

UK Statement on the poisoning of Alexey Navalny

Over the last two weeks, the United Kingdom has followed with deep concern the case of Alexey Navalny. We have now received confirmation from the German Chancellor that Mr Navalny has been the victim of an attack with the chemical weapon of the Novichok group – a nerve agent previously used with lethal effect in the UK.

It is deplorable that a banned chemical weapon has been used again, and that, yet again, we see violence directed against a leading Russian opposition figure.

The use of a chemical weapon in this way, regardless of where it takes place, engages Russia's international obligations as a Member of the OPCW. Any use by the Government would amount to a clear violation of its international obligations freely assumed. So this cannot be dismissed as a domestic matter.

The Russian government has a clear case to answer and must tell the truth about what happened to Mr Navalny. It is important that justice is done and the perpetrators of this action are held to account.

We will work closely with Germany, our allies and international partners to demonstrate that there is accountability and there are consequences for any use of banned chemical weapons anywhere in the world.

UK Government Minister visits Aberdeen coronavirus testing site

News story

The drive-through site in Aberdeen is part of the infrastructure the UK Government has put in place throughout Scotland to boost coronavirus testing capacity.



UK Government Minister David Duguid has today [4 September 2020] visited the Aberdeen drive-through coronavirus testing site.

The site is one of six drive-through testing sites across Scotland funded by the UK Government. Mr Duguid viewed the facilities and thanked the dedicated team who are running the site.

Following the visit Minister Duguid said:

The drive-through testing sites, funded by the UK Government, have been crucial in our response to the pandemic and enabled thousands of people in Scotland to get tested quickly.

Over the past few months we have seen how important these are, especially during localised outbreaks. Many people are able to get tested and return to work, safe in knowledge they are not infected.

Today was a fantastic opportunity to see how the site in Aberdeen works and how it fits into our UK-wide network. I would like to thank the Aberdeen team for their contribution to our fight against coronavirus.

The drive-through sites are part of the infrastructure the UK Government has put in place throughout Scotland to boost COVID-19 testing capacity in Scotland. This includes the Lighthouse mega-lab in Glasgow and the opening of the walk-in testing site last week in St Andrews.

This week also saw the Armed Forces officially hand over the running of up to 18 Mobile Testing Units to the Scottish Ambulance Service. Since late April, soldiers have conducted 100,000 coronavirus tests in communities around Scotland.

This is just one part of the UK Government support for people in Scotland throughout the pandemic. In Scotland, the UK Government has protected over 930,000 jobs and granted thousands of businesses loans, airlifted critically ill patients from remote communities and helped convert temporary hospitals and procured millions of pieces of PPE. It is also providing an extra £6.5 billion for the Scottish devolved administration.

The testing facility at Aberdeen airport is run by Sodexo on behalf of the UK

Government.

Published 4 September 2020

[eAlert: 2 September 2020 – Invitation to complete customer survey](#)

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey

[Readout of Foreign Secretary call with Heiko Maas](#)

News story

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab spoke with German Minister for Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas on September 3 2020.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab spoke with German Minister for Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas yesterday, to discuss the response to the poisoning of Alexey Navalny.

The Foreign Secretary and Maas agreed that any use of Novichok was a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and therefore a matter of international concern. They agreed to work together closely, including in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), to ensure Russia was held accountable for its international obligations. The Foreign Secretary made clear that Britain would stand shoulder to shoulder with Germany on the issue.

The Foreign Secretary and Maas also discussed the situation in Belarus, including the role of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in investigating the rigged election and human rights abuses, and the importance of sanctions in bringing international pressure to bear on the Lukashenko regime.

Published 4 September 2020

Scottish diners eat more than 6.3 million meals to support hospitality sector

Thousands of jobs across Scotland have been supported after statistics revealed that more than 6.3 million meals were eaten in Scotland as part of the landmark Eat Out to Help Out scheme, and more than 100 million eaten UK-wide.

Rishi Sunak said the scheme's popularity had helped support the livelihoods of the 1.8 million people working in the hospitality sector across the UK and driven the nation's economic recovery from coronavirus.

Latest figures show that Eat Out to Help out significantly boosted restaurant bookings during the month of August, with the scheme growing in popularity each week.

By midnight on 27 August 6,333,000 meals were eaten at 8,543 establishments across Scotland, making claims worth more than £38 million, with an average discount of £6.10 a meal. This has meant more jobs being supported as a

result of people going out and boosting the economy.

These numbers are likely to grow, with restaurants having until the end of September to claim back the 50% government-funded discount applied to bills in August.

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack said:

The UK Government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme has been a roaring success, helping support 1.8 million jobs in the hospitality sector. More than 6.3 million meals were enjoyed in Scotland with the UK Government paying up to £10 towards each. I want to say thank you to everyone who has supported the scheme – as well as the staff who made it possible.

This initiative is just one part of an extensive package of UK Government support for Scotland's economy and jobs. That includes supporting more than 930,000 jobs, providing business loans, helping to get young people into jobs, and a VAT cut for tourism and hospitality businesses. We are also providing an additional £6.5 billion through the Barnett formula for the devolved administration at Holyrood.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said:

From the get-go our mission has been to protect jobs, and to do this we needed to be creative, brave and try things that no government has ever done before.

Today's figures continue to show Eat Out to Help Out has been a success. I want to thank everyone, from restaurant owners to waiters, chefs and diners, for embracing it and helping drive our economic recovery.

The scheme is just one part of our Plan for Jobs and we will continue to protect, support and create jobs to ensure we come back stronger as a nation.

According to OpenTable data, restaurant bookings increased by an average of 53% on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the whole of August, compared to the same days in 2019. In July 2020, restaurant bookings were down 54% on average from Mondays to Wednesdays compared to July 2019.

On 31 August – the final day of the scheme – bookings were up 216% compared to the equivalent day in 2019. And early signs show that despite ending, the scheme has continued to boost demand, with a 2 per cent rise in restaurant bookings on Tuesday 1 September compared to the equivalent day in 2019, according to OpenTable.

There had been an upward trend in the scheme's popularity since it launched, with 10.5 million meals claimed for in total in the first week, 35 million meals in the second, 64 million in the third and over 100 million by 31 August. The scheme was used across the entire UK, with over 2 million meals claimed for in both Wales and Northern Ireland and over 51 million meals claimed for in England by 27 August.

The Eat Out to Help Out scheme is one part of the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs. The UK Government has supported more than 930,000 jobs in Scotland through the pioneering furlough and self-employed schemes and has loaned more than £2.3 billion to 65,000 Scottish businesses.

This support for the hospitality sector comes on top of the government's unprecedented assistance for all businesses including our £1,000 job retention bonus, a £2 billion Kickstart scheme to create thousands of high quality jobs for young people and a cut to some VAT to assist tourism businesses.