

First 'Foodbank Thursday' success for new response team

The 'Area 6 Covid Response Team' is providing vital help to boost support for vulnerable people living in isolated areas in and around Hillcrest and Hensingham in Whitehaven, which is some of the largest residential areas in the town.

Ryan Taylor, Senior Project Manager, is leading the response team.

He said:

I was approached to lead the team by John Murphy who is doing the same in Cleator Moor and I was keen to help. We have a lot of amazing volunteers offering their time, so the main priority is ensuring that we organise and coordinate them in the best way, to get the right support to the right people as quickly as we can.

A big thank you to the people helping us make this a more positive situation for those living in our area. Those of us from Sellafield Ltd are also very lucky to have the support of our management, who are giving us time to support the community.

Area 6 covers Hillcrest, Hensingham, Richmond, Red Lonning, Inkerman and surrounding estates in the Whitehaven area.

The service offered includes food shopping and deliveries, pharmacy collections, a telephone befriending service, utilities support, dog walking and even gardening.

The team had an overwhelming response to their first 'Foodbank Thursday' event this week, which saw food parcels being collected from doorsteps and taken to a new collection hub in Rascals nursery at Red Lonning.

Foodbank Thursday

Jessica Ward, Programme Manager, has allocated teams to focus on specific 'zones', ensuring everyone has access to support if they need it.

She said:

The first thing we did was devise a strategy to set-up the group of volunteers as quickly as possible. Within 24 hours we had split the area into 6 zones, allocating a lead to each.

Each team now has their own Whatsapp groups and are providing a

vital service to those who are in need of a helping hand. Its really motivational to see such a caring and proactive community of people working to turn a difficult situation into one that is more positive for local people.

Local Councillors Allan Forster, Mike Hawkins and Chris Hays are also backing the efforts.

Cllr Forster said:

This is a hugely populated area of Whitehaven and we're keen to do all we can to ensure vulnerable and isolated residents get the help they need.

We have been overwhelmed by offers of support and are very grateful to our volunteers offering time and skills to help their neighbours during this testing time.

[CMA clears NHS hospital trusts merger](#)

In 2013, the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) predecessor, the Competition Commission, prohibited a [previous merger proposal](#) between the hospital trusts. As a result, they were required to enter into a 10-year commitment not to merge without the CMA's permission.

When investigating an NHS hospital merger, the CMA considers the potential impact of that merger on competition between hospitals. Since the Competition Commission's decision, there have been significant changes to policy within the NHS that have affected the role that competition plays in the provision of public healthcare services.

The CMA's investigation in this case has confirmed that competition between NHS hospitals now plays little role in the provision of NHS services in the east Dorset area, with collaboration often viewed as a better way to meet increasing demands for care and deliver better value. In particular, the CMA found that the 2 hospital trusts have limited incentive to compete with each other, given the way that they are now funded, and so there would be no significant loss of competition in this area after the deal.

The CMA has therefore concluded that the merger does not give rise to competition concerns and should be cleared. The CMA has, in parallel, also released the hospitals from the commitment not to merge that they had given in 2013.

Throughout its investigation, the CMA worked closely with the sector

regulator, NHS Improvement, and engaged with local commissioners, who are responsible for planning and commissioning healthcare services in their local area. These NHS bodies fully supported the merger. The CMA also carefully considered all views and evidence provided by patients and their representative groups, local authorities and other interested bodies.

The CMA started to discuss the merger with the two hospitals in 2019. Its information-gathering with the trusts and other NHS bodies was completed before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The CMA has been conscious of the exceptional pressures on the hospitals at this time when finalising its investigation.

Looking ahead to future hospital mergers, the CMA is aware of [longer-term plans to exempt mergers between NHS hospitals from CMA review](#), which it fully supports.

For more information, visit the CMA's dedicated webpage for the [Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals / Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trusts merger investigation](#).

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press team on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

Christine Tacon to continue as Groceries Code Adjudicator

Small Business Minister Paul Scully today (Monday 27 April) confirmed the reappointment of Christine Tacon CBE as the Groceries Code Adjudicator for a period of up to 6 months. Her reappointment will provide continuity and reassurance to the groceries sector through the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Groceries Code Adjudicator enforces compliance with the Groceries Code, which was introduced in 2009 to ensure a level playing field between the UK's largest supermarkets and their direct suppliers.

