

# Press release: Severn bridges transfer to public ownership draws closer

On Monday 8 January 2018 the responsibility for the operations, maintenance and vehicle charges for the bridges will be managed and run by Highways England, the Government-owned company which looks after England's strategic network of motorways and major A-roads.

At the same time all vehicle charges will be exempt from VAT, reducing the overall charge for individual crossings from £6.70 to £5.60.

Clive Perkin, Highways England Divisional Director of Strategy and Planning, explained:

We want to remind drivers that when Highways England takes over management of the bridges, prices will be reduced as they will no longer be subject to VAT.

This is good news for private vehicle drivers as this is the first step in the Government's commitment to abolishing the bridge tolls by the end of 2018. Today we are setting out how people can prepay for their crossings when the change takes place.

UK Government Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Our decision to abolish the Severn tolls sends a powerful message to businesses, commuters and tourists that the UK Government is committed to strengthening the Welsh economy.

By strengthening the links between communities in south Wales and south-west England, we will transform the joint economic prospects of both regions, creating a growth corridor stretching from Cardiff through Newport to Bristol.

I want to ensure that visitors and investors know what Wales has to offer and I want the world to know our nation is open for business.

Holders of TAGs – the prepayment system that allows regular travellers to cross without stopping to pay manually – have been informed of the new arrangements by letter this week.

Drivers paying by direct debit will not need to take any action – their accounts and balances will be transferred automatically and their payments adjusted to reflect the new charges.

Those who pay by top-up with a Trip TAG through online banking will need to

update their payment details to Highways England's account from 8 January 2018. Account holders will still be able to pay through the website or phone.

After 8 January the crossings will operate as normal with just a few small changes to signs at the toll plazas.

Staff currently employed with Severn Crossing PLC have all been offered employment with Highways England.

Details of the changes and actions necessary are set out in the letters and are also available on the [Severn Bridges website](#). TAG holders with any queries can also contact the TAG helpline on 01454 633 522.

## **Background information**

Severn Bridges (M4 and M48) monthly charges after 8 January 2018:

Category 1: £5.60, with the Season/Shared TAG at £98.56 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).

Category 2: £11.20, with the Season/Shared TAG at £197.12 (20% discount based on 22 trips per month).

Category 3: £16.70, with the Season/Shared TAG at £330.66 (10% discount based on 22 trips per month).

<b>Vehicle Category</b>	<b>Current daily toll charges</b>	<b>Daily charges after 8 January 2018</b>
Category 1 (Cars and other vehicles up to 9 seats)	£6.70	£5.60
Category 2 (Goods vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, small buses)	£13.40	£11.20
Category 3 (Goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, large buses)	£20.00	£16.70

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.