



GMB calls for govt pledge to keep shipbuilding contracts in UK

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GMB, the union for shipbuilding and ship repair workers, has called on the Government to guarantee that in future all Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships will be built in UK yards.

The union's call comes as Prime Minister Boris Johnson prepares to unveil the preferred bidder to build new Type 31 frigates - an order that was always reserved for yards in the UK.

GMB has long campaigned for the pending £1.5 billion Fleet Solid Support (FSS) shipbuilding contract to be given to UK shipyards.

The new Fleet Solid Support ships are needed to service the UK's £6.3 billion Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers and their strikeforce of new F-35 fighter planes.

Despite the fact the ships are exempt from EU procurement rules – and the French Government recently awarded a similar order to French shipyards without a bidding process - the Ministry of Defence has up until now insisted on running a full international competition.

“ If Ministers are serious about saving jobs and skills in this country then they must also keep the £1.5 billion Fleet Solid Support contract with our yards, instead of

punting that vital work overseas

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary

GMB analysis of Ministry of Defence documents, suggests that the FSS order could support up to 16,000 jobs in the UK.

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary said:

"All work for our struggling yards is welcome but this particular order was always reserved for the UK.

"If Ministers are serious about saving jobs and skills in this country then they must also keep the £1.5 billion Fleet Solid Support contract with our yards, instead of punting that vital work overseas."