

2.1 million annual tax credits packs to be issued

About 2.1 million tax credits customers will begin to receive their annual renewal packs this week from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The packs will be sent between 25 April and 27 May, and customers have until 31 July to check their details are correct and update HMRC if there has been a change in their circumstances.

Tax credits help working families with targeted financial support, so it is important that people do not miss out on money they are entitled to.

There are 2 types of renewal packs:

- if it has a red line across the first page and says 'reply now', customers will need to confirm their circumstances to renew their tax credits
- if it has a black line across the first page and says 'check now', customers will need to check their details are correct. If correct, customers do not need to do anything and their tax credits will be automatically renewed

About 630,000 customers will need to confirm their circumstances to renew their tax credits for the 2022 to 2023 tax year.

Renewing online is quick and easy. Customers can log into GOV.UK to check the progress of their renewal, be reassured it is being processed and know when they will hear back from HMRC. Customers choosing to use the HMRC app on their smartphone can:

- renew their tax credits
- update changes to their claim
- check their tax credits payments schedule
- find out how much they have earned for the year

HMRC has released a video to explain how tax credits customers can use the HMRC app to view, manage and update their details.

[How do I use the HMRC app to manage my tax credits?](#)

If there is a change in a customer's circumstances that could affect their tax credits claims, they must [report the changes to HMRC](#). Circumstances that could affect tax credits payments include changes to:

- living arrangements
- childcare
- working hours
- income (increase or decrease)

Tax credits are ending and will be replaced by Universal Credit by the end of 2024. Many customers who move from tax credits to Universal Credit could be financially better off and can use an [independent benefits calculator](#) to check. If customers choose to apply sooner, it is important to get independent advice beforehand as they will not be able to go back to tax credits or any other benefits that Universal Credit replaces.

Find out more about [renewing tax credits claims](#).

Customers can download the [HMRC app](#) for free from their smartphone app store.

Find out more about [Universal Credit replacing tax credits](#).

[New register of specialists to advise on construction products](#)

News story

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) will commission scientific work to support public protection.



Experts are encouraged to apply to join the register of pre-approved specialists from whom OPSS can commission short pieces of ad hoc scientific work to support its work in protecting the public.

In this call for construction products expertise, OPSS is looking for people within the domains of civil and structural engineering, fire sciences, material science as well as other associated areas of knowledge in relation to the natural analytical sciences and technical fields of expertise.

Applicants will be selected based on their experience and ability to provide scientific evidence, analysis or technical advice across OPSS's remit including:

- Construction product research support: methodological design, proposal appraisal, rapid evidence reviews, report evaluation/peer review, quality assurance and risk analysis.
- Guidance and technical support on the development and validation of analytical methodologies applied to the assessment of construction products.
- Ad hoc technical advice on construction product safety issues which may impact human health.

Further information can be found on the [OPSS Careers Website](#)

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[UK boosts humanitarian support to help Ukraine's hospitals under attack](#)

- UK is sending more ambulances and fire engines to Ukraine as part of continued support to the country
- New UK funding to help train Ukrainian doctors to deal with mass casualties and vital medicine following Russian attacks on Ukrainian hospitals
- Donations are in response to a request from Ukraine's Government as they regain access to medical facilities in frontline cities

New ambulances, fire engines, funding for health experts and life-saving medical supplies are being donated to Ukraine as part of the UK's continued steadfast solidarity with the country, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced today (Tuesday 26 April).

There have been more than 130 attacks on healthcare facilities since the invasion and the UN has recorded around 4,800 civilian casualties. More than 100 fire stations and 250 fire engines have been destroyed in Ukraine.

The UK is supplying 22 new ambulances to Ukraine – in addition to those from NHS Trusts already announced – equipped with paramedic kits and medical grab bags. They are due to leave for Ukraine in the coming days. This is in direct response to a request from the Ukrainian government.

Two further convoys of more than 40 fire engines – packed with thousands of items of rescue equipment including 300 fire hoses and almost 10,000 items of

protective clothing – have arrived in Ukraine and are already providing vital support to firefighters on the frontline. This is the largest fire deployment to ever leave the UK.

The UK has already committed up to \$1 billion in loan guarantees to support Multilateral Development Banks, such as the World Bank, to bolster Ukraine's economy and allow the government in Kyiv to continue providing basic services. The total offer of humanitarian support to the current Ukraine crisis is around £400 million.

This goes alongside the Prime Minister's commitment to continue to provide defensive military aid, including protected mobility vehicles, drones and anti-tank weapons to Ukraine – reiterated on a call to President Zelenskyy on the weekend. Last week the Prime Minister announced Ukrainian personnel are being trained in the use of armoured vehicles in the United Kingdom.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We have all been appalled by the abhorrent images of hospitals deliberately targeted by Russia since the invasion began over two months ago.

The new ambulances, fire engines and funding for health experts announced today will better equip the Ukrainian people to deliver vital health care and save lives.

Together with our military support, we will help to strengthen Ukraine's capability to make sure Putin's brutal invasion fails.

Frontline medical aid charity, UK-Med, will receive funding – worth up to £300,000 – from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to help train Ukrainian doctors, nurses and paramedics on how to deal with mass casualties. They will also set up mobile health clinics to support the most vulnerable civilians remaining in Ukraine, including the elderly and young children.

The UK is also donating £300,000 worth of medicines and pharmaceutical supplies to UK-Med which could support a hospital for up to six weeks.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The Kremlin continues to lie about deliberate attacks on Ukraine's hospitals and the indiscriminate targeting of civilians.

