

Press release: One month to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force

DVLA is reminding motorists that there is just one month to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force for all cars and some motor homes that are first registered from 1 April 2017.

Rohan Gye, DVLA Vehicle Service Manager, said:

These changes won't affect any vehicles that are registered before 1 April 2017. So, for anyone who already owns a car or is thinking of buying a used car the rates of vehicle tax will not be changing. However, anyone considering buying a new car that will be first registered from 1 April should check the [vehicle tax rates table](#) on GOV.UK to find out how much they'll pay.

Under the changes, vehicle tax for the first year will continue to be based on CO2 emissions. After the first year, the amount of tax to pay will depend on the type of vehicle. The new rates are:

- £140 a year for petrol or diesel vehicles
- £130 a year for alternative fuel vehicles (hybrids, bioethanol and LPG)
- £0 a year for vehicles with zero CO2 emissions

In addition, for vehicles with a list price of more than £40,000, the rate of tax is based on CO2 emissions for the first year. After the first year, the rate depends on the type of vehicle (petrol, diesel, zero emission etc) and an additional rate of £310 a year for the next 5 years. After those 5 years, the vehicle will then be taxed at one of the standard rates (£140, £130 or £0) depending on the vehicle.

There is also [further information](#) available on the changes.

Statement to Parliament: Justice update

Earlier today, I notified the market via the London Stock Exchange group that I would today lay a Statutory Instrument to change the discount rate applicable to personal injury lump sum compensation payments, to minus 0.75%.

Under the Damages Act 1996, I, as Lord Chancellor, have the power to set a

discount rate which courts must consider when awarding compensation for future financial losses in the form of a lump sum in personal injury cases.

The current legal framework makes clear that claimants must be treated as risk averse investors, reflecting the fact that they may be financially dependent on this lump sum, often for long periods or the duration of their life.

The discount rate was last set in 2001, when the then-Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, set the rate at 2.5%. This was based on a three year average of real yields on index-linked gilts.

Since 2001, the real yields on index-linked gilts has fallen, so I have decided to take action.

Having completed the process of statutory consultation, I am satisfied that the rate should be based on a three year average of real returns on index-linked gilts. Therefore I am setting it at minus 0.75%. A full statement of reasons, explaining how I have decided upon this rate, will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The Statutory Instrument to effect this change has been laid today, and will become effective on 20 March 2017.

There will clearly be significant implications across the public and private sector. The government has committed to ensuring that the NHS Litigation Authority has appropriate funding to cover changes to hospitals' clinical negligence costs. The Department of Health will also work closely with General Practitioners (GPs) and Medical Defence Organisations to ensure that appropriate funding is available to meet additional costs to GPs, recognising the crucial role they play in the delivery of NHS care.

The government will review the framework under which I have set the rate today to ensure that it remains fit for purpose in the future. I will bring forward a consultation before Easter that will consider options for reform including: whether the rate should in future be set by an independent body; whether more frequent reviews would improve predictability and certainty for all parties; and whether the methodology – which in effect assumes that claimants would invest only in index-linked gilts – is appropriate for the future. Following the consultation, which will consider whether there is a better or fairer framework for claimants and defendants, the government will bring forward any necessary legislation at an early stage.

I recognise the impacts this decision will have on the insurance industry. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor will meet with insurance industry representatives to discuss the situation.

Green Party: Government is targeting disabled to balance its books



27 February 2017

The Green Party is deeply concerned by proposed changes to PIP payments, which will affect more than 160,000 people [1].

George Freeman MP defended the proposal by saying disability benefits should go to “really disabled people” not those “taking pills at home, who suffer from anxiety” [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The Government by its own admission is targeting the disabled to try to balance its books. This ruthless and underhand move is designed simply to cut disability benefits, regardless of the impact on people’s lives.

“The Government is deliberately going against the two tribunals that ruled the payments should have more reach, not less. George Freeman’s defence of these changes was appalling and revealed a lack of understanding and nothing less than discrimination against people who face serious health conditions like anxiety. His comments are part of the terrible stigma that still exists around mental health, and reinforces it.

