

# Press release: Claiming a Funeral Payment to be made easier

Improvements to make it easier to claim a Funeral Payment will be brought in next year, the government has announced.

Funeral Payments are available to people who receive certain income-related benefits to help pay towards the cost of a funeral for an immediate friend or relative.

The government consulted on reforms to make it clearer who is eligible for a payment and make it easier for people to claim.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance Caroline Dinenage said:

Losing a loved one is a sad and difficult time and we want to make the process of claiming a funeral payment as simple as possible.

I want to thank those who responded to our consultation and I am pleased that we will be bringing in all its recommendations to make it easier for people to make a claim.

The improvements include:

- allowing recipients of a Funeral Payment to receive contributions from relatives, friends or charities without it being deducted from the payment
- extending the claim period from 3 to 6 months from the date of the funeral
- allowing applicants to submit evidence electronically to speed up the processing of claims and get decisions to claimants sooner
- introducing a shorter application form for children's funerals

[Funeral Payments](#) can help pay for the costs of a simple, respectful funeral for people on qualifying benefits. This includes:

- burial fees and exclusive rights of burial in a particular plot
- medical certification fees needed for cremations, including the cost of the doctor's certificate
- travel to arrange or go to the funeral
- the cost of moving the body within the UK, if it's being moved more than 50 miles
- death certificates or other documents
- up to £700 for other funeral expenses, such as funeral director's fees, flowers or the coffin

People in receipt of the following benefits may be eligible for a Funeral Payment:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit which includes a disability or severe disability element
- Child Tax Credit

The changes will be brought in next year.

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## [Press release: A57 Mottram bypass in £242 million Trans-Pennine plans](#)

Highways England today announced its preferred route for the A57 Mottram bypass which will cut congestion and improve safety.

The company also confirmed it would deliver improvements at Westwood roundabout at Tankersley in South Yorkshire which links the A61 and A616, and would do further work to refine options for the dualling of the A61 between Westwood roundabout and the M1.

All 3 improvements were part of a consultation held earlier this year.

Tim Gamon, Highways England's Regional Delivery Director for the North West, said:

More than 1,000 people attended the public information events we held on both sides of the Pennines earlier this year and almost 900 people responded to the consultation – with half backing the option selected for a new link from the M67 terminal roundabout to a new junction at A57(T) Mottram Moor – near Back Moor – and a link from there to a new junction on the A57 at Brookfield.

Most people felt these improvements struck a good balance in terms of convenience for drivers, reduced impact on local communities and improved safety. So we will present them in a statutory consultation next year with a plan to starting construction in early 2020.

Plans for climbing lanes on the A628 are also being considered further following the recent consultation.

Highways England is already starting to deliver some localised safety schemes along the Trans-Pennine route.

More information on the announcement and on the timetable for statutory consultation and project delivery can be [found on the scheme website](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# **[News story: Busiest ever year as event goes on growing](#)**

The visitors, from all across the UK and overseas, enjoyed a day of exhibitions and informal networking at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) Estate Supply Chain Event.

Businesses came to Manchester's EventCity venue to be involved in one of the world's largest nuclear decommissioning supplier events, with delegates turning up from all across the UK and overseas.

Informal networking in the Innovation Zone

The NDA and its business units set up the first event 7 years ago with the aim of creating greater visibility of opportunities for suppliers and in particular for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). The event has gone from strength-to-strength and has become a highlight of the nuclear industry calendar, with around half the visitors coming from the SME community.

The day was formally opened by NDA Chief Executive David Peattie, who spoke about the importance of suppliers in providing skills and innovation for the decommissioning mission.

The main hall held 300 exhibition stands, staffed by a wide range of technical and service suppliers, alongside information stands representing the NDA and all its business units, government bodies and regeneration organisations.

The ever-popular 'Innovation Zone', supported by the government's Innovate UK, hosted more than 40 exhibitor companies, who held demonstrations of leading-edge technologies during the afternoon.

