

Government announces plan to scrap EU law, ensuring British drivers avoid £50 a year insurance hike

- government plans to bin the EU's 'Vnuk' motor insurance law – which requires insurance even on private land for a wider range of 'vehicles', including ride-on lawnmowers and mobility scooters
- move will ensure every British driver is spared an estimated £50 annual increase in insurance premiums
- decision to scrap Vnuk from British law would reiterate benefits of leaving the EU, as we take back control of our own laws and regulations

British drivers will avoid an estimated £50 a year increase in motor insurance costs as the government confirms it plans to do away with the controversial EU 'Vnuk' law, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announced today (21 February 2021).

The Vnuk law requires a wider range of vehicles than those such as cars and motorbikes to be insured, including ones previously not requiring insurance, such as golf buggies, mobility scooters and quad bikes.

The law also extends to vehicles on private land, meaning people with a ride-on lawnmower at home would require insurance where it would have previously not been needed.

Had the EU law been implemented in Great Britain, it would have meant the insurance industry would have been liable for almost £2 billion in extra overall costs. These costs would likely have been passed onto their customers – British road-users.

Now we have left the EU, the measures no longer need to be implemented, helping road-users across the country steer clear of increased premiums – a clear win for motorists in Britain.

Bypassing Vnuk will also protect the existence of the UK's world-leading motorsports industry. The EU rules would have meant any motorsports collision involving vehicles from go-karting to F1 would have been treated as regular road traffic incidents requiring insurance. This could have decimated the industry due to the additional insurance costs of roughly £458 million every single year. Scrapping the rules will save the industry from potential collapse and secure hundreds of thousands of jobs in the sector in the process.

[Video about plans to Scrap the EU Vnuk Law](#)

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We have always disagreed with this over-the-top law that would only do one thing – hit the pockets of hard-working people up and down the country with an unnecessary hike in their car insurance. I am delighted to announce that we no longer need to implement it.

Scrapping this rule would save the country billions of pounds and is part of a new and prosperous future for the UK outside the EU – a future in which we set our own rules and regulations.

As well as the likely financial burden on British road-users, the Vnuk rules are considered unnecessary as there are already insurance packages available to Brits that cover certain risks on private land.

The UK officially left the EU on 31 January 2020, with the formal transition period coming to an end on 31 December 2020, after the ratification of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement – allowing us to control our own rules and regulations and recover our economic and political independence.

PHE launches new Psychological First Aid training

From Monday 22 February, people who care for or work with children and young people aged up to 25 who have been affected by COVID-19 (or other emergencies or individual crises) will be able to access a new online [Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) training course](#).

The [COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on children](#), with many reporting that it has made them feel more stressed, lonely and worried.

The online course, developed by Public Health England (PHE), offers training on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crisis situations. Children and young people can be very resilient, but crises such as COVID-19 can severely impact their mental health. Getting the right support early on can help prevent problems occurring or worsening.

Those completing the training will be equipped to better identify those children that are in distress and provide support to help them feel safe, connected and able to take steps to help themselves during the pandemic or other crisis situations.

It's available for all frontline workers such as teachers, health and social workers, charity and community volunteers and anyone who cares for or is regularly in contact with children and young people aged up to 25, including parents and caregivers. It's free, takes about 3 hours to complete (split

into 3 sessions that the learner can complete at their own pace) and no previous qualifications are required.

On completion, participants will have an understanding of what PFA is, be able to identify who would benefit from support and how best to give help across the different age groups and also for those who might need extra support because of different needs.

Clare Perkins, Director of the Mental Health Programme at PHE, said:

The pandemic has caused significant disruption to all of our daily lives. Children are among the worse impacted, being stuck at home and not able to have the essential social interactions with their friends. Many young people are anxious and worried about their future in these uncertain times.

Children and young people will react to the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. The PFA training course will help professionals, volunteers, parents and carers better identify the signs of those who are struggling and give them timely effective support that is right for them – helping them feel safe and able to help themselves.

PFA is a globally recognised training programme designed to support people during or in the aftermath of a serious event. PHE has adapted this training for those supporting children and young people with advice from a range of experts, including NHS England, the Department for Education and the British Red Cross and is being made available online by social learning platform, [Future Learn](#).

