

LUKE POLLARD MP

Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry

15 October 2025

Dear Tan,

I am providing a quarterly update on the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS). UKMFTS is a 25-year, £3.8Bn Public Private Partnership, contracted to 2033. The programme delivers aircrew training for all three Services, namely: Fast Jet, Multi Engine, Rotary Wing and Remotely Piloted Air System pilots; and Royal Navy (RN) Rear Crew / Royal Air Force (RAF) Mission Aircrew. UKMFTS includes the provision of all training aircraft, simulators, courseware, instructors, and infrastructure. At any one time there are c.650 trainees in the system, across 20 aircrew specialisations, operating seven aircraft types from six UK sites.

RAF Pilot Holding Times – Crewed Pipelines

The training timelines within UKMFTS continue to reduce, with the Fast Jet pipeline now optimised. There are currently only six trainees waiting to commence flying training, all waiting fewer than three months. 32 pilots are in the post-Elementary Flying Training hold (compared to 39 a year ago and 128 two years ago). Of these 32, there are two Fast Jet pilots (waiting three-months), 27 Multi Engine pilots (waiting nine to 13-months) and three Rotary Wing pilots (waiting six to 12-months).

34 pilots are holding ahead of their front-line Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) training. These comprise of three Fast Jet pilots (waiting on average four months), 19 Multi Engine pilots (waiting between one to six months) and 12 Rotary Wing pilots, whose 13-to-18-month holdover is due to Chinook OCU delays and Puma deletion.

RAF Pilot Holding Times – Uncrewed Pipeline

For the Remotely Piloted Air System pipeline, there are 18 trainees who will experience holdovers of 24 to 48 months, driven by delays to the Protector Programme.

Multi Engine Pilot Training

UKMFTS Multi Engine pilot training has been highly effective and efficient. Current courses are continuing to progress well, with all courses between now and December 2025 expected to finish early. Due to new Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition &

Reconnaissance (ISTAR) platforms coming into service, there is an increased front-line demand for Multi Engine pilots from Training Year 2025/2026. In order to meet this sustained growth, a blended approach using elements of civilian provided training, combined with UKMFTS courses, is deemed the most appropriate, cost-effective and flexible way of assuring increased Multi Engine pilot demand. A Small Group Try Out will be conducted in 2026 to re-confirm the validity and viability of this training approach.

Fast Jet Pilot Training

The Fast Jet pilot training forecast for Training Year 2025/2026 continues to meet Front-Line demand. The MOD is maintaining close liaison with BAE Systems and Rolls Royce to ensure the Hawk T2 engine availability meets our requirements. Hawk T2 engine availability remains fragile. International outsourcing of pilot training continues in the USA, Italy and Qatar.

In line with the Strategic Defence Review intent to replace the Hawk T2 advanced jet training aircraft, requirements for the optimisation of the fast jet training pipeline are being developed. The high-level characteristics are for the future flying training system to be technically adaptable and scalable, placing the trainees and instructors at the centre of the training system. The aircraft will integrate with synthetic training devices and synthetic airborne entities as part of a system of systems that provides an immersive training environment. The MOD is standing up a Programme Team to assess future options and to define the full requirement. The MOD is aware of numerous potential platform solutions to replace Hawk T2 and all industry engagement will be conducted in accordance with Government Procurement Policy.

I want to assure the Defence Committee that the MOD remains committed to ensuring UKMFTS meets our current and future front-line requirements for world-class aircrew.

I trust that you find this information useful.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke', written in a cursive style.

LUKE POLLARD MP