

[HMRC late payment interest rates to be revised after Bank of England reduces rate](#)

HMRC interest rates for late payments will be revised following the Bank of England interest rate decrease.

The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee, following an emergency meeting, voted on 11 March (2020) to decrease the Bank of England base rate to 0.25% from 0.75%.

HMRC interest rates are linked to the Bank of England base rate.

As a consequence of the change in the base rate, HMRC interest rates for the late payment will decrease.

These changes will come into effect on:

- 23 March 2020 for quarterly instalment payments
- 30 March 2020 for non-quarterly instalments payments

Repayment interest rates remain unchanged.

[Information on the interest rates for the payments](#) will be updated shortly.

[Foreign Secretary statement following US airstrikes in Iraq](#)

The response to the cowardly attack on Coalition forces in Iraq has been swift, decisive and proportionate.

We will continue working with our partners to ensure those responsible for these deplorable acts will be held to account.

UK forces are in Iraq with Coalition partners to help the country counter terrorist activity and anyone seeking to harm them can expect a strong response.

[Make your Sport Relief donation go further with Gift Aid](#)

'Tick the box' and see generous charity donations go 25% further, the government urges eligible taxpayers.

This comes on the day of the all-star Sport Relief telethon, which raised £38 million for charities in the UK and abroad in 2018. Sport Relief is a fundraising campaign run by Comic Relief that raises money to tackle mental health stigma, domestic abuse, homelessness and poverty, both in the UK and around the world.

Gift Aid allows UK charities and community amateur sports clubs to claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated.

[Statistics published by HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\)](#) show that in 2018 to 2019, Gift Aid from individuals contributed more than £1.3 billion to the charities sector.

It doesn't matter how much you donate, as long as you are eligible: the vast majority of Gift Aid claimed by charities all over the UK is from smaller donations.

To add Gift Aid to a donation, you must have paid Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax that year worth at least the value of the Gift Aid being added and give the charity permission to claim it.

Alex Reid, Chief Executive of Comic Relief, said:

Gift Aid is a simple but hugely important way that supporters can increase charitable donations at no extra cost. As we race towards a fantastic Sport Relief on Friday 13 March, I hope as many people as possible enjoy the show and use Gift Aid if possible.

Gift Aid costs no extra to add on to your donation – you just tick the box.

However, [recent research](#) showed that charities are missing out on almost £600 million in Gift Aid, money which could be vital to their work.

Nicola Rawnsdon, Chairman of Salisbury Rugby Football Club, a registered community amateur sports club with current membership of 1,000, said:

For the last 4 years we have been working on 'Project All Change' to build new changing rooms at the club.

Our hard work has been very successful: we have generated around £280,000 from our own efforts, with much of this coming from

individual donations.

Gift Aid contributed almost £25,000: we couldn't have been successful without it.

HMRC works closely with charities to ensure they get the most out of Gift Aid, including making sure their donors understand the rules and that they fully benefit from the support it gives.

[The 2020 close season for coarse fishing commences](#)

This year's close season commences on 15 March and runs until 15 June inclusive.

During this time, Environment Agency (EA) officers conduct patrols to enforce the close season. As part of Operation CLAMPDOWN, now in its eighth year, Angling Trust (AT) volunteers support the EA by keeping watch on riverbanks and reporting incidents to the 24-hour incident hotline.

The annual close season helps to protect fish stocks across England when they are spawning by preventing fishing for coarse fish in rivers, streams, drains and specified canals, as well as the 'site of special scientific interest' (SSSI) stillwaters.

EA officers and AT volunteers patrol riverbanks and streams to ensure anglers observe the close season rules. They also regularly patrol lakes, canals and ponds to make sure all anglers have a valid rod fishing licence. Anyone fishing without a fishing licence can be prosecuted.

During last year's coarse fish close season campaign, 761 patrols were conducted reporting 178 illegal or unlicensed offences.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment at the Environment Agency, said:

We have an important role to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries while making sure that all anglers fish legally.

We take illegal fishing very seriously. Anyone fishing illegally should expect to be prosecuted and to face a substantial fine. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a statutory close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

- to help tackle unlicensed and illegal fishing, the Environment Agency urges anyone to report incidents by calling the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111
- the coarse fish close season runs from 15 March until 15 June inclusive on rivers, streams, drains, some canals and specified SSSI still waters
- information on close seasons and other byelaws can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- if you want to continue to fish whilst the river coarse fish close season is in force, you can visit many stillwaters and canals, depending on landowner agreement
- enjoy fishing and make sure you fish legally. Annual fishing licences are available from only £30
- it's easy to buy online. [Get a fishing licence on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
- fishing licence income is used to fund work to maintain, improve and develop fisheries, fish habitats and angling. This includes improving fish passage, river habitat improvements and fish rescues, as well as activities to promote angling
- you can learn more about how the licence fee income is used in [EA's Annual Fisheries Report](#)
- visit the [go fishing](https://www.go-fishing.org) website to find out about angling events, fisheries and venues to go fishing

[PM call with Prime Minister Trudeau: 12 March 2020](#)

The Prime Minister spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau this evening.

The leaders discussed the need for a coordinated international response to the coronavirus outbreak, including through the G7, and agreed on the importance of a science-based approach.

The Prime Minister raised climate change and the leaders agreed the need for ambitious action to reduce carbon emissions and accelerate efforts ahead of the COP26 summit in Glasgow this year.