The adjudicator also works with supermarkets and grocers to respond to issues raised by suppliers and others. They have the power to launch investigations where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the code has been breached and arbitrate disputes between retailers and suppliers. This work continues during the coronavirus outbreak.

To further support the sector during the coronavirus pandemic, the government has temporarily relaxed domestic competition rules so that supermarkets, their suppliers and logistics services providers can better work together to respond to the crisis. Legislation now in place enables affected businesses

to work together to help keep shops open and deliver the essential supplies that people need.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Supermarkets and their suppliers are working flat out to ensure people's needs are met during this unprecedented time. We are doing everything we can to make it easier for grocery suppliers to do their job, and Christine's reappointment will provide them with some much-needed continuity and reassurance in what is a very unsettling time.

Christine Tacon, Groceries Code Adjudicator, said:

These are exceptional times and it is vital for both retailers and suppliers that there is consistency and certainty when the nation is relying on the groceries supply chain to keep supermarket shelves filled.

I want to play my part in the response to COVID-19 and so will be staying in post to provide the continuity the sector needs.

Having held the role of Groceries Code Adjudicator since its launch, Christine Tacon has succeeded in improving compliance with the Groceries Code. The proportion of suppliers experiencing issues with the code has decreased from 79% in 2014 to 41% in 2019. Suppliers' assessments of each retailer's compliance with the code ranged from 58% to 90% being compliant in 2014 to between 81% and 97% in 2019, with 10 out of 12 retailers achieving a compliance rate of at least 90%.

Christine Tacon's second term as Groceries Code Adjudicator ends on 24 June 2020 and she had previously announced that she would not be seeking reappointment. However, in light of the coronavirus outbreak, she will now stay on beyond that date. The government launched a public appointment process on 30 October 2019 to identify a successor and expects to make a decision shortly.

[£1m innovation funding to predict and counter cyber attacks](#)

News story

DASA awards further funding to develop novel approaches to defend UK military systems and networks from cyber threats



The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) can today announce nearly £1m to further develop technology that predicts and counters cyber-attacks.

Three lead organisations, in collaboration with three additional organisations, have been awarded funding in Phase 2 of the [DASA 'Predictive Cyber Analytics' competition](#).

This work will develop, adapt and merge the novel approaches explored in [Phase 1 of the competition](#), to proactively defend deployed UK military systems and networks from the rapidly growing threat of offensive cyber action from aggressive adversaries.

Project manager Rebecca Duncan said:

Cyber security has been in an arms race for decades, with hackers continuously exploiting new vulnerabilities while developers race to patch them.

This DASA competition looks to get the UK ahead of these threats and better prepare us against – and even predict – future cyber-attacks.

As our understanding of adversaries and attack patterns improves, increased computing power and data growth continues to drive the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution with multiple new possibilities emerging to keep the UK safe and prosperous.

DASA delivery manager Robert Hammond-Smith said:

This DASA competition is bringing together the best minds in industry and academia with the brightest Government scientists and talent from the Armed Forces to innovate for a safer future for everyone in the UK.

Phase 2 seeks to further develop and enhance the predictive approaches while

adapting them to the military environment. The work will allow MOD to better anticipate and mitigate the impact of cyber-attacks.

The organisations being funded are:

- Bristol-based RiskAware Ltd who are awarded around £450,000 in collaboration with the University of Southampton
- Vauxhall-based decisionLab who are awarded nearly £240,000 in collaboration with DIEM Analytics and Actica
- Gloucestershire-based Montvieux Limited who are awarded nearly £250,000

[Seven proposals received nearly £1m in funding during Phase 1](#) – bringing the total funding to about £2m.

DASA finds and funds exploitable technology and innovative solutions to give UK defence and security a strategic advantage over adversaries while boosting UK prosperity.

