

First images of Brexit coin revealed



Around 3 million Brexit coins will enter banks, Post Offices and shops nationwide from Friday 31 January, with a further 7 million entering circulation later this year.

As Master of the Mint, Sajid Javid was given the very first batch of Brexit coins one of which he will present to the Prime Minister this week.

More than 13,000 people have already registered their interest in a commemorative version of the coin which is available to buy from the Royal Mint.

Commenting after seeing the coin for the first time, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid said:

Leaving the European Union is a turning point in our history and this coin marks the beginning of this new chapter.

As part of the launch, the Royal Mint will also open its doors for 24 hours to let people strike their own commemorative coins.

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Launch of Safer Streets Fund

The Safer Streets Fund will open this week for bids from police and crime commissioners (PCCs) across England and Wales to fund initiatives aimed at stopping these offences happening in the first place.

The fund is specifically designed for areas that need to tackle theft, robbery and burglary – known as acquisitive crimes.

Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse said:

We are determined to cut crime and make our streets safer. That's why we are backing the police with more resources and recruiting 20,000 new officers.

This fund will help prevent people falling victim to crimes which can have a real impact on a community, like burglaries or theft.

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners lead for prevention, Roger Hirst said:

I welcome the launch of this fund which will help to tackle acquisitive crime by investing in a more preventative approach.

Preventing crime in the first place is better for the public and reduces demand on policing. We want to ensure that this funding is used to drive down crime in the most effective way, including through targeting key local hotspots.

Police and crime commissioners, in formulating bids, will work closely with local partners to identify those measures that are most likely to make our communities safer.

PCCs can use the fund to improve neighbourhoods by increasing street lighting, installing better locks and gating alleyways.

They can also invest the money in other types of crime prevention, such as training community wardens, and delivering local crime prevention advice to residents or Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

PCCs will be expected to make use of local police force data and to use toolkits provided by the College of Policing, in partnership with other experts, to understand where the funding can have the biggest impact and what interventions will work best in a local area.

Successful areas will receive grants of up to £550,000.

As they are rolled out, each initiative will be assessed to help inform future government investments.

The Safer Streets Fund forms part of the government's concerted action to tackle crime. On Wednesday 22 January the Home Office announced the biggest increase in funding for the police system in a decade.

The amount of funding available to the policing system for 2020 to 2021 will increase by more than £1.1 billion, totalling £15.2 billion, should police and crime commissioners (PCCs) take full advantage of flexibility to set the

police precept. This will allow the government to deliver on the people's priorities and recruit the first wave of 20,000 additional police officers by the end of March 2021.

Schools encouraged to open up sports facilities all year round

Thousands of children will benefit from more sports activities after school and in the school holidays through a £1.6 million funding boost to help schools make better use of their facilities.

As part of a national drive to encourage 60 minutes of physical activity per day across the week, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced total funding worth £2.4 million for better sports activities and teaching, including for schools in 19 areas across England to collaborate with sports organisations to increase the opportunities to use school sports facilities outside the school day.

The Active Partnership Network, supported by Sport England, will set up partnerships between schools and local sport providers, encouraging them to open up their sport facilities for fun and engaging sporting competitions, after school clubs and holiday activities.

Underlining the government's manifesto commitment to make sure children get an active start to life, the new investment in school sports facilities builds on plans set out in the [Sport and Activity Action Plan](#) to provide safe and familiar environments for children to take part in activities that encourage good physical health as well as important skills for the future, like teamwork and discipline.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Getting children active from a young age helps them build confidence and learn skills they will use in later life. Many schools already open up their facilities so their communities can benefit and I want to encourage even more to do so.

By backing schools with this extra money we can make more fun activities available all year round – everything from football to dodgeball – to help children find a sport that they will enjoy and which will keep them healthy.

As part of plans to extend their facilities to sports and activity clubs

outside of teaching hours, schools will be able to generate additional sustainable income from leasing their premises to external organisations at affordable rates.

In partnership with sports charities Active Partnerships and Sport England, the fund will provide sporting opportunities across the country including in North Yorkshire and County Durham, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Greater Manchester, London and Gloucestershire.

Sports Minister Nigel Adams said:

It is absolutely right that every child, regardless of background, has the chance to learn how to run, jump, throw, and catch to develop a healthy lifestyle.

As we outlined last year, our School Sport and Activity Action Plan will mean that all children have access to at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity through quality PE, sport sessions, clubs and facilities inside and outside of school hours.

By opening up school sports halls and playing fields to sports clubs and the wider community, we will increase opportunities, particularly for those with the least access and from the most deprived areas and deliver on our manifesto commitment.

The 2022 Commonwealth Games will not just be about two weeks of sport: it will open up a wealth of opportunities for people across the West Midlands, leaving a lasting sporting legacy for the region. So I encourage young people to make the most of these opportunities, particularly by getting involved in community sport.

Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

We all know that exercise has huge benefits for both our physical and mental health – this is especially important for our children and young people as they grow and develop.

Sports and physical activity can inspire and empower young people to fulfil their potential and live longer, healthier lives, and it's fun. This fantastic investment will ensure thousands more children have access to the right facilities.

The new investment builds on the government's bold manifesto pledge to level up opportunities for young people across the country and create a £1 billion fund for more high quality wraparound and holiday childcare places. Through today's plans, parents and carers will benefit from an extended school day, helping to accommodate working patterns after school, at the weekend and during school holidays.

