

[News story: Spring Statement 2019 date confirmed](#)



The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, has announced that the government will respond to the forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) in a Spring Statement on Wednesday 13 March 2019.

Following the Chancellor's announcement at [Autumn Statement 2016](#), there will now only be one major fiscal event each year.

Published 29 January 2019

[News story: Direct Rail Services lifts 6th Golden Whistle Award](#)

Organised by the Institute of Railway Operators, in conjunction with Modern Railways Magazine, the annual event celebrates operational excellence in the industry.

The Golden Whistle is awarded annually for consistent arrival times over the previous 12 months – DRS was declared more reliable than any of its competitors.

The award also recognises the hard work and dedication of the DRS team, as well as the strong investment in reliability of the DRS fleet of locomotives and assets.

DRS is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and supports its decommissioning mission with its core nuclear transport business.

The Cumbria-based freight company also provides services for other rail

market sectors such as intermodal, infrastructure support services, passenger and charters.

NDA Commercial Director, Kate Ellis, said:

DRS makes a vital contribution to NDA's decommissioning mission and I am delighted for the team at DRS to have won such a prestigious award, once again reflecting their commitment to service and reliability.

Head of Performance for DRS, Norman Egglestone, said:

DRS has just been awarded another well-earned Golden Whistle for, once again, ensuring our customers' services arrived on time. In the last year we have seen over 90% of all DRS' commercial freight services achieve this target... Meaning DRS rightly remains 'The Best Performing Rail Freight Operator'.

This award would not be possible without the reliability of our rolling stock, the commitment and professionalism of our drivers, ground staff and those involved in the planning and co-ordination of our services.

[News story: ESFA welcomes new Management Board Chair](#)

[Irene Lucas](#) CBE, who recently joined the Department of Education Board as a non-executive board member, has been appointed as our Management Board Chair. This completes the ESFA Management Board recruitment process.

Irene has a wealth of experience working in the private sector, as Chair of the Hays Travel group, and across the civil service and local government.

This follows on from the appointment, in September 2018, of Stuart McMinnies, Martin Spencer and Hunada Nousse as non-executive members of the ESFA Management Board. Additionally, Hunada also takes on the role of ESFA Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Chair, from Friday 1 February 2019, and is joined by John Lakin, who was appointed to the Audit and Risk Committee earlier this year alongside current non-executive members Nigel Johnson and Ian Hickman.

Following the creation of the ESFA in April 2017, an interim Management Board

has been in place while we conducted a thorough public appointment process to recruit a new chair and board members, who can bring expertise and challenge to the organisation. These members had been through the public appointments process, as part of their current role on the Audit and Risk Committee of the ESFA or DfE Board.

Eileen Milner, ESFA Chief Executive said:

It is great to have Irene leading the Management Board and having all members now appointed. The role of the Management Board is to provide crucial scrutiny, challenge, advice and oversight, to hold us rightly to account as a public body. I look forward to working with Irene and the rest of the board members.

Details on the board members and all future meeting minutes will be published on [our governance](#) page.

Press release: Alert to users of FreeStyle Libre flash glucose monitoring system regarding skin reactions to sensor adhesive

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is aware some users of the FreeStyle Libre flash glucose monitoring system are experiencing skin reactions to the sensor adhesive.

Users may have been applying creams, sprays or patches under their sensor to reduce symptoms of skin reactions caused by the sensor adhesive. This is not advised as it may affect the performance of the device.

If you notice redness, itching or blistering, seek guidance from a healthcare professional on continuing the use of the device. They can advise on possible alternative glucose monitoring systems.

The manufacturer, Abbott, has confirmed they have revised the formulation of the adhesive, which will be available to customers in the UK from April 2019.

This problem may not be unique to the Abbott FreeStyle Libre sensor adhesive. The same actions should be taken if users experience similar symptoms with a different brand of continuous glucose monitoring system.

John Wilkinson, MHRA Director of Devices, said:

It is important people can rely on their medical devices.

If you experience skin irritation after applying the sensor of your flash glucose monitoring system you should speak with your doctor, pharmacist or diabetes management team.

