DIGITAL BEACON

# Making Tax Digital preparation checklist

For UK sole traders getting ready for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax. Tick each line as you do it. Never write your National Insurance number, Unique Taxpayer Reference or passwords on this page.

## 1. Find your start date

| 6 April 2026 | 6 April 2027 | 6 April 2028 |
|---|---|---|
| over £50,000 in 2024 to 2025 | over £30,000 in 2025 to 2026 | over £20,000 in 2026 to 2027 |

- [ ] I added up my self-employment and property income before expenses: my turnover, not my profit
- [ ] I left out wages, pensions, dividends and partnership shares
- [ ] I used HMRC's online tool to check my date and whether I may be exempt
- [ ] My start date is: _____

## 2. Choose your software

- [ ] It supports all my income sources
- [ ] It sends quarterly updates and submits my tax return, or just the updates if my accountant submits the return
- [ ] It lets me report all my other income
- [ ] It works with my accounting period
- [ ] If it's free, I've checked its limits, such as a number of transactions, against my busiest month
- [ ] I checked it on HMRC's software finder. "In development" means promised, not ready
- [ ] If I'll keep a spreadsheet, I have bridging software, and every link is digital with no copying or retyping

## 3. Get ready for digital records

- [ ] I know each record needs the amount, the date and a category
- [ ] I've matched my own headings to HMRC's categories
- [ ] I have a way to record cash, card payouts and mixed bills
- [ ] I know I still keep receipts, invoices and statements

## 4. Sign up with HMRC

- [ ] I'm registered for Self Assessment and have sent a tax return in the last two years
- [ ] I checked I'm not exempt, and chose my software first
- [ ] I have my Self Assessment user ID and password to hand
- [ ] I have my phone and a current passport or driving licence, in case I need to prove who I am
- [ ] I signed up on GOV.UK ("Sign up for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax")
- [ ] "Making Tax Digital for Income Tax" shows in my HMRC online account
- [ ] I authorised my software, and noted that it needs doing again every 18 months

## 5. Put your deadlines in the diary

Starting on 6 April 2027, your first four updates are due on these dates. It's always the seventh.

| 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **August 2027** | **November 2027** | **February 2028** | **May 2028** |
| 6 April to 5 July | 6 April to 5 October | 6 April to 5 January | 6 April to 5 April |

- [ ] All four update deadlines are in my diary, with my own send-by date a week before each (our suggestion, not an HMRC rule)
- [ ] My 2026 to 2027 tax return is in the diary for 31 January 2028, sent the usual way
- [ ] My first tax return through my software is in the diary for 31 January 2029
- [ ] Tax payments are in the diary: 31 January, and 31 July for any payment on account
- [ ] I know a late tax return earns a penalty point, and four points means a £200 penalty. The government said in the Budget on 28 October 2026 that late updates in my first year (2027 to 2028) won't get points, but they will from 2028 to 2029

Starting on 6 April 2028? The same dates apply, one year later. No first-year easement has been announced for a 2028 start.

## 6. Practise before it counts

- [ ] I've added up a past quarter by category and checked it against my bank
- [ ] I know a quarterly update is a summary of my totals, not a tax return
- [ ] I've set a weekly time to keep my records up to date (our suggestion)
- [ ] If I have an accountant, we've agreed who sends what, and what they need from me each quarter


### Want to be taken through all this?

Our video course, Making Tax Digital, Done Yourself, covers each step in 24 short lessons, with a workbook and templates. £49. See the course