

Press release: Tax-Free Childcare opens to all eligible families

Today (14 February 2018) Tax-Free Childcare opens to all remaining eligible families: parents whose youngest child is under 12. The new scheme helps working parents with the cost of childcare.

It's quick and easy to apply, and parents could save thousands of pounds each year. For every £8 parents pay into their childcare account, the government will add an extra £2, up to £2,000 per child per year. HM Revenue and Customs has been gradually rolling out Tax-Free Childcare since April 2017.

The money can go towards a whole range of regulated childcare, including nurseries, childminders, after-school clubs and holiday clubs.

Parents, including the self-employed, can apply online for Tax-Free Childcare by visiting [Childcare Choices](#). Parents can also access the government's childcare calculator through Childcare Choices, which helps parents to choose which government support is best for them.

Nicole, a mum of twins from Greater London, who uses Tax-Free Childcare, said:

"I was concerned about the cost of childcare, because I don't get any other support, and I'm a single mum with 15-month-old twins. Tax-Free Childcare has taken a big burden off my shoulders

"It's massively helped me: the extra money makes a huge difference, and I find the system really easy to use. It allows me to comfortably work full time, knowing that my children are being well looked after."

Elizabeth Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said:

"Tax-Free Childcare will cut thousands of pounds from childcare bills and is good news for working parents.

"More parents will be able to work if they want to and this demonstrates our commitment to helping families with the cost of living.

"All eligible parents with children under 12 can now apply through Childcare Choices and should take advantage of the available support."

Since opening the service, through which parents can apply for both Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare, more than 340,000 families have successfully applied. Of these, more than 190,000 have a Tax-Free Childcare account.

The childcare service builds on the childcare support already available to thousands of families, including:

- 15 hours free childcare for families in England
- enhanced childcare support through Universal Credit
- tax credits for childcare

[What's Tax-Free childcare like?](#)

Speech: The UK's shared economic values with Sweden

Britain cares deeply about its relationship with Sweden. I am here to reinforce this message from our Prime Minister, our Parliament and our people.

Whilst in Stockholm today (13 February 2018), I will be meeting with Finance Minister Magdalena Andersson to ensure that the bonds between our citizens and businesses strengthen over the coming years.

Our two countries are linked by shared economic principles: we both aim to maximise our trade opportunities globally, and we both have deep expertise in our respective financial sectors. Our economies are closely linked: from Spotify to IKEA, we Brits consume Swedish products at an astonishing rate. Nearly 7% of all Swedish exports end up in the UK, making us Sweden's sixth most important export partner.

As you know, the British people have voted for Brexit, and the British government is committed to delivering this in a way that protects the interests of families and businesses. We will leave the EU in March 2019, but we are not leaving Europe. We want to maintain the close connections between the UK and the economies of the EU27.

In the short term, our priority is to offer certainty. To do this, we must agree a time-limited Implementation Period after we leave the EU. Again, this is in both our interests because businesses across Sweden, the UK, and Europe will have time to prepare for a single set of changes once we know what our future partnership will look like.

Of course, Sweden did not vote for Brexit, but you have a strong interest in a successful outcome. You rightly want to maintain the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union while avoiding damage to trade and economic growth. If we can be ambitious in agreeing a new model of cooperation, one that looks beyond models that already exist, then I am confident that we can agree a deal that is good for the UK, for Sweden and for the EU.

This future partnership must cover the length and breadth of our economies, including financial services. This will benefit all of us: in the UK and the EU. The City of London is a global financial centre, which attracts capital

and people from across the world and channels finance into the European economy. London's strengths – concentration of activity, depth of expertise, and ability to channel capital – cannot be easily replicated. We can and should approach negotiations with the aim to preserve this European asset, securing a deal that benefits both our economies.

We want to establish a new economic partnership with the EU that recognises our existing deep interconnectedness. A spirit of pragmatic cooperation is vital to achieving this.

