

Press release: Record numbers of low paid workers to get above inflation pay increase

- National Living Wage and Minimum Wage rises on 1 April will mean real-terms pay increases for minimum wage workers.
- 2.5 million workers are set to be paid one of the minimum wage rates – up from 2 million.
- Sunday will see the largest minimum wage increases in a decade for young workers.

The National Living Wage – the statutory minimum wage for workers aged 25 and over – will increase by 4.4% to £7.83 on Sunday 1 April. This increase keeps it on track to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020. The LPC's latest projection puts the NLW at £8.62 in 2020.

Bryan Sanderson, Chair of the Low Pay Commission, said:

This new analysis shows that the minimum wage is an important force in helping those on low wages. More workers than ever before will see a real increase to their pay, as up to 2.5 million workers will benefit from these increases.

The NMW and more recently NLW have supported the earnings of the low-paid, meaning their pay has grown in real terms since the recession, while earnings higher up the distribution are yet to recover. The biggest rise in the minimum wages for 18-24 year olds for a decade will mean they benefit too.

Over the last 10 years, increases in the minimum wage have meant that workers at the bottom of the pay distribution have seen real-terms hourly pay increases of up to 10%. Despite higher inflation over the last 18 months, this trend has continued because of large increases in the NLW. For those paid more each hour, earnings have yet to recover to pre-recession levels.

Young workers on the age-related minimum wages will also see above-inflation pay rises. The increases in the rates for 21-24 and 18-20 year olds will be the largest in a decade, rising by 4.7% and 5.4% respectively.

In total, up to 2.5 million workers (9.1% of all workers) will benefit from the minimum wage increases. 2.1 million of these will be workers aged 25 and over who are paid the NLW. Minimum wage coverage is set to top 3 million by 2020.

Coverage will rise across a range of occupations, with people working in hair and beauty most likely to be paid the minimum wage (up to 40%). The largest number of minimum wage workers will be employed in retail (475,000 in April

2018), hospitality (290,000), and cleaning and maintenance (275,000). These occupations are predicted to have coverage between 30% and 40% in 2018.

With the 2018 upratings, coverage of the minimum wage will range from 5.2% in London to 14.2% in Northern Ireland. The South East and Scotland will have coverage well below the UK average (9.1%), while in most English regions, and Wales, between 9% and 12% of workers will be paid a minimum wage rate. Full region, nation and local authority data is attached to this release.

In our [2017 Report](#), we said that most employers had successfully managed with the increased cost of the NLW since its introduction in 2016. A wider range of sectors told us that there will be concern over its affordability by 2020, though. Unions, on the other hand, thought increases would be manageable and would bring benefits to workers and the UK economy.

National Minimum Wage rates

Minimum Wage rate	Current rate (hourly)	Rate from 1 April 2018
National Living Wage	£7.50	£7.83
21-24 Year Old Rate	£7.05	£7.38
18-20 Year Old Rate	£5.60	£5.90
16-17 Year Old Rate	£4.05	£4.20
Apprentice Rate	£3.50	£3.70
Accommodation offset	£6.40	£7.00

Notes:

1. The Low Pay Commission is the independent body that advises the Government on the rates of the minimum wage, including the National Living Wage.
2. In 2017, the LPC's remit, which is set by the Government, was to recommend rates for the NLW such that it will reach 60% of median earnings by 2020, subject to sustained economic growth. For the other rates, the LPC was asked to recommend increases to help as many low-paid workers as possible, without damaging their employment prospects.
3. All the rate increases on 1 April 2018 follow the LPC's recommendations, made in our 2017 report.
4. Rates for workers aged under 25, and apprentices, are lower than the NLW in reflection of lower average earnings and higher unemployment rates. International evidence also suggests that younger workers are more exposed to employment risks arising from the pay floor than older workers. Unlike the NLW (where some consequences for employment have been accepted by the Government), the LPC's remit requires us to set the other rates as high as possible without causing damage to jobs and hours.

5. The National Living Wage is different from the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage. Differences include that: the UK Living Wage and the London Living Wage are voluntary pay benchmarks that employers can sign up to if they wish, not legally binding requirements; the hourly rate of the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage is based on an attempt to measure need, whereas the National Living Wage is based on a target relationship between its level and average pay; the UK Living Wage and London Living Wage apply to workers aged 18 and over, the National Living Wage to workers aged 25 and over. The Low Pay Commission has no role in the UK Living Wage or the London Living Wage.
 6. The LPC recently launched its 2018 written consultation. The LPC is gathering evidence to support our recommendations for rates to apply from April 2019. [Full details are available here](#).
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Press release: New powers to crack down on waste crime

- Environment Agency given new powers to tackle the problem of illegal waste sites.
- Powers include ability to lock up sites and force rogue operators to clean up all waste
- Body worn video cameras will be rolled out to all waste enforcement officers

New powers to tackle waste crime come into force today as the Environment Agency is given the authority to lock up illegal waste sites and block access in order to prevent tonnes of waste piling up and posing a risk to the environment.