This new course follows the success of the [PFA training for COVID-19](#) that PHE launched in June 2020 which to date has received over 100,000 sign-ups from frontline workers and volunteers. The UK Public Health Rapid Support Team also launched last week [an adaption of the PFA course for use in African countries affected by COVID-19](#).

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford said:

This new training module is being introduced at an important time. I know how difficult the pandemic has been for children and young people across the country, and this additional support for those working with them every day – whether they are parents and carers, teachers, health and social care workers, or volunteers – is timely and necessary.

It builds on our commitment to supporting children and young people's mental health now and over the long-term, and the expertise already available like our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme. This includes a webinar for education staff that draws on and complements this Psychological First Aid e-

learning. They will both be of enormous value to those who want to help and improve children and young people's mental wellbeing, including teachers.

Minister for Mental Health Nadine Dorries said:

Children and young people have been uniquely challenged by the events of the last year. I remain absolutely committed to supporting them through this pandemic and beyond, ensuring we equip them with the tools and support they need to stay mentally well.

This training will ensure those who work with children and young people – including parents and caregivers – can support their wellbeing by identifying signs of distress and helping them access the support they need.

We know that while children can be very resilient, crises or emergencies can have a huge impact on their mental health and we must continue to ensure they can access the support they need.

Claire Murdoch, NHS Mental Health Director, said:

The pandemic has turned our lives upside down and hit children and young people particularly hard. Working with our partners, we have been doing everything possible to make sure that they are fully supported and this online training will be invaluable in helping people to understand how best to offer the right support at the right time.

It has been a tough year, but the NHS is here for children's mental health, so anyone who is struggling should come forward for the help they need.

Dr Sarah Davidson, Head of Psychosocial and Mental Health, British Red Cross, said:

This resource from PHE enables a thoughtful, developmentally appropriate response to children and young people who have experienced a crisis. Clear and including helpful links to other resources, it will help people to know how to be supportive whilst avoiding further harm.

The course is free for all who care for and work with children and young people aged between 0 and 25. No previous qualifications are required to enrol.

For guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of

coronavirus please visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and [Every Mind Matters](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters).

The PFA course is a training resource to equip people with information to help others. It is not intended as a therapeutic intervention for those who are experiencing distress or crisis. Anyone needing help should visit [NHS 111 website](https://www.nhs.uk), call 111 or contact their GP.

Images used in this document are subject to third party copyright.

Foreign Secretary statement on violent crackdown on peaceful protests in Myanmar

News story

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab condemns the violent crackdown by Myanmar's military on peaceful protests in Mandalay.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab statement:

The UK condemns the shooting of peaceful protesters, which only places the military regime further beyond the pale. We will consider further measures, with our international partners, to hold to account those responsible for crushing democracy and choking dissent.

Published 20 February 2021

Foreign Secretary reaffirms UK's solidarity with Ukraine on seventh anniversary of illegal annexation of Crimea

Press release

The UK will remain at the forefront of international efforts to end Russia's illegitimate control of the Crimean peninsula.



- UK announces new project to improve lives of Ukrainians living in Crimea
- UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission has received nearly £700,000 from the UK over the last year for vital work monitoring and exposing human rights abuses committed by Russia in Crimea

The UK has reaffirmed its unwavering support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its support for Ukrainians whose lives have been impacted by Russian aggression, seven years after Russia illegally annexed Crimea and began its ongoing campaign to militarise the peninsula.

To mark the seventh anniversary of the illegal annexation, the UK is announcing funding for a new project to improve access to vital services for Ukrainians living in Crimea. The UK will contribute £168,000 to this project, which will support the local authorities in the neighbouring Kherson region to help those who are struggling to visit hospitals or apply for Ukrainian passports.

The UK also welcomes the new International Crimean Platform which will bring together the international community to support the return of Crimea to Ukraine.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK stands with Ukraine against the illegal annexation of Crimea and we will continue supporting those whose lives have been

impacted by Russia's illegitimate aggression.