I say this because both sides need to be clear about what they want from a future relationship. The complaint from Brussels has been that the UK “hasn't made up its mind what type of relationship it wants” but in London, many feel that we have little signal of what future relationship the EU27 would like to have with a post-Brexit Britain. I don't believe this can be a question only for British politicians and British voters to resolve.

If we can work together on the basis that a good deal is in everybody's interests, we can agree a future partnership preserving the best of what we have – allowing our businesses to continue trading together in goods and services.

Two weeks ago the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge came to Sweden to celebrate your energy, creativity and innovation. Let us use this same energy to agree a new, deep and special partnership that keeps our relationship growing strongly in the future.

Speech: Call for Safe, Voluntary, and Dignified Return of Rohingya Refugees

Thank you Mr President,

And thank you to Assistant Secretary-General Jenca and High Commissioner Grandi for your briefings.

This weekend, UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson visited Cox's Bazar, where he met some of the almost one million Rohingya refugees enduring the difficult living conditions, that you've heard about today. Visiting northern Rakhine, he saw with his own eyes the horror of what has happened.

When he met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on Sunday, the Foreign Secretary said that there needed to be the right conditions created in Rakhine that make it safe for Rohingya refugees to return to their homes, free from fear, and in the knowledge that basic rights will be protected and upheld.

This Council stated last November that the Rohingya refugees must be allowed

to return to their homes – safely, voluntarily, and in conditions of human dignity.

Mr President,

The UK believes that his Council has a duty to ensure those words are matched by action.

We should be clear on three things:

- We should be clear on why refugees fled Rakhine in the first place, indeed why they continue to do so;
- We should be clear that the conditions in Rakhine today are not yet suitable for informed, safe, voluntary, and dignified returns;
- And we should be clear what needs to be done now.

The Rohingya refugees fleeing Rakhine have suffered the most appalling violence: rape, murder, the burning of their villages.

In December, Special Representative Pramila Patten briefed us on the horrific sexual atrocities allegedly committed by the Burmese security forces.

More details emerged last week of specific atrocities committed by Burmese security forces at Gu Dar Pyin and Inn Din villages.

Even now, Rohingya still flee forced starvation and continued human rights violations.

As many of us have said, this is ethnic cleansing.

Mr President,

We welcome the Burmese government's dialogue with Bangladesh and the initial preparations it has made for returns. Much of this is in response to this Council's focus on the crisis.

But the UK believes the conditions in Rakhine do not yet allow for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of refugees.

Now, Mr President, we must be clear on the way forward.

Last November's Presidential Statement remains the guiding frame set by the United Nations Security Council for the actions which need to be taken.

I want to highlight four in particular.

First, both Myanmar and Bangladesh must cooperate fully with the United Nations. We welcome Bangladesh's initial engagement with the UNHCR, which now needs to fully involve them in the returns process, ideally through a Tripartite Agreement. Only the UNHCR has the expertise to handle returns on this scale and give confidence to refugees. It is also essential that Myanmar allows all United Nations agencies to provide humanitarian support for all their peoples.

Second, the parties should take concrete steps to ensure that refugees will

be able to return home on a voluntary basis and with access to accurate information.

Refugees should not be sent to internment camps, and Myanmar must set out how restitution of property and livelihoods will occur.

Women and girls have suffered specific sexual and gender-based violence and face specific risks. They must be represented in any decision-making process and their views given special consideration.

Dismantling the IDP camps which have existed in central Rakhine since 2012 and supporting their inhabitants in returning home would be a positive confidence-building measure.

Again we believe that the UNHCR is the only agency with the necessary expertise.

Third, Burma must ensure the safety for all communities in Rakhine. This means an immediate halt to violence and human rights violations and steps to reduce intercommunal tensions.

It also means giving refugees confidence that those who have committed crimes will be brought to justice through an open and transparent accountability process.

Instead, we have seen the arrest of two Reuters journalists who reported on those killings and the denial of access to UN-mandated human rights bodies.

The UK calls for the release of the Reuters journalists, and calls for the Burmese government's full cooperation with the UN Fact-Finding Mission, the Special Rapporteur, and OHCHR.

