

# Loan system overhaul to benefit millions of students and graduates

Millions of graduates will be able to bin their paper statements and access their student loan account online as part of a major revamp to the system, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced today (30 December).

A new online repayment service will go live in 2020 and will allow graduates to see and manage more up to date information about their student loan balance.

The service is part of improvements to modernise the Student Loans Company (SLC) repayment system and will largely replace annual paper statements – although those who prefer the existing paper statements will still be able to receive them.

To stop students over-repaying their loans altogether, the Universities Minister is also calling on graduates to switch to direct debit towards the end of their loan – rather than continue with automatic deductions from their salary.

Earlier this year, the Government [introduced legislation](#) to bring in more frequent data sharing between the SLC and HMRC so students can see more up to date loan balances.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Student loans can remain part of graduates' lives for many years, so it's only right we do all we can to improve the system for them. These changes will make it easier for students to understand their balance, manage their loan and avoid over-repaying.

The student loan system helps make sure anyone with the drive and desire to benefit from our world-leading universities can do so, and it's right we invest in that system so it works for students and taxpayers.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:

With more and more people enjoying the benefits of a university education, it's only right that graduates have easy access to the information they need about repaying their student loan.

The Government is investing in the student loans system to make it as simple and easy for people to use as possible. I urge all graduates to use this new service and to join the direct debit scheme as they approach the end of their loan to ensure a smooth

end and not repay more than they should.

From April 2020, graduates will only need to start paying back their loans [once they earn £26,575](#) – a third consecutive annual increase in the repayment threshold. The Government has acted to help graduates keep more money in their pockets in the early stages of their careers.

Under the current student loans plan, borrowers contribute an affordable amount based on their income, only once they reach the salary threshold. The Government subsidises around half of the overall cost of higher education.

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## Orange peel, rubbish and fatbergs: the fuels behind the future of green transport

- technological advances towards net-zero to be made through 4 new UK-based advanced biofuel plants
- pioneering projects will receive government funding and could lead to greener flights and road freight
- latest move in the government's green transport revolution, following the launch of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will help drive the UK towards its 2050 net zero target

Household waste, unused straw from farmland and old wood will be amongst the unusual components used by 4 world-leading UK-based plants to produce green fuels with support from government funding announced today.

Between 2018 and 2032 low carbon fuels are expected to save nearly 85 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> – equivalent to taking nearly 18 million cars off the road. This equates to around a third of transport's projected contribution to UK carbon savings during the 2020s.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Whether you're commuting to work or travelling on a family getaway, we want that journey to be as green and environmentally friendly as possible.

This funding will help encourage innovative technology using today's waste to power tomorrow's green transport revolution, helping us reach a cleaner and greener future.

Future of Transport Minister George Freeman, said:

We made a legally binding commitment to reaching Net Zero. Now we are delivering. The UK is reducing CO2 emissions faster than any other G20 nation. We are doing it by investing in research and development, supporting the uptake of low emission and electrical vehicles, new inner city Clean Air Zones and the world's first comprehensive Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

This global leadership is helping create a 21st century transport network that is better for our environment, our health and our economy: with the potential to deliver high-skilled jobs in the green economy to all corners of the nation.

Two of the projects announced today are being funded under the government's £20 million [Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition](#) (F4C).

KEW Projects and Rika Biogas have been awarded a share of £6.5 million to build plants which aim to provide fuel for heavy goods vehicles. The project at KEW will also begin research which could pave the way for low carbon aviation fuel.

Over the next decade the UK advanced fuels industry is expected to be worth over £400 million and create 9,800 jobs.

A further 2 projects, which are being funded under the £25 million Advanced Biofuels Demonstration Competition (ABDC), are also driving towards their final stages of development. This includes Nova Pangaea Technologies, who will focus on the production of bio-ethanol from wood waste that can be blended with existing petrol used in road transport.

These latest investments build on the government's push to go further and faster to harness innovation, drive down emissions and improve air quality – including through the ground-breaking [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) which will set out plans to end the UK's transport emissions by 2050 and measures to rapidly [increase electric vehicle infrastructure](#).

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## [Health and Social Care staff and senior leaders among those praised in New Year Honours](#)

- Health and social care sector recognised in the New Year Honours list 2020

- This list celebrates the achievements and service of extraordinary people across the UK
- NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens and Professor Dame Sally Davies, former Chief Medical Officer, among those honoured

This year's [New Year Honours list](#) celebrates the incredible work taking place in the health and social care sector all around the UK.

Among the senior leaders named is Professor Dame Sally Davies, the Government's Chief Medical Officer between 2011 and 2019, the NHS Chief Executive, Simon Stevens, and Chief Social Worker, Lyn Romeo.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

It's fantastic to see so many of our incredible NHS and social care staff recognised for their incredible achievements.