The Environment Agency has also been granted the power to require rogue operators to clear all the waste at a problem waste site, not just the illegal waste. The changes are in response to a public consultation where 90% of respondents supported proposals for the regulator to take physical steps to curb illegal waste activity.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has also announced that its waste enforcement officers will be equipped with body worn video cameras on their visits to waste sites. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

The measures follow an extra £30 million of funding from the Government in November 2017 to tackle waste crime – an issue that drives business away from legitimate operators, blights communities and endangers the environment.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

These new powers will give the Environment Agency the tools they need to curb the rise of waste sites that continue to break the law and blight our communities.

Through our 25 year Environment plan we want to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it. As part of that commitment I am determined to crack down on these criminals and these new powers will be crucial in ending this criminal activity once and for all, backed up by £30 million of new money.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

These are tough new sanctions against waste criminals and their unscrupulous activity which not only drains the economy but causes harm to the environment and damages livelihoods across the country. Last year, we closed down more than two illegal waste sites a day, and we're determined to keep going.

As we step up our fight against waste criminals, we also have a duty to protect our officers who put themselves in potentially hostile situations when they visit sites for inspections or to serve notices. The introduction of the bodycams provides an added deterrent as our officers do the important job of fighting waste crime.

The use of body cameras was first trialled by the Environment Agency in the north east. Footage captured on a bodycam was recently used to bring a conviction against an offender for the first time. The defendant was found guilty of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty and using abusive behaviour towards two officers.

Paul Whitehill, Environment Agency waste officer said:

As a former police officer, I've seen routine visits rapidly escalate into threatening, or sometimes even violent, situations. Sadly the same risks apply to the Environment Agency's officers.

We want to get on with our jobs without the threat of violence and the cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

For more information on the trial of the body video cameras, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-trials-use-of-body-cameras>

For more information on the successful prosecution using body worn cameras, see our press release [here](#).

The responses to the 2015 public consultation on increasing EA powers are also available [online](#).

Speech: Foreign Secretary's Lord Mayor's Easter Banquet speech at Mansion House, Wednesday 28 March

My Lord Mayor, Your Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen.

I'm going to talk about Britain's global role and our work with our allies around the world but I turn first to the events of this remarkable week because never before has there been a collective expulsion of Russian diplomats on the scale that we have seen over the last few days.

As I speak there are now 27 countries that have themselves taken the risk of kicking out people whose presence they deem to be no longer conducive to the public good.

Of course there are many more that have chosen to act in other ways, countries that have issued powerful statements or downgraded their representation at the World Cup.

But by your leave my Lord Mayor and without wishing to be in any way invidious I want to remind you of the full roll of honour:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United States.

And NATO has either expelled or denied accreditation to 10 Russian officials.

And it seems clear that the Kremlin underestimated the strength of global feeling: if they thought that the world had become so hardened and cynical as not to care about the use of chemical weapons in a peaceful place like Salisbury, if they believed that no one would give a fig about the suffering of Sergei and Yulia Skripal or that we would be indifferent to the reckless and contemptuous disregard for public safety that saw 39 others seek medical

treatment, if they believed that we had become so morally weakened, so dependent on hydrocarbons, so chronically risk averse and so fearful of Russia that we would not dare to respond, then this is their answer, because these countries know full well that they face the risk of retaliation and frankly there are countries that have taken action that are more vulnerable to Russia than we are, whether through geography or their energy needs, and I pay tribute to them because they know that their own Russia-based diplomats, and their families, must now deal with the possibility of their own lives being turned upside down.

That is a huge commitment and sacrifice for one country to make – let alone 27 – and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

But of course I know that these thanks are in a sense impertinent because I do not for one moment believe that this global wave of revulsion has been prompted solely by Salisbury, let alone a sentimental love or affection for the UK, though I don't exclude the possibility of such feelings somewhere in the mix.

It wasn't about us: it was about all of us and the kind of world we want to live in.

Because I believe these expulsions represent a moment when a feeling has suddenly crystallised, when years of vexation and provocation have worn the collective patience to breaking point, and when across the world – across 3 continents – there are countries who are willing to say enough is enough.

