

Research Briefing

21 March 2024

Number 9914

By Claire Mills

Detailed timeline of UK military assistance to Ukraine (February 2022-present)

Summary	1
1 Financial commitments	2
2 A detailed timeline of equipment assistance	3
3 A long-term training package for Ukrainian personnel	18
4 Replenishment of UK equipment	20
5 Long term security guarantees	21
6 Further Library reading	23

Summary

The UK is one of the leading donors to Ukraine, alongside the US and Germany. [The UK has pledged almost £12 billion in overall support to Ukraine](#) since February 2022, of which £7.1 billion is for military assistance. £2.3 billion was provided in each of the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 and on 12 January 2024, the Government announced a further £2.5 billion of funding for 2024/25. Funding is being met from the Treasury Reserve and will not come from the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) main departmental budget. Spending on

Ukraine does, however, appear in MOD spending figures towards the end of the financial year as part of the MOD Supplementary Estimates.

The UK is providing both lethal and non-lethal weaponry and equipment, including tanks, air defence systems, artillery, and long-range precision strike missiles. While the UK has committed to training Ukrainian fast jet pilots, combat fighter aircraft will not be provided. [Military aid to the Ukrainian armed forces is gifted by the UK](#). Equipment is either donated from existing UK defence stocks, rapidly purchased from the defence industry in both the UK and overseas or purchased from the surplus stocks of foreign governments. Such acquisition is either funded directly or coordinated through mechanisms such as the International Fund for Ukraine, to which the UK has committed money.

The UK is also hosting a training programme (Operation Interflex), which is supported by several allies. The aim was to train 30,000 new and existing Ukrainian personnel by the end of 2023, a target that was reached in November. A further 10,000 personnel are expected to be trained by mid-2024. Training was expanded in early 2023 to include Ukrainian fast jet pilots and marines.

In July 2023, the members of the G7, including the UK, set out [a commitment to providing long term security guarantees to Ukraine](#) (PDF). Those commitments will be set out on a bilateral basis according to each country's legal and constitutional requirements. On 12 January 2024, the UK was the first country to announce a ten-year year security cooperation agreement with Ukraine.

1 Financial commitments

The UK is one of the leading donors to Ukraine, alongside the US and Germany. To date, [the UK has pledged almost £12 billion in overall support to Ukraine](#), of which £7.1 billion is for military assistance. £2.3 billion was provided in each of the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24 and on 12 January 2024, the Government announced a further £2.5 billion of funding for 2024/25.¹

¹ Prime Minister's Office, [Press release](#), 12 January 2024

Funding from the Treasury reserve

The MOD has said that the provision of military equipment to Ukraine and the replenishment of UK stocks will be funded from the Treasury Reserve and will not come out of the MOD's main departmental budget.²

Funding provided from the Treasury Reserve does, however, appear in the MOD's budget toward the end of the financial year as part of the MOD Supplementary Estimates. Funding for military support to Ukraine for 2023/24 was claimed from the Treasury Reserve at the Supplementary Estimates in February 2024.³

Library research briefing, [Revised Government spending plans for 2023/24](#) details the changes to government spending made at the Supplementary estimates and includes funding for Ukraine for the 2023/24 financial year.

2

A detailed timeline of equipment assistance

UK military assistance to Ukraine is longstanding.⁴ In October 2014, and in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of the east of the country, the Government announced that bilateral military assistance would be expanded at the request of the Ukrainian Government. That support included the provision of a package of non-lethal military equipment.⁵

In 2015 the UK launched Operation Orbital, a non-lethal training and capacity building operation. It provided guidance and training to the Ukrainian armed forces through several advisory and short-term training teams. This has been the main vehicle for providing training and assistance to Ukrainian forces. The UK also launched an initiative to enhance Ukraine's naval capacity and provide training for its naval forces.

For more detail on historic UK military assistance to Ukraine see Library briefing: [Military assistance to Ukraine 2014-21](#).

² PQ74916, [Ukraine: Military aid](#), 3 November 2022.

³ HM Treasury, [Supplementary Estimates 2023-24](#)

⁴ In September 2014 the MOD gave an overview of the military assistance that has been provided to Ukraine in the previous six years ([PQ 209093](#), Ukraine, 13 October 2014)

⁵ In July 2014 the [Council of the European Union](#) lifted the restrictive measures on export licenses to Ukraine that it had [previously imposed](#) in the February of that year in response to political violence in the country.

Provision of defensive weaponry starts in late 2021

In early December 2021, and in light of Russian military activity on Ukraine's borders,⁶ the Government said that the UK was "considering an extension of purely defensive support to Ukraine to help it defend itself".⁷

In January 2022 the Ministry of Defence confirmed that, in addition to the existing support being provided, the UK would provide a new security assistance package "to increase Ukraine's defensive capabilities", including the provision of light, anti-armour weapons. A small contingent of British military personnel would also deploy to provide initial training for a short period of time, within the framework of Operation Orbital.

