

# Only 50 days to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force

The way vehicle tax is calculated will be changing for new cars and some motorhomes from 1 April 2017. Time is flying by and we're just 50 days away.

We've been busy behind the scenes and [blogging regularly](#) about what DVLA is doing to prepare for the changes internally and with our customers. Here's a recap of where we are:

Over the past 12 months we've been working closely with stakeholders to make sure they're aware of these changes. We're changing the tax rules ready for 1 April and are developing a new service to register new vehicles to launch later in the year. To support the changes we set up and attended industry steering groups to hear the views of stakeholders, update progress and agree the changes.



We launched our public facing communications in November 2016 and have been informing customers about the changes. This publicity campaign is being run across social media, blogs as well as through messages on DVLA literature. We've also updated [GOV.UK](#) with the facts about the changes.

DVLA's contact centre is running an automated telephone service to quickly answer our customer's questions.

We also hosted [a webinar](#) in January for fleet customers with commentary provided by DVLA Service Designers Helen Jones and Rhian Townsend.

We've been keeping a close eye on how these communications are performing and what people think. From this we know that the most popular query amongst the public is whether these changes will affect existing vehicles. The answer? No they don't. The new rates only affect cars and some motorhomes first registered with DVLA on or after 1 April 2017.

So, the countdown is well underway with only 50 days to go until the new vehicle tax rates come into force.

I'm sure this will fly by so please keep up to date with this topic and others by following DVLA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and subscribing to our [Digital Services Blog](#).

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## Press release: 50 days to go until new vehicle tax rates come into force

From:

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DVLA is reminding motorists that there are just 50 days 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.

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## **Press release: Extracurricular cyber clubs to inspire and identify tomorrow's cyber security professionals**

The Cyber Schools Programme aims to support and encourage schoolchildren to develop some of the key skills they would need to work in the growing cyber security sector and help defend the nation's businesses against online threats.

Up to £20m is available to deliver an extracurricular school programme which will see an army of expert external instructors teaching, testing and training teenagers selected for the programme, with a comprehensive cyber curriculum expected to mix classroom and online teaching with real-world challenges and hands-on work experience.

The Cyber Schools Programme, led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is aimed at those aged between 14 and 18, with a target for at least 5,700 teenagers to be trained by 2021.

This programme is for students with the aptitude and enthusiasm for the subject. It aims to appeal to children from all backgrounds, including those currently underrepresented in cyber security jobs.

Cyber security is an exciting industry with strong job prospects. Recent figures from the Tech Partnership show there are already 58,000 cyber security specialists in a growing sector worth £22bn a year to the economy. This is part of the Government's commitment to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

This forward-thinking programme will see thousands of the best and brightest young minds given the opportunity to learn cutting-edge cyber security skills alongside their secondary school studies. We are determined to prepare Britain for the challenges it faces now and in the future and these extracurricular clubs will help identify and inspire future talent.

Students will be expected to commit to four hours a week. This will include classroom-based and online-teaching with flexibility around exams and busier study periods.

The aim is for students to start aged 14 and complete a four-year programme. It will be delivered in modules, meaning older students can join at any point providing they meet the right criteria. The provider will have the flexibility to decide the most appropriate way to deliver the programme, and the pilot, to begin in September 2017, will be monitored and reviewed after the first year.

The programme is all part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme to find, finesse and fast-track tomorrow's online security experts.

It includes the recently announced [CyberFirst bursary funding scheme](#), which offers grants of up to £4,000 for up to 1,000 students by 2020 to study a relevant degree, do a placement or attend a summer school and, depending on meeting requirements, the chance to work in national security on graduation.

There are 2,500 free places on CyberFirst in 2017 and an additional [CyberFirst Girls Competition](#), where teams of 13-to-15-year-old young women can pit their wits against one another to crack a series of online puzzles.

DCMS is also supporting leading employers in critical energy and transport infrastructure to train and recruit up to 50 highly skilled apprentices aged 16 and over to help defend essential services against cyber attacks. The [Cyber Security Apprenticeships for Critical Sectors Scheme](#) is open now for applications for those with a natural flair for problem solving and who are passionate about technology.

A [Cyber Retraining Academy](#), launched in January, is also helping more than 50 high-aptitude people fast-track into the cyber security industry with a ten-week intensive training course.

## **Notes to Editors**

- Media enquiries – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210 or out of hours on 07699 751153.
- DCMS are [seeking providers](#) to deliver this prestigious new schools programme. Bids close on the 13th March 2017.

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## **[Press release: North West traffic officers featured in Channel 5](#)**

# documentary

Three North West traffic officers will be featured in a new Channel 5 series which shows the work involved in keeping the roads moving during the winter months.

A film crew from Winter Road Rescue has spent several shifts with Highways England traffic officers Jason Williamson, Mike Caffrey and Barry Connolly this winter, following the incidents they respond to on some of the England's busiest stretches of motorway.

Jason, Mike and Barry are among over 1,000 traffic officers who respond to over 200,000 incidents every year. They are based at Newton-le-Willows – one of 33 traffic officer outstations on the motorway network – and their patch includes both the M62 and M6.

They can be called out to a wide range of incidents – from minor breakdowns to major collisions – and some of the recent incidents they have attended will be shown in the new series of Winter Road Rescue at 8pm on Channel 5, starting on Monday 13 February.

