

Over 19 million households have received their council tax rebate

- 99% of eligible households have received £150 council tax rebate
- The government is extending the deadline for councils to ensure as many eligible households as possible receive the payment
- Council tax rebate forms part of £37 billion package rolled out across the year to help people with cost of living

Over 99% of eligible households have received the government's £150 core council tax rebate to help with the cost of living.

Figures published today show more than 19 million households in England were handed payments by the end of September with many councils reporting that 100% of eligible households in their area have now received their payment.

Today's figures show a total of £2.87 billion of the core council tax rebate has gone to households under the scheme, an increase of £217 million from the previous month.

To ensure as many eligible households as possible receive the payment, the government is today extending the deadline for claims, helping councils support the most hard to reach households such as those that moved and did not provide any payment information.

Eligible households have until 30 November to claim the £150 payment, which does not have to be paid back. Anyone who is yet to receive their rebate is urged to check their local council for more information and make a claim.

Councils are being urged to do everything they can to encourage the remaining households to claim their rebate and ensure as many eligible households as possible get the money that they are owed.

Levelling Up Minister Dehenna Davison said:

Thanks to the tireless work of councils, more than 99% of eligible households up and down the country have received their council tax rebate.

We are now extending the deadline to claim the £150 payment to ensure as many eligible households as possible receive this payment – I urge everyone to check their eligibility and contact their local council if they have not already.

The rebate is part of £37 billion of government support being targeted at those most in need to help with the cost of living. This includes at least £1,200 of extra support for millions of the most vulnerable households this year, with all domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400 towards

their bills.

The rebate is available to most households living in council tax bands A to D on 1 April. This includes those who receive Local Council Tax Support, even if their council tax bill for the year is less than £150.

Since announcing the rebate in April, the government has provided £28 million for councils to set up software and recruit staff and will top this up as necessary to cover all reasonable delivery costs. Councils have been given a host of options to make payments quickly and securely including bank account transfers, council tax account credits or a voucher-based system.

Local authorities must also make arrangements for those who cannot access the internet.

The actions of the Belarusian state endangered the safety and security of a commercial passenger aircraft and the lives of all those onboard

Thank you, President.

When we discussed this issue immediately after the incident, many Council members emphasised the importance of an international independent investigation. We therefore thank Mr Sciacchitano, the President of the Council of ICAO, for attending the Security Council today to relate the findings of the Fact-Finding Investigation Team, and the subsequent decisions of the ICAO Council and Assembly.

President, it is clear from the investigation that on 23 May 2021, the Belarus authorities deliberately communicated a false bomb threat to Ryanair flight FR4978, before manipulating circumstances to influence the aircraft to land at Minsk airport. That the threat was communicated to the aircraft before the so-called bomb threat email was even sent to Minsk airport, leaves little room for doubt.

It appears the purpose of this brazen and dangerous operation was to arrest and detain a journalist, Mr Roman Protasevich, and his partner Sofia Sapega, who with their fellow passengers happened to be flying over Belarus on their way from Athens to Vilnius.

As the ICAO Council and the Assembly made clear, the actions of the Belarusian state endangered the safety and security of a commercial passenger aircraft and the lives of all those on board. And they were a flagrant

violation of the Chicago and Montreal Conventions.

But not only this. As we said last year, the use of a spurious terrorist threat to divert an airliner also served to undermine measures put in place by the international community to counter real aviation terror threats, including those this Council addressed in resolution 2309 in 2016.

So the Lukashenko regime has broken international law, created a major risk to the safety of innocent passengers, and undermined aviation safety more broadly – proving itself to be entirely irresponsible on the issue of international peace and security. And for what? All to silence an opposition journalist, further stifling any semblance of free speech left in Belarus.

This has only been compounded further by its role as a staging-ground and facilitator of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, through which it continues to show reckless contempt for international law and the UN Charter. We call on Belarus to hold accountable those responsible for this incident, desist from any further such unlawful actions, and end its support for Russia's illegal war on Ukraine.

Thank you.

Avian influenza: Housing order to be introduced across England

Mandatory housing measures for all poultry and captive birds are to be introduced to all areas of England from 00:01 on Monday 7 November, following a decision by the United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer.

