

## 10.7 million tax returns filed by 31 January deadline

More than 10.7 million people submitted their 2019/20 Self Assessment tax returns by the 31 January deadline, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has revealed.

The remaining 1.8 million whose tax return is now late will not be charged a late filing penalty provided they submit their return online by 28 February.

Those who did not pay their Self Assessment tax bill by 31 January are now incurring interest on the outstanding balance and should pay their bill as soon as possible.

Customers should pay any outstanding balance, or arrange a payment plan, before 3 March 2021 to avoid a 5% late payment penalty.

Those who are not yet able to file their tax return should pay an estimated amount as soon as possible, which will minimise any interest and late payment penalty. Self-employed people can [use the calculator on GOV.UK](#) to help estimate their tax bill.

Karl Khan, HMRC's Interim Director General for Customer Services, said:

Thank you to the 10.7 million customers who have sent in their tax returns.

We won't send anyone a late filing penalty if they complete their tax return by 28 February.

We know that many individuals and small businesses are finding it harder to pay this year, due to the pandemic. Anyone who can't afford to pay their tax bill in full can set up a payment plan, once they've filed their return, to spread their tax bill into monthly instalments.

There are several ways that customers can pay their Self Assessment tax bill or an estimated amount. They can pay online, via their bank, or by post. More information on [how to pay](#) is on GOV.UK.

Anyone who cannot pay their bill in full can apply to spread the cost. Customers can set up a payment plan, in up to 12 monthly instalments, [online via GOV.UK](#) provided they meet the following requirements:

- they need to have no:

- outstanding tax returns
- other tax debts
- other HMRC payment plans set up
- the debt needs to be between £32 and £30,000
- the payment plan needs to be set up no later than 60 days after the due date for payment – but they should really do it as soon as possible, and certainly before 3 March to avoid a 5% late payment penalty

Those who do not meet these requirements, or who need more than 12 months to pay off their bill, can apply for a payment plan by speaking to one of HMRC's debt advisers.

Interest accrues on all outstanding balances, including those in payment plans.

Self Assessment customers who are required to make Payments on Account, and know their 2020 to 2021 tax bill is going to be lower than in 2019 to 2020 – for example due to loss of earnings because of COVID-19, can reduce their Payments on Account. Find out [more about Payments on Account and how to reduce them](#).

Be aware of copycat HMRC websites and phishing scams. Customers should search 'self assessment' on GOV.UK to get the correct link for their Self Assessment tax return online securely and free of charge. They also need to be alert if someone calls, emails or texts claiming to be from HMRC, saying that they can claim financial help, are due a tax refund or owe tax. It might be a scam. Check GOV.UK for [information on how to recognise genuine HMRC contact](#).

Self Assessment 2021 facts summary:

- 12.1 million SA returns due
- 10,743,387 returns received by 31 January – this includes Expected Returns, unsolicited returns and Late Registrations
- 10,351,387 Expected Returns received by 31 January (85.25% of returns expected)
- 392,000 unsolicited returns/Late Registrations (3.65%)
- 1,790,368 taxpayers missed the deadline (14.74%)
- 10,274,940 returns were filed online (95.64% of total filed)

Unsolicited returns/late registrations are an estimate based on returns received by early January and previous filing behaviour. The unusual filing patterns this year means that the final figure for 31 January may be lower.

Find [more information on Self Assessment tax returns](#).

We will not charge late filing penalties for SA700s and SA970s received in February. These returns can only be filed on paper.

For SA800s and SA900s we will not charge a late filing penalty if customers file online by the end of February 2021. The deadline for filing SA800s and SA900s on paper was 31 October 2020. Customers who file late on paper will be charged a late filing penalty in the normal way. They can appeal against this penalty if they have a reasonable excuse for filing their paper return late.

There is no change to the filing deadline and other obligations are not affected. A return received online in February will be treated as a return received late where there is a valid reasonable excuse for the lateness. This means that:

- there will be an extended enquiry window
- for returns filed after 28 February the other late filing penalties (daily penalties from 3 months, 6 and 12 month penalties) will operate as usual
- the payment deadline remains 31 January and interest will be charged on late payment. The current rate of late payment interest is 2.6%
- a 5% late payment penalty will be charged if tax remains outstanding, and a payment plan has not been set up, before 3 March 2021 – further late payment penalties are charged at 6 and 12 months, on tax outstanding where a payment plan has not been set up

The calculator to help estimate self-employed individuals' tax bills assumes they have no other taxable income and receive the standard personal allowance. Also, it does not take into account any payments they may have made as payments on account

If a customer's Self Assessment debts are more than £30,000, or they need longer than 12 months to pay a debt in full, they cannot set up a Time to Pay plan online. But they may still be able to set up a Time to Pay arrangement by calling the Self Assessment Payment Helpline on 0300 200 3822.

Follow the National Cyber Security Centre's six essential steps to keep yourself and your business secure online by visiting [CyberAware.gov.uk](https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk).