

[Extension of Peter Clarke's tenure as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons](#)

The Secretary of State has announced an extension of up to six months to Peter Clarke's term of office as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, commencing 1 May 2020.

A campaign to recruit a new Chief Inspector has concluded without an appointment, and a new campaign will be run. Mr Clarke's extension will enable appropriate oversight and scrutiny at a critical time for HMPPS, until such point when the new appointee is confirmed.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons is a Royal appointment. Extensions are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and have been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

HMIP is an independent inspectorate, reporting directly to Ministers, but operating independently of Government and the services under its scrutiny. HMCIP has a duty to report on conditions for and treatment of those in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, police and court custody suites, customs custody facilities and military detention in England and Wales, and immigration detention facilities within the UK.

Biography

Peter Clarke was appointed to the role of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons on 1 February 2016. Mr Clarke is a retired senior police officer, who served in the Metropolitan Police Service for more than 30 years. He rose to the rank of Assistant Commissioner and also served as Head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch and National Co-ordinator of Terrorist Investigations. In 2014 he was appointed Education Commissioner for Birmingham to conduct an inquiry into the allegations concerning Birmingham schools arising from the "Trojan Horse" letter. Mr Clarke also served on the Board of the Charity Commission until January 2016.

[Lord Gardiner of Kimble's statement at an Extraordinary Virtual meeting of the G20 Agriculture Ministers](#)

May I thank the presidency for convening this meeting at such a critical time. Across the world, so many people have been affected, and her Majesty's Government and all in the United Kingdom are mindful of what is happening in

our own country and across the world in these difficult times.

As we all know, this virus knows no borders. We must ensure a coordinated global response by increasing our international dialogue and cooperation to tackle the immediate challenges and ensure high standards of biosecurity which will be paramount to prevent similar events happening again.

As the Ministers responsible for agriculture, we need to ensure the flow of critical agricultural products, foodstuffs, products and services essential for food production and their distribution along food supply chains.

Alongside other measures, the UK has temporarily relaxed elements of competition law to enable supermarkets to work more closely together to ensure people can access the products they need. And delivery hours to supermarkets are being extended to ensure shelves can be replenished more quickly.

Farmers, seasonal workers and input and output distributing agents must be able to move safely as required. I commend the efforts of all workers supporting the immediate and longer term fight against this pandemic.

It is imperative that we keep our markets and borders open and work together to ensure the continued flow of international trade. Global food security can only be achieved by ensuring supply and access to food everywhere.

Those living with low food security are especially vulnerable to the impacts of disruptions to the food system caused by COVID-19. This is exacerbated by existing vulnerabilities caused by climate change and natural disasters. Our response must recognise this.

I would like to praise the work of the Agriculture Market Information System and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. These organisations can assist our efforts by tracking the impacts of the pandemic and promoting transparency.

We will continue our work on protecting the foundations of all food production – a healthy environment and a stable climate. We must commit to supporting an environmentally sustainable and inclusive recovery, consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

The verdict is clear: working together is integral to protecting human life. My officials and I stand ready to work with our partners around the world to combat COVID-19 together.

[Aldi joins Free School Meal voucher](#)

scheme



Aldi has confirmed today (Tuesday 21 April) it has signed up to the national voucher scheme, which is one of the ways the Government is supporting children on free school meals during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Aldi joins a range of supermarkets including Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Waitrose and M&S where vouchers can be redeemed. The Department for Education continues to work to get more shops to join the scheme as soon as possible.

Schools can continue to provide meals and food parcels for collection or delivery themselves, but where this is not possible, the scheme allows schools to provide vouchers to families electronically, or as a gift card in the post for those without internet access.

By giving headteachers flexibility on how they can get meals or shop vouchers to these children, they can make the most appropriate decisions for families in their communities, and provide immediate reassurance that this important support will continue.

The Department has worked closely with the provider Edenred to expand the system and ensure that there is capacity to add Aldi to the list of supermarkets.

Minister for Children and Families Vicky Ford said:

We are focused on making sure that the 1.3 million disadvantaged children who would normally have a free school meal do not go hungry as a result of staying home to protect the NHS and save lives.

We encourage schools to work with their suppliers to arrange food parcels or collections. Where this is not possible, we have launched a national scheme for schools to provide supermarket vouchers. So far, Edenred report that £15 million worth of vouchers have been converted into supermarket gift cards by schools and families.

Today I am pleased to announce that supermarket Aldi has joined the list of supermarkets who can accept the national scheme gift cards and parents will be able to order Aldi vouchers from the week commencing 27 April.

The value of vouchers redeemed continues to increase rapidly as more families benefit from the national system, with £4 million redeemed between Monday (20 April) and Tuesday (21 April).

More information on the free school meals voucher scheme is available in the [guidance](#).

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Last updated 21 April 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 21 April 2020

Added clarification on value of vouchers redeemed.

2. 21 April 2020

First published.

[Government urges gambling industry to tackle risks of problem gambling during coronavirus outbreak](#)

- The Minister has written to the Chief Executives of five leading online gambling operators asking them to take extra steps to protect players at this time of heightened risk.
- He will also host a virtual roundtable with major problem gambling treatment and support organisations on the impacts of coronavirus.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has requested regular intelligence from the industry on patterns of gambling during the coronavirus outbreak, including how operators are managing the risk of problem gambling and what more companies can do to promote safer gambling messaging during the current crisis.

