

Check if you can apply for a refund of deputyship fees



Refunds are being offered to anyone who was charged more than necessary in deputyship fees between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2015.

The Ministry of Justice launched the refund scheme on 4 October 2019.

Claims can be made by anyone who:

- had a deputy previously
- is acting on behalf of someone who had a deputy and has died

The deputyship must have been active between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2015.

Not everyone who paid fees during this time will get a refund – only those clients who paid more than it cost OPG to supervise deputyships.

Current deputies acting for existing clients will get a refund automatically if they are owed money.

The scheme will be run by the Office of the Public Guardian and does not apply to fees paid to either OPG Scotland, the Office of Care and Protection in Northern Ireland or the Court of Protection.

Full guidance on the refund scheme and who is eligible to apply is available on the [Claim a deputyship refund](#) page.

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1. 13 October 2019 Added Welsh translation
 2. 9 October 2019 First published.
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First UK fighter jets land onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth

Flown by Royal Navy and Royal Air Force pilots, the Lightning jets are embarking in the 65,000 tonne carrier to conduct operational trials off the East Coast of the USA.

This follows successful developmental trials last year with US Lightning jets, where forces conducted 500 take offs and landings over their 11-week period at sea.

These trials are aimed at 'end-to-end' testing of the aircraft and personnel to ensure the aircraft are compatible with the carrier. The tests involve mission planning, arming the aircraft using the ship's Highly Automated Weapon Handling System, flying missions and debriefing on completion.

The landings on HMS Queen Elizabeth are part of the 'WESTLANT 19' Carrier Strike Group deployment. Once fully operational, UK Carrier Strike Group will be a formidable force around the world, using a number of platforms to work alongside our allies.

During this time, the aircraft carrier will be escorted by Type 45 destroyer HMS Dragon, submarine hunter HMS Northumberland, tanker RFA Tideforce and Merlins from 814, 820 and 845 Naval Air Squadrons, Wildcats from 815 squadron and Royal Marines from Lima Company, 42 Commando.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

This is another step towards the UK's carrier strike capability becoming fully operational.

The bringing together of the UK Lightnings on the first in class HMS Queen Elizabeth paves the way for the world's most up to date, fully integrated carrier force.

The Lightning aircraft operates with a cutting-edge design. It is the first jet to combine radar evading stealth technology with supersonic speed, as well as the ability to land vertically. Given its ability to conduct missions both from land and sea, the jets act as a formidable spine to the 'carrier strike' capability. The UK currently owns 18 aircraft, with an additional order placed for 30 jets.

First to land onboard, Wing Commander Adam Curd, Royal Air Force, said:

This is the first time I have landed onboard an aircraft carrier – for it to be HMS Queen Elizabeth, and in an aircraft as amazing as a UK Lightning, is quite something.

This is a proud moment not only for me, but the wider team that has brought us to this milestone for maritime aviation and UK Defence.

The trials will be led by the joint Royal Navy – Royal Air Force 17 Test and Evaluation Squadron from the Air Warfare Centre. The Squadron will be operating alongside personnel and aircraft from the UK Lightning Force, based out of RAF Marham.

Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff for Aviation and Carrier Strike, Rear Admiral Martin Connell, Royal Navy, said:

Embarking UK Lightning jets in HMS Queen Elizabeth for the very first time is a major milestone for Royal Navy and Royal Air Force aviation and for our development of the 5th generation Carrier Strike Group capability.

Once again, the support from our US Navy and US Marine Corps colleagues in the United States has been incredible and undoubtedly helped bring us to this moment: making maritime aviation history.

Air Officer Commanding Number 1 Group, Air Vice-Marshal Harvey Smyth, Royal Air Force, said:

WESTLANT19 marks an extremely significant milestone on our 10-year journey to establishing our renewed Carrier Strike capability.

Bringing our own Lightnings onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time gives us the opportunity to conduct critical operational testing. With the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force operating so closely together, these are incredibly exciting times for embarked Combat Air.

The UK will declare Initial Operating Capability for Carrier Strike by the end of 2020. The first operational deployment for HMS Queen Elizabeth 617 Squadron and a squadron of US Marine Corps Lightning jets is due to take place in 2021.

Commander of the Strike Group, Commodore Mike Utley, Royal Navy said:

Getting to this point of embarking UK Lightning jets into our British-built carrier has been a significant joint undertaking by industry and military – both ours, and those from the United States.

We will take the jets from the successful developmental phase we achieved last year through to a more operational footing, so we are

confident that the jets, the carrier and our destroyers and frigates will function seamlessly together.