Announcing the decision, the Defence Secretary said:

Ukraine has every right to defend its borders, and this new package of aid further enhances its ability to do so. Let me be clear, this support is for short-range and clearly defensive weapon capabilities. They are not strategic weapons and pose no threat to Russia. They are to use in self-defence.⁸

Although intended for defensive purposes, the decision represented the first time the UK had supplied lethal weaponry to Ukraine. On 30 January 2022 the Government confirmed that 2,000 anti-armour missiles had been supplied.⁹ On 10 February the MOD confirmed that additional defensive equipment, including body armour, helmets and combat boots would also be provided.¹⁰

In response to concerns of an imminent Russian invasion the UK announced in mid-February 2022 that all UK military training personnel would withdraw from Ukraine.¹¹

The Government will not send forces to Ukraine – February 2022

On 25 February 2022, the Minister for the Armed Forces, James Heappey, made clear that, while support for Ukraine would continue, there would be no "active" role for British or NATO troops in Ukraine:

⁶ This is examined in greater detail in Library research briefing, [Ukraine: Russia's "red line"](#)

⁷ [HC Deb 7 December 2021 \[Ukraine\], c188](#)

⁸ HC Deb 17 January 2022, [Ukraine](#), c62

⁹ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 30 January 2022

¹⁰ HCWS608, [Ukraine](#), 10 February 2022

¹¹ ["Russia-Ukraine crisis: UK won't be able to fly people out - minister"](#). BBC News, 12 February 2022

[W]e will explore all that we can do to support the Ukrainians in the next few days. All hon. Members in this House must be clear that British and NATO troops should not—must not—play an active role in Ukraine. We must all be clear what the risks of miscalculation could be and how existential the situation could quickly become if people do miscalculate and things escalate unnecessarily.¹²

Pressed for further details of what additional military equipment and support the UK might be able to provide, the Minister said the Secretary of State has “instructed military officers in Defence to look across the full UK inventory for everything that we have right now that might be usable in the circumstances and to look at whether that could be sent forward and absorbed by the Ukrainians”.

He warned, however, of some of the difficulties involved, including that most systems require some degree of training, and all the countries that have intellectual property or that operate the system have to give their permission for it to be donated. He emphasised though that “we are leaving no stone unturned, and [...] we want to see as much British kit in the hands of the Ukrainians as we can manage”.¹³

The Government does not support a no-fly zone – February 2022

In response to Ukrainian requests in late February 2022 for a no-fly zone to be imposed over the country, the Government made clear that it did not support such a move, for fear of escalation. On 25 February 2022, James Heapey said:

As Members will appreciate, a no-fly zone is somewhat difficult to implement in a hostile airspace against a peer adversary. We need to have our eyes wide open to the reality that in such an event NATO jets would, not just possibly but most certainly probably, come into a combat situation with Russian jets, and the risk of miscalculation, escalation and the triggering of article 5 could not be understated in those circumstances.¹⁴

On 11 October 2022 the Government confirmed that its position on implementing a no-fly zone had not changed, but that it was committed to providing Ukraine with air defence capabilities.¹⁵

¹² HC Deb 25 February 2022, [Ukraine](#), c623

¹³ HC Deb 25 February 2022, [Ukraine](#), c623

¹⁴ HC Deb 25 February 2022, [Ukraine, c621](#)

¹⁵ HC Deb 11 October 2022, [Ukraine](#), c33

Library briefing '[No-fly zones and Ukraine](#)', gives further details of calls for a no-fly zone in Ukraine, the response of the UK and its allies, their legal basis and examples of when have they been used before.

Further package of military support promised – March 2022

“We have provided Ukraine with military aid on the understanding that it will be used in accordance with international humanitarian law. We liaise on a daily basis with the Ukrainian Government, and they are clear that equipment provided by the UK is intended for the defence of Ukraine”.

PQ54667, [Ukraine: Military aid](#), 11 October 2022

On 2 March, the MOD confirmed that a further package of military support would be provided to Ukraine, including “lethal aid in the form of defensive weapons and non-lethal aid such as body armour, medical supplies and other key equipment as requested by the Ukrainian Government”. Details of that aid were, however, withheld for operational security reasons.¹⁶

The MOD later revealed that the UK had continued to supply next generation light anti-tank weapons (NLAWs), going beyond the 2,000 first announced on 17 January, deliveries of anti-tank javelin missiles would begin, and that the Government was “exploring the donation of Starstreak high-velocity, man-portable anti-aircraft missiles”, which it believed remained within the definition of defensive weapons and would “allow the Ukrainian forces to better defend their skies”.¹⁷

The MOD also announced the UK would be increasing supplies of rations, medical equipment, and other non-lethal military aid.

The Defence Secretary argued at the time that the Government was exercising caution when deciding what military assistance to provide Ukraine, saying “everything we do is bound by the decision to supply defensive systems and is calibrated not to escalate to a strategic level”.¹⁸

A doubling of lethal aid – March-April 2022

At the NATO and G7 leader’s meeting on 24 March, the Prime Minister announced a major package of military support to Ukraine which would more than double the defensive lethal aid provided so far. A further 6,000 defensive missiles would be provided, including the Starstreak air defence system which had been under consideration.

The Prime Minister also announced £25 million in financial backing for the Ukrainian military. That financial support would come from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and help pay the salaries of Ukrainian soldiers,

¹⁶ HC Deb 2 March 2022, [Support for Ukraine and Countering Threats from Russia](#), C1107

¹⁷ HC Deb 9 March 2022, [Ukraine Update](#), c326.

¹⁸ HC Deb 9 March 2022, [Ukraine Update](#), c325.

pilots and police and “ensure the armed forces are well equipped with high-quality equipment”.¹⁹

In early April the MOD confirmed that a further £100 million package of military aid would be provided to Ukraine. Additional equipment would include more than 800 NLAW anti-tank missiles, more Javelin and Starstreak missiles, additional loitering munitions for precision strikes and additional non-lethal aid including body armour, ballistic helmets and night vision goggles.²⁰

Following a visit to Kyiv by the Prime Minister, Downing Street also confirmed on 9 April that the UK would provide Ukraine with 120 armoured vehicles and new Harpoon anti-ship missile systems.²¹

At the end of April that was followed up with the gifting of a several “Stormer” armoured vehicles fitted with anti-air missile launchers.²²

A doubling of financial assistance – May 2022

In May 2022 the Government announced that £1.3 billion of funding would be committed to military assistance to Ukraine and would be provided from the Treasury’s Special Reserve.²³ The funding included the £300 million military assistance package that the Prime Minister announced on 3 May, and included electronic warfare equipment, a counter battery radar system, GPS jamming equipment and thousands of night vision goggles.²⁴

Provision of long-range artillery – June 2022

On 6 June 2022 the MOD confirmed that it would provide Ukraine with three M270 multiple-launch rocket systems, and associated munitions. The M270 can strike targets up to 80km away with precision and would “offer a significant boost in capability for the Ukrainian forces”. The decision came at the request of the Ukrainian government for longer range precision weapons to defend against Russian heavy artillery and was taken in tandem with the US decision to provide Ukraine with the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. Ukrainian troops received training on the new systems in the UK.²⁵

“As Russia changes tactics, so must our support to Ukraine”.