Culture Minister Nigel Huddleston has written to the Chief Executives of five leading online gambling operators – Bet 365, GVC, Skybet, William Hill and Flutter – and the trade body the Betting and Gaming Council – to:

- Request regular and comprehensive internal data around online gambling

- habits as a result of the ongoing lockdown measures;
- Remind them of their responsibilities and encourage extra steps to protect players at this time of heightened risk;
 - Call for a greater prominence of safer gambling messaging within their advertising aimed at existing and potential customers across television, radio, online and print media. This should more clearly warn of risks and signpost people to sources of support, such as GambleAware.

The latter action follows the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) announcing an increase in gambling-related complaints since the start of the coronavirus epidemic. DCMS has requested further details from the ASA on the scale and trends of these complaints.

These measures will support DCMS and the Gambling Commission to make a full assessment of the impact of the current circumstances on gambling habits, monitor whether risks are materialising, to what extent operators are taking action, and whether the current regulations and voluntary measures by the industry are sufficient to prevent an increase in gambling-related harm.

Although there is no firm evidence at this stage, there are concerns that the current social distancing measures could lead to an increase in problem gambling online with people in lockdown and internet usage up.

This follows reports received by the Gambling Commission of a recent increase in consumer activity around online slots, poker, casino gaming and virtual sports, following the cancellation of most live sport and the closure of all land-based gambling premises. Players of online casino games, for instance, have been identified by the Commission as over three times more likely to be problem gamblers than those who take part in general sports betting.

Nigel Huddleston, Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage, said:

As we stay at home and spend more time online, it is vital that no stone is left unturned in protecting people from gambling related harm.

Whilst overall gambling participation has fallen in recent weeks and the industry has made notable contributions to support the national response, we must take proactive steps now, and keep these measures under review.

I expect patterns of play to be closely monitored so we can move quickly if there is any evidence of problem gambling increasing. I also want more to be done to promote responsible gambling during the pandemic.

The Minister will also host a virtual roundtable with major problem gambling treatment and support organisations in the coming weeks. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the impacts of coronavirus, to assess trends in service use, how remote treatment provision is working and an assessment of current self-exclusion measures.

The government has already taken strong steps to ensure consumers are protected from gambling related harm including introducing a ban on gambling with credit cards, which came into effect across Great Britain on 14 April 2020. At the end of last month it also became mandatory for all online gambling operators to integrate with Gamstop, the online self exclusion tool, ensuring that consumers only need to sign up once to be blocked from all licensed online gambling.

The Government has also already announced that it will review the Gambling Act to ensure it is fit for the digital age. Further details about the review will be provided in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors

On 25 March 2020 the Gambling Commission wrote to all online operators to make clear expectations on consumer protection and compliance with licence conditions.

On 7 April 2020 the Advertising Standards Authority introduced a new process for the public to report inappropriate advertising.

There are robust requirements for operators to safeguard players across every form of gambling. All operators must adhere to these rules if they wish to operate in the British market.

The Gambling Commission has a range of powers to take strong action against any company that breaks the rules, whether online or in land-based premises.

[First charter flight departed from Bangladesh to bring British travellers home](#)

The British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen were present at the Shahjalal International Airport to observe the return process and speak with departing British travellers.

Earlier on 18 April, the British High Commission to Bangladesh announced four charter flights (21, 23, 25 and 26 April) from Bangladesh to bring home 850 British nationals to the United Kingdom.

For these return flights, priority is initially being given to vulnerable passengers, most at risk from the effects of coronavirus, including the

elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

The flights are intended for British Nationals who are on holiday or are short-term visitors to Bangladesh. During this process, we will continue to prioritise vulnerable British nationals most at risk from the effects of coronavirus. We have undertaken checks to ensure those registering for these flights are eligible.

We have engaged heavily with the Government of Bangladesh, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh and airport officials, Bangladesh Police, local law enforcement and administration, to ensure British nationals safe return to the UK.

The UK Government committed up to £75 million to help thousands of British people return home. We have a responsibility to the UK taxpayer to deliver value for money so we can put on as many flights as possible. Anyone flying back to the United Kingdom on a UK Government chartered flight purchased their ticket. This approach is in line with other countries, who are charging similar fees for charter flights.

As of 21 April, The UK Government helped [number of British travellers] to returned home from [number of countries].

The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson said

“I am very pleased that we have today enabled 269 British visitors to Bangladesh, many of them vulnerable and with underlying health conditions, to return home to the UK on our first special charter flight, operated by British Airways. Working with Bangladesh Biman Airlines we were able to provide a connecting flight from Sylhet, where many of our nationals were staying. Our next flights will run from Dhaka on 23, 25 and 26 April, again with a connection from Sylhet.

“I would particularly like to thank the Government of Bangladesh, the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, the management of Hazrat Shahjalal and Osmani International Airports and Biman Bangladesh Airlines for their exemplary support in ensuring the safe return of British visitors.

“The British High Commission in Dhaka remains fully operational and we will continue to provide full consular support to British nationals in Bangladesh.”

Notes to editor

- The charter flights are for UK travellers who normally reside in the UK and their direct dependants. A number of seats will be reserved for those deemed vulnerable.
- Movement within Bangladesh is currently very restricted. The British High Commission contacted those who have confirmed seats on the flight with further details.

- Those who are eligible to fly, and when their seat is confirmed, were sent information on getting to airports and flight itineraries.
- The British High Commission continues to provide consular support to any British nationals who remain in Bangladesh. Support is available 24/7 by telephone for all routine enquiries and emergencies: +88 02 55668700.
- Also, remaining British Nationals can send your consular enquiries through the [contact form](#)

Further information

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