

PM statement at NATO press conference: 24 March 2022

It is scarcely believable as we stand here today that just a month ago, the Ukrainian people were living ordinary, peaceful lives. Now, they are locked in an extraordinary battle for survival against an unprovoked onslaught from their neighbours.

Ukrainians have taken up the fight and taught the world the meaning of bravery. Against the odds, they have snarled up Russia's invading army, inflicting defeat after defeat. The heroism of Ukraine has changed the geopolitics of Europe.

Vladimir Putin has badly miscalculated in Ukraine, and I believe he knows it. But now that Putin's Plan A has foundered, he is already escalating by intensifying his attacks on civilians.

Maternity wards, schools and homes and have been bombed without any regard for civilian life. Families are being starved out in freezing basement shelters, and targeted as they flee.

The United Kingdom – and our allies in NATO and the G7 here today – are clear: we will not stand by while Putin vents his fury on Ukraine.

I have rarely seen our nations more united in recent years than we are now. Putin's failure in Ukraine is vital for the peace and prosperity of all of us, and his barbaric invasion has galvanised the international community into collective action.

We will work with likeminded allies to ramp up lethal aid to Ukraine at scale, providing kit to President Zelenskyy in the quantity and with the quality and quantity that he needs to defend his country from its bullying neighbour.

Today, I have announced we in the UK will send an additional 6,000 missiles and provide £25 million in unrestricted funding for Ukraine's armed forces, more than doubling the lethal aid we have provided to date.

We are bolstering our support for the NATO countries on the frontline, sending a new deployment of UK troops to Bulgaria on top of the doubling our troops both in Poland and in Estonia.

This is just the beginning. We must support a free and democratic Ukraine in the long term. This is a fellow European democracy fighting a war of national defence.

NATO and G7 leaders were also united today in our determination to continue turning the screws on the Kremlin's war machine, including by weaning ourselves off Russian oil and gas and reshaping global energy security.

The UK has already hit over 1,000 Russian individuals and entities in our toughest-ever sanctions, and the Foreign Secretary has announced 65 new sanctions against Russian banks, weapons manufacturers and oligarchs just this morning.

I also discussed the humanitarian response with our allies and partners today, as we continue to see huge numbers of Ukrainians flee their homes.

And the message that President Putin can take from today's extraordinary meeting of NATO and the G7 is this: Ukraine is not alone.

We stand with the people of Kyiv, of Mairupol, of Lviv and Donetsk. And as President Zelenskyy has said himself – the people of Ukraine will prevail and Putin must fail and he will fail.

Government names preferred candidate for Ofcom chair

Lord Grade has had a long career in broadcasting, encompassing London Weekend Television, the BBC, ITV, as well as over nine years as Chief Executive of Channel Four Television.

In May 2004 he was appointed Chairman of the BBC, succeeding Gavyn Davies, resigning in November 2006 when his appointment as Executive Chairman of ITV was announced, a post he relinquished in 2009.

Lord Grade was non-executive Chairman of Pinewood and Shepperton Film Studios for 16 years. He is non-executive Chairman of Talent Bank and of the production company StoryFirst. He is also on the advisory board of Miroma SET (formerly R4E Plc), a media and entertainment marketing company.

Lord Grade is co-founder of the GradeLinnit company, a theatrical production company, having also been Chairman of Ocado, First Leisure Corporation, Camelot, the Charity Fundraising Regulator and Bradford's Media Museum as well as being a member of the former Press Complaints Commission and a trustee of the Science Museum.

In January 2011 he became the Conservative Peer, Lord Grade of Yarmouth. However if he is appointed as Ofcom chair he will move to the cross-benches at the earliest opportunity. Lord Grade would also give up any non-executive roles that could cause a conflict of interest in him becoming Ofcom chair.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

I am delighted to announce that Lord Grade is the Government's preferred candidate to be the new chair of Ofcom. Lord Grade's

experience at the highest level of a number of broadcasters and his expert knowledge of the British media landscape makes him an ideal candidate for this role.

Going forward, Ofcom has an even more important role to play as the UK's communications regulator. The introduction of the Online Safety Bill will give it new responsibilities and resources to ensure digital platforms tackle illegal and abusive material online. I am confident that under Lord Grade's leadership Ofcom will rise to the challenge with great success.

Lord Grade said:

Ofcom is respected across the globe as a first rate communications regulator so I am privileged to be asked to become its chair. The role of Ofcom in British life has never been more important with new responsibilities on the horizon regulating online safety, on top of the ever changing broadcasting landscape. I look forward to my appearance in front of the DCMS Select Committee to outline what I can bring to this role and how I can help ensure Ofcom is fit for the future.

Lord Grade will now appear before MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for pre-appointment scrutiny (date to be confirmed).

Under the terms of the legislation, the appointment is made by the Secretary of State. The appointment process for this role was conducted in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments with due process followed at all times.