“With the Spring Budget approaching the Government should urgently reconsider its plans. This will hurt thousands of people, put up more social barriers and restrict them from going about their daily lives. Disabled people should not be penalised and forced to pay for a budget deficit which they did not create.”

Mags Lewis, Green Party disability spokesperson, said:

“Disabled people are already on the brink, having faced vicious cuts, confusing benefit changes, and Government indifference. Now the Government is planning to change the goal posts yet again. As a disabled person, I know these constant onslaughts cause anxiety, hardship, and terror to disabled

people's lives. Why are we seen as an easy target for cuts? We must unite against this onslaught, fight in the courts and be heard by our Government. Enough is enough."

Notes:

1. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/benefits-cut-change-tory-pip-9906018?service=responsive>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39097019>

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[Press release: People urged to have their say before A303 Stonehenge consultation ends](#)

People still have a chance to give their views on proposals to improve the A303 past Stonehenge as part of a major roads package to cut congestion in the south west.

Consultation on the proposals for the Highways England dualling scheme continues until March 5 and anyone who would like to comment can still do so [via the scheme consultation website](#).

Project director Derek Parody said:

The consultation on plans to relieve congestion on the A303 around Stonehenge is ongoing and the feedback we receive from everyone is really important in helping us to develop our proposed option.

We are delighted with the response so far with more than 2,500 people attending our ten information events.

The consultation website is still live and we would urge anyone who would like to comment on the proposals to do so before consultation ends on March 5.

A single carriageway section of the A303 currently runs alongside the Stonehenge monument. The proposed option is to move the road further away from the stones and put it underground in a 1.8 mile dual carriageway tunnel.

This would improve journey times for the tens of thousands of tourists, commuters, businesses and local people that use the road every day, as well as remove the sight and sound of traffic from this part of the world heritage site.

The Highways England proposals also include a bypass for the village of Winterbourne Stoke and improvements to existing junctions between the A303 and the intersecting A345 and A360 north-south roads. The upgrade will develop the A303 corridor into a high quality, high performing route linking the M3 in the south east and the M5 in the south west, improving journeys for millions of people.

Following consultation the preferred route will be announced later in 2017 and is subject to the completion of statutory procedures for development consent.

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: Planned roadworks in Yorkshire and the Humber: 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 Friday 24 February and 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.

M1 junction 30 Barlborough

The northbound entry slip road at junction 30 will be fully closed overnight on Monday 27 February for survey works. The closures will take place between 8pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

M1 Junction 32 Thurcroft to Junction 35a Stocksbridge

The hard shoulder is currently closed in both directions as part of the smart motorway scheme between junctions 32 and 34. The northbound carriageway will be closed between the slip roads at junction 33 overnight for two nights from Saturday 4 March. The northbound exit slip road at junction 32 will be closed on Thursday 2 March. The southbound entry slip road at junction 34 will be closed overnight for seven nights from Monday 27 February. The southbound exit slip road at junction 33 will be closed overnight for seven nights from Monday 27 February. There will be narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit until the project is completed in March 2017. The closures will take place between 8pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

M62 junction 22 to junction 23 Outlane

The westbound carriageway will be reduced to a single lane overnight for four nights from Tuesday 28 February for road marking works. The closure will take place between 9pm and 6am.

M62 junction 22 Rishworth Moor

The eastbound entry slip road will be fully closed overnight on Monday 27 February for electrical works. The closures will take place between 8pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

M62 junction 24 Ainley Top

The westbound exit slip road will be fully closed overnight on Tuesday 28 February for electrical works. The closures will take place between 8pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

M621 junction 2 to junction 2a Cemetery Road Bridge

The clockwise exit slip road at junction 2 will be fully closed overnight on Tuesday 28 February for electrical works. The clockwise entry slip road at junction 2a will be fully closed overnight on Thursday 2 March for electrical works. The closures will take place between 9pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

A1M junction 37 to junction 36 Warmsworth

The southbound carriageway will be fully closed overnight for four nights from Thursday 2 March for barrier works. The closures will take place between 9pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

A63 South Cave

The westbound entry and exit slip roads will be fully closed overnight on Thursday 2 March for routine works. The closures will take place between 8pm and 6am, and drivers will be able to follow clearly signed diversion routes.

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