

Press release: One million married couples still eligible for £900 tax boost

Around three million couples across the UK have boosted their finances with Marriage Allowance, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) announced today.

More than a million married and civil partnered couples are still eligible for the free tax break worth up to £238 a year. And thanks to the start of the new tax year couples can backdate their allowance and boost their payment up to £900 – just in time for the summer holidays.

Applying for Marriage Allowance is quick and easy and once an application is complete it's processed immediately. The new online form takes fewer than ten minutes to fill out and eligible customers will receive backdated claims of up to £662 as a lump sum. Over 300,000 couples have signed up for the Marriage Allowance tax break since March 2018.

Mel Stride MP, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

It's great news that so many couples are now benefitting from Marriage Allowance. This is a really important tax relief and reflects the social importance of marriages and civil partnerships.

And I'd urge those that haven't yet managed to claim the money to do so right away – it's quick and easy to apply. Just search online for Marriage Allowance and go to the GOV.UK site.

[Mel Stride on Marriage Allowance](#)

Further Information

- Everyone has a tax-free personal allowance of £11,850 and no tax is due on income up to this amount. The Marriage Allowance allows a spouse or civil partner who is a non-taxpayer to transfer £1,190 of it to their partner.
- About four million married couples, including around 15,000 civil partnerships, stand to benefit from the Marriage Allowance, which was introduced in April 2015.
- Couples have four years to claim their backdated allowance and can apply [online](#)

Statement to Parliament: PM Written Statement: ISC Detainee Reports

The Government agreed with the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (ISC) in December 2013 that it would enquire into the themes and issues identified in Sir Peter Gibson's Detainee Inquiry Report, take further evidence and produce a report. The ISC has now concluded its work and their report on detainee mistreatment and rendition issues has today been laid in Parliament. It is in two parts: the first on the period 2001 to 2010; the second on current issues.

The Government welcomes the publication of the ISC's reports. It is important to begin by noting the context in which the Government, including the Security and Intelligence Agencies and Armed Forces, was working in the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001 and the deployments of Armed Forces personnel to Iraq and Afghanistan. The UK responded, alongside its international partners, to the tragic events of 9/11 with the aim of doing everything possible to prevent further loss of innocent life, both here and overseas. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the priority again was preventing loss of life.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that UK personnel were working within a new and challenging operating environment for which, in some cases, they were not prepared. It took too long to recognise that guidance and training for staff was inadequate, and too long to understand fully and take appropriate action on the risks arising from our engagement with international partners on detainee issues. The Agencies responded to what they thought were isolated allegations and incidents of mistreatment, but the ISC concludes that they should have realised the extent to which others were using unacceptable practices as part of a systematic programme. The Agencies acknowledge that they did not fully understand this quickly enough and they regret not doing so.

UK personnel are bound by applicable principles of domestic and international law. The Government does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (CIDT) for any purpose. The ISC has noted, in the context of its historical report, a number of cases where intelligence and Armed Forces personnel are alleged to have threatened individuals in foreign detention. Such alleged behaviour is clearly unacceptable and the ISC's Current Issues report recognises that improvements have been made to operational processes, fostering a greater awareness of risks and establishing enhanced oversight in relation to detainee issues.

Since 2010, UK intelligence and Armed Forces personnel have operated under the published Consolidated Guidance. It provides direction for UK personnel

and governs their interaction with detainees held by others overseas and the handling of intelligence derived from them. As the ISC acknowledges, very few countries in the world have attempted to set out their approach to these matters, and let themselves be held accountable in this manner, and it is to the Security and Intelligence Agencies' and Ministry of Defence's credit that they have embedded these procedures and ensure that their personnel follow them carefully when dealing with detainees held by others. It is coupled with a world-leading independent oversight regime, underpinned by the Justice and Security Act 2013 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. This has given enhanced powers to the Intelligence and Security Committee to oversee the activities of the Security and Intelligence Agencies, alongside the statutory role of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, Sir Adrian Fulford.

Working closely with international partners is an essential part of keeping this country and its people safe. In doing so UK personnel seek assurances from those countries on their treatment of individuals and make clear the UK's position on torture and CIDT. Detainee-related work remains important and at times difficult, but intelligence and Armed Forces personnel are now much better placed to meet that challenge. The lessons from what happened in the aftermath of the appalling terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 are to be found in improved operational policy and practice, better guidance and training, and an enhanced oversight and legal framework. We should be proud of the work done by our intelligence and service personnel, often in the most difficult circumstances, but it is only right that they should be held to the highest possible standards in protecting our national security.

The Government will give further consideration to the ISC's conclusions and recommendations, noting that it has expressed a number of concerns about the Consolidated Guidance, but has said that these should be read in the spirit of continuous improvement. Formal oversight responsibility for the Consolidated Guidance rests with the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, following my direction to him under section 230 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, with effect from 1 September 2017. I am therefore inviting Sir Adrian to make proposals to the Government about how the Guidance could be improved, taking account of the ISC's views and those of civil society.

The Government will consider the reports in full and respond formally in due course.

Press release: Highways England releases first sections of updated road design manual

Highways England today paved the way for improved road building with the much

anticipated release of the first suite of new design standards.

