



GMB calls for investment in Ministry of Defence facilities

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Review silent on what matters to defence workers – secure jobs, decent pay and workplaces which are properly heated, ventilated and free of asbestos

GMB, the union for Ministry of Defence workers, has cautiously welcomed the additional investment announced this week – but calls for more cash to be spent on facilities.

The Integrated Review which sets out the UK's foreign and defence policies until 2030, announced three years of investment in the MoD.

But GMB is calling for a radical overhaul of facilities – many of which date back to the last world war - as well as the insourcing of work undertaken by private companies and a rapid expansion of apprentice roles.

Many MoD buildings are not fit for purpose and were built at a time when asbestos was used extensively.

Others have problems with temperature and ventilation being too hot in the summer and too cold in the winter and the lessons of the Covid 19 pandemic need to be applied to allow for better ventilation.

For many years the MoD has chosen to involve the private sector as a default in the provision of transport, catering, cleaning and other facilities management leading to these workers being paid substantially less than equivalent MoD workers and feeling undervalued for the essential roles they undertake.

Vehicle maintenance and repair contracts have been hampered by inadequate staffing levels, a lack of investment, and companies more concerned with delivering profits than caring for the workforce.

The MoD has thousands of skilled workers in both industrial and non-industrial roles, and already provides training and development, however the integrated review provides an opportunity for this to be enhanced to deliver skilled careers for the future to the benefit of society.

Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer, said:

“The Integrated Defence Review is very long to how tackle ‘adversaries’, including references to serious organised crime and flooding, neither of which are part of the MoD remit.

“But is effectively silent on issues which actually matter to defence workers – secure jobs, decent pay and workplaces which are fit for purpose, properly heated and ventilated and free of asbestos.

“Our members want workplaces to be modernised, safe and secure. They want new and up to date tools to enable them to do their jobs properly and with pride. Abandoning outsourcing as the automatic first choice for civilian work must become a priority.

“Despite all its problems the implementation of this review gives the MoD an opportunity to provide young people in particular to develop skills through enhanced and well supported apprenticeship and training programmes and this is an opportunity which the MoD must not ignore.