Fourth, Myanmar must demonstrate progress implementing the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations. These recommendations continue to provide a blueprint for a more peaceful and prosperous future for all communities in Rakhine. Crucially, they address civil and political rights, including pathways for the Rohingya to receive full Burmese citizenship, as well as addressing socio-economic development. Genuine progress on implementation would demonstrate that the Burmese government is sincere about offering Rohingya refugees a viable future to return to.

Mr President,

Before I conclude, I want to once more pay tribute to Bangladesh for hosting the Rohingya community while they fled in panic for their lives.

But while they remain, Bangladesh – supported by all of us and the international community – must protect refugees and provide for their needs. This includes getting children into schools, helping men and women earn livelihoods, providing support to victims of sexual violence. Humanitarian agencies need to deliver services and prepare camps for the monsoon season.

The UK stands with Bangladesh. We have contributed £59 million in assistance.

We urge the international community to do more to support Bangladesh as they help these refugees and the communities that host them.

Mr President,

The world watched in horror as the violence in Rakhine forced the Rohingya to flee. This Council has played a vital role in shining a spotlight on the situation and in encouraging action by the authorities on the ground. We must not turn away or become distracted. We should stand ready to visit ourselves, and we must be ready to take further action.

Thank you.

[News story: Chair of the Animals in Science Committee](#)

If so, this is an exceptional opportunity to deliver reports and policy advice to ensure that government is best placed to maintain the highest standards in the welfare of animals used in research.

Location: Central London.

Time commitment: The expected time commitment is up to 20 days per year.

Remuneration: Unremunerated; however travel and subsistence expenses will be reimbursed.

The Animals in Science Committee (ASC) is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Home Office to provide independent advice to the government on the use of animals in scientific procedures, advise the Animal Welfare Ethical Review Bodies on good practice, and exchange information with other national bodies within the European Union.

We are seeking a new chair with the ability to set the strategic direction of the ASC and oversee the development and delivery of independent and expert advice to government. The successful candidate will ideally have:

- committee experience at a senior level, including strong organisational and communication skills and the ability to effectively chair multi-disciplinary meetings
- experience of negotiating between conflicting expert opinions

You will possess the ability to think logically and objectively in analysing complex information in order to identify key issues and make effective decisions, including excellent judgement under pressure. Therefore a clear understanding of the role of scientific advice in informing policy in an area of political and public attention and sensitivity is essential.

This will be a 3-year appointment with the possibility of re-appointment.

[More information and details of how to apply.](#)

The closing date for applications is midnight on Sunday 11 March 2018.

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit

[News story: Dstl opens apprenticeship recruitment campaign for 2018](#)

At the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), we work to harness science and technology (S&T) to protect our nation – bringing together the best ideas in sometimes unexpected ways.

Because we provide the UK government with specialist S&T research, advice and analysis, our work is often sensitive or international in nature. Much is operationally critical and has the potential to save many lives. All of it is fascinating.

Crucially, we work with other brilliant people – collaborating with everyone from small companies and world-class universities to large defence companies and other nations. Together, we develop battle-winning technologies, based on deep and widespread research, to support UK military operations now and into the future.

We are on the lookout for apprentices to join us at Dstl. Alongside your training you will earn money and get the chance to work on mind-blowing projects in a truly unique environment. It's an inspiring setting where you can develop wide-ranging skills and gain experience, while learning from some of the brightest minds in the UK.

All of our current vacancies are published on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#).

Electrical Engineering Apprenticeship

Dstl employs some of the world's brightest people. We are always on the lookout for talented, dedicated, creative and innovative individuals to join us.

As an electrical engineer apprentice you will be on a 3 year structured training programme with the chance to experience work across Dstl on different work placements. You will be part of a team of highly skilled and dedicated employees based at our Porton Down site in Salisbury.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572362

Embedded Electronics System and Design Engineer Apprenticeship

Do you want to really make a difference? Be part of an internationally recognised team? Use your practical and theoretical electronics experience?

