

News story: £22.7 Million awarded to support older veterans

The money will help organisations across the country to continue the invaluable work they do to support older veterans, which includes providing access to health care and carers, support with using the internet, and offering general advice.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

Our veterans have given so much for their country, and the Aged Veterans Fund is a way of us thanking our older veterans and ensuring they are cared for in later life.

One of the awards, totalling almost £4 million, went to Poppyscotland who manage 14 projects under its Unforgotten Forces programme, which provides wellbeing improvements to homes, helps to prevent veterans from feeling isolated, and support to those who suffer hearing problems.

Mark Bibbey Chief Executive at Poppyscotland said:

We want people to understand that key organisations in the area of support provision have joined forces to provide a more holistic provision for aged veterans. If a veteran is engaged with one organisation, for example, they can immediately be referred to another – or multiple consortium members if required. The essence is strength in numbers and we want the identity of our consortium to reflect this.

Age UK received £4.4 million for its Joining Forces scheme, which gives up to 12 weeks of tailored support for older veterans across the country, providing information and advice, practical support at home, access to social events and digital technology, and opportunities to become more active.

Steve Hampson, Head of Innovation & Programmes at Age UK said:

Joining Forces allows us to build on the work we already do across the country with older veterans and to reach out to those who may need more support. The grant means we can develop and test our services, and learn more about how best to support older veterans to get more out of later life. Our work has at its core what older people want to achieve for themselves.

£4.8 million was awarded to the Legion Healthy Living Portfolio, led by The

Royal British Legion, to promote healthy living through a number of ways including local activities, research to improve services, and the training of specialist staff.

Steve Baynes, Head of Grants and Social Policy at The Royal British Legion said:

This grant will help the Legion continue its work with a network of charities, supporting the Armed Forces community through thick and thin. In particular, the grant will enable us and our partners to focus on achieving lasting social change for aged veterans. The veterans to benefit will be from a range of communities, including those who are at risk of becoming socially isolated, struggling with their physical or mental health, with hearing loss or in residential care. Many of the projects will also benefit carers and family members of those who Served, and some are research-oriented so that we, as a society, are better informed of current and emerging needs.

The ten charities to receive the awards are Age UK, Poppyscotland, The Royal British Legion, the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association, Cornwall Rural Community Charity, Rural Action Yorkshire, St Johns and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service, Age Cymru, Seafarers UK, and Hospice UK.

The Aged Veterans Fund which was set up in 2015, had a total of £30 million of LIBOR funds available to support older veterans.

It is designed to support non-core health, wellbeing, and social care needs for older veterans (born before 1 January 1950), including surviving Second World War veterans, those who undertook National Service, and other voluntary enlisted veterans who may need some focused support in relation to their health and social care needs.

This final round of awards comes after the Aged Veterans Fund initially granted £6.6 million to eight organisations in 2016.

[News story: £22.7 Million awarded to support older veterans](#)

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Brexit capital “open to the world” says UKIP Councillor as Remain paper snubs Skegness

UKIP County Councillor Victoria Ayling has slammed comments in an internal email from ‘The New European’ which claimed Brexit could ‘close down’ Skegness.

In an accidentally published email from the Pro EU paper, staff promoted provoking anger in the very pro Brexit town taunting ‘there is an opportunity to stir up some controversy locally’.

Responding to the story, Mrs Ayling dismissed the claims as “nonsense from the losing side” and added “The EU was almost the death knell not only for Skegness but for the much of the coast of the UK thanks to its poaching of our fishing industry and the money it sapped from the UK treasury to send abroad.”

Labour will make corporate tax returns public

LABOUR WILL MAKE CORPORATE TAX RETURNS PUBLIC

Nowhere to hide for tax dodgers as Labour will make giant corporations' tax returns public

The next Labour government will change company law to make sure the largest corporations publish their tax returns in full. Tax avoidance schemes rely on secrecy and complexity to enable tax dodgers to shirk their responsibilities.

By shining the spotlight on large company accounts, Labour will close the loopholes through which large corporations swindle the public.

The "tax gap" between the tax is collected and the tax expected is estimated by HMRC to stand at £36bn. Wealth hidden in tax havens worldwide is estimated at £13,000bn. Even a fraction of this amount paid as the fair taxes that are due would end austerity.

Labour will be tabling a series of amendments to the Finance Bill seeking to strengthen and widen the scope of anti-tax avoidance measures. The second reading of the Finance Bill will be Tuesday the 18th April 2017.

Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell MP today said:

"Tax avoidance is a scourge on society that company secrecy laws help facilitate, and the Tories have done nothing to tackle. Labour will pour the disinfectant of sunlight on large company accounts, helping close down the loopholes and the scams that the tax dodgers rely on.

"The Tories are running a rigged economy for the super-rich and giant corporate tax dodgers. Only Labour will stand up for workers and small businesses to make our tax system fair and our public services like education and the NHS are protected."

