

- Workers and communities must take the lead in making decisions for diversification, but a broad partnership involving all stakeholders is necessary for success.
- Political support for diversification must come from national, regional and local levels.
- Action must be taken at early stages to proactively assist communities in diversification, rather than reacting to a crisis. Suggested timelines to organise and plan for diversification range from three to five years as a minimum.
- Funding must be available not just for putting a plan into action but for organising, analysis of the situation, planning and then implementation.
- Existing organisations, relationships and expertise must be identified and taken advantage of and efforts should be made to ease the transition into more competitive civil markets. Joint ventures and network learning should be encouraged.

**In the light of the clear decline in defence jobs, the Nuclear Education Trust calls on the current and future governments to make use of the findings of this research and integrate them into an effective defence diversification policy, part of a comprehensive industrial strategy.**

The full report can be found on the NET website:  
**[www.nucleareducationtrust.org](http://www.nucleareducationtrust.org)**

#### About the author

Barnaby Pace writes, researches and campaigns on politics and security. His work has featured in the *SIPRI Yearbook*, the edited collection *African Muckraking*, published by Jacana Media, and *Offensive Insecurity*, published by Scientists for Global Responsibility. He was a primary researcher for *Shadow World: Inside the Global Arms Trade*, and holds a Master's Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Warwick.

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## Defence Diversification: International learning for Trident jobs

### Executive Summary

Employment in the UK arms industry has been in decline for several decades. The arms industry lobby group ADS estimates that in 2016 the industry employed 142,000 people directly in the UK. This is down from previous UK Government estimates of 155,000 jobs in 2000/01 and 405,000 jobs in 1980/81. This decline is a long-term downward trend in employment in the UK arms industry due to the increasingly capital-intensive nature of the work carried out in the UK, automation, globalised supply chains, limited increases in defence spending and a highly competitive arms export market.

Despite the 2016 Parliamentary vote to replace the UK's Trident nuclear weapons system, uncertainties remain over the future of the programme, particularly in terms of affordability, technical feasibility and political commitment (especially if the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is ratified internationally). There remains the possibility that in the event of a change of government at the next UK general election, the project will be scaled back or wound down.

This report explores how defence diversification as it has been demonstrated in international case studies, can be used to tackle the opportunities and challenges brought about by changes in defence spending and its effects on employment in the UK.

Our findings show that the best ideas and innovations come from the workers and affected communities – but on their own, these are not enough for success. A broad partnership is needed to tackle the issues, and for the best chance of success the arms companies themselves, national and local government, unions, civil society, academia and other stakeholders must fulfil their role in supporting workers and affected communities in making decisions for their future. This coalition must be given appropriate support in organising, analysis and planning as well as implementation.

However, even where diversification has been deemed to be a success, the costs of the reallocation of resources from military industry to civil production should not be understated. There is a real cost for workers and communities, especially where new economic activity cannot be created in the same location through an idealised plant-based conversion programme. Every international case study identified has involved substantial job losses in the short term.

On the other hand, economic transition always results in upheaval, and ‘do nothing’ is not an option: trends in defence spending and markets show that employment in the defence manufacturing sector is already shrinking. Diversification should not be portrayed as a manifesto to save every job but a tool to mitigate the impacts of change and provide opportunities.

There is good data on the number of jobs affected by changes in the UK arms industry or specifically Trident. The UK arms industry now directly employs an estimated

142,000 people while according to a CND study only approximately 11,000 jobs are currently supported by Trident. The employment supported by replacing Trident meanwhile is estimated at between 26,000 and 30,000 with many of those jobs not appearing until after new submarines come into service in 2031.

Cancelling Trident’s replacement does not inherently mean putting this number of people out of work but consideration could be given to the regions most heavily dependent on the UK arms industry. The costs of the international diversification programmes are tiny in contrast to the cost of Trident’s replacement which is estimated to cost between £140bn and £205bn over its lifetime.

There is already interest and support from civil society in diversification at the locations most affected by cancellation of Trident’s replacement with proposals having been made for each location putting forward opportunities for diversification.

Several trade unions as well as Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn have called for a government Defence Diversification Agency that could provide coordination, assistance and funding to diversification efforts. In 2017 the TUC Congress voted for Motion 17 which committed it to lobbying the Labour Party to set up a Shadow Defence Diversification Agency before the next general election, and work to develop a national industrial strategy which includes the possibility of arms conversion. To help such a project succeed the lessons from international experiences of defence diversification must be learned.

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