

UK Government extends support for UK nationals who need assistance when applying for residency in Poland

- the UK Government has extended its funding for International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Poland's support for UK nationals with their residency applications in Poland
- this is a part of an additional £1 million of funding for charities and voluntary organisations across Europe to support vulnerable UK nationals applying for residency, bringing the total to £4 million
- in Poland, IOM have provided UK nationals with advice and support in taking the action required of them by the Polish government on securing the correct residence documentation
- since March 2020, eight organisations have reached 350,000 vulnerable individuals using the UK Nationals Support Fund

The UK Government is extending support for potentially at-risk groups including pensioners, disabled people and those with language difficulties who live in Europe by continuing the activity of the UK Nationals Support Fund (UKNSF) and supplementing it with an additional £1 million.

IOM (International Organisation for Migration) in Poland gives practical advice to UK nationals and their family members on their residency applications and it offers detailed guidance on residency requirements and procedures.

The UKNSF provides funds to eight organisations to support UK nationals who may need additional assistance with their residency applications.

These organisations operate in 11 EU Member States and Norway, and since the launch of the fund in March 2020, have provided practical support for UK nationals who need assistance with the process of applying/registering for residency in 12 European countries, following the end of the Transition Period. This funding is in addition to £3 million announced by the Foreign Secretary in March 2020.

The UKNSF will continue to operate in France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Malta and Norway.

British Ambassador to Poland, Anna Clunes, said:

IOM Poland provide vital support to UK nationals who need additional support with their residency application in Poland. I also urge all UK nationals living in Poland to take action and apply for the Polish Government's Withdrawal Agreement scheme as soon as possible, as this will help them secure their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement.

This assistance builds on the ongoing outreach and guidance provided by the UK's network of Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates across Europe.

UK nationals should visit the [Living in Poland Guide](#) to check what action they may need to take.

[Sir Jonathan Thompson appointed to the HS2 Ltd Board](#)

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has appointed Sir Jon Thompson as a non-executive director to the [High Speed 2 \(HS2\) Limited](#) Board.

Sir Jon will represent government's interests on the board, as was recommended by the independent [Oakervee Review of HS2](#).

He brings strong financial management and experience in leading major projects. Sir Jon is currently chief executive of the Financial Reporting Council, and was previously the Permanent Secretary at both the Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue and Customs.

This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Governance Code for public appointments](#). It follows that of 3 other non-executive directors to the board last year – Ian King, Elaine Holt and Tom Harris – who were appointed to strengthen oversight and scrutiny of the UK's largest infrastructure project.

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

Sir Jon will be an invaluable asset to the board of HS2 Ltd and will strengthen oversight and accountability as this vital project is delivered.

He joins HS2's board at an exciting time as construction of Phase One ramps up and Phase 2a has been given the green light to begin – creating thousands of jobs, driving our economic recovery from coronavirus (COVID-19), and delivering on our promise to level up towns and cities across the country.

HS2 Ltd Chair Allan Cook said:

I am delighted to announce that Sir Jon will join the HS2 Ltd board in the very near future. His experience at the top of the civil service will be a great addition to our team as the project moves forward.

HS2's first tunnelling machine is scheduled to start digging under the Chilterns in May, and with Parliament recently giving approval to the next phase extending the line from the West Midlands to Crewe, Jon will join us at a very exciting time for the programme.

Sir Jonathan Thompson said:

I am delighted to have been appointed to the board of HS2, a project in the national interest, and one where hopefully I can contribute strongly to delivering on time and to budget.

The process to appoint a new Chair of HS2 Ltd is now underway after the current Chair, Allan Cook CBE, confirmed his intention to leave the company this summer. The vacancy for Chair of HS2 Ltd has been advertised on the Cabinet Office public appointments website and is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Following the publication of the [independent Oakervee Review](#) in February 2020, which recommended proceeding with HS2, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed the project would go ahead to deliver better connectivity across the country, greater capacity on the rail network and shorter journey times.

Construction of Phase One of HS2 is underway, and is now supporting over 15,000 jobs and over 500 apprenticeships. In February 2021, the [Phase 2a Bill was given Royal Assent](#), in a historic milestone that will bring the new high-speed railway to the north.

[UKAEA nominated in Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Awards 2021](#)

News story

Three nominations for UKAEA in county's leading apprenticeship awards



UKAEA engineer Barry Preston

Two UKAEA staff have been shortlisted for Oxfordshire Apprenticeships' [2021 awards](#) – in addition to the Authority itself being nominated.

Electrical engineer Barry Preston was named in the final three of the awards' Shining Star category. This award recognises apprentices who have demonstrated outstanding career progression since their training.

In addition, Associate Project Manager Apprentice, Rosie Lay, was nominated in the Higher Apprentice of the Year category.

UKAEA has also been shortlisted as a finalist in the Large Employer award.

Barry – who joined UKAEA as an Electrical Engineering apprentice in 2013 and graduated in 2017 – now works at its RACE robotics centre and is involved in the programme to upgrade JET's Remote Handling Systems.

