

[News story: UK families will soon see bills cut as date announced for the launch of Tax-Free Childcare](#)

Millions of parents can pre-register from today for the government's new childcare offers, with the launch of a new Childcare Choices government [website](#).

The introduction of the government's Tax-Free Childcare scheme will begin on 28 April, for parents of the youngest children. It will be gradually rolled out over 2017 – cutting childcare costs for working families across the UK by up to £2,000 per child per year, or £4,000 for disabled children.

On top of this, from September this year parents of three and four year old children living in England will be able to apply for a new 30 hours free childcare offer, worth around £5,000 per child.

The Childcare Choices website includes a [Childcare Calculator](#) for parents to compare all the government's childcare offers and check what works best for their families.

Through the site parents can also pre-register for email alerts that will notify them when they can apply, as well as providing details of existing government childcare offers.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke, said:

This Government is on the side of working families and our childcare support will cut thousands of pounds off bills for millions of households, as well as supporting parents to return to or remain in work.

The new Childcare Choices website provides busy families with options that suit their needs, so they can clearly see which childcare offer works best for them. For the first time, we have brought all the childcare options together to make the process easier and simpler for families and childcare providers.

Education Secretary, Justine Greening, said:

Affordable childcare and early years education are a vital part of how we can get our children on the right path, whilst also helping parents to be back at work, if that is what they want. Many parents are struggling to balance the cost of childcare against the benefits of being in work and this government wants to help.

From today, parents can use the Childcare Choices website to find out what support is available for their family. Whether that's our 30 hour free childcare offer, Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit, the website is a quick and easy way for parents to choose the offer that's best for them and their children.

Two million working families will be eligible for Tax-Free Childcare. It will be gradually rolled out, with parents of children under two invited to enter the scheme first. By the end of the year, all eligible parents will be able to receive government top-ups of £2 for every £8 that a parent pays into their Tax-Free Childcare account. This will be open to all working parents across the UK with children under 12, or under 17 if disabled.

The new 30 hours free childcare offer for working parents of three and four year olds in England doubles the current 15 hours of free childcare currently available, saving eligible working families up to £5,000 a year.

Parents will be able to apply for Tax-Free Childcare and the 30 hours offer in one go through the government's new digital childcare service. Eligible parents can benefit from both Tax-free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare at the same time.

Both of these new offers have been run as trials over recent months, to test the new digital services.

More than 4,000 parents are already benefiting from the 30 hours offer in eight 'early implementer' councils, with thousands more set to follow suit, as four new areas launch the 30 hours offer in April. And over 2,000 parents are cutting their childcare costs with the Tax-Free Childcare trial.

These offers build on the childcare support already available to thousands of families, including:

- 15 hours free childcare for all three and four year olds
- 15 hours for disadvantaged two year olds
- enhanced childcare support through Universal Credit
- childcare vouchers.

How Tax-Free Childcare works

Working parents will be able to apply, through the childcare service, to open an online childcare account. For every £8 that families or friends pay in, the Government will make a top-up payment of an additional £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children). This top up is added instantly and parents can then send electronic payments directly to their childcare providers.

All registered childcare providers – whether nannies, nurseries or after school clubs – can sign up online now to receive parents' payments through Tax-Free Childcare. Once childcare providers have signed up they will appear on the [Childcare Provider Checker](#). This allows parents to check whether childcare providers have already signed up for Tax-Free Childcare.

How 30 hours free childcare works

Eligible parents will be able to apply online through the childcare service. They will receive a code – this will allow parents to arrange their childcare place ahead of September 2017. Parents can take their code to their provider or council, along with their National Insurance Number and child's date of birth. Their provider or council will check the code is authentic and allocate them a free childcare place.

Minister moves to protect Welsh language promotion and facilitation grants for 2017-18

The money will provide core and project funding to 77 organisations over 2017-18 to deliver a variety of activities. Groups that will benefit directly from this fund include:

- Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol
- Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru
- Mentrau Iaith
- Merched y Wawr
- Young Farmers Clubs Wales
- Papurau Bro Welsh – language local newsletters
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru

Minister for Life Long Learning and Welsh Language Alun Davies said:

“Our aim is to promote the use of Welsh in every day life across the whole of Wales through opportunities to use the language, and supporting organisations to protect and strengthen the position of the Welsh language. These grants recognise the contribution of these organisations to the future well-being of the language.

