

Health and Social Care Secretary's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 1 February 2021

Good afternoon and welcome to Downing Street for today's coronavirus briefing.

And I'm joined by Professor Steve Powis, the Medical Director of NHS England. And Dr Susan Hopkins, who is the Chief Medical Advisor to Public Health England and to NHS Test and Trace.

I've got quite a lot of news to bring you up to speed on. Right at the start, I wanted to tell you where we are with our vaccine programme.

I'm so proud of the team, who've now vaccinated 9.2 million people across the UK, that includes 931,204 vaccinations just this weekend.

And to put that into context – that's one in every 60 adults in the whole United Kingdom vaccinated in one single weekend. It's a mammoth effort.

I know how much these jabs mean to people. And I'm so grateful for all the messages that we get, and all the pictures that I'm sent of people being vaccinated.

It fills me with pride that so many people are doing so much to help for this roll out to happen so smoothly and I want to say thanks to you all.

Care homes

Getting vaccinated is an emotional moment for so many people and that's because it is about protecting those who are most vulnerable to COVID.

We've now vaccinated almost 9 in 10 of all over 80s in the UK and now, as of today, we've vaccinated over half of all people in their 70s.

And, I'm delighted that I can tell you we've visited every eligible care home with older residents in England, and offered vaccinations to all their residents and staff.

This has been an incredible example of health and social care working together, working side-by-side to protect people most in need.

As Professor Martin Green, the Chief Executive of Care England said today, this is a "wonderful achievement and one that is testament to the hard work of care home staff and our colleagues in the NHS and local authorities."

And, I want to thank every single person who's helped us to get this far.

Vaccine supply

I also want to let you know some good news on vaccine supply. Today we've ordered another 40 million vaccine doses from Valneva.

As we have all along, we've invested early and at risk, before we know for sure if it will come good because from the start, we've taken a no regrets attitude to backing vaccines. We've tried to leave nothing on the table.

If this gets regulatory approval, the Valneva vaccine, like many others, will be made right here in the UK.

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is made in Oxford, and Staffordshire, and Wrexham. The Novovax vaccine is being manufactured on Teesside. And if approved, this Valneva vaccine will be manufactured in Livingston, in Scotland.

We didn't start this pandemic with a large-scale on-shore vaccine manufacturing capability, so we're building one, all across the United Kingdom.

The vaccine programme just goes to show how important it is to have the UK working as one, together.

International

We now have over 400 million doses of vaccines on order. This is obviously more than the UK population needs. And my attitude has always been we protect every UK citizen as fast as we can. And at the same time, we're generous around the world.

I want to say this to our international partners. Of course, I'm delighted about how well this is going at home. But I believe fundamentally that the vaccine roll out is a global effort.

One of the many reasons that I'm so happy with the AstraZeneca contract is that it not just that it gives us a strong supply here but because it is the only vaccine being deployed that's available to the whole world at cost.

And because it's logistically straightforward, it can be practically deployed in the poorest parts of the world too.

So, we will protect UK supply and we'll play our part to ensure the whole world can get the jab.

New variants

Another area where we're helping around the world is in spotting new variants.

Our global leadership in genomic sequencing has helped us to spot new variants here in the UK, and quickly alert the rest of the world. But there

are other countries that don't have the capacity they need.

Last week, we offered our capacity and expertise to other nations through our New Variant Assessment Platform, because a mutation in one part of the world is a threat to people everywhere.

For example, our South African colleagues spotted a new variant through their high quality genomic sequencing and rightly notified the world, as we did with the variant that we discovered here in the UK.

We've now identified 105 cases of this variant here. Eleven of those cases don't appear to have any links to international travel.

There's currently no evidence to suggest this variant is any more severe, but we need to come down on it hard and we will. We've already made sure that all these cases are isolating and that we've done enhanced contact tracing of all of their close contacts.

We are surging [extra testing into the areas where this variant has been found](#) and sequencing every single positive case.

