

Prime Minister's statement to the House on COVID-19: 23 June 2020

Mr Speaker, before I begin, I am sure the whole House will join me in sending our deepest condolences to the families and friends of

James Furlong, Joe Ritchie-Bennett and David Wails,

who were brutally killed in Reading on Saturday.

To assault defenceless people in a park is not simply an act of wickedness but abject cowardice,

and we will never yield to those who would seek to destroy our way of life.

Mr Speaker, with permission I will update the House on the next steps in our plan to rebuild our economy and reopen our society,

while waging our struggle against Covid-19.

From the outset, we have trusted in the common sense and perseverance of the British people

and their response has more than justified our faith.

Since I set out our plan on the 11th May,

we have been clear that our cautious relaxation of the guidance is entirely conditional on our continued defeat of the virus.

In the first half of May, nearly 69,000 people tested positive for Covid-19 across the UK;

by the first half of June, that total had fallen by nearly 70 percent to just under 22,000.

The number of new infections is now declining by between 2 and 4 percent every day.

Four weeks ago, an average of 1 in 400 people in the community in England had COVID-19;

in the first half of June, this figure was 1 in 1,700.

We created a human shield around the NHS and in turn our doctors and nurses have protected us,

and together we have saved our hospitals from being overwhelmed.

On the 11th May, 1,073 people were admitted to hospital in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with Covid-19,

by 20th June, this had fallen by 74 per cent to 283.

This pandemic has inflicted permanent scars and we mourn everyone we have lost.

Measured by a seven-day rolling average, the number of daily deaths peaked at 943 on the 14th April,

on 11th May it was 476,

and yesterday, the rolling average stood at 130.

We have ordered over 2.2 billion items of protective equipment from UK based manufacturers, many of whose production lines have been called into being to serve this new demand –

and yesterday, we conducted or posted 139,659 tests, bringing the total to over 8 million.

And while we remain vigilant, we do not believe there is currently a risk of a second peak of infections that might overwhelm the NHS.

Taking everything together, we continue to meet our five tests

and the Chief Medical Officers of all four home nations have downgraded the UK's Covid Alert Level from four to three,

meaning that we no longer face a virus spreading exponentially,

though it remains in general circulation.

The administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland hold responsibility for their own lockdown restrictions

and they will respond to the united view of the Chief Medical Officers at their own pace, based on their own judgment,

but all parts of the UK are now travelling in the same direction and we will continue to work together to ensure that everyone in our country gets the support they need.

Thanks to our progress, we can now go further and safely ease the lockdown in England.

At every stage, caution will remain our watchword, and each step will be conditional and reversible.

Mr Speaker, given the significant fall in the prevalence of the virus, we can change the two-metre social distancing rule, from 4th July.

I know this rule effectively makes life impossible for large parts of our economy, even without other restrictions.

For example, it prevents all but a fraction of our hospitality industry from

operating.

So that is why almost two weeks ago, I asked our experts to conduct a review and I will place a summary of their conclusions in the libraries of both Houses this week.

Where it is possible to keep 2 metres apart people should.

But where it is not, we will advise people to keep a social distance of 'one metre plus',

meaning they should remain one metre apart, while taking mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission.

We are today publishing guidance on how businesses can reduce the risk by taking certain steps to protect workers and customers.

These include, for instance, avoiding face-to-face seating by changing office layouts,

reducing the number of people in enclosed spaces,

improving ventilation,

using protective screens and face coverings,

closing non-essential social spaces,

providing hand sanitiser

and changing shift patterns so that staff work in set teams.

And of course, we already mandate face coverings on public transport.

Whilst the experts cannot give a precise assessment of how much the risk is reduced,

they judge these mitigations would make "1 metre plus" broadly equivalent to the risk at 2 metres if those mitigations are fully implemented.

Either will be acceptable and our guidance will change accordingly.

This vital change enables the next stage of our plan to ease the lockdown.

Mr Speaker, I am acutely conscious people will ask legitimate questions about why certain activities are allowed and others are not.

I must ask the House to understand that the virus has no interest in these debates.

Its only interest, its only ambition is to exploit any opportunities is to recapture ground that we might carelessly vacate.

There is one certainty: the fewer social contacts you have, the safer you

will be.