UK Defence Secretary,
[Ben Wallace](#), 6 June
2022

¹⁹ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 24 March 2022

²⁰ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 8 April 2022

²¹ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 9 April 2022

²² Ministry of Defence, [Defence Secretary Statement to the House of Commons](#), 25 April 2022

²³ [HC Deb 20 June 2022](#), c559

²⁴ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 3 May 2022

²⁵ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 6 June 2022

The MOD also confirmed the purchase of 20 M-109 self-propelled artillery units from a Belgian arms company which would be refurbished before sending them to Ukraine.²⁶

A further £1 billion in military support – June-August 2022

At the NATO Summit at the end of June 2022 then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced a further £1 billion of military support to Ukraine as part of a “next phase” that would “enhance and sustain Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian invasion”. Specifically, that funding would help supply capabilities including anti-tank weapons, air defence systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), electronic warfare equipment and thousands of pieces of kit for Ukrainian soldiers.²⁷

In a statement to the House on 21 July 2022, the Defence Secretary confirmed that “Future planned military support will also include more sophisticated defence systems across a range of capabilities”.²⁸

On 11 August the MOD confirmed that additional M270 multiple launch rocket systems would be sent to Ukraine, along with “a significant number” of precision guided M31A1 missiles. The Secretary of State said the latest equipment would help Ukraine “continue to defend against Russian aggression and the indiscriminate use of long-range artillery”.²⁹

Additional air defence systems – October 2022

On 13 October 2022 the MOD confirmed that it would donate hundreds more air defence missiles to Ukraine to protect against Russian missile strikes and to protect critical national infrastructure after Russia launched a series of drone and missile attacks against civilian targets.³⁰ In that package were AMRAAM rockets, for use with the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) being provided by the United States. The AMRAAM rockets were the first capability pledged by the UK capable of shooting down cruise

²⁶ PQ20208, Ukraine: Military aid, 22 June 2022

²⁷ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 30 June 2022

²⁸ HCWS259, [Military support to Ukraine](#), 21 July 2022

²⁹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 11 August 2022

³⁰ President Putin said the attacks were in retaliation for an earlier attack on a bridge across the Kerch Strait linking Russia and Crimea ([“Vladimir Putin says missile strikes across Ukraine are in retaliation for Crimea bridge- ‘terrorist’ blast”](#), Sky News, 10 October 2022)

missiles. As part of this package of assistance, a further 18 howitzer artillery guns and hundreds of additional aerial drones were also donated.³¹

During a visit to Kyiv on 19 November, the Prime Minister announced “a major new package” of air defence support, including 125 anti-aircraft guns and counter-drone technology, including radars and anti-drone electronic warfare capability.³²

Provision of search and rescue helicopter capability – November 2022

In November the MOD also confirmed that the first of three Sea King search and rescue/reconnaissance helicopters had been delivered to Ukraine. The Sea King retired from service with the RAF and Royal Navy in 2018.

The Royal Navy has provided training in the UK for Ukrainian personnel who will crew those helicopters, and associated engineers.³³

Provision of Challenger II main battle tanks – January 2023

“A long and static war only serves Russia’s ends”.

Downing Street, [Press release](#), 14 January 2023

On 14 January 2023 the UK became one of the first allies to announce it would gift main battle tanks to Ukraine. Described as “the start of a gear change in the UK’s support” a squadron of 14 Challenger II tanks, thousands of rounds of munitions, and associated armoured recovery and repair vehicles would be provided.³⁴ The UK had already been providing hundreds of armoured vehicles.

While the decision was welcomed by Ukraine and its allies, the UK Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Patrick Sanders, was reported to have expressed concern that such donations may leave the British Army “temporarily weaker”.³⁵

During a meeting of the Defence Select Committee on 11 January 2023, Committee member Kevan Jones MP called the decision a “PR story”,

³¹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 13 October 2022

³² Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 19 November 2022

³³ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 23 November 2022

³⁴ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 14 January 2023

³⁵ [“Ukraine: Military hardware donations weaken Army – UK chief”](#), BBC News, 17 January 2023

questioning the ability to maintain the capability within Ukraine, including the longer-term provision of munitions which are not NATO standard.³⁶

The Challenger 2 tanks were received in theatre at the end of March.³⁷

A significant uplift in combat support – January 2023

In addition to the Challenger 2's, in January 2023 the UK also announced a significant uplift in combat support for Ukraine. Described by the MOD as “the most significant package of combat power to date”, the UK would also provide Ukraine with:

- 30 AS-90 self-propelled guns.
- Hundreds of additional armoured vehicles, including the Bulldog armoured personnel carrier.
- A manoeuvre support package including minefield breaching and bridge laying capabilities.
- Additional unmanned aerial systems to support Ukrainian artillery.
- Hundreds of additional missiles, including munitions for the M270 multiple launch rocket system, Starstreak air defence missiles, medium range air defence missiles and 600 Brimstone anti-tank missiles.
- A support package of equipment and spares to refurbish up to a hundred Ukrainian tanks and infantry fighting vehicles.³⁸

The AS-90 and the Challenger 2 tanks came from UK stocks, while other capabilities were purchased from the open market, or from third countries.³⁹

Announcing the package of assistance, then Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Today’s package is an important increase in Ukraine’s capabilities. It means they can go from resisting to expelling Russian forces from Ukrainian soil.