The housing measures legally require all bird keepers to keep their birds indoors and to follow stringent biosecurity measures to help protect their flocks from the disease, regardless of type or size.

The order will extend the mandatory housing measures already in force in the hot spot area of Suffolk, Norfolk and parts of Essex to the whole of England following an increase in the national risk of bird flu in wild birds to very high.

Over the last year, the United Kingdom has faced its largest ever outbreak of avian influenza with over 200 cases confirmed since late October 2021. The introduction of the housing measures comes after the disease was detected at over 70 premises since the beginning of October, as well as multiple reports in wild birds.

The Chief Veterinary Officer is now encouraging all bird keepers across England to use the week to prepare, including taking steps to safeguard animal welfare, consult their private vet and expand housing where necessary.

The United Kingdom's Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

We are now facing this year, the largest ever outbreak of bird flu and are seeing rapid escalation in the number of cases on commercial farms and in backyard birds across England. The risk of kept birds being exposed to disease has reached a point where it is now necessary for all birds to be housed until further notice.

Scrupulous biosecurity and separating flocks in all ways, from wild birds remain the best form of defence. Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, from Monday 7 November onwards you must keep your indoors. This decision has not been taken lightly, but is the best way to protect your birds from this highly infectious disease.

Evidence shows that housing birds reduces the risk of kept birds being infected with bird flu. However, housing alone will not protect birds and all keepers must still follow the other enhanced biosecurity measures mandated by the AIPZ at all times to protect their flocks and prevent the risk of future outbreaks which is circulating in wild birds. Housing combined with stringent biosecurity measures can provide even greater reduction in risk.

The new housing measures build on the strengthened biosecurity measures that were brought in as part of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) earlier this month. The AIPZ means that all bird keepers need to take extra precautions, such as restricting access for non-essential people on site, ensuring workers change clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles regularly to limit the risk of the disease spreading.

The UK Health Security Agency continue to advise that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency advice remains unchanged, that avian influenzas pose a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

Further Information:

- Biosecurity guidance and a biosecurity self-assessment checklist have been published by Defra to assist all bird keepers in instigating and maintaining good biosecurity, which together with further updates on the latest avian influenza situation, can be found via [GOV.UK/bird-flu](https://gov.uk/bird-flu)

The addition of housing measures to the AIPZ already in force across England means all bird keepers across England must:

- housing or netting all poultry and captive birds
- cleanse and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- reduce the movement of people, vehicles or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from

- manure, slurry and other products, and use effective vermin control
 - keep records of mortality, movement of poultry and poultry products and any changes in production
 - thoroughly cleanse and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
 - keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
 - minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds
 - prevent access by poultry to ponds and watercourses and ensure that birds are kept in fenced or enclosed areas
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Government launches new campaign to boost aviation recruitment

- new recruitment and engagement campaign will encourage the next generation into aviation
- forms part of government strategy to create a more sustainable, open and diverse aviation sector
- campaign will help deliver training, outreach schemes and opportunities for anybody looking for a career in the industry

People across the country will be encouraged to kick-start a rewarding and exciting career in the aviation sector as the government launches a brand new recruitment campaign today (31 October 2022).

Generation Aviation is part of the government's [22-point plan to support aviation as it recovers from the pandemic](#) and forms part of the wider aviation strategy '[Flightpath to the future](#)'. The recruitment campaign builds on £1.5 million announced by the government over the summer to boost recruitment into the sector.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the air transport and aerospace sectors contributed at least £22 billion to gross domestic product (GDP) each year and provided at least 230,000 jobs across all regions of the country directly. However, there are several challenges ahead, from decarbonisation to changing travelling patterns following the pandemic.