My duty, our duty as the Government, is to guide the British people, balancing our overriding aim of controlling the virus against our natural desire to bring back normal life.

We cannot lift all the restrictions at once, so we have to make difficult judgments,

and every step is scrupulously weighed against the evidence.

Our principle is to trust the British public to use their common sense in the full knowledge of the risks,

remembering that the more we open up, the more vigilant we will need to be.

From now on we will ask people to follow guidance on social contact instead of legislation.

In that spirit we advise that from 4 July, two households of any size should be able to meet in any setting inside or out.

That does not mean they must always be the same two households.

It will be possible for instance to meet one set of grandparents one weekend, and the others the following weekend.

We are not recommending meetings of multiple households indoors because of the risk of creating greater chains of transmission.

Outside, the guidance remains that people from several households can meet in groups of up to six.

and it follows that two households can also meet, regardless of size.

Mr Speaker, I can tell the House that we will also re-open restaurants and pubs.

All hospitality indoors will be limited to table-service, and our guidance will encourage minimal staff and customer contact.

We will ask businesses to help NHS Test and Trace respond to any local outbreaks

by collecting contact details from customers, as happens in other countries, and we will work with the sector to make this manageable.

Almost as eagerly awaited as a pint will be a haircut, particularly by me, and so we will re-open hairdressers, with appropriate precautions, including the use of visors.

We also intend to allow some other close contact services, such as nail bars,

to re-open as soon as we can, when we are confident they can operate in a Covid-secure way.

From 4th July, provided that no more than two households stay together, people will be free to stay overnight in self-contained accommodation, including hotels and bed & breakfasts, as well as campsites as long as shared facilities are kept clean.

Most leisure facilities and tourist attractions will reopen if they can do so safely,

including outdoor gyms and playgrounds, cinemas, museums, galleries, theme parks and arcades

as well as libraries, social clubs and community centres.

“Close proximity” venues such as nightclubs, soft-play areas, indoor gyms, swimming pools and spas will need to remain closed for now, as will bowling alleys and water parks.

But my RHF's the Business and Culture Secretaries will establish taskforces with public health experts and these sectors to help them become Covid-secure and re-open as soon as possible.

We will also work with the arts industry on specific guidance to enable choirs, orchestras and theatres to resume live performances as soon as possible.

Recreation and sport will be allowed, but indoor facilities, including changing rooms and courts, will remain closed

and people should only play close contact team sports with members of their household.

Mr Speaker, I know that many have mourned the closure of places of worship, and this year, Easter, Passover and Eid all occurred during the lockdown.

So I am delighted that places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services –

including weddings with a maximum of 30 people,

all subject to social distancing.

Meanwhile, our courts, probation services, police stations and other public services will increasingly resume face-to-face proceedings.

Wrap-around care for school age children and formal childcare will restart over the summer.

Primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance

and those children who can already go to school should do so – because it is safe.

Mr Speaker, we will publish Covid-secure guidelines for every sector that is re-opening,

and slowly but surely, these measures will restore a sense of normality.

After the toughest restrictions in peacetime history,

we are now able to make life easier for people to see more of their friends and families

and to help businesses get back on their feet and get people back into work.

But the virus has not gone away.

We will continue to monitor the data with the Joint Biosecurity Centre and our ever more effective Test and Trace system.

And I must be clear to the House, that as we have seen in other countries, there will be flare-ups for which local measures will be needed

and we will not hesitate to apply the brakes and re-introduce restrictions even at national level – if required.

So I urge everyone to stay alert, control the virus and save lives.

Let's keep washing our hands,

staying 2 metres apart wherever feasible, and mitigating the risks at 1 metre where not,

avoiding public transport when possible, and wearing a mask when not,

getting tested immediately if we have symptoms,

and self-isolating if instructed by NHS Test and Trace.

Today, we can say that our long national hibernation is beginning to come to an end

and life is returning to our shops, streets and homes

and a new, but cautious, optimism is palpable.

But it would be all too easy for that frost to return

and that is why we will continue to trust in the common sense and the community spirit of the British people to follow this guidance,

to carry us through and see us to victory over this virus.

I commend Mr Speaker this Statement to the House.

Student Support in England

News story

Statement from Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Universities



Eligibility rules for EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals, and their family members, who wish to commence courses in England in the Academic Year starting in August 2021 are changing.

EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals will no longer be eligible for home fee status, undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced learner financial support from Student Finance England for courses starting in academic year 2021/22.

This change will also apply to Further Education funding for those aged 19+, and funding for apprenticeships.

It will not affect students starting courses in academic year 2020/21, nor those EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals benefitting from Citizens' Rights under the EU Withdrawal Agreement, EEA EFTA Separation Agreement or Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement respectively.

It will also not apply to Irish nationals living in the UK or Ireland whose right to study and to access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis for UK and Irish nationals under the Common Travel Area arrangement.

Written Ministerial Statement available at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements>

[£20-million contract awarded for Typhoon infrastructure at RAF Lossiemouth](#)

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has awarded a contract worth £20-million to Galliford Try for work which will house Number IX (Bomber) Squadron in facilities that are fit for purpose, enabling them to deliver in their role as a Typhoon Aggressor Squadron. Their re-role from Tornado to Typhoon, and move from RAF Marham to RAF Lossiemouth, was announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015.

The work will start later this summer and is expected to take around two years. It will involve the refurbishment of an existing hangar and construction of new technical and storage facilities. It forms part of a wider redevelopment of RAF Lossiemouth which also includes a refurbished runway, facilities for the RAF's fleet of Poseidon MRA Mk. 1 sub-hunters, new and improved accommodation, and much more.

RAF Lossiemouth is now home to four Squadrons of Typhoons which hold the Quick Reaction Alert role, Securing the Skies of the United Kingdom every minute of every day. Aircraft could be launched at a moment's notice to intercept unidentified aircraft, or aircraft which may pose a threat. RAF Lossiemouth covers the north of the UK including Scotland, while RAF Coningsby covers the south. The Typhoon is an extremely versatile multi-role combat aircraft involved in operations around the world, including Lithuania where 6 Squadron from RAF Lossiemouth are deployed on NATO Baltic Air Policing.

Once fully established in their new facilities, IX(B) Squadron will be the RAF's dedicated fourth-generation Aggressors. This involves simulating the tactics, threats, and procedures of our adversaries to create the best training environment for Royal Air Force pilots. While providing this essential training, the Squadron will also be involved in Quick Reaction Alert duties alongside 1(F) Squadron, II(AC) Squadron, and 6 Squadron.

Margaret Jesson, DIO's Project Manager, said:

It's exciting to have reached this stage of the project and we are looking forward to continuing to work with our colleagues at RAF Lossiemouth and Galliford Try to provide some fantastic facilities for these Typhoon pilots and ground crew.

Group Captain Chris Layden, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth, said:

This is great news for the Station, for Moray, and for the RAF. Defence's sustained investment in RAF Lossiemouth continues to transform us into a next-generation fighter and maritime patrol base, ready to secure the UK's skies and seas for many years to come.

Keith Yarham, Defence Director at Galliford Try, said:

We are delighted to be working once again with DIO to deliver much needed infrastructure for the RAF. Together with our previous experience at RAF Marham and RAF Valley we are building a strong track record in the air station sector, and look forward to providing the personnel at Lossiemouth with the high-quality facilities they depend on.

[Meet the women in engineering helping to shape the world](#)

Although traffic levels may have dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic, for Highways England engineers it's been an important time for maintenance and work to take place. They've been planning, maintaining and building roads to ensure medical and food supplies can be transported around the country to those who need them most.

Highways England is celebrating International Women in Engineering Day (23 June), in a bid to encourage women of all backgrounds to 'Shape the World' (this year's theme) by considering a rewarding career in engineering.

Three of Highways England's engineers explain more about their roles and how they've contributed to the pandemic work force.

Bonnie Pearce, Assistant Project Manager, said:

Working at Highways England has widened my experience and has provided me with knowledge into the lifecycle of a construction project from all areas and specialties needed for the preconstruction period.

I previously worked as a project management professional and engineering surveyor on a variety of environments including large

construction sites, residential areas, Network Rail and London Underground gave me a view of construction from a survey perspective, enabling me to move to Highways England into my current role as a project manager on the A303 Stonehenge Project.

The widening of my experience includes working with stakeholders, planning and scheduling works and an insight into contract preparation.

The team I work with on the A303 Stonehenge Project have adapted well to working from home during Covid19 and have kept up communication and supported each other throughout.

