UK's nuclear programme as a critical 'National Endeavour' which is vital for our long-term security and prosperity.

It is expected to set out how the UK will deliver the capabilities necessary to maintain our independent nuclear deterrent – including progressing plans to bring new Dreadnought Class submarines into service in the early 2030s, deepening cooperation with our partners under the flagship AUKUS agreement and upgrading key infrastructure – supported by an additional £3 billion in funding for our nuclear enterprise announced last year.

The UK's ambitious defence plans are underpinned by major new investment in Barrow. To unlock Barrow's huge potential and support a growing workforce, the Government will commit an initial £20 million for immediate projects, including supporting people towards work, community projects and completing construction on the A595 Grizebeck Bypass, and a minimum of £20 million a year over 10 years to improve health outcomes, build more homes, develop the transport network and support local schools.

The Barrow Transformation Fund will be managed by the Barrow Delivery Board in collaboration with local leaders, who will allocate funding to areas of greatest need.

Charles Woodburn, BAE Systems Chief Executive and member of the Nuclear Skills Executive Council said:

“ Barrow is at the heart of the UK's submarine enterprise and as the custodian of our submarine design and build capability, we're incredibly proud of the role we play in the Astute, Dreadnought and now SSN-AUKUS programmes.”

“ Today's announcement reinforces the importance of continued investment in critical nuclear skills at a time of significant growth for our submarines business and our 13,500 employees.”

“ The long-term vision set out in the command paper is hugely welcome and will support the necessary infrastructure development and recruitment required for the delivery of these important national security programmes.”

David Lockwood, CEO Babcock International and member of the Nuclear Skills Executive Council said:

“ This is a fantastic opportunity for the UK to deliver a stronger nuclear industry that will contribute to the resilience of the UK's independent deterrent and will support the UK's energy security ambitions and net zero targets. As well as providing bed-rock support for the ambitious development required across industry and government for the AUKUS programme. ”

“ Babcock is proud of the leading role it is taking in driving forward initiatives to retain and grow the critical mass of nuclear skills we need today and tomorrow. We have a keen focus on our major nuclear sites in the South West of England and in Scotland and are determined to leverage the benefits of the NNSPS, with our customers and other industry partners, across the broader communities we serve.”

Simone Rossi, CEO EDF in the UK and member of the Nuclear Skills Executive Council said:

“ EDF welcomes the joint commitments announced today and looks forward to working with Government and industry to help deliver the great opportunities for people who choose to work in the nuclear sector.”

“ EDF has been at the heart of the UK’s nuclear energy sector for over 15 years and in 2024 is hiring a further 1,000 people into its UK nuclear family – in operations, construction, engineering support and many other exciting roles. The majority of these will be apprentices and graduates, as well as those with relevant skills from other industries. ”

“ As we have learned in recent years there is an urgent need to attract, train and inspire the next generation of people who can design, build, operate and decommission existing and new nuclear facilities. We are excited to be part of this national endeavour.”

Steve Carlier, President at Rolls-Royce Submarines and member of the Nuclear Skills Executive Council said:

“ As a proud member of the Nuclear Skills Council and an important partner in the Defence Nuclear Enterprise, we welcome news that the UK is going to go even further in its mission to meet the growing demand for nuclear expertise. It is an exciting and fascinating time for the industry as both civil and defence organisations collaborate to ensure we all have a strong and sustainable pipeline of talent coming into the world of nuclear.”

“ Nuclear has the power to protect and help meet the growing demand for clean energy, so news of the UK’s commitment to this unique industry is a sign of its importance. From opening our Nuclear Skills Academy, which welcomes 200 apprentices every year for at least the next decade, and our recently announced site expansion work, which is creating over 1,000 new highly-skilled jobs in Derby, to new satellite offices creating almost 300 jobs in Glasgow and Cardiff, Rolls-Royce is playing a pivotal role in supporting this national endeavour.” ”

As part of today’s visit, the Prime Minister is expected to meet apprentices working on the Royal Navy’s cutting-edge nuclear submarines. The UK’s nuclear industry is going through an unprecedented period of growth, driven by the Government’s ambitious nuclear energy targets, and is expected to need 123,000 people by 2030.

The investment in nuclear skills – which includes £350 million from the Government and more than £400m from industry – will create some 5,000 new apprenticeships in the next four years. It will also drive private investment and create job opportunities for everyone from specialist scientists and engineers, to welders and electricians, to project managers and Royal Navy submariners.

This follows the major reforms and £60 million worth of investment outlined by the Prime Minister following the Spring Budget to enable 20,000 more apprenticeships and slash unnecessary regulatory burdens.

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