President Putin cannot win but he is equally certain to continue inflicting this wanton violence and human suffering until his forces are ejected from their defensive positions and expelled from the country.

³⁶ Defence Select Committee, [Oral evidence: Land Acquisition](#) (PDF), HC978, 11 January 2023, Q.17

³⁷ Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, [@DefenceU](#), 27 March 2023

³⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 16 January 2023

³⁹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 16 January 2023

That requires a new level of support – the combat power only achieved by combinations of main battle tank squadrons, operating alongside divisional artillery groups, and further deep precision fires enabling targeting of Russian logistics and command nodes at greater distance [...]

The international community recognises that equipping Ukraine to push Russia out of its territory is as important as equipping them to defend what they already have.⁴⁰

The UK's commitments form part of [the Tallinn Pledge](#), which was announced by the UK and eight other European allies on 19 January 2023. That pledge recognised the renewed effort that would be required to assist Ukraine in, not only defending Ukrainian territory, but in expelling Russian forces from the areas of Ukraine currently under Russian control. To that end, the signatories of the pledge committed to “collectively pursuing delivery of an unprecedented set of donations including main battle tanks, heavy artillery, air defence, ammunition, and infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine’s defence”.

On 21 April 2023, the MOD confirmed that the UK was set to provide more than 300,000 artillery shells to Ukraine during 2023.⁴¹

Long-range strike capabilities – May 2023

On 8 February 2023, the Prime Minister confirmed that the UK would provide Ukraine with “longer range capabilities” in its next package of military assistance, intended to “disrupt Russia’s ability to continually target Ukraine’s civilian and critical national infrastructure and help relieve pressure on Ukraine’s frontlines”.⁴²

Precise details of those long-range capabilities were not provided at the time, although discussions within government were thought to be focused on the potential provision of [Storm Shadow/SCALP air-launched cruise missiles](#).⁴³

The UK’s donation of Storm Shadow missiles was confirmed on 11 May 2023, although an exact number has not been disclosed for operational security reasons. The Defence Secretary said the decision had been taken in response to Russia’s “continued aggression” and that:

The donation of those weapon systems gives Ukraine the best chance to defend itself against Russia’s continued brutality, especially the deliberate targeting of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure against international law. Ukraine has a right to be able to defend itself against that.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ HC Deb 16 January 2023, [Ukraine: Update](#), c36

⁴¹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 21 April 2023

⁴² Downing Street, [Press release](#), 8 February 2023

⁴³ “Ukraine prepared to use British missiles to strike Crimea”, The Times, 10 February 2023

⁴⁴ [HC Deb 11 May 2023](#), c475

With a range of more than 250km, the Storm Shadow has a greater range than other capabilities donated so far, including the US HIMARS system, and allows Ukraine to strike targets “within its sovereign territory”.⁴⁵ This could include Crimea which is recognised as being within Ukraine’s 1991 borders.

The UK also committed to the provision of long-range attack drones, which have a range of over 200km, alongside hundreds of additional air defence missiles and other unmanned air systems.⁴⁶ The MOD did not provide any further detail on the long-range attack drone, or any information about its capabilities. The UK does not possess such capability in its own military inventory, leading to speculation that the capability will be purchased by the UK from a third country.⁴⁷

An air defence partnership- June 2023

In mid-June 2023, the UK, the US, the Netherlands, and Denmark announced that they would form a partnership to address Ukraine’s most urgent air defence requirements.

Hundreds of Soviet-era short and medium range air defence missiles and associated systems were to be procured by the partnership and delivered to Ukraine over the following few weeks.⁴⁸

This initiative is in addition to the air defence capabilities being provided under the second tranche of [the International Fund for Ukraine](#).

Support to the NATO Comprehensive Assistance Package – June 2023

In June 2023 the Defence Secretary announced that the UK would contribute a further £60 million to [NATO’s Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine](#). That brought the UK’s support to the CAP to £80 million since February 2022 and was in addition to the bilateral assistance that the UK has provided to Ukraine so far.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ [HC Deb 11 May 2023](#), c477

⁴⁶ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 15 May 2023

⁴⁷ [“Mystery surrounds ‘hundreds of UK long-range’ attack drones heading to Ukraine”](#), Breaking Defense, 19 May 2023

⁴⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 15 June 2023 and [Joint Statement](#), 15 June 2023

⁴⁹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 16 June 2023

Major new package of support – July 2023

At the NATO summit in July 2023 the UK announced that more than 70 combat and logistics vehicles would be provided to Ukraine, along with thousands of additional rounds of Challenger 2 munitions and a support package for equipment repair worth £50 million, including spare parts, technical support and maintenance training.⁵⁰

The also led a project to establish a new military rehabilitation centre in Ukraine that will support the rehabilitation, recovery and return of Ukrainian soldiers injured in combat. That centre is funded through NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package and supported by rehabilitation specialists from across NATO member states.⁵¹

Support for the winter – September 2023-March 2024

With the onset of winter, there have been concerns Russia would renew its attacks against Ukraine's critical infrastructure and energy networks.⁵²

At the meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group in September 2023, the UK outlined its priorities for the coming months, including the provision of further air defence and long-range strike capabilities, although did not provide specific details. The UK also committed to delivering tens of thousands of additional artillery shells by the end of the year and the provision of support to help Ukraine sustain the capabilities that the UK had already provided. This included the ability to recover and repair equipment used in Ukraine's counteroffensive.⁵³

