

# HMRC customers have one month left to switch their Post Office card account

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding about 7,500 tax credits, Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance customers they have just one month left to switch their Post Office card account.

HMRC will stop making payments to Post Office card accounts after 5 April 2022 so customers must notify HMRC of their new account details, so they don't miss out on vital payments.

In November 2021, HMRC extended the deadline to the end of the financial year. The one-off extension to the contract meant customers could temporarily continue to receive their payments into their Post Office account, giving them extra time to set up new accounts and notify the department.

Nearly 138,800 customers have already switched their accounts and provided HMRC with updated bank account details. Time is running out for the remaining 7,500.

Customers can choose to receive their benefit payments to a bank, building society or credit union account. If they already have an alternative account, they can contact HMRC now to update their details.

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

We want to make sure that no customer misses out on the benefit payments they are entitled to. If you still need to switch your Post Office card account, contact HMRC to update your bank account details by 5 April.

Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance customers can use their Personal Tax Account to provide revised account details, [change their bank account details via GOV.UK](#) or by contacting the Child Benefit helpline on 0300 200 3100. Tax credits customers can [change their bank account details](#) by contacting the tax credits helpline on 0345 300 3900. If customers cannot open a bank account, they should contact HMRC.

If a customer misses the 5 April deadline, their payments will be paused until the customer notifies HMRC of their new account details.

The Money Helper website, provided by the Money Advice and Pensions Service, offers information and advice about [how to choose the right current account](#) and [how to open an account](#).

HMRC has been contacting customers recently to encourage them to take action and will continue to contact them to remind them.

HMRC has been writing to affected customers since October 2019 to notify them that their Post Office card accounts will be closing, urging them to take action so their payments are not affected.

The agreement enabling HMRC to make payments into Post Office card accounts was due to end on 30 November 2021. HMRC agreed a one-off extension with the Post Office to temporarily continue making payments into HMRC customers' accounts until 5 April 2022.

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## [Change to pre-2012 income contingent \(ICR\) student loans interest rate](#)

News story

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced a change to the pre-2012 income contingent (ICR) student loans interest rate.



Pre-2012 income contingent (ICR) student loans have an interest rate of either RPI (from the March prior to the September when the new interest rates are implemented) or the Bank Base Rate + 1%, whichever is the lower (this is known as the “low interest cap”). The low interest cap mechanism means that the interest rate on Plan 1 loans may change in-year, if the Bank Base Rate changes.

On 3 February, the Bank Base Rate changed to 0.5%. This means that the Bank Base Rate + 1% is now 1.5%.

In line with this, from 3 March 2022 the interest rate for pre-2012 ICR loans will increase to 1.5%.

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## United Kingdom and Turkmenistan begin Structured Dialogue

During the first day of the Dialogue, which was held virtually, representatives discussed a wide range of topics. One priority topic was the relationship between the UK and Turkmenistan in bilateral and international forums. Justin McKenzie Smith, Additional Director EECAD and co-chair, highlighted the importance of laying the foundation for focused cooperation this year, which marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Justin McKenzie Smith, Additional Director EECAD and co-chair

Co-chair Vepa Hajiyev, Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, thanked the UK delegation for active participation. He stressed that discussions and exchange of views on bilateral, political and foreign policy, human dimension, climate change, trade and economy, as well as defence issues, will help to define new areas of cooperation. Exchange of views about the situation in both Afghanistan and Ukraine was also high on the agenda.

The second day of the Structured Dialogue was also rich in variety of themes. Vepa Hajiyev and Justin McKenzie kicked off the day with cooperation in the area of climate change. Speakers Janet Rogan, COP26 Regional Ambassador: Middle East and Africa, John Hamilton, Deputy Head of Mission in Ashgabat, and Mr Magtymguly Akmuradov, Ambassador and Counsellor of the International Organisations Department, took the opportunity to discuss post COP26 cooperation and how the United Kingdom can continue to support Turkmenistan reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Janet Rogan, COP26 Regional Ambassador: Middle East and Africa

Magtymguly Akmuradov, Ambassador and Counsellor: International Organisations Department

Exchange of views about economic and trade relations between Turkmenistan and the UK was another highlight of the day. Jane Grady, Deputy Trade Commissioner for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Ozgur Kutay, UK Export Finance, spoke about the UK export and finance offer and laid the groundwork for cooperation on green economy. British Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Lucia Wilde, highlighted that the UK has a great deal of expertise and experience to share with Turkmenistan regarding green economy, and is interested in deepening cooperation in this area. Mr Maksat Chariyev, Head of International Economic Cooperation at the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed the importance of bringing UK and Turkmen experts together and tapping into new

areas of cooperation.

Both Turkmen and UK representatives concluded that the Structured Dialogue meetings had proved to be a very effective format for the two governments to discuss potential areas of cooperation in detail.

Later in the day, Mr Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and UK Minister for Central Asia, Lord Ahmed, held a virtual meeting. They closed the first meeting of the Structured Dialogue with a positive discussion about the situation in Afghanistan and Ukraine. They also exchanged views on regional stability, human rights, climate change and green growth. At the end of the meeting, the Ministers signed a MoU on future cooperation between the two foreign ministries.

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## [Skills and connectivity boost for East Yorkshire and the Humber as region is named UK's fastest growing region for digital jobs](#)

- £37,500 invested to keep digital skills growing across the Humber region
- Boost comes as Hull and East Yorkshire named UK's fastest growing region for digital jobs
- 37 local primary schools get lightning-fast broadband for next generation of online learning

A new drive to improve the digital skills of thousands of people across the Humber is being launched today following match-funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It comes as new figures reveal Hull and East Yorkshire's tech sector is one of the fastest growing in the UK.