Bonnie Pearce, Highways England Assistant Project Manager

Dr Joanna White, Head of Intelligent Transport Systems, said:

Highways England has enabled me to focus on my passion for research in Intelligent Transport Systems and how they can deliver safer and more reliable journeys.

I've developed from a Senior Research Engineer through promotion to Team Leader and then to my dream role as Head of Intelligent Transport Systems. I now lead a group of about 25 people who research and develop our technology standards and systems of the future. This includes trialling communications infrastructure to enable connected vehicle environments on our network, helping us to deliver our digital roads ambitions.

I've learned about the architecture of the operational technologies we use on our network as well as about emerging technologies, such as connected and autonomous vehicles. I've developed as a leader, a people manager as well as improving my understanding of finance and programme management. My career at Highways England has also contributed to building my professional competence and capabilities to become a Chartered Engineer with the Institute for Engineering and Technology which I achieved in March 2020.

Although I'm not a key worker, I've participated in regular calls to help manage the changes that have resulted from Covid-19, in particular the move from office-based working to home working and the opportunities and challenges that's brought. I've made sure everyone's been regularly updated and escalated issues. Part of my group's remit is to provide advice and assurance to Operations and Major Projects schemes, and by supporting the transition I've been able to ensure this service has continued.

Lorraine Bennetts, Senior Project Manager, said:

Highways England has provided a unique opportunity to develop my project management skills in a complex, fast paced and challenging environment. I have been able to make use of a wide variety of training opportunities ranging from formal learning, shadowing senior leadership and more recently access to the Chartered Project Professional cohort approach.

I have developed my knowledge base through formal learning i.e. business case course but perhaps the biggest skill learnt is the art of collaboration. This considers the six iBip behaviours and how together they form collaborative behaviours which empower successful delivery. I endeavour to role model and practice these skills and help others to consider their approach as there is no 'one size fits all' and everyone brings a different insight into the working environment. I also have had the opportunity to become a mental health first aider which has been really beneficial in supporting colleagues through difficult times.

First and foremost, in these challenging and unprecedented times, is ensuring that my family and I help stop the spread of the virus by following the rules; maintaining our lock down and social distance requirements whilst balancing this with home-schooling four children and working full time (and living in a static caravan).

In terms of work my project is the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements scheme and it has been crucial that we maintain progress on the scheme as we move towards our Development Consent process. This scheme has the potential to unlock economic growth in the area and if we are to recover our economy then maintaining our commitment to the delivery of the RIS is essential.

Lorraine Bennetts, Highways England Senior Project Manager

If you're interested in finding out more about a career in engineering with Highways England, [have a look at our website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Slovenia: September 2020

Press release

Mrs Tiffany Sadler has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia in succession to Ms Sophie Honey MBE.



Mrs Tiffany Sadler has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Slovenia in succession to Ms Sophie Honey MBE who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mrs Sadler will take up her appointment during September 2020.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Tiffany Sadler

Married to: Stephen Sadler

Children: Three

2019 to present Full Time Slovene Language Training
2018 to 2019 FC0, Director, Tech Overhaul Programme
2018 FC0, Additional Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate
2016 to 2018 Tbilisi, Deputy Head of Mission
2014 to 2016 HM Treasury, Joint Head of Energy Policy, Enterprise and Growth Unit
2011 to 2014 FC0, Head of Official Development Assistance Team, Finance Directorate
2010 to 2011 FC0, Analyst, Strategic Finance Directorate
2008 to 2009 FC0, Head of EU Communications Team, Europe Directorate
2007 to 2008 FC0, Project Manager, Consular Directorate
2005 to 2006 FC0, Analyst, Comprehensive Spending Review Team

2004 to 2005	FCO, Head of Economic, Africa/African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) Section, Europe External Department
2003	FCO, Head of Economic, Africa and ACP Section, Europe External Department
2001 to 2003	London School of Economics, Study for Masters in Economics
1999 to 2001	FCO, Head of Global Economic Issues Team, Economic Policy Department
1996 to 1999	Rangoon, Second Secretary – Political/Economic
1995 to 1996	Full-time Language Training (Burmese)
1994 to 1995	FCO, Desk Officer, Thailand, South East Asia Department

Further information

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