

# Admin fees removed for COVID disrupted rail travel on Advance tickets

- rail passengers holding Advance tickets across Great Britain will not lose out as government makes it easier to change travel plans
- greater flexibility will ensure passengers are not penalised for adhering to new restrictions, building consumer confidence and encouraging passengers back to the railways when it is safe to do so
- this temporary measure builds on an extensive package of industry support to keep railways running for passengers

Rail passengers will have extra protections to ensure they are not left out of pocket from COVID related local restrictions. Passengers who have bought an [Advance ticket](#) which they can subsequently no longer use as a result of COVID restrictions changing will not have to pay the administration cost of rearranging travel for a ticket purchased prior to any announcement.

As new travel restrictions come into force in different parts of the country, passengers are more at risk of having to change travel plans. The government has worked closely with train operators to build consumer confidence and support the industry.

The new temporary measures enable passengers to claim discretionary rail travel vouchers or credit notes for unused advance tickets that are valid for up to a year, offering more flexibility than the current arrangements.

The government is also allowing independent rail retailers to temporarily waive the usual change of journey admin fee for Advance tickets.

This decision follows extensive support provided to the rail industry throughout the COVID pandemic, to protect jobs and keep services running for passengers. Today's announcement ensures that support continues as people return to the railways.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

COVID has seen massive disruption to our way of life, and passengers buying Advance tickets should not be penalised for cancelling their travel plans to follow advice that can save lives.

By temporarily scrapping these admin fees on Advance tickets, and extending the time people have to re-book their journeys, we are ensuring that large numbers of rail passengers will not be left out of pocket.

The government previously stepped in to permit Advance ticket refunds at the outset of the pandemic, as well as removing administrative refund or change

of journey charges from Advance, Off-Peak, Super Off-Peak or Anytime tickets. These new measures offer further support for customers across the rail network.

Jacqueline Starr, Chief Operating Officer at the Rail Delivery Group, said:

When people take the train we want them to travel with confidence.

As well as extra cleaning and more trains, that means people knowing that if things change and they can no longer use their Advance ticket due to COVID restrictions, they won't be unfairly penalised, so this announcement is good news for our passengers.

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## **Ministry of Defence Police clamp down on illegal activity and keep the training estate safe in the south east**

The arrival of the MDP on the south east Training Estate is part of an ongoing programme to reduce the number of illegal incursions taking place on the Aldershot, Pirbright, Longmoor and Barrossa training areas.

Their presence also ensures the areas remain a safe place for the military to train and for those wanting to use the land for legal leisure and recreational activities.

Public safety is a priority for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), which manages the Defence Training Estate, and has recently launched its Respect the Range Public safety campaign in Aldershot.

The campaign aims to educate users about the inherent dangers of visiting military training areas and urges the public to only access MOD land where and when it is safe to do so.

In the last 12 months, the MDP team has handed out 54 warning off notices and seized over 30 vehicles including over 25 illegal motorcycles, a JCB and a caravan found on the Defence Training Estate in the south east.

Mark Ludlow, Training Safety Officer, Security and Access for the south east Training Estate said:

We take our responsibility for the safety of both the military and public very seriously. The training estate is a beautiful area and we respect that the local public want to access it, but it must be

done where and when it is safe to do. We ask the public to respect the range and respect the military's requirement for safe training.

The impact that illegal incursions have on the training estate is huge. It's dangerous and can disrupt military training activity which can impact on the MOD's operational capability and readiness.

The impact of MDP's presence has been a game-changer for the MOD as they've acted as a deterrent, which has helped us in our attempt to monitor activity and educate people on what they can and can't do on the training estate.

Sgt Martin Saunders, MDP Senior Police Officer at Longmoor, said:

We are pleased to be working with the DIO team here at Longmoor and delivering a service that is helping them with their continuing efforts to keep the area safe for both the military and public alike.

My team's presence in the area is hopefully making people think twice about taking part in illegal activities or carrying out criminal acts.

The MDP monitors the south east defence Training Estate 7 days a week.

