

36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Liberia

World news story

The UK delivers statement on Liberia at the 36th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on 2 November, sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

The UK would like to thank Liberia for its engagement with the UPR process.

We recognise the impact that Covid-19 has had on Liberia, and we hope adequate steps will be taken to support the most vulnerable in society whose income has been affected the most by the pandemic.

The UK welcomes the introduction of Liberia's Roadmap on Ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2020-2022). It is encouraging that Liberia is taking tangible steps to address the root causes as well as planning legislative improvements.

We recommend that Liberia:

1. Focus the anti-Sexual and Gender Based Violence response on prevention (including through increasing the proportion of girls in education) and engagement with local actors.
2. Prioritise resources for the identification of victims of trafficking, including internal trafficking, and more vigorously investigate and prosecute traffickers, including officials accused of complicity.
3. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.

Executive release and determinate recalls – A joint approach

The Secretary of State is required to refer to the Parole Board the cases of all recalled determinate sentenced prisoners, who remain detained beyond day 28 of their return to custody.

The Parole Board will then progress those reviews to ensure they are considered by the Parole Board members either at the Paper review stage-Member Case Assessment, or at Oral Hearing.

The Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS), on behalf of the Secretary of State, has the power to consider and make a decision about a recalled prisoner's re-release – Executive Release; whether there is an active referral to the Parole Board or not.

Both the Parole Board and PPCS have been looking at how to support both the parole review and executive release process, in a way which avoids a duplication of work and minimises delay in either process.

PPCS and the Parole Board have now agreed two separate approaches, which were introduced from the 1st October 2020:

1. Determinate Recalls that are adjourned or deferred at MCA or waiting to be listed.

Where a case is not listed for an oral hearing, PPCS have given an undertaking to use their best efforts to consider any executive release consideration within 3 weeks of notifying the Parole Board. When three weeks have passed, in any case where the Parole Board have not been notified of the outcome of the executive release consideration the Parole Board will inform PPCS that they intend to progress the board's recall review.

2. Determinate Recall cases which are listed for an Oral Hearing.

Where a review has been listed for an oral hearing, PPCS and the Parole Board have agreed that PPCS would only consider a case for Executive Release if they are able to finalise the decision at least three weeks before the Oral Hearing date. If they are not able to complete this within that timescale the prisoner's review would continue to the scheduled oral hearing.

The Board and PPCS have been able to agree this approach because members are directing reports at the paper review stage to a specific date, leading to the details of the risk management plan being available much sooner than has

previously been the case.

There are benefits for all parties in this approach including;-

- The prisoners review will progress without delay;
- There will be less duplication of work for both organisations;
- Early notification of executive release will allow the Parole Board to utilise the vacated hearing slot.
- The Parole Board members will not be preparing for hearings, which are cancelled at short notice – thus directing their focus to cases that will be heard and reducing the cost to the public purse.

There may be cases which under exceptional circumstances do not follow this process, but it is expected that these will be a small number.

[36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Mongolia](#)

World news story

The UK delivers statement on Mongolia at the 36th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

The United Kingdom welcomes Mongolia's constructive approach to the last UPR and substantial progress since.

Notably, positive action was taken on recommendations regarding LGBT rights, in particular including LGBT rights in the recent anti-discrimination law.

We encourage the Mongolian Government to take a visible lead and provide the resources to ensure this law is fully implemented. We remain committed to

helping further this progress.

We recommend Mongolia:

1. Strengthen domestic legislation to ensure all forms of modern slavery are criminalised, including criminalising human trafficking in line with the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections;
3. Protect freedom of expression by abolishing article 6.21 of the Law on Administrative Offences

Thank you.

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[More than £9 million funding for green Scottish businesses](#)

More than £9m of UK Government funding will be awarded to 85 pioneering projects in Scotland to scale up and protect their innovations from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, while helping to power up the UK's green economic recovery.