After the annexation of Crimea, the intervention in the Donbas, the downing of MH17, the cyberattacks, the attempted coup in Montenegro, the concealing of chemical weapon attacks in Syria, the hacking of the Bundestag, the interference in elections, there are now just too many countries who have felt the disruptive and malign behaviour of the Russian state.

And Salisbury has spoken not just to Salisbury in South Australia and Salisbury in Pennsylvania, in North Carolina, in Maryland, but to all the tranquil cathedral cities across Europe that could have suffered a similar fate and where people deserve to live free from fear and after all these provocations, this week was the moment when the world decided to say enough to the wearying barrage of Russian lies, the torrent of obfuscation and intercontinental ballistic whoppers.

First they told us that Novichok never existed, then they told us that it did exist but they had destroyed the stocks, then they claimed that the stocks had escaped to Sweden or the Czech Republic or Slovakia or the United States.

And the other day they claimed that the true inventor of Novichok was Theresa May.

In the last few days we have been told that Sergei Skripal took an overdose, that he attempted suicide and therefore presumably tried to take his daughter with him, that his attempted murder was revenge for Britain's supposed poisoning of Ivan the Terrible, or that we did it to spoil the World Cup.

In fact the Foreign Office has so far counted 24 such ludicrous fibs – and so I am glad that 27 countries have stood up to say that they are not swallowing that nonsense any more.

It is rather like the beginning of Crime and Punishment in the sense that we are all confident of the culprit – and the only question is whether he will confess or be caught.

And in these last few days it is our values – and our belief in the rules based international order – that have proved their worth.

Not only has there been a strong and speedy multilateral response from NATO and the EU Council but countries that are members of neither have come forward to show that this country is blessed to be part of a broader community of ideals.

And I believe there are many British people who have found it immensely reassuring to learn we may be leaving the EU in exactly a year but we will never be alone, and in part that commitment to Britain reflects Britain's reciprocal commitment to our friends, whether through the work of our peerless intelligence agencies or our armed forces or our development budgets.

And that is what I mean by Global Britain, and so I repeat the prime minister's unconditional and immovable commitment: that we will stand by you as you have stood by us.

We will continue to work with you – bringing as we do 20 per cent of EU defence spending, 25 per cent of the aid budget, 55 per cent of the tonnage of the supply and replenishment vessels needed to keep warships at sea, 100 per cent of the heavy lift capacity.

We are with you in Estonia, we are with you in training the armed forces in Ukraine, we are there in Nigeria and in the Middle East, where the fight against Daesh goes on and where the UK has delivered the second biggest number of air strikes after the US.

We are with you in the Sahel – or we will be with you shortly – and HMS Sutherland is now in the Pacific, exercising alongside our Australian friends, and the UK has forces deployed in more countries than any other European power.

And I have last week announced that we are expanding our FC0 network, with another 250 British diplomats overseas and another ten UK embassies or high commissions in another ten sovereign posts – with the Commonwealth as a priority especially as we will be hosting its summit next month – so that Britain will have more diplomatic missions than any other European country – exceeding the French by one, news that I am told was received with rapture in the Quai d'Orsay, since there is no more compelling case for more funding than news of expansion in King Charles Street.

We believe in that expansion – and we will go further, especially in Africa, because we believe that a Global Britain is fundamentally in the interests of

the British people because it is by being open to the world, and engaging with every country, that the British people will find the markets for their goods and services and ideas as we have done for centuries in that great free trade revolution that made this city the capital of the world and built the Mansion House in which we meet tonight.

When we leave the EU next year, we will re-establish ourselves as an independent member of the WTO and we will be the world's leading proselytiser for free trade.

And it is symmetrically by being welcoming to talent from abroad – as we must and will be – that we have brought to our shores for generations people who want to live their lives without fear of judgment or persecution, to do as they choose provided they do no harm to others, and it is that ethos of generosity that has made this city not just the most diverse in the world but also the most productive region of Europe.

And today the UK is the biggest destination for FDI after the US, our unemployment is at the lowest for 43 years (I seem to remember some people predicting that it would rise by 500,000), we have the biggest tech sector, the best universities.

And Cambridge University alone has won more Nobel prizes than every university in Russia and China added together and multiplied by 2.

We have the most vibrant and dynamic cultural scene, with one venue – the British Museum – attracting more visitors than ten whole European countries that it would not be tactful to name tonight.

And out of this great minestrone, this bouillabaisse, this ratatouille, this seething and syncretic cauldron of culture, we export not just goods – though we certainly do – but ideas and attitudes and even patterns of behaviour.

I am delighted to say that in both the Czech Republic and in Iceland they mark Jan 7 with silly walks day in honour of Monty Python.

