

# DataConnect22 is coming!

News story

Join us for the second DataConnect conference, bringing together people and data stories from across the public sector



Last year we organised DataConnect21 with our colleagues in the Data Standards Authority. Our first week-long data event [featured 83 sessions](#), from around fifty different organisations. We had over 6000 registrations for events, with attendees coming from 325 organisations across the government, academia, the third sector and beyond.

And we are doing it again in 2022 so mark your calendars for 26 to 30 September.

DataConnect22 will feature the same great mix of sessions as last year, by and for people across the UK public sector. We know that there are fantastic data stories to share, so if you have a piece of work, a challenge, or an innovation you want the data community to know about, then bring it along to DataConnect.

If you would like to do a show and tell, share a challenge, run a workshop, take part in a panel discussion or showcase an innovation [please sign up](#) now. Or you can email us at [dataconnect@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk](mailto:dataconnect@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk) to talk about bringing your story to DataConnect22. Every aspect of data belongs at DataConnect, from technical stories about data design, to strategic thinking about data leadership. DataConnect21 had speakers from a data apprentice up to director generals, if you are working with government data in any way then this is the event for you.

If you just want to attend, that's fine too, you can [register to receive information](#). Get updates about the event in the run up to DataConnect22; be one of the first to receive the schedule; and sign up for our free events across the week.

Please help us spread the word by telling your colleagues that DataConnect22 is coming!

## [Independent report on Windrush Compensation Scheme](#)

News story

Professor Martin Levermore MBE DL, Independent Person to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, releases report on the Compensation Scheme.



The report comes on the same day that the latest Compensation Scheme statistics are released showing over £45m has been paid or offered to the Windrush generation.

In his report, Professor Levermore came to a number of conclusions on the Windrush Compensation Scheme and made some recommendations for improvement.

He found that knowledge of the Windrush schemes is increasing amongst affected Commonwealth nationals. He notes the department is working diligently to refine processes to increase efficiency and productivity of the scheme. He also found that there are robust procedures, systems, and checks and balances in place, which with a few refinements could exemplify best in service delivery.

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration, Kevin Foster said:

Over £45 million has been paid or offered to members of the Windrush generation.

I thank Professor Levermore for his work and report on the scheme. We will continue working closely together to make sure it is as efficient as possible and everyone eligible for compensation, receives it.

This is Professor Levermore's first report on the scheme's operation, policy and effectiveness. He will be making regular reports on the operation of the Compensation Scheme to track progress and improvements.

His recommendations included grouping applications with close family links and creating a clearer link between the Windrush Documentation Scheme and Windrush Compensation Scheme to reduce administration.

Professor Levermore was appointed in March 2021 and reports directly to the Home Secretary. He also regularly attends the Windrush Cross-Government Working Group. He brings a wealth of professional and personal experience to the role and provides crucial independent oversight and reassurance on the Windrush Compensation Scheme.

Published 24 March 2022

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## **BBC gets emergency funding to fight Russian disinformation**

The government is giving the BBC World Service emergency funding to help it continue bringing independent, impartial and accurate news to people in Ukraine and Russia in the face of increased propaganda from the Russian state.

BBC World Service will receive an additional £4.1 million in emergency funding to support its Ukrainian and Russian language services in the region, and to help it increase trusted and independent content to counter disinformation about the war in Ukraine.

BBC World Service channels – including TV, radio and digital – play an increasingly valuable role in challenging the Kremlin's disinformation, but it is facing additional costs from operating within a military conflict and due to a crackdown on independent reporting in Russia.

Following a BBC request, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will provide the extra funding to cover urgent and unexpected costs that have arisen as a result of the conflict.

This will help the BBC to relocate staff and operations to safe locations to ensure the resilience of their services and that they continue to reach people in Russia and Ukraine.

The BBC will also use the funding to continue expanding new and more widely accessible content, delivered through a range of channels, to tackle

disinformation and to help local audiences circumvent the Kremlin's media restrictions and continue to access the BBC's journalism.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

The Government is providing the BBC with an additional £4.1 million in emergency funding to help the World Service broadcast directly into Ukraine and Russia.

In scenes reminiscent of 80 years ago, the BBC will ensure that audiences in the region can continue to access independent news reporting in the face of systemic propaganda from a dictator waging war on European soil. It's vital we lift the veil on and expose the barbaric actions of Putin's forces.

Minister for Europe and North America, James Cleverly said:

Britain is calling out Putin's lies and exposing his propaganda and fake news.

This new funding will help strengthen the BBC's impartial voice in Russia and Ukraine, which is critical to counter Russian disinformation and will help ensure we win the battle for the airwaves.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The World Service receives funding from the BBC's licence fee income, in addition to grant funding directly from the FCDO. The World Service's Spending Review settlement for the period 2022 to 2025 from the FCDO will be confirmed shortly.

The Culture Secretary made it clear to the BBC in her letter confirming the final licence fee settlement that the BBC should continue to make a substantive investment from the licence fee into the World Service to ensure that it continues to effectively reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world – in English and through its language services.

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**[One week left to pay your Self](#)**

# Assessment tax bill

Self Assessment customers have just one week left to pay their tax bill or set up a payment plan to avoid incurring a penalty, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has urged.

Customers have until 1 April to pay all tax due from their 2020 to 2021 tax return and not receive a late payment penalty. If they are unable to pay in full, there is still time to set up an online payment plan to spread the cost of their bill into manageable monthly instalments.

[The online Time to Pay service](#) is available for businesses and individuals who have filed their Self Assessment tax return and owe up to £30,000. They can set up a payment plan online at GOV.UK without speaking to HMRC.

If customers owe more than £30,000, or need longer to pay, they can call the Self Assessment payment helpline on 0300 200 3822.

