

News story: FinTech Week 2017: celebrating Britain's status as global Fintech hub

Announced by the Chancellor today (26 February 2017), FinTech Week 2017 will take place in April and showcase the sector's successes, aim to attract more investment into Britain and share global regulatory expertise. Planned events include:

- Innovate Finance's Global Summit (April 10-11)
- the government's first International FinTech Conference (April 12)
- Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) International Innovate Seminar (April 12)

Designed to bring together industry, government and regulators, the second UK FinTech Week will build on the success of last year's event, and focus of the issues affecting Britain's world leading sector, including investment, access to skills and business support to FinTech start-ups.

As part of the week, the Chancellor will host the first International FinTech Conference on 12 April in London. He will be joined by the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Kirby and other market leading industry voices.

The conference, which will connect hundreds of FinTech companies from across the UK with investors from all over the world, will also include expert led discussions and panels as well as workshops from the government, FCA and financial services organisations. UK FinTech firms will have an opportunity to showcase themselves in an exhibition space and during a pitch session.

The Innovate Finance Global Summit on the 10th-11th April will convene the start-ups, investors, regulators and institutions shaping the global FinTech agenda. With over 2000 expected attendees, 100 speakers, the inaugural Pitch360 demos and Innovate Finance's 300+ member companies, the summit will bring the global FinTech community together in London.

The two-day summit will focus on the themes driving innovation in financial services, such as the blockchain, digital identity, cyber security, financial wellness and inclusion.

The FCA will also be hosting an International Innovate Seminar on 12 April, which will bring together regulators from around the world who are working on, or have an interest in, the regulation of positive innovation and technological developments in financial services.

The seminar will provide an opportunity for regulators to share experiences, approaches and perspectives on a range of different issues and challenges related to the regulation of FinTech.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

The FinTech sector is one of our fastest growing sectors, adding more than £6.6 billion into the UK's economy and attracting more than £500 million of investment.

FinTech Week 2017 is an opportunity for Britain to build on these successes and attract further investment in our world-leading sector, ensuring we remain at the cutting edge of financial innovation.

HM Treasury's special envoy for FinTech, Eileen Burbidge said:

The UK is already the best place in the world to start, grow and scale a FinTech company thanks to our strong financial services heritage, leadership in digital technology, strong investment landscape and progressive and innovative regulators.

This second annual UK FinTech Week will showcase all of the many strengths of the UK, and highlight the reasons why even more entrepreneurs and investors should look to the UK for value creation and market opportunities.

CEO, Innovate Finance, Lawrence Wintermeyer said:

The UK has developed a blueprint for the best FinTech ecosystem in the world through progressive government policy, an innovative regulator, and a global pool of FinTech talent that is the envy of the world. We have invited the world to the UK in April to showcase our community and share with entrepreneurs and investors why this is the place to do FinTech.

Further events taking place on April 13 will be announced nearer the time.

Press release: Foreign Secretary to visit Egypt

In his first visit to Egypt as Foreign Secretary, Mr Johnson will also host a reception with British investors and some of Egypt's best and brightest entrepreneurs. During the trip the Foreign Secretary will also meet with representatives of civil society and Human Rights activists.

Speaking ahead of the visit, the Foreign Secretary said:

I am looking forward to my first visit to Egypt as Foreign Secretary and meeting both President Sisi and Foreign Minister Shoukry to discuss a wide range of issues and deepen the strength of our bilateral relationship.

The UK is a longstanding friend of Egypt. We are Egypt's top economic partner and strong allies against terrorism and extremist ideas. The UK is a champion of a renewed Egypt, because stability, peace and growth in this region are the bedrock of opportunity and security for British people and people in the region.

Further information

News story: Two-year university courses come a step closer

The government has today, Friday 24 February, tabled amendments to the Higher Education and Research Bill to encourage more flexible learning and increased choice for students.

These include a key amendment to enable universities to offer more accelerated courses, including 2-year courses, where content is condensed into a shorter period.

This amendment would enable a higher annual fee limit to be set for accelerated courses, subject to Parliamentary approval. This amendment responds to evidence which shows that inflexible fee structures are seen as a major barrier to the availability of accelerated courses, with many universities unable to deliver their traditional 3-year courses in two years because of the existing limit on annual fees.

