

[News story: One million Help to Buy: ISAs opened](#)

More than one million [Help to Buy: ISAs](#) have now been opened, helping first-time buyers across the UK save towards their first home. First-time buyers have saved over £1.8 billion in their ISAs.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay, said:

Reaching the landmark of one million [Help to Buy: ISAs](#) shows the product's success in helping first-time buyers save towards a home.

Our [Help to Buy schemes](#) continue to prove hugely popular across the country, as we support people to get on in life and achieve their dream of climbing the housing ladder.

The government's [Help to Buy: ISA](#) scheme was launched on 1 December 2015 to provide first-time buyers the opportunity to save up to £200 a month with the government topping up their contributions by 25%, up to a maximum of £3,000.

First-time house buyers across the UK can open an [ISA](#), which is available for home purchases up to £250,000 (£450,000 in London). If you plan to buy a home with someone who also qualifies, you are each able to separately claim the bonuses on your savings and put both towards the home you are buying.

The scheme has proven to be hugely popular, with the equivalent of 1,500 [Help to Buy: ISAs](#) being opened every day since its introduction. The number of providers of the scheme, which includes banks, building societies and credit unions, has doubled since its launch to 28, with the Nottingham Building Society being the most recent to sign up.

Savings in a [Help to Buy: ISA](#) are tax-free and are also quick and easy to open. Savers can receive on average 2.4% interest rate on their savings which is typically higher than an instant access savings account.

First-time buyers will be able to open a [Help to buy: ISA](#) until 30 November 2019. Existing account holders can continue to save in their ISA account until 30 November 2029 when accounts will close to additional contributions. Bonuses can be claimed until 1 December 2030.

[Press release: 'Aid workers should](#)

never be targets' – Priti Patel

Today, 19 August, is World Humanitarian Day. Thanking aid workers from across the UK and around the world, International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

Today we thank the men and women who demonstrate the goodness of humanity in places shadowed by despair, poverty and violence. They selflessly choose to try and make a difference by delivering food, shelter and medicine to people whom have been denied the most basic of human necessities.

These extremely brave humanitarian heroes represent the best of us, while those who attack them represent the opposite.

As we remember those who have unfairly lost their lives doing this incredible work, I want to thank those who continue to take the risks which allow the UK to stand tall with pride and make the lives of so many better.

Aid workers should never be targets. Every effort should always be made to give them full access to disaster areas and the protection they need to do their life-saving work.

Background

On 19 August 2003, a terrorist attack hit the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people.

Five years later, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day (WHD). Every year since then, the humanitarian community has organized global campaigns to commemorate WHD, advocating for the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers, and for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises.

For WHD 2017, humanitarian partners are coming together to reaffirm that civilians caught in conflict are #NotATarget.

ENDS

Press release: Key reforms mean big

difference to sight impaired

Changes brought in by the Department of Health after a recommendation from the Minister for the Constitution, will allow local authorities to use records for those with vision impairments to support participation in electoral events – provided the person's consent has been given to do so.

As a result, people with vision impairments will have access to wider services which will assist them in voting at elections.

A new [Certificate of Vision Impairment \(CVI\) form and accompanying Explanatory Notes for Ophthalmologists](#) was launched by the Department for Health yesterday. This makes the CVI process more effective to ensure that people who are newly certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired receive the support they need as soon as possible.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

Our reform of the Certificate of Vision Impairment will mean that, for the first time, local authorities will be able to contact those who hold a CVI in order to ask whether they need any extra help or support when it comes to registering to vote, or participating in our elections.

We want to ensure that our elections are as accessible as possible, and to remove any barriers that exist to democratic participation – every voice matters and we want ours to be a democracy that works for everyone.

Fazilet Hadi, RNIB's Deputy Chief Executive, said:

This is a really important step forward for blind and partially sighted voters. Our 2017 voting survey revealed that only 1 in 5 said they got information such as polling cards in a format they can read.

Enabling local authorities to send accessible voting information directly to blind and partially sighted people will make a huge difference. Equal access to voting starts with an accessible polling card.

Background information

- when a person's sight loss reaches certain levels they are entitled, if

consenting, to be certified as severely sight impaired or sight impaired by a Consultant Ophthalmologist. This allows them to receive certification and is an opportunity for the patient to access support and services.

[Press release: Nominations open for 2017 awards celebrating police volunteers](#)

Nominations for the 24th annual Lord Ferrers Awards to recognise the outstanding contribution of Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers and Volunteer Police Cadets opened today (Friday 18 August).

This year a new category, the 'Technical Innovation Award', has been introduced to encourage recognition of 'cyber specials' and volunteers using technology creatively to combat the changing nature of crime.