Ministers were assisted in their decision-making by an Advisory Assessment Panel which included a departmental official and a senior independent panel member approved by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Notes to editors

- The appointment is for a term of four years. The role is for 3 days per week, remunerated at £142,500 per annum.
- This appointment is made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code for Public Appointments.
- The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of this code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.
- In accordance with the Code, it should be publicly disclosed if a successful candidate, has, in the last five years, been employed by a political party, held a significant office in a party, has stood as a candidate for a party in an election, has publicly spoken on behalf of a political party, or has made significant donations or loans to a party.
- Lord Grade is a Conservative peer in the House of Lords, however he will move to the cross benches if the appointment is confirmed. Lord Grade has not declared any further political activity in line with these

requirements.

Say bye bye to boozy buys – CMA warns about dangers of late-night shopping

- 1 in 2 shopping online at night drink and click
- CMA warns about sneaky sales tactics as cost of living rises
- Digitally native Gen Z first to admit they're susceptible to online rip-offs

As the cost of living continues to increase, and with almost one-third of all retail purchases now taking place online, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has become increasingly concerned about the impact of "sneaky" sales practices on consumers.

The survey comes as part of the CMA's new campaign [The Online Rip-Off Tip-Off](#) to help shoppers spot and avoid misleading online tactics, which could result in them being ripped off.

This latest phase of the campaign warns shoppers that such sales ploys can be even more effective at manipulating them if they shop at certain times of the day, or when they are in certain states of mind. And it advises all shoppers to be careful before they drink and click.

Initial research highlighted that misleading tactics are designed to play on behavioural biases, often without people realising that they are being manipulated. This means they can be even more effective when shoppers are distracted, hungry, or tired for example.

With 8 in 10 people who shop online late at night saying they do so, or have done so, while watching TV, and around three quarters saying the same about listening to the radio/music (69%) or scrolling on social media (70%), this latest poll highlights how easy it is to be unwittingly misled.

The CMA also warns that no one is immune. Its survey revealed that more than a third of Gen Z, dubbed the 'digitally native' generation, admit to being susceptible to online rip-offs. And they are the biggest night-time online shopping spenders, splurging £290 on average last month.

George Lusty, Senior Director for Consumer Protection, explained:

As the cost of living continues to rise, every penny we spend must count.

We're increasingly concerned about online businesses using sales tactics to push people into parting with their cash.

And the time of day or mindset you're in when shopping can make you more vulnerable to being unwittingly misled.

Check out the CMA's Online Rip-Off Tip-Off, which has been launched to help shoppers spot and avoid potential online rip-offs.

4 common misleading online tactics are:

- Subscription traps – misleading a customer into signing up to, and paying for, an unwanted subscription that can be difficult to cancel
- Hidden charges – unexpected compulsory fees, charges or taxes being added when someone tries to make an online purchase
- Pressure selling – a tactic used to give a false impression of availability or popularity of a product or service
- Fake reviews – reviews that do not reflect an actual customer's genuine opinion or experience of a product or service

Fronted by TV presenter and consumer champion Angellica Bell, the Online Rip-off Tip-Off campaign launched with a film depicting misleading online tactics in a real-life market, with the key message "you wouldn't put up with it offline, so don't do so online". The aim of the campaign is to make consumers aware of misleading online practices, understand the negative impact they can have and provide tips on how to avoid them. Find out more at www.gov.uk/ripoff-tipoff

If people in England and Wales want further advice or wish to report a concern they should contact [Citizens Advice](#). Consumers in Scotland should contact [Advice Direct Scotland](#), and shoppers in Northern Ireland should contact [The Consumer Council](#).

Notes to Editors

1. For more information or to request an interview please contact CMA@23red.com or call 07455 518530.
2. Link to Rip Off Road video: <https://youtu.be/c6hcM6Jn90c>
3. [ONS survey: How the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift to online spending](#)

About the Censuswide research

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from Censuswide Plc.
 2. This survey was conducted using an online interview (administered between 11-14 March 2022).
 3. The total sample size was 2048 adults. The figures have been weighted to reflect the profile of the UK adult population.
 4. Censuswide plc make every effort to provide representative information.
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BEIS in the Spring Statement 2022

News story

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be at the forefront of helping support households and businesses in the months ahead.



The government has published the 2022 Spring Statement that puts billions of pounds back into the pockets of hard-working people and unveils a new Tax Plan to ease the rising cost of living and to deliver the biggest cut to personal taxes in a quarter of a century.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be at the forefront of helping support households and businesses in the months ahead, as well as boosting growth and productivity across the country.

The further measures announced by the Chancellor, including cutting fuel duty and reducing VAT on energy saving materials such as solar panels and heat pumps, build on the existing support the government is providing to families worth over £22 billion in 2022 to 2023, including additional support to help household energy bills and measures to boost home insulation.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

We are working hard to help households and businesses with rising costs, while supporting growth and jobs in every corner of the UK.

