

Budget 2021 sets path for recovery

Chancellor's three-point plan to protect jobs and strengthen public finances

- billions to support businesses and families through the pandemic
- investment-led recovery as UK emerges from lockdown
- future changes to strengthen public finances

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said his immediate priority continues to be supporting those hardest hit, with extensions to furlough, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts – bringing total fiscal support to over £407 billion.

He also set out plans to drive jobs, growth and investment to help the economy rebound – and spoke honestly about the tough choices required to put the public finances on a more sustainable path.

Delivering the budget in Parliament Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

This Budget meets the moment with a three-part plan to protect the jobs and livelihoods of the British people.

First, we will continue doing whatever it takes to support the British people and businesses through this moment of crisis.

Second, once we are on the way to recovery, we will need to begin fixing the public finances – and I want to be honest today about our plans to do that.

And, third, in today's Budget we begin the work of building our future economy.

Protecting jobs and livelihoods

In line with the government's roadmap for the cautious easing of social distancing rules, the Chancellor pledged to keep economic support in place until we are out of lockdown.

To protect the livelihoods of those hardest hit, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme will be extended to September and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue with a fourth and a fifth grant. The Chancellor announced that more than 600,000 people, many of whom became self-employed in 2019-20, may now be able to claim direct cash grants under SEISS.

In addition, the business rates holiday in England has been extended by an additional three months. That means 750,000 retail, hospitality and leisure properties in England will pay no business rates for three months from 1 April when combined with Small Business Rates Relief, with further relief

available for the rest of the year.

To continue supporting the 150,000 businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors and to protect 2.4 million jobs, the government has extended the temporary 5% reduced rate of VAT until 30 September 2021. To help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate, a 12.5% rate will then apply for a further six months, until 31 March 2022.

Grant funding will be available to businesses in England through a new £5 billion Restart Grant scheme to help the high street, providing up to £18,000, bringing the total spent on business grants to £25 billion.

A new Recovery Loan Scheme will also be launched to replace the existing government guaranteed schemes which have supported £73 billion of lending to date and close at the end of March.

To maintain momentum for the Covid-19 vaccination programme, the Budget will inject an extra £1.65 billion to ensure the roll-out in England continues to be a success and invest a further £50 million to boost the UK's vaccine testing capability.

As part of the UK Government's Plan for Jobs to support, protect and create jobs, the Chancellor is increasing support with £126 million of new money to enable 40,000 more traineeships, and doubling the cash incentive to firms who take on an apprentice to a £3,000 payment per hire. The National Living Wage will be increased to £8.91 from April and there will also be a six-month extension of the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift, with eligible Working Tax Credit claimants receiving a one-off payment of £500.

A new mortgage guarantee scheme will enable homebuyers to secure a mortgage up to £600,000 with a 5% deposit, and an extension to the temporary cut in Stamp Duty Land Tax to September will support the housing market and protect and create jobs.

£700 million will support the UK's arts, culture and sporting institutions as they reopen, backing the UK and Ireland's joint bid to host the World Cup in 2030.

To put more money in the public's pocket, fuel duty will be frozen for the 11th consecutive year and there will be a freeze in duty rates for beer, cider, wine and spirits.

Strengthening the public finances

The Chancellor was honest with the public about the need to get public finances back on track and give people and businesses the certainty they need for the future while not raising rates of income tax, national insurance or VAT.

Income tax personal allowance and the higher rate threshold will rise next year as planned and will then be maintained at that level until April 2026. Nobody's take home pay will be less than it is now, and the UK's allowances remain the most generous of any G20 country.

To balance the need to raise revenue with the objective of having an internationally competitive tax system, the rate of Corporation Tax will increase to 25%, which will remain the lowest rate in the G7. In order to support the recovery, the increase will not take effect until 2023. Businesses with profits of £50,000 or less, around 70% of actively trading companies, will continue to be taxed at 19%. A tapered rate will also be introduced for profits above £50,000, so that only businesses with profits of £250,000 or greater will be taxed at the full 25% rate.

An investment-led recovery

The Budget will spread investment and opportunity across the UK, helping businesses to grow, and improving access to skills, capital and ideas.

New English Freeports will be based in East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe & Harwich, Humber, Liverpool City Region, Plymouth, Solent, Thames and Teesside and will be special economic zones with different rules to make it easier and cheaper to do business. Combined with changes to immigration rules, the Towns Fund, the UK-wide Levelling Up Fund, and the UK Community Renewal Fund, opportunities for well-paid jobs, innovation and growth will be leveled up across the country.

The Budget also coincides with the publication of the the government's new Build Back Better: our plan for growth strategy, setting out how infrastructure, skills and innovation will drive the UK economy.

130,000 small and medium sized businesses will be supported through the new Help to Grow scheme, providing the digital and management tools needed to innovate, grow and help drive recovery.

Beginning April 2021, a new super-deduction will cut companies' tax bill by 25p for every pound they invest in new equipment meaning they can reduce their taxable profits by 130% of the cost. This is worth £25 billion to companies over the two-year period the super-deduction will be in full effect.