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury Peter Dowd MP today said:

"The measures in the Finance Bill claiming to close tax loopholes do not go far enough and have gaping omissions, another Tory conjuring trick to hide their inaction in making sure that everyone, including the rich, pays their fair share of society's upkeep.

"There is nothing in the government's proposals to address the chronic lack of enforcement in the context of the wider regulatory problems. As usual, the Tories are playing rhetorically to the gallery.

"Labour are calling for a wide-ranging review of the UK tax gap and will be

tabling a range of reform proposals to the Finance Bill, scope allowing. In particular, we will be seeking to strengthen the new penalty for any person who enables the use of abusive tax avoidance arrangements which has already been watered down since consultation with stakeholders.”

News story: Driving test changes: 4 December 2017

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has confirmed that the driving test in England, Scotland and Wales will change from Monday 4 December 2017.

The changes are designed to make sure new drivers have the skills they'll need to help them through a lifetime of safe driving.

The changes will only apply to car driving tests to begin with.

The 4 driving test changes

1. Independent driving part of the test will increase to 20 minutes

The independent driving part of the test currently lasts around 10 minutes. During this part of the test, you have to drive without turn-by-turn directions from the driving examiner.

This part of the test will be made longer, so it'll last around 20 minutes – roughly half of the test.

2. Following directions from a sat nav

During the independent driving part of the test, most candidates will be asked to follow directions from a sat nav.

The examiner will provide the sat nav and set it up. You won't need to set the route – the examiner will do this for you. So, it doesn't matter what make or model of sat nav you practise with.

You can't follow directions from your own sat nav during the test – you have to use the one supplied by the examiner.

You'll be able to ask the examiner for confirmation of where you're going if you're not sure. It won't matter if you go the wrong way unless you [make a fault](#) while doing it.

One in 5 driving tests won't use a sat nav. You'll need to follow traffic signs instead.

3. Reversing manoeuvres will be changed

The 'reverse around a corner' and 'turn-in-the-road' manoeuvres will no longer be tested, but you should still be taught them by your instructor.

You'll be asked to do one of 3 possible reversing manoeuvres:

- parallel park at the side of the road
- park in a bay – either driving in and reversing out, or reversing in and driving out (the examiner will tell you which you have to do)
- pull up on the right-hand side of the road, reverse for 2 car lengths and rejoin the traffic

4. Answering a vehicle safety question while you're driving

The examiner will ask you 2 vehicle safety questions during your driving test – these are known as the ['show me, tell me' questions](#).

You'll be asked the:

- 'tell me' question (where you explain how you'd carry out a safety task) at the start of your test, before you start driving
- 'show me' question (where you show how you'd carry out a safety task) while you're driving – for example, showing how to wash the windscreen using the car controls and wipers

Watch how the new test will work

This video shows how the test will work from 4 December 2017.

[YouTube video](#)

Pass mark, length of test and cost not changing

The pass mark is staying the same. So, you'll pass your test if you make no more than 15 driving faults and no serious or dangerous faults.

The examiner will still mark the test in the same way, and the same things will still count as faults.

The overall time of the driving test won't change. You'll still drive for around 40 minutes.

The [driving test cost](#) will also stay the same.

Why the changes are being made

Road collisions are the biggest killer of young people. They account for over a quarter of all deaths of those aged between 15 and 19.

DVSA wants to make sure that training and the driving test reduce the number of young people being killed in collisions.

These changes are being made because:

- most fatal collisions happen on high-speed roads (not including motorways) – changing the format of the test will allow more of these types of roads to be included in driving test routes
- 52% of car drivers now have a sat nav – DVSA wants new drivers to be trained to use them safely
- research has shown that new drivers find independent driving training valuable – they can relate it to driving once they've passed their test

Changes are supported by the public

The changes follow a:

- public consultation that over 3,900 people took part in
- trial of the changes involving over 4,300 learner drivers and over 860 driving instructors

The proposals were widely supported by the public. The [results of the consultation](#) show that:

- 88.2% agreed with increasing the length of the independent driving part of the test
- 70.8% agreed with asking candidates to follow directions from a sat nav
- 78.6% agreed with the plans to change how the reversing manoeuvres are test
- 78.4% agreed with asking the 'show me' question while the candidate is driving

Helping you through a lifetime of safe driving

Transport Minister, Andrew Jones, said:

Our roads are among the safest in the world. However, road collisions are the biggest killer of young people.

These changes will help us to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and equip new drivers with the skill they need to use our roads safely.

DVSA Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

DVSA's priority is to help you through a lifetime of safe driving.

Making sure the driving test better assesses a driver's ability to drive safely and independently is part of our strategy to help you stay safe on Britain's roads.

It's vital that the driving test keeps up to date with new vehicle technology and the areas where new drivers face the greatest risk

once they've passed their test