In addition to the funding to support extended hours for school sports facilities, nine teaching schools known for their expertise in sport in different parts of the country will share a £500,000 grant to trial new ways to engage the least active pupils and help to develop the skills and confidence of PE teachers. In further efforts to drive up the importance and quality of PE lessons, these nine teaching schools will test new ways to provide high-quality PE lessons that meet Ofsted's new inspection framework, which requires schools to create opportunities for children to be physically active across the day.

With volunteering rates among young people having increased in recent years, the Department for Education will also award a grant worth £20,000 for Birmingham to increase the number of youth volunteers in the community, ahead of the Commonwealth Games hosted by Birmingham in 2022. This is part of a £300,000 funding package to encourage volunteering opportunities in other parts of the country.

The investments, totalling £2.4 million, forms part of the government's push to make sport and exercise an integral part of pupils' daily routine, boosting their physical health, mental wellbeing, character and resilience.

Lee Mason, Chief Executive, Active Partnerships said:

This funding is a great opportunity to better understand how we can support all types of secondary schools to open up their facilities during evenings, weekends and holiday periods for the benefit of their school children and local communities. Schools are trusted sites within local communities and are the ideal place for people of all ages to be more active.

By the end of this project, we will know more about the barriers schools face when trying to open their facilities for community use and how to support schools to overcome these challenges. We will also identify and celebrate schools who are placing their facilities at the heart of their community and the impact that this is having on both school and community life.

Mike Diaper, Sport England's Director of Children and Young People said:

A significant amount of community sports facilities are found in schools. This new funding will help support schools to open up

their facilities beyond the school day so they can be used for as long as possible by young people and the wider community and link schools up with great local activities.

The 19 Active Partnerships around the country will be working with local schools to make it easier, overcome some of the obstacles and share best practice – in what will be a win-win for pupils, community members and local sports clubs.

Lets build on the stability that business needs

When we wake up on the morning of February 1, we will do so in a UK that is truly independent for the first time in nearly half a century. We will have got Brexit done – finally delivering on the promise made to the British people back in 2016.

December's election result has delivered the stability that business needs, and the benefits are already starting to show. The UK's latest employment figures are hot off the press and well worth celebrating – the number of people in full-time work is at a record high, unemployment is at a record low, and long-term unemployment has more than halved since 2014.

Deloitte's most recent survey of chief financial officers also had good news – the largest increase in business confidence in its 11-year history – while PwC's report of chief executives across Europe, Japan and Australia found that they are increasingly seeing the UK as an attractive place to invest.

By January 31, I will have met with 253 businesses in my time as Business Secretary. The key message I have heard time and time again is that stability is vital for them to invest and to grow.

The withdrawal agreement negotiated by the prime minister will provide this stability – and with a solid majority in parliament, this week we were finally able to pass it.

The implementation period means that until the end of 2020, businesses will be able to continue trading across EU markets just as they do now. During this time, and to take effect from 2021, we will be negotiating a new free-trade deal with our EU friends and neighbours, taking the views and interests of business closely into account. At the same time, we can begin work on the huge opportunities of the opening-up of free trade around the world, together with introducing our new Australian-style points-based immigration system

that will put the UK back in control.

These efforts together will open up new markets and new opportunities for businesses big and small, while allowing in more talent from around the world to support our industries and economy.

As we enter this exciting period, I am re-evaluating how my own department does business. I want to ensure that we are reuniting our communities and levelling up across the country, making sure that jobs, growth and opportunity are spread to areas that for too long have been left behind. I want us to seize the opportunities that decarbonisation presents, by making the most of the UK's amazing technology and innovation.

In recent years, the business department has become known for its close relationship with a group of representative organisations. In my view, that group was too small. The relationship benefited a select few – but at such an important time, it's crucial that we do not unintentionally shrink the number of voices influencing our decisions.

That's why tomorrow I will be holding the first in a regular series of meetings with a new and expanded group, doubling the number of organisations involved from five to ten. New attendees will include the British Retail Consortium, the Creative Industries Federation and Tech UK. By inviting a more diverse range of industry voices to the table, our meetings will better represent businesses across the country, helping unleash the full potential that the UK has to offer in a post-EU world.

In recognition that not every business owner is represented by a business organisation, these meetings will take place once a month instead of once a week. The time saved will be spent meeting businesses, particularly small businesses, face-to-face in all four corners of the country.

As trade deals are signed and our long-term relationship with the EU agreed, I will use these meetings to ensure that businesses are kept informed of the next steps, and what they will need to do over the next 12 months to make the most of all the UK has to offer.

As well as talking, I want to listen. We are at a turning point in our history. After almost 50 years as part of a formal European economic community, the UK will be free to choose its path – and business has a key role to play in this.

I want to use the opportunity that leaving the EU presents to make it easier to start and grow a business; to deliver world-leading employment rights; to tackle climate change and to make the UK a science superpower. I have plenty of ideas and we're already making progress, but I want to hear yours. We are our most successful when business and government collaborate.

Article originally published on [The Times website](#) (paywall).

Prince William is appointed Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2020



The Queen has approved that His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge and Earl of Strathearn KG KT be appointed as Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2020.

The Lord High Commissioner is the Sovereign's personal representative to the Annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He attends the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on behalf of the Sovereign. He makes the opening and closing addresses to the Assembly, and carries out a number of official functions as the Lord High Commissioner.

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