

JCVI issues updated advice on COVID-19 vaccination of children aged 12 to 15

The JCVI has reviewed the evidence on vaccinating children aged 12 to 15 who do not have underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk from severe COVID-19.

Rail industry on track to win big in UK-Australia trade deal

- UK-Australia deal set to remove 5% export tariff on rail products, potentially cutting costs and making British bids more competitive
- Will allow UK companies to compete for lucrative government contracts on an even footing versus Australian competitors
- Will open the door to top-priority country for UK rail industry, helping more Brits to work in areas such as construction and services

British rail companies are on track for potential Australian export boom thanks to the trade deal that will be signed later this year.

Australia is already the highest priority country for UK rail exporters, with more than £82 billion (\$155 billion AUD) being invested by Australia into its networks over the next decade, including new cross-country lines and modernised metros in cities including Melbourne.

All current tariffs on rail-related goods, including railway stock, track fixtures and fittings, and traffic signalling equipment are set to be scrapped as part of the free trade agreement (FTA), which will allow UK companies to be even more competitive when bidding for Australian government contracts worth billions of pounds in the coming years.

British rail companies will also benefit from new, legally guaranteed access to bid for Australian government contracts on an even footing with their Australian competitors, opening up billions of dollars of public sector rail contracts.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

Our rail exports industry is a Global Britain success story. Australia is undergoing a huge reconstruction of its train networks and this trade deal will allow British companies to be even more

competitive when bidding for these massive, multi-billion-pound infrastructure projects.

These major contracts will support high value jobs up and down the UK, and allow more of our professionals to live, work and enjoy life on the other side of the world.

The deal will allow rail companies to build on some of the British successes already enjoyed in Australia's rail sector. These include manufacturer Altro's floor covering, which is used in the refurbishment of Melbourne's Trams and on trains in Victoria and Queensland, and consultancy firm Ricardo, which makes 25% of its rail revenue in Australia having won several high-profile projects.

It will also give UK employees more freedom to work Down Under and allow Brits under 35 to travel and work in Australia for up to three years as part of the agreement.

Chairman of the Railway Industry Association, David Tonkin, said:

Many UK rail suppliers already trade with Australia – from manufacturing firms in Doncaster to design companies in London – and with a Free Trade Agreement they can deliver even more. With Australia voted as the number one priority market for rail businesses in the UK, a trade deal will be welcome news to many, allowing them to more easily sell our world-leading products and services into the market.

The UK rail industry is a major exporter, selling £800 million each year across the world and it has a pivotal role to play in achieving the Government's vision of a 'Global Britain', supporting a clean, environmentally-friendly form of transport both at home and abroad.

This comes as the Department for International Trade and Innovate UK launch a competition that will support UK companies in the rail sector to innovate globally. The competition will award small businesses grants of up to £50,000 to help them access growing markets such in Australia, India, and Canada.

[Guidance: COVID-19: letter regarding clinically extremely vulnerable](#)

children and young people

Reference-only version of letter from the government to all parents of clinically extremely vulnerable children and young people on the shielded patient list.

New body to tackle health disparities will launch 1 October, co-headed by new DCMO

- Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy has been appointed as the new Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England and will co-lead the new body alongside Director General, Jonathan Marron
- Health disparities across nation to be reduced by tackling top risk factors for poor health

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will officially launch on 1 October with the aim of tackling health inequalities across the country. It will be co-led by newly appointed Deputy Chief Medical Officer (DCMO), Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy.

The OHID will be a vital part of the Department of Health and Social Care and will drive the prevention agenda across government to reduce health disparities, many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and improve the public's health.

Health disparities across the UK are stark – for example, a woman living in Blackpool will on average live 16 fewer years in good health than a woman born in Brent, London and we know someone's ethnicity can have a significant bearing on their health and health outcomes.

Health disparities can undermine people's ability to work and live long healthy independent lives while creating pressure on the NHS, social care and other public services.

Ill-health amongst working-age people alone costs the economy around £100 billion a year and it's estimated that 40% of health care provision in the UK is being used to manage potentially preventable conditions.

The new body will tackle the top preventable risk factors for poor health, including obesity caused by unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity, smoking and alcohol consumption. It will work across the health system to drive forward action on health disparities, including improving access to

health services across the country, and coordinate with government departments to address the wider drivers of good health, from employment to housing, education and the environment.