Visit the [Accessing the training estate safely](#) page for information about firing times and how to safely access the MOD estate.

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## **UK Trade Policy Minister champions stronger trade links in virtual visit to Taiwan**

- UK Trade Policy Minister Greg Hands co-hosts the 23rd UK-Taiwan trade talks and moves forward discussions on lamb market access, offshore wind and financial services cooperation.
- Minister Hands welcomes enhanced UK-Taiwan cooperation on bilingual language education and launches new bilateral cooperation on advanced semiconductors

UK Minister for Trade Policy, Greg Hands, led a virtual visit to Taiwan on 21-22 October to further develop the UK-Taiwan trade relationship.

During the talks on 22 October, Minister Hands and Taiwan's Deputy Minister

of Economic Affairs, Chen Chern-Chyi, pledged to build stronger trade and investment links and resolve market access issues between our economies and agreed the importance of facilitating trade during the Covid pandemic. The UK secured progress on its lamb market access application, and also made progress on easing barriers in the pharmaceuticals and financial services sectors.

The UK and Taiwan also discussed further cooperation on renewable energy, with a particular focus on the offshore wind sector. The UK is committed to working with all partners including Taiwan to inspire climate action ahead of its COP26 presidency next year. The UK has set out new plans to Build Back Greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy to reach net zero emission by 2050. Taiwan is also making important steps on this path to cleaner energy by developing its offshore wind supply chain and gearing up to boost its offshore wind capacity to 15.7GW by 2035. More than 26 UK businesses have now set up office in Taiwan, with six entering the market this year.

During his virtual visit, Minister Hands also witnessed the signing of a letter of intent committing to closer cooperation on English language education on 21 October and welcomed Taiwan's scholarship announcement for 100 British students to study Mandarin in Taiwan.

The letter of intent between the British Office Taipei and Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MoE) focuses on English language education and assessment collaboration to support Taiwan's ambitions to improve English proficiency and internationalise the education system by 2030. The British Council and Taiwan's Ministry for Education also exchanged contracts to conduct evaluation projects to improve English language proficiency levels of Taiwanese students in high schools and universities.

### **UK Trade Policy Minister, Greg Hands, said:**

I was delighted to co-chair for the third time the 23rd annual UK-Taiwan trade talks today. Taiwan offers huge opportunities for UK businesses to offer their products, services and expertise in a number of fields including offshore wind and financial services. This year's trade talks underlined the growing importance of UK – Taiwan trade and investment relationship in areas including education, science and innovation.

We held productive discussions on a number of issues, including ways in which we can lower market access barriers between our economies. I'm pleased that we've made good progress on market access issues faced by British businesses in a range of sectors including financial services, offshore wind, agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

In response to the volatile economic and trade environment, such as

the escalating tension of the US-China trade conflict, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the UK's EU Exit, our government has actively assisted companies in making adjustments. The UK is one of Taiwan's major trading partners. After the UK's EU Exit, the UK will develop its own independent trade policies, which is an opportunity for both Taiwan and the UK to deepen the partnership.

We look forward to strengthening industrial cooperation with the UK, including cooperation on the development of rapid diagnostic tests, offshore wind industry, and the semiconductor field.

The virtual visit also saw the Minister launch the UK-Taiwan International Showcase for Compound Semiconductor Technology with 9 UK businesses pitching to a virtual audience of 200 potential collaborators and investors. Semiconductor technology is vital for emerging tech development and Taiwan has the dominant role in the international supply chain. Taiwan is the UK's key international partner for semiconductor technology collaboration and the UK's Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult (CSA Catapult) and Taiwan's Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to further deepen the exchange.

Minister Hands also welcomed a new fund to support UK-Taiwan joint research in social sciences. The Minister said the new initiative between the UK's Economic and Social Research Council and Taiwan's Ministry for Science and Technology would launch on 3 November 2020 with a call for research proposals, with initial funding of £500,000.