Working with local authorities, we are going door-to-door to test people in the local area. These cases have been identified in the following postcodes:

- W7, N17, CR4, WS2, ME15, EN10, GU21, and PR9

If you live in one of these postcodes where we're sending in enhanced testing, then it's imperative that you stay at home. And that you get a test, even if you don't have symptoms.

This is so important so that we can break the chains of transmission of this new variant. And we've got to bring this virus to heel.

So there's lots of good news, but this is a stark reminder that the fight against this virus isn't over yet.

Every day, we're protecting more people and getting ourselves one step closer to normal life. But this is no time to let things slip. So let's, all of us, do what we must to get this virus under control.

[Secretary of State announces appointment of new Independent Reviewer](#)

Press release

The Secretary of State, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP, has today announced the appointment of Professor Marie Breen-Smyth as the Independent Reviewer of the exercised powers under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.



The Secretary of State, Rt Hon Brandon Lewis CBE MP, has today announced the appointment of Professor Marie Breen-Smyth as the Independent Reviewer of the exercised powers under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Professor Breen-Smyth will replace David Seymour CB with effect from 1 February 2021.

Professor Marie Breen-Smyth is an academic with a background in the study of political violence, conflict and international relations. She has held various academic roles including as Associate Dean and Professor in the University of Surrey, Reader in International Politics in Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom and previously Jennings Randolph Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington DC.

Background:

The role of the Independent Reviewer is set out within the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

In particular, the Independent Reviewer has a responsibility to review the operation of sections 21 to 32 of the Act and those who use or are affected by those sections; to review the procedures adopted by the military in Northern Ireland for receiving, investigating and responding to complaints; and to report annually to the Secretary of State.

The Reviewer will act in accordance with any request by the Secretary of State to include in a review specified matters over and above those outlined in Sections 21 to 32 of the Act.

Terms of appointment:

- Length of appointment: Three years from 1 February 2021
- Remuneration: £650 per day
- Pension: The position is not pensionable
- Time Requirements: 3 – 4 days per month

Political Activity:

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories within the last five years to be made public. Professor Breen-Smyth has not been engaged in any political activity in the last five years.

Regulation:

The Commissioner for Public Appointments does not regulate this appointment.

Published 1 February 2021

Reappointment to the Adaptation Committee of the Climate Change Committee

Defra and the Devolved Administrations have reappointed Professor Michael Davies to the Adaptation Committee of the Climate Change Committee.

The Adaptation Committee is comprised of experts in the fields of climate change impacts, science, environmental economics, conservation, public health and business. It provides independent, expert advice on preparing for and adapting to climate change.

Whilst this reappointment is not regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, it has been made in line with the guidance set out in the Ministerial Governance Code for Public Appointments. It will run from 1 February 2021.

Commenting on Professor Davies' reappointment, Adaptation Committee Chair Baroness Brown of Cambridge said:

Mike has been an excellent appointment to the Committee. His background in buildings, planning, cities and public health, including heat, ventilation and air quality, is central to the adaptation challenges the UK faces with all of our building stock as the climate warms.

Commenting on his reappointment, Professor Davies said:

I am delighted to be able to continue as a member of the Adaptation Committee. The Committee undertakes vital work in addressing the pressing need to prepare for a changing climate.

The Board of the Adaptation Committee is currently one member short as it prepares to recruit a successor for Professor Dame Georgina Mace, who joined the Adaptation Committee in 2018 to lead its work assessing the impacts of climate change and adaptation responses in the UK's natural environment. Defra and the CCC have paid their respects to Dame Georgina, who sadly passed away last year.

The Adaptation Committee has appointed Professor Kate Jones as interim Expert Advisor until the full recruitment campaign is run.

Biographical details

Professor Michael Davies

Professor Michael Davies is Professor of Building Physics and Environment at the UCL Institute for Environmental Design and Engineering (IEDE) and Director of the Complex Built Environment Systems Group at UCL. For over a decade he has led an extensive programme of research, founded on close collaboration with researchers from health and other disciplines, which has sought to understand the complex relationship between the built environment and human well-being.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. Adaptation Sub-Committee members receive £550 per day based on a time commitment of up to three days per month.

The Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body created under the Climate Change Act (2008). It is publicly known as the Adaptation Committee (AC) of the Climate Change Committee. The AC is jointly sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. Further information about the CCC is available on the [CCC website](#).

The Board for the Adaptation Committee comprises a Chairperson and five members. Currently the board is one member short as it prepares to recruit a successor to Professor Dame Georgina Mace.

[New kitchen and dining facility at](#)

Cameron Barracks enhances training experience for armed forces

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation working with industry partner Landmarc Support Services and Highlands based contractor Compass Building and Construction Services, opened a new £2.3-million kitchen and dining facility at Cameron Barracks, a military training camp located on the eastern outskirts of Inverness in Scotland.

Cameron Barracks is a key site for exercising troops in the Scottish Highlands accommodating around 335 troops at one time, with additional day trainees also using the site. The kitchen and dining facilities can feed the whole camp within an hour.

The new facility replaces a temporary portacabin-style kitchen extension which was installed in the early 1990s. The new brick-built extension includes a repaint of the existing dining area, a complete internal refurbishment of the kitchen with brand-new catering equipment, additional storage areas and toilets for troops, and welfare facilities for kitchen staff.

Cameron Barracks is a key site for exercising troops in the Scottish Highlands and the kitchen and dining facilities can feed the whole camp within an hour. DIO Crown Copyright.

The bricks and slate for the new facility were specially made to satisfy Local Planning Authority requirements because Cameron Barracks is a listed site, meaning it is of special architectural or historic interest. Bat boxes were also installed during construction because the Barracks is home to several bat roosts.

During the construction phase of the project as many as 35 tradespeople were on site, all managed in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on safe working during the COVID pandemic. Materials and goods were also sourced locally where they were available.

Bob Phillips, DIO's Regional Training Contract & Infrastructure Manager for the Scotland and Northern Ireland Training Estate, said:

DIO supports our armed forces by providing what they need to live, work and train.

Cameron Barracks is considered by the Armed Forces as their gateway to the Scottish Highlands and has been categorised as a core site in 'Army 2025', the army's plan for future capacity over the next 25 years. The location is essential for dealing with all priority military units' pre-operational training. This new state-of-the-art

kitchen and dining facility will enable us to support the activities of training troops for many years to come.

Ronnie Shields, Project Manager, Landmarc Support Services said:

As DIO's industry partner for the delivery of services across the National Defence Training Estate, we're proud to have been part of a project that is helping to provide the best training experience for our armed forces. This is a superb facility that will significantly improve the welfare of troops using the camp to train.

The project was delivered on time and under budget and was achieved by close partnership working with DIO and Compass building and construction services. The new facility has a DREAM Rating of 'Excellent' which we are extremely proud of.

[Secretary of State appoints new member to the parades commission for Northern Ireland](#)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Right Honourable Brandon Lewis CBE MP, has announced the appointment of William Gamble to the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland.

Mr Gamble will take up the appointment with effect from 1 February 2021.

Mr Gamble now works as a Strategy Consultant following his retirement as a senior civil servant in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. During his civil service career, he held roles including Head of Good Relations & Reconciliation Division in the Office of the First and deputy First Minister, and Director of Regional Planning and Transportation in the Department for Regional Development.

Mr Gamble has previously held a number of board and trustee appointments, including membership of the board of the International Fund for Ireland, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, and the Community Relations Council.

Background

The Parades Commission for Northern Ireland was established in 1997 and took on its full powers in 1998 through the Public Processions (Northern Ireland)

Act 1998. The Commission operates as a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Northern Ireland Office.

Under the terms of the Act, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for making appointments to the Parades Commission. The appointments are made in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 of the Act.

Further information on the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://www.paradescommission.org/>

Terms of Appointment

- This position is part-time for a period ending on 31 December 2023.
- The position of member receives a fixed annual remuneration of £22,000.
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Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and with regards to the statutory requirements. Political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories to be made public.

Mr Gamble has declared that he has not been politically active in the last five years.

Regulation

The Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment (OCPA) regulates appointments to the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland.

Statutory Requirements

The Secretary of State makes appointments to the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland in accordance with the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998.