As the new DCMO for Health Improvement, Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy will advise government on clinical and public health matters as the co-lead for OHID, alongside the DHSC Director General for the OHID, Jonathan Marron. They will be under the professional leadership of the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the disparities that exist within our country. We know the virus has had a greater impact on those with poorer health and we must ensure we give people the tools they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle, whilst relieving pressures on our NHS.

By focussing on preventing and not just treating poor health, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will tackle health disparities to break the link between people's background and their prospects for a healthy life.

I look forward to Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy coming on board to co-lead the OHID, bringing her extensive knowledge to deliver a meaningful reduction in health disparities for people up and down the country.

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, incoming Deputy Chief Medical Officer said:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will play a critical role in reducing health inequalities across the country and build on the important work undertaken over recent years.

COVID has exposed and exacerbated the health inequalities across the UK. It is critical we address these head-on and support people to live healthier lives. I look forward to getting started.

Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer said:

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy brings extensive local, regional and national experience to the role.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has a lot of important and challenging work to do and Dr de Gruchy is well placed to ensure it delivers meaningful health improvements for people nationwide.

The Office will help inform a new cross-government agenda which will look to track the wider determinants of health and reduce disparities. The OHID will bring expert advice, data and evidence together with policy development and implementation to ensure action on improving health is better informed, more effective and more joined-up. It will bring together a range of skills to lead a new era of public health polices, leveraging modern digital tools, data and actuarial science and delivery experts.

Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy is currently President of the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), the Director of Population Health at Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and Chair of the Greater Manchester Association of Directors of Public Health. She will be stepping down from these roles to become DCM0.

Her previous roles include being Director of Public Health at the London Borough of Haringey (2010 to 2018) and Chair of the London Association of Directors of Public Health. Prior to that, she was Deputy Director of Public Health at Nottingham City NHS Primary Care Trust.

Forest of Dean visitors and residents urged to stop potential spread of African Swine Fever

People visiting or living in the Forest of Dean are being reminded not to feed the wild boar or drop food to help prevent an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF).

Over 2.5 million people visit the Forest of Dean and with the large number of staycations this summer due to the pandemic, there is a concern that some visitors may not properly dispose of food waste. This increases the risk of wild boar eating food scraps, which in turn increases the risk of African swine fever being introduced to the UK, which would be devastating for the UK pork industry.

African swine fever poses no risk to human health but is a highly contagious disease for pigs and wild boar with no vaccine available. In recent years it has been circulating in parts of Africa, Eastern and Central Europe and Asia, leading to the deaths of millions of pigs and causing significant disruption to the meat trade. In 2020 the disease spread to Germany through the movement

of wild boar and this year it has been found in their farmed pigs for the first time.

The virus can survive for weeks and even months in pork meat and pork products, including cooked, cured, and frozen meat. The most likely way the virus could be introduced to the UK is by a member of the public bringing pork or pork products back from an affected country.

UK Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Richard Irvine said:

If African Swine Fever arrived in the Forest of Dean it would have a devastating impact on our pigs and pig keepers. We regularly test our contingency plans to ensure that we are ready to respond to potential future disease outbreaks.

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Forest of Dean District Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities Paul Hiatt said:

We are grateful to live in a beautiful and culturally rich part of England. It is important that we preserve our environment and proactively prevent any challenges to our individual and collective enjoyment of these natural resources.

Join us and play your part to help prevent the spread of African Swine Fever to the wildlife in our beloved forests. Secure waste bins are provided, please put your food waste in them. Together we can help to maintain a healthy forest and wildlife.

Everyone can help to stop the spread of ASF to the UK by doing the following:

- If you are visiting ASF-affected areas in Europe, Asia, or Africa you must not bring any pork or pork products back to the UK.
- Disposing of leftovers or food waste in secure bins that pigs or wildlife cannot access.
- Farmers, the public and members of the food industry should practise high biosecurity standards, including never feeding catering waste, kitchen scraps or meat products to pigs which is illegal and can spread the disease.

The Government continually monitors disease outbreaks around the world to assess whether there may be risks for the UK and takes action to limit the risk of the disease reaching our shores.

Further information on [ASF, including for people travelling abroad, can be](#)

[found here. Visit Forestry England's website for information about wild boar.](#)

Government departments across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland recently tested African swine fever contingency plans during [Exercise Holly](#).