The Skills Zone also returned for 2017, featuring a range of organisations who were able to offer guidance, advice and one-to-one discussions.

Other government departments attending included:

- The Ministry of Defence's Submarine Enterprise Programme
- Department for International Trade
- the Crown Commercial Service
- the Welsh Government

Ron Gorham, the NDA's Head of Supply Chain Optimisation and SME Champion, said:

We have a challenging mission for decades to come which relies on vibrant, dynamic businesses providing solutions to our many challenges. Success across our estate and also the MOD's Submarine Enterprise Programme is good not only for the UK, local and national economies, but also provides fulfilling careers for a whole new generation.

We remain committed to working with the supply chain, from the largest to the smallest players, to improve not only the quality of the opportunities but also help ensure successful outcomes for all.

Informal feedback during the day suggests that yesterday's event was the most successful so far. It provides a unique opportunity to hear leading figures from across our sector, see world-beating technology and enjoy an unrivalled opportunity for networking with other businesses suppliers and clients.

The event remains a key element of our Supply Chain Development programme and the SME action plan both of which show NDA's continued commitment to encourage, support and develop our supply chain for today and for the future.

One of the morning highlights was the [presentation of NDA estate awards.](#)

[More images on the NDA's Flickr account](#)

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**[News story: Accelerated access scheme](#)**

# means patients will get new treatments faster

The government has announced a new fast-track route into the NHS for “breakthrough” medicines and technologies. This will speed up the time it takes for patients to benefit from ground-breaking products for conditions such as cancer, dementia and diabetes.

From April 2018, the new ‘accelerated access pathway’ will mean products with the greatest potential to change lives could be available up to 4 years earlier. It will be done by reducing the time it takes to negotiate evaluation and financial approvals before the NHS can purchase the products.

Under the scheme, a number of products each year will receive ‘breakthrough’ designation. This will unlock a package of support allowing firms to accelerate clinical development and gain a fast-track route through the NHS’s approval processes.

Health Minister Lord O’Shaughnessy said:

I want the UK to be the best place in the world to develop new drugs and medical technology – but despite the innovation happening here, our uptake in the NHS can be too slow.

Today’s new measures will not only benefit patients by improving how quickly and easily we can get innovative products from the lab to the bedside, but will guarantee future collaboration between the life sciences sector and the NHS post-Brexit – benefiting the British economy and creating jobs.

Sir Andrew Witty, former chief executive of GlaxoSmithKline, will lead the Accelerated Access Collaborative, to highlight which products should be granted access to the pathway. The collaborative will draw on advice from patients, clinicians and industry.

In return, life sciences firms will be expected to deliver additional value for the taxpayer, with a new Strategic Commercial Unit being created within NHS England to negotiate cost effective deals.

Sir Andrew Witty, Chair of the Accelerated Access Collaborative, said:

Patients, scientists and the UK economy will all benefit from the positive steps outlined by the government today.

The opportunity to ensure the NHS gets rapid access to cost effective breakthrough technologies is vitally important, and I’m delighted to help lead the effort to deliver this.

The government is also providing an £86 million package to help innovators of all sizes gain access to the NHS market, to get their products to patients.

The package includes:

- support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to help them build a stronger evidence base for their products, with £35 million over 4 years for digital products, and £6 million for medtech, diagnostics and pharmaceutical products
- £6 million to support clinicians to use new treatments and technologies in everyday practice
- £39 million to encourage grassroots adoption and uptake of new medical technologies – driven by 15 Academic Health Science Networks responsible for identifying high potential products, supporting their adoption in the regions, and sharing lessons across the NHS

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## [News story: People – not products – are the secret to scaling up businesses](#)

British businesses are missing opportunities to secure investment, grow and scale up because of misunderstandings in what investors are looking for, according to a new report published by Innovate UK.