Barry, who said he applied to the UKAEA Apprenticeship Scheme because he wanted to learn and be involved in world-leading research into fusion energy, said:

“I feel honoured to have been named in the Top 3 of the Shining Star award, and would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported me through my apprenticeship and beyond.

“The most enjoyable and challenging project I completed as an apprentice was to design a haptic glove system to control robotic arms remotely using a VR interface.”

Rosie, who joined as an apprentice in September 2019, has already worked on a range of key projects at UKAEA.

She said: “I was pleasantly surprised to hear I had been shortlisted. I feel very proud, and I am so grateful for all the opportunities I have had throughout my apprenticeship to work on a variety of different projects and activities across the organisation.”

The winners will be announced in May.

[Australian healthtech firm chooses UK to scale up and grow](#)

- KISA is launching accessible mobile phones and services in the UK to meet needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.
- The Australian healthtech firm sets up global headquarters in London with support from the Department for International Trade.
- The company will invest over £6.1m in the project, bringing up to 25 new jobs to London.
- Their investment demonstrates the strength of the UK's business environment as we grow closer to securing a Free Trade Agreement with Australia.

Australian healthtech firm, KISA Pty Ltd, has chosen to set up its global headquarters in the UK and launch its line of accessible mobile phone products with support from the Department for International Trade (DIT).

The KISA phone – already available in Australia – is designed to make mobile technology accessible to those who have difficulty using mainstream touch-screen devices, including the elderly and people with disabilities. The phone gives users more independence and provides peace of mind for carers and relatives, with large tactile buttons displaying clear text or photos, loud audio, and inbuilt GPS tracking in case of emergencies.

Phone sales increased during lockdown in Australia and mobile phones became essential to communicate at a distance with friends and family. Since setting up in the UK, the firm has already secured a mobile network deal with the UK's Abzorb, one of the leading commercial enablers on the EE network.

One of the co-founders Dmitry Levin and CEO Alexander Millin began searching for opportunities to transfer KISA's operations to the UK prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. DIT has been working with the firm to help facilitate the transition, providing guidance on setting up the company in the UK, market research, and offered key networking opportunities.

CEO Alexander Millin said:

The support we received from the DIT team in helping to establish KISA in the UK was very significant indeed. The resources and knowledge made available to us took the strain off our management team and helped us make the right decisions.

The DIT team made a number of introductions to potential channel

and R&D partners that would otherwise have taken months or even years to cultivate for a new market entrant.

The company are investing around £6.1 million, which will create 25 new jobs, including several highly skilled positions in software and electrical engineering.

The UK remains one of the most attractive investment destinations in the world and our foreign direct investment (FDI) stock levels reached £1.6 trillion by the end of 2019. The UK was the second largest direct investor in Australia and the second largest recipient of Australian Foreign Direct Investment in 2019.

According to the 2021 Tech Nation Report the UK continues to be the number one tech investment destination in Europe, with over £1.1 billion of venture capital investment in Emerging Healthtech in 2020 alone – three times more than 2018.

Today's announcement supports the Government's ambition to drive further investment into every UK nation and region, as well as complements the UK's ongoing trade negotiations with like-minded partners like Australia.

Minister for Investment Gerry Grimstone said:

I am pleased KISA has chosen to join the UK's vibrant tech landscape as a base to scale up and grow and where the firm can make the most of our deep pool of talent, and world leading research and development.

Their substantial investment shows the strength of the UK's business environment as we grow closer to securing a Free Trade Agreement with Australia.

HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific Natalie Black said:

We welcome KISA's £6.1m investment to build a global headquarters in the United Kingdom.

Accessible mobile technology is an important field of innovation, as is their upcoming work in using big data and machine learning to build safety systems into their devices.

We are ready to support other firms who wish to expand into the thriving £149bn UK technology sector.

The UK Government has already agreed trade deals with 67 countries plus the EU, that account for £891bn of UK bilateral trade in 2019. In 2021, we will be adding to these deals, with negotiations underway with Australia and New Zealand. The UK's accession to CPTPP remains a firm priority and an important

part of our strategy to place the UK at the centre of a modern, progressive network of FTAs.

UK House Price Index for February 2021

In the past 12 months all those involved in the property market have been affected by coronavirus (COVID-19); HM Land Registry is no different and, as a result, this release of the UK House Price Index is not as complete as it could be.

The data is accurate. However, this release may be subject to increased revisions as we add more data over the coming months. See [Reducing delays](#) for more information.