Russia is trying to cover up its human rights abuses by preventing access to Crimea for international monitors. But we will work closely with the UN and international partners to ensure Russia is held to account.

The UK calls on Russia to immediately release all Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and Russia – currently known to be over 100 - who are often kept in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions and refused access to proper medical treatment.

The UK has contributed nearly £700,000 to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission which monitors and documents human rights abuses on the peninsula, while also providing human rights expertise to promote the right to a fair trial for political prisoners in Crimea.

Published 20 February 2021

Care home residents to be allowed one visitor as part of cautious easing of lockdown

- Visitors to be allowed to hold hands, with tests required before entry and PPE to be worn on site
- Scheme designed to be the next, cautious step in bringing families back together

Care home residents will be able to be visited indoors by a single, named individual from 8 March as part of the Prime Minister's roadmap to ease lockdown restrictions.

The scheme will allow a single visitor to hold hands indoors with their relative or contact in a care home, and make repeat visits under carefully designed conditions to keep residents, staff and visitors safe.

Every resident will have the opportunity to name one individual, who will be required to have a test beforehand, wear PPE during the visit and avoid close contact.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I know how important visiting a loved one is and I'm pleased we

will soon be in a position for people to be carefully and safely reunited with loved ones who live in care homes.

This is just the first step to getting back to where we want to be. We need to make sure we keep the infection rate down, to allow greater visiting in a step-by-step way in the future.

Restrictions on visits have been in place during national lockdown to protect vulnerable residents. While coronavirus cases remain high, the number of infections is falling. The UK's vaccination programme has seen every care home resident offered a jab, with almost 17 million vaccinations carried out in total.

Outdoor, pod and screen visits will be able to continue in line with the published guidance which has been in place during lockdown, meaning there will be chances for residents to see more than just the one person they nominate.

The clinically led approach has been designed in partnership with the Deputy Chief Medical Officers and Public Health England and is the next step towards regular indoor visits resuming.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

One of the hardest things during this pandemic has been seeing families desperate to be reunited with their loved ones kept apart and I absolutely want to bring them back together.

Throughout this pandemic we have sought clinical guidance on how visits can be conducted safely.

We had to restrict the majority of visiting when the new variant was discovered but we have done all we can to enable visits to continue in some form. That includes providing funding towards costs of screens and PPE.

As we begin to open up we will move step by step to increase visits while remembering we are still in the grip of a global pandemic.

All visitors will receive a lateral flow test and be required to follow all infection prevention and control measures.

These measures, based on the science, represent a balance between the risk of infections and the importance of visiting for the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and their families.

Professor Deborah Sturdy, chief nurse for adult social care, said:

I know how much people want to visit, hug and kiss their loved ones but doing so can put lives at risk so we would ask people to

continue to follow the rules.

This is a first step towards resuming indoor visits and we all hope to be able to take further steps in the future.

I am pleased that, as a result of so many people following the rules, we are in a position to increase visits and I hope this is just the start.

Close-contact care will be restricted to visitors who provide assistance – such as help dressing, eating or washing – which is essential to the immediate health and wellbeing of a resident. Existing guidance already enables these visits under exceptional circumstances.

We are providing extra support for these carers by providing them with the same regular PCR testing regime and PPE arrangements as care home workers to further reduce the risk of infection to themselves and those for whom they provide vital care.

All care home providers not experiencing an outbreak will be asked to follow the updated guidance and continue to work together with families and local professionals to ensure visits are possible while continuing to limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The government will continue to provide free tests and PPE to support the scheme and has already distributed £1.1 billion from the infection control fund, an additional £149 million to support rapid testing and visits and £120 million to increase staffing.

- The person nominated will remain unchanged while this step is in place
- There will be discretion for care homes to allow more than one named visitor in exceptional circumstances
- Home testing of single, named visitors will not be allowed during the start of the scheme but will be reviewed
- Hand-holding is allowed but named visitors will be asked to avoid any closer contact
- Vaccination is not mandatory and will not be a condition of visiting
- In terms of visiting out, the rules and guidance will remain unchanged at this stage
- Visiting will be suspended during local outbreaks in individual homes
- Further guidance will be published before the launch of the single, named visitor scheme on 8 March