

Press release: Minister for Asia statement on Bangladesh elections

I note the announcement of the unofficial results of the 11th Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh.

While I welcome the participation of all opposition parties in these elections, I am aware of credible accounts of obstacles, including arrests, that constrained or prevented campaigning by opposition parties, and of irregularities in the conduct of elections on polling day that prevented some people from voting. I urge a full, credible and transparent resolution of all complaints related to the conduct of the elections.

I deplore the acts of intimidation and unlawful violence that have taken place during the campaign period, and am deeply concerned by the incidents that led to so many deaths on polling day. My thoughts are with the families and friends of those who have lost loved ones.

Free, fair, peaceful, and participatory elections are essential to any functioning democracy. It is vital for the government and all political parties to now work together to address differences and find a way forward in line with the interests of the people of Bangladesh.

We have a broad and important partnership with Bangladesh, and a significant Bangladeshi diaspora in the UK. We will continue to support the people of Bangladesh in their aspirations for a more stable, prosperous, and democratic future.

Press release: Minister for Asia statement on Bangladesh elections

FCO Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field comments on the announcement of the unofficial results for Bangladesh's general election

Press release: Loyal energy customers

to pay fair price from today

- Government delivers on manifesto commitment to protect millions from unjustified price rises as energy price cap comes into force today
- new cap will mean 11 million loyal energy customers on “default” tariffs pay a fair price for their energy
- part of the government’s commitment to tackle fuel poverty and protect consumers

Around 11 million households who have stayed loyal to energy suppliers on poor value energy tariffs will pay a fair price from today (1 January 2019) thanks to the government’s price cap.

The cap will bring down the amount consumers have been overpaying to energy companies, including the Big Six, by £1 billion a year, starting this winter when households are typically using more energy to heat and light their homes. It will remain in place until at least 2020, while energy suppliers and industry continue to work with the energy regulator Ofgem and the government to build an energy market that works better for all consumers.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Our energy price cap will cut bills for millions of families and people across the UK who have been ripped off by energy companies for far too long. From today, money will go straight back into the pockets of loyal consumers, including the elderly and those on lower incomes who feel the pinch more acutely.

But work to tackle this issue doesn’t stop there. We’re working with regulators and industry to ensure that consumers are not unfairly overcharged in the future – whether on their phone bills or their insurance premiums.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

Today marks the end of unjustified price rises on energy bills as this government delivers on time on its promise to protect millions of households from poor value deals, especially the vulnerable.

For too long, suppliers have failed to pass on any savings to their customers, who deserve to pay a fair price for their gas and electricity. Switching supplier is still the best way to find a better deal, but that doesn’t mean customers should be punished for their loyalty.

Bill payers can now be confident that any change to the price cap will be a fair representation of the actual costs of energy, rather than suppliers passing on inefficiencies to their customers or as

excess profits.

Following a consultation, Ofgem set the price cap level at £1,137 per year for a typical dual fuel customer paying by direct debit. The amount customers will pay depends on how much energy they actually use, as the price cap sets a limit on how much suppliers can charge per unit of gas and electricity not on overall energy bills.

The cap will also protect around one million households who receive the Warm Home Discount currently protected by Ofgem's safeguard tariff. Ofgem already caps energy prices through its safeguard tariff for 4 million households on pre-payment meters.

Ofgem will review the level of the cap every 6 months taking into account any changes to the actual costs of providing gas and electricity to energy customers. The first review will take place in early February coming into effect on 1 April 2019.

Dermot Nolan, chief executive at Ofgem, said:

Under the cap, Ofgem will protect consumers from being overcharged and ensure they pay a fair price to heat and light their homes. Consumers can have confidence that any rise in prices in the future will only be down to genuine increases in energy costs rather than supplier profiteering while falls in energy costs will always be passed on to them.

Households who are protected by the cap will be able to save even more money by shopping around for a better deal. In the meantime Ofgem will continue with reforms which aim to deliver a smarter, more competitive energy market which, combined with protection for those who need it, works for all consumers.

The Domestic Gas and Electricity Act, which passed Parliamentary scrutiny and became law on 19 July 2018, put in place a requirement on Ofgem to cap standard variable and default energy tariffs after the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found consumers had been overpaying the Big Six an average of £1.4 billion a year.