And to help progress the Prime Minister's ambitious Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, new port infrastructure will be built to support the next generation of offshore wind projects in Teesside and Humberside. The UK will issue at least £15 billion in green bonds to help finance the transition to net zero and the government will launch the world's first sovereign green savings bond for retail investors.

Support for the whole UK

Many of today's announcements such as the extension of job support schemes and VAT cut will directly benefit people across the UK.

In addition, this budget provides an additional £2.4 billion to the devolved administrations in 2021-22 through the Barnett formula.

- the Scottish Government will benefit from a £1.2 billion funding boost

- the Welsh Government a £740 million funding boost
- the Northern Ireland Executive a £410 million funding boost

[Further measures](#) announced by the Chancellor can be found at this factsheet.

[Students invited to apply now for finance as the application service launches for 21/22](#)

Press release

Students in England are being encouraged to apply for student finance as soon as possible to ensure their finances are in place for the new academic year.



Full-time undergraduate students in England are being encouraged to [apply now](#) for student finance, as the application service opens for the 21/22 academic year. So far this year, The Student Loans Company (SLC) has funded over 1 million students and anticipates an increase in applications for academic year 21/22.

The quickest and easiest way to apply is online at <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/> and students should do so as soon as possible to ensure their finance is in place for the start of term. Students should apply now even if they are unsure what course they will be doing or what university they will attend.

The application service opened during SLC's Student Money Week (1-5 March). Throughout the week, students and their parents and partners will be able to access information about the application process via a series of online Q&A sessions and Facebook events hosted by SLC's team of expert customer advisors.

Applying for student finance is straightforward and students can make the process easier by following the tips below:

- **Apply Early**

[Apply as early as possible](#) to make sure your finances are in place before your studies start. The deadline to apply is 21 May for new students and 25 June for continuing students. Even if you don't know what course you are doing, you should apply now, just use the course you think you are most likely to do and you can update the application later if required.

- **Make sure you understand how much funding you may be entitled to**

You can apply for Tuition Fee Loans to cover your fees and Maintenance Loans to help with living costs. You can use the student finance calculator to get an estimate of how much you could be entitled to <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-calculator>

- **Have your important documents at hand**

Have your National Insurance Number and UK passport details to hand before you start your application as you will be asked for this information when you apply.

- **Provide your supporting evidence online**

Don't forget to submit any evidence you are asked for. All evidence apart from some forms of ID or residency evidence can be submitted digitally via your online account.

- **Ensure that you tell us if you have studied before**

If you have studied before it could affect your eligibility – even if your previous course was self-funded. Make sure to submit your application early so your entitlement can be confirmed.

- There may be circumstances where you are able to access some extra money, for example if you are disabled, have children or are studying for a medical, social work or teaching course. You can find out more about what is available here.

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/extra-help>

- **Follow Student Finance England (SFE) on Facebook and Twitter**

Students can get all the latest information on student finance and put

their questions to our customer advisors via the SFE social media channels.

Derek Ross, SLC Executive Director of Operations, said: “The launch of the application service signals that it is time for students to get on with the important business of organising their finances. We expect it to be a busy year with more applications than ever and are urging students to [apply now](#). Students that apply before the deadline can be confident knowing their finance will be in place for the start of term.”

“Resources are available online to help students and their parents and partners with their applications and they can also follow Student Finance England on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for all the latest student finance information.”

New and returning students can apply online at <https://studentfinance.campaign.gov.uk/>

Published 3 March 2021

[Job Advert for 2 Biologicals Assessors](#)

News story

Details about 2 vacancies for Biologicals Assessors in the VMD’s Biologicals team.



Job Title

Biologicals Assessor

Grade

Grade 7

Office base

Addlestone, Surrey

Salary & Pension

£52,289 per annum with Pension Scheme

Annual Leave entitlement

Commencing at 25 days

Role

These exciting and interesting jobs put you at the heart of the important work of the VMD's Biologicals Team and your primary role will be to authorise biological/immunological veterinary medicinal products in the UK.

You will be responsible for the scientific evaluation of data packages against UK requirements for quality, safety and efficacy and making recommendations on the suitability of the product for use in animals.

Your work will play a major role in availability and assuring quality, safety and efficacy of these products in the UK. You will also play an influential role in shaping the regulation and scientific assessment of novel products in the veterinary medicines' arena.

Qualifications

You must have a higher degree obtained by research in a relevant biological scientific discipline together with the experience outlined in our online prospectus.

Skills

You will have practical experience in the development and/or manufacturing processes of biological/immunological medicinal products and postgraduate experience which has given you a thorough working knowledge of biological medicinal product development and/or manufacturing processes, for example in the pharmaceutical industry.

How to apply

You must make your application via the [Civil Service Jobs Website](#) where you will find a full job description including salary details.

Closing Date

31st March 2021

Published 3 March 2021

Change of British High Commissioner to Ghana: Harriet Thompson

Press release

Ms Harriet Thompson has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Ghana and Non-resident British High Commissioner to the Republic of Benin.