At the end of December 2023, the Government confirmed that an additional 200 air defence missiles would be delivered to re-supply UK developed air defence systems that were first provided to Ukraine in late 2022 (see above).⁵⁴ In February 2024 the MOD also announced an additional 200 Brimstone anti-tank missiles,⁵⁵ and a new package of funding (£245 million over the course of 2024-25) to replenish Ukraine's artillery ammunition reserves.⁵⁶ The first

⁵⁰ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 12 July 2023

⁵¹ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 12 July 2023

⁵² "Ukraine prepares for winter again as Russia targets its power grid", *The Economist*, 2 October 2023

⁵³ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 20 September 2023

⁵⁴ The UK's Advanced Short-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (ASRAAM) has been re-designed into a ground-launched air defence capability specifically for use in Ukraine. Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 29 December 2023

⁵⁵ [HC Deb 22 February 2024](#), c887

⁵⁶ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 24 February 2024

deliveries under this new package are expected in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.⁵⁷

“Drones are one of the most important capabilities we have seen in Ukraine, and they have arguably transformed the nature of warfare in this conflict”.

[Minister for Defence Procurement, James Cartlidge](#), 27 February 2024

At least £345 million of the £2.5 billion in financial assistance announced for 2024/25 (see above) will also be spent on the “rapid” procurement and manufacture of over ten thousand military drones, including surveillance, long-range strike and naval drones.⁵⁸ Those systems are expected to be produced both in the UK and Ukraine as the UK looks to support Ukraine in strengthening its defence industrial base (See [UK-Ukraine Agreement on Security Cooperation](#)).⁵⁹ It will also form part of the longer term drone capability coalition that the UK announced it would lead, alongside Latvia, in February 2024 (see [Long-term Capability Coalitions](#)).

Acquisition through the International Fund for Ukraine

In addition to direct acquisition, the UK, in coordination with several allies, has established an [International Fund for Ukraine \(IFU\)](#) to coordinate the purchase and transport of military equipment to Ukraine from third countries and/or industry.⁶⁰

Among agreements reached at an [international donor’s conference in Copenhagen \(PDF\)](#) in August 2022 was the expansion of the IFU in order to finance the rapid purchase of military equipment for Ukraine, to support Ukraine in the procurement process and to facilitate training. The longer-term intention was to facilitate a move away from donations by individual countries from their own stockpiles, to purchases directly from the defence industry.⁶¹

To date, over £900 million has been contributed to the IFU by the UK, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Lithuania, Iceland, Australia and New Zealand.⁶²

⁵⁷ PQ15580, [Ukraine: Military aid](#), 5 March 2024

⁵⁸ Initial investment was outlined at £200 million (Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 12 January 2024). That funding was increased to £345 million in early March 2024 (Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 7 March 2024).

⁵⁹ Prime Minister’s Office, [Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s Address to the Ukrainian Parliament](#), 12 January 2024

⁶⁰ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 27 April 2022

⁶¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#) (in Norwegian), 11 August 2022

⁶² Ministry of Defence, [International Fund for Ukraine](#) (accessed 20 March 2024) and PQ17292, [Ukraine: Military aid](#), 15 March 2024

Three urgent bidding rounds have been announced so far. The outcome of the first procurement round was announced in February 2023 and included ammunition, drones, air defence and electronic warfare capabilities.⁶³

The second and third procurement rounds are ongoing. The first capability resulting from the second round, a £92 million air defence package, was announced on 13 June, with contracts signed on 18 August 2023.⁶⁴ A mobility and maintenance support package was announced in October 2023, which will provide, among other things, mine clearance capabilities.⁶⁵ At the time of writing, a competition for the manufacture and supply of artillery ammunition is underway.⁶⁶

The third procurement round was launched on 26 January 2024 and will focus on air defence and maritime capabilities.⁶⁷

The UK MOD has contributed £500 million to the IFU. £250 million was committed in August 2022, followed by a further commitment of £250 million in June 2023.⁶⁸ This money is part of the £7.1 billion committed so far.

Long-term Capability Coalitions

The UK is committed to supporting several of the Capability Coalitions that are being established by Ukraine's allies and partners, under the framework of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group.⁶⁹

Are British combat aircraft likely?

Calls have, in the past, been made by President Zelenskyy for the provision of British combat aircraft.⁷⁰ In February 2023, the Prime Minister said that "nothing is off the table",⁷¹ although the provision of combat aircraft was thought unlikely in the short term.⁷²

Ukraine has since expressed an interest in building its air combat capabilities around the US F-16 combat aircraft, which the UK does not possess. Nevertheless, the UK has committed to supporting those efforts by working

⁶³ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 16 February 2023

⁶⁴ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 13 June 2023 and [Press release](#), 18 August 2023

⁶⁵ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 11 October 2023 and Ministry of Defence, [Joint Statement by contributors to the International Fund for Ukraine](#), 12 October 2023

⁶⁶ Ministry of Defence, [International Fund for Ukraine](#) (accessed 20 February 2024)

⁶⁷ As above

⁶⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 11 August 2022 and [Press release](#), 16 June 2023

⁶⁹ Those coalitions are examined in greater detail in section 2.1 of Library research briefing, [Military assistance to Ukraine since the Russian invasion](#)

⁷⁰ [President Zelenskyy speech in full](#), YouTube, 8 February 2023

⁷¹ [Sunak and Zelenskyy hold joint news conference](#), Sky News, 8 February 2023

⁷² The debate was examined at the time in Library Insight [Will the UK send combat aircraft to Ukraine?](#)

with other countries on the provision of F-16 aircraft through the Air Force Capability Coalition, and in the delivery of elementary flying training, which was announced by the Prime Minister in February 2022.⁷³ In December 2023, the MOD confirmed that the first cohort of trainees had completed a basic training programme in the UK before moving on to advanced flight training on the F-16 in Denmark.⁷⁴

A Maritime Capability Coalition

On 11 December 2023, the Secretary of State announced that the UK will lead a new Maritime Capability Coalition, alongside Norway, that will develop Ukraine's naval capabilities and strengthen its ability to operate along its coastlines and into the Black Sea. The new framework is one of a series of recently established capability coalitions intended to strengthen Ukraine's military capabilities in the long term and will include the provision of ships, vehicles, training and infrastructure.⁷⁵

In the first instance the UK will gift Ukraine 23 on and offshore raiding craft and 20 Viking amphibious vehicles. Ukraine will also procure two minehunter vessels from the UK.

