

[Press release: Controls prevent phone fraudsters spoofing HMRC](#)

The tax authority has put an end to fraudster's mimicking its most recognisable helpline numbers to dupe taxpayers and steal money.

[Press release: New law protecting tenants comes into force today](#)

The Tenant Fees Act comes into force today (1 June 2019).

[News story: RAF Typhoons intercept Russian fighters in Estonia](#)

The RAF jets scrambled yesterday (Thursday 30 May) to intercept two Russian SU-30 Flanker fighters, two SU-24 Fencer attack aircraft and an AN-12 transport aircraft flying off the north coast of Estonia.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

Our commitment to NATO and European security is unwavering and our brave RAF pilots have shown once again that we are ready to respond to any threat to the UK and its allies. Alongside our NATO allies, we must remain vigilant and aware of Russian military activity.

This was a routine NATO mission for the Typhoons which took over the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission from the German Air Force last month. The presence in the Baltics provides reassurance that the UK is here to work in partnership with Estonia.

A Typhoon pilot from XI(Fighter) Squadron, attached to 121 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), was conducting Quick Reaction Alert duty when the scramble was called. He said:

We were scrambled to intercept a group of four Russian fighters. The intercept was routine and we stayed with them for around 25 minutes during their transit from mainland Russia to the Kaliningrad oblast.

Once complete with this task we hauled off and conducted a further intercept of a Russian AN-12 aircraft travelling much lower and slower along the same route. The intercept of all five aircraft was uneventful and conducted in a professional manner throughout.

This is the fourth Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) scramble since the RAF deployed in April 2019 as part of Baltic Air Policing. The RAF operates alongside its NATO allies to deter Russian aggression and assure NATO allies of the UK's commitment to collective defence.

News story: Ten independent chairs announced to scrutinise modern slavery cases

Potential victims of modern slavery will receive more transparent and joined-up support thanks to plans introduced by the Home Office.

Changes to the national referral mechanism (NRM), that have now come into force, will allow an independent group of professionals to review certain cases and assess whether the right decision has been made.

People who receive a negative "conclusive grounds" decision after being referred to the NRM – the government system to identify and support victims of modern slavery – will automatically have their decision reviewed by a Multi-Agency Assurance Panel to be scrutinised.

These panels can then require the Home Office to reconsider any case where they consider an incorrect decision to have been made.

This comes as, following a pilot scheme, a new Single Competent Authority was introduced at the end of April to handle all cases referred from front line staff and to make decisions about whether somebody is a victim of modern slavery.

The expert unit within the Home Office has replaced the previous model of separate case management units in the National Crime Agency and UK Visas and Immigration.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Sadly, slavery and exploitation are not crimes of the past. They are very real and with us today.

The government is committed to stamping out this horrific crime and ensuring that victims get the support they need.

By introducing truly independent and transparent scrutiny of decisions, we can ensure that people can have confidence in the decisions taken by the national referral mechanism, and in the level of support they will receive.

Those appointed as chairs are:

- Allan Doherty
- Mike Taylor
- Joy Shakespeare
- Mary Cunneen
- Vincent Dean
- Sharon Squires
- Andrew Leonard
- Russ Middleton
- John Clements
- Alison Towns

Last year, 6,993 people were referred to the NRM.

The government is committed to ensuring victims have access to the support they need to begin re-building their lives.

In February 2019 the minimum period of support for confirmed victims was increased to 90 days, and we are in the process of implementing a range of other reforms to the NRM.

The reforms aim to improve decision-making and the support available to victims before, during and after the NRM process.

Improvements to support include introduction of places of safety for those rescued by law enforcement bodies prior to entering the NRM and implementation of post-NRM support to help victims transition to the next phase of their lives.

The improvements in support for victims sit alongside a range of measures to tackle modern slavery in the UK and overseas. These include:

- the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act in 2015, which gave law enforcement agencies better tools to tackle modern slavery and enhanced protection for victims
- requiring companies to publish transparency statements and recently announced
- a package of support to help child victims of modern slavery including a new Child Trafficking Protection Fund and the national rollout of Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTAs), who provide specialised

support for trafficked children

- £4 million in funding for initiatives to tackle modern slavery and labour exploitation overseas through the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund

Press release: Prime Minister appoints new Independent Members to the House of Lords Appointments Commission

The Prime Minister has confirmed the appointments of Lord Chartres (Richard), Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle and Charles Moore as Independent Members of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) from 1 June 2019.

The appointments follow an open recruitment exercise.

Rt Rev and Rt Hon Lord Richard Chartres KCV0

Lord Chartres is a Crossbench Peer and Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal. He is the former Bishop of London and held a number of wider roles during that time, including as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE DL

Mrs Jay-O'Boyle is the current Lord Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast, a member of the Advisory Board to Hillsborough Castle, and the Vice-Chair of Northern Ireland Opera. She has been involved in public and voluntary service for many years.

Charles Moore

Mr Moore is the Group Consulting Editor for the Telegraph Group, and a weekly columnist for The Daily Telegraph and The Spectator. He was previously editor of the Spectator, the Sunday Telegraph and the Daily Telegraph; and is the authorised biographer of Margaret Thatcher.

The Minister for the Constitution, Kevin Foster, welcomed the new Members' appointments, and thanked their predecessors:

Lord Chartres, Mrs Jay-O'Boyle and Mr Moore have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that the House of Lords reflects the people it represents, and to acting in accordance with the seven principles of public life. I am also grateful to Lord Low of Dalston, Professor Gillian Peele and Sir Malcolm Ross for their service to the Commission.

HOLAC has two main functions:

- to recommend individuals for appointment as non-party political life peers; and to vet nominations for life peers, including those nominated by the UK political parties, to ensure the highest standards of propriety.
- Independent Members are appointed for five year non-renewable terms. More information about HOLAC can be found on [their website](#).