

Government to monitor impact of coronavirus on UK medicine supply

The Chinese government continues to impose further restrictions on movement within China in response to the coronavirus outbreak, including on flight and rail travel.

To relieve potential pressures on global supply chains, suppliers have been asked to carry out a risk assessment on the impact of coronavirus on their business.

As an extra precaution, companies have also been asked to retain existing stockpiles of medical supplies, compiled as a contingency measure ahead of our exit from the EU, where possible.

There are no current medicine shortages in the UK linked to the situation in China but the UK government is taking precautionary measures to help continue the uninterrupted supply of medicines to patients in the UK.

Health Minister Nicola Blackwood said:

We are not aware of any current medicine shortages linked to this novel coronavirus, but we are putting in place common-sense measures as a precaution to help to ensure the uninterrupted supply of medicines to UK patients.

We have world-class systems in place to prevent supply problems and we are working closely with industry and partners to prevent shortages and ensure the risks to patients are minimised.

The government will work closely with industry and partners to continually monitor the impact of coronavirus on the UK supply chain and put in place measures to protect UK patients.

There is no need for the public or NHS to stockpile. This could aggravate problems elsewhere in the supply chain if they emerge.

The Department of Health and Social Care is also working with NHS Supply Chain to retain centralised stock of medical products.

The department has well-established procedures to deal with medicine shortages and works closely with the MHRA, the pharmaceutical industry, NHS England and others operating in the supply chain to help prevent shortages and ensure that the risks to patients are minimised when shortages do arise anywhere in the UK.

The NHS and wider health system is extremely well prepared for coronavirus and follows tried and tested procedures of the highest standards to protect

staff, patients and the public.

The latest information on coronavirus is available at gov.uk/coronavirus.

[Data visualisation techniques used in annual Up-rating report](#)

The Government Actuary Department's (GAD) [annual report](#) on the overall balance of the National Insurance Fund (NIF) has just been published.

Our report provides advice to MPs as they scrutinise the government's draft legislation Up-rating Social Security Benefits and updating National Insurance Contribution (NIC) terms.

The report's results project contribution income, benefit payments and the balance of the NIF over the coming financial year.

Main results

The headline results are that:

- income is projected to exceed expenditure by £8.2bn increasing the NIF balance to £44.9bn
- costs of the proposed changes to NICs paid to the NIF are estimated at £2.0bn – these deliver the government's commitment to raise the primary threshold to £9,500 a year saving the typical employee £104 a year
- costs of the proposed benefit increases paid from the NIF are estimated at £3.4bn – these incorporate the government's 'triple lock' policy with pensioners who receive the full basic State Pension getting an extra £263 a year and those receiving the full rate of new State Pension getting an extra £344 a year
- the NIF is not expected to need any top-up from the Treasury
- 5-year projections show the NIF balance increasing up to the 2024-2025 financial year

All the headline results are sensitive to future economic conditions.

Data visualisation

At GAD we continually look for new ways to work. Both in terms of seeking more efficient ways of working and presenting our report conclusions in clear and engaging styles.

For this report we updated our benefit and NICs projection models as part of transferring the calculation processes to our central actuarial services

team. We also considered how to use data visualisation to modernise our presentation.

The Up-rating report project was led by GAD Senior Consulting Actuary Chris Morley. He said: "GAD's increased use of our central actuarial services team means improved efficiency, consistency and quality assurance to our calculations, which will bring time and cost savings over many years to come.

"Good data visualisation allows our clients to better understand complex analysis, enabling them to make effective decisions with greater confidence."

Data science experts in GAD regularly produce informative graphics using a variety of specialist visualisation software and tools. This approach, based on conveying key messages, has helped clients quickly get to the heart of overarching issues.

[Biometrics Commissioner on the police use of live facial recognition](#)



Paul Wiles, the Biometrics Commissioner, responds to the Metropolitan Police Service.

I am aware that the Metropolitan Police Service have produced an equality impact assessment in relation to their deployment of live facial recognition (LFR). In that document they claim that I 'supported the concept of LFR'. In fact I have continually said that we need proper governance of new biometric technologies such as LFR through legislation. In my view it is for Parliament to decide whether LFR ought to be used by the police and if so for what purposes.

Profitable and sustainable future for UK fishing industry

Two weeks after its introduction, the legislation that will give us the powers to implement an independent fisheries policy has moved a step forward. Lords' Minister, Lord Gardiner, has led the Second Reading of the Fisheries Bill in the House of Lords today.

The Bill will provide the legal framework to ensure that the UK becomes an independent coastal State outside of the EU, and the Common Fisheries Policy. It will also provide the powers needed to manage our fisheries more responsively and responsibly by including strong measures to protect our seas, as well as a new climate change objective recognising the impact of fishing on the health of the ocean.

Lord Gardiner opened the session with a speech setting out how the Bill will enable the UK to create a sustainable, profitable fishing industry, while securing the long term health of British fisheries.

Lords' Minister Lord Gardiner said:

The Fisheries Bill gives us the historic opportunity to design our own domestic fishing policy, one that is catered to support our coastal communities best.

We are also fully committed to securing the good health of our marine environment. The Bill includes strong measures to allow the UK to lead the way on sustainable fishing.

Fisheries Minister George Eustice said:

This Bill gives us the powers we need to become an independent coastal state and control who fishes in our waters and under what terms.

Now that we have left the EU there are many opportunities to do things better, to fish sustainably and to get a fair settlement for our fishermen.

The Second Reading of the Fisheries Bill will conclude this evening. The Bill

will then go to Committee Stage, with Report Stage and Third Reading following this, before transferring to the House of Commons for further scrutiny.

You can track the progress of the Fisheries Bill and read debates on all stages of the Bill on [parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk)

Further detail on the Bill is [here](#).

[Royal visit to meet patients and staff at Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre](#)

The Royal party learnt how this purpose-built military rehabilitation centre helps injured personnel, get back to fitness.

DMRC is the dedicated rehabilitation centre for the armed forces and began treating patients in October 2018, replacing Headley Court in Surrey. The £300-million pound state of the art centre provides in-patient and residential rehabilitation for complex musculoskeletal disorders and injuries, including complex trauma and rehabilitation following neurological injury or illness.

Jack from First Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, who is receiving treatment after suffering an injury, said:

It was a fantastic honour to meet the Royal Family and tell them about the most amazing support and treatment, I have received to help me recover from my injury.

The Royal Party were shown around some of the therapy areas and observed patients undertaking gym rehabilitation sessions and occupational therapy. They also visited the purpose-built prosthetic workshops and heard from patients and staff about the broad range of clinical and therapy services available.

Commanding Officer of the DMRC facility, Captain Alison Hofman Royal Navy said:

It was a huge honour to be able to show Their Royal Highnesses around the Centre, introducing them to some of the patients and to many of the staff who provide them with superb care and support on a daily basis.

Prince William officially opened the rehabilitation centre in June 2018 and was the patron of the charity raising money for the complex. The facility was the vision of the late sixth Duke of Westminster, Gerald Grosvenor, who started the project and was handed over by his son Hugh Grosvenor to the nation in June 2018.

The planning for a civilian National facility is progressing through a business case process which could see the facility operating in 2023, subject to relevant approvals.