As of 15 January 2024, the coalition has been joined by another twenty partner nations, in addition to Norway.⁷⁶

Prior commitments under the Naval Capabilities Enhancement Programme

The UK's commitment to strengthening Ukraine's naval capabilities in the long term is not new and pre-dates the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In October 2020 the UK and Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Intent that would focus on developing Ukraine's naval capabilities through a new Naval Capabilities Enhancement Programme (NCEP).⁷⁷ That was followed in June 2021 by a [Memorandum of Implementation](#) that would push the NCEP forward. Among the decisions taken at the time was the delivery of two refurbished Royal Navy Sandown-class minehunters in a government-to-government sale.

⁷³ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 15 May 2023 and [Statement on a Joint Coalition on F-16 Training of the Ukrainian Air Force](#) (PDF), July 2023

⁷⁴ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 26 December 2023

⁷⁵ Ministry of Defence, [Speech by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps](#), 12 December 2023 and HC Deb 19 December 2023, [Ukraine](#), c1254

⁷⁶ Ministry of Defence, [Speech: Defending Britain from a more dangerous world](#), 15 January 2024

⁷⁷ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 8 October 2020

In August 2020, the UK also announced that it would lead a multinational Maritime Training Initiative for the Ukrainian Navy, intended to boost its capacity to act in the Black Sea.⁷⁸

More detail on the NCEP and maritime training initiative is available in Library research briefing, [Military assistance to Ukraine 2014-2021](#)

Provision of two ex-Royal Navy Minehunters and the Montreux Convention

In December 2023 the MOD confirmed the transfer of two ex-Royal Navy minehunter ships, HMS Grimsby and HMS Shoreham, to the Ukrainian Navy.⁷⁹

That decision pre-dates the Russian invasion of Ukraine and formed a key part of the Naval Capabilities Enhancement Programme (NCEP) that was first established in October 2020 (see above).

In early January 2024, however, the Turkish government said that it will not allow passage of the vessels through the Turkish Straits and into the Black Sea for as long as the war continues, and in line with the terms of the Montreux Convention.⁸⁰

Under the terms of that agreement Turkey has sovereignty over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits connecting the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. In February 2022 Turkey closed the straits to all warships (except those returning to their bases in the Black Sea), in an effort to preserve the naval balance of power in the region.⁸¹ This means neither Russia nor Ukraine or its NATO allies can move military vessels into the Black Sea.⁸²

Drone Capability Coalition

A new coalition focused on developing Ukraine's long-term drone capabilities was [announced at the meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group on 23 January 2024](#).

In February the MOD announced that it would jointly lead that coalition, alongside Latvia. The coalition will supply thousands of drones to Ukraine, including first-person view (FPV) drones which the MOD says have been highly effective so far in providing situational awareness to target enemy positions, armoured vehicles and ships.⁸³

The UK will shortly launch a competition to produce FPV drones at scale and “at an affordable price point”. It will be the first project launched as part of

⁷⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 18 August 2020

⁷⁹ Ministry of Defence, [Speech by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps](#), 12 December 2023.

⁸⁰ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, [Statement regarding disinformation about UK mine hunting ships](#), 2 January 2024

⁸¹ “The Black Sea’s role in Russia’s war on Ukraine”. Deutsche Welle, 13 August 2023

⁸² An explanation of the Convention can be found in the [The Conversation: What the Montreux Convention is, and what it means for the Ukraine war](#), March 2022.

⁸³ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 15 February 2024

the £345 million in funding for drone capabilities that was announced in January and March 2024 (see above).⁸⁴

3

A long-term training package for Ukrainian personnel

30,000 Ukrainian personnel have been trained so far.

In mid-2022 the UK launched a new training programme for Ukrainian armed forces personnel to develop their combat expertise and rebuild their forces.⁸⁵

Based in the UK, the programme (Operation Interflex), had the initial aim of training 30,000 personnel by the end of 2023 in frontline combat skills, basic medical training, patrol tactics, and the laws of armed conflict.⁸⁶ That milestone was reached in November 2023.⁸⁷ The aim is to train a further 10,000 personnel by mid-2024.⁸⁸

Approximately 1,050 UK service personnel run the programme, led by 11 Security Force Assistance Brigade, and supported by allies.

The UK has also gifted clothing and equipment to support Ukrainian personnel in their training and following their deployment back to Ukraine.

