



Terms of reference for the UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce

Objectives of the Taskforce

The UK Shipbuilding Skills Taskforce (UKSST) has been established to develop and implement a future-focused skills strategy for shipbuilding in the UK. It will operate over an 18-month period and aim to ensure the UK's shipbuilding industry has a skilled workforce both in the short and longer-term.

The Taskforce will:

- deliver a collaborative approach to better understand, articulate and safeguard a fit-for-purpose skills provision for UK shipbuilding
- establish a baseline understanding of the upskilling, reskilling and future skilling needs to support shipbuilding across the UK
- provide solutions and identify interventions to address the identified skills shortfalls for traditional shipbuilding methods, as well as those needed for new and emerging technologies
- use its networks to share ideas and promote best practice to build a strong skills base for UK shipbuilding
- stimulate a wider interest in skills for shipbuilding amongst young people and the associated employment and career opportunities
- consider and address barriers in all four nations of the UK
- promote partnership with providers and training bodies/academics working within the existing UK skills system to leverage greater momentum for UK shipbuilding
- advocate the work of the Taskforce to their networks and the wider sector
- optimise available skills funding and infrastructure to better support UK shipbuilding

As part of Taskforce activities, especially when stimulating wider interest in the industry, diversity and inclusion should be considered, and where possible, actions should be implemented to increase diversity and inclusion within the industry.

The scope of the Taskforce aligns with the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSbS) and includes the design; build; integration; test and evaluation; repair; refit; conversion; and support of warships; commercial vessels; workboats; leisure vessels; systems and sub-systems. This does not include submarines, although we recognise that there are some overlaps, particularly in terms of skills and the supply chain. Government's approach to the submarine industry is set out in the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

Outcomes of the Taskforce

The Taskforce will prepare a future-focused Shipbuilding Skills Strategy by the end of June 2023, with a set of recommendations and a prioritised SMART Action plan to support and enable the UK shipbuilding sector to meet its skills requirements and thereby develop a competitive advantage. The Taskforce will begin to implement the agreed actions during the final six months of the Taskforce's lifespan.

The Taskforce will be instrumental in taking steps to achieve the policy ambitions for skills as set out in the NSbS. The Taskforce will also be essential in supporting the creation of a skilled pipeline of workers needed to deliver the cross-Government 30-year shipbuilding pipeline and growth ambitions for the industry.

Approach of the Taskforce

The work of the Taskforce will follow three distinct phases, with each stage being approximately 6 months in duration:

1. **Discovery:** the Taskforce will use members' knowledge and networks to draw together a picture of the skills needs and barriers within the industry, and the extent to which existing provision is meeting those needs.
2. **Prioritisation:** the Taskforce will identify areas of action to address barriers and ensure skills needs are met into the future. It will consult broadly to ensure proposed activity has the support of the wider sector.
3. **Advocacy and engagement:** the Taskforce will begin to implement the actions agreed during the prioritisation phase. This will include promoting best practice from other sectors and promoting career and employment opportunities in shipbuilding itself.

The Taskforce will:

- foster an industry-wide understanding of the future workforce requirements to ensure that demand is clearly articulated to the UK skills supply chain
- review detailed analyses of all relevant skills training and their uptake
- propose ways in which greater levels of talent can be attracted to the shipbuilding sector in quantities that meet industry demands
- leverage funding opportunities to their full potential
- support skills development to catalyse new technologies (especially green technologies) to support UK shipbuilding

Commitment to the Taskforce

The first meeting of the Taskforce took place in July 2022. At that meeting these Terms of Reference were agreed and an overview work plan was reviewed.

The Taskforce secretariat records the main discussion and action points from each meeting, to be shared with members within seven days of the meeting (a verbatim record is not required).

Following its first meeting, the UKSST has met monthly, with both in-person and virtual meetings taking place. The aim is for in-person meetings to take place alongside a relevant visit to the sector in locations across the UK. It is anticipated that the final meeting will take place in December 2023.

As part of their role on the Taskforce, members are expected to contribute to distinct workstreams on priority areas. These were established and agreed in the first two meetings.

It is likely activity will still be required after the planned conclusion of the Taskforce in December 2023. The Taskforce should therefore make recommendations for consideration by the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Shipbuilding Office (NSO) on how relevant and incomplete work could continue.

