

[Press release: FCO Minister for Asia statement on Sri Lanka](#)

Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

I am concerned by ongoing political developments in Sri Lanka and am following this fast-moving situation closely. Once again, I call upon all parties to uphold the constitution and due political and legal process.

I urge President Sirisena, in consultation with the Speaker, to reconvene the parliament immediately in order to give the democratically elected representatives of the Sri Lankan people their voice at this time.

The UK, as a friend of Sri Lanka, remains committed to working with international partners and alongside the Sri Lankan government and people to support democracy, human rights, and reconciliation.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
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Press release: More than half a billion for Wales in Chancellor's Budget

Wales will benefit from over half a billion pounds in additional funding for the Welsh Government, as well as £120 million for a North Wales Growth Deal, the Chancellor has announced in the Budget today.

This year's Budget is a result of the UK government's balanced approach to the country's finances, meaning the Welsh Government will have more spending power, while keeping taxes low and debt falling.

Today's announcements for Wales include:

- More than £550 million of extra money for the Welsh Government, meaning its budget will have grown to over £16.1 billion by 2020.
- £120 million for a North Wales Growth Deal, generating investment, jobs and prosperity in the region.
- Continuing to support a Mid Wales Growth Deal, working with the Welsh Government, businesses and local councillors to agree a deal.
- Supporting the delivery of the M4 relief road by reviewing the Welsh Government's borrowing powers.
- Giving Welsh councils the freedom to build more council homes by removing the borrowing cap on housing.
- Appointing a dedicated manager from the British Business Bank in Wales, for the first time, to help to reduce geographical imbalances in small businesses' access to finance.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

My Budget sends a clear message to the people of Wales – your hard work is paying off.

Thanks to the UK government's careful stewardship of the economy, the public finances are in a much stronger position and national debt is falling.

This means we have more money to invest in Wales's future – including £550m of extra funding for the Welsh Government and £120m for a North Wales Growth Deal.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's budget shows the scale of ambition the UK Government has for Wales.

From the clear support for a North Wales Growth Deal, reviewing borrowing capacity to deliver critical infrastructure projects, and the additional half a billion of spending power, this is a Budget that clearly backs Wales's future prosperity.

The wider package of announcements made today show that we are getting the important things right – backing hardworking people and unlocking key infrastructure. Taken together, these measures are proof positive of a UK Government that is building on a strong foundation for Wales's economic prospects as part of a stronger United Kingdom.

The Chancellor set out his Budget against a backdrop of positive economic news across Wales. Since 2010, 151,000 more people in Wales are in employment and in 2016 it had one of the highest productivity growth rates across the UK.

The people of Wales will also benefit from measures to tackle the cost of living:

- Fuel duty has been frozen for a ninth successive year. As a result of these nine years of freezes, by April 2020, the average car driver will have saved a cumulative £1,000 compared with the pre-2010 escalator.
- The National Living Wage will also rise next year to £8.21 per hour, with the current rate benefitting around 81,000 workers in Wales. An additional 20,000 people will also benefit from changes to the Minimum Wage, which will also increase to £7.70 per hour.
- The Personal Allowance will increase to £12,500 and the Higher Rate Threshold will also go up to £50,000, meaning people will keep more of what they earn.

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[Press release: LPC welcomes acceptance of its 2019 minimum wage rate recommendations](#)



Future rates were announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget, in line with those recommended by the LPC. The National Living Wage (NLW), the statutory minimum for workers aged 25 and over, will increase by 4.9% to £8.21 per hour. Rates for younger workers will also increase above inflation and average earnings. They will apply from 1 April 2019.

Bryan Sanderson, Chair of the LPC, said:

I am pleased that the Government has again accepted in full the Low Pay Commission's recommendations for future minimum wage rates. The increase in the National Living Wage (NLW) to £8.21 in April 2019 will ensure a pay rise for the lowest-paid workers that exceeds both inflation and average earnings.

Over the past year, the labour market has continue to perform well and the economy, while subdued, has met the criteria of ‘sustained growth’ set out in our remit for the NLW. We therefore recommended an increase in line with a path to 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020. On current forecasts, we estimate that the NLW will reach this target at a rate of £8.62 in 2020.

We recommended real-terms increases to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates for younger workers and apprentices, as the labour market conditions for these groups remain strong. These rates will continue to rise faster than both inflation and average earnings. We opted for smaller increases than we recommended last year because of slightly weaker labour market conditions for young people, combined with insufficient evidence to fully understand the impact of the largest increases in a decade implemented in April of this year. However, next year’s will still be some of the highest increases on record.

The 2019 Low Pay Commission Report, containing the underpinning analysis and evidence used to make these recommendations, will be published on 27 November.

The LPC’s rate recommendations comprised:

	Current rate	Future rate (from April 2019)	Increase
NLW	£7.83	£8.21	4.9%
21-24 rate	£7.38	£7.70	4.3%
18-20 rate	£5.90	£6.15	4.2%
16-17 rate	£4.20	£4.35	3.6%
Apprentice rate	£3.70	£3.90	5.4%
Accommodation offset	£7.00	£7.55	7.9%

Notes:

1. The rationale for each of our rate recommendations is set out in [a letter from the Chair of the LPC to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#).
2. The National Living Wage is the statutory minimum wage for workers aged 25 and over. It was introduced in April 2016 and has a target of 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020, subject to sustained economic growth.
3. Different rates apply to 21-24 year olds, 18-20 year olds, 16-17 year olds and apprentices aged under 19 or in the first year of an apprenticeship.
4. Rates for workers aged under 25, and apprentices, are lower than the NLW in reflection of lower average earnings and higher unemployment rates. International evidence also suggests that younger workers are more exposed to employment risks arising from the pay floor than older workers. Unlike the NLW (where the possibility of some consequences for employment have been accepted by the Government), the LPC’s remit requires us to set the other rates as high as possible without causing

damage to jobs and hours.

5. The accommodation offset is a an allowable deduction from wages for accommodation, applicable for each day of the week. [Further information is available here](#). It will increase to £7.55 per day.
6. Our 2019 Report, containing the underpinning analysis and evidence used to make these recommendations, will be published on 27 November. In previous years it has been published on the same day as the rates were announced, but the early budget means that this has not been possible this year.
7. The National Living Wage is different from the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage. Differences include that: the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage are voluntary pay benchmarks that employers can sign up to if they wish, not legally binding requirements; the hourly rate of the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage is based on an attempt to measure need, whereas the National Living Wage is based on a target relationship between its level and average pay; the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage apply to workers aged 18 and over, the National Living Wage to workers aged 25 and over. The Low Pay Commission has no role in the UK Living Wage or the London Living Wage.
8. The Low Pay Commission is an independent body made up of employers, trade unions and experts whose role is to advise the Government on the minimum wage. The rate recommendations were agreed unanimously by the Commission.

The nine Low Pay Commissioners are:

- Bryan Sanderson
- Professor Sarah Brown
- Professor Richard Dickens
- Kate Bell
- Kay Carberry
- Simon Sapper
- Neil Carberry
- Clare Chapman
- Martin McTague

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1. 29 October 2018 Typo
2. 29 October 2018 First published.

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recommendations

Updated: Added link to Government response.

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