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC's Director General for Customer Services, said:

We understand some customers might be worrying about paying their Self Assessment bill this year, and we want to support them. There is still time to set up a payment plan – to see if you're eligible go to GOV.UK and search 'pay my Self Assessment'.

The Self Assessment deadline was 31 January but, this year, HMRC gave customers extra time to file and pay their 2020 to 2021 tax return and not face penalties.

More than 11.3 million customers filed by 28 February, with one million of those taking advantage of the extra time by filing their tax return in February.

Customers can make secure Self Assessment payments through the [HMRC app](#) by either connecting to their bank to make their payments or paying by Direct Debit, personal debit card or corporate/commercial credit/debit card.

A full list of the payment methods customers can use to [pay their Self Assessment tax bill](#) is available on GOV.UK.

HMRC urges everyone to be alert if they are contacted out of the blue by someone asking for money or personal information. Customers should always type in the full online address [www.gov.uk/hmrc](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc) to get the correct link for filing their Self Assessment return online securely and free of charge. HMRC sees high numbers of fraudsters emailing, calling or texting people claiming to be from the department. If customers are in doubt, do not reply directly to anything suspicious, but contact HMRC straight away and [search GOV.UK for 'HMRC scams'](#).

Interest has been applied to all outstanding balances since 1 February.

A 5% late payment penalty will be charged if tax remains outstanding, and a payment plan has not been set up, by midnight on 1 April 2022. Further late payment penalties will be charged at the usual 6 and 12 month points (August 2022 and February 2023 respectively) on tax outstanding where a payment plan has not been set up.

The [free HMRC app](#) is available on either the App Store for iOS or the Google Play Store for Android. Customers will need their Government Gateway user ID and password to sign into their account for the first time.

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## **National Highways delivers A38 bridge boost for all in Plymouth**

Since 2015, National Highways has invested more than £85 million towards the creation of 160 new and upgraded cycle ways across England, providing safe, attractive and more accessible and inclusive facilities for people to travel for work, shopping and leisure.

And this week the company marked the completion of a significant £2.89 million scheme to upgrade the Mowhay footbridge, effectively joining up with a local cycle route around the city and also making it easier for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs to cross the A38.

The original bridge was not wide enough to safely accommodate both cyclists and walkers, and work started in June last year to modify both the bridge and ramps to enable it to link up with a recently completed footway/cycleway.

As well as the wider deck, the upgrade includes a more manageable gradient, new ramps, steps, fencing and guard rails, new lighting and a new surface water drainage system.

By improving the connection between Honicknowle, Weston Mill and St Budeaux further recreational opportunities will be unlocked in Plymouth and commuters will be provided with a new facility enabling them to actively choose an alternative sustainable method of transport.

National Highways Route Manager Ed Halford said:

We're committed to significantly improving safety across our road network, and the new and improved bridge will make it much easier and safer for a variety of users, including cyclists, travelling to and from the centre of Plymouth.

At National Highways, our work goes beyond operating, maintaining

and improving roads. We're investing in the environment and communities surrounding our network, as well as the people travelling and working on it. We aim to address social and environmental issues and add real value to society.

We've worked closely with Plymouth City Council to realise this project – a glowing example of how this funding can make life better for communities living and working near our roads.

The original Mowhay bridge over the A38 (above) was too narrow to accommodate cyclists and walkers safely, and (below) the widened bridge

The scheme follows the completion of Sustrans' National Highways-funded cycle path scheme at the A38 Marsh Mills Interchange near Plymouth.

Councillor Jonathan Drear, Plymouth City Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, said:

We're delighted to see the newly improved Mowhay Road bridge open following this substantial investment by National Highways.

It provides a key walking and cycling link between communities either side of the A38 and will complement improvements we're looking to deliver through our Transforming Cities Fund, between the dockyard and city centre, and our Major Roads Network programme.

Plymouth's growing walking and cycling network will help more and more people to choose active travel and supports our Climate Emergency Action Plan commitments.

Iain Stewart, Sustrans Network Development Manager for the South West, added:

I'm delighted to see this project come to a successful conclusion. This bridge is an important active travel connection for the communities living north and south of the busy A38.

These improvements make it easier for people to choose walking, wheeling and cycling in the area, and are very much welcomed by Sustrans.

National Highways manages four designated funds, allocated by the Government, to deliver benefits above and beyond building, maintaining and operating England's strategic roads.

From protecting the environment and enhancing the landscape around roads, to

improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting communities, the aim is to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Elsewhere in the South West, designated funding has already provided safer journeys for cyclists around M5 Junction 16 near Bristol, on the A35 in Bridport, and Cycle Route 45 around the A303 Solstice Park near Amesbury.

Last year also saw the completion of South Gloucestershire Council's initiative to upgrade close to seven miles of walking and cycling paths around the Severnside Enterprise Area at Avonmouth, near Bristol, and a new cycleway on the A36 in Salisbury – both realised with National Highways' designated funding – while other ongoing schemes include:

- funding Wiltshire Council to deliver a new, safer toucan crossing on the A345 in Amesbury
- funding provided to Gloucestershire County Council towards the design of the A40/B4063 cycleway, currently under consultation.
- funding provided to North Somerset Council to create a cycle path between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon and complete the final part of the cycle route between Brean and Portishead
- funding invested to enable Cornwall Council to deliver cycle routes alongside the busy A30 in mid-Cornwall.

Going forward, cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders will see more benefits over the next five years from the £169 million set aside for various community-focussed projects in National Highways' Users and communities fund.

The company is using the fund to improve services for users and neighbours of England's motorways and major A-roads, including increasing the options people have for sustainable travel.

Learn more about [National Highways' designated funds plan](#).

## **General enquiries**

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

## **Media enquiries**

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