Ms Harriet Thompson has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Ghana and Non-resident British High Commissioner to the Republic of Benin in succession to Mr Iain Walker who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Ms Thompson will take up her appointment during Summer 2021.

Curriculum vitae

Full name: Harriet Clare Thompson

Married to: Nicholas Paul Thompson

Children: Three

Year	Role
2019 to 2020	Lagos, Head of Mission and Deputy to the British High Commissioner in Nigeria

Year	Role
2016 to 2019	Abuja, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy to the British High Commissioner in Nigeria
2015 to 2016	HM Revenue and Customs, Head, Fraud Investigation Service Transformation
2015	Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), Team Leader, Strategic Review of Business Energy Efficiency Policy
2011 to 2013	DECC, Head, Institutional Arrangements, Electricity Market Reform
2010 to 2011	DECC, Head, International Climate Change Negotiations
2009 to 2010	Home Office, Head, Strategic Centre for Organised Crime, Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Review
2008 to 2009	Freetown, Governance Advisor, Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative, Sierra Leone Ministry of Agriculture
2006 to 2008	Home Office, Deputy Head, Delivery Unit and Project Manager, Prime Minister's Delivery Unit
2003 to 2006	Brussels, Second Secretary (Trade), UK Permanent Representation to the EU
2001 to 2003	Department of Trade and Industry, EU Policy Advisor, Energy, Digital Communications

Further information – Newsdesk

All the latest news is available on the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office page of the gov.uk website at: www.gov.uk/fcdo

Published 3 March 2021

Medical matters

Many common medical conditions can affect your ability to drive and could put you and other road users at risk. Around 49 million people hold a GB driving licence with around 757,000 drivers telling us about their medical condition last year. But how do medical professionals know which conditions will affect our driving?

To help clinicians assess their patients' fitness to drive, we provide an '[Assessing fitness to drive: guide for medical professionals](#)' (AFTD) and update it every 6 months.

My role and AFTD

I joined DVLA in March 2015, bringing around 38 years' experience – first as

a doctor, then a surgeon, and finally as an A&E consultant. This background has been essential in this job, reminding me that there's an individual behind each case.

I work with DVLA management colleagues as well as being the professional lead for DVLA doctors and act as the conduit between DVLA doctors and the General Medical Council (GMC).

Part of my role is to lead on updating AFTD.

AFTD helps clinicians decide if a patient's ability to drive might be impaired by a medical condition, treatment, or even certain medications. They use AFTD to advise their patients if they need to tell DVLA about their medical condition and if they can meet the medical standard to drive.

It also helps clinicians provide advice on driving while DVLA makes medical enquiries about the patient.



Dr Nick Jenkins, DVLA's Senior Doctor.

Medical panels

Twice a year, we host [Secretary of State medical panel meetings](#) about each type of condition that could affect driving and these panels corresponds with a chapter in AFTD .

The medical panel comprises of independent nationally and internationally renowned medical experts in each field: me as Senior Doctor (or my deputy), staff from our medical areas, and lay members who offer the perspective of those using our services. We talk about any changes in medicine related to the topic, any issues that have arisen in that field, and any complex medical cases.

Last year this worked slightly differently. When the coronavirus pandemic resulted in the first lockdown in 2020, we immediately turned our focus on contingency planning for the autumn round of panels and how we would host them through conferencing software.

The autumn panels played out seamlessly and we've had some great feedback from those involved. It's really given us opportunities to work smarter.

After the panel meetings

Once we've agreed what changes need to be made we make arrangements to update AFTD. Some updates are more complex than others, so [we work closely with the relevant medical charities](#) to make sure the changes cover everything needed.

The guidance is updated and published on GOV.UK. As soon as the guidance goes live, we tell DVLA colleagues, the GMC and our [email subscribers](#). We'll also have updated the corresponding medical pages within '[Check if a health condition affects your driving](#)' (an A-Z guide of medical conditions).

By law you must tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. The [A-Z guide](#) helps you meet your legal responsibility, as it tells you which conditions you need to tell us about (and the ones you do not).



What happens after you've told us about your medical condition

We may need to make further investigations, get reports from your consultant, or contact your doctor. This can sometimes take a bit of time, especially if doctors are busy, but while your application is with us you may still be able to drive under Section 88 of The Road Traffic Act. You should speak with your doctor about [the Section 88 criteria](#) and decide whether you should drive while you are waiting for a licence to be issued.

Most people who [report a medical condition](#), which can be done online, get to keep their driving licence. We may issue a short-term licence (1 to 5 years) if you've got a medical condition considered to be progressive.

This is because we'll need to assess the ongoing stability of the condition or consider the risk of recurrence of an episode being below a certain threshold. Examples of this kind of condition are dementia, epilepsy, and diabetes.

If you're a driver and have had, or currently suffer from, a medical condition or disability that affects your driving, [you must tell DVLA](#).

If you're a medical professional you can keep up to date with any future changes to the guidance, including changes to medical standards, by [signing up for our email alert service](#). Simply go to the option named 'DVLA Stakeholders' and select 'Medical Professionals'.

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