

# Fascinating facts about Self Assessment

Did you know almost 100,000 people filed their tax returns on 6 April 2020, which is the first day of the tax year?

With the 31 January 2021 deadline fast approaching, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) shares some little-known facts about Self Assessment tax returns.

The April 'early birds' are not the only ones to make HMRC's list of Self Assessment facts; it is also 20 years since the tax authority introduced online tax returns. In 2001, 38,000 online tax returns were filed and this year, HMRC estimates around 11 million online tax returns – quite the increase and in line with the digitisation of the tax system.

HMRC's 7 Self Assessment facts are:

- 96,519 people filed their tax return on 6 April 2020 (first day of the tax year)
- it's the 20th anniversary of Self Assessment internet filing, the service began on 3 July 2000 – with 38,000 individuals successfully sending their digital tax return by 31 January 2001
- in January 2011, 3.4 million taxpayers completed a Self Assessment tax return online – this has increased to an estimated 5 million in January 2021
- this year's deadline (31 January 2021) is on a Sunday. The last time the deadline was on a Sunday was in 2016
- last year, the busiest filing day was 31 January with 702,171 returns completed
- the peak hour for filing last year was between 16:00 to 16:59 on 31 January when 56,969 customers filed
- HMRC has increased the self-serve Time to Pay threshold to £30,000 to help Self Assessment customers spread the cost of their tax bill

Karl Khan, HMRC's Interim Director General for Customer Services, said:

It's 20 years since Self Assessment online was introduced and it's how the vast majority of customers complete their tax return these days. Fewer and fewer people are doing it on paper each year.

There's still time for customers to complete their tax return before the deadline, and help and support is available on GOV.UK.

HMRC expects more than 12.1 million people to complete a Self Assessment tax return. Figures released earlier this month revealed that 55% of customers have already filed their returns, with more than 6.2 million choosing to submit online (93% of all returns filed).

Once customers have completed their tax return, and know how much tax is owed, they can set up their own payment plan to help spread the cost of their tax liabilities.

They can use the self-serve Time to Pay facility to set up monthly direct debits online.

This year, in light of the additional pressures caused by COVID-19, HMRC has increased the self-serve Time to Pay threshold to £30,000 to help Self Assessment customers spread the cost of their tax bill. Interest will be applied to any outstanding balance from 1 February 2021.

To see if they're eligible, customers can visit GOV.UK to find out more about [paying through instalments](#).

Be aware of copycat HMRC websites and phishing scams. Customers should always type in the full online address [www.gov.uk/hmrc](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc) to get the correct link for their Self Assessment tax return online securely and free of charge.

They also need to be alert if someone calls, emails or texts claiming to be from HMRC, saying that they can claim financial help, are due a tax refund or owe tax – it might be a scam. Check GOV.UK for information on how to [recognise genuine HMRC contact](#).

See more information about [Self Assessment](#).

Find [help and support](#) on GOV.UK or through the HMRC app for customers completing their Self Assessment tax return.

If a customer's Self Assessment debts are more than £30,000, or they need longer than 12 months to pay their debt in full, they may still be able to set up a Time to Pay arrangement by calling the Self Assessment Payment Helpline on 0300 200 3822

To protect against identity fraud customers must verify their identity when accessing HMRC's online services. They must have two sources of information including:

- credit reference agency data
- tax credits
- P60/payslip
- UK passport

Customers can also [check on GOV.UK whether they need to declare, or possibly pay tax on any 'casual' income](#) they receive. The new interactive guidance is quick and easy to use and explains what individuals need to do if they receive non-PAYE income

Follow the National Cyber Security Centre's six essential steps to keep yourself and your business secure online by visiting [CyberAware.gov.uk](http://CyberAware.gov.uk).

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# Prime Minister and Chancellor launch new Business Council

Today the Prime Minister will chair the first meeting of a new Business Council established to work with government to fuel COVID-19 economic recovery and future growth plans.

The Build Back Better Council will bring together a broad range of business leaders from across the whole British economy to work in partnership with the government to unlock investment, boost job creation, promote Global Britain and level up the whole of the UK.

The Build Back Better Council will be comprised of 30 members representing industries from retail and hospitality, to finance, science and technology. It will be co-chaired by the Prime Minister and Chancellor, with the Business Secretary as a standing member, and other Cabinet Ministers attending as required – the Trade Secretary will join the first meeting.

At the first meeting, which will take place virtually, the Prime Minister will update leaders on the current COVID-19 situation, including the vaccine roll-out, as well as plans to rebuild the economy after the crisis has passed. Council members will share their views on the economy, provide a commercial perspective on policy and highlight obstacles and solutions to economic recovery.

Whilst recognising that the short term will be difficult, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor are committed to making sure that we will be ready to kickstart our economy as soon as we can, so vital work continues across government on supporting job creation, improving skills, opening up new investment, cementing the UK's position as a science superpower, delivering a once in a generation investment programme in infrastructure, launching a green industrial revolution and enabling our entrepreneurs to scale their businesses.

The government will take this opportunity as a truly independent country to forge our own economic and global path and we will explore how the opportunities outside the EU can help aid our recovery.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We know the best way to rebuild our economy is to beat Covid which is why we have invested billions in new vaccines and a national testing operation so that we can reopen the economy safely as soon as possible in the future.

But despite this we – like many other countries – face a huge

economic challenge. And as we recover from this crisis it won't be enough to just go back to normal – our promise will be to Build Back Better and level up opportunity for people and businesses across the UK.