Tech Minister Chris Philp is in Hull today to formally launch a new Local Digital Skills Partnership, a new campaign aiming to equip people for the region's digital jobs boom and ensure more residents can benefit from the thriving local tech sector.

New data from smarter job search engine [Adzuna](#) and Dealroom published today reveals the number of employees in Hull and East Yorkshire's digital sector is expanding at eight per cent per year, making it the fastest growing region in the UK for digital jobs.

It follows a [report](#) published by DCMS which showed the region's digital sector is expected to add an extra £1.6 billion to the economy every year by 2025 creating an additional 42,200 jobs.

The partnership – a coalition of local authorities, businesses and education providers – will make it easier for businesses and residents to identify gaps in their skills and access training on a range of topics from software development and data management to digital marketing.

It comes as the government continues its mission to level up communities and revolutionise public services with faster internet speeds, with the completion of a project to connect a raft of primary schools in East Riding with high speed and ultra-reliable gigabit broadband.

Digital Minister Chris Philp said:

Yorkshire and the Humber has massive potential to be a leading UK tech destination which will put rocket boosters on the region's economy and help unlock new innovations that improve people's lives. But we must make sure people have the skills and talents needed for these jobs of the future. Our Local Digital Skills Partnership will give residents and businesses the chance to be part of the digital revolution happening on their doorstep.

Following a successful independent pilot, the Humber Local Digital Skills Partnership has been match-funded by DCMS to continue its important work in the community.

Hull City Council Leader Daren Hale said:

The Humber region has led the way in boosting digital skills and creating opportunities in the digital sector, so I'm pleased that the government has recognised the success of the Humber Local Digital Skills Partnership pilot. The council has continued to support the LDSP, sitting on its steering group to offer support and expertise to help shape the digital future of the city. The partnership has proven to be very valuable to the council and the local economy.

Since 2018 DCMS has successfully run partnerships in seven other locations, including Lancashire, Cheshire and Warrington and the West Midlands. Being part of the partnership means local councils can benefit from monthly networking events and sessions with industry, learning from leading skills programmes like [Google Digital Garage](#) and the [Lloyds Bank Academy](#).

These initiatives have brought benefits including improved career opportunities for local people – including from groups typically underrepresented in the digital workforce – and a better understanding for businesses of the training provision available up and down the country.

Charlotte Collyer, South West LEP Digital Skills Partnership Manager, said:

The Heart of the South West LEP Digital Skills Partnership has been connecting people and businesses with high-quality, fully-funded digital skills initiatives for 3 years across Devon, Somerset, Plymouth, and Torbay.

The strategic input from DCMS Digital Skills Partnership Policy Lead and connections made through the DSP network has enabled us to leverage a significant additional investment for digital skills activity for our region and we welcome the opportunity to work with East Yorkshire and Humber DSP to share our knowledge and build best practice.

Today's launch comes as government-backed work, in partnership with East Riding of Yorkshire Council to connect 37 primary schools in East Riding is completed. This roll out will transform online learning opportunities for pupils and stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks in the area.

Councillor Jonathan Owen, leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council, said:

The successful delivery of these two full-fibre broadband programmes will be a boost to our more rural schools, making a welcome difference for both pupils and staff as they continue their learning.

We want to continue to provide the best, cutting-edge technological capabilities to our region, and this is an essential example of this forward thinking.

The gigabit broadband rollout in East Riding builds on Hull and East Yorkshire's high level of broadband coverage, with Hull benefitting from the best full-fibre broadband coverage out of all UK cities to support a thriving tech startup scene. Hull is home to more than 60 tech startups, including challenger broadband provider Connexin, which recently raised £80 million in investment, and product lifecycle management software Bombyx PLM.

Lucy Blackley, founder and director of Bombyx PLM, said:

Bombyx PLM had a brilliant 2021 – we've grown 300% over the past 12 months, added new clients in the UK and our team has increased to 10 people.

I couldn't imagine growing my business in any other city – the welcoming atmosphere at C4DI and the support network of other entrepreneurs in Hull have been integral in helping us achieve these fantastic results. I look forward to seeing what 2022 has in store for Bombyx PLM. Minister Philp will also visit Hull's Centre 4 Digital Innovation, a tech accelerator which helps new companies to scale and build connections within the local digital

community.

ENDS

Notes to Editor: *□The Humber Local Digital Skills Partnership has been granted £37,500 in match-funding from DCMS. \*An independent evaluation conducted by Amion Consulting assessed the impact made by six regions operating Local Digital Skills Partnerships in September 2021. The full report can be found [here](#). □The 37 primary school connections were funded via £847,000 investment from two government schemes: Local Full Fibre Networks (£508,000) and Rural Gigabit Connectivity (£339,000).□*

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## [UK to bring in further sanctions targeting provision of insurance](#)

News story

UK to bring in further sanctions targeted at the provision of insurance and reinsurance services for Russian companies



- Russian companies in aviation and space industry prevented from access to UK insurance sector
- Measure will severely limit access to the global insurance and reinsurance market

Russian companies in the aviation or space industry will be prevented from making use of UK-based insurance or reinsurance services directly or indirectly, the UK Government has announced today, in response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

These further economic sanctions will limit the benefits Russian entities receive from their access to the global insurance and reinsurance market.

Through Lloyd's and the London Market, the UK is a world leader in these

sectors of the global insurance market. In taking such action, the UK is demonstrating its commitment to apply severe economic sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The UK Government will bring in legislation to prohibit UK based insurance and reinsurance providers from undertaking financial transactions connected with a Russian entity or for use in Russia. Further details of the legislation will be available in due course. Coupled with similar actions by the EU, this move further isolates Russia's economy from the international financial system.

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