UK-Taiwan bilateral trade rose to £7.1 billion in 2019, making Taiwan the UK's 7th largest trading partner in Asia Pacific region. In 2019, Taiwan invested £64.2m in the UK, making the UK Taiwan's most popular investment destination in Europe. More than 300 UK firms are present in Taiwan and there are over 180 Taiwanese firms in the UK, with TCY Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd recently investing £6.5 million in its facilities in Yorkshire, UK to bolster its machine sales and after-sales services.

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## [Action to help prevent vulnerable young people from becoming homeless](#)

- New guidance for councils to help care leavers live independently and prevent them becoming homeless
- Support for vulnerable young people announced during Care Leavers' Week

New guidance for councils to help ensure care leavers have the stable homes they need, and prevent them from becoming homeless has been published today

(26 October 2020) by Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst.

Care leavers can often struggle to cope with the challenges of living independently at a young age without a family network, and they may need help to access services or deal with specific problems they face. Unfortunately for some this means they may end up at risk of being homeless.

To help ensure this vulnerable group get the support they need new guidance published today sets out how council housing departments and children's services can work effectively together to support care leavers into settled accommodation and prevent them from becoming homeless.

The [good practice guidance](#) recommends how council housing departments and children's services should produce a joint protocol that sets out how they will work together to ensure:

- each care leaver has a tailored support plan as they transition to independent living
- those at risk of homelessness are identified early and action is taken to prevent it
- a quick, safe and joined up response for care leavers who go on to become homeless

The government will write to councils to remind them that they can offer council tax discounts to care leavers. This is on top of £3.2 million government funding per year announced as part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy to increase the support provided to care leavers at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. This funding has been allocated to the 47 councils with the highest number of care leavers at risk of rough sleeping.

Kelly Tolhurst, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing said:

Young adults leaving care need firm foundations on which to build a stable home for themselves, and to help support them start their adult lives confidently so they can fulfil their potential.

The guidance I've published today will help key services ensure care leavers get the housing support they need is another mark of the government's resolute commitment of helping vulnerable people.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

Young people leaving care too often face daunting transitions to adulthood, without the support system many of us take for granted. That's why this government is working together to tackle the challenges they have told us they face, like housing, health care and employment, to make sure the right help is available.

This new guidance will directly support care leavers to live independently and prevent them becoming homeless – building on the

excellent work many councils are already doing for young people in care. Everyone has a responsibility – government, businesses, universities and local authorities alike – to support care leavers at this critical time in their life.

The good practice advice document published today has been produced by the Homelessness Advice and Support Team within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and with the Department for Education.

This government implemented the Homelessness Reduction Act, the most ambitious reform to homelessness legislation in decades, which placed new duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to try to prevent and relieve a person's homelessness. This means that many more young people who may not previously have been eligible for support, are now being helped to prevent homelessness before it even occurs.

The Act also places a duty on public bodies, including Children's Services, Youth Offending Institutions and Youth Offending Teams ensuring better partnership working between public bodies and local authorities to prevent youth homelessness.

We have put in place bespoke support for local authorities through our Homelessness Advice and Support Team, which includes dedicated youth homelessness advisor roles that have a commitment to work with local authorities to proactively promote positive joint working across housing authorities and children's services, offering training, advice and support to all local authorities.

The Youth Advisers are working closely with local authorities on the particular challenges that young people and care leavers are facing during COVID-19.

The Department for Education has provided over £100 million to support children to learn at home, including providing laptops and tablets for care leavers.

It has also called on universities to extend the support they offer to care leavers as they progress into higher education.

All care leavers who go to university are entitled to a £2,000 bursary from their local council, £1,200 from the college if they go into further education and £1,000 for the first year of an apprenticeship.

See the [Joint housing protocols for care leavers: good practice advice](#).

The government has launched 3 care leaver social impact bonds, which will use 'payment by results' contracts to support care leavers who are not in education, employment or training.

Further details on support for care leavers can be found in the announcements made on [24 April 2020](#) and [23 October 2019](#).