Announced today (Wednesday 4 November) by the Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, the £9.26m funding is part of a wider £134 million UK Government package enabling 1,069 ground-breaking clean growth projects develop new technologies, secure and create new jobs, drive productivity and tackle climate change.

Businesses right across the UK, from Glasgow to Devon, are set to benefit from the investment.

These ideas could transform whole industries such as manufacturing, hospitality and the automotive sector by helping them respond to the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, while supporting risk takers to bring their novel ideas to market.

The 85 projects in Scotland benefiting from the package include:

Argyll-based Oceanium which is developing an advanced bio-refinery to help turn seaweed into food and compostable packaging products. Farming seaweed on a large scale will help create new jobs in the local area, and tackle plastic waste, supporting the UK's aim to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Glasgow-based start-up Nuvven which is creating a fully mobile, digital and no-contact car rental service to benefit customers and owners. Using innovative features such as keyless entry, biometric customer verification and digitised damage assessments, car rental companies can offer lower prices through reducing their own costs.

Edinburgh-based Good-Loop which is helping small businesses promote themselves online, while using some of that advertising spend to help fund good causes around the world. Good-Loop target ads for local customers to connect local businesses and charities through smart software tools. Whenever users watch, swipe, or click on an ad, 50% of the revenue is donated to charity.

The Glasgow Wetland Carbon Capture Project (GWCCP) which will transform degraded, redundant or vacant land into thriving urban wetlands. While offering increased biodiversity and more green spaces, such wetlands create the world's most effective carbon sinks (each hectare capturing up to 250 tonnes of carbon), and also transform contaminated soils and waters. And all achievable in time for Glasgow to demonstrate to the world its innovative approach to a greener, fairer, more sustainable recovery at COP26.

The Sustainable Innovation Fund, delivered through Innovate UK, is a cornerstone of the £1.25 billion investment package announced by the Chancellor in April to help ambitious, innovative businesses survive and thrive during the current pandemic.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

The UK's response to coronavirus has demonstrated the very best of British ingenuity, and it is this resourcefulness that will help us navigate our way through this pandemic.

Today's investment will ensure that our innovators and risk-takers can continue to scale up their ideas, helping the UK to build back better and ensure we meet our clear commitments on tackling climate change.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, David Duguid, said:

Innovation is an essential part of dealing with climate change and the UK Government is committed to investing in trailblazing Scottish businesses as we build back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

Saving our environment will require making sustained changes and I

urge others to join us in this year of climate action ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

Innovate UK Executive Chair, Dr Ian Campbell, said:

Yet again we see the exciting range of business innovation taking place across the United Kingdom, despite these difficult times.

Every initiative we've supported here represents an important step forward in sustainable economic development, but also one step nearer dreams becoming reality for ambitious hard-working company owners and their staff.

The investment forms part of the government's commitment to support the UK's entrepreneurs and start-ups to scale up their innovations, set out in its ambitious R&D Roadmap in July this year.

[Clinically extremely vulnerable receive updated guidance in line with new national restrictions](#)

- new guidance published today for the clinically extremely vulnerable on keeping safe under new national restrictions which come into force this Thursday
- group strongly advised to stay at home at all times, unless for exercise or doctors' appointments
- range of support available, backed by over £32 million government funding for local councils

Clinically extremely vulnerable people in England have today received [further guidance on keeping safe](#) as the country introduces new national restrictions from Thursday, the government has announced.

The new advice details further precautions those in this group can take on top of the tougher national measures being introduced, as cases continue to rise across the country. Everyone not considered to be clinically extremely vulnerable will be expected to follow the new restrictions, such as staying at home unless shopping for food or exercising and not meeting up with people outside of the household.

