

[Press release: UK signs fisheries agreement with the Faroe Islands](#)

The UK signs second fisheries agreement since leaving the EU, following earlier successful agreement with Norway.

[Fireworks evidence base](#)

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has published its report on the fireworks evidence base on 29 October 2020.

OPSS has developed the evidence base by:

- drawing on existing data, literature and research
- undertaking stakeholder engagement with a wide range of organisations and groups, inviting them to submit data they can collate or have access to that is not available to OPSS or is not publicly accessible

The aim has been to seek evidence around the key issues raised in petitions, correspondence and debate. These are:

- market-related information
- noise
- injuries and accidents
- anti-social behaviour and illegal activity
- environmental information
- intelligence related to non-conformity and non-compliance with product requirements
- international comparisons

Fireworks information supplied to OPSS

OPSS is publishing information provided by organisations and existing online content drawn to its attention (highlighted in the hyperlinks below).

This is for general reference and does not represent the views of OPSS.

Please note that a number of the following materials are not Crown Copyright.

Market-related information

[Firework importation notification system: Quarter 3 evaluation October to December 2019](#) (PDF, 638KB, 3 pages) – Provided by Suffolk County Council Trading Standards Service

[Submission from the British Pyrotechnics Association \(BPA\) and CBI Explosive Industry Group](#) (PDF, 105KB, 2 pages)

[Evidence sent to House of Commons Petitions Committee](#) – Provided by Bright Star Fireworks and the British Fireworks Association (BFA)

[Consumer safety product awareness programme report, drawing on an online survey by Atomik Research](#) (PDF, 746KB, 14 pages) – Provided by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

[Submission from Association of Convenience Stores](#) (PDF, 163KB, 3 pages)

Noise

[Submission from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(RSPCA\)](#) (PDF, 199KB, 4 pages)

[Position paper on the use and sale of fireworks](#) – Provided by the British Veterinary Association (BVA)

[BVA Voice mini-survey](#) (PDF, 382KB, 3 pages) – Provided by BVA

[Submission from the British Fireworks Association \(BFA\)](#) (ODS, 54.8KB)

Injuries and accidents

[Hospital admitted patient care activity 2017-2018](#) – Provided by RoSPA

See:

- External causes spreadsheet

[Submission from the British Horse Society \(BHS\)](#) (PDF, 136KB, 3 pages)

Intelligence related to non-conformity and non-compliance with product requirements

[Firework occurrence summary 2014-2019](#) (PDF, 382KB, 5 pages) – Provided by the Civil Aviation Authority

Other

[Reports, debates and petitions](#) – Provided by the Firework Abatement Campaign

See:

- Full report 2019
- MP briefing firework debate 2018
- Addendum to report 2018
- Full report 2016

[Not a one-way road – Severity, progression and prevention of firework fears in dogs](#) (Stefanie Riemer, 2019) – Provided by RSPCA

Fireworks information commissioned by OPSS

[Fireworks: noise levels and impacts on health and the environment](#) (PDF, 246KB, 7 pages)

[Open source monitoring report – Fireworks](#) (PDF, 1.14MB, 9 pages)

Scottish consultation on fireworks

[Consultation on fireworks in Scotland](#) – Provided by the Scottish Government

See:

- Analysis of consultation responses
- Nationally representative opinion poll
- Review of existing evidence
- Fireworks action plan: Promoting the safe and appropriate use of fireworks in Scotland

Petitions Committee inquiry

[Fireworks report 2019](#) – Provided by the House of Commons Petitions Committee

Openness, Transparency and improving performance

Delivering a fair, open and timely planning appeal and examination service that meets the needs of our customers can be challenging, particularly when unexpected events occur.

During the pandemic we set ourselves three priorities:

- To continue to keep our staff and customers safe and well.
- To continue to progress and decide casework robustly as quickly as possible.
- To keep our staff, customers and other key stakeholders informed and engaged.

Despite the challenges we face by not being able to undertake traditional physical hearings and inquiries to help stop the spread of COVID-19, we are determined to provide good customer service and recover our performance.

In August, following a short break due to impact of COVID-19, we again published the average appeal handling times which are being updated each month. We have today published a [Statistical Release](#) which provides even

more information on planning appeals. These represent the highest volume of our work.

Our work involving the examination of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, such as major roads, power stations and airports, has continued and the statutory deadlines for events have been met on all occasions (needing only 3 extensions to examination deadlines). Our work on supporting Local Authorities to develop a sound Local Development Plan is also continuing.

These statistics will be produced each month to allow anyone to see how we are performing. The focus is on timeliness as we understand this to be a key area of interest from what customers and stakeholders have told us. We also include some information on the decisions that we have made; and on the number of Inspectors available to make those decisions. They have been published to ensure the public has equal access to the information and it supports the Planning Inspectorate's commitment to transparency and openness by releasing information where possible.