[‘Scaling up: the investor perspective’](#) compares the views of investors and scale-up small to medium-sized enterprises on the factors for success. It includes the views of investors both in the UK and internationally.

### **Mismatch between businesses and investors**

The report finds that business leaders consistently underestimate the value investors place on ‘softer’ aspects, for example:

- 78 per cent of investors thought chemistry was important, versus 53 per cent of businesses
- poor communication was a deal breaker for 84 per cent of investors, compared to just under half (46 per cent) of businesses
- a lack of adaptability and resilience was a deal breaker for 87 per cent of investors. Only 58 per cent of businesses thought this to be the case

What businesses underestimate when looking for investment.

## **Strong management vital to success**

Both investors (96 per cent) and businesses (82 per cent) had a similar level of agreement that a strong management team is the most important ingredient for scale-up success. They also agreed that drive and passion were the top qualities.

The management qualities investors look for.

It follows that almost all (97 per cent) investors agreed that a weak management team was the number one deal breaker. Three-quarters (74 per cent) have actually turned down an investment opportunity based on gut feeling.

Key elements to scale up success.

Chris Wade, venture partner at [Octopus Ventures](#), comments:

I have been developing a 20-year thesis that nothing works out from a company pitch; their products or services always end up taking a different direction. A strong team can build a company, but a weak team – even with a brilliantly compelling idea – wouldn't be one for us to invest in.

## **Other factors considered to be deal breakers**

The report highlighted further disconnect when it came to understanding what investors look for:

- two-thirds of businesses (65 per cent) thought timescale to exit was a deal breaker, while less than a third (28 per cent) of investors said that they had turned down an investment opportunity for this reason
- 70 per cent of investors felt cultural fit was a deal breaker, versus only 50 per cent of businesses
- interestingly, businesses overestimated the importance of fit with the investor's portfolio, with 74 per cent believing it to be of consideration, compared to 55 per cent of investors

5 areas of weakness that cause investors to turn down scale up businesses.

## **International expansion and growth**

In addition to looking at the factors for scale-up investment success, the report also looked at SMEs' plans for international expansion.

It found that 92 per cent of UK businesses are either currently exporting or plan to do so in the next 12 months. Lack of local market knowledge and having the right contacts are seen as 2 of the biggest barriers in doing so and achieving international growth.

In terms of inward investment, the UK is seen as a target by investors, with

47 per cent saying that UK scale-ups are more attractive than those in other countries.

## Connecting innovators with investment

Innovate UK will use the results of this research to inform and improve its work on follow-on investment and the formulation of innovation loans, which are due to launch during November 2017.

Dr Ruth McKernan CBE, CEO of Innovate UK says:

Attracting investment is often a challenge for innovative businesses and the brilliant people at their heart.

At Innovate UK we are increasing our focus on connecting innovators with both government grant funding and venture capital investment, to turbo-charge their journeys to success and the UK's economic growth.

## Further inform and engage the sectors

Commenting on the report, Dr Jeremy Silver, Chief Executive Officer, [Digital Catapult](#), adds:

Digital Catapult helps UK companies of all sizes grow and scale their businesses through digital innovation. We want to help more companies grow faster for longer, rather than rushing to trade sales.

We recognise that this requires entrepreneurial and investor confidence, and run projects to help companies achieve those goals; recent successes include [Nymbly](#), [Cambridge Bio-Augmentation Systems](#) and [Smartify](#). We launched [Dimension Studio](#) last week, which sees Digital Catapult partnering with [Microsoft](#) and [Hammerhead](#) to bring world-leading volumetric capture technology to the UK.

This new report on scale-ups will further inform and engage the key players in this sector.

## About the research

Innovate UK commissioned the report to identify how investors, government organisations and advisors can better support innovative UK businesses to scale and export, in line with the UK's Industrial Strategy.

Independent research agency, [Ebiquity](#), conducted the research on our behalf. It questioned a total of 250 innovative SMEs and investors between June and September 2017.