While the temporary cap is in place, energy suppliers and industry will continue to work with Ofgem and government to build an energy market that works better for all consumers, ensuring they get the best service for a fair price so that everyone reaps the benefits of the move to a smarter, more digital economy.

Other measures designed to deliver the government's objective of clean, affordable and innovative energy, while tackling fuel poverty, as part of our modern [Industrial Strategy](#) include:

- the rollout of smart meters

- initiatives to promote smarter and faster switching
 - a joint review with Ofgem on the future of the retail market
1. Ofgem already caps energy prices through its safeguard tariff for 4 million households on pre-payment meters. This cap was extended to a further one million vulnerable households in receipt of the Warm Home Discount, a £140 discount on winter energy bills, early in 2018. These Warm Home Discount households will be transferred on 31 December to the new price cap for direct debit customers, which has been designed for those on standard, rather than prepayment, meters.
 2. The new cap will protect households in every region of Great Britain who are on standard variable or default fixed-term tariffs. Around 60% of households currently pay for their energy on these tariffs.
 3. The cap will remain in place until at least 2020 and can be extended until end of 2023 if the conditions for effective competition are not in place.
 4. For more information on the energy price cap, including the pre-payment meter cap, visit [Ofgem's Energy price cap webpages](#).
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Press release: Mel Stride: British productions deserve our support

Thousands of productions – including the widely-anticipated series five of Idris Elba's hit BBC One drama – have benefitted from the government's creative industry tax relief.

The British Film Institute said this support is playing a vital role enabling the industry to work on the global stage, while generating thousands of jobs.

Treasury Minister Mel Stride said the booming UK industry is now giving Hollywood and Bollywood a run for their money.

In the last year, almost 300 films and TV shows and a further 2,000 theatre productions, including festive pantomimes, claimed tax relief.

Britain's world-leading creative industries benefited from over £850 million of support through this HM Treasury scheme in the last year. Since its introduction, 2,420 films, 530 TV productions and 480 videogames have benefited from the tax reliefs.

As such, families sitting down together this Christmas most likely enjoyed a production made possible because of this. These included:

- festive treats such as the Dr Who Christmas special and Snowman
- gripping dramas like Luther and Bodyguard
- family-friendly favourites including the Jungle Book and Mary Poppins Returns

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride MP, said:

Original British productions deserve our support. They not only make a valuable cultural contribution to the UK, they are also a crucial part of our economy.

Thanks to your support our industry has gone from strength to strength and is giving Hollywood and Bollywood a run for their money.

The TV guides and festive calendars this Christmas are another reminder of our booming creative industries which, with the backing of the Treasury, will continue to grow in 2019.

The Chief Executive of the British Film Institute, Amanda Nevill, said:

The government's screen sector tax reliefs play a vital role in enabling our film and television industries to work on a global stage and do what they do best – creating world-class film and television, generating thousands of jobs for talented people working in front of and behind the camera.

UK-made films and television productions are a vibrant part of our storytelling culture, celebrated by audiences at home and abroad and showcase UK creative excellence to the world.

Further Information

- the UK's creative industries made a record contribution to the economy in 2017 growing to over £100bn (compared to £95bn a year earlier)
- creative sector tax reliefs were first introduced 10 years ago to support production companies filming in Britain
- in 2013, the scheme was expanded to include high-end TV, video games and theatre (which includes pantomimes)
- once a TV or film company meets the qualifying criteria, it allows

producers to claim a significant rebate on a large part of its expenditure

- to be eligible for the film, high-end TV, animation, video games or children's TV tax relief, a production must be culturally British
- productions are assessed by a "cultural test" or co-production treaties administered by the British Film Institute
- last year, some 180 UK films, 90 TV shows and over 2,000 theatre productions claimed this tax relief
- in total, over £850m was paid out to the creative sector through the scheme during 2017-18
- several well-known productions on the TV guide and in cinema this Christmas have claimed creative sector tax relief. Notably: Avengers: Infinity War, Bodyguard, Dr Who, Holmes and Watson, Killing Eve, Paddington, Ready Player One, Snowman and the Snowdog, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, The Jungle Book, The Inbetweeners Movie, and Watership Down
- creative Tax Relief is available for: films, high end TV, animation programmes, video games, children's TV, orchestras, theatre productions, and museum and gallery exhibitions

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