This is the biggest cut ever on all fuel duty rates, and this is in addition to the already significant steps we have taken to tackle the cost of living, such as the £9 billion household energy bill package and a boost to the National Living Wage next month.

The Spring Statement and Tax Plan will help businesses and families alike, setting the foundations for a strong economy that will create well-paid, highly-skilled jobs for years to come.

The Spring Statement and new Tax Plan includes key measures that will mean hard-working people across the UK will keep more of what they earn, and BEIS will be at the forefront: Measures announced include:

Supporting people with the cost of living

- cutting fuel duty for petrol and diesel by 5p per litre from 6pm Wednesday 23 March to help drivers across the UK with rising costs – a tax cut worth £2.4 billion. This is the biggest cut ever on all fuel duty rates
- doubling the Household Support Fund with an extra £500 million. This will ensure the most vulnerable families continue to get support with their food, energy and water bills. The fund is distributed through local authorities in England, who are best placed to know how to use it in their local areas
- equalising National Insurance and Income Tax starting thresholds from July. People will be able to earn £12,570 a year without paying any Income Tax or National Insurance
- this support comes on top of a £9 billion energy bill rebate package, worth up to £350 each for around 28 million households, and an increase to the National Living Wage, worth £1,000 for full time workers

Backing business

- raising the Employment Allowance to £5,000. This is equivalent to a tax cut worth up to £1,000 for around half a million small businesses
- investing nearly £50 million to create a new Public Sector Fraud Authority and continuing to investigate, seize and recovery money fraudulently claimed through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme
- the support for SMEs comes on top of 50% business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality, and leisure properties, also coming in this April and worth £1.7 billion for small businesses
- the Help to Grow Management and Digital schemes, worth thousands of pounds per business, and the £1 million Annual Investment Allowance are also available to continue supporting UK businesses

Unleashing innovation

- a commitment from the Chancellor to improving R&D reliefs. R&D tax reliefs will be reformed to deliver better value for money for the taxpayer while being more generous where it can make the most difference. The scope of relief will also be expanded to cover data, cloud computing and pure maths
- planning to encourage greater business investment to help drive innovation. From April 2023, business will be able to claim relief on the storage of their vital data and pure maths research. This is set to boost sectors where the UK is a world-leader, including AI, robotics, manufacturing, and design

Helping families become more energy efficient

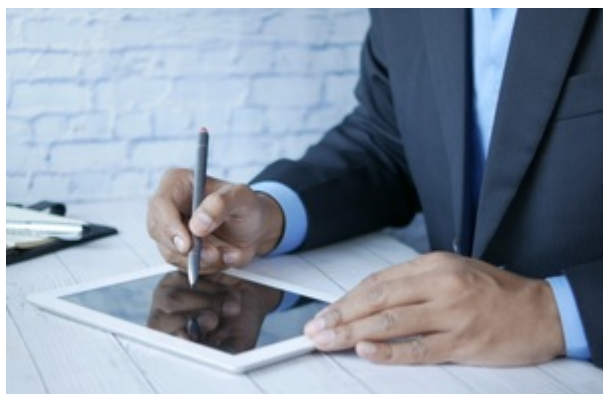
- reducing the VAT on energy saving materials such as solar panels, heating pumps and roof insulation from 5% to zero for 5 years, helping families become more energy-efficient, and reinstating wind and water turbines as qualifying technologies. A 100% relief for eligible low-carbon heat networks which have their own rates bill will also be available
- as previously announced, the government will also provide grants to encourage property owners to install low carbon heating systems such as heat pumps, through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). The scheme will open for applications in May 2022

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[Personal Injury Discount Rate – Northern Ireland](#)

News story

The Personal Injury Discount Rate in Northern Ireland has been determined by the Government Actuary. It relates to sums awarded to seriously injured claimants.



The Government Actuary has published his determination of the [Personal Injury Discount Rate in Northern Ireland](#) concluding it should be set at RPI -1.50%. The report sets out his determination of the personal injury discount rate.

Purpose and use

Damages are awarded to claimants who have endured life-changing events which have led to serious and long-term injuries. The lump sum payments are intended to provide victims with full and fair financial compensation for all

the expected losses and costs caused by their injuries.

Where a claim for future losses is settled as a single cash amount, the assessment of future losses and costs is converted into a lump sum allowing for the:

This assumed investment return is the personal injury discount rate.

GAD's involvement

The report was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Damages (Return on Investment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

This sets out the way in which the Government Actuary should set the personal injury discount rate in Northern Ireland. Therefore, his role is as the 'rate assessor' as defined in the Act.

Before this the Damages Act 1996 provided for the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland to set the PI discount rate in Northern Ireland. This meant the PI discount rate reflected the average yield on Index-Linked Gilts

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