In particular, Professor Dame Sally Davies had an extraordinary impact during her time as Chief Medical Officer, including her revolutionary efforts in the fight against antimicrobial resistance and leading the UK's response to recent health emergencies. I'm delighted her unfaltering determination to improve the nation's health is being celebrated.

I love the NHS and am immensely proud of the incredible work it does. I want to thank Simon Stevens for his excellent work over the last five years and congratulate him on being recognised for that.

Also receiving an honour is Lyn Romeo, who became Chief Social Worker in 2013.

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said

I'm delighted to see health and social care sector staff get the recognition and thanks they so rightfully deserve.

Lyn Romeo has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of social work and social care, making a real difference to people's lives across the UK, and I want to congratulate her today.

Also recognised in this year's Honours list were several nurses, midwives, paramedics and surgeons who have dedicated their lives to supporting the NHS.

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# Additional £35 million for Violence Reduction Units

Eighteen police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will receive an additional £35 million to continue funding specialist teams to tackle violent crime in their area, the Home Secretary has announced today (29 December 2019).

Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) bring together different organisations including police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to prevent serious violence by understanding its root causes.

This early intervention approach forms one part of the government's drive to tackle serious violence, which also includes bolstering law enforcement with 20,000 new police officers and increasing prison sentences for violent criminals.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I will not tolerate criminals drawing vulnerable young people into a life of violence.

We are delivering on the people's priorities by recruiting 20,000 new police officers and introducing tougher sentences to keep offenders behind bars for longer, but agencies must also work together to tackle this issue head on.

These units are already playing a vital role in diverting young people away from crime – and the funding I have announced today will allow them to continue this important work.

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) Serious Violence Lead, Mark Burns-Williamson PCC OBE said:

This funding is very welcome as it will enable PCCs to continue to develop and fund their Violence Reduction Units in the short term. PCCs are investing in preventative and early intervention initiatives around the country and are working to deliver a whole-system approach to tackling serious violence.

We will continue to work with the Home Office and our partners to ensure longer-term investment over the period of the next spending review for all police force and PCC areas to deal with the scourge of serious violence in helping to keep our communities safe.

Earlier this year the Home Secretary allocated £35 million to 18 PCCs in the areas worst affected by violent crime to set up Violence Reduction Units, as

part of an additional £100 million fund to support police to surge their response to serious violence.

Each unit has been tasked with delivering strategies that involve police, healthcare workers, community leaders and others, and aim to reduce and prevent violence in both the short and long term.

Work already under way from the Violence Reduction Units includes new virtual reality technology to teach young people about the dangers of getting involved in serious violence and putting community leaders in hospital A&E departments to provide support to those involved in violence when they are most vulnerable.

The announcement also follows a raft of new commitments from the government to crack down on violent crime, such as creating a legal duty on public bodies to work together to tackle and prevent violent crime.

## **Overview of funding for Violence Reduction Units**

Funding is subject to receiving proposals from Violence Reduction Units on spending allocations and being agreed by the Home Office.

<b>Force area</b>	<b>£ funding per year (19/20 and 20/21)</b>	<b>Total funding for VRUs</b>
Metropolitan Police	£7,000,000	£14,000,000
West Midlands	£3,370,000	£6,740,000
Greater Manchester	£3,370,000	£6,740,000
Merseyside	£3,370,000	£6,740,000
West Yorkshire	£3,370,000	£6,740,000
South Yorkshire	£1,600,000	£3,200,000
Northumbria	£1,600,000	£3,200,000
Thames Valley	£1,160,000	£2,320,000
Lancashire	£1,160,000	£2,320,000
Essex	£1,160,000	£2,320,000
Avon and Somerset	£1,160,000	£2,320,000
Kent	£1,160,000	£2,320,000
Nottinghamshire	£880,000	£1,760,000
Leicestershire	£880,000	£1,760,000
Bedfordshire	£880,000	£1,760,000
Sussex	£880,000	£1,760,000
Hampshire	£880,000	£1,760,000
South Wales	£880,000	£1,760,000
Total England & Wales	£34,760,000	£69,520,000

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## New Year Honours 2020 – update on publication error



A Cabinet Office spokesperson said:

A version of the New Year Honours 2020 list was published in error which contained recipients' addresses.

The information was removed as soon as possible. We apologise to all those affected and are looking into how this happened.

We have reported the matter to the ICO and are contacting all those affected directly.

We are contacting affected individuals in order to provide advice and guidance should they have any security concerns, as well as apologise for the error.

Anyone affected should contact the Cabinet Office at [honours@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:honours@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

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