This delivers on a manifesto commitment to encourage universities to offer more 2-year courses and extends the opportunity to study at England's world-class universities to even more people.

The government intends to consult on the detail of how to deliver higher annual fee limits for accelerated courses ahead of tabling secondary legislation. The proposals will include clear measures to ensure the limit would only apply to accelerated courses.

Other important amendments to the bill tabled today include:

- an amendment which will help students to store up academic credits and

to switch institution more easily

- an amendment which will place a requirement on the new sector regulator – the Office for Students – to have regard to institutional autonomy in everything that it does
- amendments that will guarantee that the standards against which providers are assessed are determined by the higher education sector
- an amendment that enshrines in law for the first time the Haldane Principle, which dictates that decisions on individual proposals should be reviewed and made by experts in their fields; this means with that all governments will, in the future, need to have regard to the Haldane Principle when making a grant or giving directions to UK Research and Innovation – the government’s single strategic research and innovation funding body

Speaking at the Universities UK conference in London, Jo Johnson, the Minister for Universities and Science, said:

Change is long overdue and this bill gives us the chance to introduce new ways of learning. Students are crying out for more flexible courses that enable them to get into and back into work more quickly, and courses that equip them with the skills that the modern workplace needs.

I absolutely recognise that for many students the classic 3-year model will remain the preferred option but that cannot be the only option. That is why we have tabled amendments that give real flexibility in learning.

These changes will not mean any compromise in quality, or an increase in overall degree costs for students. The tuition fees for a student taking an accelerated degree will never be more, in total, than those for the same degree over a longer time period. It is also likely that students will end up paying less overall because they will have fewer years of maintenance costs and a real chance of entering the workforce more quickly.

Read the [entire speech](#).

News story: Current outage of online applications

We are currently experiencing an outage to a number of our online systems.

This includes the Insolvency Register, ISCIS Online, Find an Insolvency Practitioner, Find an Official Receiver, the Debt Relief Order web app, CHAMP and IP Upload.

Technicians are investigating the issue and are working to resolve the outage as quickly as possible.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused by this temporary disruption to our services.

Press release: Planned roadworks in Kent and Sussex: weekly summary for Monday 27 February to Sunday 5 March 2017

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 24 February but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

M2 junctions 2 to 3, Kent: structure inspections

Work to improve safety begin this week on the M2. There will lane closures in both directions between junction 2 and 3 on Monday 27 February for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Inspections are expected to be complete by mid March.

M20 junctions 3 to 5, Kent: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M20 between junctions 3 and 5. There will be various lane closures in both directions on Monday 27 February for 5 nights, between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

M20 junctions 9 to 13, Kent: litter clearance

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the M20 by undertaking litter clearance. There will be various slip road closures each night from Monday 27 February for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction of the motorway.

M23 junctions 8 to 10a, South Nutfield to Crawley: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M23 between junctions 8 and 10a. There will be various lane closures in place in both directions overnight on Monday 27 February for 5 nights, between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

A2 Darenth to Bean, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the A2. There will be a full closure between the Darenth A282 junction and the Bean B255 junction on Monday 27 February for 5 nights between 10pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 Junction 1a, A206 and B255. Works are scheduled to be complete in early March 2017.

A2 Canterbury, Kent: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A2 between Wincheap and Brenley. There will be a full closure in place on the westbound carriageway between Whitfield A256 junction and the Brenley junction A299 on Monday 27 February for 4 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A256, and the A299.

A21 Battle, Sussex: tree works

Work to improve safety commence this week on the A21 between Robertsbridge and Hastings. There will be a full closure in place between Johns Cross and Westfield on Monday 27 February for 4 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A2100.

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury, Kent: major improvement

Work to improve journeys on the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury continues this week. A 40mph speed limit remains in place 24/7 between the Vauxhall interchange and the A228. Two way traffic lights will be in place on the A21 overnight between 8pm and 6am from Monday 27 February for five nights.

Tonbridge Road will remain closed after Pembury Hospital up to and including Longfield Road roundabout until Spring 2017. A clearly signed diversion route will be in place via the A228 and the A21.

The scheme is due to be completed in Summer 2017. For further information, [visit the scheme website](#).

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.