International partners

Twelve international partners have joined the UK in delivering the training programme so far:

- The Netherlands.⁸⁹
- Canada - Canadian forces have been deployed in Ukraine since 2015 as part of its military training and capacity building mission ([Operation Unifier](#)). Following a temporary pause following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, those personnel have recently had their mandate extended until 2026.⁹⁰
- Sweden.⁹¹
- Finland.⁹²

⁸⁴ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 15 February 2024 and [Press release](#), 7 March 2024

⁸⁵ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 9 July 2022

⁸⁶ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 9 July 2022

⁸⁷ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 10 November 2023

⁸⁸ PQ4038, [Ukraine: Armed forces](#), 4 December 2023

⁸⁹ The Netherlands Ministry of Defence, [News release](#), 15 July 2022

⁹⁰ Government of Canada, [Operation Unifier](#)

⁹¹ Government Offices of Sweden, [Press release](#), 7 August 2022

⁹² Finnish Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 8 August 2022

- Denmark – The country has provided longstanding training support to Ukraine, having participated in the UK’s Operation Orbital training programme and Canada’s Operation Unifier, since 2015.⁹³
- Norway.⁹⁴
- New Zealand.⁹⁵
- Lithuania.⁹⁶
- Australia.⁹⁷
- Romania.⁹⁸
- Kosovo – joined the programme in January 2024.⁹⁹
- Estonia - joined the programme in January 2024.¹⁰⁰

Expansion of training – pilots and marines

On 8 February 2023 the Prime Minister announced plans to expand military training for the Ukrainian armed forces, to include fast jet pilots and marines. Pilots will be trained on NATO-standard aircraft with the aim of ensuring “Ukraine can defend its skies well into the future”.¹⁰¹ An elementary flying course for Ukrainian pilots started in summer 2023 and is set to continue throughout 2024.¹⁰²

The provision of training for fast jet pilots has prompted wider discussions about the provision of British combat fighter aircraft to Ukraine (see above).

At the UK-France Summit on 10 March 2023, President Macron confirmed that French personnel would also contribute to the training programme for Ukrainian marines.¹⁰³

Nearly 1,000 Ukrainian personnel completed the training in August 2023.¹⁰⁴

⁹³ Danish Ministry of Defence [Press release](#), 10 August 2022

⁹⁴ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#) (in Norwegian), 11 August 2022

⁹⁵ New Zealand Defence Force, [Press release](#), 15 November 2023

⁹⁶ “[Interview with the Lithuanian Defence Minister](#)”, UKRIFORM, 24 August 2022

⁹⁷ Australian Government, [Press release](#), 27 October 2022 and [Press release](#), 18 January 2023

⁹⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 10 November 2023

⁹⁹ “[Kosovo soldiers to train Ukraine’s army in UK](#)”, DTT-NET, 19 January 2024

¹⁰⁰ Estonia Ministry of Defence, [News release](#), 24 January 2024

¹⁰¹ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 8 February 2023

¹⁰² Downing Street, [Press release](#), 15 May 2023 and Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 26 December 2023

¹⁰³ [UK-France Joint Leader’s Declaration](#), 10 March 2023

¹⁰⁴ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 11 August 2023

Additional training

Separately to Operation Interflex, the MOD confirmed in November 2022 that additional training assistance would be provided in the region, with the deployment of several army medical personnel and engineers.¹⁰⁵ The UK has also been providing combat medical training, in conjunction with the Netherlands and Iceland,¹⁰⁶ training in mine disposal techniques,¹⁰⁷ and in October 2023 announced a new programme of training to help Ukraine protect its critical national infrastructure.¹⁰⁸

The RAF has also provided firefighting training to Ukraine's fire and rescue services, ahead of a delivery of 17 specialist firefighting vehicles from the RAF, Defence Fire and Rescue and the Welsh Government.¹⁰⁹

4

Replenishment of UK equipment

Given the extent of UK military assistance to Ukraine, questions have been raised over the ability of the UK Government, and the defence industry, to replenish the stocks of equipment that have been gifted and how it will be paid for.

The MOD has said that it keeps weapons stockpile levels and requirements under review, “balancing current holdings against threats, availability, industrial capacity and evolving technology” and that such considerations inform “the numbers of munitions granted in kind to the armed forces of Ukraine”.¹¹⁰

The Department has said that it remains engaged with industry, allies and partners to ensure “both the continuation of supply to Ukraine” and to ensure that all equipment and munitions granted in kind from UK stocks are replaced as soon as possible.¹¹¹

In September 2022 the Defence Secretary confirmed that “letters of comfort” had been given to industry outlining the Government's intention to place orders and to encourage manufacturers to expand production.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 19 November 2022

¹⁰⁶ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 24 June 2023

¹⁰⁷ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 25 September 2023

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 22 October 2023

¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 7 July 2023

¹¹⁰ HL7885, [Defence equipment](#), 28 April 2022

¹¹¹ Deposited Paper 2024-0156, [Letter from the Earl of Minto, Minister of State in the House of Lords to Lord Browne of Ladyton \(PDF\)](#), February 2024

¹¹² HC Deb 5 September 2022, [Ukraine update](#), c31

In a debate in January 2023, Minister of State, Baroness Goldie, said: “We are absolutely clear that we will never go below the safe line that we require for the security of our own nation”.¹¹³

In the 2022 Autumn statement the Treasury announced that £560 million would be earmarked for the replenishment of the UK’s stockpile.¹¹⁴ A further £2 billion to replenish ammunition stocks and improve the UK’s munitions infrastructure was announced in the March 2023 Spring Budget, as part of a £5 billion uplift in the defence budget.¹¹⁵

On the back of the conflict in Ukraine, a key commitment of the Government’s [Defence Command Paper refresh](#) (PDF), published in July 2023, is investment in the resilience and credibility of military capabilities, including the adequate provision of stockpiles and munitions.¹¹⁶ At the end of February 2024, the Minister for Defence Procurement said that a munitions strategy, outlining the work being undertaken to increase production, would be published soon.¹¹⁷

5 Long term security guarantees

On the side lines of the NATO summit in Vilnius in July 2023, the members of the G7 agreed a framework setting out long term bilateral security guarantees to Ukraine.