This Build Back Better Council will ensure that government and businesses continue to work closely together. It will provide an important forum for frank feedback on our recovery plans and will help ensure the steps we are taking are the right ones.

The Business Council will meet quarterly, but with further meetings agreed with the Prime Minister and Chancellor if required. Each member is appointed to the Council for a term of 12 months.

It will complement the wide range of engagement with businesses, business representative groups and trades unions across the whole of Government.

Isabel Dedring, Arup

Leo Quinn, Balfour Beatty

Stephen Welton, BGF

Rachel Lord, Blackrock

Bernard Looney, BP

Sean Doyle, British Airways

Philip Jansen, BT

Poppy Gustafsson, Darktrace

Penny James, Direct Line

Ronan Harris, Google

Emma Walmsley, GSK

Lord Deighton, Heathrow

Mark Tucker, HSBC

Dame Carolyn McCall, ITV

Thierry Bolloré, Jaguar Land Rover

Dame Sharon White, John Lewis Partnership

Robert MacLeod, Johnson Matthey

Cressida Hogg, Landsec

Nigel Wilson, Legal & General

Vivian Hunt, McKinsey & the CBI

Ron Kalifa, Network International

Karen Jones, Prezzo

Laxman Narasimhan, Reckitt Benckiser

Liv Garfield, Severn Trent

Carl Ennis, Siemens

Martin Murphy, Syncona

Ken Murphy, Tesco

Alan Jope, Unilever

Charlotte Hogg, Visa

Sir Ian Wood, Wood

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## **Coronavirus (COVID-19): letter to all postmasters, January 2021**

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Letter from the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility, Paul Scully, to all postmasters, their staff and Post Office employees.

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## **DAO 02/21 EU Law references in Managing Public Money**

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# Successful first year for waste crime taskforce despite pandemic

Criminals operating in the waste industry are being warned that the Covid-19 pandemic is not stopping the authorities from cracking down on their illegal activities, as the Joint Unit for Waste Crime (JUWC) heralds a successful first year in operation.

[Launched in January 2020](#), the multi-agency taskforce was the first of its kind to formally bring together environmental regulators and law enforcement agencies to tackle serious and organised waste crime which is estimated to cost the UK economy at least £600 million a year and cause great harm to the environment, local communities and businesses.

Despite the Joint Unit being in its infancy when the Covid-19 pandemic struck, the taskforce has wasted no time in sharing intelligence, identifying illegal activity and conducting numerous operations to disrupt illegal activities, leading to arrests of suspected waste criminals and bringing them to justice. The taskforce has also strengthened in number, with the British Transport Police and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency joining the Unit in September.

Nicola Lawton, JUWC Deputy Director for Enforcement, said:

The JUWC is crucial to our fight against serious and organised waste crime, and despite the Covid-19 pandemic we have continued to target and disrupt the criminal networks who are undermining the waste industry and the environment.

In the last year we have conducted numerous multi-agency operations against groups and individuals who are causing serious harm, and the Unit is now leading over 20 operations into offending that spans the UK and involves not only waste crime but other criminal activities including firearms, drugs, vehicle theft and money laundering.

The Joint Unit has entered 2021 stronger and more determined than ever to tackle those engaged in serious and organised waste crime.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

The past year has been a real challenge for our enforcement agencies as they carry out their important work, and I commend the

Joint Unit for Waste Crime for its vital efforts in disrupting the criminals and gangs who show complete disregard for our waste industry, local communities and the environment.

We are absolutely committed to clamping down on waste crime and I look forward to seeing the Joint Unit go from strength to strength over the coming years as it protects the public and the environment from harm and brings waste criminals to justice.

Much waste crime is carried out by gangs and individuals who operate bogus waste services, accepting payment for disposal without having the necessary permits for transportation or storage. Waste is then illegally dumped on private and public land to avoid fees and landfill taxes, which causes significant harm to businesses, local communities and the environment.

## **JUWC case studies**

- In May 2020, the JUWC started an investigation into a hostile waste operation where local Environment Agency officers had previously been intimidated and threatened. JUWC officers commenced a surveillance operation and worked with the local council, HMRC, the DVSA and the RSPCA on a targeted plan for the site. This led to a warrant being executed in August 2020 by JUWC officers and the police. The JUWC are now reviewing the evidence gathered and will take enforcement action for any offences committed.
- In September 2020, the JUWC was invited by the Government Agency Intelligence Network to attend a site raid in Kent which was supported by over 300 Metropolitan Police firearms officers. Seven people were arrested on suspicion of an array of offences after police discovered drugs, stolen vehicles and an arsenal of weapons including a loaded shotgun, 17 air weapons, CS gas and a machete. Two people found at the site were cared for by the force's modern slavery team and 49 stolen dogs seized, with most now returned to their owners.
- In October, JUWC officers from the Environment Agency and the British Transport Police undertook a week of action tackling waste and metal crime. Over 1,100 vehicles were stopped and 550 sites were visited. Over 150 offences were detected and 29 arrests made.

In addition to the JUWC, the Environment Agency (EA) conducts its own operations to disrupt criminal waste activity. In 2019, the Agency stopped illegal waste activity at 912 sites – 12 per cent more than the previous year. As a result of prosecutions taken by the EA, businesses and individuals were fined almost £2.8 million for environmental offences in 2018.