

News story: UK's NATO Southern Air Policing Mission to begin in May

Sir Michael also confirmed that four Typhoons from Royal Air Force 3 (Fighter) Squadron will lead the deployment.

The Defence Secretary agreed the UK's air policing contribution during NATO defence ministerial talks in the autumn and confirmed the timing of the deployment and squadron name at the International Parliamentary Conference on National Security in London today.

The Typhoons from RAF Coningsby will be based at Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in south east Romania for up to four months, working side-by-side with the Romanian Air Force to police the skies over the Black Sea.

Royal Air Force 3 (Fighter) Squadron has a long history. One hundred years ago it was a fighter scout unit assisting our forces in the trenches, in World War Two it was at the forefront of our air defences destroying nearly 300 V1 flying bomb. More recently it took tours of Sierra Leone and as part of Counter Daesh operations in Iraq and Syria.

The UK is the first nation to provide jets to this NATO mission, which forms part of the UK's increasing support to our Allies following the recent deployment of British troops to Estonia as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon said:

The UK is stepping up its support for NATO's collective defence from the north to the south of the alliance. With this deployment, RAF planes will be ready to secure NATO airspace and provide reassurance to our allies in the Black Sea region.

During his speech the Defence Secretary addressed a range of national security issues, including cyber where the UK is investing its growing Defence budget in new cyber capabilities.

This comes as the UK's cyber capabilities are tested in exercises, including Information Warrior 2017, the Royal Navy's first ever large-scale cyber war games, designed to test new Artificial Intelligence able to speed up complex decision making, which starts this week.

Sir Michael also confirmed that £1.9 billion will be invested in developing cyber capabilities and skills across all Government departments, in addition to establishing the new National Cyber Security Centre, the Defence Cyber School at Shrivenham, and a Cyber Operations Centre at Corsham.

Sir Michael added:

Our military is among the best prepared in the world to tackle cyber threats – with capabilities and skills integrated into the Army, Royal Navy, and the RAF. But in such a dynamic environment we must continually test and enhance our skills.

We're interested not just in defensive but also in offensive cyber – those who threaten cyber-attacks against us need to know the risk they're running.

During the speech at Church House the Defence Secretary also paid tribute to those who lost their lives during last week's attack in Westminster.

[This is the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months – Rebecca Long- Bailey](#)

Rebecca

Long- Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Energy, commenting on the Government announcement today that the tax payer will incur nearly £100m in costs and damages due to the mishandling of nuclear decommissioning contracts, said:

“By cancelling just two years into a 14 year contract, the Government has shown dramatic levels of incompetence in the procurement process of this deal.

“British tax payers who stand to lose nearly £100m should be asking themselves not just whether they are willing to put up with such ineptitude but also whether the Government actually has a well thought out and long term nuclear decommissioning strategy.

“This is of course the second big Government contract cancelled in the space of six months after the Concentrix tax credits scandal earlier this year. With Concentrix, a similar pattern of Government behaviour emerged, they failed to recognise key failures in service provision and were forced to cancel the contract.”

[Louise Haigh responds to BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom](#)

Louise

Haigh, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy, commenting on BT's £42 million fine from Ofcom, said:

"It's right that Ofcom has taken this so seriously. The sluggish upgrade of our digital infrastructure has already left swathes of the UK behind; and now it's clear that BT failed to give proper notice that it was not going to meet roll out deadlines, failed to pay compensation and then did not comply quickly and fully with the information demands Ofcom made of them.

"It's just not good enough that time again promises on advertising speeds and roll-out have been broken. It's right that BT is being made to pay for these failures."

[New vehicle tax rates: how motorhomes, kit-built and multi-stage build vehicles are affected](#)

We're counting down to the 1 April changes to the way [vehicle tax is calculated](#) for cars and some motorhomes [first registered](#) with DVLA on or after this date.

New Vehicle Tax Rates: How motorhomes, kit-built and multi-stage build vehicles are affected