The times for delivering decisions that we publish are the average times from cases that have reached that stage in the previous month, measured from the time we have received all the information we need from a customer to begin the appeal process ('valid') to the time a decision is issued. This is in line with local authorities receiving planning applications. The appeal will 'start' later when an inspector is allocated, but all our performance information explains the total time we take, including the period before an inspector is allocated. Our future online appeals casework portal system will help customers by using a screening tool to only accept valid applications at the point they are submitted to us.

Whilst we may not meet all our ministerial targets this year [2020/21], with the continuing high number of cases being received and the challenges of running hearings and inquiries so that they comply with Covid-19 regulations, the appeals process is "back on track" by holding virtual hearings since the lockdown. This statistical bulletin provides:

- Appeals decisions from October 2019 to September 2020
- The time taken to reach those decisions
- Number of open cases (cases being processed but not yet decided)
- Number of Inspectors working for The Planning Inspectorate.

The data in this Statistical Release applies only to England.

[UK warns that peace talks 'fail](#)

without women'

The UK is urging countries and UN agencies to give more women a meaningful role in peace talks and protect them from violence while they are on the frontline of negotiations, ahead of the 20th anniversary of the first UN Security Council resolution on women's inclusion in peace and security.

In a virtual address to the United Nations today (Thursday 29 October 2020), Middle East Minister James Cleverly will set out a new UK-funded protection framework – the first international guidance to be developed to specifically to protect women peacebuilders – amid increasing attacks on them globally.

According to research by UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations, when women meaningfully participate in peace talks, the resulting agreement is 64% less likely to fail and 35% more likely to last at least 15 years. Yet between 1990 and 2017, women made up only 2% of mediators, 8% of negotiators, and 5% of witnesses and signatories in all major peace process.

To demonstrate the UK's ongoing commitment to women's inclusion in peacebuilding, Minister Cleverly will announce £1 million of new UK aid for the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth (WMC) network, an independent group of 50 women mediators around the world, hosted by peacebuilding NGO Conciliation Resources. The funding will provide women on the frontline of peace talks with training, mentoring and resources for their participation in peacebuilding, and to lobby for greater inclusion of women at all levels of negotiations, including at the UN.

The UK will also announce £250,000 of new aid funding to support research into the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on women and girls living in fragile and conflict-affected states, such as Afghanistan and Nigeria. The study will develop policy recommendations to ensure women and girls are better protected in future pandemics.

At a UN open debate on women, peace and security, Middle East Minister James Cleverly, will say:

We know that when women have a seat at the table, peace negotiations are less likely to fail, which is why 20 years ago, every country at the UN pledged to increase their participation.

Yet the proportion of women still hasn't increased and when women are included, they increasingly suffer threats against their lives.

World leaders must now put words into action and follow the UK's lead of protecting women on the frontline and lobbying for greater inclusion.

The UK-funded Women Peacebuilders Protection Framework urges countries to prepare for and respond to threats and attacks women peacebuilders face doing

their work. This includes:

- recognising the expertise and skills that women peacebuilders offer, by paying them for their services;
- training local police and judiciary on how to better respond to the unique threats women peacebuilders face;
- ensuring secure transport and communication for women peacebuilders who partake in peace talks; and
- planning for the emergency relocation of women peacebuilders when their lives may be endangered, including flexible grants to pay for transport and accommodation, and psychological support.

Mossarat Qadeem is one of the women peacebuilders supported by the WMC. Her work in peacebuilding includes working with vulnerable young people in Pakistan who are at risk of being radicalised by extremist groups, including by better contextualising their understanding of the Quran, and supporting their reintegration into society.

Mossarat Qadeem, Executive Director of the PAIMAN Alumni Trust, said:

Women can bring something unique, because we look at the issue of conflict from a different angle. Women peacebuilders start building peace long before the formal process begins, and continue long after.

I was excited to join the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth network. It gives us a platform to influence the process better and seek recognition for women mediators, and it has become like a sisterhood from which we can share and learn with each other.

Women's involvement in the peace process is vital, as women and girls are disproportionately impacted in conflict settings – for example, the higher risk of sexual violence and child marriage, or lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services. Their experiences and role in society bring an important dimension to peace negotiations.

Today's new package of support comes ahead of the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a UK-led resolution which set out the importance of substantially including women in all levels of the peace process, which falls this Saturday 31 October 2020.

Laura Aumeer, Programme Director at NGO Conciliation Resources who host the WMC network, said:

Conciliation Resources welcomes the financial support provided to the WMC by the UK government. Despite the challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, the network continues to support members and their peacebuilding work, responding to an increased need for conflict prevention and resolution globally.

The WMC is unique in its diversity of membership, bringing together women peacebuilders working in all spaces, from community to national and international processes.