With a view to ensuring forces are capable of defending Ukraine and deterring any future Russian aggression, the [Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine](#) (PDF) envisaged:

- Providing more defence equipment across the land, sea and air domains and increasing interoperability with Euro-Atlantic partners. Priority capabilities are air defence, artillery and long-range fires, armoured vehicles and combat air assets.
- Increasing and accelerating intelligence sharing.
- Strengthening Ukraine’s ability to defend against cyber and hybrid threats.
- Expanding training programmes and joint military exercises.

¹¹³ [HL Deb 26 January 2023](#), c368

¹¹⁴ PQ93479, [Defence: Expenditure](#), 8 December 2022

¹¹⁵ Downing Street, [Press release](#), 13 March 2023. That £5 billion uplift forms part of an £11 billion increase in the defence budget that was announced two days later as part of the Spring Budget 2023 (HM Treasury, [Spring Budget Speech](#), 15 March 2023)

¹¹⁶ Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 18 July 2023

¹¹⁷ [HC Deb 27 February 2024](#), c143

- Developing Ukraine's defence industrial base.

These security commitments will be implemented on a bilateral basis, in line with the nature of military assistance to Ukraine so far.

UK-Ukraine Agreement on Security Cooperation

On 12 January 2024, the Prime Minister announced that the UK and Ukraine had concluded a ten-year security cooperation agreement, making the UK the first country to deliver on the wider commitment to provide long-term security guarantees.¹¹⁸

The Government described [that agreement](#) (PDF) as “the first step in developing an unshakeable hundred-year partnership between Ukraine and the United Kingdom”.¹¹⁹ It builds upon a [15-year Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation that was signed in March 2016](#) and a [Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement](#) that was agreed in November 2020.

The new agreement is wide ranging in its ambition, but is centred around two main objectives:

- It formalises the support that the UK has been providing, and will continue to provide, including the provision of modern military equipment (primarily through Capability Coalitions),¹²⁰ intelligence sharing, protection of critical national infrastructure, cyber security assistance, medical and military training and long-term defence industrial cooperation, including joint programmes, the localisation of repair and maintenance and the manufacturing of UK defence equipment in Ukraine.¹²¹ It also outlines long term support for defence governance and civil-military reform.
- It commits the UK to consult with Ukraine, within 24 hours, if it is attacked by Russia in the future and to provide “swift and sustained” security assistance.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Prime Minister's Office, [Press release, 12 January 2024](#)

¹¹⁹ Prime Minister's Office, [Press release, 12 January 2024](#)

¹²⁰ Such as the international Air Force capability Coalition and the Maritime Capability Coalition. The latter was established in December 2023 and is being jointly led by the UK and Norway (See [Long-term Capability Coalition](#)).

¹²¹ A UK defence industry delegation conducted its first trade mission to Ukraine in December 2023. Further trade missions are planned for 2024. See, Ministry of Defence, [Press release](#), 18 December 2023

¹²² [Agreement on Security Cooperation between the United Kingdom and Ukraine \(PDF\)](#), 12 January 2024, part VIII

The long-term aim is to:

support an independent, democratic, and sovereign Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders, capable of deterring and defending against future attacks, as well as to deepen Ukraine's interoperability with NATO, and to accelerate Ukraine's transition to NATO equipment and standards.¹²³

Beyond the security sphere, the agreement also sets out the commitment to support Ukraine's reconstruction, including through continued humanitarian support and for the country's future integration into the EU and NATO, including support for continued political and economic reform.¹²⁴ The agreement notes that:

The legacy effect created by the war, such as the liberation of occupied territory, the transition from martial law, and the need to meet public expectations, will require Ukraine's institutions to be well adapted to manage such challenges.¹²⁵

The provisions of this agreement came into force upon signature.¹²⁶

6 Further Library reading

- [Military assistance to Ukraine since the Russian invasion](#). This paper sets out the headline military assistance provided to Ukraine by the UK, US, NATO countries, the EU and other allies and partners.
- [Security guarantees to Ukraine](#). Examines the commitments to ensuring Ukraine's long-term security that were first announced in July 2023.
- [Ukraine: UK aid and humanitarian assistance 2022-23](#). Among other things, this paper examines the extent of humanitarian and economic assistance pledged by the UK.
- [Post-conflict reconstruction and assistance to Ukraine](#). Examines the proposals and planning underway for reconstruction after the conflict has ended.

¹²³ [Agreement on Security Cooperation between the United Kingdom and Ukraine \(PDF\)](#), 12 January 2024, Part II, para.3

¹²⁴ In November 2023 the European Commission published its [latest assessment of Ukraine's reform efforts](#) (PDF) and recommended that accession negotiations be opened. That recommendation was approved at the European Council in December 2023, although formal talks will not begin until further reform is achieved in relation to the treatment of minorities, Ukraine's anti-corruption efforts and in limiting the powers of Ukraine's oligarchs (European Commission, [Press release](#), 8 November 2023)

¹²⁵ [Agreement on Security Cooperation between the United Kingdom and Ukraine \(PDF\)](#), 12 January 2024, Part VII, para.1

¹²⁶ See Part 4 of Library research briefing, [How Parliament treats treaties](#), June 2021

- [Military assistance to Ukraine 2014-2021](#). This paper examines the longstanding military support that allies and partners had been providing to Ukraine since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee has also launched a new inquiry: [Implications of the war in Ukraine for UK defence](#). That inquiry is accepting evidence until 24 April 2024.

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing '[Legal help: where to go and how to pay](#)' for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Sources and subscriptions for MPs and staff

We try to use sources in our research that everyone can access, but sometimes only information that exists behind a paywall or via a subscription is available. We provide access to many online subscriptions to MPs and parliamentary staff, please contact hoclibraryonline@parliament.uk or visit commonslibrary.parliament.uk/resources for more information.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)