Foreign Secretary speech to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly: 12 October 2019

Thank you very much and good morning to all of you as fellow members of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Today, we celebrate NATO's 70 years of pre-eminence as an alliance founded on creating peace and prosperity for all of our countries. Forged from the ashes of the Second World War, NATO defended its members from the spread of Communism. Today it protects nearly one billion people across our 30 countries.

The UK's commitment to European security has, and will always be, strong and we continue to play a leading role in ensuring the success of NATO. We are, I like to remind everyone, the top defence spender in Europe and the second largest in NATO as a whole.

Every single day, thousands of our Armed Forces personnel serve side by side with those from your countries in our shared endeavours: from troops supporting NATO missions in the Baltics, Iraq and Afghanistan, to ships patrolling the Black Sea and planes policing European skies.

We are proud that nearly 70 years ago, London became the home to the first headquarters of NATO. And we are also proud that, while NATO headquarters may have outgrown its original headquarters in the townhouse less than a mile from here, in the seven decades since, NATO has achieved its aims of securing peace for a more prosperous world.

Margaret Thatcher said nearly two decades ago, "NATO has surely been the most successful Alliance in history." Her words ring true today. But we also know that the threats aren't as predictable, and the solutions aren't so simple as they were in Margaret Thatcher's day.

The world has moved on since the Cold War. Russia is using different types of disinformation and deploying new missile systems in its efforts to destabilise Europe. Terrorist groups are becoming more capable and more agile. For all of us, new and rapidly developing technologies present a double-edged sword of risk and reward, opportunity and threat.

In the face of these complex challenges, the transatlantic alliance has come

under some pressure. But I believe that that should only serve as a clarion call to us to reinforce and recalibrate NATO, so it is well equipped to take on those new threats and rise to the new challenges that lie ahead of us.

Above all, Europe and North America must work together. We must work together in order to be effective, effective champions of the values and strategic interests that we share, now more than ever.

NATO is the preeminent organisation that brings us together, Europe and North America, in the pursuit of those shared interests and those common goals and values. So the stronger we are together, the harder we work to avoid division, the more effective we will be.

But I think the same is true in reverse. The more we neglect those ties, the weaker we will be in tackling the challenges that threaten us all. I don't want to airbrush away some of the differences, on any one or other issue there are and will be between us.

But I hope we will always have the empathy and wisdom to place them in their proper context, set against the far greater challenges and threats we face together, shoulder to shoulder. So let's cast our eyes beyond relatively minor disputes between us, and towards the growing turbulence I think we can all see on the horizon.

Now, more than ever, our foreign policy should be guided by a clear strategic vision and direction, designed to uphold the rules-based international system, underpinned by unity and shared values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law. We must stand together in defence of the values that set the very foundations of this precious alliance.

And, for NATO to continue to meet the challenges of tomorrow, it must adapt, both geographically and strategically. Above all, we have got to adapt to the threats we face in the here and now, today.

In the last 18 months, we have made good progress. We are thinking in innovative ways about new strategies for air power, maritime posture, countering hybrid attacks, and of course the threat from cyber. We are developing our agility by tripling the size of the NATO Response force, so we can deploy more forces, more quickly, to cover a wider range of threats. We are expanding geographically, deploying new battlegroups to the Baltics and Poland, building defence capacity in Afghanistan, Jordan and Tunisia, and increasing support to Georgia and Ukraine.

But we have also got to face and contend with a more aggressive Russia. One that frankly shows a blatant disregard for rule of law. Let's remember, just for a moment, these aren't just mere technical violations of the rules. The Russian state has used force to illegally annex Crimea. It has carried out cyber attacks in Europe. It has sought to undermine European democracy, for example in its failed coup attempt against Montenegro. And this pattern of behaviour shows no signs of abating.

Last year, we in the UK suffered a nerve agent attack in Salisbury, for which

Russia bears responsibility. And Russia's repeated violations of the INF Treaty led to the recent collapse of that decades-old missile treaty.

So I want to be clear about this. We do need an approach that invites the possibility of a better relationship with Russia, if and when Russia shows it is serious, willing and able to cooperate in support of international law rather than undermining it.

We must also, at the same time, be clear-sighted in adapting our deterrence and defensive capabilities to respond to Russia's patterns of aggression, malign activity and abuse of the international rules-based system.

Now, our more conventional measures include leading a battlegroup in Estonia, increased support to Georgia and Ukraine, and our presence in the Black Sea region. But in this changing environment, we must look to the future, we must change with it. Russia is already exemplifying a novel and innovative cyber threat with their reckless and irresponsible activity.

As colleagues will know, last year, the GRU attempted an attack on the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, one of the foundations of the rules-based international order. Thanks to the security partnership we have with the Dutch security service, the GRU was thwarted. But we can never be complacent.