We continue to encourage people to report any issues involving medical devices to us via our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Libby Dowling, Senior Clinical Advisor at Diabetes UK, said:

People with diabetes who use flash should be aware that, as per recent reports, using barrier creams or sprays could affect the performance of their glucose monitoring sensors. If people are having skin reactions, they should consult with their healthcare professional or pharmacist in order to get advice on the measures they should take for the performance of their device to not be affected.

We're reassured that the manufacturer is currently revising the formulation of the adhesive and is looking to make this available to the public in response.

Notes to editor

1. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe.
2. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes [NIBSC](#) and [CPRD](#). The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is an executive agency of the [Department of Health and Social Care](#).
3. Anyone who has experienced an adverse incident with a medicine or medical device is encouraged to report any issues to MHRA via our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).
4. Read the [Medical Device Alert in full on our website](#).

[Press release: December 2018 Price Paid Data](#)

This month's Price Paid Data includes details of more than 88,700 sales of land and property in England and Wales that HM Land Registry received for registration in December 2018.

In the dataset you can find the date of sale for each property, its full address and sale price, its category (residential or commercial) and type (detached, semi-detached, terraced, flat or maisonette and other), whether it is new build or not and whether it is freehold or leasehold.

The number of sales received for registration by property type and month

Property type	December 2018	November 2018	October 2018
Detached	20,320	23,931	25,066
Semi-detached	23,512	26,797	27,567
Terraced	23,890	26,758	28,352
Flat/maisonette	15,573	19,158	19,352
Other	5,490	6,059	6,553
Total	88,785	102,703	106,883

Of the 88,785 sales received for registration in December 2018:

- 67,741 were freehold, a 21% increase on December 2017
- 10,664 were newly built, an 8% increase on December 2017

There is a time difference between the sale of a property and its registration at HM Land Registry.

Of the 88,785 sales received for registration 24,840 took place in December 2018 of which:

- 451 were of residential properties in England and Wales for £1 million and over
- 270 were of residential properties in Greater London for £1 million and over
- 2 were of residential properties in the West Midlands for more than £1 million
- 6 were of residential properties in Greater Manchester for more than £1 million
- none were of residential properties in Cardiff for more than £1 million

The most expensive residential sale taking place in December 2018 was of a terraced property in Kensington and Chelsea for £11,000,000. The cheapest residential sale in December 2018 was of a terraced property in Peterlee, County Durham for £17,500.

The most expensive commercial sale taking place in December 2018 was in Evesham for £60,172,946. The cheapest commercial sales in December 2018 were in Ilkeston, Haringey and Southampton for £100.

[Access the full dataset](#)

Notes to editors

1. Price Paid Data is published at 11am on the 20th working day of each month. The next dataset will be published on 28 February 2019.
2. [Price Paid Data](#) is property price data for all residential and commercial property sales in England and Wales that are lodged with HM Land Registry for registration in that month, [subject to exclusions](#).
3. The amount of time between the sale of a property and the registration of this information with HM Land Registry varies. It typically ranges between two weeks and two months. Data for the two most recent months is therefore incomplete and does not give an indication of final monthly volumes. Occasionally the interval between sale and registration is longer than 2 months. The small number of sales affected cannot be updated for publication until the sales are lodged for registration.
4. Price Paid Data categories are either Category A (Standard entries) which includes single residential properties sold for full market value or Category B (Additional entries) for example sales to a company, buy-to-lets where they can be identified by a mortgage and repossessions.
5. HM Land Registry has been collecting information on Category A sales from January 1995 and on Category B sales from October 2013.
6. Price Paid Data can be downloaded in text, CSV format and in a machine readable format as [linked data](#) and is released under the [Open Government Licence \(OGL\)](#). Under the OGL, HM Land Registry permits the use of Price Paid Data for commercial or non-commercial purposes. However, the OGL does not cover the use of [third party rights](#), which HM Land Registry is not authorised to license.
7. The [Price Paid Data report builder](#) allows users to build bespoke reports using the data. Reports can be based on location, estate type, price paid or property type over a defined period of time.
8. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
9. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

10. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 86% of the land mass of England and Wales.
11. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
12. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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