“I’ve always maintained that Government does not have a monopoly on the future of the Welsh language. Many other bodies, both national and local, societies, schools, employers, families and individuals, all have their parts to play. The language is part of who we are and it belongs to everyone.

“All of us have a part to play in advancing its future and this money will in no small part help us all towards realising our shared ambition of one million Welsh speakers.”

1.17 lakh more affordable houses for urban poor sanctioned under PMAY(Urban)

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation today approved construction of 1,17,814 affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor in six States at a total cost of Rs.5,773 cr for which central assistance of Rs.1,816 cr has been approved, under the Prime Minister's Awas Yojana (Urban).

News story: Additional hand luggage restrictions on some flights to the UK

On Tuesday 21 March the government announced [new aviation security measures](#) on all inbound direct flights to the UK from the following countries:

- Turkey
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Tunisia
- Saudi Arabia

Under the new arrangements, passengers boarding flights from these countries to the UK will not be allowed to take phones, laptops and tablets which are larger than:

- length: 16.0cm
- width: 9.3cm
- depth: 1.5cm

into the cabin of the plane. Passengers with these devices should check with their airlines for more details on transporting these items.

The additional security measures may cause some disruption for passengers and flights, and we understand the frustration that will cause, but our top priority will always be to maintain the safety of British nationals.

Direct flights to the UK from these destinations can continue to operate to the UK subject to these new measures being in place. Travellers are advised to keep up-to-date with the latest [FCO travel advice](#) and to check online with

their chosen carrier for further information.

Which devices are not allowed in the cabin?

- large phones
- all laptops
- all tablets and e-readers

Which flights and routes will this apply to?

These new measures will apply on all inbound direct flights travelling to the UK from the following countries:

- Turkey
- Lebanon
- Jordan
- Egypt
- Tunisia
- Saudi Arabia

Passengers travelling on these flights should check online with their carrier if they require further information.

Should I cancel my trip? Is it still safe to go to these countries?

These new measures are concerned with flights into the UK. The UK is not stopping direct flights to and from those countries. Those with imminent travel should contact their airline for further information. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also publishes [travel advice](#).

What's a 'normal sized mobile phone'?

Most smart phones will be allowed in the cabin, including many common popular handsets such as:

- iPhone 7 Plus
- Samsung Galaxy 7 Edge
- Samsung Galaxy Note 3
- LG G3
- Sony Xperia Z2

The new UK measures will mean that phones, laptops and tablets larger than:

- length: 16.0cm
- width: 9.3cm
- depth: 1.5cm

will not be allowed in the cabin.

Can I take items purchased from duty free on board?

Any phones, laptops or tablets larger than the above dimensions will not be allowed in the cabin, regardless of whether they were purchased in duty free.

Why are these measures not in place for flights travelling from the UK?

This applies to inbound flights. The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world but we keep this under constant review based on assessment of risk.

More about [hand luggage restrictions on electronic devices and items at UK airports](#).

What about any costs incurred as a result of this? And what if I want to cancel my flight can I get compensation?

This is matter for the airlines. We encourage them to take a customer focused approach.

How long will these measures be in place?

The UK has some of the most robust aviation security measures in the world and we will continue to take all the steps we believe are necessary to put in place security measures we believe will be effective and proportionate. We keep our aviation security measures under constant review.

Is this in response to a specific threat?

It is long standing government policy not to comment on intelligence matters.

Why isn't the UK following the US and banning all personal electronic devices from the cabin, why only phones, laptops and tablets?

We are confident these measures are proportionate and effective.

What happens to passengers travelling from countries unaffected by the measures who are transferring to an affected flight?

Transfer passengers who board a flight on a route affected will be subject to the measures.

Petroleum Minister meets Mr Showkutally Soodhun, Vice-Prime Minister of Mauritius

Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan met H.E. Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Housing and Lands of Mauritius, Mr Shokutally Soodhun. Mr Soodhun is on a three day visit to India for the meetng of the Joint Committee on Hydrography and to further strengthen India-Mauritius bilateral maritime cooperation.