Jason Williamson, 48, has been a traffic officer for 7 years. The married father-of-three from Macclesfield spent several years with the Royal Air Force Police before signing up as a traffic officer. Jason said:

I was pleased that we were asked to get involved with Winter Road Rescue as we were able to show some of the work we do to keep the roads moving.

Drivers often only see us when we've finished dealing with an incident and the road's reopened. They don't see us helping drivers, moving badly-damaged vehicles or clearing up spillages that would otherwise cause hours of delays, so I hope some of that comes across in the programme.

The new series of Winter Road Rescue will also feature Highways England's North West regional control centre in Newton-le-Willows, where incidents are monitored on CCTV cameras and responded to 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Mike Caffrey, 27, from Warrington, joined Highways England as a traffic officer in September last year. He said:

I really like the variety of the job and the fact that it's such an unusual role. When I applied to become a traffic officer, it sounded different to anything else I'd done and has definitely lived up to expectations. Every day is different.

I get a buzz coming to work as you never know how your shift is

going to play out. We perform a vital job on the motorway network and I feel lucky to be a part of a role helping members of the public to be safe and to arrive at their destination safely.

To be able to make a positive difference to someone's day, no matter how small, is a real enjoyment.

Highways England is urging drivers to adapt their driving to the changing conditions on the road this winter after the latest annual figures revealed that travelling too fast for the conditions is a factor in 1 in 9 of all road deaths in Great Britain.

A new safety campaign is warning drivers that 'when it rains, it kills' after the figures also showed that people are 30 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads in rain than in snow.

It generally takes at least twice as long to stop on a wet road as on a dry road because tyres have less grip on the surface. In wet weather you should:

- slow down if the rain and spray from vehicles is making it difficult to see and be seen
- keep well back from the vehicle in front as this will increase your ability to see and plan ahead
- ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually if the steering becomes unresponsive as it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road

A new road safety video, showing rain falling inside the home of a family imagined to have been involved in a serious road collision, is available to [watch on our YouTube channel](#).

## **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.

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**[Press release: Weekend closures for final phase of £192m dual carriageway](#)**

# project

Drivers in Cheshire are being reminded the A556, M56 junctions 7 and 8 and M6 junction 19 will all be closed next weekend as work to open the new £192 million Knutsford to Bowdon dual carriageway gets underway.

Highways England, which is replacing the A556 between the 2 motorways with the new dual carriageway, today confirmed the new road is currently on course to open for the first time on Monday 6 March – after the second of 3 full weekend closures of the existing A556 and 2 motorway junctions.

The first weekend closure, which will be in operation from 9pm next Friday night (17 February) and 5am on the following Monday morning (20 February) – a total of 56 hours – will allow preparations for the old road to be sealed off to through traffic and for the motorway junctions to be tied into the new dual carriageway.

Work over the 3 weekend closures includes linking the southern end of the new dual carriageway (top centre) with the roundabout at junction 19 of the M6 at Knutsford and sealing off the existing A556 (top right)

Highways England project manager Paul Hampson said:

We're delighted to be able to confirm that we can start work next week on preparations to open the new road with the first of these 3 scheduled weekend closures.

We appreciate there will be some inconvenience for people wanting to use the A556 and the 2 motorway junctions over these weekends but we have worked hard to plan diversions for through traffic and local road users, which will be clearly-signed.

We're working to publicise these but road users can help by taking a little bit of extra care in planning journeys, especially if they are heading to Manchester Airport on any of the 3 weekends.

Motorway users will be diverted to alternative junctions to leave or join the M6 or M56.

Drivers on the northbound M6 heading for Manchester and Manchester Airport will need to stay on the M6, join the westbound M56 at Lymm Interchange (M6 junction 20) and then join the eastbound M56 at junction 10 (Preston Brook).

Drivers on the westbound M56 heading away from Manchester and wanting to join the southbound M6 will also need to travel to junction 10 at Preston Brook – joining the eastbound M56 from there to travel back to Lymm Interchange and access the southbound M6 .

Local diversions , which will be strictly monitored, will also be in place

with access to the A50, Chapel Lane and Mereside Road. A one way system, travelling southbound, will be in place at Bucklow Hill to allow access for residents and businesses located between the Bucklow Hill and Mere junctions along Chester Road. Vehicles must use Mereside Road and Chapel Lane to access Chester Road. Traffic marshalls will be at Mere and Bucklow Hill junctions to facilitate the local diversion.

Over the weekend, only the northbound exit slip road at junction 19 of the M6 will remain partially open – allowing drivers to access the southbound, local authority section, of the A556 towards Northwich.

Work during the 3 weekend closures also includes connecting the new dual carriageway at its northern end with junction 7 of the M56 using these new free-flow link roads, opened in December.

Drivers are advised to build in some extra time for the diversions and to check traffic conditions before setting out on journeys. Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps.

Information is also available from Twitter via @highwaysNWEST as well as services in other regions. Providing they can do so safely, road users can also call the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000 to keep up to date with road conditions.

The current schedule for the 3 weekend closures – and the timetable for opening the new road – involves:

- next weekend's full closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions (Friday 17 February to Monday 20 February)
- a full weekend closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions from 9pm on Friday 3 March to 5am on Monday 6 March – with the new road opening to drivers for the first time that morning
- a final full weekend closure of the old A556 and new A556 between 9pm on Friday 10 March and 5am on Monday 13 March to finalise work to seal off the old road

Construction of the new A556 link road, between the M56 and the M6, started in November 2014 and is part of a £15 billion government investment in motorways and major A roads by 2021 which is being delivered by Highways England as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

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