

Press release: 3 million households set to benefit from Universal Credit changes

Three million households across the country, including lone parents and those on the lowest incomes, are set to keep more of what they earn due to a £700 million boost to Universal Credit.

From today the taper rate, the rate at which a Universal Credit payment reduces as someone moves into work, will be lowered from 65p to 63p. The change means that some households could benefit by £425 a year.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Damian Green, said:

Creating a welfare system that rewards work is central to our plan to build a fairer Britain for all. We want everyone to be able to get on and support their families. That's why through Universal Credit, when people start work they keep more of every pound they earn.

This complements the support that work coaches are already offering to help people progress in their jobs, to take on more hours and earn more money, by making sure it always pays to be in work.

Universal Credit replaces 6 benefits with a monthly payment that gradually reduces as earnings increase, making sure people are better off in work. Evidence shows people are also moving into jobs faster and staying in work longer than under the old system.

The new taper rate comes into force on 10 April for those claiming Universal Credit.

A couple with 2 children earning £30,000 a year could benefit by £425 a year.

Universal Credit replaces Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, working and child tax credit and Housing Benefit. Claimants receive their Universal Credit in a monthly payment.

The new taper rate means a Universal Credit award is reduced by 63p for every £1 a claimant earns over their work allowance (compared to 65p previously).

Universal Credit is available for all new claims from single jobseekers, wherever they are in Great Britain. Nearly 15,000 new claims are made every week.

In May 2016 we started the expansion of Universal Credit to a wider range of claimants. In July 2017 we will increase roll-out to around 30 jobcentres a

month.

Current Work Allowance is £397 per month if your Universal Credit payment does not include housing support, or £192 per month if it does include housing support.

The reduced Universal Credit taper rate was announced in the Autumn 2016 budget.

See [Universal Credit at Work \(December 2015\)](#) for evidence showing that people are moving into jobs faster and staying in work longer than under the old system.

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[Government response: Update on PrEP Impact trial in England](#)

Considerable progress has been made in preparing for the [HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis \(PrEP\) trial](#) that was announced by NHS England and PHE last December as a major extension to the [national HIV prevention programme](#). The trial, called the PrEP Impact Trial, will include at least 10,000 participants over the next 3 years and will answer key outstanding questions on the extent of need, uptake and duration of use of PrEP in the setting of sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinics in England. Our aim is to have the trial started by the summer of 2017.

The trial protocol is complete, trial participant eligibility criteria have been endorsed by experts in the field and by community representatives, and independent peer review has been conducted. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has been consulted about trial categorisation and a relevant opinion received. Submission for ethics committee approval is imminent.

STI clinic attendees considered to be at high risk of acquiring HIV will be eligible to participate in the trial. Heterosexual and transgender individuals and gay men will be clinically risk-assessed as part of combination prevention and those at high risk offered PrEP. To ensure equity of access across the country, the trial sites will include as many as possible of the over 200 level-3 STI clinics.

A number of STI clinics have expressed an interest in joining the trial. Site participation standards are being finalised and all level-3 STI clinics will be written to in the next 2 weeks enquiring about capacity, willingness to

meet the standards and to be a trial site. The likely trial site and per-participant costs are being assessed prior to detailed discussion with the trial management team which will include STI service provider representation.

PHE's Prevention Innovation Fund in 2017 to 2018 is seeking proposals that will address knowledge, awareness and understanding of PrEP and other PrEP related questions, especially in currently under-served populations in the community (e.g. higher-risk heterosexuals, black and minority ethnic group gay men and transgender communities). To register interest in the fund please send an email with your name, email address and organisation name to hiv.prevention@phe.gov.uk.

PrEP drug supply will be paid for and secured by NHS England. Competitive procurement has begun and all relevant supplier-manufacturers have been written to. A market engagement meeting is scheduled for later in April as part of this process.

Overarching governance arrangements, in the form of a PrEP Programme Oversight Board with joint leadership from PHE and NHS England, is in place to support the trial and to use the findings to prepare for a subsequent PrEP programme. Membership includes the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).

[Press release: Government publishes new anti-littering strategy](#)

Litter louts could be hit with £150 fines as part of ambitious new plans to tackle rubbish in England.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom unveiled the Government's first [Litter Strategy for England](#) to reduce the near £800m burden to the taxpayer of clean-up costs.