The new campaign will help to boost recruitment into the sector by:

- raising awareness of aviation careers, such as through our £700,000 [Reach for the Sky](#) programme which will fund outreach programmes and events to educate young people from all backgrounds on the opportunities on offer in aviation
- signposting training, careers and opportunities to people looking to enter or move up in the industry, including through the relaunched

[Aviation Skills Recruitment Platform \(ASRP\)](#), which have already received £600,000 in funding

- championing the sector to celebrate its successes and promote it to a wider audience, including through the incumbent and new [aviation ambassadors](#) inspiring representatives of the aviation sector and its breadth of opportunities
- driving research and data to articulate the issues facing the sector and inform decision-making on its future resilience

For the sector to successfully adapt, it requires new skills and a robust pool of talent across a wide range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields and other critical roles. This campaign will see government and industry work together to build a workforce that is open, diverse and accessible.

The campaign is being launched today at London's Heathrow Employment & Skills Academy, where in an opening address Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

The aim of Generation Aviation is quite simply, to build an aviation workforce fit for the future – a future that can only be realised by a new generation of aviation workers, from all corners of the country, representing the rich diversity of modern Britain.

This will be followed by several events over the coming days aimed at students, those already in other careers looking to make a future in aviation, and those already in the industry keen to progress or seek new skills and roles. Tuesday will see webinars and panels on how people can enter the industry through education pathways. Wednesday will look at early career opportunities. Thursday will look in more depth at life in the sector, and Friday will focus on accessibility, diversity and inclusion.

Heathrow's Learning and Inclusion Director Jason Knight said:

A successful aviation sector connects countries and continents. It acts as the global gateway for leisure, commerce, and families and is a central pillar for local communities and the national economy.

Generation Aviation is a timely celebration of everything this sector provides and the opportunities we can create through career opportunities here. To support this, Heathrow has set two major targets, creating 10,000 jobs and apprenticeships and 15,000 'experience of work days' by 2030.

Marcus O'Shea from Aerobility said:

We change lives by providing anyone, with any disability with access to the magic and wonder of flight. We do this because taking the controls of an aircraft drives a focus on capability and

encourages our flyers to ask the question ‘If I can fly an aeroplane, what else can I do?’

It is our mission to ensure as many people as possible can access the benefits and opportunities provided by the aviation industry, which is why we are delighted to announce the Equal Skies Charter as part of the week’s activities. Equal Skies will work with the aviation industry to increase accessibility and deliver a more diverse workforce.

The week will conclude with an interview with Mike Miller-Smith MBE, the CEO of Aerobility, a charity helping people with disabilities get into flying, led by DfT Director of Aviation, Ben Smith. The government is working with Aerobility to help ensure the industry is as accessible as possible, providing over £200,000 in funding for the [Virtual Aerobility programme](#).

[UK and Japan strengthen cooperation in the area of digital government](#)

Press release

On Monday 31 October 2022, the UK and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to deepen ties on digital government transformation.



The UK was represented remotely by Minister Jeremy Quin and in-person by Government Digital Service CEO Tom Read. Japan was represented by Digital Transformation Minister KONO Taro and the ceremony took place in Tokyo.

The MoC establishes links between the UK’s Government Digital Service (GDS) and Japan’s Digital Agency. The two agencies will work together to exchange knowledge and strategies to promote the adoption, design and diffusion of digital tools and services across public sectors in the UK and Japan.

Cooperation will also focus on sharing best practices in training and building technical capabilities across government departments and agencies, and delivering greater efficiencies in government procurement and spending.

To coincide with the MoC signing, the UK has sent a delegation of digital experts to take part in workshops, teach-ins and policy exchanges with Japan's Digital Agency.

UK's Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, Minister Jeremy Quin said:

The UK and Japan are two of the largest, most advanced economies in the world, with thriving tech sectors and clear ambitions to become world leaders in digital. By sharing expertise in areas like digital government transformation, we look to support each other in delivering better services and unlocking greater opportunities for our citizens and businesses.

Japan's Digital Transformation Minister KONO Taro said:

The UK is an important partner for Japan and we are working together to maximise the benefits of digital. We are happy to welcome the GDS delegation as we have learned from the UK's experience in delivering our own digital government initiatives, like the establishment of the Digital Agency. By sharing expertise and lessons learned, we are assisting each other in promoting digital transformation in the government and across society to ensure no one is left behind.

The MoC comes after the UK and Japan [announced deepening digital collaboration](#) in May 2022, which covers all facets of joint digital priorities including digital infrastructure, data, digital regulation and standards as well as digital transformation.

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