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[PM statement in Downing Street: 27 April 2020](#)

I am sorry I have been away from my desk for much longer than I would have liked

and I want to thank everybody who has stepped up

in particular the First Secretary of State Dominic Raab

who has done a terrific job

but once again I want to thank you

the people of this country

for the sheer grit and guts

you have shown and are continuing to show

every day I know that this virus brings new sadness and mourning to households across the land

and it is still true that this is the biggest single challenge this country has faced since the war

and I in no way minimise the continuing problems we face
and yet it is also true that we are making progress
with fewer hospital admissions
fewer covid patients in ICU
and real signs now that we are passing through the peak
and thanks to your forbearance, your good sense, your altruism, your spirit
of community
thanks to our collective national resolve
we are on the brink of achieving that first clear mission
to prevent our national health service from being overwhelmed
in a way that tragically we have seen elsewhere
and that is how and why we are now beginning to turn the tide
If this virus were a physical assailant
an unexpected and invisible mugger
which I can tell you from personal experience it is
then this is the moment when we have begun together to wrestle it to the
floor
and so it follows that this is the moment of opportunity
this is the moment when we can press home our advantage
it is also the moment of maximum risk
because I know that there will be many people looking now at our apparent
success
and beginning to wonder whether now is the time to go easy on those social
distancing measures
and I know how hard and how stressful it has been to give up
even temporarily
those ancient and basic freedoms
not seeing friends, not seeing loved ones
working from home, managing the kids
worrying about your job and your firm

so let me say directly also to British business
to the shopkeepers, to the entrepreneurs, to the hospitality sector
to everyone on whom our economy depends
I understand your impatience
I share your anxiety
And I know that without our private sector
without the drive and commitment of the wealth creators of this country
there will be no economy to speak of
there will be no cash to pay for our public services
no way of funding our NHS
and yes I can see the long term consequences of lock down as clearly as
anyone
and so yes I entirely share your urgency
it's the government's urgency
and yet we must also recognise the risk of a second spike
the risk of losing control of that virus
and letting the reproduction rate go back over one
because that would mean not only a new wave of death and disease but also an
economic disaster
and we would be forced once again to slam on the brakes across the whole
country
and the whole economy
and reimpose restrictions in such a way as to do more and lasting damage
and so I know it is tough
and I want to get this economy moving as fast as I can
but I refuse to throw away all the effort and the sacrifice of the British
people
and to risk a second major outbreak and huge loss of life and the
overwhelming of the NHS
and I ask you to contain your impatience because I believe we are coming now
to the end of the first phase of this conflict

and in spite of all the suffering we have so nearly succeeded
we defied so many predictions
we did not run out of ventilators or ICU beds
we did not allow our NHS to collapse
and on the contrary we have so far collectively shielded our NHS so that our
incredible doctors and nurses and healthcare staff have been able to shield
all of us
from an outbreak that would have been far worse
and we collectively flattened the peak
and so when we are sure that this first phase is over
and that we are meeting our five tests
deaths falling
NHS protected
rate of infection down
really sorting out the challenges of testing and PPE
avoiding a second peak
then that will be the time to move on to the second phase
in which we continue to suppress the disease
and keep the reproduction rate, the r rate, down,
but begin gradually to refine the economic and social restrictions
and one by one to fire up the engines of this vast UK economy
and in that process difficult judgments will be made
and we simply cannot spell out now how fast or slow or even when those
changes will be made
though clearly the government will be saying much more about this in the
coming days
and I want to serve notice now that these decisions will be taken with the
maximum possible transparency
and I want to share all our working and our thinking, my thinking, with you
the British people
and of course, we will be relying as ever on the science to inform us

as we have from the beginning

but we will also be reaching out to build the biggest possible consensus across business, across industry, across all parts of our United Kingdom across party lines

bringing in opposition parties as far as we possibly can

because I think that is no less than what the British people would expect and I can tell you now that preparations are under way

and have been for weeks

to allow us to win phase two of this fight as I believe we are now on track to prevail in phase one

and so I say to you finally if you can keep going in the way that you have kept going so far

if you can help protect our NHS

to save lives

and if we as a country can show the same spirit of optimism and energy shown by Captain Tom Moore

who turns 100 this week

if we can show the same spirit of unity and determination as we have all shown in the past six weeks

then I have absolutely no doubt that

we will beat it together

we will come through this all the faster

and the United Kingdom

will emerge stronger than ever before