We have long played a leading role in NATO's cyber adaptation. The UK was the first Ally to offer our offensive cyber capabilities to NATO, and a further eight partners have joined us since. But with developments like artificial intelligence, hypersonic missiles and autonomous weapons systems, there is a potential to change warfare as significantly as flight did more than a century ago, so we need to be able and willing to grasp those opportunities and rise to those challenges.

At the upcoming NATO Leaders' Meeting in December, we also want to see our allies addressing evolving challenges in outer space, just as it has already done with cyber, and address disruptive, emerging, new technologies.

That Leaders' Meeting will make sure that we can respond with the strength that we need to the increase of hybrid attacks that, let's remember, affect the day-to-day lives of our people – whether by compromising their bank accounts or undermining the integrity of our elections and our democratic system.

This potent combination of threats leaves no room for complacency. We have, and we must, call on other countries to step up their contributions to NATO and our collective defence. I recognise and I pay tribute to the progress that has been made on burden sharing. But it's still the case today that only eight allies invest the necessary 2% of GDP.

So to you all, as friends gathered here, I urge you, and your legislatures, to put our jointly held principles into practice. NATO ally legislatures can, and should, play a vital role in supporting increases in defence budgets, and stepping up commitments to deployments and greater military cooperation.

It was the former US President, Herbert Hoover, who once said “peace is not made at the council table, or by treaties, but within the hearts of” people. So while we are all here today because of our commitment to NATO, we can’t just rely on treaties to bind us together. Talking about the threats won’t get the job done. We’ve got to act, all of us.

In a fast-changing world, whatever our differences, we must focus relentlessly and consistently on our shared values and our common purpose – upholding peace, prosperity and the international rule of law.

Our hearts must be in this struggle.

So let us reaffirm and recommit to those noble aims today.

Thank you all very much.

[Cayman Islands to establish a new reserve unit with support of the UK military](#)

Following engagement from the Minister earlier this year the Governor of the Cayman Islands his Excellency Martyn Roper OBE and the Honourable Premier, Alden McLaughlin have announced that they will look to establish a reserve unit to be known as the Cayman Regiment, the first defence force for the islands.

A team of UK military and civilian experts from the MOD and FCO will shortly deploy to begin the assessments needed to take the project forward. Having a specially trained defence force in the region will provide a boost to security and disaster management capability both in Cayman and the wider Caribbean.

Initially, assistance from the UK is likely to take the form of logistical advice and support but will develop further to include operational training and equipment.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

The UK enjoys a close and historic bond with the Cayman Islands and through helping to establish the Islands first reserve unit we are strengthening this relationship even further.

We are committed to the safety and security of the Overseas

Territories. Having recently worked with regional partners on the response to Hurricane Dorian we have demonstrated both the depth of that commitment and value we place on our partnerships in the Caribbean.

Both in 2017 during the response to Hurricane Irma and more recently with Hurricane Dorian the UK has worked hand in hand with the Cayman Islands on relief efforts. During his visit the Minister was able to personally thank the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and the Air Operations Unit for their work on the response and hear about how they worked with the Royal Navy and RFA Mounts Bay.

The Minister was also shown the growth of the Cayman Island Junior Cadet Corps, which has gone from strength to strength since its establishment in 2001. The new defence force will help offer an avenue for cadets on graduation, should they choose to develop their skills further. The Cadet Force also assist with low-level activities during national emergencies such as hurricanes.

[Midland Metropolitan hospital gets extra government support](#)



This funding will secure the future of the new hospital which has been stalled since the collapse of Carillon in 2018. It follows the government's recent commitments of £2.7 billion to fund six new hospitals, £850 million for 20 hospital upgrades and £100 million towards developing business case proposals for new building projects across 34 hospitals.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, said:

It is absolutely right that the Midland Metropolitan hospital is completed so that doctors and nurses working for our NHS across the West Midlands can deliver excellent care in brand new, state-of-the-art facilities.

This investment of £350 million will help deliver on the people's priorities of improving the NHS and levelling up services available across the country.

The new Midland Metropolitan hospital will bring together urgent care services from two hospitals across the region into one state-of-the-art site, promoting better patient safety and care while ensuring value for taxpayer's money.

Further information

- the project is expected to be completed in April 2022 and will ensure that patients across the West Midlands continue to benefit from access to world-class treatment and cutting-edge facilities.
- this is part of the NHS long term plan, setting out how the NHS will improve the quality of patient care and health outcomes. This is backed by a historic commitment of an extra £33.9 billion a year by 2023-2024.
- this announcement marks the formal sign off by Government of the Trust's business case for completion of the MMH hospital. The Trust is finalising commercial terms with its preferred bidder Balfour Beatty and expects to sign a contract for the construction work in the next few weeks.

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