Under the new measures, the most serious litterers could be hit with the £150 fines, while vehicle owners could receive penalty notices when it can be proved litter was thrown from their car – even if it was discarded by somebody else.

The new motoring rules, which are already in force in London, make owners liable even if they didn't throw the litter themselves.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Litter is something that affects us all – blighting our countryside, harming our wildlife, polluting our seas, spoiling our

towns, and giving visitors a poor impression of our country.

Our litter strategy will tackle this antisocial behaviour by building an anti-litter culture; making it easier for people to dispose of rubbish; and hitting litter louts in the pocket.

We want to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it, and tackling litter is an important part of our drive to make the country a better place to live and visit.

Further new measures drawn up by environment, transport and communities departments include:

- Issuing new guidance for councils to be able to update the nation's 'binrastructure' through creative new designs and better distribution of public litter bins, making it easier for people to discard rubbish.
- Stopping councils from charging householders for disposal of DIY household waste at civic amenity sites (rubbish dumps) – legally, household waste is supposed to be free to dispose of at such sites.
- Recommending that offenders on community sentences, including people caught fly-tipping, help councils clear up litter and fly-tipped waste.
- Working with Highways England to target the 25 worst litter hotspots across our road network to deliver long-lasting improvements to cleanliness.
- Creating a 'green generation' by educating children to lead the fight against litter through an increased number of Eco-Schools and boosting participation in national clean-up days.
- Creating a new expert group to look at further ways of cutting the worst kinds of litter, including plastic bottles and drinks containers, cigarette ends and fast food packaging.

Communities Minister Marcus Jones said:

It's time we consigned litter louts and fly-tippers to the scrap heap of history. Through our first ever National Litter Strategy we plan to do exactly that.

Our plans include targeting the worst litter hotspots, cracking down on litter louts with increased fines and getting people to bin their rubbish properly.

For too long a selfish minority have got away with spoiling our streets. It's time we sent them a clear message – clean up or face having to cough up.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

Litter on our roads is a major and costly problem to deal with. It

makes our roads look messy, can threaten wildlife and even increase the risk of flooding by blocking drains.

To combat this needless blight on our landscape, I am working with Highways England to target the worst 25 litter hotspots on our road network, on which hundreds of thousands of sacks are collected every year with the clean-up bill running into millions of pounds.

By increasing fines and working with local authorities, the Government is taking decisive action to clean up our environment.

The strategy also outlines measures to protect seas, oceans and marine life from pollution. It builds on the success of the 5p plastic bag charge, which has led to a 40% decrease in bags found on the beach.

Funding will also be made available to support innovative community-led projects to tackle litter that could turn local success stories into national initiatives.

The Government will follow the strategy with a new national anti-littering campaign in 2018, working with industry and the voluntary sector to drive behaviour change.

The [consultation on the new enforcement measures](#) officially opens today. Guidance will then be issued to councils to accompany any new enforcement powers, to make sure they are targeted at cutting litter, while preventing over-zealous enforcement or fines being used to raise revenue.

[News story: Losing GSI – MHRA emails are changing](#)

From 10 April, we are removing .gsi from our email addresses.

Launched in 1996, the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) has been used until now to guarantee the security of emails sent by Government agencies and Arms Length Bodies. Technology has changed a lot since 1996 and the GSI is now being phased out across Government.

What's changing?

Our new email addresses will be more secure, and the new system will protect against anyone trying to forge our domain name (the @mhra bit) and sending emails that claim to be from MHRA.

What do I need to do?

Update your MHRA email contacts and remove .gsi from our email addresses.
Update any tools that use MHRA email addresses

Emails sent to email addresses including the .gsi will continue to be forwarded until further notice.

If you have any questions about this change or require more information please contact us on info@mhra.gov.uk

This change only affects email addresses ending in mhra.gsi.gov.uk –all email addresses ending in nibsc.org will remain the same.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary condemns Egypt terror attacks](#)

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I am saddened and appalled by these attacks in Egypt, and strongly condemn them. My thoughts are with the Egyptian people and particularly those directly affected by these terrible acts. I offer my condolences to those grieving for lost friends and relatives, and those suffering from injuries.

The UK continues to stand with Egypt against terrorism. These attacks only strengthen our determination to work together with the Egyptian government and people against this shared threat.

Further information

Follow the Foreign Secretary on twitter [@BorisJohnson](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson)

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