The February data shows:

- on average, house prices have neither risen nor fallen since January 2021
- there has been an annual price rise of 8.6% which makes the average property in the UK valued at £250,341

England

In England the February data shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.2% since January 2021. The annual price rise of 8.7% takes the average property value to £268,291.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the North West experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 1.3%
- the North East saw the lowest monthly price growth, with a fall of -1.6%
- the North West experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 11.9%
- London saw the lowest annual price growth, with a rise of 4.6%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price February 2021	Annual change % since February 2020	Monthly change % since January 2021
East Midlands	£213,967	10.6	0.8
East of England	£306,346	6	-0.9
London	£496,269	4.6	-1.4
North East	£138,370	9	-1.6
North West	£184,351	11.9	1.3

Region	Average price February 2021	Annual change % since February 2020	Monthly change % since January 2021
South East	£345,075	8.5	0.9
South West	£279,242	9	0
West Midlands	£215,451	8.3	0.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	£182,220	10.9	0.6

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in December 2020 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in December 2020 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	December 2020
East Midlands	12
East of England	4
London	25
North East	23
North West	42
South East	32
South West	18
West Midlands	13
Yorkshire and the Humber	36
England	205

Average price by property type for England

Property type	February 2021	February 2020	Difference %
Detached	£409,868	£375,328	9.2
Semi-detached	£253,633	£232,287	9.2
Terraced	£219,032	£200,753	9.1
Flat/maisonette	£236,375	£221,254	6.8
All	£268,291	£246,739	8.7

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price February 2021	Annual price change % since February 2020	Monthly price change % since January 2021
Cash	£252,731	9	0.4
Mortgage	£276,185	8.6	0.1
First-time buyer	£224,797	8.7	0.7
Former owner occupier	£304,863	8.8	-0.3

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price December 2020	Annual price change % since December 2019	Monthly price change % since November 2020
New build	£316,962	7.1	0.2
Existing resold property	£264,664	7.9	1.1

London

London shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 1.4% since January 2021. An annual price rise of 4.6% takes the average property value to £496,269.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	February 2021	February 2020	Difference %
Detached	£980,803	£913,264	7.4
Semi-detached	£622,049	£584,538	6.4
Terraced	£531,618	£501,384	6
Flat/maisonette	£423,854	£411,015	3.1
All	£496,269	£474,480	4.6

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price February 2021	Annual price change % since February 2020	Monthly price change % since January 2021
Cash	£508,518	2.4	-2.4
Mortgage	£491,521	5.1	-1.2
First-time buyer	£433,726	4.8	-0.6
Former owner occupier	£560,746	4.3	-2.5

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price December 2020	Annual price change % since December 2019	Monthly price change % since November 2020
New build	£488,371	2.2	-0.6
Existing resold property	£502,975	4.7	0.1

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.7% since January 2021.

An annual price rise of 8.4% takes the average property value to £179,861.

There were 18 repossession sales for Wales in December 2020.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	February 2021	February 2020	Difference %
Detached	£272,097	£250,414	8.7
Semi-detached	£172,565	£160,638	7.4
Terraced	£140,825	£129,311	8.9
Flat/maisonette	£123,542	£113,441	8.9
All	£179,861	£165,953	8.4

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price February 2021	Annual price change % since February 2020	Monthly price change % since January 2021
Cash	£175,983	9.2	-0.2
Mortgage	£182,363	8	-1
First-time buyer	£155,687	8.5	-0.2
Former owner occupier	£207,914	8.2	-1.4

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price December 2020	Annual price change % since December 2019	Monthly price change % since November 2020
New build	£229,665	8.4	0.5
Existing resold property	£179,168	9.4	1.5

*Figures for the 2 most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

UK house prices

UK house prices increased by 8.6% in the year to February 2021, down from 8% in January 2021. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, average house prices in the UK were unchanged between January and February 2021, compared with an decrease of 0.6% during the same period a year earlier (January and February 2020).

The [UK Property Transactions Statistics](#) showed that in February 2021, on a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of transactions of residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 147,050. This is 48.5% higher than a year ago. Between January 2021 and February 2021, UK transactions increased by 23% on a seasonally adjusted basis.

House price growth was strongest in the North West, where prices increased by

11.9% in the year to February 2021. The lowest annual growth was in London, where prices increased by 4.6% in the year to February 2021.

See the [economic statement](#).

The UK HPI is based on completed housing transactions. Typically, a house purchase can take 6 to 8 weeks to reach completion. The price data feeding into the February 2021 UK HPI will mainly reflect those agreements that occurred after the government measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 took hold.

Reducing delays

Our absolute top priority is to reduce any delays, both those caused by the pandemic and those existing beforehand. To deliver our services while promoting public health, we are:

- adjusting our resources where necessary
- introducing automation where practical
- recruiting and training more than 500 new staff

Northern Ireland sales volumes

We've changed the way we publish the Northern Ireland sales volumes and corrected the way we include them in the UK figures. We've produced a monthly estimate by dividing the total sales volumes for the quarter in Northern Ireland by 3.

We previously included the quarterly Northern Ireland data in the monthly UK sales volumes data, which resulted in higher than expected sales figures.

Background

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The March 2021 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 19 May 2021. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to

process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).

5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in CSV format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (July 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.

16. The data can be downloaded as a CSV file. Repossession sales data prior to July 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 26 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).