Last year almost 300 nominations were submitted by police forces across England and Wales, and for the first time, members of the public could also recommend volunteers for their service, 43 exceptional candidates were shortlisted.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd said:

Policing has a long and proud history of volunteers and the Lord Ferrers Awards are an opportunity to recognise and celebrate their achievements.

Every day Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers and Volunteer Police Cadets make a selfless contribution to tackling crime and supporting police forces.

I urge police officers and members of the public to nominate police volunteers who they think have made an outstanding contribution to their communities for an award.

The awards are named in honour of the late Lord Ferrers, the former Home Office minister and founder of the awards, who died in November 2012.

The awards ceremony, sponsored by Police Mutual, will take place in central London in November 2017. Winners will be presented with their awards by Home Officer Ministers, senior officials and Chief Police Officers.

Members of the public have from [Friday 18 August until midnight on Sunday 17](#)

September to make nominations.

Lord Ferrers Award categories are:

- Ferrers Special Constabulary – Individual Award: celebrating Special Constables who have demonstrated a sustained and significant contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Ferrers Special Constabulary – Team Award (Sponsored by Police Mutual): recognising teams of Special Constables who have demonstrated a sustained and significant contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Police Support Volunteer – Individual Award: celebrating Police Support Volunteers who have demonstrated a significant and sustained contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Police Support Volunteer – Team Award: recognising teams who have worked together to make a significant and sustained contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Volunteer Police Cadet – Individual Award: celebrating individual Volunteer Police Cadets who have demonstrated a significant and sustained contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Volunteer Police Cadet – Team Award: open to teams who have worked together to make a significant and sustained contribution to policing in their local communities.
- Employer Supported Policing Award: open to individuals and teams of employees who support their local police force through volunteering. The award recognises the contribution of both volunteers and their employers and will now be open to those accredited under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.
- Leadership Award (Sponsored by ASCCO): open to individual Special Constables who have demonstrated a significant and sustained contribution to leadership.
- Technical Innovation Award – Team or Individual: open to Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers or Volunteer Police Cadets. The award recognises the contribution volunteers can bring to using IT and technology to support policing

[Press release: Councillors see plans for reducing flooding in Mytholmroyd](#)

A guided walking tour of Mytholmroyd to share plans for the new £30m flood alleviation scheme proposed for the village has been hosted for ward councillors.

They were invited to meet the Environment Agency's project team on Friday 18 August to share their plans for the project on site and ask any questions.

Mark Tupman, senior advisor with the Environment Agency, said:

Our aim is to explain to the local councillors, who represent the people of Mytholmroyd, our plans for the scheme so that they fully understand the timing of various activities and have a point of contact throughout the two-year project.

We would like to give them an opportunity to ask any questions and raise any concerns and see first-hand the plans by taking a walk around the site.

The Calderdale Flood Partnership Board recently approved the allocation of funding of the major flood scheme to improve the protection for homes and businesses in Mytholmroyd

The Environment Agency will be submitting a series of submissions for planning permission this week, with further submissions planned for September and construction is expected to commence in the Autumn.

The scheme for Mytholmroyd has been developed in partnership with Calderdale Council, the local community, and partners. As design work is finalised, the current options for the scheme include:

- New, raised flood and improved walls
- The relocation of Caldene Bridge
- Widening of the river channel at key locations
- Strengthening and waterproofing of buildings next to the river.

The Leader of Calderdale Council, Cllr Tim Swift, said:

The works in Mytholmroyd are part of an ongoing programme to reduce the risk of flooding across Calderdale. We're keen for people in the local community to keep up to date with the work, which they can do by visiting www.eyeoncalderdale.com or popping in to the Mytholmroyd flood information centre during opening hours.

The second phase of a demolition is currently being carried out at a site on the main A646 Burnley road through the village which is expected to take a further six weeks. This involves demolishing three two-storey buildings, including a former post office, which has been relocated to the nearby Grange Dene complex.

The demolition of the buildings is being done carefully in order to deal with the constraints associated with their proximity to the highway, the river, and the fact they are within a conservation area. Historic England, the Environment Agency and Calderdale Council are all keen that the stone is re-used. The properties are being demolished to prevent any further collapse during another flood event.

Plans are for the scheme to be completed in phases and widening the river at Greenhill Industrial Estate will continue to be explored.

A flood information centre is open in the village offering the public advice on flood resilience and the opportunity to speak to Environment Agency staff about plans for flood schemes in Calderdale.

Following the flooding of December 2015, the Environment Agency has completed six new schemes, reducing flood risk to 500 homes as part of a £9million recovery programme across Calderdale. In Mytholmroyd, significant work to clear the channel, repair damaged walls and make safe damaged buildings has already been carried out.