

Leonardo sustains 340 South West jobs with £360m helicopter deal

Helicopter manufacturer Leonardo has secured a £360m Ministry of Defence (MoD) contract which it says will sustain 340 jobs across the South West.

The defence firm will deliver the next five-year stage of a support and training programme for the British Army's Wildcat helicopters.

The company said the contract will help sustain highly skilled aerospace engineers apprentice roles at its site in Yeovil, as well as Leonardo in Yeovil and staff at Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Yeovilton, where the Wildcat Training Centre and frontline RAF squadrons are based.

Leonardo said its teams would work "shoulder to shoulder" with the MoD to support the UK's fleet of AW159 Wildcat helicopters which were deployed during the pandemic to transport essential medical staff and equipment.

The contract will see Leonardo provide spares provisioning service, a three-year scheduled maintenance service, enhanced technical support including aircraft safety management, as well as synthetic and ground-based training for aircrew and maintainers.

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Simon Jones, vice president of customer support and training at Leonardo Helicopters UK, said: “The next tranche of the Wildcat Integrated Support and Training (WIST) contract ensures the British Armed Forces have the right equipment, training and support to continue to meet their operational needs.

“Through collaboration and partnerships, WIST maintains UK rotary wing capabilities onshore through the centre’s cutting-edge technologies and a highly-skilled workforce.”

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin added: “Wildcat helicopters play a vital role in supporting our Armed Forces through reconnaissance, protection and transport. I am delighted they will continue to receive high-quality technical support and training from Leonardo UK.”

The twin-engine AW159 helicopter is a modern, multi-role and agile platform utilised for anti-submarine Warfare and anti-surface warfare roles around the world.

More than 70 AW159s in a variety of roles have been delivered to battlefield and maritime military operators around the

world, including the British Army and Royal Navy.

Leonardo employs more than 3,000 people at its Yeovil site where it is also building a [£30m logistics hub](#) this year.

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