The updated guidance, which clinically extremely vulnerable individuals are strongly urged to follow, includes:

- socialising: stay at home as much as possible, except to go outdoors to exercise or attend health appointments. People can exercise with those they live with or in their support bubble
- work: if people cannot work from home, they should not attend work. They may be eligible for [Statutory Sick Pay, Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) during this period of national measures. People in the same household who are not clinically extremely vulnerable can still attend work, in line with the new national restrictions
- school: as evidence has shown there is a very low risk of children becoming very unwell from COVID-19, most children originally on the shielded patient list no longer need to be and therefore can still attend school. If they are unsure, parents should contact their child's usual GP or hospital clinician to check whether they should still be considered clinically extremely vulnerable. If a GP or clinician has advised that a child should remain on the shielded patient list, they are advised not to attend school. Children who live with someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, but aren't themselves, should still attend school
- going outside: avoid all non-essential travel – they should continue to travel to hospital and GP appointments unless told otherwise by their doctor. They are strongly advised not to go to any shops or to pharmacies

The government will also be providing over £32 million to upper tier councils in England to support the clinically extremely vulnerable over the next month. It will be used to provide support, such as access to food deliveries and signposting to local support or befriending services, to the most at risk and enable them to stay at home as much as possible over this short period.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, Dr Jenny Harries said:

We have previously said that where the conditions of transmission of the infection alters significantly we would alert patients in relative regions.

With the prevalence of the virus continuing to increase across England and in places across the world, it's right that we adjust our advice for the clinically extremely vulnerable accordingly so they can feel as safe as possible over the coming few weeks.

Our guidance for this group of individuals has always been advisory, but I would strongly urge all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable to take these extra precautions to keep themselves as safe as possible.

Individuals in this group will also be able to use an online service which will help people to request priority access to supermarket delivery slots and to inform their council they need help. NHS Volunteer Responders can also help with a regular, friendly phone call, and transport to and from medical

appointments.

The clinically extremely vulnerable group includes those with reduced immune systems, for example due to organ transplants, or those with specific cancers or severe respiratory conditions, such as cystic fibrosis. The group list is updated regularly as patients' conditions or the scientific evidence changes, so the majority will have received a letter previously from the NHS or their GP advising them of their inclusion.

Due to new evidence about groups more likely to be at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, those with chronic kidney disease (stage 5) and those undergoing dialysis, as well as adults with Down's Syndrome, are also being added to the shielding patient list by the NHS.

Those with more general underlying health conditions or who are 70 or over may still be more vulnerable to COVID-19 than the general population, so are also advised to stay at home as much as possible, to carefully follow the rules and minimise contact with others.

The [new national restrictions](#) will come into force from Thursday and are set to be reviewed on 2 December.

Letters will be going out later this week to all those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, providing them with further detail on the updated guidance and on how to access the support available.

Background information

How to [get support if you're clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus](#).

Those with the following conditions fall into the clinically extremely vulnerable group:

- solid organ transplant recipients
- people with specific cancers:
 - people with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy
 - people with lung cancer who are undergoing radical radiotherapy
 - people with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
 - people having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
 - people having other targeted cancer treatments that can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- people who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- people with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- people with rare diseases that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous

sickle cell)

- people on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection adults with Down's syndrome
- adults on dialysis or with chronic kidney disease (Stage 5)
- women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired
- other people who have also been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of their needs. GPs and hospital clinicians have been provided with guidance to support these decision

Those in the following group count as clinically vulnerable:

- are 70 or older
- have a lung condition that's not severe (such as asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis)
- have heart disease (such as heart failure)
- have diabetes
- have chronic kidney disease
- have liver disease (such as hepatitis)
- have a condition affecting the brain or nerves (such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy)
- have a condition that means they have a high risk of getting infections
- are taking medicine that can affect the immune system (such as low doses of steroids)
- are very obese (a BMI of 40 or above)
- are pregnant

We now have evidence to suggest that those with chronic kidney disease (stage 5) and those undergoing dialysis, as well as adults with Down's Syndrome, are at higher risk from COVID-19 than the general population and therefore the Chief Medical Officer has advised they follow the new guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable. We have asked the NHS to begin the process of identifying and contacting all those affected, providing them with the latest advice.