There are now nine countries that have their own version of David Brent, and it is an astonishing fact that both of the two highest grossing movies in the world last year was either shot or produced in this country:

Beauty and the Beast and Star Wars.

And what is the principal utensil of violence in Star Wars?

And where was the light sabre invented?

In which part of London? In Uxbridge and South Ruislip.

And that tells you all you need to know about the difference between modern Britain and the government of Vladimir Putin.

They make Novichok, we make light sabres.

One a hideous weapon that is specifically intended for assassination.

The other an implausible theatrical prop with a mysterious buzz.

But which of those two weapons is really more effective in the world of today?

Which has done more for our respective economies?

Which has delighted the imaginations of three generations of children and earned billions?

Which one is loved and which one is loathed?

I tell you that the arsenals of this country and of our friends are not stocked with poison but with something vastly more powerful: the power of imagination and creativity and innovation that comes with living in a free society, of a kind you see all around you today.

And it is that power that will prevail and it is in that spirit of absolute confidence and security that it is our job now not just to beware the Russian state, but to reach out, in spite of all our present difficulties, to extend the hand of friendship to the Russian people.

Because it cannot be said too often that the paranoid imaginings of their rulers have no basis in fact, they are not ringed by foes but by countries who see themselves as admirers and friends, who have taken this action this week because they want nothing so much as to have an end to this pattern of disruptive behaviour, and who want to live in peace and mutual respect and who hope one day that it will be possible to see ever greater commercial and cultural cooperation between us and the Russian people.

And I believe that day can and will come.

I hope it does.

And if and when it does I believe it will be thanks to the resolution of all the countries that acted in their different ways this week.

We will have to keep that resolve because there is no doubt that we will be tested again and I can assure you that in that test the resolve of the British government and people will be unflinching.

Press release: Prime Minister vows to deliver a Brexit that unites the UK

The Prime Minister will travel around the country talking to a range of

people and emphasising that, regardless of whether they backed Leave or Remain, what is important now is making Brexit a success for everyone.

Kicking off in Scotland, the Prime Minister will visit textile workers at a factory in Ayrshire, before travelling to Newcastle to meet with a local parent and toddler group. She will have lunch with farmers near Belfast before travelling to Barry to host a roundtable with Welsh businesses. She will finish the day in West London where she will have tea with a group of Polish citizens who have made the UK their home.

Today, one year until the UK leaves the EU and begins to chart a new course in the world, I am visiting all four nations of the Union to hear from people across our country what Brexit means to them. I am determined that as we leave the EU, and in the years ahead, we will strengthen the bonds that unite us, because ours is the world's most successful union. The UK contains four proud and historic nations, but together we amount to so much more than the sum of our parts and our Union is an enormous force for good.

We see that on the global stage, where the UK stands up for liberal and democratic values and leads the world in international development action. And we see the enormous benefits of our Union at home too, as we face challenges together, freely pooling and sharing risks and rewards as one united people.

As we leave the EU, powers will return from Brussels to the parliaments and assemblies of the UK, closer to the people we all serve and with greater ability to deliver for their needs. Each of the devolved nations will see an increase in their decision-making powers. Make no mistake, this government is absolutely committed to the devolution settlements as we have demonstrated beyond question with landmark pieces of legislation over the last few years.

But as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, I have an absolute responsibility to protect the integrity of the United Kingdom as a whole. That means ensuring that no new barriers are created within our common domestic market and that the UK is able to meet its international obligations in the future. No Prime Minister could leave these things to chance, because they are absolutely crucial to our success as a country in the future.

The government is taking action to benefit the whole UK, from supporting the security services that keep us all safe and pursuing a modern industrial strategy which will deliver jobs and economic growth in every community, to pursuing an international trade policy which will open up new markets for our world-beating exports around the world.

I am determined that our future will be a bright one. It's a future in which we trade freely with friends and partners across Europe and beyond. Having regained control of our laws, our borders and our money, and seized the opportunities provided by Brexit, the UK will thrive as a strong and united country that works for everyone, no matter whether you voted Leave or Remain.

Press release: PM call with Chancellor Merkel: 28 March 2018

The Prime Minister spoke with German Chancellor Angela Merkel this evening.

The PM began by thanking the Chancellor for her strong support and solidarity following the Salisbury attack.

The Chancellor and Prime Minister both agreed on the need to continue to work together to counter increased Russian aggression.

They also discussed the temporary exemption announced by the US in relation to steel and aluminium tariffs.

The two leaders also discussed the importance of the Iran nuclear deal and agreed to stay in touch on these issues.