The publication of the first sections of the new 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' (DMRB) will ensure roads are designed, built and maintained to the very highest and safest standards.

Accepted as the cornerstone of the delivery and management of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads across the UK, and a respected document worldwide, the DMRB was first published in 1992.

Highways England, the Government company responsible for maintaining, operating and improving the country's motorways and major A roads, is currently updating it to make it clearer, more consistent and easier to understand and implement. The update puts design requirements at its core and it will also make it easier to incorporate developments in design best practice. This will result in greater efficiency and innovation throughout the lifecycle of the assets, fewer departures from the requirements, and reduced time and associated cost.

Highways England Chief Highway Engineer, Mike Wilson said:

"This is an exciting time for the highways sector as we continue to successfully deliver the record £15bn investment in roads. The updated DMRB documents mark a historic moment for the design of the UK's motorways and major A-roads.

"I would like to thank the Devolved Administrations and our supply chain who have supported this significant review, which will ensure our roads are designed, built and maintained to the very highest, safest standards for the millions of drivers that use these roads every day."

The first four documents of the updated "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" (DMRB) are:

- Introduction to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
- Requirements for safety risk assessment
- Use of Compressive Membrane Action in Bridge Decks
- Management of Corrugated Steel Buried Structures

Experts at Highways England began the task of updating the complete suite of over 350 documents and associated interim advice notes (IANs) that make up the manual in April 2017 with the review due for completion by March 2020. This is a specific requirement of the Protocol attached to the Highways England Licence as part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy.

Changes in the updated document include:

- a new structure of the volumes to be aligned to asset life-cycle stages, from appraisal to design up to disposal
- new numbering systems of documents reflecting the relevant asset life-cycle stage and the specific discipline covered by the document
- new style of individual clauses to make a clear distinction between

requirements and advisory material

- incorporation of interim advice notes (IANs) into the DMRB as relevant
- consolidation of DMRB 'A' (advisory) documents with related 'D' (design) documents
- introduction of National Application Annexes attached to the DMRB to cover the specific requirements of the Overseeing Organisations

Several leading UK consultants have supported Highways England with the update, and a new set of drafting rules has been used, which follows best practice from national and international standardisation organisations.

The updated DMRB supports Highways England's ["The road to good design"](#) vision.

The DMRB re-drafting is being completed using a revolutionary online authoring tool purposefully built for the refresh of the document. This signals an important move to digital technology and unlocks the potential of digital innovations.

The updated DMRB documents will be released in phases with completion due by March 2020.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Glebe Quarry Ltd AKA 1st Call Skips fined for supplying contaminated waste

A Cornish waste disposal company has been ordered to pay £26,500 in fines and costs for illegally handling and disposing of hazardous waste.

Glebe Quarry Limited was also ordered to pay £17,000 compensation to a local farmer after waste contaminated with asbestos was dumped on his land. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

The company, which trades as 1st Call Skips, operates a permitted waste transfer station at Glebe Quarry near Roche, St Austell. On 6 December 2017,

the company pleaded guilty to 5 separate offences at Truro Crown Court.

The offences occurred at 3 sites in Cornwall, including the company's own waste transfer station, a nearby farm and a site operated by the china clay company, Imerys.

The Environment Agency had earlier advised the company to improve Glebe Quarry after the drainage and concreting at the site was checked and found to be 'inadequate'. No action was taken so the Environment Agency issued an enforcement notice requesting that improvements works be carried out.

Glebe Quarry Limited appealed, but the appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate; forcing the company to carry out the improvements that were finally completed in November 2016.

Further checks by the Environment Agency revealed the company had unlawfully dumped more than 2,400 tonnes of waste, some of which was contaminated with asbestos, on land which wasn't authorised by their site permit. Glebe Quarry Limited continued illegally dumping waste at the site despite being warned they would be committing an offence if they carried on.

In 2015, the defendant also sent waste to Imerys Minerals Ltd with waste that should have been suitable for land improvements for restoring an area of china clay spoil heaps. However, it was later found to be contaminated with asbestos.

The asbestos was discovered before the waste was spread and the loads were returned to Glebe Quarry. Nearly 50 tonnes of hazardous material was removed by Glebe Quarry Limited but was never traced as no paperwork was kept.

Glebe Quarry Limited also supplied waste to local farms for use in low-risk activities such as the construction of farm tracks. This was done under an exemption which is an agreement that doesn't require a permit. The waste supplied to one farm was heavily contaminated with asbestos and cost nearly £120,000 to clean-up.



Each yellow flag in this farm track, made from waste supplied by Glebe Quarry Ltd, marks where asbestos was found

Matthew Lee of the Environment Agency said:

This case sends a clear message to those who put profit ahead of the environment and human health.

As a minimum, we expect waste companies who hold environmental permits to act legally and should set an example to others, but the behaviour in this case has fallen far short of exemplary.

Appearing before Truro Crown Court on 22 June 2018, Glebe Quarry Limited was fined £12,500 for offences under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010, the Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005, and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

In addition to the financial penalty, the court ordered that Glebe Quarry Limited must proactively inform the Environment Agency which sites they are sending their waste to and they must also remedy the sites they have polluted.

If you see waste crime taking place report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to [Crimestoppers](#).

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