Join our Platform Systems Division as a degree apprentice. The division supports the Ministry of Defence and other government departments in a broad range of groundbreaking technical research areas. We respond to current and future demands ensuring that the UK retains a battle-winning advantage.

We strengthen and protect our armed forces through groundbreaking technical research. It means safeguarding armoured vehicles, warships and aircraft against the harshest combat environments and providing the most advanced weapon capabilities. Crucially, we ensure that all of this technology and equipment across the military operates together seamlessly.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572410

Cyber and Information Systems Degree Apprenticeship

Do you have a passion for technology? At Dstl we're looking for people that live and breathe technology. Maybe you have a flare for:

- Creativity
- Systems thinking
- Innovation
- Digital embracement

To ensure we stay ahead of the game, we are always on the lookout for talented, dedicated, creative and innovative individuals to contribute to our team. If you think this sounds like you, we would love to hear from you. Cyber and Information Systems Division is the digital hub of the lab with cutting edge facilities. You could be supporting our world-class cyber capability and countering attacks in cyber-space.

This is not a stereotypical 'computer hacker' role – it takes an incredible variety of people to achieve our goals. Here you'll use your computer skills to advance the tools, techniques and tradecrafts required to ensure the UK is able to establish a world-class cyber capability, including the ability to counter-attack in cyberspace.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572368

Data Analyst Apprenticeship

Our Defence and Security Analysis Division supports the Ministry of Defence and other government departments to ensure intelligent decision making is at the heart of the UK Defence and Security. We develop innovative analytical

tools and techniques to take advantage of new advances in science and technology, and provide experienced human and social science advice to maximise the performance of whole systems across the Ministry of Defence and government.

We have a number of project areas in which could work spanning the breadth of UK's Defence and Security including: the Air and Maritime environments; Modelling and Simulation, Wargaming and statistics; Policy analysis and support; and Human and Social Sciences.

This is an excellent apprenticeship opportunity in Dstl, a Ministry of Defence Agency, for a Data Analyst within the Defence and Security Analysis Division with excellent future career prospects in Data Science, Analysis and the Defence Enterprise.

You will be joining our team of highly skilled and dedicated employees based primarily at our Portsmouth West site in Fareham.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572423

Associate Project Management Apprenticeship

Do you want a role where you can show off your organisational skills?

We have an exciting opportunity to join Dstl as an Associate Project Manager Apprentice. You will get to work with our Project Managers in delivering exciting projects giving science and technology support to Defence customers.

Opportunities are available in either our Platform Systems or Defence and Security Analysis Division, where you can support the management of some exciting projects.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572394

Commercial Apprenticeship

Can you communicate effectively, work as part of a team, think on your feet, have the drive to deliver and get things done and able to take personal responsibility for your work and continuous development?

There are apprenticeship vacancies in our Commercial function, based at either of our Portsmouth West, Fareham or Porton Down, Salisbury sites.

You will work alongside our Procurement professionals and have a unique opportunity to work at the forefront of Defence research procuring a variety of requirements from materials for our laboratories to delivering research requirements through a range of procurement routes including framework contracts.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572386

Laboratory Technician Apprenticeship

Do you have a passion for science; are you enthusiastic, motivated and willing to learn?

We have an exciting opportunity to join Dstl as a laboratory technician apprentice within our Chemical Biological and Radiological Division (CBR), at Porton Down, Salisbury. Our CBR division is the UK's centre of excellence for chemical, biological, radiological and medical science and technology within government.

[Dstl Lab Technician Apprentice talks about her role](#)

We provide an integrated capability, delivering longer term research as well as short term advice and consultancy. You will get to work on exciting projects and work alongside internationally renowned scientists. We need people who can use their skills to innovate and develop technologies which give our country the winning edge.

As an apprentice at Dstl you will learn the technical elements of running a lab, maintaining stock and working on project work that truly makes a difference.

Apply now on the [Civil Service Jobs site](#) – reference 1572420