Taskforce members will be expected to:

- actively contribute to all meetings, providing evidence-based advice in their respective area(s) of expertise
- bring their advice, views, constructive challenge and best practice to the meetings, whilst avoiding the promotion of company-specific work or direct conflicts of interest
- frequently consult and inform their organisations and respective networks on the Taskforce's work and bring relevant others' views to meetings
- engage with the Taskforce and government to refine and finalise the policy solutions to be included in the UKSST's final report
- engage in prioritised action planning and engagement once the UKSST Report is agreed
- attend all meetings, whether in person or virtually. If members cannot attend a meeting, they should inform the secretariat and Chair as soon as possible. If members miss more than two meetings, the secretariat and Chair will discuss with the member the reasons for their absence
- be transparent, open and honest about any conflicts of interest throughout the Taskforce's duration. The secretariat will maintain a log of such conflicts.
- approach the secretariat team if they require any support with external communications relating to their work as part of the Taskforce
- uphold the Nolan Principles for conduct in public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- not share any confidential or controversial items or data discussed at Taskforce meetings outside of the group unless pre-agreed with the secretariat

Taskforce Chair

The Taskforce is chaired by Honorary Captain Dr Paul Little, Principal and Chief Executive of City of Glasgow College.

The Chair will attend the Maritime Skills Commission (MSC) and Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth (SEG) meetings to represent the Taskforce and ensure alignment with these groups. The Chair will report on the work of the Taskforce to the Shipbuilding Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) as required.

In addition to the requirements for all members, the Taskforce Chair will:

- chair all Taskforce meetings
- provide leadership to the Taskforce, ensuring it is properly organised, delivers its functions effectively, champions bold thinking, with all members provided with a fair opportunity to contribute
- ensure the Taskforce works collaboratively, and communicates effectively with stakeholders across the shipbuilding enterprise, academia, trade unions and government sectors
- ensure that the Taskforce identifies actions to improve skills shortages, and that all solutions and the relevant evidence base are considered
- ensure the work of the Taskforce remains on schedule to achieve its aims and objectives
- provide regular content and updates for the wider consultative group, to be led by DfE, and take up opportunities for communications and engagement moments with the sector more broadly
- attend weekly meetings with DfE officials to review Taskforce work, progress and risks and agree Taskforce meeting agendas, as well as regular meetings with the Director of Apprenticeships (DfE) and the CEO of the NSO to update on the work of the Taskforce
- work with the secretariat to produce a report on the work of the Taskforce in real time
- attend other ad hoc events or meetings as and when required, such as the Shipbuilding Inter-Ministerial Group

The Chair's main point of contact in DfE for the secretariat is Hannah Patterson. For any specific issues or questions relating to the NSO, the point of contact is Rue McIlmoyle.

Should the Chair be unable to attend a meeting, the secretariat will invite another member to Chair the meeting.

Taskforce membership

The Taskforce includes a diverse mix of expert members from across the UK, providing coverage from industry (including SMEs and corporates), academia, training providers and trade representative bodies.

Should a Taskforce member's personal circumstances change, they will be asked to discuss this with the Chair and the Taskforce secretariat.

Officials from government departments will attend relevant Taskforce meetings and working groups to provide secretariat support. With the agreement of the Chair, other relevant stakeholders may be invited by government to take part in working group discussions as required.

Government officials will support with coordination, policy thinking and analysis, working with Taskforce members and their organisations.

Representatives from other government departments across all four nations may also be invited to attend on an ad hoc basis, depending on the topics being discussed. Similarly, the Taskforce may identify individuals to attend to support discussion of a specifically identified matter.

Taskforce governance

The secretariat will monitor the effectiveness of the group in meeting its intended objectives and, with the Chair, frequently review any need to change the structure and purpose of the meetings.

It will regularly provide progress updates via governance structures within the DfE (see annex A for diagram):

- The Director for Apprenticeships will report on progress to the NSbS Board. This is a cross-Government Directors board which oversees the delivery of Departmental commitments in the NSbS;
- The Chair will attend the Shipbuilding Enterprise for Growth (SEG) meetings to represent the Taskforce and ensure alignment with the group. The SEG is the main interface between government and industry for delivery of the strategy and is co-chaired by Rear Admiral Rex Cox, CEO of the NSO, and John Howie, President of the Society of Maritime Industries;
- The secretariat will be responsible for briefing the DfE Ministerial team on a regular basis in advance of the Shipbuilding Inter-Ministerial group (IMG). Chaired by the Defence Secretary, in his role as Shipbuilding Tsar, it provides Ministerial oversight of the NSbS and the opportunity to expose and resolve conflicting priorities.

Issues and risks will also be escalated in this order. These boards, on occasion, will also invite the Chair of the Taskforce to provide updates.

Taskforce members will be able to raise any issues with the secretariat by contacting officials directly, or via shipbuilding.uksst@education.gov.uk.

Secretariat

The secretariat function for the Taskforce will be a shared responsibility between the DfE and the NSO. It will be responsible for arranging meetings, circulating papers and recording minutes of meetings, as well as other ad hoc tasks.

Agendas and papers will be circulated at least three working days in advance; minutes will be circulated within one week of meetings.

The secretariat will provide updates to and consult the wider Taskforce mailing list on work when required. Minutes shared outside of the core Taskforce will have any confidential information removed.

The secretariat will also be responsible for maintaining and tracking progress of the agreed workplan and actions.

Annex A