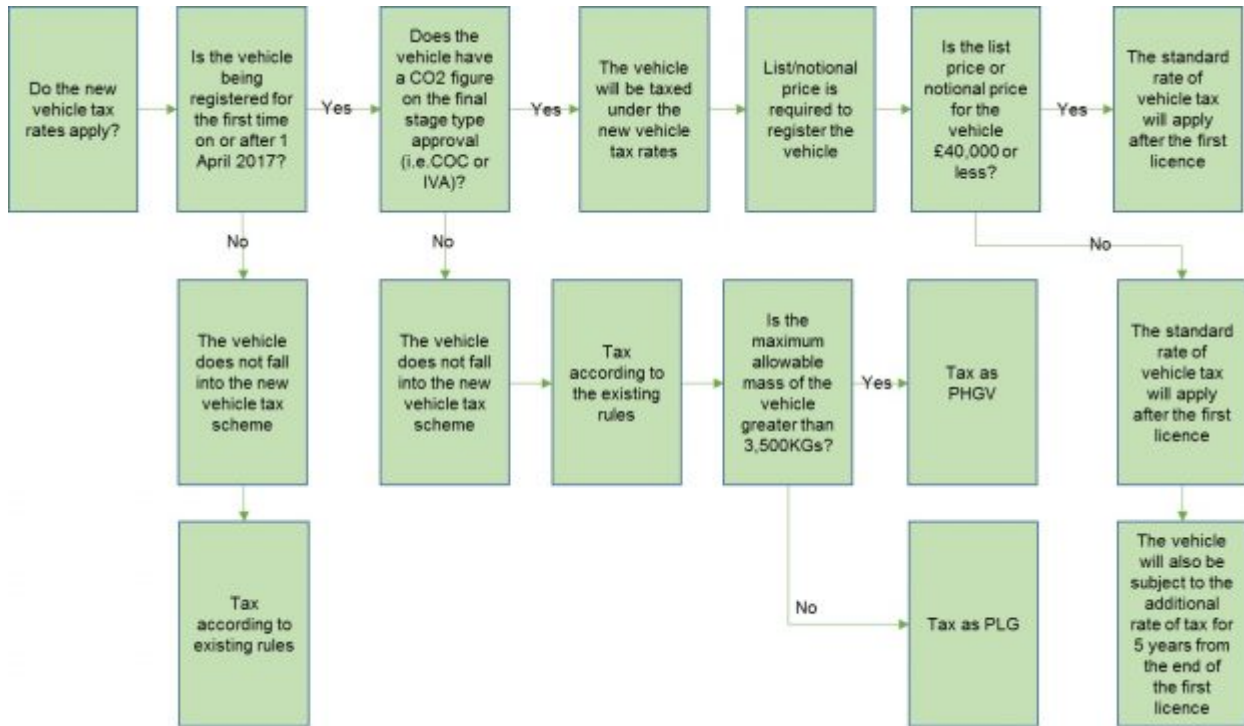
We thought we'd take a closer look at how changes to the way vehicle tax is calculated will affect motorhomes, kit-built and multi-stage build vehicles.

Only vehicles categorised as M1, M1SP and M1G vehicles on the [type approval](#) certificate are affected, so when you register the vehicle you'll need the:

- [CO₂ emissions](#) figure (shown on the [type approval](#) certificate)
- list price (the published price before any discounts) or notional price – check with your dealer, if you're purchasing a vehicle through them, so you know how much vehicle tax you'll have to pay.

The new tax rules will only apply if the CO₂ emissions figure is present

If no type approval or [CO₂ emissions](#) figure is recorded on the [type approval](#) certificate the vehicle will be taxed in the PLG [tax class](#). The current rates of tax can be found [here](#)



New vehicles with a list price of more than £40,000

As with cars, if your vehicle has a list price or notional price over £40,000, the rate of tax is based on CO₂ emissions the first time the vehicle is taxed. The additional rate of tax will apply from the next time you tax the vehicle.

From the second time the vehicle is taxed, the standard rate of tax is £140 (£130 for alternative fuel vehicles) and an additional rate (where applicable) of £310, adding up to £450 (£440 for alternative fuel vehicles) a year for the next 5 years.

Check out [new vehicle tax rates from 1 April 2017](#) for more information.

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[Press release: Do you want to make a difference to flood risk in the South West?](#)

The Environment Agency is looking for enthusiastic applicants from all walks of life to fill a vacancy on the South West Regional Flood and Coastal

Committee (RFCC). Being an RFCC member is an exciting opportunity to help guide local flood and coastal management across the whole region.

The South West RFCC covers [Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly](#).

The successful applicant will play an important role in:

- deciding on local priorities
- approving programmes of work
- supporting the Environment Agency and lead local flood authorities in working with communities and other partners.

They will have a key role in balancing local priorities and making sure that investment is co-ordinated at the river catchment and shoreline scale, as well as promoting the consideration of climate change impacts in local decision making.

The Environment Agency is recruiting for one member to represent nature, conservation and wider environmental issues. This member will need to provide an environmental perspective at meetings, helping the committee to understand the conservation impact of specific plans or projects.

The member will also:

- monitor and review programmes of flood and coastal risk management work and the conservation issues to be addressed
- provide a link between the committee, Natural England and other conservation organisations in the committee's area.

A key role will be ensuring the aims of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy are embodied within the committee's decisions and to ensure consistency between strategic and local plans.

People from a wide range of backgrounds are invited to apply for this post, especially those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and women who are currently under-represented on regional flood and coastal committees.

Further information and an application form is [online](#), or from sarah.harding@environment-agency.gov.uk or call 0203 025 32478 or 07976 256 299.

The closing date for applications is on Wednesday 12 April 2017 at 5.30pm.