Now our vital humanitarian support will help save lives and deliver medical expertise to the frontline.

Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency Jacob Rees-Mogg said:

I was privileged to be able to visit Ashford and meet the volunteers and civil servants behind the fire aid shipments to Ukraine.

This aid demonstrates the tremendous practical work that Britain's public servants are doing for the people of Ukraine, and is an example of the good-heartedness of the British people and their determination to help.

More than five million medical items have also been donated to Ukraine including wound packs, intensive care equipment and medicines.

At the beginning of March, UK-Med launched a national fundraising appeal to fund its work in Ukraine and has sent 26 doctors, nurses, paramedics, surgeons and humanitarian health programme specialists to the country.

UK-Med CEO David Wightwick who's currently in Eastern Ukraine said:

I've seen with my own eyes the devastating impact of this cruel war. Ensuring the more than 7 million internally displaced people across the country have access to vital primary health care is and will continue to be of the upmost importance for many months to come.

This very welcome funding from the UK government will enable us to continue to deliver primary health care and lifesaving specialist clinical training in both the east and the west of the country, reaching those who need it most. We're proud to stand in solidarity with the people and with our Ukrainian medical colleagues in this desperate time.

[HMCI commentary: Ofsted's strategy 2022 to 2027](#)

I am delighted to introduce [our new 5-year strategy](#), setting Ofsted's direction from now until 2027.

As I write, both education and social care are under great pressure, grappling with the effects of the pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions on children and young people: their education, their social development, their physical and mental health, and their welfare. Ofsted's role has never been more important, and we will continue to play our part in this recovery phase, working as always for children to raise standards and improve lives.

Over the last 5 years we have built strong foundations for the future. In 2019 we brought in a new [education inspection framework](#) that put greater emphasis on the substance of education – the curriculum. We have championed the view that high exam results are the product of a great education, not only an end in themselves. In children’s social care we have become more proactive in protecting the interests of our most vulnerable children and supporting high standards of care.

Each of us has only one childhood, and it shapes the rest of our lives. That’s why this strategy has a particular emphasis on giving all children the best possible start. Our work should help make sure a child’s earliest experience of education is as good as it can be. It should also help make sure that children who need extra help have the right support in place, both within and outside education.

Our work looks right across the education landscape, as well as children’s social care. We scrutinise services for our youngest citizens – from childminders and nurseries to children’s homes and adoption agencies. And we trace the impact of education through school and college, into apprenticeships and adult education.

Because of this unique position we collect significant amounts of data and intelligence.

Over the next 5 years we will continue to use this information, often augmented by further research, to make the case for change and improvement. We will use it to inform and equip policymakers; we hope providers will use it to inform their work; and, of course, we will use it to evaluate our own policies and practices.

This year marks our 30th anniversary. Thirty years of raising standards and improving lives. This strategy explains how we will continue our work on behalf of England’s children and learners – helping prepare each one for wherever their life may lead.

Every child deserves the best start in life

The strategy sets out how Ofsted will continue its work to improve the lives of children and young people, which is more important than ever following the disruption and distress of the past 2 years.

The strategy centres on the fundamental principle that Ofsted will be a force for improvement through the intelligent, responsible and focused use of inspection, regulation and insights. It sets out the strategic priorities for Ofsted over the next 5 years, which include a stronger focus on the

inspectorate's work in the early years and ensuring children get the best start in life.

Ofsted's recent reports on education recovery highlighted the serious impact the pandemic has had on some of the youngest children. Many have gaps in their communication and language skills and are behind where they should be in their personal, social, emotional, and physical development.

The early years workforce has also been hit hard. Thousands have left the sector since the first lockdown in 2020, while those who have stayed are often struggling to get by on low wages.

There has also been a drop in the number of childcare providers. At the start of the pandemic there were just over 75,000 registered providers, but that has since dipped below 70,000, with childminders accounting for the bulk of the reduction.

To play its part in the recovery, the new strategy commits Ofsted to helping make sure every child's earliest experience of education is as good as it can be. It states that Ofsted will use research and insight to support young children's physical, social and wider development, increase training for the inspection workforce and promote a better understanding of early education and care in support of positive change.

Ofsted will also share data and insights about group-owned early years providers, to improve regulatory oversight at the group level, and work with government to simplify the regulatory regime for childminders.

Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, said:

Our strategy for the next 5 years takes account of the impact of the pandemic and raises still further our ambitions for children and learners. Ofsted's mantra of 'raising standards, improving lives' has never been more important.

If the past 2 years have taught us anything then perhaps it is how resilient people can be, not least the youngest in our society whose start in life has been challenged in a way we've never seen before.

We recognise the outstanding work early years providers have done to help children recover what they missed, and this strategy aims to increase our support for a workforce that is so deeply devoted to what it does.

Whether it is through developing specialist training for our inspection workforce or through sharing our own insights, we will do everything in our power to help every child gain the best start in life.

The 2022–2027 strategy also includes commitments to:

- accelerate the inspection cycle so that all schools are inspected by July 2025
- allow more time for professional dialogue and evidence-gathering by increasing the proportion of longer inspections in education
- assess all further education colleges on how well they are meeting the skills needs of the economy within the next 4 years
- enhance inspections of independent schools, so swift intervention can happen where standards are poor
- review social care inspections following the recommendations of the independent care review
- develop and implement a new area SEND inspection framework that holds the right agencies to account for their role in the system
- work with the Department for Education (DfE) to increase powers to act when children are educated or cared for in unregistered settings
- improve the diversity of our staff, across grades and roles