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# Analysis in Government Awards 2020

Thank you to everyone who has submitted a nomination for the Analysis In Government Awards. We have received well over 100 nominations; an indication of just how important government analysis has been this year.

There are five separate awards which will be presented to teams from across the Analysis Function and you can find the shortlisted entries under each category.

## **Collaboration**

This award recognises great working between teams, departments, other professions and/or external organisations or researchers to deliver a piece of analysis or analytical project. The joint winners are:

- COVID-19 Infection Survey – COVID-19 Infection Survey Team (Office for National Statistics)
- Excess mortality in England – Population Health Analysis/Public Health Data Science (Public Health England)

The two highly commended entries are:

- COVID-19 international trends – International Comparators Joint Unit Data Team (joint unit between Cabinet Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office)
- Collaboration in preparation of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 – WIMD team (Welsh Government)

## **Innovation in Methods**

This award recognises innovation in methods of analysis. The winner is:

- Splink: Probabilistic Data Linkage at Scale – Internal Data Linking Team (Data and Analytical Services Directorate – Ministry of Justice)

The runner-up is:

- How we are teaching machines the difference between shirts and t-shirts – Prices Classifications Project Team (Office for National Statistics)

The two highly commended entries are:

- NI Pharmacy Needs Assessment – Pharmacy Analytical Projects Team (Family Practitioner Services Information Unit)
- How DWP upgraded its modelling and forecasting methodologies to respond to the Universal Credit forecasting challenge in the time of Covid-19 – Working Age Modelling and Forecasting Division (Department for Work and Pensions)



## **Communication**

This award recognises clear and successful presentation and distribution of analysis using methods such as commentary, visualisations, interactive materials and social media. This could include public facing communication as well as within teams and departments or across professions. The winner is :

- COVID-19 Situation Operational Dashboard – Analytical Products team, Product Management, Design and Delivery (NHS England and NHS Improvement)

The runner-up is:

- COVID-19 press data team – Best Practice and Impact (Office for National Statistics)

The two highly commended entries are:

- Emergency Care Intensive Support Team Urgent and Emergency Care dashboard – Emergency Care Improvement Support Team (NHS England and NHS Improvement)
- GAD's work on McCloud remedy – Public Service Pension Schemes Team (Government Actuary's Department)

## **Impact**

This award recognises analysis which has had a lot of impact through its use or influenced decision-making and/or has contributed to public debate. The winner is:

- Department of Health COVID-19 dashboard – COVID-19 Statistical Reporting Team (Department of Health Northern Ireland)

The runner-up is:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group – Health Analysis and Life Events (Office for National Statistics)

The two highly commended entries are:

- Statistics on Deaths involving COVID-19 in Scotland – Vital Events Statistics Team (National Records of Scotland)
- Evaluation Transformation Programme – Implementation Unit (Cabinet Office)

## **Investment in people**

This award recognises achievements in the development of our people and the building of an inclusive culture across the Analysis Function. The winner is:

- Happiness Index – Data Services (Ministry of Defence)

The runner-up is:

- Building the Analytical Community in Manchester – Sarah-Kate O’Grady (Department for Work and Pensions)

The highly commended entry is:

- MoJ EU’s Nationals Network – Maria Angulo (Ministry of Justice)

Awards and certificates will be sent out to winners and short-listed nominations shortly. We’ll also be hearing more about the short-listed work (as well as all of the other nominated work) at the first ever Analysis in Government Month being held next year as well as through a programme of sharing webinars that will soon be rolled out across the Government Analysis Function. Further details will be announced in due course.

## **World-class analysis**

The work of the Government Analysis Function, in bringing together all in the analytical profession, has long been essential to inform decision-making and monitor the delivery of the government’s priorities. Every day, our community delivers data, evidence, analysis, research and evaluation, which is vital to make critical decisions. In 2020, our work has never been more important. We have put world-class, innovative analysis in the hands of decision-makers in order to answer government’s most important questions at pace.

Please contact [AF.Awards@ons.gov.uk](mailto:AF.Awards@ons.gov.uk) for any further information.