Notes to editors

- The UK was the penholder on the first UN resolution (1325) on women, peace and security in 2000. The aim was to establish the crucial role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and reduce the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls.
- There has been no significant increase in the proportion of women at peace tables since 2000 while attacks against women peacebuilders across the globe have increased.
- Last year, HRH the Countess of Wessex met members of the WMC, which was launched by the UK in 2018. Her Royal Highness heard about their work and supported the creation of the Protection Framework, announced today, as part of her longstanding support for women's role in peace and security.
- A UK grant of £250,000 will support Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS), a UK-based NGO network to lead research on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on women and girls in ten countries affected by conflict: Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia, Uganda and Ukraine. The research will be conducted by grassroots and international women's rights organisations, overseen by GAPS.
- [Data from UN Women and the Council on Foreign Relations \(5 January 2018\). Women's Participation in Peace Processes.](#)

[Latest interim findings from COVID-19 study published](#)

- over 85,000 volunteers tested in England in latest significant study into COVID-19 by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI
- interim findings show infections continued to rise across all regions between 16 and 25 October, with 128 people per 10,000 infected
- figures reinforce the need for everyone to follow their local COVID alert level rules and remember 'Hands. Face. Space'

Interim results from the sixth report of one of the country's largest studies into COVID-19 infections in England have been published today by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI.

Over 85,000 volunteers were tested in England between 16 and 25 October as part of a new REACT study, to examine the levels of infection in the general population. The findings show infections continue to rise across all age

groups and all regions in England, with the biggest increase in those aged 55 to 64. The highest number of infections remain in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, where overall prevalence has more than doubled.

The main findings from the sixth Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT) study show that between 16 and 25 October:

- 128 people per 10,000 were infected in England, up from 60 per 10,000
- the virus was doubling every 9 days
- the national R rate increased to 1.6
- prevalence was highest in Yorkshire and the Humber (2.7% up from 0.84%) and the North West (2.3% up from 1.2%) meaning over 1 in 40 people were infected in Yorkshire and the Humber region as of Sunday 25 October
- the percentage of people infected aged 55 to 64 increased more than threefold from 0.37% to 1.2%, but infections remain highest in those aged 18 to 24 (2.2%).

Professor Paul Elliott, Director of the programme at Imperial from the School of Public Health, said:

These interim findings paint a concerning picture of the situation in England, where we're seeing a nation-wide increase in infection prevalence, which we know will lead to more hospitalisations and loss of life.

We're also detecting early signs that areas which previously had low rates of infection are following trends observed in the country's worst-affected areas.

Now more than ever we must all work together to curb further spread of the virus and avoid subsequent overwhelming of the health service.

This report is the latest from the [REACT](#) study which was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and carried out by a world-class team of scientists, clinicians and researchers at Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Ipsos MORI.

As infection levels continue to rise across England, it is critical everyone plays their part to help stop the spread of the virus so together we can protect lives and our NHS, and prevent greater economic damage in the future.

Everyone must follow the [local COVID alert level rules](#) where they live, including those on household mixing. It is vital to remember 'Hands. Face. Space' and if you develop symptoms you must self-isolate, along with your household, and get a free test.

Cases are not evenly spread, with infection rates rising more rapidly in some areas than others. Our strategy is to suppress the virus while supporting the economy, education and the NHS, until an effective vaccine is widely available. Local action is at the centre of our response, and engagement with

Local Authorities is, and will continue to be, a key part of this process.

Kelly Beaver, Managing Director, Public Affairs at Ipsos MORI said:

The continuing support of the public by taking part in the study is something we remain immensely grateful for. The number of participants gives this study the robustness and thoroughness which marks it out as world leading. Ipsos MORI would like to thank everyone who's volunteered so far and those who will volunteer for further rounds of this study.

Findings from over 85,000 volunteers between 16 October and 25 October:

- overall prevalence of infection in the community in England was 1.28% or 128 people per 10,000 infected
- using the most recent data, the virus was doubling every 9 days
- the reproduction number R has increased to 1.6
- out of 85,971 results, 863 were positive
- prevalence of infection was highest in the North West (2.3%), Yorkshire and the Humber (2.7%), North East (1.2%), East Midlands (1.2%), West Midlands (1.6%), London (0.89%), South East (0.55%), East of England (0.64%), South West (0.72%)
- clustering of cases is more prevalent in Lancashire, Manchester, Liverpool and West Yorkshire, West Midlands and East Midlands
- nationally, prevalence increased across all age groups with the greatest increase in those aged 55 to 64 (1.2%)
- in those aged over 65, prevalence was 0.81%. Prevalence remains highest in 18 to 24 year olds at 2.2%
- prevalence is increasing in primary- and secondary-aged children

Read the [report published for pre-print](#).

Read more on the [REACT](#) programme of work.

This study falls under pillar 4 of the COVID-19 national testing programme, which focuses on mass surveillance in the general population.